

SERIES OVERVIEW

In the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon sets out to discover if “life under the sun” is truly worth living. He goes on a journey throughout the book and finds himself originally declaring that everything under the sun is meaningless (Hebrew. Hebel—literally translated, vapor or breath. Used 38 times in this book). Solomon is overwhelmed with the truth that death is coming for every person, and that nothing worked for, earned, or pursued seems to have any lasting value. It’s not until Solomon starts focusing his attention on things “beyond the sun” that he recognizes life’s true meaning and purpose. He ultimately discovers that the whole purpose of man is to enjoy life and all its blessings, to live by faith, and to prepare for eternity by fearing God and keeping his commandments.

- [Watch Overview](#) (Watch as a group)

CONTEXT

The Preacher, who is King over Israel in Jerusalem, reflects on his quest for wisdom and knowledge. He concludes that with great wisdom comes great sorrow and that increasing knowledge leads to increasing grief, highlighting the vanity of human endeavors.

THE BIG IDEA

Something has gone terribly wrong in the world, and the more you know about the world, the more it hurts.

SCRIPTURE: Ecclesiastes 1:12-18

12 I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. 13 And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. 14 I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

15 What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted.

16 I said in my heart, “I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me, and my heart has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.”

17 And I applied my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind.

18 For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

QUOTE FROM SERMON

“Without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God. Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true sound wisdom consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.” – John Calvin

STARTER QUESTION

What is one thing that stood out to you from the sermon and why do you think God wants you to remember this truth?

GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Ecclesiastes 1:12-18 as a group.

In what ways does the concept of "double knowledge" from John Calvin's teachings relate to the Preacher's reflections in Ecclesiastes? (See QUOTE on page 1)

According to the sermon and verses 13-14, what were the 3 conclusions from the Preachers experiment on life? Which conclusion is the truest in your life today and why?

How can the realization that "what is crooked cannot be made straight" (vs. 15) impact our approach to life's challenges? What does this say about our need for Jesus?

How do the Preacher's conclusions about the limitations of wisdom and knowledge challenge the modern pursuit of information and progress?

In what ways can embracing the brokenness in our lives and the world around us lead to a deeper reliance on God?

Where and how do we find hope in the realities of verses 12-18?

How can we reconcile the pursuit of knowledge with the pain it brings, according to Ecclesiastes 1:12-18?

All To Him: What segment of our broken world has God put on your heart to embrace and engage? What is a next step you can take? (Foster families, the unborn, homeless/underserved, etc.)

PRAYER (In gender based groups)

*Share praises, answered prayers, and prayer requests.

Closing Prayer (together as a group)

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that with great wisdom comes great sorrow and that our search for knowledge often brings us grief. Help us to find peace in knowing You, and grant us the strength to embrace and engage the brokenness around us, trusting in Your divine purpose and grace. Amen.

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