

Searching for Fullfillment in Life

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Preacher: Bill Story

[0 : 00] The women of gospel sing. The women of gospel is a disc that I have when I go traveling and I put it on. And then the women sing. And I was over there trying to do that, failing miserably.

Delinda's laughing. Heather's laughing at me. That's okay. I loved it, brother. So thank you, man. It's all for Jesus. All right.

Take out your Bibles and turn with me to Ecclesiastes. Chapter 1. You will find it after the book of Psalms. Psalms is in the very middle, likely, of your Bible.

Keep going to the right. You'll come to Proverbs. Keep going past Proverbs. You'll come to Ecclesiastes. We began this last week looking at the first 11 verses.

As the author sets the theme of the book, Vanity of Vanities. Or more literally, vapor of vapor. All is vapor.

[1 : 04] And then sets the theme more generally in verse 3. What does a man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?

His conclusion is nada. Okay. And so he's going to develop that a little bit more. So liven up. This is exciting. As Chris said, why are we reading so far?

Because we need to get to the last part there. Chapter 2. So we're looking at verses 12 in chapter 1 all the way through chapter 2. That's what we're going to read today.

So if you're able, please stand as I read from Ecclesiastes. Chapter 1 beginning of verse 12. Notice it's a new speaker now. So back in verse 1, we had somebody speaking in the third person, talking about the preacher.

Now in verse 12, we have the preacher himself speaking. Okay. I, the preacher, have been king over Israel and Jerusalem. And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven.

[2 : 17] It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. I have seen everything that is done under the sun.

And behold, all is vanity and striving after wind. What is crooked cannot be made straight. What is lacking cannot be counted. I said in my heart, I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me.

And my heart has had great experiences of wisdom and knowledge. And I applied my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but striving after wind.

For in much wisdom is much vexation. And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow. I said in my heart, come now, I will test you with pleasure.

Enjoy yourself. And behold, this also was vapor. I said of laughter, it is mad. And of pleasure, what use is it?

[3 : 28] I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine. My heart still guiding me with wisdom, of course. And how to lay hold on folly till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life.

I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. I made myself gardens and parks and planted them and all kinds of, planted in them all kinds of fruit trees.

I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had slaves who were born in my house.

I also, I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces.

I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines. The delight of the children of man. So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem.

[4 : 39] Also, my wisdom remained with me. And whatever my eyes desired, I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure.

For my heart found pleasure in all my toil. And this was my reward for all my toil. Excuse me. Then I considered all that my hands had done, and the toil I had expended in doing it.

And behold, all was vapor and striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.

So I turned to consider wisdom and madness and folly. For what can the man do who comes after the king? Only what has already been done. Then I saw that there was more gain in wisdom than in folly, as there's more gain in light than in darkness.

The wise person has eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I perceived that the same event happens to all of them.

[5 : 48] Then I said in my heart, what happens to the fool will happen to me also. Why then have I been so very wise? I said in my heart that this also is vanity.

For of the wise, as of the fool, there is no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come, all will have been long forgotten.

How the wise dies just like the fool. So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and striving after wind.

I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, and who knows whether he'll be wise or a fool. Yet he will be master of all which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun.

This also was vapor. So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it.

[7 : 11] This also is vapor and a great evil. What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun?

For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night, his heart does not rest.

This also is vapor. There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil.

This also, I saw, is from the hand of God. For apart from him, who can eat and who can have enjoyment? For to the one who pleases him, God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy.

But to the sinner, he has given the business of gathering and collecting only to give to the one who pleases God. This also is vapor and striving after wind.

[8 : 26] So reads the text. Let us pray. Father, grant us eyes to see and ears to hear. Help us to rightly look at this text.

We pray, O Father, that you would open our eyes, that we might behold what is wonderful in your word.

Make us to walk in the path of your commandments, for we delight in it. Incline our heart toward your precepts and not toward selfish gain.

Turn away our eyes from looking at vanity and revive us in your ways. This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated.

Who do you think wrote this? Which part?

[9 : 29] Which part? Well, what's the tradition? The tradition says Solomon wrote this, right? Or at least they want to create the impression that Solomon has written this.

So let's look back just for a moment to begin and hear what Solomon was like. Back in 1 Kings chapter 10, right after the visit of the Queen of Sheba, the Queen of the South, comes to visit Solomon and she says, it's more than I was told.

You have it all. And so in 1 Kings 10, 14 and following, kind of summary of what Solomon had. The weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold, which is about almost 50k pounds of gold.

One year. Besides that, which came from the explorers and from business of merchants and from all the kings of the West and from the governors of the land. King Solomon made 200 large shields of beaten gold.

