

QUESTION: What does a man gain for all his toil under the sun?

## WISDOM

Ecclesiastes 2:12–23

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned my thoughts to consider wisdom, and also madness and folly. What more can the king's successor do than what has already been done? <sup>13</sup> I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness. <sup>14</sup> The wise man has eyes in his head, while the fool walks in the darkness; but I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both. <sup>15</sup> Then I thought in my heart, "The fate of the fool will overtake me also. What then do I gain by being wise?" I said in my heart, "This too is meaningless." <sup>16</sup> For the wise man, like the fool, will not be long remembered; in days to come both will be forgotten. Like the fool, the wise man too must die!

- **WISDOM'S BENEFITS:** His **mind** is engaged when he looks out on the world
- **WISDOM'S LIMITATIONS:** Wisdom is no match for **death**

## LIFE IS A PUZZLE

Ecclesiastes 2: 17-19

<sup>17</sup> So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. <sup>18</sup> I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. <sup>19</sup> And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. <sup>20</sup> So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. <sup>21</sup> For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. <sup>22</sup> What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? <sup>23</sup> All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.

- You **can't take it with you**
- One day, all our stuff will be **controlled** by another

Luke 12:13–21

<sup>13</sup> Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." <sup>14</sup> Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" <sup>15</sup> Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; **a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.**" <sup>16</sup> And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man

produced a good crop. <sup>17</sup> He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' <sup>18</sup> "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. <sup>19</sup> And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." ' <sup>20</sup> "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' <sup>21</sup> "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

<p><b><u>Man's perspective</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich</li> <li>• <b>My crops</b></li> <li>• Treasure on earth</li> <li>• <b>You have plenty for many years</b></li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Jesus' perspective</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich toward God, Fool</li> <li>• Someone else will get your stuff</li> <li>• No treasure in heaven</li> <li>• Your life, which rests in God's hands and over which you have no control, is over!</li> </ul>
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**FOR FURTHER STUDY:**

1. Solomon is "the man who has everything". Read through the passage again and pay attention to the manner in which he describes his life. Can you identify with the Teacher in any area of your life? What are some steps you can take to correct this situation?
2. Read Philippians 4:10-13. How is the apostle Paul's attitude different from the one expressed by the Teacher in Ecclesiastes 2:12-23?