

Introduction:

1. **What Makes a Happy Life?—The Illusive Joy & Fulfillment Were All Searching For**
 - a. A Recent survey of Young People asked what their most important life goals were...
 - b. Over 80% said a major life goal was to get rich.
 - c. And 50% said another major life goal was to become famous
 - d. But This Isn't New—SUCESS is what Most College Freshmen thought brings happiness
2. **What Makes a Happy Life? This is what a 75 yr Harvard Study is trying to find**
 - a. But Wait, Arn't You the Harvard Professors? The ones with the PhD's?
 - b. Why Aren't You the Happy and Smart People Telling Us?!
 - c. Why are you asking us? Aren't You Supposed to Have All the Answers?
3. **Well the Search for Happiness Continues in the Longest Study in History**
 - a. **This Study has lasted so long that it's had 4 different directors...**

Each director viewed the data different... Each took a guess at the answer

 1. At first they thought it was: Genetics that determined your happiness
 2. Then they thought Physical health or Intelligence
 3. Then later, Success, or Personality...
 4. It wasn't until 50 years into the study they began to see it is Not Genetics, or Intelligence or Success or Health or Personality...
 - b. **One Thing They Could Determine—Happiness is not found by accident in winning the lottery of life!**
 1. Good Genes are Good—but Joy is Better!
 2. Health is good, Personality is Good, Success is Good—But Joy is Better
 - c. **So The Study Continues... and the search for the happy life continues...**
4. **This is the Same Search Solomon Embarked on (1:12-13)**
 - a. As king of Israel, he possessed more of this world's power, pleasures, and possessions — More than any other person in History!
 - b. He had it all! — He Had Won the Lottery of Life!
 - c. Yet his heart was still NOT fully satisfied—in Fact it was EMPTY

I. SOLOMON'S SEARCH

SEARCHING FOR TRUE MEANING & HAPPINESS...

A. IN HUMAN KNOWLEDGE (1:16-18)

1. **Solomon pursued Knowledge and Wisdom as a pathway to happiness**
 - a) He Pursued Knowledge and Studied About Everything Under the Sun (**v.12-13**)
 - b) He Studied Nature, Botany, Zoology, Astronomy, Math, Medicine,
As Well as Wisdom, Scripture and Truth
 - c) Wisdom is discernment for the proper application of knowledge

2. **He Gained so much Intellectual Understanding that Kings, Queens, Rulers, Judges, Scholars would travel far distances to learn from him**
 - a) The Queen of Sheba said Solomon's knowledge and Wisdom surpassed even the Claims she heard from afar
3. **Wisdom and Knowledge without God Leads to Sorrow and Grief (v.17)**
 - a) There Are Many Very Intelligent & Knowledgeable People Who Are Very Unhappy
 - b) Knowledge Does Not Bring Happiness... It Usually Brings Sorrow!
 - c) The More I Know About Government—the Sadder I Am!
 - d) The More I Know About Higher Education—The More Sorrow I Have!
 - e) The More I Know About the Smartest People with the Highest IQ, the more Discouraged I Become!
 - f) When You Look At Their Lives You Realize THEY DON'T HAVE THE ANSWERS!
4. **The Answers to Life Are NOT Within Man—They Are Only From God!**

SEARCHING FOR TRUE MEANING & HAPPINESS...

B. IN THE PURSUIT OF PLEASURE (2:1-2)

1. **The Pursuit of Pleasure Seems Like it Would Bring Happiness...**
 - a) Entertainment isn't Inherently Wrong—but it Quickly Fades Away
 - b) It Only Lasts for a few days or few hours, sometimes only a few minutes!
2. **Even the Perfect Vacation has to end—they you have to pay it off!**
 - a) And Even if you were Rich Enough to be on Permanent Vacation, you still face the storms of life...
 - b) **[Even Living in a Tropical Paradise!] These Two Billionaires are still fighting!**
3. **Even After Pursuing Pleasure Solomon's Heart Was Still Empty...**

SEARCHING FOR TRUE MEANING & HAPPINESS...

