



ECCLESIASTES

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INTRODUCTION:

Chapter 1: The Futility of Human Effort

Introduction:

The Preacher begins by declaring the emptiness and vanity of everything under the sun. He reflects on the cyclical nature of life—how generations come and go, yet the earth remains unchanged. Despite human pursuits for knowledge, pleasure, and achievement, he observes that these efforts ultimately

lack lasting meaning. The chapter sets the tone for the entire book, emphasizing the transient and often futile nature of human endeavors without divine purpose.

Chapter 2: The Pursuit of Pleasure and Wealth

Introduction:

In this chapter, the Preacher explores his personal experiments with pleasure, wealth, and accomplishments in search of fulfillment. He describes indulging in laughter, possessions, and achievements, only to find that these pursuits do not bring true satisfaction. His conclusion is that all is vanity—meaningless and fleeting—highlighting the emptiness of worldly pleasures when divorced from spiritual purpose.

Chapter 3: A Time for Everything

Introduction:

The chapter introduces a poetic reflection on the different seasons and times appointed by God for every activity and event in life. It underscores the idea that life is governed by divine timing—there is a season to be born, to die, to weep, to rejoice, and everything in between. This acknowledgment of divine sovereignty aims to help readers accept life's natural rhythms as part of God's plan.

Chapter 4: Oppression, Loneliness, and the Value of Companionship

Introduction:

The Preacher examines the injustices and oppressions that pervade human life, highlighting the loneliness and despair that can result. He notes that solitude can lead to despair but also recognizes the importance of companionship and mutual support. This chapter emphasizes the value of community and warns against the futility of competitive pursuits and envy.

Chapter 5: Worship, Wealth, and the Fear of God

Introduction:

This chapter offers practical advice about approaching God with reverence, cautioning against rash vows and obsession with wealth. The Preacher reflects on the fleeting nature of riches and the importance of fearing God, which leads to true wisdom. The focus shifts to the transient nature of prosperity and the necessity of humility before divine authority.

Chapter 6: The Uncertainty of Life and Human Desires

Introduction:

The Preacher discusses the frustration of unfulfilled desires and the unpredictability of life. He observes that wealth and possessions often do not bring satisfaction and that human efforts can be vain since life's outcomes are uncertain. This chapter emphasizes the limitations of human wisdom in controlling life's circumstances.

Chapter 7: Wisdom and Morality in Life

Introduction:

This chapter explores the value of wisdom, patience, and moral conduct. The Preacher encourages accepting life's difficulties with a calm spirit and recognizes that wisdom can help navigate hardships. He also highlights the contrast between wisdom and foolishness, emphasizing that wise living is preferable even amid life's inevitable troubles.

Chapter 8: Authority, Justice, and the Limitations of Human Understanding

Introduction:

Here, the focus is on respecting authority and trusting God's sovereignty even when justice seems delayed or elusive. The Preacher reflects on the unpredictability of life and the complexity of justice, urging humility and submission. He acknowledges that human understanding is limited and that trusting God's ultimate justice is essential.

Chapter 9: Mortality and the Enjoyment of Life

Introduction:

The Preacher confronts the certainty of death, emphasizing that death comes to all, regardless of status or wisdom. Despite this, he encourages people to enjoy life—eating, drinking, and working—because these are gifts from God. He advocates for living joyfully in the present, mindful of life's brevity.

Chapter 10: Wisdom and Folly in Daily Life

Introduction:

This chapter offers practical wisdom about everyday actions, leadership, and speech. The Preacher warns against rash decisions, careless words, and foolish conduct that can lead to ruin. Wisdom is shown to be valuable, but even wise people are vulnerable to error, underscoring the importance of humility and prudence.

Chapter 11: Youth, Old Age, and the Uncertainty of Life

Introduction:

The chapter encourages young people to enjoy their youth, while also reminding them of life's unpredictability. It emphasizes trusting in God's sovereignty and making the most of life's opportunities. The Preacher advocates for a balanced approach—enjoyment tempered with reverence for divine authority.

Chapter 12: The Conclusion and Final Exhortation

Introduction:

As the book draws to a close, the Preacher reflects on the frailty of human life—the deterioration of the body and the inevitability of death. He calls all to remember God in their youth and to fear Him, for judgment is coming. The chapter summarizes the vanity of worldly pursuits and underscores the importance of living in reverence of God's commandments, which leads to true fulfillment.

CHAPTER 1:

Ecclesiastes 1:1

"The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem."

This opening verse introduces the speaker of the book, traditionally understood as Solomon, the son of David and king of Jerusalem. The term "Preacher" (Hebrew: Qoheleth) signifies one who gathers or addresses an assembly, setting the tone for a philosophical discourse. It establishes authority and credibility, as Solomon was renowned for wisdom and kingship. The verse frames the entire book as a reflective speech or sermon about life's meaning, delivered by someone with divine insight and royal experience.

Ecclesiastes 1:2

"Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

This verse encapsulates the central theme: the futility and emptiness of human pursuits. The Hebrew word "hebel," translated as "vanity," connotes vapor or breath—something fleeting and insubstantial. The repetition emphasizes the profound frustration and the transient nature of worldly endeavors. The Preacher asserts that, from a human perspective, everything under the sun lacks lasting significance, prompting readers to question the value of worldly pursuits.

Ecclesiastes 1:3

"What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"

Here, the Preacher asks a rhetorical question about the ultimate benefit or gain ("profit") from human labor and efforts. Despite working hard and striving, what lasting benefit is there? This inquiry

challenges the notion that human toil leads to meaningful fulfillment, emphasizing the fleeting nature of success and wealth when viewed from an earthly perspective. It invites reflection on whether human efforts truly produce lasting satisfaction.

Ecclesiastes 1:4

"One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever."

This verse highlights the repetitive cycle of life—generations come and go, yet the earth remains unchanged. It underscores the fleetingness of human life contrasted with the permanence of the natural world. The constancy of the earth emphasizes the insignificance of individual human existence in the grand scope of eternity, fostering a sense of vanity in human pursuits that are temporary.

Ecclesiastes 1:5

"The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose."

The imagery of the sun rising and setting symbolizes the repetitive, predictable cycles of daily life. The sun's swift movement back to its starting point illustrates the monotony and unchanging pattern of natural phenomena. This perpetual cycle reinforces the theme of life's repetitive, seemingly meaningless routines, contributing to the overall sense of life's vanity.

Ecclesiastes 1:6

"The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits."

This verse describes the restless motion of the wind, which constantly shifts direction in endless cycles. The metaphor emphasizes the repetitive, unchanging nature of natural processes. It suggests that life, much like the wind's circling, is characterized by ceaseless repetition without progress, reinforcing the futility of human efforts to find lasting meaning.

Ecclesiastes 1:7

"All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again."

This verse portrays the continual flow of rivers into the sea, which remains unsatisfied and ever-changing. It illustrates the endless cycle of giving and receiving, similar to human pursuits that seem to go nowhere permanent. The image of rivers returning to their source underscores life's repetitive cycles and the apparent futility in seeking fulfillment through worldly means.

Ecclesiastes 1:8

"All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing."

This verse expresses the insatiable nature of human desire. No matter how much one observes or listens, the satisfaction remains elusive. The phrase "full of labour" indicates that life is burdened with endless toil. Humanity's craving for more—more knowledge, more possessions, more experiences—leads to frustration, emphasizing the vanity of earthly pursuits.

Ecclesiastes 1:9

"The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun."

This verse reflects on the cyclical and repetitive nature of history and human activity. Nothing truly new exists; everything repeats itself over time. This perspective underscores the futility of human innovation or progress when viewed without divine purpose. It suggests that life's patterns are unchanging, contributing to the sense of life's vanity.

Ecclesiastes 1:10

"Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us."

Building on the previous verse, this verse questions whether anything can genuinely be considered new, asserting that what appears new has always existed in some form. It reinforces the theme that human endeavors and inventions are merely repetitions of what has gone before. The verse highlights the unchanging, cyclical nature of life and human history, emphasizing the fleetingness and vanity of worldly pursuits.

Ecclesiastes 1:11

"There is no remembrance of former things: neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after."

This verse emphasizes the fleeting nature of human memory and legacy. The Preacher reflects on how, over time, the achievements, events, and even people fade from remembrance. Future generations will forget what came before, underscoring the transient impact of human life and accomplishments. It highlights the vanity in striving for lasting fame or worldly recognition, as ultimately, time erases all traces of human existence.

Ecclesiastes 1:12

"I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem."

Here, the Preacher identifies himself as the ruler of Israel residing in Jerusalem. This assertion of

authority and position lends weight to his reflections, showing that he speaks from experience and wisdom gained from his royal perspective. His status as king underscores that even those with the greatest earthly power are subject to life's vanity and the limitations of worldly pursuits.