600 shekels of gold went into each shield. And he made 300 regular shields of beaten gold. Three minas of gold went into each shield.

[10 : 49] And the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon. The king also made a great ivory throne and overlaid it with the finest gold.

The throne had six steps. And at the back of the throne was a calf's head. And on each side of the seat were armrests and two lions standing besides the armrest.

Well, 12 more lions stood there, each on one end of a step on the six steps. The like of it was never made in any kingdom.

All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. None were silver.

Silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon. For the king had a fleet of ships of Tarshish at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years, the fleet of ships of Tarshish used to come bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.

[11 : 53] Thus, King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. And the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind.

Every one of them brought his present, articles of silver and gold, garments, myrrh, spices, horses, mules, so much year by year.

And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen. And he had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen who were stationed in the chariot cities.

So many had to have a city for them. In the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone. And he made cedar as plentiful as the sycamore of the Shefila.

Sorry, I'm trying to pronounce it. And Solomon's import of horses was from Egypt and Q. And the king's traders received them from Q at a price.

[13 : 00] The chariot would be imported from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver and a horse for 150. And so, through the king's traders, they had exported to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.

Here's Solomon. He has it all. Just a short summary of what he has. He has wealth, glory, fame. He excelled all kings, all nations. Had it all.

Then begins 1 Kings chapter 11. Everything changed. Now, King Solomon loved many foreign women.

Along with the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, Hittite women, Parasite, Cellulite, every kind of woman.

Sorry. From the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the people of Israel, you shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn your heart after other gods.

[14 : 16] Solomon clung to these in love. He had 700 wives and princesses and 300 concubines, and his wives turned away his heart.

For when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

For Solomon went after Ashtarothe, the goddess of the Sidonians, after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not wholly follow the Lord, as David his father had done.

Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, and for Molech, the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem, which is the Mount of Olives.

And he did this for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrifices to their gods. That's how we think of Solomon.

[15 : 41] He had it all. Wealth, glory, fame, excelled. Above all kings, he had wisdom that God had given him that was incredible wisdom.

And yet at the end of his life, it wasn't enough. He wanted more. He abandoned God at the end of his life.

What a tragic story. And the scriptures never give us any hint that he ever repented. David, we know, was clearly repented when he messed up big time. But no such word for Solomon.

The wisest man. Whoever lived. Really? Maybe not so wise. Do what I say, not what I do. Why? What happened? Solomon, if anybody, knew better. Right?

[16 : 42] He warned of that woman. He knew the consequences. That's what wisdom is. Knowing the consequences of actions.

And making a right choice based on discernment. Did he really not have enough? So we've heard it many, many times, haven't we?

People who are wealthy and successful. You know, after they've been successful and achieved such status, they say, eh, not enough. Still not satisfied, not fulfilled, not happy, certainly.

And yet, everyone who wins the lotto, right, says, well, I still want to give it a try. We think, oh, I'll do better than they do. I'll spend more wisely.

Money will help because it'll solve some very immediate problems. Tom Brady, ever heard of him? Quarterback? Yeah, no, I don't like him.

[17 : 46] Broke Joe's records. Tom Brady, after winning three Super Bowl rings, he's won, I don't know how many now, ridiculous amount. But after three Super Bowl rings, he says, I do have three Super Bowl rings and still think there's something greater.

He said, I've reached my dream, I've reached my goal, and it's got to be more than this. This was in an interview he gave.

So, he's won, I don't know, how many Super Bowls now? I don't know. Yeah, more than three, right? About 18, I don't know how many he's won.

And he retired last year, right? Okay, I'm done. I'm satisfied. I'm complete. Then he unretired. It's got to be more than this.

It's just not as satisfying as I thought it would be. I accomplished all my dreams, had all the success, still not what I thought it would be. Not as rewarding, not as fulfilling as I thought.

[19 : 03] It's smoke. It was there, and it's over. We go to Disneyland, and that's it. So, we see the king's search for meaning, for fulfillment in life, trying to live the dream.

So, as we look at this, let's first consider the preacher and his quest. In chapter 1, verses 12 to 18, he's just kind of given a preview of what he's going to do in the next chapter.

So, who is he? He claims, right, he says, I'm the preacher. He never says it's Solomon. Right? The book of Proverbs says, these are the Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Jerusalem.

Here it says, the words of the preacher, king, or son of David. So, whoever wrote this wants us to think it's Solomon, but does not literally say it's Solomon.

Okay? It says he's king in Jerusalem. Verse 16 says he's wiser. He has more wisdom than all who were before him in Jerusalem. By the way, how many were there before him in Jerusalem?