C. IN THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL (2:3)

1. **Some think that ALCOHOL Will Make Them HAPPY... and a \$Billion \$ Industry is Telling Them it will!**
 - a) If You Watch their Commercials—Alcohol is supposed to make you happy, and Popular, and Important!
 - b) But Alcohol is a depressant that can have the effect of an anti-anxiety Med
 - c) Many Self-medicate to deaden the conscience or numb the pain of the past
 - d) Without Realizing the Long-Term Effects...
2. **Within the Harvard Grant Study, they identified the #1 destructive force that kills happiness: Alcohol**
 - a) At first Alcohol Releases Endorphins which make people feel good
 - b) But Behind the Scenes, Alcohol is Corrosive to Your Health and Happiness
 - c) A British Study found that even moderate use shrinks the area of the brain used for cognition and learning

- d) A 30 yr Oxford study found through MRI scans of the brain, that the the amount of shrinkage in the hippocampus (the Brain area associated with memory and reasoning) was related to the amount people drank alcohol.
 - e) Those who were heavy drinkers had the most rapid decline of cognitive abilities
 - f) A Harvard Study Confirmed the Same: Alcohol causes Cognitive Decline
(*This is Your Brain on Alcohol, Harvard Medical School, 7/14/17 Beverly Merz*)
3. **The Harvard Grant Study Found that Almost as destructive as Alcoholism**
 - a) Was **Loneliness** and **relationship conflict**...
 - b) And Yet **Alcoholism Results in all Three!** — **A Toxic-Trifecta!**
 4. **Filling his emptiness w/ Alcohol, Only Brought More Emptiness...**

SEARCHING FOR TRUE MEANING & HAPPINESS...

D. IN HUMAN ACHIEVEMENTS (2:4-6)

1. **Notice how many times Solomon uses the word 'I' 'my' or 'myself'**
 - a) Over 30x in just 11 verses!
2. **But how many times did he indicate these great plans were to help others**
 - a) or for the enjoyment of others? [NONE]
3. **All these Great Plans—Building Projects, Remodeling Projects,**
 - a) Gardens, Parks, Vineyards and Inventing Watering Systems for them
 - b) Solomon was Becoming Like the Howard Hughes of Ancient Times

SEARCHING FOR TRUE MEANING & HAPPINESS...

E. IN MATERIALISM (2:7-8)

1. **Acquiring People and Things...**
 - a) He Acquired Full Times Slaves and Servants — Constantly Working Full Time to created Happiness and Contentment for this King
 - b) He Acquired Full Time Singers for Live Entertainment and Concerts...
like the greatest musical shows of Vegas
 - c) As a Collector He Amassed Gold and Silver, Treasures for Kings, Princes

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING & HAPPINESS IN...

F. HUMAN GREATNESS (2:9)

1. **King Solomon became the greatest geo-political leader of his time**
Greater than all the kings of the earth (2 Chron 9:22)
2. **Solomon became an Empire Builder and people marveled at his brilliance**
 - a) Think of a Powerful Ruler with an Incredible I.Q. Along with a Photographic Memory
 - b) and a Deep Well of Wisdom to Apply All His Knowledge Properly
3. **He Was a Prodigy w/ a Reputation that spread through the whole world**

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING & HAPPINESS IN...

G. SELFISH INDULGENCE (2:10-11)

1. **Solomon said He Withheld Nothing that His Eyes Desired...**

- a) Even Trophy Wives and Women (v.8 ESV) His Concubines & Wives (1 Kings 11:3)
 - 2. **But When He Surveyed Everything—He Was still Empty...**
 - a) It Was All Just Chasing After the Wind... Fleeting and Empty
 - 3. **EX: William Randolph Hearst became one of wealthiest men in world...**
 - a) He built a Castle for himself and filled it with a vast Collection of Artwork
 - b) B/C That What You Do When Your Super Rich! Build a Castle and Fill it with Toys
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II. SOLOMON'S CONCLUSION

HOW TO LIVE LIFE UNDER THE SUN...

