

“Wisdom’s Limitations”
Ecclesiastes 1:12-18
New Hope Community Church
February 4th, 2018

Wisdom as Solomon uses it here might be defined as —

‘Keen insight into life and ways of dealing with its problems’
(Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology)

A. Solomon Takes On the Task of Exploring Man’s Domain (3)

* Key phrase: ‘under the sun’ —

A reference to man’s domain in this temporal world

* He seeks the big answers for two main concerns —

How to be in **control** and have inner **happiness**

1. He finds the task to be filled with **adversity** (13)

▪ The task is **painful**

▪ The task is a heavy **burden**

▪ Mankind was given **dominion** over the earth

(1) God pronounced all of His creation **good**

(2) The presence of sin brought **instability** (Ro 8:18-22)

2. What he finds falls far short of **lasting** satisfaction (14)

3. He concludes that mankind has his **limitations** (15)

▪ There are many things that we can’t **control**

▪ These are ultimately **God** sized problems

B. Solomon Experiences the Limitations of Wisdom

1. He is **confident** in his credentials (16)

2. He applies himself passionately to attain **ultimate** wisdom (17a)

3. He is forced to admit such wisdom is **beyond** his grasp (17b)

4. He experiences in wisdom severe **heartache** (18)

Reflection Three takeaways to bring us peace today —

(1) The **source** and **goal** of all true wisdom is Jesus Christ
Christ Jesus became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness
and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written,
‘LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.’ 1Cor 1:30,31

(2) This satisfying wisdom for life that is found in relationship with
the Savior comes only to those who seek it as a little **child**
(Mt 18:1-3)

(3) Only in a **just** and **true** Savior will the crooked be made
straight (Lk 3:4-6)

Life Group Meeting
Ecclesiastes 1:12-18

QUESTIONS

1. Read Ecclesiastes 1:12-18
2. Do you agree or disagree that a great majority of people would be content if they could be in control of their lives and maintain happiness? Is this enough to get through life well? Why or why not?
3. Solomon, the wisest of men, exclaimed that the task of trying to understand & control life with his wisdom was a heavy burden and only led to much grief. Why do you think he feels like this? Have you ever felt this way?
4. Discuss the meaning of verse 15, and identify some examples in life of crooked things that can not be straightened. (think in both the physical and the spiritual realm)
5. How about in your own life — have you had things that were beyond your power to change that brought you pain or sorrow?
6. Solomon, in spite of his best efforts (v 17), ultimately failed in his attempt to control life and its pain with his wisdom. This is the point when despair can really set into a person’s life. What is the solution?
7. Read together I Corinthians 1:30,31, and discuss the statement that Jesus is the source and the goal of all true wisdom. (see also Col 1:16,17)
8. What does it mean to seek Jesus as “a child”?