[20 : 12] One. One. Daddy. David. So, big claim, right? If it's Solomon, I'm wiser than everybody before me in Jerusalem.

Yeah, that was just that. That was just David. So, so, whatever. Chapter two, he talks about all the wealth he has, all the riches, all the wealth he has. We read about Solomon and first kings.

It's like, okay, yeah, this is describing the same kind of person. So, is this Solomon writing this, or is this a Solomon-like person? Certainly, what we read here, chapter one, chapter two, and on, does not sound like Solomon, the Solomon of Proverbs.

Does it? That's why it's frustrating. We look at this, we're frustrated. Wait a minute, is that all? Have you really looked at everything from the whole point of view? Or, you know, you're such a pessimist, right?

Is it a Solomon-like imitation, or is it possibly Solomon at the end of his life, when he's the apostate, when he's no longer the believer, no longer the faithful one, no longer clearly the wise one?

[21 : 30] Possible. In fact, it's extremely possible that it's Solomon after he abandons the Lord. We'll see.

I don't know. We'll leave that decision for later. What he does do here in this opening section, verse 13 following, is introduce the quest that he's going to do. Verse 13, I sent out, I applied my heart to seek and to search out, by wisdom, all that is done under heaven.

Seek and explore. Everything under heaven. That phrase, under heaven, or under the sun, he's going to use nine times just in this section. He uses it 29 times throughout the book, so it's more, it is pervasively his perspective.

He's looking at things just under the sun, just on a horizontal level. Not above the sun, not from heaven's view, but under heaven's view. This is just an earthly perspective.

Keep that in mind. That'll help us clarify what he's talking about. Not from an above sun perspective. This is just an earthly perspective. And he's going to conclude that it's all empty.

[22 : 38] It's all vapor. It's all breath. It's all chasing the wind. Useless. That's where he's going to go. So he says that in verse 14. Right? I'm doing this.

I have seen everything that is under the sun. And behold, all is vanity, striving after the wind. Now he adds a new phrase, striving after the wind. Whatever he meant by vapor, now he's adding striving after wind.

So how do you strive after wind? What do you get? You know, nothing. It's elusive, right? Just like the vapor. It's just, it's useless. Pointless. Useless. Why would you do that?

I'm chasing after wind. So all of these pursuits, this whole quest, is like chasing after something you can't get. Trying to get what you can't get.

Fulfillment. Satisfaction. Under the sun. So in verse 17, he's even going to compare wisdom and folly.

[23 : 42] I'm going to look at those things. But that too, verse 18, is pointless. The end of verse 17, striving after wind. In much wisdom.

I mean, wisdom's good. He's going to say that later. Wisdom's good. But it also, the more you know, the more pain you get. The more you know, the more problems you see.

Wouldn't it be better just to bury your head in the sand? Right? I don't have to look at it. So that's all he's saying. Okay? So that's his introduction. So let's get to chapter 2. Because he's going to say that, he's going to talk about those same things from chapter 1, but now he's going to kind of flesh it out.

So the pursuit of fulfillment, or what he ends up calling the wind. What can we learn about an all-out pursuit of fulfillment?

What do we discover in his search for meaning under the sun? We find two things. He comes to two conclusions. In chapter 2, verses 1 through 23, three different quests, he finds vanity.

[24 : 48] Right? Under the sun, in terms of under the sun, he finds everything is ultimately unfulfilling, unsatisfying, useless, pointless.

vapor. And then in verses 24 to 26, the last three verses of the chapter, he's going to say, but there's another perspective.

From the point of view of God in my life, there is joy. There is some fulfillment in this life.

Okay? So two perspectives. So, first of all, under the sun perspective, which means an apart from God perspective, from just an earthly perspective, he says, all worldly pursuits are ultimately unfulfilling.

All earthly, worldly pursuits are ultimately useless, unrewarding, vapor, like chasing after the wind. Elusive. Got it?

[25 : 53] And it's gone. Very temporary and fleeting. So he's going to do three tests. Chapter 2, verses 1 through 11, he's going to pursue pleasure.

Chapter 2, verses 12 to 17, he's going to pursue wisdom. And then chapter 2, verses 18 through 23, he's going to pursue possessions, or more accurately, productivity.

What has my life achieved? What's my success? Looking at that. So, first of all, he tests, he says, verse 1, I'm going to test, test pleasure. I said, at my heart, come now, I will test you with pleasure, with enjoyment, with delights.

Enjoy yourself. Find good things, right? All kinds of things. He's going to test delight. He says, actually, I'm going to test you with pleasure, enjoy yourself.

Literally, what he says, is, cause, to see what is good. To see what's good. What is it that brings joy? What brings pleasure?

