

## **“Futility”**

***“The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem:  
‘Meaningless! Meaningless!’  
says the Teacher.  
‘Utterly meaningless!  
Everything is meaningless.’  
What do people gain from all their labors  
at which they toil under the sun?  
Generations come and generations go,  
but the earth remains forever.  
The sun rises and the sun sets,  
and hurries back to where it rises.  
The wind blows to the south  
and turns to the north;  
round and round it goes,  
ever returning on its course.  
All streams flow into the sea,  
yet the sea is never full.” (Ecclesiastes 1:1-7)***

Sounds pretty hopeless, doesn't it. And his life was found to be hopeless because he sought meaning in material things, such as wisdom, wealth, women...in everything this world had to offer. How did he feel about his success in finding meaning? **Chapter 2, verse 11** says this:

***“when I surveyed all that my hands had done  
and what I had toiled to achieve,  
everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind;  
nothing was gained under the sun.”***

Things hadn't changed much by the time Jesus came around. He instructed His followers to seek meaning in a relationship with God. With quotes like ***“life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.” (Luke 12:15)***, along with His teachings against greed and an unfounded trust in material wealth, Jesus is telling us the same thing that Solomon did in the opening passage. The people in the late first century were warned by inspired writers to stay away from the futile, meaningless, and aimless life of those of the world.

Paul said this in **Ephesians 4:17-19** about the people of his time:

***“So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.”***

This could describe the people of today. So many go around aimlessly and are futile in their thinking like the Romans of Romans 1:21, when Paul said of them: ***“their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”*** They, and many in the world today live this way; they have aimless, hopeless, Godless existences. The solution? It's really pretty obvious. **GOD**, plain and simple. Loving Him. Respecting Him. Obeying Him. That kind of life has meaning. It's not

pointless, aimless, or futile. It is hope-filled and has direction. As the Preacher concluded in **Ecclesiastes 12:13**:

***“...here is the conclusion of the matter:  
Fear God and keep his commandments,  
for this is the duty of all mankind.”***

Great words of wisdom then, and just as great words today.

--- Johnny Stephens