

Scripture

Ecclesiastes 1:1-18 (NLT)

1 These are the words of the Teacher, King David's son, who ruled in Jerusalem.

Everything Is Meaningless

2 "Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "completely meaningless!"

3 What do people get for all their hard work under the sun? 4 Generations come and generations go, but the earth never changes.

- 5 The sun rises and the sun sets,
then hurries around to rise again.
- 6 The wind blows south,
and then turns north.
Around and around it goes,
blowing in circles.
- 7 Rivers run into the sea,
but the sea is never full.
Then the water returns again to the rivers
and flows out again to the sea.

8 Everything is wearisome beyond
description.

No matter how much we see,
we are never satisfied.

No matter how much we hear,
we are not content.

9 History merely repeats itself.

It has all been done before.

Nothing under the sun is truly new.

- 10 Sometimes people say, “Here is something new!” But actually it is old; nothing is ever truly new.
- 11 We don’t remember what happened in the past, and in future generations, no one will remember what we are doing now.

The Teacher Speaks: The Futility of Wisdom

12 I, the Teacher, was king of Israel, and I lived in Jerusalem.

13 I devoted myself to search for understanding and to explore by wisdom everything being done under heaven. I soon discovered that God has dealt a tragic existence to the human race.

14 I observed everything going on under the sun, and really, it is all meaningless—like chasing the wind.

- 15 What is wrong cannot be made right.
What is missing cannot be recovered.
- 16 I said to myself, “Look, I am wiser than any of the kings who ruled in Jerusalem before me. I have greater wisdom and knowledge than any of them.”
- 17 So I set out to learn everything from wisdom to madness and folly. But I learned firsthand that pursuing all this is like chasing the wind.

18 The greater my wisdom,
the greater my grief.
To increase knowledge
only increases sorrow.