[26 : 54] So, verse 2, so I said of laughter. It's mad. It's inane. Doesn't accomplish anything. He says of pleasure, what use is it?

What gain is pleasure? What do you gain? Nothing that lasts. Nothing, no profit. Then he searches wine. I search with my heart, how to cheer my body with wine.

An aside, of course, I'm still guided by wisdom. I think that's kind of funny. Yeah, I'm going to drink a lot of wine, but I'm still being wise. Cause I'm just analyzing it, right?

Like Moses, not Moses, excuse me, Noah, right? Okay. And how to lay hold of folly. That probably followed the wine. How to lay hold of folly.

Till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life. See that perspective at the end of verse 3 there? I might see what is good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life.

[27 : 58] Talking about just that temporary life. That's the perspective. And then he tries other things. Verse 4, I made great works. Houses, vineyards, gardens, parks, fruit trees, pools, slaves, possessions of herds and flocks, gathered silver and gold, treasures, singers, and many concubines, by the way, the pleasure of, or the delight of the children of men.

So his conclusion, verse 9, I became great. Surpassed everybody before me in all these things. Not only in wisdom but in all my attainments, all my achievements. Right?

Whatever, verse 10, he admits, whatever my eyes desire to not keep from them because I'm going to try everything. I try everything. Whatever looked pleasing and good, I tried it. I kept my heart from no pleasure for my heart found pleasure in all my toil and this was the reward of my toil.

So now he's admitting, no, I did find pleasure. So, so, to really understand what he's saying is he makes statements like everything's vanity, everything's empty, nothing's worth it.

But here he says, I did find pleasure. He's not saying there's no pleasure whatsoever. If there were no pleasures whatsoever, how could he test it? So it's true, there is pleasure.

[29 : 18] The point is, it's puff of smoke. It's fleeting. It's chasing after the wind. Right?

It's not substantial. It's not real. It's not lasting. That's his point. There are pleasures, of course.

We wouldn't be tempted if there wasn't pleasures. It does promise something. It does give limited, temporary relief, escape, whatever we're looking for.

Then, verse 12 to 17, he looks at prudence or wisdom. He's now going to test so I turn, verse 12, so I turn from pleasures, I turn to consider wisdom and its comparables, madness and folly.

So there's wisdom and folly, right? Wisdom and foolishness. And then there's just madness. Somewhere in between, there's irrationality. I looked at that too.

[30 : 20] Just to be fair, what's wise, what's prudent, what's, what, what, what is discernment, what's, what's, what's, what's no discernment, and then what's just plain insanity?

What's, what, what is, uh, irrationality? Try that too. Just, you know, just do whatever. So, this is the next experiment, comparing wisdom and foolishness.

So he says, verse 13, now when I compared wisdom and foolishness, I saw there is more gain in wisdom than folly. There is a clear advantage of wisdom. That's, a reason we pursue it.

Wisdom, it, it, like light and darkness. I mean, at least, verse 14, the wise man has eyes in his head. At least he's looking. At least he's paying attention to life. There's an advantage.

It saves him from bumping into things that he doesn't need to bump into. Like walking, a fool walks in darkness. He doesn't consider anything. Doesn't look ahead. Doesn't, doesn't think about consequences.

[31 : 27] A wise person, that's the whole point of wisdom, right, is, is application. Wisdom isn't about knowledge. It's about doing something with the knowledge, right? The whole book of Proverbs is, here's this road, here's this road.

Here's this choice, here's this choice. Here's this voice, and here's this voice. So consider what those voices say. Consider the outcome. That's wisdom.

Choose the wise path. Jesus talks the same way. There's two roads, right? There's a narrow road that leads to life, and there's a broad road that's really easy, and a lot of people take it, that leads to death.

So, what people do, the fool says, that's a broad road, I'm going on this road. Doesn't think about what's ahead, just goes on the broad road. Wise man takes, okay, but I want life.

So, I choose the, I choose the harder road, I chose the road less traveled, I choose the narrow road, the groaning road, because, that's what I ultimately want.

[32 : 29] Right? So, that's the difference between wisdom and foolishness. So, clearly, wisdom has an advantage.

Then verse 15, but, there's no side to this. I studied this all the way through. Then I said in my heart, verse 15, what happens to the fool will happen to me.

Huh? No, the wise person will be in a better place, right? He said, no, no, no. What happens to the fool will also happen to me, the wise person.

Why then have I been so wise? What was the use of wisdom? If we end up in the same place. Right? He's looking all the way down the line. Then I said in my heart, yeah, right?

And I said in my heart, this too is vanity. This is absurd. This is senseless. This is pointless. For of the wise, as of the fool, there's no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come, all will have been long forgotten.