Ecclesiastes 1:13

"And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith."

This verse reveals the Preacher's personal quest for understanding life's meaning through wisdom. He dedicated himself to exploring all human endeavors under heaven, recognizing that this pursuit is a challenging and exhausting task. He acknowledges that God has permitted and perhaps ordained this relentless search, implying that the human desire for knowledge and purpose is part of divine design, but also a source of toil and frustration.

Ecclesiastes 1:14

"I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

The Preacher has examined all human activities and achievements, and his conclusion is that they are ultimately empty and frustrating. Despite the effort and accomplishments, they fail to bring lasting satisfaction or meaning. The phrase "vanity and vexation of spirit" captures the sense of inner unrest and disappointment that accompanies the pursuit of worldly pursuits without divine purpose.

Ecclesiastes 1:15

"That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered."

This verse speaks to the imperfection of life and human limitations. The crooked or broken cannot be fixed perfectly, and what is lacking cannot be fully quantified or restored. It emphasizes that some aspects of life are inherently flawed or incomplete, reinforcing the idea that human efforts to perfect or understand everything are ultimately futile.

Ecclesiastes 1:16

"I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gained more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge."

The Preacher recounts his own introspection, boasting of his wisdom and experience. He claims to have attained greater understanding than anyone before him in Jerusalem, highlighting that his insights are profound and extensive. This self-reflection sets the stage for his subsequent realization that even great wisdom does not ultimately lead to happiness or meaning.

Ecclesiastes 1:17

"And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit."

He describes his pursuit of both wisdom and folly, seeking to understand the full spectrum of human experience. However, he finds that knowing madness and folly is also burdensome, adding to his inner turmoil. The phrase "vexation of spirit" indicates that the pursuit of knowledge, especially when it includes understanding sin and folly, can lead to frustration and spiritual unrest.

Ecclesiastes 1:18

"For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

This concluding verse summarizes a key insight: the more wisdom and knowledge one acquires, the greater their awareness of life's hardships and vanity. Increased understanding can bring sorrow rather than peace because it reveals the imperfections, injustices, and fleeting nature of life. This verse underscores the paradox that wisdom, while valuable, can also be a source of distress when it exposes life's deeper frustrations.

CHAPTER 2:

Ecclesiastes 2:1

"I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity."

The Preacher begins by describing his deliberate pursuit of pleasure as a means to find meaning. He resolves to test happiness through joy, laughter, and indulgence, thinking that these might bring fulfillment. However, he quickly recognizes that even these pursuits are ultimately empty and fleeting, reaffirming the recurring theme that worldly pleasures are vain and do not provide lasting satisfaction.

Ecclesiastes 2:2

"I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?"

He reflects on his experience with laughter and joy, questioning their value. Laughter, which often symbolizes happiness and merriment, is deemed "mad" or foolish because it doesn't bring true fulfillment. The Preacher acknowledges that transient joy can be superficial and insufficient for addressing the deeper longing for meaning.

Ecclesiastes 2:3

"I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom, and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the children of men, which they should do under heaven all the days of their life."

Here, he describes a complex experiment: trying to find pleasure in wine while maintaining wisdom. His goal was to explore what is genuinely good for humanity during their earthly existence. Despite attempting to balance joy and folly, he recognizes the futility of seeking happiness solely through worldly indulgences, as it does not yield meaningful purpose.

Ecclesiastes 2:4

"I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:"

The Preacher lists his accomplishments, emphasizing his wealth and success. He invested in grand projects—building houses, planting vineyards—aiming to achieve greatness and security. These efforts reflect his desire for lasting legacy and personal fulfillment through material achievements.

Ecclesiastes 2:5

"I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits:"

He continues describing his pursuits in beautifying and cultivating nature—creating gardens and orchards. These endeavors symbolize the pursuit of beauty, enjoyment, and abundance, illustrating his desire to enjoy life's pleasures and pleasures of the senses.

Ecclesiastes 2:6

"I made me pools of water, to water therewith the forest where trees were reared;"

The Preacher's efforts extend to constructing water reservoirs to nurture his gardens and forests. This shows his desire to control and sustain his environment, seeking to create a self-sufficient, pleasurable paradise. It underscores his pursuit of comfort and mastery over nature.

Ecclesiastes 2:7

"I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of cattle and of sheep, above all that were in Jerusalem before me:"

He recounts acquiring servants, livestock, and possessions, reflecting his wealth and status. These material things symbolize abundance and the outward signs of prosperity, which he hoped would bring happiness and security, but also serve as a testament to the vanity of worldly riches.

Ecclesiastes 2:8

"I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasures of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts."

He continues listing his accumulated treasures, including wealth, rare possessions, and entertainment—highlighting his pursuit of pleasure through luxury, music, and entertainment. These pursuits reflect the attempt to find joy in worldly delights, yet they ultimately fall short of providing lasting fulfillment.

Ecclesiastes 2:9

"So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me."

The Preacher acknowledges that his achievements surpassed those of any before him, asserting his greatness and wisdom. Despite his success, he recognizes that these accomplishments did not bring true happiness, reinforcing the idea that worldly greatness is ultimately vain.

Ecclesiastes 2:10

"And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour."

He describes indulging in every desire without restraint, finding joy in his work and possessions. This verse shows his attempt to fill the void with pleasure, declaring that he took pleasure in his labors as his reward. Yet, even this satisfaction is transient, underscoring the theme that worldly pursuits are fleeting and ultimately vain.

Ecclesiastes 2:11

"Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."

The Preacher reflects on his extensive pursuits and accomplishments, examining all the work he had done to achieve success and fulfillment. Despite his efforts, he concludes that everything is vanity—meaningless and empty—and causes inner turmoil ("vexation of spirit"). He recognizes that worldly labor and achievements do not yield lasting profit or satisfaction, reinforcing the recurring theme that earthly pursuits are futile without divine purpose.

Ecclesiastes 2:12

"And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which hath been already done."

He shifts his focus to wisdom, madness, and folly, contemplating their roles in life. The Preacher notes that after him, others will follow and do the same things—repeating the cycle of human actions. This reflection underscores the idea that wisdom and folly are part of the human condition, but ultimately, they do not change the vanity of life under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 2:13

"Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness."

Here, he acknowledges that wisdom is superior to folly, much like light is better than darkness. This recognition highlights the value of wisdom in navigating life, even if it does not fully eliminate the vanity and frustrations inherent in earthly pursuits. Wisdom provides clarity and guidance amid life's fleeting nature.

Ecclesiastes 2:14

"The wise man's eyes are in his head: but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived that one event happeneth to them all."

The Preacher observes that wise people see and understand more clearly, while fools stumble blindly in darkness. Despite this, he realizes that both wise and foolish individuals share the same fate—death—affirming the universality of mortality. This understanding deepens the sense of life's fleetingness and the vanity of worldly pursuits.

Ecclesiastes 2:15

"Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, This also is vanity."

He questions whether wisdom truly offers any advantage, recognizing that death comes to both the wise and the fool. This realization leads him to conclude that his own wisdom, like foolishness, is also vanity—meaningless in the face of life's ultimate end. It emphasizes the futility of earthly wisdom when considering mortality.

Ecclesiastes 2:16

"For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever: seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? as the fool."

The Preacher laments that both wise and foolish individuals will eventually be forgotten. The transient nature of fame and knowledge underscores the vanity of seeking lasting recognition through wisdom alone. He reflects on the inevitability of death erasing all human distinctions, reinforcing life's fleeting nature.

Ecclesiastes 2:17

"Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

He admits to feelings of despair and hatred for life itself, due to the burdens and frustrations of worldly

labor. Despite his accomplishments, he finds that everything under the sun is vanity, leading to inner distress. This verse captures the deep dissatisfaction that can accompany the pursuit of worldly success.

Ecclesiastes 2:18

"Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me."

The Preacher expresses frustration that all his hard work will ultimately be passed on to someone else—possibly an unworthy heir or future generation. This realization diminishes the value of his labor, emphasizing the vanity of accumulating possessions and achievements when they are not truly his to enjoy forever.

Ecclesiastes 2:19

"And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity."

He questions whether the next person will be wise or foolish, acknowledging uncertainty about the future. Despite his wisdom and efforts, he sees that his labor may be directed by someone unworthy or foolish, further highlighting the vanity and unpredictability of life. It underscores the fleeting and uncontrollable nature of worldly pursuits.

Ecclesiastes 2:20

"Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun."

The Preacher admits that he was tempted to despair over his labor, recognizing its ultimate futility. This despair arises from the awareness that his efforts are temporary and that the inheritance of his work may be in vain. It captures the deep internal struggle with the vanity of worldly pursuits and the fleeting nature of human achievement.

