

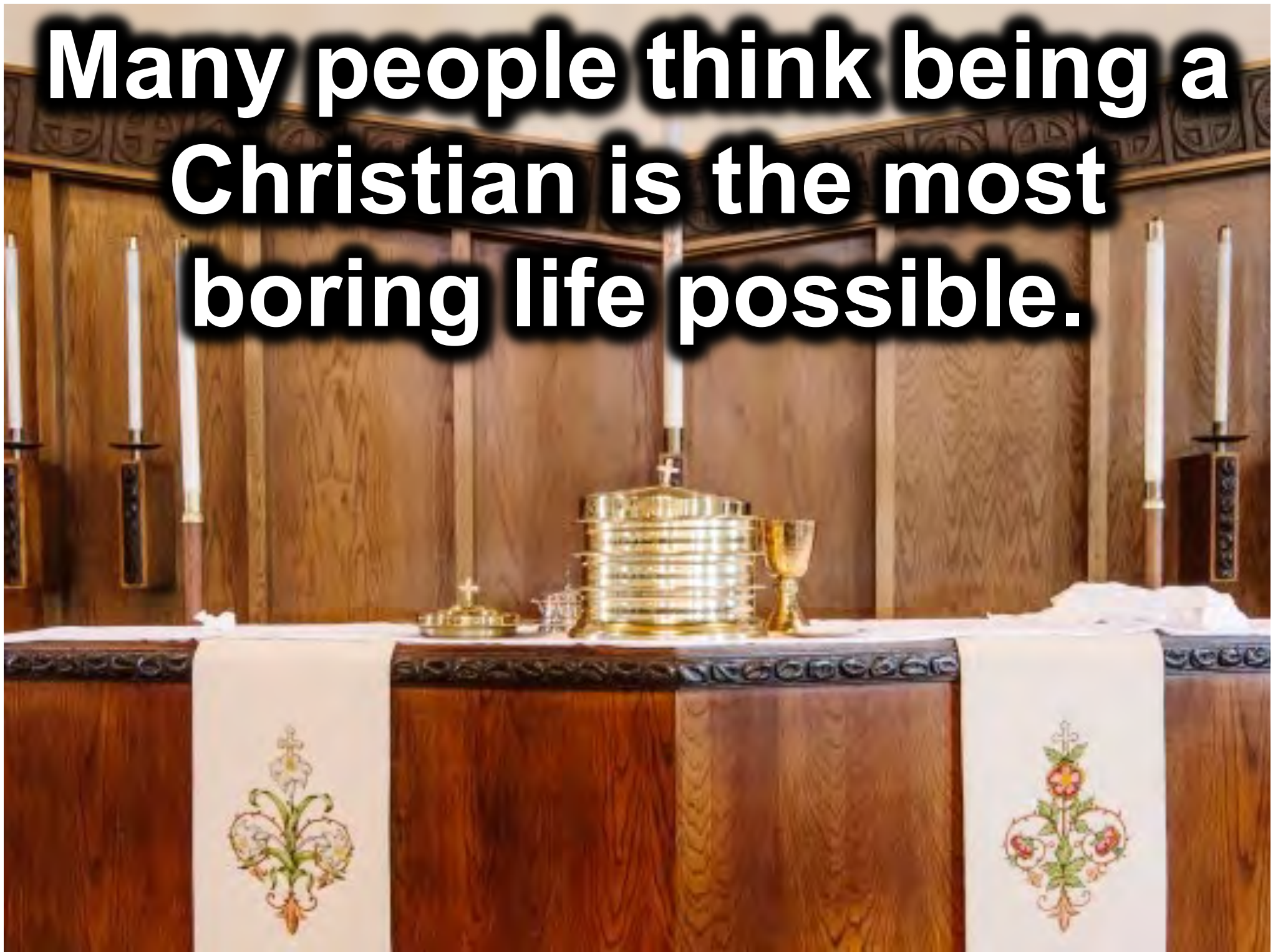


Be Intentional

Ecclesiastes

**Dr. Rick Griffith • Crossroads International Church Singapore
CICFamily.com • BibleStudyDownloads.org**

**Many people think being a
Christian is the most
boring life possible.**

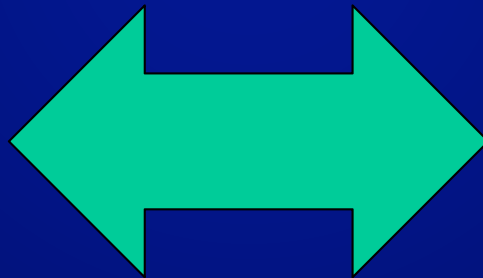


Can Christians be happy?



**Do you think these
contradict?**

enjoy life



fear God

A UNIQUE AUTHOR

Ecclesiastes

A King's Ambition



Date: Solomon in His Books

Song of Solomon 404

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Solomon, as seen in –

- **Song of Solomon** - the lover (in his youth)
- **Proverbs** - the wise (in mid-life)
- **Ecclesiastes** - the foolish (in old age)

Who do you admire?



MODERN IDOLS

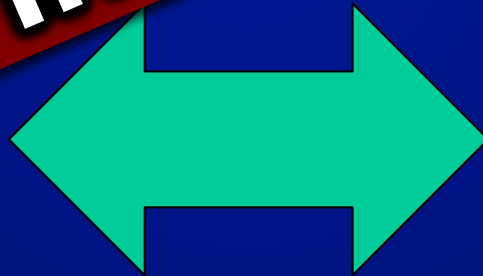


**They
admired
sages**

How can we do both?

**4 ways to be
intentional**

enjoy life



fear God

I. Live as if **life** is fleeting
(1:1-11).



Work & Wisdom Don't Last

Theme: Fleeting Nature of...	Work	Wisdom	Youth
1:1-11	1:12–6:9	6:10–11:6	11:7–12:14
Man's Humanity	Man's Hands	Man's Head	Man's Heart
Cycles	Work	Ignorance	Aging
Place: Earth (“under the sun”) about 935 BC			

Ecclesiastes 1

Ecclesiastes



Going in Circles (1:1-11)

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Why so fast?



Rats often run in circles





Rat Race

You?



Still a
rat.



**"Yeah, but if only you
knew my boss..."**



Every human endeavor is
short-lived (1:2).



The Hebrew Word *Hebel*

**“Vanity of
vanities!”**



“all is vanity!”

1:2 KJV

Meaning of *Hebel*

הבל

"vanity" (KJV, ESV, NAU),

"meaningless" (NIV, NLT),

"futile" (NET, TLB, BKC)

"fleeting"



The Key Word of Ecclesiastes

Two Ways to Look at Life

406

"enjoy life"
"fear God"
"keep his commandments"

"meaningless"
"under the sun"