[33 : 36] How the wise, so what's that same event that happens? Well, death. How the wise dies, just like the fool. So I hated life, because that which is done in the sun is grievous to me, for it is all vapor and striving after wind.

At death, there's no advantage to all the wisdom I have. Both die, both are forgotten. Why bother? I can't control it. So what's his point?

Wisdom, for all its advantages, cannot save me from death. It can save me from trouble in life. But it also, you know, with all the trouble it saves me from, it also brings me grief, because I know more.

At least the fool's in the dark, right? But in the ultimate end, wisdom can't save me from death.

And the wise men and the fool both die. And frankly, from under the sun perspective, that's not fair. It's not fair.

[34 : 47] It's not right. Is it? Shouldn't the wise man live? And the fool, of course, deserves to die. Why does the wise man die?

Hmm. Maybe there's another perspective to this. Right? But here's his frustration. The result of his toil.

Now, finally, verse 18 to 23, looks at the result of his toil. So, in other words, what he accumulates, his possessions, right? His accomplishments, his achievement. Verse 18, I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it.

Right? So he's not just talking about his work, but what his work has brought him. His productivity, his possessions, his accomplishments, his achievements. Everything that I've gained from all my toil and wisdom, I must leave it to the man who will come after me.

And who knows? Who knows if the man will be wise? What if he's a fool? Everything I did goes to a fool?

[35 : 56] Is that right? I mean, can you... And he, he, that other guy will be master for all which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun.

This is vapor. So I turned about and gave my heart to despair over all my labors under the sun because sometimes a person who is toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill has to give it away to somebody who didn't deserve it, didn't earn it.

I did all the work and he gets it. By the way, he keeps using this term. Oh, number 45. Where'd that come?

Oh, new pants. Sorry. That was distracting. What was, what was I saying? Shoot.

Yeah. God, I lost my train of thought. Oh, thank you. Got it. He keeps saying this other person, this man.

[37 : 20] Actually, so I looked at the Hebrew and I was just kind of checking out and it's the word Adam. All the way through, it's Adam. It's a grievous task that God has given a man, Adam, to do.

That brought me back to the beginning. Why did he, God give a grievous task to Adam to do? All his work would now be toil.

All his work would now be sweat. All his work now would be grievous. All his work now would be with thorns and thistles. Not a great pleasure, but some hardness in it.

Why did God give Adam that work? Because he fell. Because what did Adam want?

He wanted more. I'm not content with that one tree. I want the other tree. Because the other tree is going to give me something I don't have.

[38 : 25] I want more. I want that too. Which means I don't trust what God says. I don't take him at his word. I want more. So it's interesting. So all the way through the text he keeps saying Adam.

Adam. I got to give it to Adam. You know what an idiot he is. Right?

So that's interesting. So what does he do? Verse 20 through 20. He despairs. It's unfair. All this work. All this pain. Even the lack of sleep at night.

Because he is a workaholic. Right? He doesn't even go to bed. He's still working. Right? He's a workaholic. So all that has to go to another one. I can't control it. I can't. It's pointless.

Useless. Futile. It's not as rewarding. All my achievements, everything, it's just not as rewarding. It was there. Now it's gone.

[39 : 25] It didn't fill me like I thought it would fill me. So that's his view. All worldly pursuits apart from God are ultimately unfulfilling, unsatisfying, useless.

So what's the biblical view of worldly pursuits? Well, it's different, isn't it? It's not this view. What did the original Solomon say in Proverbs?

Right? Trust the Lord with all your heart and lean not where? Your own understanding. Don't rely on how you see it. Right?

In all your ways acknowledge Him. And He will make your path straight.

That's the original Solomon. That was great reward to that kind of wisdom. Not just earthly wisdom.

