LIVING ON THE RAGGED EDGE: COMING TO TERMS WITH REALITY

JOURNAL OF A DESPERATE JOURNEY

SELECTED VERSES IN ECCLESIASTES



The Heart of the Matter

Living on the Ragged Edge is a study of the book of Ecclesiastes, and it's for folks who live in the trenches—down there where it's dark and dirty and full of responsibility, where the grit of reality mixed with the grind of accountability holds people's feet to the fire. It's for real people who cannot free themselves from the demands of competition or escape the pressures of deadlines. All the messages in this study will offer straight talk on coping with life as it really is.

No matter where you live, it isn't long before you realize that you're back on the ragged edge of reality . . . especially if you're the type who wants to make a contribution to this world before you're six feet under.

Solomon, David's brilliant son who followed his dad as king of Israel, came to realize that nothing is worthwhile—everything is futile.

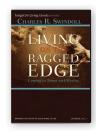


Discovering the Way

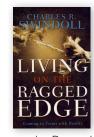
1. Introductory Matters

One doesn't need to be a Hebrew scholar to realize that Solomon's outlook was pretty bleak. Solomon, a man of great wisdom, went through a maddening period in his life when everything lost its luster, when the very roots of his life were loosened. With clenched fists and cynical words, Solomon called into question the most basic issues of existence. The man kept a journal of that dark and desperate journey that has been preserved for all to read. It is not only the story of one man's experience but of all who attempt to live their lives apart from God.





Living on the Ragged Edge by Charles R. Swindoll Classic CD series and softcover workbook



Living on the Ragged Edge Workbook by Insight for Living softcover workbook



Solomon by Charles R. Swindoll CD series

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Selected Verses in Ecclesiastes

2.	General	Survey:	The Flo	ow of the	Journal	(Ecclesia	astes 1–12)
Le	arn the sti	ructure ai	nd flow	of though	nt in the	book of F	Ecclesiastes:

- Introducing the Journey (1:1–11)
- Pursuing and Exploring Life (1:12–6:9)
- Reflecting and Summarizing (6:10–11:6)
- Being Young and Growing Old (11:7–12:8)
- Drawing Some Final Conclusions (12:9–14)



GETTING TO THE ROOT Life Below the Sun

The phrase "under the sun" is repeated twenty-nine times in the Hebrew Old Testament and all in Ecclesiastes. It's the realm characterized by grievous labor (1:3, 14; 2:11, 17–22; 8:17), endless cycles (1:9), injustice and wickedness (3:16; 4:1, 3, 7, 15; 5:12; 6:1; 8:9; 9:3), and a short lifespan (5:17; 6:12; 8:15). It's the material world of earthly pleasure and chance (9:6, 9), the human experience considered apart from God. In today's world, the philosophical equivalents would be secular humanism (that humanity is supreme in the universe), materialism (that the physical universe is all there is), naturalism (that the natural flow of the universe is not disrupted by the supernatural), agnosticism (that we don't know if God exists), and even atheism (that there is no God to whom we're accountable).

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Starting Your Journey

"itch" that begs to be scratched.

How does Solomon's journal relate to *our* journeys? We must understand that:

•	The temptation to <i>go for it</i> is often so strong, it blinds us to consequences it creates an irresponsible

• The lure of something better—something more than what we have—is forever with us.

• This book stands as timeless proof that without God, apart from His presence and His approval, *nothing* satisfies!

Do you invest all of your time, talents, and treasures in some uncertain future when you believe you'll finally reap the rewards, or do you treat each day as a unique gift to be enjoyed and used to God's glory?