

Author: Solomon. Written for his subjects in particular and for all.
Purpose: To spare future generations the bitterness of learning through their own experience that life is meaningless apart from God.
Blueprint: Solomon's personal experience (1:1-2:26)
 Solomon's personal observations (3:1-5:20)
 Solomon's practical counsel (6:1-8:17)
 Solomon's final conclusion (9:1-12:14)

Themes of this Book:

> searching
 > emptiness
 > work
 > death
 > wisdom

* This book will help us discover true purpose in life.
 * True satisfaction is knowing that what we are doing is part of God's purpose in our lives.

"EVERYTHING IS MEANINGLESS! COMPLETELY MEANINGLESS!"

> whenever we are near our death, we always tend to look back on our lives and would come to realize that everything we had done that is in this world (worldly) seems meaningless. Just like King Solomon.

> **King Solomon**

- ↳ king over Israel in Jerusalem
- ↳ refers himself as a preacher or leader of the **assembly**. assembling people to hear a message and gathering wise sayings (PROVERBS).
- ↳ the only person in the Bible who had **everything**: wisdom, power, riches, honor, reputation, and God's favor.
- ↳ YET he is the one who discussed the **ultimate emptiness** the world has to offer. ↳ confidence on our own efforts, abilities, and righteousness. These must be directed to God, who is the ultimate source of life and the reason for living.



> Psalm 103:14-16; Isaiah 40:6-8; James 4:14
 King Solomon wants us to understand that all other things are just temporary such as success and prosperity.

> We need to remember that all human accomplishments will soon fade and **only** the pursuit of God brings real satisfaction.

> Honor God in what we think, say, and do!

> **ECC 1:15** refers to the ultimate perplexities and confusions because of all unanswered questions in **life**. True wisdom comes from God and true happiness comes from pleasing Him.

> ↑ wisdom & knowledge ↑ grief & sorrow
 this is the cost of wisdom; the more you know, the more imperfection we see.

WISDOM comes from God; **KNOWLEDGE** (human) reasoning or philosophy

what are my current goals in life?
 is God and being Christ-like the foundation of these goals?



> King Solomon had everything he thought would give him pleasure or those he thought were the "good things in life!"

- wine
- foolishness
- huge homes for himself
- beautiful vineyards
- gardens, parks, reservoir
- slaves
- large herds & flocks
- great sums of gold & silver
- wonderful singers
- concubines
- hardwork

* King Solomon thought these are the things any man could ever ask for yet he later realized that these are meaningless and nothing really worthwhile.

> wisdom = light

↳ we can see where we are going

> foolishness = darkness

↳ fools walk in the dark

But BOTH will die and won't be remembered.

> "my wisdom never failed me"

↳ God provided King Solomon all the wisdom in order to realize that what he is doing is meaningless - chasing the wind (you can feel but can never capture)

> Big or small accomplishments would just give us temporary happiness; we pursue security & self-worth.

> We must **anchor** to God as a solid foundation so that if everything has disappeared, we still have God.

> Any hardwork that is solely after money and possessions will bear no fruit.

> toil leads to grief, while serving God leads to ever lasting JOY.

Only what's done for Christ will last!

ECCLESIASTES

2

3 There's a time for EVERYTHING.

Timing is important.

Ecc 3:9 Do not lose the sense of purpose God intended for our work.

God has set "eternity" in our hearts.

↳ meaning we will never be completely satisfied with earthly pleasures & pursuits.

PURPOSE

- God has made us in His image; we have a spiritual thirst, we have eternal value, and nothing but eternal can truly satisfy us.
- God blessed King Solomon all the wisdom and favors to build credibility to his life realizations.
- Everything, indeed, is beautiful in its time.

WORK HARD BUT IN MODERATION



- Do not be motivated with success. It leads to envy, greed, and the desire of staying ahead.
- Enjoy the fruits of your labor and experience the life God gave you.
- We may be successful at our time yet we are replaceable. Our achievements are from God & must be used for His Glory and not ours.
- Do not isolate yourself; seek companions to help you. Be a TEAM MEMBER. Avoid entitlements.
- Pursue God's approval rather of men. Galatians 1:10 If seeking men's approval is my goal, then I am not a servant of Christ. ↳ God is unchanging. That is His nature.
- His Love Never Changes.

