

# THE USELESS SEARCH FOR SATISFACTION

## *Ecclesiastes 1:1-18*

4/26/15

### OUTLINE OF ECCLESIASTES:

A. *The Prologue: Vanity Declared (1:1-11)*

B. *The Monologue: Vanity Described (1:12-12:8)*

❖ *The Reality of the Vanity of Life (1:12-2:23)*

MAIN IDEA: Life can appear meaningless when viewed from the human perspective.

### I. THE INSPIRED PENMAN (Eccles. 1:1)

A. *How he is identified: Qoheleth (Heb.)—the title of the book*

- From Heb. verb meaning “to *call* together, assemble, collect”
- Either referring to one who *gathers* people together to hear or one who gathers and *collects* truth from life

B. *Who he is: Solomon (cp. 1:1, 12, 13, 16; 2:4-10; 12:9)*

*Son of David, king in Jerusalem (Eccl. 1:1, 12)*

### II. THE BASIC PREMISE (Eccles. 1:2)

A. *The premise: “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity” (1:2).*

B. *The key word (“vanity”): used 38 times in the book*

C. *The meaning: breath, vapor, emptiness, futility, meaninglessness*

### III. THE EXISTING PROOF (Eccles. 1:3-18)

A. *A look at labor: what advantage is it? (1:3; cp. 2:22; 3:9)*

B. *A look at life: what does it accomplish? (1:4-18)*

- Learn a lesson from *nature* . . . (1:4-7)

*The same thing happens over and over, day in and day out.*

- *Generations (1:4a)*
- *The earth (1:4b)*
- *The sun (1:5)*
- *The wind (1:6)*
- *The rivers (1:7)*

- Learn a lesson from *history* . . . (1:8-11)

➤ *Nothing new ever happens—it’s always the same old thing (1:8-10).*

➤ *Nothing that happens is ever remembered--it is soon forgotten (1:11; cp. 2:16; 9:5).*

- Learn a lesson from *experience* . . . (1:12-18)

*For many things that happen, wisdom does not provide the explanation (1:12-18).*

➤ *Wisdom’s search is difficult (1:12-13).*

➤ *Wisdom’s search cannot change circumstances (1:14-15).*

➤ *Wisdom’s search can bring grief and sorrow (1:16-18).*

❖ *Viewing creation and life itself can lead us to believe that life is futile.*

❖ *Even wisdom is limited in changing circumstances and answering questions.*

❖ *Life is truly meaningless and futile apart from a relationship with God.*