

Weekly Newsletter

17th February 2026



Holyrood
Church

The Pursuit: Getting to grips with Ecclesiastes

By Jon Gemmell

We are all chasing something.

A better job. A quieter mind. A fuller bank account. A thinner waistline. A happier home. A more fulfilling social life. More followers, more influence, a lower golf handicap, less stress. A life that is secure, satisfying, settled, sustainable.

And yet, if we are honest, much of life feels like trying to catch smoke with our bare hands. Like trying to shepherd vapour, like trying to corral fog.

I want to invite you into *The Pursuit*, a journey through Ecclesiastes, the most unsettling, bracing, and unexpectedly comforting book in the Bible. It is Scripture's authorised interpretation of life East of Eden, and how to live with skill. It's a Spirit-breathed reality check. It's a loving refusal to allow us to build our lives on things that cannot bear the weight.



Ecclesiastes does not speak in polite whispers. It speaks with the clarity of cold water to the face. The Preacher is a myth-buster, popping the illusory bubbles of meaning that we construct for our lives and demands that we look at life in the raw.

Here is a book that surveys everything. Success. Wealth. Pleasure. Productivity. Reputation. Possessions. Self-improvement. Even wisdom itself. And it has come back to report its findings with disarming honesty: none of these things can carry the human soul.

Not because they are bad. Because they are not God.

Ecclesiastes is like an intensive course of therapy, only better, because the counsellor is infallible and the diagnosis is perfect. It exposes our fictions. It dismantles our quiet idolatries. It gently, firmly, relentlessly peels our fingers off the fragile things we cling to. And in doing so, it does us immense good.

It strengthens us.

It nourishes us.

It tells us the truth.

The truth, even when uncomfortable, is a mercy.





This is not a cynical book. It is a kind one. It is not trying to depress us. It is trying to liberate us. It is clearing away what cannot last so that we might cling to what can. It teaches us to enjoy God's gifts without worshipping them, to live wisely in a baffling world, and to fear the Lord with steady, joyful seriousness. Along the way, we will laugh, because Ecclesiastes is surprisingly funny. Its dry observations about human striving are painfully familiar. We will wince, because it sees straight through our carefully managed lives. And, by God's grace, we will be steadied. Grounded. Freed.

This is also a very accessible book. 'The Preacher' is a scientist making his deductions from observations garnered through real life. It is a book that does not require extensive Old Testament knowledge, it is a book that invites you to look closer and look honestly. Therefore, a great series to invite others to.

This enigmatically unique portion of Scripture meets us in the real world, not the imaginary one. The world where plans fail. Where bodies age. Where answers do not always come neatly. And yet where God reigns, perfectly and unthreatened.

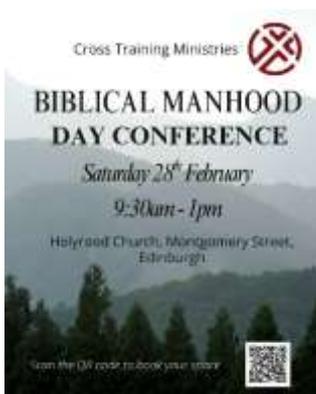
The Pursuit will help us stop chasing the wind and start fearing the Lord.

Which, it turns out, is where real life begins. **Please join us for The Pursuit, a journey through Ecclesiastes, starting 6pm on Sunday 1st March at Holyrood Church.**

Men's Event – this Friday

This Friday (20th February) at 7pm there will be an opportunity for the men in the church family to get together for Bible study and to play table tennis, pool and chess! If you are interested, please contact Daniel Trail for more details (danieltrail89@gmail.com)

Biblical Manhood Conference – Saturday 28th February



What does it mean to be a man? There are many voices today seeking to call men in different directions. Amidst the confusion many men are seeking Biblical clarity to step up to their God given calling.

Cross Training Ministries are organising a half day conference on the **28th of February (from 9.30am to 1pm)** on the topic of Biblical manhood. We'll spend time thinking together about the gift of masculinity, the calling of manhood, and the importance of Christian brotherhood. Go [here](#) to sign up or speak to Joe for more details.





Raj Family – Joining the Church

We're delighted that Raj, Christy and Kezia are joining the church on **Sunday 1st March**. The family are providing light refreshments (sandwiches, cakes etc) for after the morning service. Everyone is warmly invited to stay behind and enjoy food and fellowship together.

CARE - A Last Stand to Protect Life

CARE are inviting all the Scottish Church to an important moment of prayer prior to the Stage 3 debate and vote at the Scottish Parliament on assisted suicide (dying).

Join us in person at Edinburgh Elim (18 Morningside Road, Edinburgh, EH10 4DB) on **4th March at 7.30pm** for A Last Stand to Protect Life. There's no requirement to book, but please come and pray where we'll spend an hour and half or so praying for more of the Lord's intervention and protection.

St Luke Passion – Chalmers Church

St Luke Passion is a choral work by Edinburgh based composer Nigel Don. During the concert there will be a short introductory talk on Luke's gospel: an eyewitness account of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

Date: Saturday 14th March

Time: 7:30pm

Location: Chalmers Church 69b Morningside Road, Edinburgh

This is a free event but please book [here!](#)

Church Calendar

For your info and prayers:

- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting 7-8pm (with refreshments from 6.45pm) and an online option is available.
- Thursday: Women's Bible Study from 10.30am-11.30am
- Friday: Men's Event from 7-9pm at the church
- Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed)
 - Evening Service at 6pm – Ciaran Kelleher preaching (live streamed)
- Monday: Baby and Toddler Group from 10am – 11.30am