Ecclesiastes



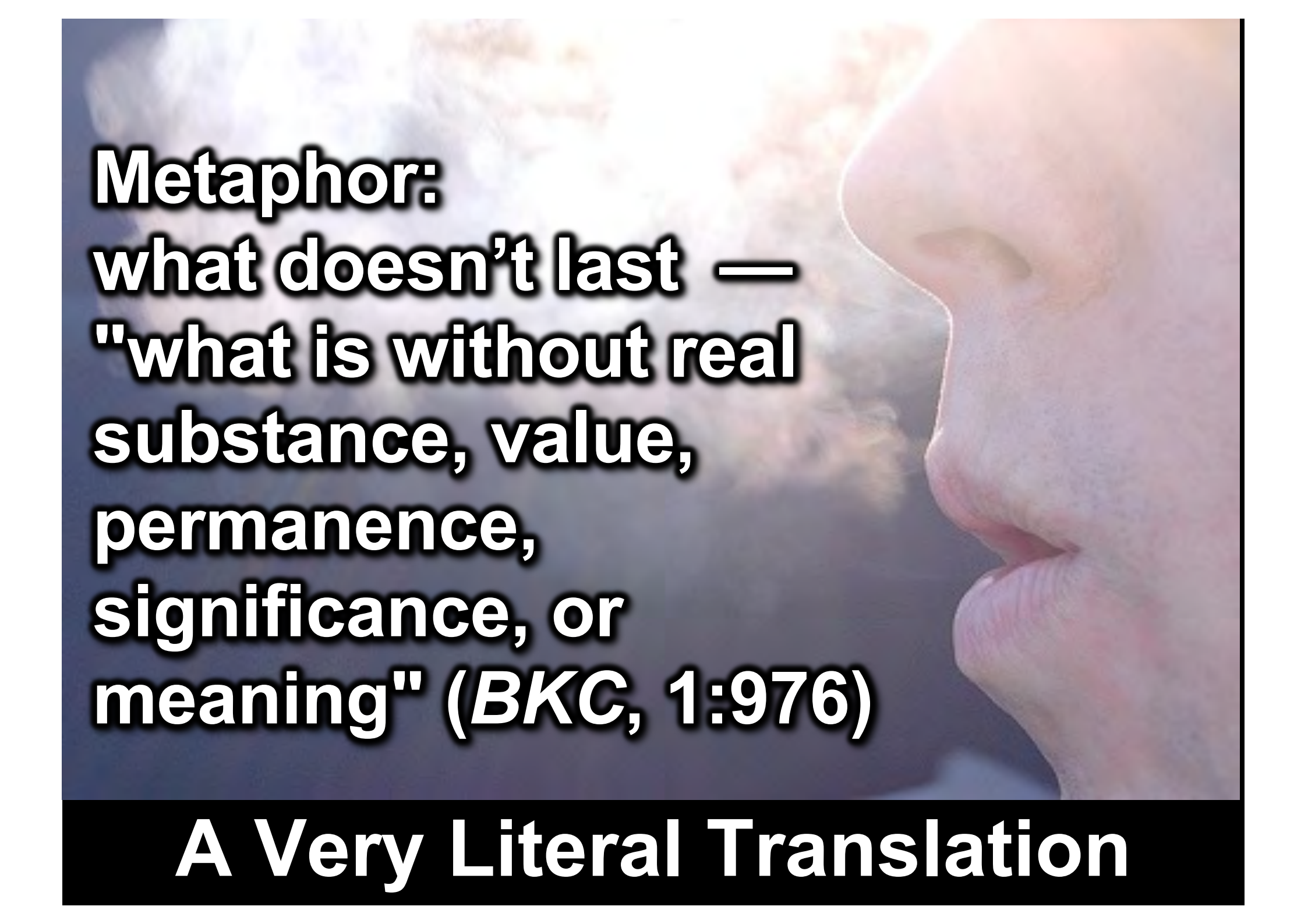
But...
Is life really meaningless?
Was Solomon schizo?

**The Meaninglessness of Human
Achievement & Wisdom**

Hebel literally means
"a breath, wind, or vapor"
(Prov. 21:6; Isa. 57:13).



Ecclesiastes



**Metaphor:
what doesn't last —
"what is without real
substance, value,
permanence,
significance, or
meaning" (*BKC*, 1:976)**

A Very Literal Translation

What's wind or vapor like?

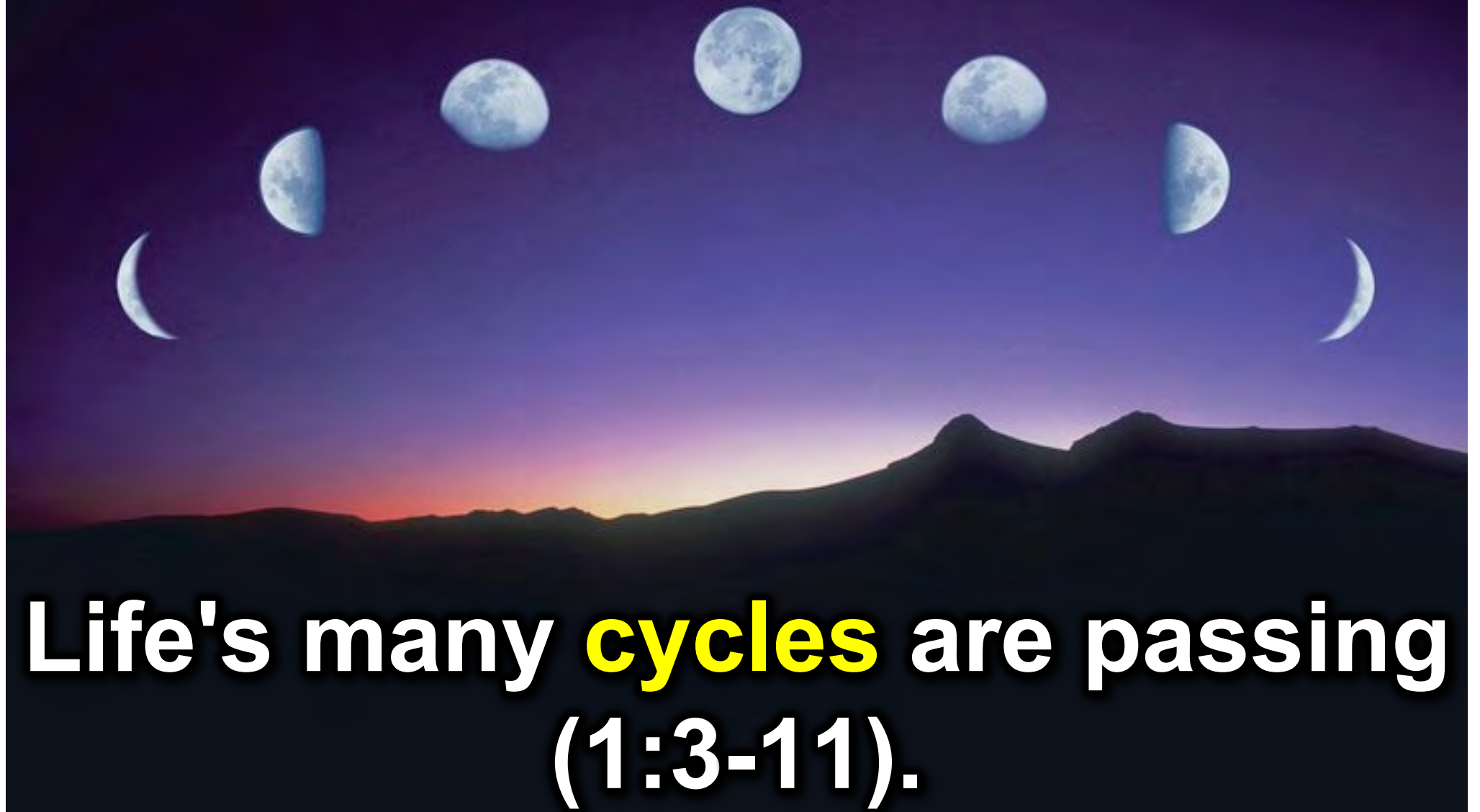
- **fleeting or transitory (6:12 with 3:19; 7:15; 9:9; 11:10)**
- **enigmatic or perplexing (6:2; 8:10, 14)**
- **unseen and obscure (11:8).**

Synonyms:

