



Ecclesiastes Study - Chapter 1:

- 1) These sayings were spoken by the great Teacher himself, the Son of David and King in Jerusalem.
- 2) “Futile, futile!” Says the Teacher. “It’s all just so futile!”
- 3) “What can it possibly advantage a man to keep working when it never stops? It’s all sweat and sunburn.”
- 4) “Generation after generation the Earth just keeps grinding along and the work never lets up.”
- 5) “The God more radiant than the Sun sets it burning in the sky while we gasp, up and down it goes, every day.”
- 6) “Then the wind! First from the North. Then from the South. Round and round – back and forth. Everywhere you turn it’s in your face.”
- 7) “Every brook, stream and river keeps pouring itself out into the Sea. No matter how much it drinks, it is never satisfied, yet the rivers keep trying.”
- 8) “And words are just the same – no matter how many spill out of us, no matter how weary we are of them, they just keep coming. Men and women, all they do is talk, talk, talk and never get to the bottom of anything. We seek ourselves blind, and we talk ourselves deaf.”
- 9) “What is to become of ourselves? Just the same ol’ same ol’. Nothing ever changes. The World’s stuck on repeat. As sure as the Sun rises and sets it’ll just be more of the same.”
- 10) “Seriously! Have you ever seen anything in this World that you can honestly say is completely original? Just look around you! We’re all just doing what we’ve always done. Look as far as daylight will take you and you won’t find anything novel under the Sun.
- 11) “Even worse – those who did it first aren’t even remembered! We just keep mindlessly repeating what others set in motion. And we won’t be remembered for doing it.”
- 12) “Hear me! I the Teacher became King over all Israel, here in Jerusalem.”
- 13) “I threw myself into the pursuit of all Wisdom that was to be found. I chased Knowledge, Insight and Wisdom with a passion. I searched for it wherever it was to be found under Heaven. I deconstructed the very act of ‘work’ in my pursuit and studied all the ways men work hard for a living. Turns out it’s practically evil how hard men have to work just to get by. God uses it to humble men.”
- 14) “I saw all the ways men work and get worked over. It’s amazing how futile it all is – no matter how hard you grasp, it slips through your fingers. No matter how fast you run, you fall behind. It’s insane.”

- 15) "Once life has contorted you in strange ways, you can't seem to straighten yourself out. You can't count all the ways you seem to lack what you need."
- 16) "And there I was, taking it all in. I acknowledged that my situation was quite different – I had everything I needed. More than that I had wisdom and the capacity to pursue it to my heart's desire. I did just that from my palace in Jerusalem. No king before me had such wealth, insight and wisdom as I."
- 17) "I even gave myself over to partying till I was wasted, just to test the bounds of pleasure. Oh, yes! THAT turned out to be a total waste. I was more frustrated than ever."
- 18) "I gained more 'wisdom' from the experience, but it just added grief to my growing anxiety. I figured more of this knowledge would just lead to more pain. If you want more of one, you'll certainly get more of the other."

Explain the Context

From your own reading provide a short answer to the following:

What is the theme of this chapter?	What is the author communicating?
What did the author miss?	What is God trying to say?

Take a moment to consider these questions:

- 1) What gives life purpose? How do we measure it in daily activities?
- 2) If there is nothing new under the sun (vs 9) how can that bring us peace? Or *can* it?
- 3) How can we be sure that future generations *will* remember the events of long ago (vs11)?
- 4) What kind of (the study of) wisdom *will* bring us peace rather than madness and folly (vs 16-17)?
- 5) What does it mean to “catch hold of a breath” (vs 1), “embrace the wind” (vs 14), or “pursue the wind” (vs 17)? In what areas of your life do you find yourself doing this?

Apply the Scripture

Write the verse that stood out to you while reading [in this translation or your favorite].

How does this verse challenge you? Does it reveal an attribute of God's character?

For further study:

Based on these scriptures what do we learn about wisdom? Add any others you find.

- Isaiah 55: 8-9
- 1 Corinthians 3:18
- James 1: 5-8

Lessons the *author* should have learned:

- The wisdom of God is not like man's wisdom.
- Our peace depends on learning to live with mystery.