Ecclesiastes 2:21

"For there is a man whose labour is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it for his portion."

This verse highlights the reality that even those who work diligently with wisdom, understanding, and fairness may not necessarily enjoy the fruits of their labor. Despite their efforts and virtues, they might have to leave everything behind upon death, passing their possessions and accomplishments to someone else—potentially unworthy or undeserving. It underscores the transient and uncertain nature of worldly success and possessions, reinforcing the vanity of placing hope in material or intellectual achievements.

Ecclesiastes 2:22

"For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun?"

The Preacher questions the ultimate benefit of all human labor and the inner turmoil ("vexation of heart") that accompanies it. Despite the effort invested, what lasting reward does a person gain? This rhetorical question emphasizes the futility of toil, suggesting that, under the sun, all efforts are vain and do not provide true fulfillment or lasting satisfaction.

Ecclesiastes 2:23

"For all his days are sorrow, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity."

He describes the life of continual sorrow and toil, with no peace or rest, implying that even rest is elusive for those focused on worldly pursuits. The constant labor and grief make life seem vain, as true peace and happiness are absent when one's focus is solely on material or earthly gain.

Ecclesiastes 2:24

"There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy the good of his labour. This is from the hand of God."

This verse introduces a note of acceptance and divine sovereignty. The Preacher suggests that enjoying simple pleasures—eating and drinking—are the best we can do in life, acknowledging that these are gifts from God. It emphasizes that, despite life's vanity, appreciating God's provision and finding joy in daily life is a divine gift and a reasonable pursuit.

Ecclesiastes 2:25

"For who can eat, or who can have more, more than I?"

He questions the pursuit of excess or material gain, implying that no one can truly have more or enjoy life more than he has. This humility recognizes that worldly pursuits often lead to dissatisfaction, and ultimately, everyone faces the same limitations and mortality.

Ecclesiastes 2:26

"For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap, and to give to him that is good before him. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit."

The Preacher concludes by contrasting God's gifts: He grants wisdom, knowledge, and joy to those who are good in His sight, while the unrighteous or sinful are burdened with toil and accumulation, only to pass their gains to others. This underscores the divine sovereignty behind life's blessings and

burdens, emphasizing that true fulfillment comes from God's grace, not worldly pursuits. Ultimately, both the enjoyment of blessings and the vanity of toil point back to life's fleeting nature without divine purpose.

CHAPTER 3:

Ecclesiastes 3:1

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:"

This opening verse introduces the central theme of the chapter: life is marked by divine timing. Everything that happens occurs within God's appointed season, emphasizing that human life and events are under God's sovereignty. It reassures believers that there is a divine purpose behind the different seasons of life—times for joy, sorrow, growth, and rest—highlighting God's control over the rhythm of existence.

Ecclesiastes 3:2

"A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;"

This verse acknowledges the natural order of life—there's an appointed time for coming into the world and for leaving it. Similarly, there are seasons for planting and harvesting, symbolizing growth and fruition. It reminds us of life's inevitable cycles, encouraging acceptance of both beginnings and endings as part of God's plan.

Ecclesiastes 3:3

"A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;"

Here, the Preacher recognizes that life includes both destructive and restorative seasons. While some acts may seem harsh ("kill" or "break down"), they are part of God's divine timetable, leading to healing and rebuilding. This verse underscores that even difficult experiences serve a purpose in God's overarching plan for growth and renewal.

Ecclesiastes 3:4

"A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;"

Life encompasses both sorrow and joy, mourning and celebration. This verse highlights the emotional spectrum within God's timing, affirming that experiencing grief is as natural as experiencing happiness. It encourages embracing both seasons, knowing they are part of God's design for human life.

Ecclesiastes 3:5

"A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;"

This verse uses the metaphor of gathering and casting stones to symbolize seasons of separation and drawing together. It also speaks to the appropriate times for intimacy and restraint, illustrating that human relationships and activities are governed by divine timing, and that each season has its proper purpose.

Ecclesiastes 3:6

"A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;"

This verse emphasizes the fluctuating nature of possessions and opportunities—there are seasons of gaining and losing. Recognizing these cycles helps believers accept changes and trusts that God's timing is perfect, whether in gaining or relinquishing.

Ecclesiastes 3:7

"A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;"

This verse highlights the importance of discernment in communication and actions. There is a season for opening wounds ("rend") and for restoring ("sew"). Similarly, knowing when to speak and when to remain silent is crucial, reflecting wisdom in aligning our responses with God's timing.

Ecclesiastes 3:8

"A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace."

Life involves contrasting seasons—times of love and hate, conflict and peace. These extremes are part of God's divine plan, teaching that human experience includes all emotions and circumstances, and trusting God's timing can bring peace amid chaos.

Ecclesiastes 3:9

"What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?"

The Preacher questions whether human effort and labor have any lasting benefit given the changing seasons of life. It invites reflection on the futility of solely relying on worldly work without understanding God's divine timing and purpose, emphasizing the need for divine guidance in our pursuits.

Ecclesiastes 3:10

"I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it."

He concludes that the seasons and efforts of life are part of God's divine testing and purpose. The "travail" or toil is given by God to refine and shape us. This verse encourages believers to view life's seasons, even the difficult ones, as opportunities for growth and spiritual exercise within God's sovereign plan.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

"He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end."

This verse highlights that God has appointed perfect timing for everything, making all things beautiful in their appropriate season. It also acknowledges that God has placed eternity in the human heart—an innate longing for understanding beyond our grasp. Despite this divine imprint, humans are unable to fully comprehend the scope of God's work from start to finish, emphasizing the limit of human knowledge and the divine mystery behind life's workings.

Ecclesiastes 3:12

"I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice and to do good in his life."

The Preacher recognizes that, apart from God, human efforts and pursuits are ultimately vain ("no good"). Instead, he encourages joy and doing good as the best response to life's fleeting nature. Finding joy in God's blessings and living righteously are presented as meaningful pursuits within the limited understanding humans possess.

Ecclesiastes 3:13

"And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God."

This verse emphasizes that enjoying life's simple pleasures—eating and drinking—are gifts from God. It encourages contentment and gratitude for God's provision, recognizing that pleasure and satisfaction are divine blessings meant to be appreciated, even amidst life's vanity.

Ecclesiastes 3:14

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him."

He affirms that God's actions are eternal and unchangeable; nothing can add to or diminish what God has decreed. The purpose of God's eternal work is to inspire reverence and awe in humanity, prompting us to fear and worship Him with respect and humility.

Ecclesiastes 3:15

"That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past."

This verse reflects on the cyclical nature of history and life—what has been will be again, and nothing is truly new under the sun. God demands accountability for all that has occurred, reinforcing the idea that divine justice encompasses all times and events, past and present.

Ecclesiastes 3:16

"And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there."

He observes that even in places of justice and righteousness, wickedness and iniquity exist. This paradox reveals the corruption and moral ambiguity present in the world, emphasizing the fallen state of human society and the challenge of discerning divine justice amid earthly imperfection.

Ecclesiastes 3:17

"I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work."

The Preacher affirms his belief that God will execute perfect justice—judging both righteousness and wickedness. He recognizes that everything occurs in God's appointed time, reinforcing the certainty that divine justice will ultimately prevail according to God's purpose.

Ecclesiastes 3:18

"I said in mine heart, concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts."

He reflects on the mortality of humans, pondering that life's ephemeral nature reveals that humans are no different from animals in the end—destined for death. This realization underscores the futility and mortality inherent in human life, emphasizing our dependence on God's mercy.

Ecclesiastes 3:19

"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath: so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity."

He compares humans and animals, noting that both share mortality and the same breath (life force). Without divine grace, humans are no different from animals in death, which highlights the vanity of human pride and pursuits when viewed solely through mortal eyes.

Ecclesiastes 3:20

"All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."

This verse emphasizes the universal fate of death—regardless of status or virtue, everyone returns to the dust from which they came. It underscores the transient nature of life and the equality of death, reinforcing the vanity of worldly distinctions.

Ecclesiastes 3:21

"Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?"

He questions whether humans truly understand the destination of the spirit—the upward movement of the human soul versus the downward return of animals to the earth. This uncertainty highlights the mystery of the afterlife and the divine sovereignty over spiritual matters.

Ecclesiastes 3:22

"Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?"

He concludes that the best humans can do is find joy in their work and possessions, as these are their portion in life. Since the future is uncertain and no one can see what lies ahead, contentment and gratitude for what God has given are the wisest responses to life's vanity.

CHAPTER 4:

Ecclesiastes 4:1

"So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comfort, and their oppressors had power upon them, but they had no comfort."