Fleeting
Passing
Brief

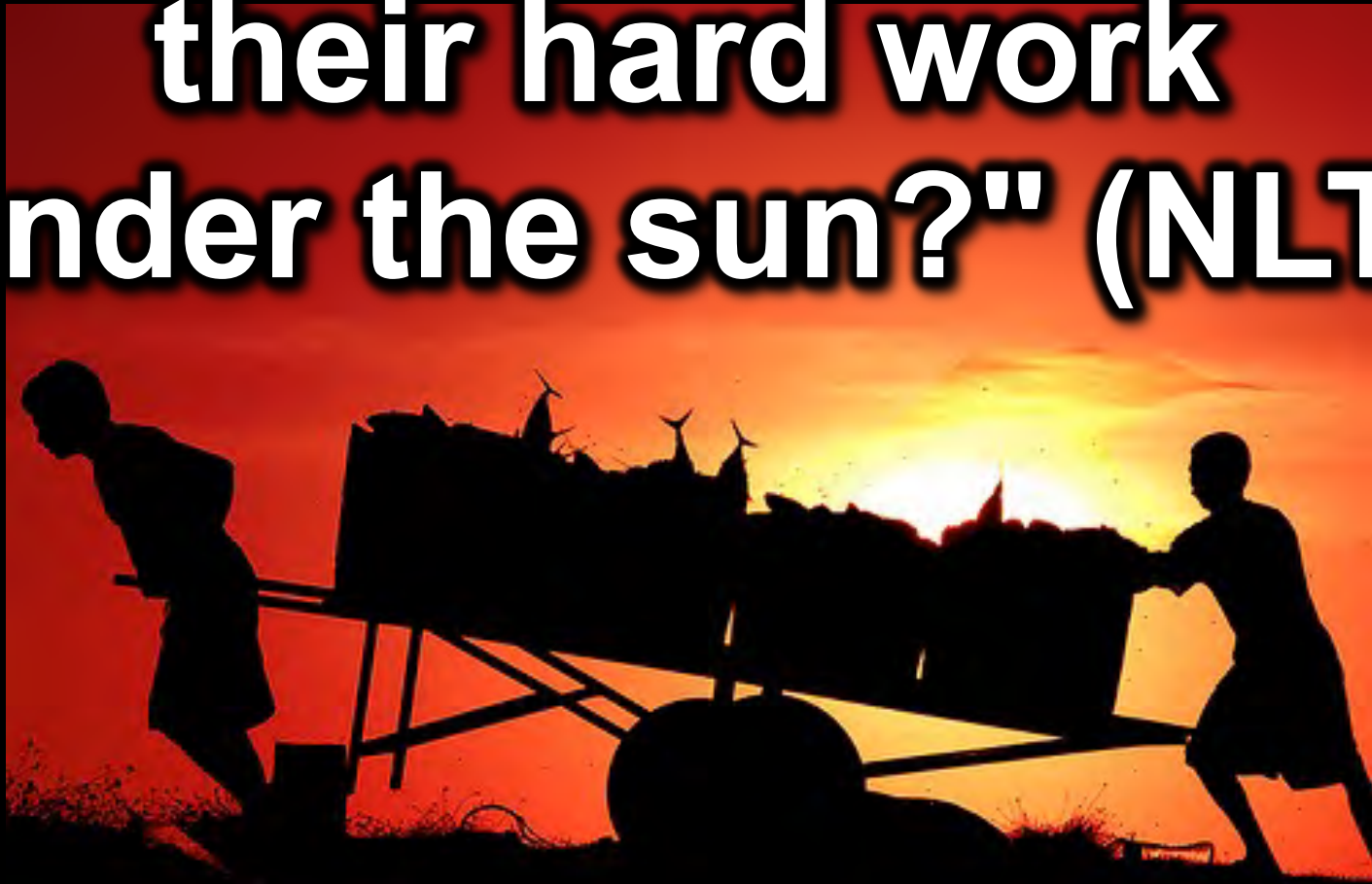
Temporary
Momentary
Transitory
Short-lived





Life's many **cycles** are passing
(1:3-11).

**"What do people get for all
their hard work
under the sun?" (NLT)**



**Theme (of 1:1–6:9): Our work
ultimately brings us nowhere (1:3).**

Proof: Life's many fleeting repetitions bring no real change (1:4-11).



**fertilized
egg**

fetus

baby

**Ceaseless cycles are
evident in our
generations (1:4).**

child

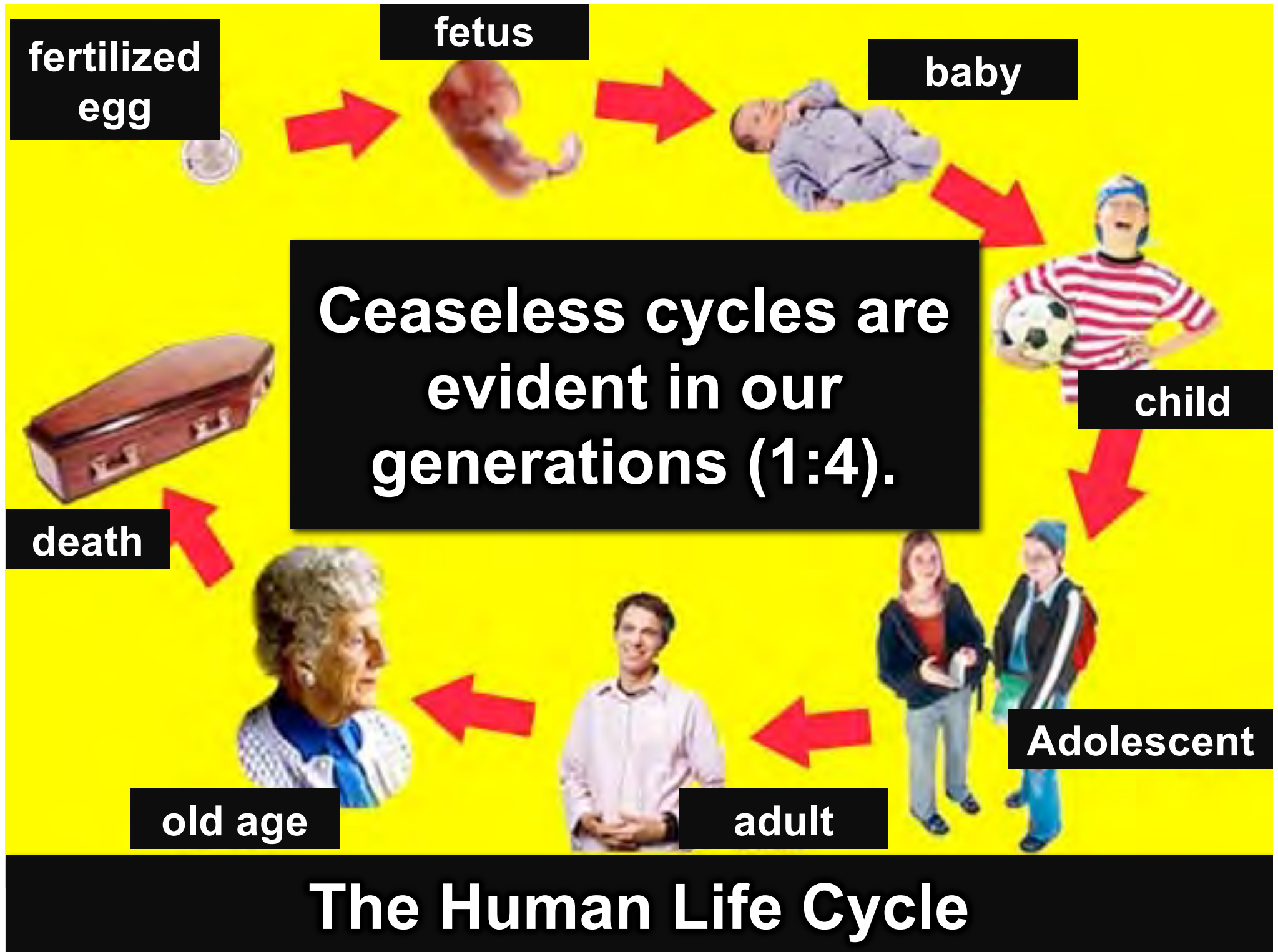
death

old age

adult


Adolescent

The Human Life Cycle



Ceaseless cycles are evident in nature (1:5-7).

