

## the POINT

WEEK 2: September 17, 2017	Ecclesiastes 1:12 – 2:11	Gain
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QUESTION: What does a man gain for all his toil under the sun?

### The Teacher's Credentials:

- Position: king
- Prosperity: wealthy
- Privilege: unhindered opportunity

<p><b>Ecclesiastes 1:12–15 (NIV84)</b> <b>12</b> I, the Teacher, was<sup>i</sup> king over Israel in Jerusalem. <i>[this can only be said of David and Solomon]</i> <b>13</b> I devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under heaven. What a heavy burden God has laid on men<sup>ii</sup>! <b>14</b> I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind. <b>15</b> <b>What is twisted cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted.</b></p>	<p><b>Ecclesiastes 1:16–18 (NIV84)</b> <b>16</b> I thought to myself, “Look, I have grown and increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge.” <b>17</b> Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom, and also of madness and folly, but I learned that this, too, is a chasing after the wind. <b>18</b> <b>For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief.</b></p>
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**Ecclesiastes 2:1–11 (NIV84)** — **1** I thought in my heart, “Come now, I will test you with **pleasure** to find out what is good.” But that also proved to be **meaningless**. **2** “Laughter,” I said, “is foolish. And what does pleasure accomplish?” **3** I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was worthwhile for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives. **4** I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. **5** I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. **6** I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. **7** I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. **8** I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well—the delights of the heart of man. **9** I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. **10** I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. **My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor.** **11** **Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.**

## Three Experiments

- [World](#) (CF. Ecclesiastes 1:4-11)
- [Wisdom](#)
- [Pleasure](#)

## THREE RESULTS

**WORLD:** Ecclesiastes 1:15 (NIV84) — 15 What is twisted cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted.

**WISDOM:** Ecclesiastes 1:18 (NIV84) — 18 For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief.

**PLEASURE:** Ecclesiastes 2:10–11 (NIV84) — 10 I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. 11 Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

## FOR FUTHER DISCUSSION<sup>iii</sup>

1. Read through the life of Solomon to get a clearer picture of the man (1 Kings 1–11)
2. Notice how the apostle Paul compares the wisdom of God and the wisdom of man (1 Cor. 1:18–2:16).
3. What things do you think most prevent a person from gaining and using wisdom?

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<sup>i</sup> He had been ruling (or “I was ruling,” as a past tense, or a present perfect, “I still am ruling”) as king over all Israel in Jerusalem (v. 12). Kaiser Jr., Walter C. *Coping with Change - Ecclesiastes* (Kindle Locations 960-961). Christian Focus Publications. Kindle Edition.

<sup>ii</sup> (Hebrew has “Adam” or “man,” not “men”). . . . Was Solomon thereby alluding to Adam and the effects of the Fall? Yes, that seems to be the situation. He did not choose to say “sons of men,” but instead, “the sons of Adam” labor and toil without finding any satisfaction or an answer to the question: What is the profit or gain to mortals? Yet all the time it was God who continued to prompt man’s heart to discover the truth. -Kaiser Jr., Walter C. *Coping with Change - Ecclesiastes* (Kindle Locations 972-975). Christian Focus Publications. Kindle Edition.

<sup>iii</sup> Winter, J. (2005). [Opening up Ecclesiastes](#) (p. 31). Leominster: Day One Publications.