The Preacher reflects on the widespread injustice and suffering in the world. He observes that oppressed individuals cry out for justice and relief, yet they find no comfort or hope. Oppressors hold power and dominance, but their cruelty leaves victims without consolation. This highlights the vanity and sorrow present in a fallen world where injustice often prevails.

Ecclesiastes 4:2

"Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive."

He expresses a somber view that the dead seem better off than the living, possibly because they are free from the injustices and struggles faced by the living. This reflects a sense of despair, suggesting that those who have passed away are in a better state than those still enduring suffering and hardship.

Ecclesiastes 4:3

"Yea, better is he than both they: for he hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun."

He further emphasizes that even the dead are better off than those who continue to witness or endure evil. The one who has not seen or experienced the corruption and wickedness remains untainted or unaffected, which is preferable to the pain of witnessing evil firsthand.

Ecclesiastes 4:4

"So I returned, and saw all the labour, and that every man his labour for that he maketh it himself: and that it was all vanity and vexation of spirit."

The Preacher observes that people labor hard to achieve personal gain, but their efforts often lead to frustration and emptiness. The phrase "vanity and vexation of spirit" indicates that much human effort is futile and burdensome, offering little lasting satisfaction.

Ecclesiastes 4:5

"The fool foldeth his arms, and eateth his own flesh."

He describes the foolish who choose laziness or inaction, metaphorically "folding their arms" and suffering from their own neglect or folly. This imagery emphasizes that laziness leads to self-destruction and missed opportunities, contrasting with diligent labor.

Ecclesiastes 4:6

"Better is a handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit."

This verse advocates for contentment over greed or constant striving. Having a modest amount with peace ("quietness") is preferable to having more but suffering stress and unrest. It underscores the value of tranquility and satisfaction in life.

Ecclesiastes 4:7

"Then I returned, and saw vanity under the sun."

The Preacher recognizes that, despite efforts and pursuits, everything remains vanity—meaningless and fleeting—under the sun. This repeated theme underscores the emptiness of worldly pursuits without divine purpose.

Ecclesiastes 4:8

"There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour,

and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail."

He describes a solitary person who works tirelessly for wealth but remains unsatisfied, questioning the purpose of his labor. Despite accumulating riches, he lacks fulfillment or someone to enjoy his gains, making this pursuit vain and burdensome.

Ecclesiastes 4:9

"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour."

This verse highlights the benefits of companionship and partnership. Working together yields better results and provides mutual support, emphasizing that community and cooperation are valuable in life.

Ecclesiastes 4:10

"For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up."

He underscores the importance of companionship, noting that friends or partners can uplift each other in times of trouble. Conversely, those who are alone are vulnerable and lack support when they face hardships, illustrating the practical and emotional benefits of fellowship.

Ecclesiastes 4:11

"Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?"

This verse highlights the practical benefit of companionship: warmth and comfort. It symbolizes the idea that together, people can provide support and security, especially in difficult circumstances. It underscores the value of relationships and community, suggesting that loneliness diminishes comfort and strength, whereas fellowship offers mutual protection and encouragement.

Ecclesiastes 4:12

"And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

He emphasizes the strength found in unity, illustrating that individuals are more resilient when they stand together. The "threefold cord" symbolizes a strong, interconnected relationship—such as friendship, marriage, or community—that is difficult to break. This verse advocates for collaboration and mutual support as vital to overcoming adversity.

Ecclesiastes 4:13

"Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished."

This verse suggests that wisdom and humility are more valuable than wealth or status, even if it means being young and poor. A wise young person has the potential for growth and correction, whereas an old

king who refuses to listen to advice is foolish and beyond redemption. It underscores the importance of humility and teachability at any age.

Ecclesiastes 4:14

"For he cometh out of prison to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor."

He describes how circumstances can change unexpectedly—someone who was oppressed or confined can rise to power, while those born into wealth can fall into poverty. Life's unpredictability means that prosperity and decline are possible for anyone, emphasizing the fleeting and uncertain nature of worldly fortune.

Ecclesiastes 4:15

"I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead."

The Preacher observes that among the living, there is a continual succession—one generation replaces another. The "second child" signifies future successors who will take their place, highlighting the transient nature of rulership and human authority, which are temporary and subject to change.

Ecclesiastes 4:16

"There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit."

He concludes that no matter how many people are born or how many rulers there are, the cycle is endless and ultimately futile. Future generations won't rejoice in the accomplishments of the past, and the continuous succession leads only to vanity and frustration. This reinforces the theme that worldly pursuits and human legacy are fleeting and ultimately empty without divine purpose.

CHAPTER 5:

Ecclesiastes 5:1

"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil."

This verse advises reverence and attentiveness when approaching God's house. It warns against rushing into worship or offering insincere sacrifices without proper reverence or understanding. The "sacrifice of fools" refers to superficial or thoughtless religious rituals, which God disapproves of because they lack genuine faith and devotion. True worship requires humility, listening, and mindfulness.

Ecclesiastes 5:2

"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."

This verse emphasizes the importance of caution and humility in prayer and speech before God. It warns against impulsive or boastful words, urging believers to speak thoughtfully and reverently, recognizing God's sovereignty—He is in heaven, while we are on earth. Silence and humility are virtues in approaching divine matters.

Ecclesiastes 5:3

"For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words."

He highlights that busy, restless minds often produce fleeting, meaningless dreams—symbolic of unimportant or trivial pursuits. Additionally, the fool's verbosity reveals recklessness; excessive words often demonstrate foolishness. The verse advocates thoughtful speech and focus over idle chatter.

Ecclesiastes 5:4

"When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed."

He stresses the seriousness of making vows to God, urging prompt fulfillment. Failing to keep vows shows disrespect and foolishness, as God takes commitments seriously. Trustworthiness and integrity in vows honor God and reflect genuine devotion.

Ecclesiastes 5:5

"Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay."

This verse advises caution in making promises to God; it's better to refrain from vows than to make commitments one cannot keep. It underscores the importance of sincerity and the peril of hypocrisy—making vows lightly and breaking them diminishes spiritual integrity.

Ecclesiastes 5:6

"Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?"

He warns against rash words that lead to sin, emphasizing the need for careful speech. Swearing falsely or blaming others for mistakes can provoke God's anger. Words have power—speaking hastily can have spiritual consequences, so prudence is essential.

Ecclesiastes 5:7

"For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God."

He acknowledges that dreams and numerous words can be empty and meaningless—vanities. The true focus should be reverence and awe of God, which surpasses superficial pursuits or empty chatter. Fear of God is the foundation of genuine wisdom and humility.

Ecclesiastes 5:8

"If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and the violent taking away of justice and right in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they."

This verse recognizes that injustice and oppression exist, but believers should not be surprised, as God's sovereignty oversees all. Those in authority are accountable to a higher power, and ultimate justice belongs to God, who sees and will judge rightly.

Ecclesiastes 5:9

"Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field."

He points out that the resources of the earth are for everyone, including rulers and kings. Even those in power depend on the land and its produce. This reminds us of the interconnectedness of creation and the humility that rulers should have, recognizing their dependence on God's provision.

Ecclesiastes 5:10

"He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity."

The final verse warns that greed and love for wealth are insatiable—they never bring true satisfaction. The pursuit of riches leads only to emptiness, reinforcing the theme that material possessions cannot fulfill the human soul and are ultimately vanity.

Ecclesiastes 5:11

"When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?"

This verse highlights the futility of wealth accumulation, noting that as possessions grow, so do those who consume or envy them. The owner gains little benefit beyond the sight of their riches, which can lead to worry and loss rather than contentment. It underscores the emptiness of materialism when it is pursued solely for possession rather than purpose.

Ecclesiastes 5:12

"The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep."

He contrasts the peaceful rest of a hardworking person with the restless anxiety of the wealthy who worry about losing their riches. True contentment is found in diligent labor and simple living, whereas wealth can breed stress and insecurity, disrupting peace of mind.

Ecclesiastes 5:13

"There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owner thereof to his hurt."

The Preacher observes that hoarding wealth can be harmful rather than beneficial. Excessive greed or the desire to accumulate wealth can lead to negative consequences, such as loss, stress, or missed opportunities for generosity and joy. Wealth kept for selfish reasons can ultimately be destructive.

Ecclesiastes 5:14

"But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand."

He warns that wealth can be lost through misfortune or evil circumstances, leaving heirs with nothing. Despite efforts to accumulate riches, they can vanish unexpectedly, emphasizing life's unpredictability and the vanity of relying solely on material wealth.

Ecclesiastes 5:15

"As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand."

This verse reminds us of life's transient nature—just as we enter the world with nothing, we leave with nothing. Material possessions are temporary, and labor for worldly gains does not follow us beyond death, reinforcing the futility of placing ultimate hope in riches.