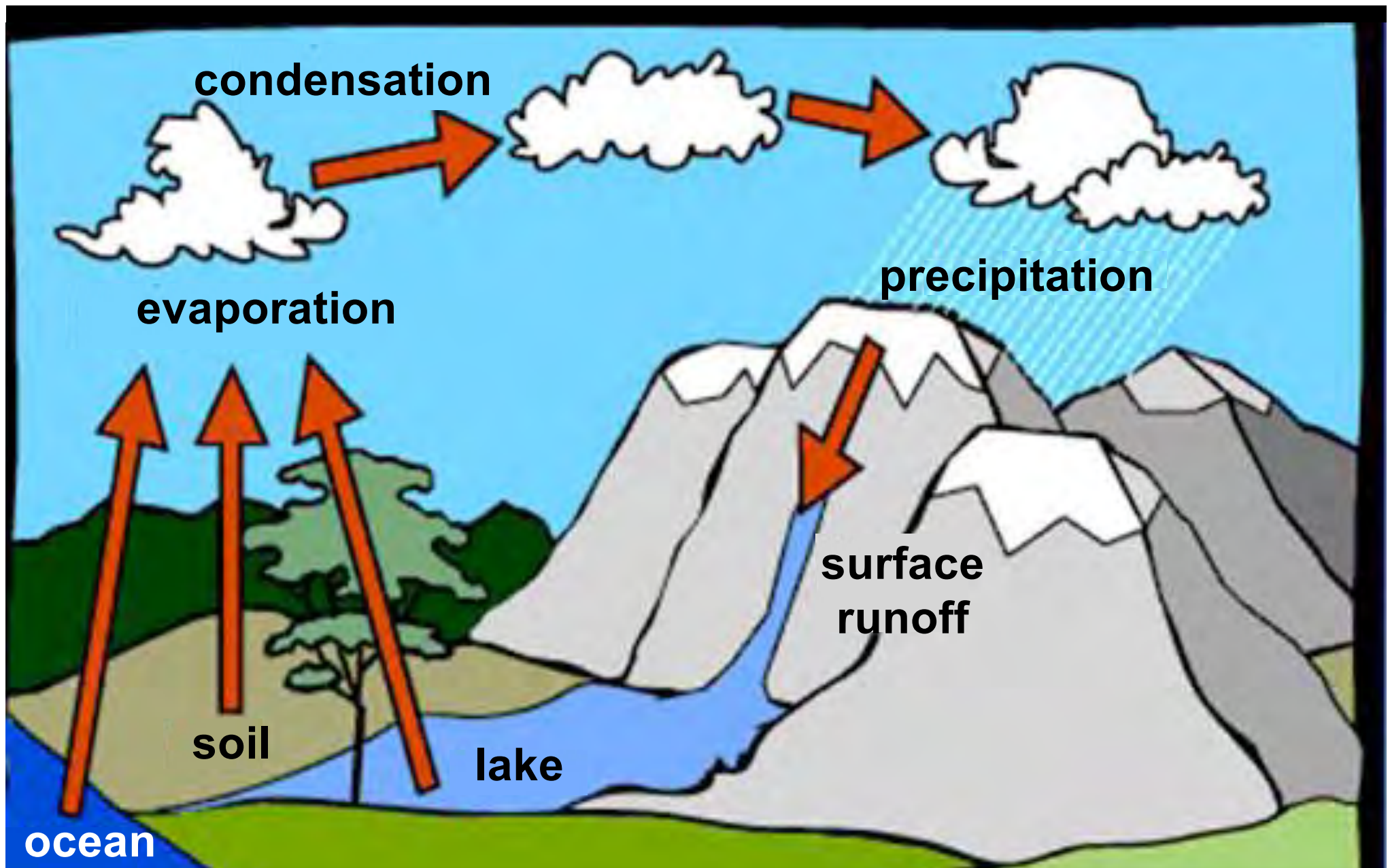




**The sun continually rises and
sets (1:5).**

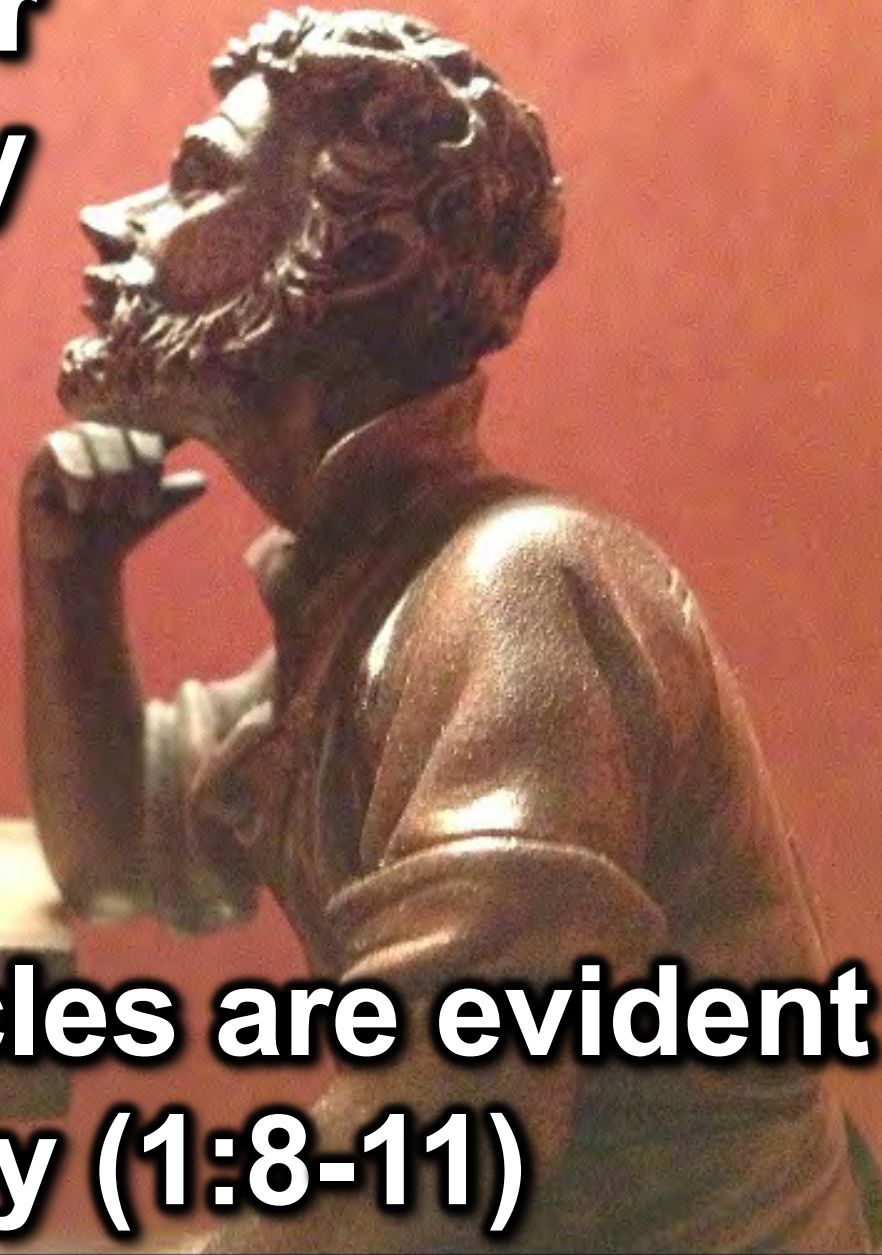


The wind blows in circles (1:6).