A. WE MUST LIVE WITH WISDOM IN HARMONY WITH GOD AND HIS WILL, OTHERWISE WE DISCOVER ALL OUR WORK IS VANITY

This is the Theme of Chapters 1–6

1. **Without the Wisdom to Live in Harmony with God and His Will, We will discover that all our work is Vanity!**
 - a) **Steve Jobs was considered a tech visionary and he became one of the richest and most powerful men in business world.**
 - b) At the peak of his career, Apple had more cash than any company in world history. More money than most foreign countries.
 - c) But even though Jobs was fighting cancer, he was fighting a corporate war against google. The CEO of google, Eric Schmidt was on the Apple board during the secret development of the iPhone. Much of the technology was also used in googles android phone.
 - d) Only a couple years after the release of the iPhone, Jobs knew that Android was going to flood the marketshare...
 - e) "I will spend my last dying breath if need to, and I will spend every penny of Apple's \$40 billion in the bank, to right this wrong. I'm going to destroy Android, because it's a stolen product. I'm willing to go thermonuclear war on this," the late CEO famously said.
2. **Steve Jobs was an Empire builder and Visionary—And So Was Solomon**
 - a) But unlike Steve Jobs, Solomon was a World Leader and the wisest man in history
 - b) Who Realized at the End of His Life, that when we live and work without God,
All Our Work results in Emptiness (**Ecclesiastes 2:12–23**)
3. **Vanity is a Multi-Dimensional Metaphor: Vapor, breath, empty meaningless**
 - a) **The famous psychologist Carl Jung said that a third of his cases suffered from no definable neurosis other than "the senselessness and emptiness of their lives."**
 - b) He said Meaninglessness was the general neurosis of the modern era

**B. WHEN WE LIVE WITH WISDOM IN HARMONY WITH GOD AND HIS WILL,
WE CAN LIVE WITH PEACE AND APPRECIATION FOR GOD'S
BLESSINGS REGARDLESS OF OUTSIDE CIRCUMSTANCES¹ (2:24-26)**

This is the Theme of Chapters 7–12

1. This is the Wisdom that Withstands the Storms of Life!
2. That Regardless of Outside Circumstances that are always in flux...
3. If We Live with Wisdom in Harmony With God and His Will,
We Can Appreciate and Enjoy the Gift of Life!
4. Because We Love and Trust God! (2:24-26)

**C. TRUE HAPPINESS IS NOT BASED ON WINNING THE LOTTERY OF LIFE
IT IS BASED ON LIVING IN HARMONY WITH GOD AND HIS WILL!**

1. Let's Be Real—Your Not Going to Win the Lottery of Life! (in eyes of world)
And That's Actually a Good Thing...
2. Solomon Won the Lottery of Life and He Couldn't Find True Happiness!
 - a) Money, Power, Pleasure, Success may be All Good—but Joy is Better
 - b) Money, Materialism, Achievements, Indulgence—Can't Survive the Storms of Life
3. **The Harvard Grant Study Shows—Happiness is not from winning the
Lottery of Life—it is found in Loving Relationships...**
4. **Which is What Solomon Discovered—True Happiness in Life is Found
in Relationship with God the Creator of Life...**
 - a) Life, Love, Enjoyment, Happiness, Fulfillment are Gifts from God
 - b) They're Not Intended to Be Wasted on Selfish Indulgence
 - c) But to Be Enjoyed in Harmony with God the Giver of all Gifts!

CONCLUSION:

***True Happiness is Not Based on Winning the Lottery of Life,
it is Based on Living with Wisdom in Harmony With God and His Will***

1. This One Relationship is so Critical—So Key to Eternal Joy...
2. That God gave up His own Son to Restore this Relationship!
Romans 5:6–9
3. God Loves us so much—He Paid Our Debt in Full
by the Blood of Jesus Christ
4. So We Can Enjoy True Peace, True Happiness in Fellowship With Him!

¹ Theme of ch. 1-6 and 7-12 adapted from Bible Study Textbook, Kidwell, College Press