Ecclesiastes 5:16

"And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?"

He emphasizes that life and death are equalizing, and all worldly labor is like chasing after the wind—futile and insubstantial. The vain pursuit of material wealth and success offers no lasting benefit, making it a "sore evil."

Ecclesiastes 5:17

"All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness."

Despite accumulating riches, many live in hardship and sorrow—eating "in darkness" symbolizes despair and ignorance. Wealth without purpose can lead to spiritual emptiness, suffering, and inner turmoil, especially when health and happiness are compromised.

Ecclesiastes 5:18

"Behold that which I have observed: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion."

The Preacher recognizes that enjoying the simple blessings of life—like food and drink—is a gift from God. Accepting and appreciating what God provides is wise, and finding contentment in daily blessings is part of God's plan for life.

Ecclesiastes 5:19

"Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour, this is the gift of God."

He affirms that wealth and the ability to enjoy it are divine gifts. When God blesses with prosperity, and one finds joy in labor and provision, it becomes a genuine blessing. Gratitude and contentment in these blessings are signs of God's grace.

Ecclesiastes 5:20

"For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart."

Finally, he concludes that a person who trusts in God's gifts and finds joy in life will not be troubled by the fleeting nature of worldly riches or hardships. God's presence and blessing bring inner peace, making life's transient struggles less burdensome, and filling the heart with joy.

CHAPTER 6:

Ecclesiastes 6:1

"There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men:"

The Preacher introduces a troubling observation: that there exists a widespread, troubling evil among humanity. This "evil" refers to the fleeting nature of life and the vanity that often accompanies human pursuits. It sets the tone for the reflection that follows—highlighting life's inherent frustrations and the often unfair distribution of blessings.

Ecclesiastes 6:2

"A man to whom God giveth riches, and wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul, of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease."

This verse describes a paradox: a person blessed with riches, honor, and desires fulfilled, but unable to enjoy these blessings because someone else consumes them. It illustrates the vanity and injustice that can exist under the sun—wealth and success are not always enjoyed by the one who earned them, leading to frustration and a sense of futility, which the Preacher calls an "evil disease."

Ecclesiastes 6:3

"If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial: I say, that an untimely birth is better than he."

He presents a hypothetical: a man with many descendants and long life, yet lacking fulfillment or happiness. Such a person is compared to an "untimely birth"—a life unfulfilled or without benefit—suggesting that even a long, prosperous life can be meaningless if it lacks true joy and purpose.

Ecclesiastes 6:4

"For he cometh in vain, and departeth in darkness, and his name is covered with darkness."

The person described enters and leaves life in obscurity, with no lasting legacy or recognition. Their name is forgotten, emphasizing the transient nature of worldly fame and possessions. This underscores the vanity of striving for fame or material success, which ultimately leads nowhere.

Ecclesiastes 6:5

"Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other."

Despite a long life or wealth, the person who lacks fulfillment has not truly experienced life ("seen the sun" or known anything meaningful). Interestingly, they are said to have more rest—perhaps a peaceful ignorance—than the restless pursuit of worldly gains, but it is a shallow kind of peace lacking true purpose.

Ecclesiastes 6:6

"Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?"

Even an extraordinarily long life offers no guarantee of happiness or fulfillment, as the Preacher emphasizes life's fleeting nature. Ultimately, everyone shares the same fate—death ("go to one place")—regardless of lifespan or wealth, reinforcing life's vanity.

Ecclesiastes 6:7

"All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled."

Human effort is driven by basic needs—food, comfort, and pleasure—but even these desires are insatiable. No matter how much one works, the appetite remains unfulfilled, illustrating the endless cycle of pursuit and dissatisfaction.

Ecclesiastes 6:8

"For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that he dependeth on the rich?"

He questions the value of wisdom and poverty in comparison to foolishness and wealth. Wisdom and poverty do not necessarily bring happiness or security, and the poor often rely on the rich, highlighting the futility and inequality of worldly status and possessions.

Ecclesiastes 6:9

"Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit."

Contentment with what one has ("the sight of the eyes") is better than constantly longing for more ("wandering of the desire"). The restless pursuit of desires leads to frustration and spiritual unrest, emphasizing the importance of gratitude and contentment.

Ecclesiastes 6:10

"That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he."

He concludes that everything that exists or has happened is recognized and attributed to human effort, but humans cannot contend with God's sovereignty ("Him that is mightier than he"). This underscores the futility of opposing God's will and the ultimate supremacy of divine authority over human pursuits.

Ecclesiastes 6:11

"Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better?"

This verse reflects on the abundance of pursuits and possessions that often lead to vanity—meaningless or fleeting things. Despite acquiring many worldly things, the question arises: what real benefit does man gain? It underscores the theme that accumulating wealth, knowledge, or status does not necessarily improve one's true well-being or eternal significance. The proliferation of vanity only emphasizes the futility of worldly pursuits.

Ecclesiastes 6:12

"For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? For who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?"

The Preacher acknowledges the uncertainty of life's purpose and the difficulty in knowing what is truly beneficial for humanity. Life is described as a "vain shadow," fleeting and insubstantial, like a fleeting shadow that disappears. Moreover, no one can predict what the future holds after one's lifetime. This verse emphasizes human limitations in understanding God's plan and the transient nature of life, reinforcing that true security and purpose are found only in divine sovereignty.

CHAPTER 7:

Ecclesiastes 7:1

"A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth."

This verse highlights the value of a good reputation over material possessions ("precious ointment"). It also suggests that the day of death, often seen as a sad event, can be viewed as better than the day of birth because it signifies the completion of a life well-lived, with a legacy left behind. The emphasis is on integrity and the lasting impact of one's character rather than fleeting pleasures.

Ecclesiastes 7:2

"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart."

He advises that attending funerals offers more valuable lessons than celebrations, as death is the ultimate destiny for everyone. Mourning reminds us of life's brevity and the importance of living wisely. It encourages humility and reflection, urging the living to heed the lessons that come from contemplating mortality.

Ecclesiastes 7:3

"Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better."

This verse suggests that experiencing sorrow can be more beneficial than constant happiness because it leads to personal growth and humility. Sadness prompts reflection and can improve the heart, leading to greater wisdom and spiritual maturity, contrasting superficial joy with meaningful inner development.

Ecclesiastes 7:4

"The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth."

The wise prioritize reflection, humility, and spiritual growth, which are often found in times of mourning. Conversely, fools focus on trivial pleasures ("mirth") and avoid contemplating life's deeper truths. The verse emphasizes that true wisdom involves recognizing life's serious realities.

Ecclesiastes 7:5

"It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools."

He underscores the importance of correction and learning from wise counsel over superficial entertainment or foolish talk. Reproof from wise people leads to growth and improvement, while listening to foolishness offers no real benefit and can hinder personal development.

Ecclesiastes 7:6

"For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of fools: this also is vanity."

This vivid imagery compares foolish laughter to the crackling of dry thorns—short-lived, noisy, and ultimately pointless. It emphasizes that superficial laughter and frivolity are fleeting and empty, adding to the theme that worldly pursuits and distractions are vanities.

Ecclesiastes 7:7

"Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart."

He notes that injustice and corruption—oppression—can frustrate even the wisest, causing anger or madness. Additionally, bribes or gifts can corrupt judgment and integrity, undermining true wisdom and leading to spiritual and moral decay.

Ecclesiastes 7:8

"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit."

This verse emphasizes that the conclusion or outcome of a situation is more important than its start. Patience and endurance are virtuous qualities, superior to pride, which can lead to haste and error. Endurance leads to better results and spiritual maturity.

Ecclesiastes 7:9

"Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools."

He warns against quick temper and rash anger, which are characteristic of foolishness. Patience and self-control are virtues that prevent destructive actions and promote peace—qualities that are vital for wise living.

Ecclesiastes 7:10

"Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this."

He advises against romanticizing the past or longing for earlier times without understanding their realities. Such sentiments are unwise, as they can foster discontentment. Wisdom involves accepting the present and seeking God's guidance rather than dwelling on the past with nostalgia.

Ecclesiastes 7:11

"Wisdom is good with an inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that see the sun."

This verse highlights the value of wisdom as a beneficial complement to material wealth. While inheritance provides security, wisdom enhances its usefulness, offering insight and guidance for living wisely. Those who possess wisdom can navigate life's challenges more effectively, gaining true profit and understanding while they are alive ("see the sun").

Ecclesiastes 7:12

"For wisdom is a defense, and money is a defense: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it."

He emphasizes that both wisdom and wealth serve as defenses against adversity, but wisdom is superior because it sustains and enriches life itself. Wisdom offers spiritual protection and enables a person to live meaningfully, whereas wealth alone cannot provide true life or fulfillment.