The rivers and seas cycle water endlessly (1:7).

**"Nothing under
the sun is truly
new" (1:9b)**



**Ceaseless cycles are evident in
history (1:8-11)**

Main Idea of 1:1-11



Life's short-lived and **fleeting**
cycles should move us to seek
God.

Don't get caught up in the race





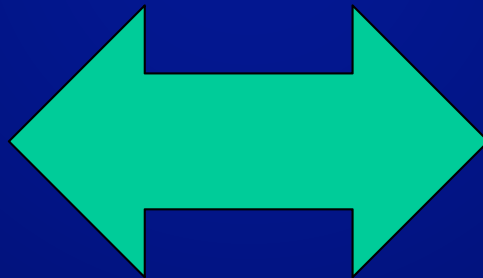
**"Our greatest
fear should not
be failure, but
succeeding in
the things in
life that really
don't matter."**

–Francis Chan



How can we do both?

enjoy life



fear God

I. Live as if **life** is fleeting
(1:1-11).



II. Live as if **work** is fleeting (1:12–6:9).



Work & Wisdom Don't Last

Theme: Fleeting Nature of...	Work	Wisdom	Youth
1:1-11	1:12–6:9	6:10–11:6	11:7–12:14
Man's Humanity	Man's Hands	Man's Head	Man's Heart
Cycles	Work	Ignorance	Aging

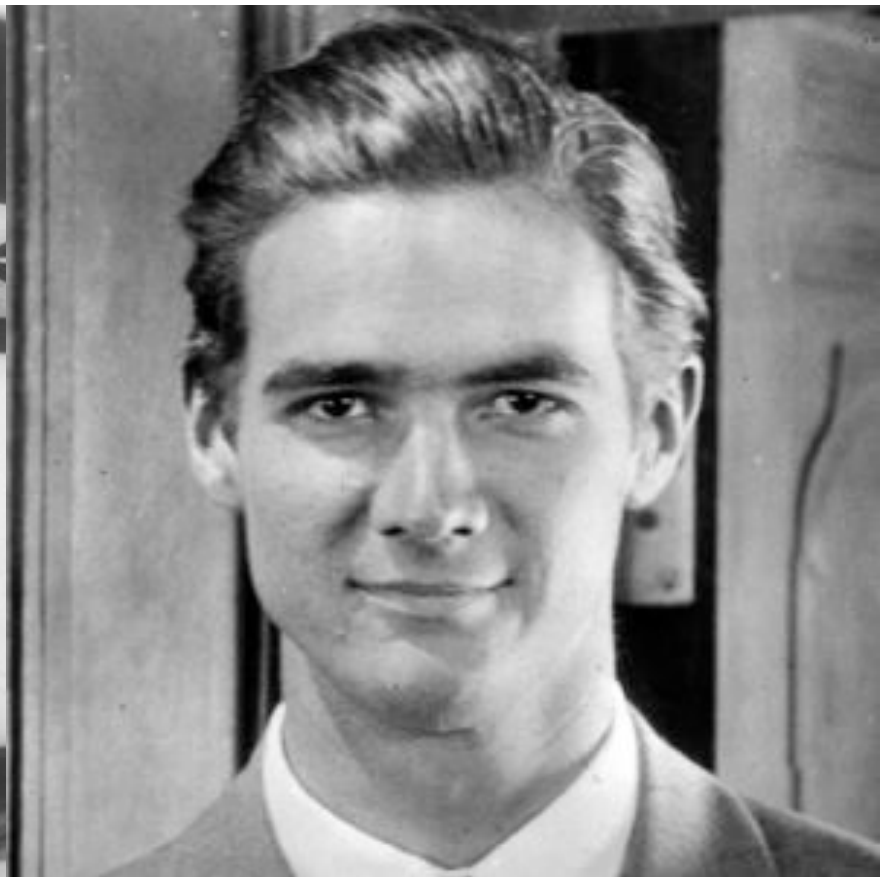
Place: Earth (“under the sun”) about 935 BC



Profitless Pursuits

Ecclesiastes 1:12–2:11

Dr. Rick Griffith • Crossroads International Church Singapore
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**Howard
Hughes
(1905-1976)**

HUGHES
HUGHES AIRCRAFT COMPANY



H-4 Hercules 2



**Billie
Dove**



**Bette
Davis**



**Ava
Gardner**



**Olivia de
Havilland**



**Katharine
Hepburn**



**Ginger
Rogers**



**Gene
Tierney**



**Joan
Fontaine**

Women, Women, Women!



The Desert Inn, Las Vegas



HOWARD

ROBARD

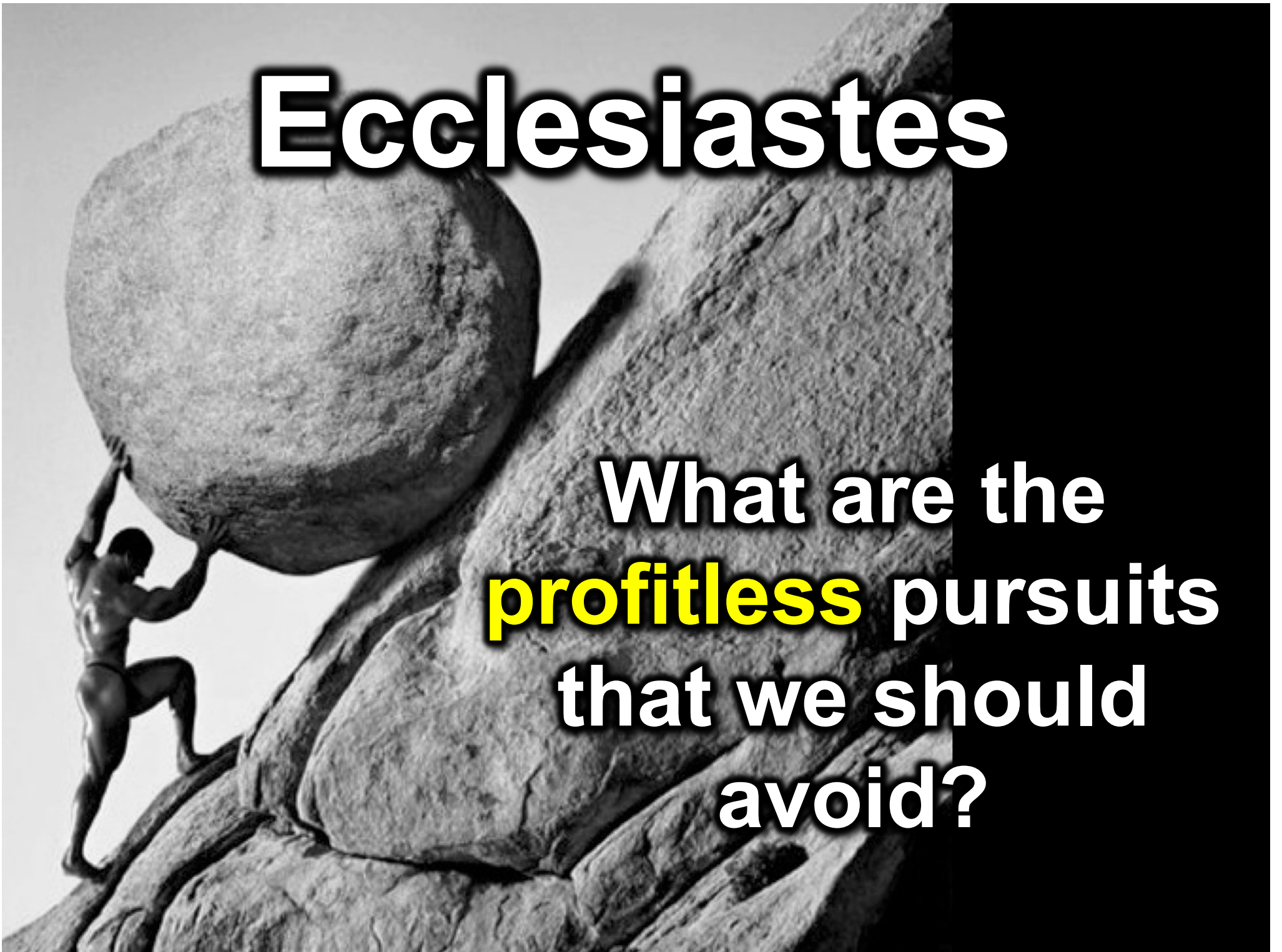
HUGHES, JR.

