

CHAPTER 2:12-26

Lesson 4

KEY VERSE(S)—

OUTLINE—

- I. **OBSERVATION:** Looking for Meaning (1:12-2:23)
 - A. Conclusion of His Search (1:12-15)
 - B. Objects of His Search (1:16-23)
 1. Knowledge and Worldly Wisdom (1:16-18)
 2. Pleasure and Mirth (2:1-3)
 3. Wealth and Accomplishments (2:4-9)
 4. Everything Man Desires (2:10-11)
 5. Inequity of Life (2:12-17)
 6. Labor and Toil (2:18-23)
- II. **INSTRUCTION:** Enjoy Good In One's Labor (2:24-26)

KEY WORDS (Themes)—

SUMMARY—

The Preacher continues to discuss the objects of his search for meaning and fulfillment in life. He saw that wisdom far excelled madness and folly (2:12-13) but that wisdom brought him knowledge of a depressing truth—that death pays no deference to the wise over the fool. Therefore, it seems that even the pursuit of wisdom over folly is vanity (2:14-16). And the truth it reveals is vexation (2:17).

Now he looks at all his labor and toil in a different light—the burdens that he bears, the skill that he exhibits, the sacrifices that he makes are all in vain (2:18-23). The instruction he gives us based on his observation of all these other things is this: find contentment and joy in our labors, and enjoy that as our reward from God (2:24-26). Of all the things man seeks for fulfillment, this is the thing that God gives!!

QUESTIONS—

- 1) *Summarize this passage in one sentence.*
- 2) *He concludes that wisdom is far greater than folly (2:12-13). But why does he reject that as having any lasting importance (2:14)?*
- 3) *What two things happen to both the wise and the fool (2:15-16)?*
- 4) *What were some of the reasons that the Preacher despaired of all his hard work and labor?*
 - *verses 18-19—*
 - *verse 21—*
 - *verses 22-23—*

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- 5) *What quickly causes the pride of our accomplishments to pale (2:18; Psalm 39:5-6; 49:10)?*

 - 6) *What does the Preacher conclude is good for man to do (2:24-26)? Why?*

 - 7) *The Preacher finally answers the question he asked in 2:3. What is his answer in 2:24-26? (cf. Philippians 4:6-7; Matthew 6:25-34)*

 - 8) *How can his conclusions about work and labor be considered consistent with the admonition to work hard to the best of our abilities (9:10; Colossians 3:23)?*

ASSIGNMENT—

Here is where the frustrated Preacher’s search finally finds an answer to his question about “*what was good for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their lives*” (2:3). What are some of the conclusions he reaches in the following verses?

What Is Good For The Sons Of Men To Do?	
2:24	
3:12-13	
3:22	
5:18-20	
8:15	
9:9	
12:13	

READING SCHEDULE—

Read this passage every day before the upcoming class (check the box after each day that you read the passage)

Sunday
 Monday
 Tuesday
 Wednesday
 Thursday
 Friday
 Saturday