

Eternal PERSPECTIVE Ecclesiastes

BIBLE TEXT | ECCLESIASTES 1:12-18

12 I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. **13** And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. **14** I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind. **15** What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted.

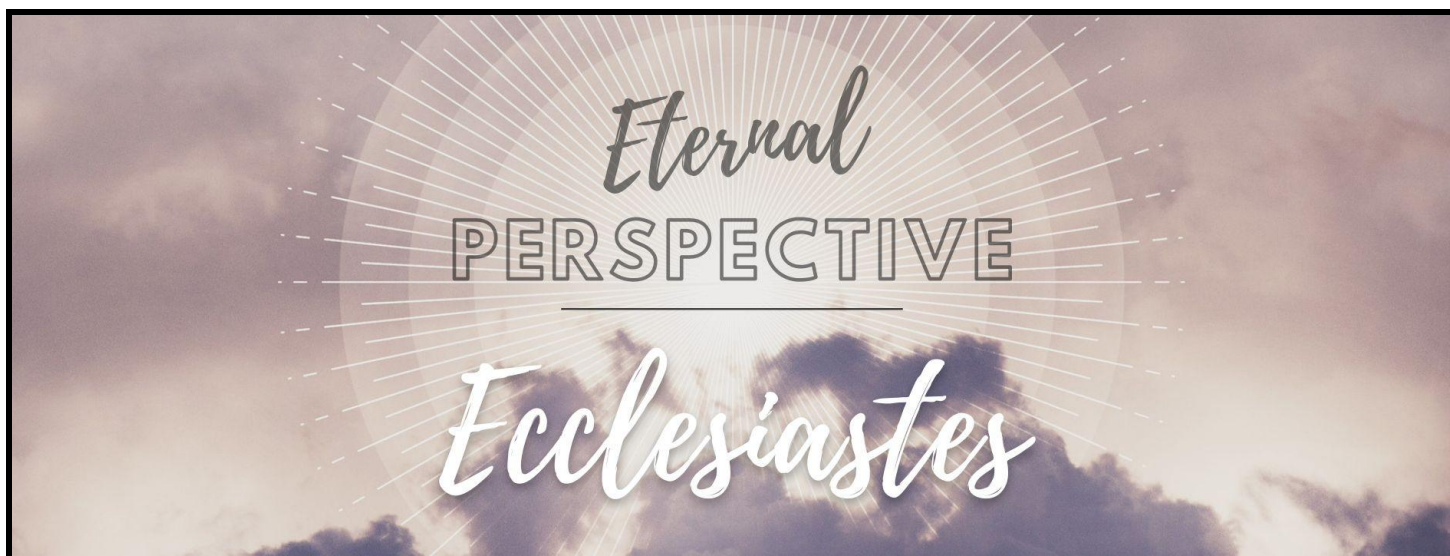
16 I said in my heart, "I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me, and my heart has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge." **17** And I applied my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind. **18** For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow

DEVOTIONAL FOR ECCLESIASTES 1:12-18

AUTHOR: BILLY VENABLE

I'll admit I had a good chuckle when I realized my devo assignment in Ecclesiastes because it deals with wisdom, which is the same topic I covered in my last devo. Perhaps, God is telling me this is an area to which I need to pay special attention.

When I was growing up, our small town had a kind of wisdom that just made sense, common sense. It was the kind of know-how passed down from generation to generation, like knowing when to plant and when to harvest just by looking at the sky. But King Solomon, in Ecclesiastes 1:12-18, lets us know there's a heavy side to wisdom, too. Nowadays, we learn so much, maybe even too much from the internet and TV, and it weighs on us. If we get caught up in the news sometimes, it feels like our hearts are getting dragged through the mud. But there's good news for us believers: Jesus offers to carry that weight (Matthew 11:28). When life's worries stack up like hay bales, we're called to hand it over to God, trusting Him to balance the load.



Solomon, who was the brainiac of brainiacs, realized that even he didn't have all the answers. It's a bit like when we fix up an old truck - no matter how much we tinker, there's always something we can't figure out. We need to remember that's okay. It's God's way of telling us that it's not all on us to know everything. Our smarts, just like that old truck, have their limits. The Bible reminds us in 1 Corinthians 3:19 that the kind of smarts we prize isn't all that smart in God's eyes. That means our wisdom is best when built on a healthy dose of humility and rooted in God's Word.

Yet Solomon wasn't saying that wisdom is useless. It's a gift, as valuable as the oldest tool in the shed, guiding us through life's twists and turns. Wisdom teaches us how to live right, help our neighbors, and keep walking with God, especially when the world doesn't make much sense. It's about using what we know to do the right thing because it's part of God's bigger picture, not because it'll get us ahead. Like it tells us in Micah 6:8, it's about doing what's fair and walking humbly with God, even when no one's looking out from their porch swing.

So, how do we bring God's wisdom into our day-to-day life out here in the country? Proverbs 3:5-6 has the answer: trust God with all you've got, and don't just rely on your own noggin. Whether we're deciding how to help our community, sorting out family matters, or just trying to live a good life, we've gotta lean on God's Word. His ways might seem backward to the rest of the world, but around here, we know that sometimes the old ways—the Godly ways—have the truest form of common sense. When we live like this, with God's wisdom leading the way, it's like planting the best seeds in the field and waiting for the good growth. We make sure it's God's wisdom that's praised in our community, shining brighter than any city lights.

Questions:

1. How can understanding the limitations of human wisdom, as Solomon describes, change the way you approach your own problems and decisions in daily life?
2. Reflecting on your own experiences, can you share a time when leaning on God's wisdom, rather than your own understanding, led to unexpected blessings or outcomes?
3. How might embracing the wisdom found in God's Word affect the way you interact with your family and neighbors in today's fast-paced, modern world?