DECEMBER 24 1905

APRIL 5 1976

Ecclesiastes

What are the
profitless pursuits
that we should
avoid?



A digital illustration of King Solomon, an elderly man with a long white beard and a golden crown, looking out over the city of Jerusalem. The city is depicted with various buildings, including domes and walls, under a warm, hazy sky. The overall style is painterly and evocative of biblical art.

Solomon

**"I, the Teacher, was
king of Israel, and I
lived in Jerusalem"
(1:12 NLT).**

Ecclesiastes



Israel's Golden Age

A man with a long white beard and a tall yellow hat, looking out over a city. The background is a blurred cityscape with buildings and a warm, orange-toned sky.

Fleeting

**"I observed everything
going on under the sun,
and really, it is all
meaningless—like
chasing the wind"
(1:14 NLT).**

Ecclesiastes



**Let's see
5 of
them...**

**Profitless Pursuits
Under the Sun**

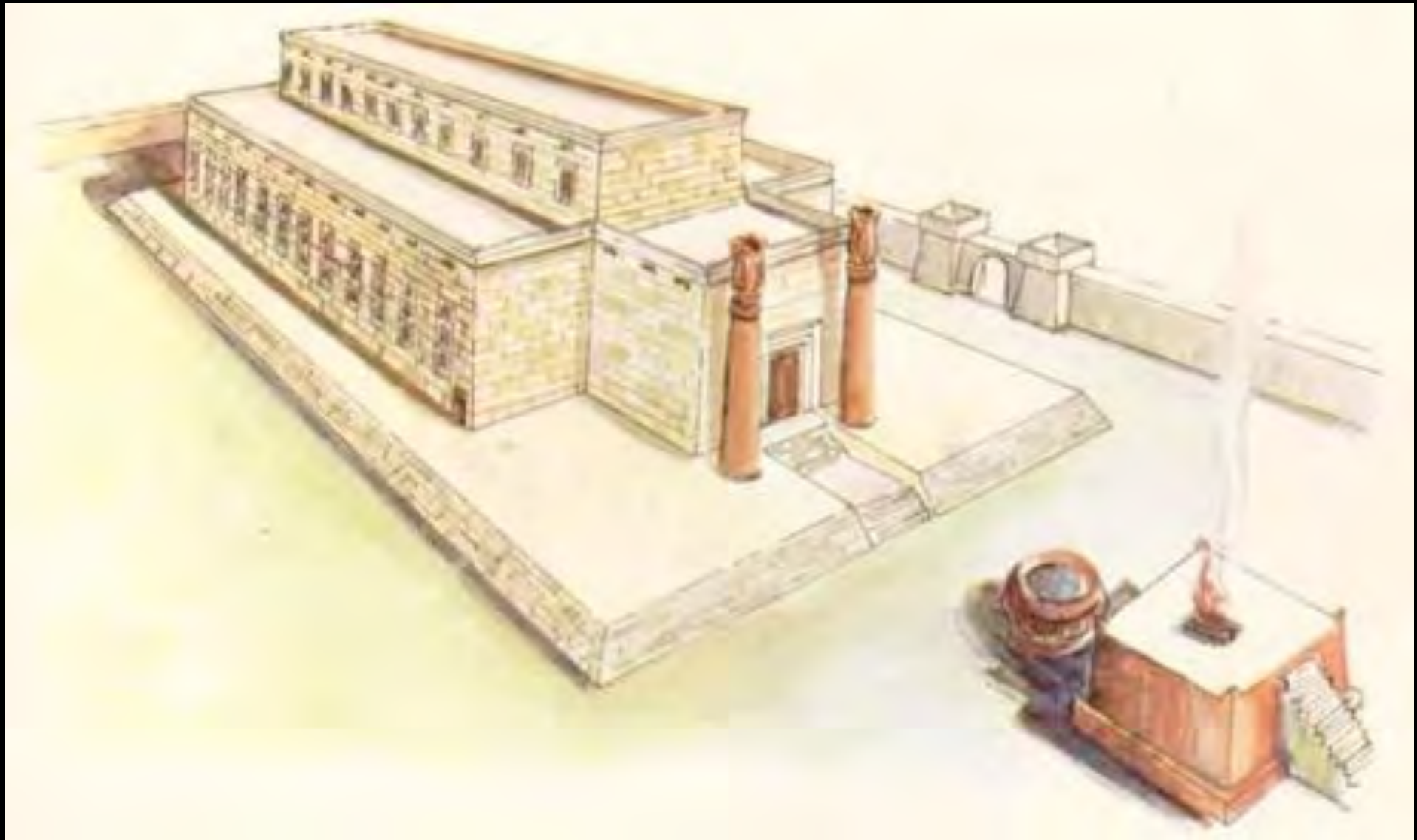
1. Prudence doesn't satisfy
(1:16-18; 2:12-16).



2. **Pleasure** doesn't satisfy (2:1-3).



