

**Notes for home groups** - Is there more to life than this? (Alpha 1) (Sunday 8 January 2017)

Introduction

Many would consider a driving licence to be one of the fundamental necessities of life today. Imagine that the requirements of the current driving test were modified to require a re-test every couple of years. Failure of the re-test would result in disqualification from driving. How is your current knowledge of the Highway Code with all the traffic signs, limits and stopping distances etc? How important to you is (or was) your driving licence? Would you expect to pass today's driving test without some revision of the basics? What preparations would you make to ensure a pass of the re-test?

Read Ecclesiastes 1: 1 – 9

1. Many in our country would endorse that life today has no purpose or meaning other than to maximise self-satisfaction, to be 'happy'. For them, ultimately, 'everything is meaningless'.

*(a) What reasons could they have for reaching this conclusion?*

*(b) What are they based upon?*

2. The Christian faith claims to provide both meaning and purpose for the life of its followers.

*(a) What are, for you, the key elements that provide your life with meaning and purpose?*

*(b) If you had to explain this to someone who themselves felt life was meaningless, have you considered how you might do this? What reasons could you give to for the key elements you have chosen as life's priorities?*

3. Read Psalm 16

*(a) Can you identify with all that David has written here, or just parts?*

*(b) To what extent does your response to this Psalm depend on your current feelings when you read it?*

4. Read 2 Peter 1: 3 – 11

*(a) To what do you think Peter is referring when he writes (verse 4) 'escape the evil corruption in the world caused by evil desires' (NIV)?*

*(b) The Bible tells us to 'always be ready to give an answer' why Christ is Lord of our lives (2 Peter 3: 15-16). Should you be asked to give an answer, how much of a challenge would this be?*

If you felt your 'to give an answer' might be poorly expressed or inadequate, what could you positively do –

*(c) to improve your own ability to give an answer?*

*(d) to ensure your enquirer received clearly the information sought?*

5. Many outside the church consider 'religion' (Christianity) to be irrelevant in today's world. "How can the life and death of someone who lived 2000 years ago, in a country 2000 miles away, have any relevance to my life today in modern society?" "And anyway, there are many belief systems and I can pick from each what I believe to be right for me; they all lead to God (if there is one), don't they?"

*(a) as Christians, can we say with confidence that Jesus certainly lived, died and was resurrected from death?*

*(b) Is any confidence you have based on feelings or fact?*

*(c) Which passages of scripture would help you respond to the challenge 'all belief systems lead to God'?*

6. What, if anything, should your church be doing to support you in providing all that is needed to help you respond to these challenges

*(a) to equip and empower you personally?*

*(b) What would be your role in facilitating the church to respond to enquirers you would like to 'be given an answer'?*

#### Prayer

Holy Spirit of God, source of knowledge and creator of fellowship; open our minds to recognize the truth and our hearts to welcome it, that in company together we may learn your will and be strengthened to obey it; through Jesus Christ. Amen. (Basil Naylor)