Ecclesiastes 7:13

"Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked?"

He urges reflection on God's sovereignty—His actions are perfect, and no human can alter what God has designed. Recognizing God's ultimate authority helps believers accept life's difficulties and uncertainties, trusting that God's plan is just, even when things seem "crooked" or confusing.

Ecclesiastes 7:14

"In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him."

This verse encourages joy during times of blessing, but also urges reflection and humility during hardships. Both prosperity and adversity are part of God's divine ordering—intended to humble humans and remind them that their ultimate purpose is found in dependence on God, not in worldly circumstances.

Ecclesiastes 7:15

"All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a righteous man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness."

He laments the apparent unfairness of life—righteous people sometimes suffer, and wicked people often prosper. This observation highlights life's vanity and the inscrutable nature of divine justice, which can be difficult to understand from a human perspective.

Ecclesiastes 7:16

"Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?"

He warns against becoming self-righteous or overly proud of one's wisdom. Excessive pride or self-righteousness can lead to spiritual harm, creating a trap of arrogance or despair. Humility is essential in maintaining a proper relationship with God.

Ecclesiastes 7:17

"Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?"

Similarly, he cautions against excessive wickedness, which can shorten life through judgment or self-destruction. A balanced life seeks righteousness without falling into complacency or reckless behavior, acknowledging God's sovereignty over life and death.

Ecclesiastes 7:18

"It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thy hand; for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all."

He encourages holding onto the balance of fearing God—embracing righteousness without excessive pride or wickedness. Those who genuinely fear God will ultimately be justified and preserved through His grace, rising above life's contradictions.

Ecclesiastes 7:19

"Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city."

Wisdom provides incomparable strength and security, even more than a powerful army. A wise person's insight and discernment protect and empower them in ways that physical strength cannot match, emphasizing the supreme value of divine wisdom.

Ecclesiastes 7:20

"For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."

He acknowledges the universal nature of human imperfection—no one is completely righteous or free from sin. This humility reminds believers that everyone needs God's mercy and grace, and it discourages self-righteousness or judgment of others.

Ecclesiastes 7:21

"Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee:"

This verse advises caution in paying attention to every word spoken about us, especially when it involves criticism or gossip. Even if others curse or speak ill of us, we should not be overly concerned or reactive, recognizing that such words are often spoken out of ignorance or malice. Maintaining humility and patience helps prevent bitterness or unnecessary offense.

Ecclesiastes 7:22

"For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others."

He reminds us that we are often guilty of the same faults we criticize in others. Our own conscience bears witness that we, too, have spoken harshly or unjustly. This realization encourages humility, self-awareness, and forgiveness, helping us avoid judgment and extend grace to others.

Ecclesiastes 7:23

"All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me."

The Preacher admits that he diligently sought understanding and wisdom but found it elusive. Despite his efforts, true wisdom remained beyond his grasp. This highlights the limitations of human understanding and the necessity of relying on God's wisdom rather than solely on personal insight.

Ecclesiastes 7:24

"That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?"

He reflects on the profound mysteries of life and God's ways—things that are beyond human comprehension. The deeper and more distant the truth, the more difficult it is to fully understand. This encourages humility and trust in God's sovereignty, recognizing that divine wisdom surpasses human knowledge.

Ecclesiastes 7:25

"I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, and the madness of foolishness."

He describes his earnest pursuit of understanding—seeking wisdom, reason, and insight into human folly and foolishness. His desire was to grasp the nature of evil and madness, illustrating the human drive for knowledge and the struggle to comprehend life's complexities.

Ecclesiastes 7:26

"And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her."

He presents a metaphor describing the danger of temptation and wicked influence, comparing a deceptive woman to a trap or snare more bitter than death. Those who seek to please God can avoid such snares, but sinners risk being ensnared and destroyed by evil influences.

Ecclesiastes 7:27

"Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one by one, to find out the account:"

He indicates that he has carefully examined and counted (metaphorically) all things to understand their true nature. His methodical search underscores the human desire for understanding life's mysteries and the difficulty of gaining definitive answers.

Ecclesiastes 7:28

"Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found."

Despite his diligent search, he admits that genuine righteousness or wisdom is rare; he has found only one truly righteous man among a thousand, but not a single woman. This reflects his perception of the rarity of true virtue and integrity in human society, though it may also reflect cultural biases of his time.

Ecclesiastes 7:29

"Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."

He concludes that God's original creation of mankind was righteous and upright. However, humans have deviated by devising numerous schemes and inventions—ways to rebel or escape God's design—highlighting human tendency toward sin and deviation from God's intended purpose.

CHAPTER 8:

Ecclesiastes 8:1

"Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed."

This verse highlights the illuminating power of wisdom. A wise person's understanding and insight can brighten their appearance and confidence, making them stand out positively. Wisdom brings clarity and assurance, transforming how one presents oneself and perceives life's challenges, giving a sense of peace and boldness.

Ecclesiastes 8:2

"I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God."

He advises obedience to authority—specifically to the king—because respecting rulers and their commands aligns with the divine order and the oaths we take before God. Maintaining respect for authority is part of living wisely and in harmony with divine principles.

Ecclesiastes 8:3

"Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him."

This verse warns against rushing to leave or oppose authority prematurely, as the ruler's will is ultimately sovereign. Caution and patience are essential because the ruler acts according to their own pleasure, which may have divine or worldly consequences.

Ecclesiastes 8:4

"Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?"

He emphasizes the authority and power of rulers—what they decree holds weight, and questioning their actions is often futile. Recognizing this authority is part of understanding life's realities and exercising wisdom in navigating societal structures.

Ecclesiastes 8:5

"Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment."

Obedience to divine and earthly commandments leads to safety and peace. A wise person discerns the right timing and proper judgment in actions, understanding that wisdom involves knowing when and how to act appropriately.

Ecclesiastes 8:6

"Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him."

He recognizes that life is governed by divine timing and justice, but humans often struggle because

they lack understanding of these divine plans. This disconnect leads to suffering and frustration, highlighting mankind's limited perspective.

Ecclesiastes 8:7

"For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?"

Humans are unaware of the future and cannot predict God's timing or plans. This uncertainty causes anxiety and helplessness, emphasizing the importance of trusting in God's sovereignty rather than trying to control or understand everything.

Ecclesiastes 8:8

"There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it."

He states that no one can control their life or prevent death—death is inevitable and beyond human power. Wickedness cannot save or deliver anyone at the end, reminding us of life's ultimate vulnerability and the futility of relying solely on wickedness or worldly power.

Ecclesiastes 8:9

"All this have I seen, and applied my heart to every work that is done under the sun: there is a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt."

He reflects on the injustices and inequalities of human authority—sometimes rulers oppress others for their own gain. Recognizing this reality helps us understand the flawed nature of worldly power and the importance of trusting God's justice.

Ecclesiastes 8:10

"And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city: this also is vanity."

He observes that wicked people, despite their evil deeds, are sometimes honored in death and then quickly forgotten, which illustrates the vanity of worldly reputation and success. Ultimately, human greatness is fleeting, and only what is rooted in divine righteousness endures.

Ecclesiastes 8:11

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

This verse recognizes that when justice is delayed, people's hearts become more inclined toward wrongdoing. The lack of immediate consequences for evil emboldens individuals to continue sinning,

as they perceive no repercussions. It underscores the importance of divine justice, which ultimately will be executed, but human impatience often leads to complacency or continued rebellion.

Ecclesiastes 8:12

"Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him."

Despite observing that sinners may prosper and live long, the Preacher affirms his faith that those who reverence God are ultimately in a better position. True security and blessing come from fearing and honoring God, regardless of outward appearances or temporary success of the wicked.

Ecclesiastes 8:13

"But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God."

He warns that the wicked will not truly succeed in the long run—despite their apparent prosperity, their days are fleeting ("as a shadow") because they do not have reverence for God. Their transient success is only temporary, emphasizing divine justice and the importance of fearing God.

Ecclesiastes 8:14

"There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity."

He observes the perplexing reality that innocent people suffer while wicked people sometimes prosper, and vice versa. This apparent injustice is a vanity—meaningless and frustrating—highlighting life's unpredictability and the inscrutable justice of God.

Ecclesiastes 8:15

"Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun."

He encourages enjoying life's simple pleasures—food, drink, and merriment—because these are blessings from God and serve as the best use of one's earthly labor. Such contentment is a divine gift amid life's uncertainties.

Ecclesiastes 8:16

"When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: (for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes:)"

He describes his earnest pursuit of understanding the complexities of life and human activity. Despite intense effort, he recognizes the restless nature of life—people are constantly busy, yet their work and struggles seem endless, with no true rest or peace.

Ecclesiastes 8:17

"Then I beheld all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it: yea, farther, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it."