- [40 : 27] There's lots of guys that are smart in this world but they have no happiness, no hope, no satisfaction because they think that's all there is.
- They're brilliant at suppressing all the evidence of God. They're going to stand before God someday and go right?
- And we can say the same as Solomon for all the wisdom and knowledge and discernment that he had. What happened? How could he end so tragically? We all can't.
- So what's the biblical view? Let's look at a different example. Hebrews 11. Remember Hebrews 11 talks about that chapter of faith. It's those people who live by faith. It's those people who didn't get the reward now.
- All these lived by faith, did not receive the promises here on earth, but kept looking for something more. See, they wanted more too. It wasn't enough what they had on earth.
- [41 : 32] They wanted something more, something better than here. John Piper talks about Christian hedonism. You know what hedonism, he said it right the first time.
- Hedonism is pursuit of pleasure, right? Living for pleasure. Piper, he took it from C.S. Lewis, and C.S. Lewis took it from the Psalms, so it's biblical, said that when we sin, we strive after things of this world, we're actually aiming too low.
- We're not seeking the greatest pleasure, because the greatest pleasure is God. The greatest pleasure, the greatest fulfillment is God. So if we seek it in things, we're aiming way too low.
- We don't want it enough. So he's talking about aiming for, do you really, really want fulfillment that lasts? Peace that passes understanding?
- Joy that just flows? Only in God can you find that. So here's Moses. Hebrews 11, 24 talks about Moses.
- [42 : 38] By faith, Moses. Moses, when he was all grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.
- Moses chose that. He had the choice of the fleeting pleasures of sin in the palace and chose rather, why?
- To be mistreated with the people or by the people. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt.
- Why? Because he's looking past. He's looking to the real reward. He's looking for something more. Treasures of Egypt. Pretty good. But he's already looking beyond that.
- By faith, he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king. Why? Why is he not afraid of the anger of the king? That's the most powerful king in the world. That's the king with the greatest army of the world at the time.
- [43 : 49] How would he not be afraid of Pharaoh? Why? Well, he endured because he saw somebody greater. Somebody more powerful.
- Somebody much more fierce. He saw him who is invisible. He knew God. By faith, he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood.
- Why? So that the destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. In other words, he trusted what God said would happen if he did not do this. He'd already seen the nine plagues before.
- You know, he knew God. Yeah, God kind of keeps his word. Well, always keeps his word. So, my point is, apart from God, all worldly deceits are ultimately unfulfilling.
- Here in Hebrews, it talks about a different perspective. Moses had a whole different perspective about life. He didn't pursue it in pleasure. He didn't pursue it in wealth. In fact, he chose a hard road.

[44 : 51] He actually chose mistreatment and reproach. So, what does faith have to do with choices in life? It says he did it by faith.

What does my faith have to do with my worldview? What does my faith have to do with my choices that I make? What does faith have to do with wisdom? Well, my faith is about trusting what God has said.

Trusting his words. Trusting his way. Right? Trusting his promise. Thou shalt not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

For in the day that you eat of it, you shall die. Did he believe it? Clearly not. Did he die?

Yeah. There was a major radical change and a dying of relationship between he and God. What choices do you make?

[46 : 02] Do you choose what's best for your comfort or do you choose what's best for Christ? What is your ultimate goal? Do you think about this even, right? When you make choices. When you make choices about pleasures or about pursuits or about activities or success or work or career.

Whatever, whatever, whatever. Do you make those choices based on what's best for you right now? What gives you comfort? Or do you make a choice?

Do you consider the choice in terms of what's best for Christ? How can I best serve Christ? Just want to think here. What is your ultimate goal?

Right? What do you want most? So wisdom looks at the far end. I want life. So it means I choose a narrow road. Do I want Christ glorified?

Is that my ultimate, ultimate goal? Is that what I want most of in life? Is that what I want? At the end of my life, I want to have glorified and serve Jesus. If that's my goal, then it might change how I make choices.

[47 : 11] That's what I'm saying. You have to determine how. I mean, that's where you go before the Lord. So this is not the final word. His first conclusion, all these pursuits are ultimately unfulfilled because they're apart from God.

They're just under the sun. But there's another choice he makes, another conclusion he comes to at the end. Verse 24, 25, 26. Now he's going to see above the sun.

Now he's going to look at it from another perspective. Now he's going to look at it with God involved. Okay, this changes everything. Second conclusion is this. We can find fulfilling joy in God's gifts now.

So if I walk through life with God, I can find fulfilling joy in this life now. So it's not all vain.

Verse 24, there's nothing better, nothing better for a person than he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. Nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink.

[48 : 15] And then literally he says, and cause his soul to see good in his toil. So it's not just find enjoyment, but intentionally see good.

And not just intentionally see good, but cause my soul to see good. Because my soul is the, you know, it's the negative me. It's the mini me.

It's probably the maximum me. It's like, it's the feeler. It's the, it's, it's, you know, once the quick way, once the, that's why Jesus said, hate your soul in this world so that you can save your soul.

Because your soul will lead you astray. Your soul will lead you to, right, get the quick result, get the treasure now, get the relief now. So cause your soul to see good in your toil.

So that's intentional. First of all, enjoy the simple pleasures God has given. They lighten the burdens of your life. Now something changed here because back in chapter two, verse one, he said, it's all vanity.

[49 : 23] I tested pleasure. I enjoyed myself. And this was vanity. Now he's changed. What changed? Well, verse 24 B, what does he say at the end?

this also I saw is from the hand of God. That's the difference. It changes everything. To cause my soul to see good in my toil.

