Seeing the Big Picture

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The Bible’s Wisdom Books: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes
The Story of Ecclesiastes

➢ The author sounds like Solomon.
Ecclesiastes 1:1

¹ The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.
16 I said to myself, “Behold, I have magnified and increased wisdom more than all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has observed a wealth of wisdom and knowledge.”
He is asking: “What has real meaning? What fulfills us?”
2 “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.”

3 What advantage does man have in all his work Which he does under the sun?
A generation goes and a generation comes,
But the earth remains forever.
His Quest: What Doesn’t Fulfill

Some of the things he tried:

Knowledge
Ecclesiastes 1:13-14

13 And I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven. ...
Ecclesiastes 1:13-14

14 I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind.
16 When I gave my heart to know wisdom and to see the task which has been done on the earth (even though one should never sleep day or night),
Ecclesiastes 8:16-17

17 and I saw every work of God, I concluded that man cannot discover the work which has been done under the sun. Even though man should seek laboriously, he will not discover; and though the wise man should say, “I know,” he cannot discover.
But beyond this, my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body.
His Quest: What Doesn’t Fulfill

Some of the things he tried:

Knowledge

Pleasure
Ecclesiastes 2:1

1 I said to myself, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself.” And behold, it too was futility.
8 ... I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men—many concubines.
Ecclesiastes 2:10

10 All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor.
His Quest: What Doesn’t Fulfill

Some of the things he tried:

Knowledge
Pleasure
Wealth
Ecclesiastes 2:7-9

7 ... Also I possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem.
8 Also, I collected for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men—many concubines.
Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me.
He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.
His Quest: What Doesn’t Fulfill

Some of the things he tried:
Knowledge
Pleasure
Wealth
Accomplishments
4 I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself;
5 I made gardens and parks for myself and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees;
6 I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees.
11 Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun.
His Quest: What’s Really Meaningful

1) Living for God
1 Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, “I have no delight in them”;
The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.

For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.
His Quest: What’s Really Meaningful

2) Enjoy your blessings
Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.
Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one’s labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward.
19 Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God.
Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.
His Quest: What’s Really Meaningful

3) Enjoying time with others
Ecclesiastes 2:24

24 There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God.
Ecclesiastes 9:9

9 Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun.
His Quest: What’s Really Meaningful

4) Enjoy your **activities**, and do **good**.
I have seen that nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities, for that is his lot. For who will bring him to see what will occur after him?
Ecclesiastes 3:12-13

12 I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one’s lifetime;
13 moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor—it is the gift of God.
Ecclesiastes 9:10

10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.
Wisdom from Ecclesiastes: Life is short – let’s put God first now!
Receiving God’s Salvation

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Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.