He concludes that God's ways and works are ultimately beyond human comprehension. No matter how hard one seeks understanding, divine mysteries remain hidden. This humbling truth encourages trust in God's sovereignty rather than exhaustive human attempts to grasp His plans.

CHAPTER 9:

Ecclesiastes 9:1

"For all this I considered in my heart, even to declare all this: that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them."

The Preacher reflects on the sovereignty of God over human affairs, acknowledging that both the righteous and the wise are ultimately in God's control. Since God's plans are beyond human knowledge, people cannot always discern whether they are experiencing love or hatred, blessing or hardship. This calls for humility and trust in God's divine justice and wisdom.

Ecclesiastes 9:2

"All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath."

He emphasizes the universality of death and life's uncertainties—regardless of morality, virtue, or religious observance, everyone shares the same fate. This stark reality underscores life's fleeting and equalizing nature, reminding us that worldly distinctions do not guarantee safety or favor.

Ecclesiastes 9:3

"This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead."

He points out the troubling fact that death is the common destiny for all, and that human hearts are often filled with evil and madness during life. This duality of human nature—corruption and folly—contributes to life's vanity and the need for divine mercy.

Ecclesiastes 9:4

"For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion."

He offers a note of hope, stating that as long as one is alive, there is still a chance for change and salvation. Even the weakest creature (a dog) is better than a mighty but dead lion, emphasizing the importance of life and the potential for God's grace while we still breathe.

Ecclesiastes 9:5

"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten."

He explains that the living are aware of mortality, while the dead are oblivious of their state and have no further reward or remembrance. This underscores the transient nature of life and the importance of living wisely with an awareness of mortality.

Ecclesiastes 9:6

"Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in any thing that is done under the sun."

The dead have no consciousness or influence—they no longer experience love, hate, or envy, and they do not partake in earthly affairs. This highlights the finality of death and the cessation of all human passions and pursuits.

Ecclesiastes 9:7

"Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works."

He encourages enjoying life's simple pleasures—food and drink—with joy and gratitude, recognizing that God accepts and blesses our efforts. Life is a gift from God, meant to be appreciated with a joyful heart.

Ecclesiastes 9:8

"Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment."

This verse advocates for maintaining dignity and joy in life—symbolized by clean, white garments and good ointment—reminding us to present ourselves well and cherish the blessing of life with positivity.

Ecclesiastes 9:9

"Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun."

He exhorts believers to find joy and contentment in their marriage and relationships, recognizing these as gifts from God. Marriage is part of our earthly portion, meant to bring happiness amid life's vanity.

Ecclesiastes 9:10

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

He emphasizes diligent effort in everything we undertake, as death is the end—there is no opportunity for work or learning in the afterlife. Living with purpose and vigor honors God and makes the most of our earthly existence.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

"I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all."

He notes that success is often determined by circumstances beyond human control—speed, strength, wisdom, or skill do not guarantee victory. "Time and chance" influence all aspects of life, emphasizing the role of divine sovereignty.

Ecclesiastes 9:12

"For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared at an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them."

He illustrates life's unpredictability—people are unaware of when misfortune or death will strike, much like fish or birds caught unexpectedly. This reinforces the need for vigilance and dependence on God's mercy.

Ecclesiastes 9:13

"This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me:"

He introduces a story or example of wisdom he has observed, implying that practical wisdom can be valuable and impactful, even in the face of life's uncertainties.

Ecclesiastes 9:14

"There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it:"

He recounts a story illustrating how a small city was under attack by a powerful king, symbolizing how even the humble or weak can face overwhelming opposition, highlighting the unpredictability of worldly events.

Ecclesiastes 9:15

"Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man."

Despite his wisdom saving the city, the poor man was forgotten. This underscores the often temporary recognition of human achievement and the fleeting nature of worldly fame or gratitude.

Ecclesiastes 9:16

"Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the wisdom of the poor is despised, and his words are not heard."

He recognizes that wisdom surpasses brute strength, but the wise, especially the poor, are often ignored or undervalued. Wisdom's power is real but not always appreciated by society.

Ecclesiastes 9:17

"The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools."

He notes that wise and gentle speech is more effective and influential than loud, foolish commands. Wisdom speaks softly, but with greater lasting impact.

Ecclesiastes 9:18

"Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good."

He concludes that wisdom provides greater security than military might, but a single sinner's actions can undo much good. This highlights the destructive power of sin and the importance of living wisely.

CHAPTER 10:

Ecclesiastes 10:1

"Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour."

This verse uses the imagery of dead flies contaminating fragrant ointment to illustrate how small faults or foolishness can tarnish a person's reputation, even if they are generally wise and honorable. A single act of folly can undo the good reputation built over years, emphasizing the importance of humility and vigilance against small sins that can have big consequences.

Ecclesiastes 10:2

"A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left."

He contrasts the wisdom and foolishness of the heart, suggesting that a wise person's heart is aligned with good judgment ("at his right hand"), while a fool's heart is misguided or left in error ("at his left"). This symbolizes the difference in direction and mindset, guiding wise living versus foolishness.

Ecclesiastes 10:3

"Yea, also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool."

When a fool acts foolishly in public, it reveals their lack of wisdom. Their behavior exposes their folly to others, making it clear to everyone. This underscores that foolishness often becomes evident through actions, not just words.

Ecclesiastes 10:4

"If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for reason turneth away great offences."

He advises patience and humility if a ruler or authority becomes angry with you. Responding with anger or rebellion only worsens the situation. Instead, patience and reason can diffuse offenses and restore peace, reflecting wisdom in handling authority figures.

Ecclesiastes 10:5

"There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler:"

He acknowledges that corruption and injustice can originate from those in authority—rulers making wrong or foolish decisions. Recognizing this reality encourages humility and patience, understanding that bad leadership is part of life's fallen state.

Ecclesiastes 10:6

"Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low places."

This verse highlights the paradox of societal values—foolishness can sometimes be exalted, while true wisdom and virtue are overlooked or undervalued. It points to the injustice and absurdity of worldly rankings.

Ecclesiastes 10:7

"I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth."

He observes the reversal of expectations—servants riding on horses (symbolizing power), while princes walk on foot (symbolizing humility or loss of status). This highlights life's unpredictability and the fleeting nature of worldly status.

Ecclesiastes 10:8

"He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him."

He warns of the dangers of malicious or foolish actions—those who plot harm or break boundaries are likely to suffer harm themselves. It emphasizes the principle of retribution and the foolishness of wicked schemes.

Ecclesiastes 10:9

"Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby."

This verse continues the theme of consequences—those who undertake difficult or dangerous work without caution risk injury. It underscores the importance of prudence and careful planning in all endeavors.

Ecclesiastes 10:10

"If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct."

He concludes with a practical lesson: dull tools require more effort, but wisdom enables proper guidance and efficiency. Wisdom is valuable because it helps us work smarter, not harder, emphasizing the importance of preparation and discernment.

Ecclesiastes 10:11

"The serpent charmers that is a wise master of lies: but they shall be no more help than the cattle; for they shall be destroyed both they and their masters."

This verse criticizes those who deceive with charm and lies, likening them to skilled snake charmers—masters of trickery. Despite their craftiness, their influence is ultimately futile, and they will face destruction alongside those who rely on their deception. It warns against trusting false wisdom or cunning that leads away from truth.

Ecclesiastes 10:12

"The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself."

Wise words are gentle, gracious, and beneficial, reflecting wisdom's ability to edify and bring peace. In contrast, foolish speech is destructive, ultimately damaging the speaker himself. This emphasizes the power of words and the importance of speaking wisely.

Ecclesiastes 10:13

"The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness."

He describes a fool's speech as starting in folly and ending in chaos or madness. Foolish words lack sound judgment from the outset and lead to destructive consequences, illustrating the danger of heedless speech.

Ecclesiastes 10:14

"A fool also is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him?"

Fools tend to talk excessively and without understanding. They lack insight into future events, and their words reveal their ignorance. No one can predict what will happen after them, highlighting the futility of boastful or reckless speech.

Ecclesiastes 10:15

"The labour of the foolish wearied every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city."

Foolish workers are exhausted because they lack direction or understanding of their tasks. Their ignorance about navigating life's responsibilities leads to unnecessary fatigue and frustration, symbolizing the importance of wisdom and guidance.

Ecclesiastes 10:16

"Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning."

This verse condemns a nation whose leadership is immature or inept, and where leaders indulge excessively early in the day. Such a situation leads to instability and decline, emphasizing the importance of wise, mature governance.

Ecclesiastes 10:17

"Blessed art thou, O land, when thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!"

He praises a well-ordered nation where leaders eat appropriately for nourishment and strength, not for drunkenness or excess. Wise leadership sustains the country's stability and prosperity.

