

# **WISDOM UNDER THE SUN:**

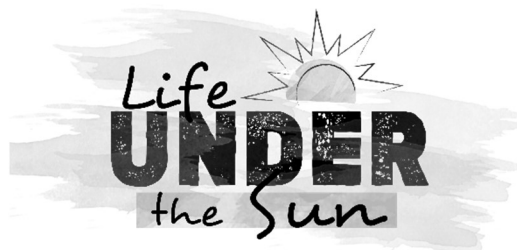
## **CAN IT ANSWER OUR QUESTIONS?**

Ecclesiastes 1:12-18; 2:12-17

Wisdom under the sun cannot produce \_\_\_\_\_ . 1:12-18

Wisdom under the sun cannot change the outcome of \_\_\_\_\_ . 2:12-17

Wisdom from God alone can give us \_\_\_\_\_ in the presence of a perplexing world. 12:13, 14; Colossians 2:1-3



## **Ecclesiastes 1:12-18**

**1**<sup>12</sup> I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

<sup>15</sup> What is crooked cannot be made straight,  
and what is lacking cannot be counted.

<sup>16</sup> 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."

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> For in much wisdom is much vexation,  
and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

## **Ecclesiastes 2:12-17**

**2**<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> Then I saw that there is more gain in wisdom than in folly, as there is more gain in light than in darkness.

<sup>14</sup> The wise person has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I perceived that the same event happens to all of them.

<sup>15</sup> Then I said in my heart, "What happens to the fool will happen to me also. Why then have I been so very wise?" And I said in my heart that this also is vanity.

<sup>16</sup> 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! <sup>17</sup> So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after wind.

# Wisdom Under the Sun

May 9, 2021



**Open:** How would you describe what it means to have wisdom?

**Read & Discuss:** Ecclesiastes 1:12-18

1. The preacher describes his quest in 1:13 as “to search out by wisdom of all that is done under heaven.” How would you describe in your own words what he is looking for? How do we tend to think about wisdom as a source of satisfaction in American culture today?
2. What do you think the preacher means in 1:15 when he says, “What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted?” What evidence can we see of this in contemporary society? What is an appropriate Christian response to this dilemma?
3. This man also describes his quest to understand life as “an unhappy business” (1:13) and a “striving after wind” (1:14). Why do you think he views it that way? How have you experienced exasperation in your effort to understand life or difficult circumstances you have encountered?
4. According to Ecclesiastes 1:18, wisdom and knowledge can increase frustration about life’s meaning rather than provide a satisfying explanation of it. Why would this be true? What biblical truths and practices help you deal constructively with hard situations you face?

**Read & Discuss:** Ecclesiastes 2:12-17

5. The writer sees there is “gain in wisdom” (2:13). What are some of the practical benefits of wisdom? Identify some of the limitations of wisdom. According to 2:14-16, what can wisdom not prevent? This caused the preacher to hate life (2:17). How should a Christian react to this?

**Read & Discuss:** Colossians 1:9-10 and James 1:5

6. How do these verses give us confidence that we can receive wisdom and find meaning in a world striving after wind? In what ways has God been gracious to give you wisdom in your life experiences?

**Apply:** How can you seek to use the wisdom found in Christ as your primary foundation of wisdom? How can we adopt a helpful attitude toward the benefits and limitations of worldly wisdom?

**Pray:** Pray that the wisdom found in Christ would overflow from the people of God. Pray for NCAC to be a lighthouse of hope in Christ in a world looking only at broken solutions.

## **Ecclesiastes 1:12-18**

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<sup>18</sup> For in much wisdom is much vexation,  
and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow. (ESV)

## **Ecclesiastes 2:12-17**

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## **Colossians 1:9-10**

<sup>9</sup> And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, <sup>10</sup> so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. (ESV)

## **James 1:5**

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (ESV)