- "Guard our steps" means be careful whenever we enter the house of God. ↳ have an attitude of being open and ready to listen to God and not dictate Him. ↳ Remember, He doesn't need us; we need Him!

- Avoid foolish vows! Deuteronomy 23:21-23 Vows are voluntary but it is unbreakable once made. Proverbs 20:25 It is foolish to make a vow to God that you cannot keep. Matthew 5:33 make a vow and keep it.

5

ECCLESIASTES

> money in itself is not wrong, but loving it leads to all sorts of sin.

↳ you lose happiness; it attracts thieves & freeloaders; sleeplessness

- Never depend your happiness in wealth. Receive from the Lord and the good health to enjoy it.
- Whether it is much or little, God wants us to view what we have in the right perspective. Because everything came from Him

BE CONTENTED

- Be contented with what we have and realize that if we have God, then we already have EVERYTHING.
- We must learn to enjoy what we have rather than what we don't have.
- Prosperity may not always be good & adversities may not always be bad.
- EVERYTHING has already been decided for us. No use to argue with God.
- We do not know how much time we each have but we should stop our meaningless pursuits. We will just continue to waste the life God gave us because we will always seek for more satisfaction.
- God wants us to live in accordance to His plans. Trust Him and do not delay obedience. That way we can only be contented & fully satisfied.
- Jeremiah 18:6; Romans 9:19-24 God knows fully well and can see the future; It is foolish to contend or argue with our Creator.

GOD IS IN CONTROL

- No one knows what the future holds and each day must be lived by its own VALUE. ↳ this is a profound TRUTH.
- If the most powerful & wise King believes that only God can take charge of our destiny, who are we to argue?
- Surrender your life to God, our Creator. Be contented and pursue Christ likeness

day by day as we receive mercy & grace day by day.

WISDOM for Life 7

- > Reputation is more valuable than some costly perfume; our death is better than the day we were born.



- ↳ the way we live in our lifetime can determine what other people can say on our death. What would other people say on our eulogy? What would your epitaph say about how you lived?
- > Adversities in life can teach us to live wisely, and it refines our character.
- > Since we know that everyone will eventually die, each day given for us to live is a chance to live according to God's will.
 - ↳ It is still never too late to change and to accept Jesus as your Lord & savior!
- > Allow criticism from the wise rather than gather praises from fools. It's a waste of time.
- > **WISDOM + MONEY** can get you almost anything but **ONLY WISDOM** can save your life.



- ↳ NO one can take away your wisdom.
- ↳ They say everyone has a price, but a wise man can never be bought by any price. → This is uncontrollable.
- > We have to accept (the way) God does things.
- > Prosperity & Difficulties both come from God.
 - ↳ Enjoy both. God is in CONTROL.
 - ↳ Understand that God sometimes allow difficulties for us to come back to Him.
 - ↳ Never discredit God for our successes and never blame God for the difficulties.
 - ↳ Job 2:10 Why accept good from God and not adversity?
- > **NO ONE IS OVERLY RIGHTEOUS & OVERLY WISE.**
 - ↳ Balance is important! Avoid extreme legalism and immorality.
- > King Solomon pointed out that thinking we have enough wisdom clearly shows our lack of it. ALWAYS SEEK WISDOM FROM GOD.
- > Proverb 5:4; 6:23-24; 7:23; 22:14
God made us virtuous (but we still choose our own downward path away from Him.

8

- > Having **WISDOM** makes a person feel great; it is seeing life in God's perspective.
- > Proverbs 9:10 Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
 - ↳ Acquiring wisdom is a valuable asset.
 - ↳ It comes from knowing & understanding God.
- > How can people avoid what they don't know?
 - ↳ there's a time and a way for everything.
- > Sometimes, God doesn't give us the consequences of our sins yet (perfect timing) but we should never assume He sweeps our sins under the rug.
 - ↳ God knows (all of our sins) and one day, we will have to answer for them.
- > Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Exodus 34:6; Psalm 86:15
God is slow to anger, with endless patience, God of compassion and mercy. Does all of these nature of God meaningless to us? Why aren't we afraid and continuously keep on sinning?
- > **Joy & contentment** are the King Solomon's encouragement to us. Each day must be lived with (measure) of work, food, and pleasure.
 - ↳ moderation; not excessive.
- > No one can fully comprehend God and all He has done and what He will still do but this must not overshadow our joy, faith, or work.
 - ↳ Do not allow the uncertainties of tomorrow or the unknown destroy (the joy) God wants you to have for today. Don't allow Fear to rob you of your joy.
- > We will all receive the same FATE → DEATH.
- > We are called to really live while we are alive for once we are dead, we could no longer acquire knowledge, wisdom, etc.