Ecclesiastes 10:18

"By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through."

Neglect and laziness cause deterioration—whether of physical buildings or spiritual well-being. Idle hands and procrastination lead to decay, highlighting the value of diligence and active stewardship.

Ecclesiastes 10:19

"A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all things."

He acknowledges that food, drink, and merriment bring joy, but ultimately, money is the practical solution to many problems. This verse balances enjoyment of life with the acknowledgment of money's importance in addressing life's needs.

Ecclesiastes 10:20

"Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter."

He advises against speaking ill of authority or the wealthy—even in private—because words can easily be overheard or spread. Gossip and curses have consequences, and divine justice will reveal all truths, so prudence is essential.

CHAPTER 11:

Ecclesiastes 11:1

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

This verse encourages acts of generosity and kindness, symbolized by "casting bread upon the waters." The idea is that doing good without immediate expectation can yield blessings over time. It teaches

patience and faith that acts of charity or investment will eventually bring returns, emphasizing trust in God's timing.

Ecclesiastes 11:2

"Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth."

He advises diversifying efforts and resources, because the future is uncertain. By sharing with many, one protects against unforeseen hardships. This promotes prudent stewardship, trusting that unpredictable troubles may come upon the earth, and preparedness is wise.

Ecclesiastes 11:3

"If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be."

This verse illustrates inevitability—natural events and outcomes are determined by divine order or nature. The fall of a tree or the release of rain happens according to established laws, reminding us that some things are beyond human control and should be accepted with humility.

Ecclesiastes 11:4

"He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap."

Those who are overly cautious or hesitant, waiting for perfect conditions, will miss opportunities. Patience is good, but excessive caution can lead to inaction and missed blessings. This verse encourages a balanced approach—trusting God while acting responsibly.

Ecclesiastes 11:5

"As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all."

He highlights human ignorance about divine mysteries, comparing it to the unknown process of life developing in the womb. This humility about God's sovereignty encourages us to trust His unseen works and timing, acknowledging that human understanding is limited.

Ecclesiastes 11:6

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

He advocates diligent effort in all endeavors, trusting that some efforts will succeed even if we cannot

predict which. Consistent work and perseverance are virtues, and trusting God's blessing in due time is key.

Ecclesiastes 11:7

"Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun:"

He celebrates the beauty and joy of life, emphasizing that appreciating God's creation and the light of day brings happiness. Life's simple pleasures are gifts from God, to be enjoyed with gratitude.

Ecclesiastes 11:8

"But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many."

He reminds us that long life includes periods of hardship ("days of darkness"). While joy is to be embraced, we must also remember life's inevitable sorrows, maintaining a balanced perspective rooted in faith.

Ecclesiastes 11:9

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

He encourages young people to enjoy their youth and pursue happiness, but with awareness that they will be held accountable before God. Joy should be tempered with reverence and responsibility.

Ecclesiastes 11:10

"Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity."

He concludes by urging the young to forsake sorrow and evil, recognizing that youth and childhood are fleeting and ultimately insubstantial ("vanity"). Living righteously now prepares one for the future, acknowledging life's transient nature.

Ecclesiastes 12:1

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

This verse urges young people to prioritize their relationship with God early in life. The "evil days" refer to old age and life's hardships, which can diminish our ability to serve and honor God. Early

devotion ensures that when life's difficulties come, our faith remains strong and centered on the Creator.

Ecclesiastes 12:2

"While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:"

He describes a time of clarity and vitality—when life is bright and unclouded. This symbolizes the prime of life when one is able to serve God fully, before the difficulties and darkness of aging set in. It emphasizes the importance of seizing the present moment for spiritual devotion.

Ecclesiastes 12:3

"In the days when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,"

He vividly depicts aging: trembling hands, weakening strength, and diminished senses. These physical declines remind us of life's fleeting nature and the importance of preparing spiritually before our strength wanes.

Ecclesiastes 12:4

"And the doors shall be shut in the street, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low;"

As age progresses, activity slows, and even the simple pleasures—music, social interactions—become muted or diminished. This reflects the decline of vitality and the quieting of life's joyful noise, urging us to cherish time while we are still active.

Ecclesiastes 12:5

"Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way; and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail:"

He describes growing fears, physical fragility, and loss of desire in old age. The almond tree's whiteness symbolizes aging, and the burdens of weakness and fear serve as reminders to live with purpose before these declines fully set in.

Ecclesiastes 12:6

"Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken at the cistern."

This poetic imagery depicts the final moments of life—death—when the "silver cord" (the soul or life force) is broken. It emphasizes the certainty of death and the importance of living wisely and faithfully before that inevitable event.

Ecclesiastes 12:7

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."
He affirms the biblical view of death: the body returns to dust, and the soul returns to God. This reminds us of our mortality and the divine origin of life, encouraging us to live with eternal perspective.

Ecclesiastes 12:8

"Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity."
He repeats the refrain that life under the sun is fleeting and meaningless without divine purpose. Recognizing life's vanity leads us to seek lasting value in our relationship with God.

Ecclesiastes 12:9

"And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs."
The Preacher highlights his role as a wise teacher, diligently imparting knowledge and wisdom to others. This underscores the importance of passing on divine truth for the benefit of future generations.

Ecclesiastes 12:10

"The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth."
He emphasizes his pursuit of truthful and meaningful words—truth that is upright and acceptable—encouraging us to value honesty and integrity in teaching and living.

Ecclesiastes 12:11

"The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd."
He describes wise words as tools for guiding and stabilizing, like goads and nails. These divine words are given by the "one shepherd" (God), meant to correct and establish truth in the community.

Ecclesiastes 12:12

"And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh."

He warns against overindulgence in studying or writing, which can lead to 疲惫 and distraction from true wisdom. Balance and humility are essential in seeking understanding.

Ecclesiastes 12:13

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

He summarizes life's purpose: reverence for God and obedience to His commandments. Living with this focus is the foundation of true fulfillment and duty.

Ecclesiastes 12:14

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

He reminds us that God will judge all our actions, including hidden deeds. Living with accountability in mind should motivate us to pursue righteousness.

CONCLUSION:

Ecclesiastes Chapter 1:

The chapter concludes that all human pursuits—wisdom, pleasure, and toil—are ultimately vanity and fleeting under the sun. Despite the pursuit of knowledge and happiness, life's transient nature reveals the futility of relying solely on worldly efforts without divine perspective.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 2:

The preacher finds that pleasure, wealth, and achievements bring temporary satisfaction but fail to provide lasting fulfillment. Recognizing the emptiness of worldly gains, he emphasizes that fearing and serving God is the true purpose of life, as only divine reverence offers lasting meaning.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 3:

The chapter highlights that there is a time for everything under heaven—seasons of joy, sorrow, and rest—demonstrating God's sovereign control over the cycles of life. Embracing divine timing helps us accept life's changes and trust in God's perfect plan.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 4:

He observes the oppression, injustice, and the loneliness that afflict humanity, concluding that striving for meaningful relationships and justice, while ultimately insufficient alone, are vital pursuits in the human experience, prompting reliance on divine wisdom.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 5:

The chapter warns against vain religious rituals and careless speech before God, urging sincerity, humility, and reverence. True worship involves heartfelt devotion rather than mere outward appearances or empty words.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 6:

He reflects on the vanity of wealth and long life without contentment or spiritual fulfillment, emphasizing that true satisfaction comes from appreciating God's gifts and fearing Him, rather than accumulating possessions or longevity.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 7:

The preacher advocates wisdom through humility, patience, and accepting life's paradoxes. Recognizing life's vanity and trusting divine justice helps believers navigate hardships with faith and humility.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 8:

He notes the unpredictability of life and the importance of respecting authority, trusting God's sovereignty, and living wisely amid life's uncertainties, reminding us that divine justice and divine mysteries are beyond human understanding.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 9:

The chapter concludes that life is unpredictable, and death comes to all, regardless of righteousness or wickedness. Therefore, living joyfully, diligently, and with reverence for God is essential, making the most of our fleeting earthly existence.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 10:

He emphasizes the importance of wisdom in leadership, speech, and work, warning against folly and laziness. Wise living and careful speech are vital for stability and success in a transient world.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 11:

The preacher encourages generous, diligent, and optimistic living, trusting God's sovereignty. He reminds us to seize opportunities, live joyfully, and remember life's fleeting nature, all while trusting divine timing and provision.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 12:

The concluding chapter urges remembering God early in life, living righteously, and preparing for death, which is inevitable. The ultimate goal is to fear God and keep His commandments, for divine judgment will bring everything to light.

Dr. Paul Crawford is more than just a Christian Author; His books are a source of inspiration and guidance on your spiritual journey. His books are created with a deep sense of faith and a desire to uplift and inspire all who read.