To see that, to see good is from the hand of God. That means I'm seeing from God's perspective. I'm seeing with gratitude. That means I'm seeing with his perspective.

See, eating, drinking, finding joy, God intends our enjoyment of his creation. We read Genesis chapter one.

In the beginning was God, right? And he created and he made all these things. And every day he said, and he saw it was evening and morning and it was good.

[50 : 22] Evening, morning, good. Evening, morning, good. Evening, morning, all the way until he made Adam. And then he said, not good. Not good for a man to be alone.

Good, good, good, good. Everything's good. He created it for good. To be enjoyed. To be, to be, delighted in.

So, how is this done? So, how do I find joy in what God has given? And what if my work's hard? What if my work is frustrating? What if my work is not something, it's not my dream job?

What if that, right? What if I'm frustrated? What if, huh, it's so drudgery? How do I find joy in that? How do I do that?

Well, verse 25 says, you can't do it apart from God. For apart from him, who can eat and who can have enjoyment? So, you, you can't enjoy without him.

[51 : 24] So, that's where you start, with him. Starts there. Which means, so, Paul talks about, uh, uh, uh, that some, foods were considered unclean, and this kind of thing.

And Paul says, you know, don't even worry about that. If you give thanks, God has created all things good. People twist it for bad, but God has created all things good.

Good. The creation in itself is good. So, if you give thanks for it, it's clean. Doesn't matter where it came from. It's clean.

Because it's God's thing. Right? And he talks about that, being grateful. Gratefulness makes it. It's clean. Gratefulness also cleans up our attitude.

Even if I have a hard job, if I say to God, thank you for this job. I don't, I, you know, it's not my dream job, whatever, whatever, whatever. But it does accomplish A to B that I need right now.

[52 : 24] Right? It, it puts food on the table, pays the rent, whatever, whatever. Whatever. So, thank you that I can do that. And that might expand my, my, my gratefulness to think, oh, I'm also around people I'm not normally around.

Maybe he wants, maybe that's what he wants. Maybe he wants me to be a witness. Whatever. I don't know. That's between you and the Lord to figure out, but it's, it starts with gratefulness.

It starts with humility. You ever take the time to do that? So, who is the one that can find this joy? It starts with God, but who's the one that finds it? He says in verse 26, right?

To the one who pleases him, God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy. So, it's the one who pleases him. That's the one who gets the wisdom and the knowledge and the joy. Okay?

I want all those. Those are good. So, what does it mean to please him? What is that? So, okay, now we're back to works, aren't we?

[53 : 30] Gotta earn it. Gotta, gotta, gotta, gotta, oh, I gotta do something so that he can pat me on the back. He, because he's mad at me and now I gotta, is that how it works? That's not how it works, is it? How do I please him?

Well, if I'm striving after the wind, under the sun, that's not pleasing him. If I'm trying to work it out on my own and control my life, that's not gonna please him.

But if with him, I'm trusting what he says about walking this narrow road instead of doing it on my own, that pleases him.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean on and don't understand. In all your ways, acknowledge him, he'll make your paths straight. Yeah. That's what we expect Solomon to say.

So, the one who trusts, the one who's humbly thankful, the one who's not ungrateful. Remember what Paul said about life? Paul, in Philippians 1, memories fade in the end, he doesn't know if he's gonna live or die, doesn't know if he's gonna stay in prison, doesn't know, right?

[54 : 39] He's writing to the Philippians and he's so full of joy. He's so full of joy. So he says, I don't know what's gonna happen, but the bottom line is this, for me to live is Christ.

To die is gain. So if I die, that's good. If I live, well, that's all about Christ.

So if that means he wants me here in this prison, if that means he wants me working over here, it's not about me, it's about him. For me, to live is Christ. To die, man, that's all better.

I'm invincible until he takes me home. That's why Paul was so radical. Have they taken me out? Oh, good.

That's not like this author in Ecclesiastes has that kind of view, does he? Doesn't have that afterlife view, does he? It's kind of like, you know, you die, that's it.

[55 : 44] But here at least we get some perspective, right? So for Paul, he had enough. He had enough to live as Christ, to die as gain. I've got everything I need.

I'm content. I'm forgiven. I have a new identity. I have security in heaven. I have hope. Do you have enough? Whereas the sinner here, right?

Who's the sinner? He's the one chasing the wind, seeking fulfillment in worldly pursuits. The one who's trying to control his life so that he might find some fulfillment. The one who seeks for himself now.

He's laying up his treasures now here on earth. Where? What? It gets destroyed. It just fades away. It's temporary. It's not lasting at all.