9

- > **Hope** is only for the living.
- > Despite all the uncertainties, God wants us to enjoy his gift of life.
- > Romans 12:11 whatever you do, do well. Never be lazy. Work hard and serve the Lord with enthusiasm.
- > King Solomon wants us to not expect too much in life if lived in overly righteousness and overly wisdom.
- > **KEEP OUR PERSPECTIVE.** Proverbs is written to show how life is if everyone acted fairly whereas Ecclesiastes is what happens in a sinful and imperfect world.
 - ↳ Colossians 3:23 Never allow iniquities keep us from being virtuous. We serve God, not men.

ECCLESIASTES

10

Always be receptive to wisdom.
no matter who it comes from.

A little foolishness can spoil great wisdom and honor.

- > If your boss is angry, don't quit! (never abandon your post). A quiet spirit can overcome even great mistakes.

↳ we should not seek vengeance.

- > We are reminded that life is not fair, however whatever we have, owe it to God.

- > "tools" = skills; it needs sharpening to do better jobs. What is /are your skills that needs sharpening?

- > Matthew 6:24; 1 Timothy 6:10; Hebrews 13:5 while money is necessary for survival, the Bible constantly warns us against the love of money.

↳ the love of money is sinful because we TRUST money rather than God to solve our problems.

UNCERTAINTIES OF LIFE 11

- > Life has opportunities and we must **SEIZE THEM!**
- > Never play it safe because no one knows the future.
- > Life may be uncertain but that doesn't mean we shouldn't do anything.
- > waiting for the perfect timing means idleness.

↳ If we wait for a perfect time to start our spiritual discipline, we will never start.

↳ If we wait for us to feel equipped before leading a DGroup, you will never be ready.

↳ If we wait for a perfect ministry, we will never serve.

- > Take steps NOW to grow spiritually.
- > Don't wait for conditions to be favorable to you. Do not wait for conditions that may never exist.
- > Ecc 11:4 If farmers wait for the perfect weather, they will never plant. If they watch every cloud, they will never harvest.
- > Do not wait. Seize the day!

- > Enjoy every minute of being young.
Do whatever you want to do but REMEMBER to give an account to God for every thing you do.

- > Psalm 90:12 Teach us to number our days, that we may present to you a heart of wisdom.

- > A wise person thinks ahead — ETERNITY.

↳ Align each decision to God's perspective. Consider a long-term impact.

↳ Live with the attitude that although life is short, we will still be with God forever.

- > Whatever we do while we are young matters.
- > Avoid doing things (physical, emotional, moral, spiritual) that will corrupt you from your joy with the Lord.

↳ Look ahead! Never do things that you know you'll regret until you're old. Don't be a fool.

- > Enjoy youth but in moderation.

↳ Too much excitement might make us forget God.

↳ Never forget the blessing once we get the blessing!

↳ We might get caught up to much with all the pleasures instead of eternal values.

- > While young, let all of our strengths be available to God. Seek him always.

- > Meaningless activities may form bad habits or may make us callous.

Remember God always

- > Without God's Spirit, we will all return to dust. Without God's Purpose, our work is in vain. Without God's Love, our service is futile.
- > Put God first because without him, we are simply meaningless. Seek him first!
- > Wisdom must lead into action. Wise men won't waste the things they learn.

FEAR GOD & OBEY HIS COMMANDMENTS

- > Never forget that God is the ultimate judge to every thing; may it seems unfair or not.
- > We must pursue knowing God.
- > Enjoy life but keep in mind that we are not exempted from obeying his commandments.

↳ Seek purpose and meaning in life.

> John 15:5 Apart from Jesus, we can do nothing.

ECCLESIASTES