So what's your worldview of possessions and earthly pursuits and kind of this whole subject? What's your worldview? Do we adopt what the world says?

[56 : 48] Do we adopt what this guy says in the first 23 verses? Or do we have this view? Here's Jesus' view, Matthew 6. He says, don't lay up for yourselves treasures on earth.

Don't do it. Because moth and rust destroy and thieves break in and steal. You're always worried and it's not secure. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where there's no moth, no rust, no thieves.

Totally secure. Don't even have to worry about it. For, why do that? Because where your treasure is, there is your heart.

That's where your heart is. The eye, I'm not talking about the eye, the eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is healthy, if it's clear, if it's good, then your whole body is full of light.

But if your eye is bad, if it's clouded, if it's covetousness, then your whole body is full of darkness. If the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness?

[57 : 54] Point, no one can serve two masters. You can't have it both ways. You either hate the one and love the other or you'll devote it to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

Guess what we usually choose in the short run? We know better, but we still do that. He goes on, therefore I tell you, don't be anxious about your life, what you will eat, what you will drink, about your body, what you put on.

Come on, those are the basics. We have to do that every day. What if I don't? Jesus says, don't be anxious. Is not life more than food? Is your life not more than pursuits of pleasures and possessions and things?

Look at the birds. Jesus. How do I give you an example? Look at the birds. Look at the birds. Have you ever looked at the birds and thought about this?

Boy, they neither toil nor weep nor gather in the barns. Yet your Heavenly Father feeds and they have plenty to eat. Oh, they're out early pecking at the ground and all that, you know, but they find it.

[59 : 05] Right? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour span on his life? How do you make your life more fulfilling by worrying about it? And why are you anxious about clothing?

So you look at the birds. Now look at the lilies of the field. You love flowers? By the way, this is springtime, isn't it? Or did we miss? Did we miss spring already? There's 12 seasons in Colorado, right?

There's a fall spring and then there's a later spring and then there's a fall spring. Then the winter comes back. Winter part two. Lilies of the field.

How they grow. They neither toil nor spin. I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. The lilies. And if God so clothes the grass of the field which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown in the oven, will he not much more clothe you?

Oh, you of little faith. Not little like this. Little like this. Not very long.

[60 : 13] Because you don't need much faith. Mustard seed faith. Two big things. Short faith. Oh, you of short faith. Peter stepped on the water with little faith, right?

How long did it last? Until he saw the wind. Right? Short. And he said, you of little faith. I thought it was pretty big step out on the water in the storm, but it's not size, it's the length.

Oh, you of little faith. That's us. We have short faith. We have faith. We have faith. And then comes Monday. And then comes, oh, I hope Friday comes sooner this week.

Right? And so our faith gets, that's just who we are, right? Therefore, don't be anxious saying, what shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear? Where shall I work?

What shall I do? What about my future? What about my kids? What about my security? What if I have to retire? What if I get sick? What then?

[61 : 27] I get real anxious about that. We get real anxious about that. For the Gentiles seek after all these things.

But you know something? Your heavenly father, he knows something. He knows that you need it. He already knows that you need these things. Do you believe that he already knows that you need these things?

Because you're more important than the birds. And you're more valuable than the lilies. So, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things.

all these things will be added to you. He'll take care of you. He'll take care of you. Take care of you. Do we believe that? Yeah.

Sometimes. In my head, yeah. In my heart, I struggle with it.

[62 : 32] Yeah. That's because we're human. Do you still get anxious? Of course. Do you try to control it?

Yeah. Try to fix it. Try to control it. Try to... And not that I shouldn't do something about my future. Not that I shouldn't think about what's ahead because the Bible does encourage us to do those kind of things.

But do I do it in my strength or do I do it, okay, Lord, help us. Guide us with this. We want to leave something for our kids. We want to take care of our parents of their old age. We want to do these kind of things as good believers would do.

Right? Why do we struggle with these things? Why do we still seek after these? Because we have short faith. So, as Jesus says, where are you laying up your treasures?

Just... Just... seek that out before the Lord. Lord, where... Help me see. Show me. Show me where I'm really laying up my treasures.

[63 : 41] Are they really in heaven? Likely they're divided, huh? They're... And so help me. Help me, Lord. Search and try me and see if there be any earthly way in me.

Do you have enough? Or like Solomon, do you still want more? Oh, Adam, where is your treasure? Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you, Lord, that this word causes us, even though it can be a difficult word, we thank you that it causes us to think.

It causes us to evaluate. It causes us to look at it not just from under the sun perspective, but a complete perspective, a real world view that includes you.

And so, Father, help us to rightly evaluate ourselves before you and how we... how we pursue things, how we have perspective.

[64 : 47] We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.