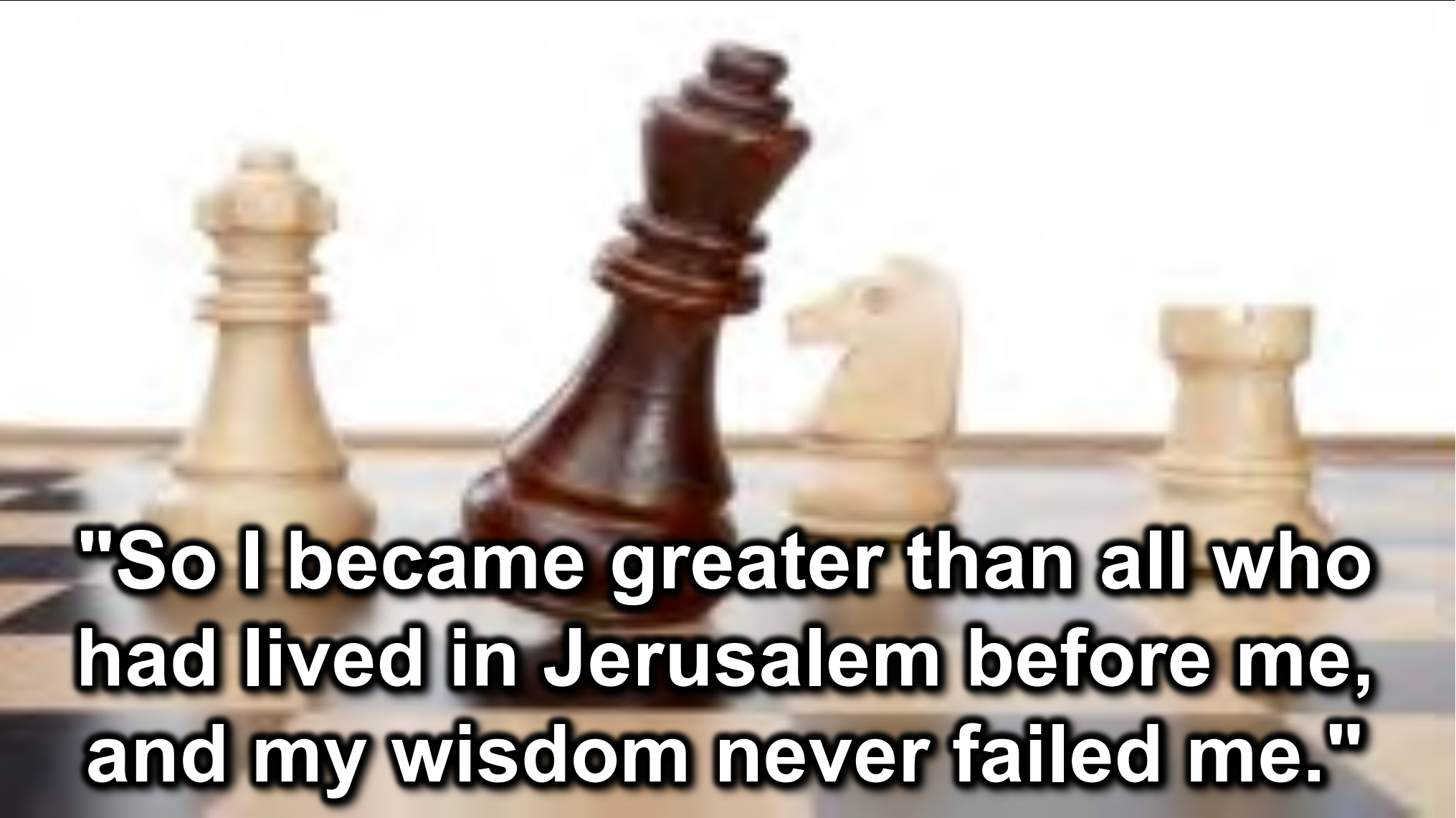
3. **Projects** don't satisfy (2:4-6).



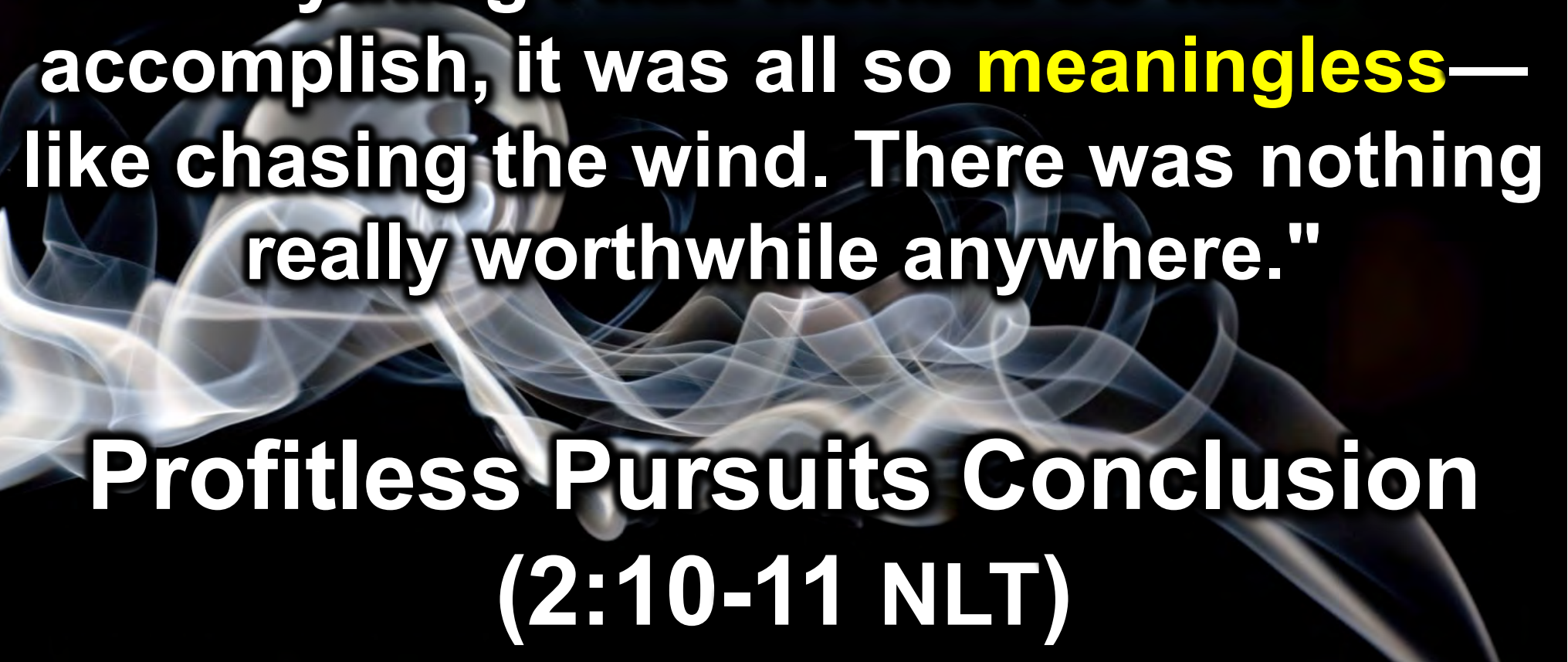
4. **Possessions** don't satisfy (2:7-8).



5. **Power** doesn't satisfy (2:9).



"So I became greater than all who had lived in Jerusalem before me, and my wisdom never failed me."



"Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure. I even found great pleasure in hard work, a reward for all my labors. ¹¹ But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so **meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere."**

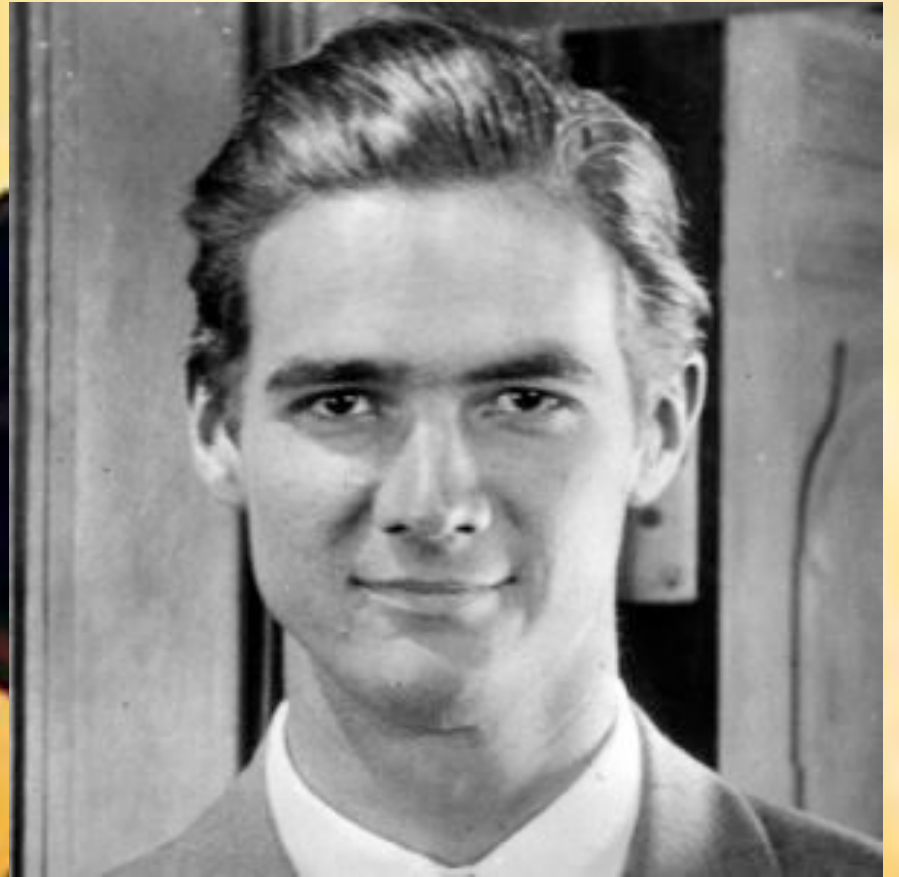
Profitless Pursuits Conclusion
(2:10-11 NLT)

Main Idea of 1:12–2:16



Our **pursuits** never **profit**.

**Prudence
Pleasure
Projects
Possessions
Power**



**Profitless Pursuits
Under the Sun**



What will it take for you to
be *really* **satisfied**?

**Since work is fleeting, trust
God's timing, enjoy life, and
enjoy God (2:17–6:9).**



Ecclesiastes 3



God's **timing** is
perfect (3:1-8).

**The Thesis: Every activity has its
appointed time (3:1)**




**"There is a time
for everything..."**



Ecclesiastes 3:1a (NIV)



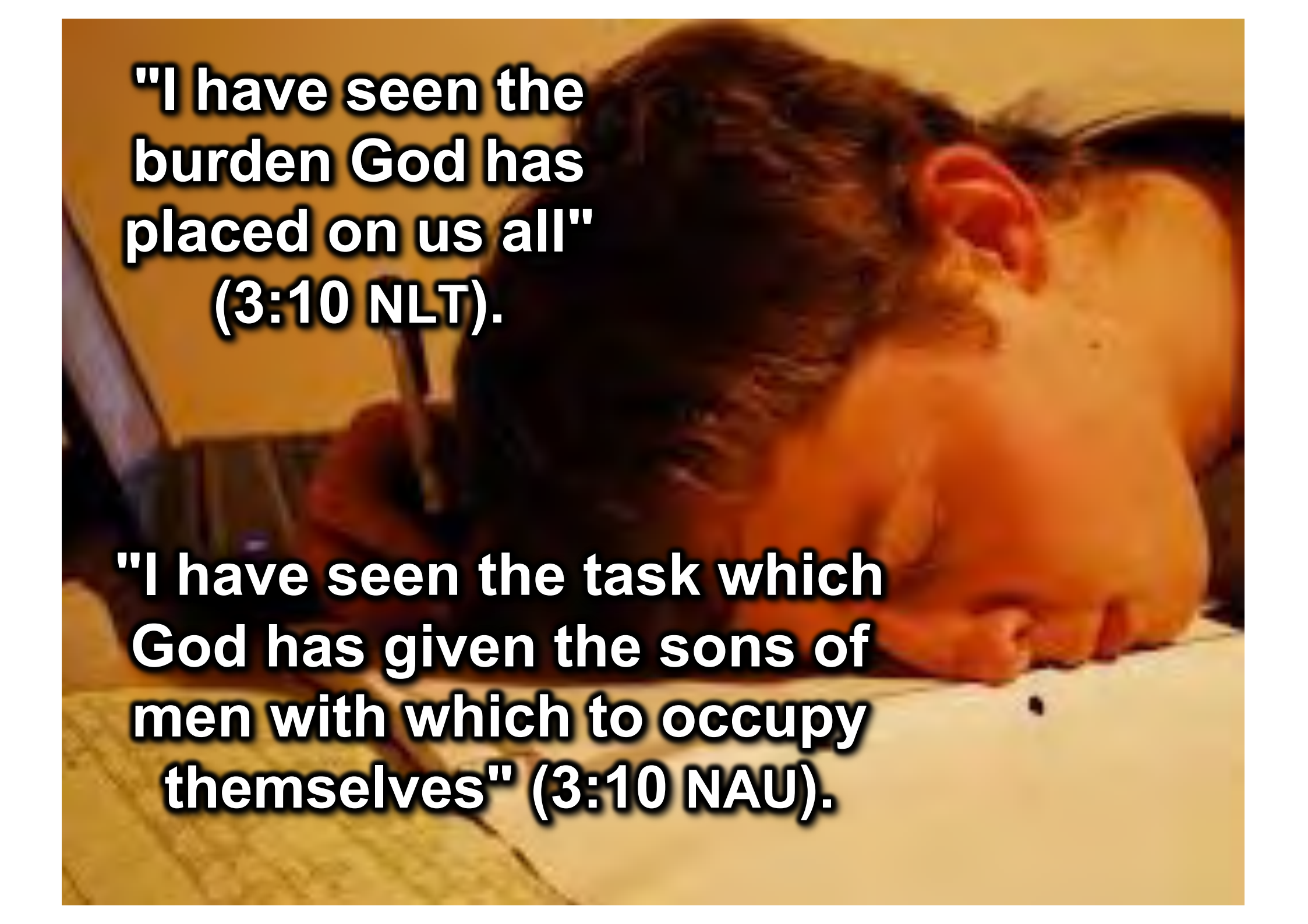
"...and a season for every activity under heaven" (3:1b NIV).

A gravel path leads from the foreground into a field of tall, golden-brown grass. In the background, a line of green trees is visible against a clear blue sky. The text "God's ways are perfect (3:9-11)." is overlaid on the image, with the word "ways" in yellow and the rest in white with a black outline.

God's **ways** are
perfect (3:9-11).

**"What do people
really get for all
their hard work?"
(3:9 NLT)**





**"I have seen the
burden God has
placed on us all"
(3:10 NLT).**

**"I have seen the task which
God has given the sons of
men with which to occupy
themselves" (3:10 NAU).**

"Yet God has
made
everything
*beautiful**
for its own
time"
(3:11a NLT)



* "appropriate" (NAU), "fitting" (5:18)

Main Idea of Ecclesiastes 3



Celebrate your **ignorance**
of God's timing.

God's **timing** is perfect (3:1-8).
God's **ways** are perfect (3:9-11).
Enjoy life and **fear** God (3:12-15).



Key Ideas



What should you do when
life is **unfair**?

1. Realize that **you will
account to God (3:16-17).**

Injustice



You

2. **Enjoy** life now (3:18-22)!

Death



Enjoy

Main Idea of 3:16-22

**What should
you do when
life is unfair?**

**Account to God and
enjoy life!**



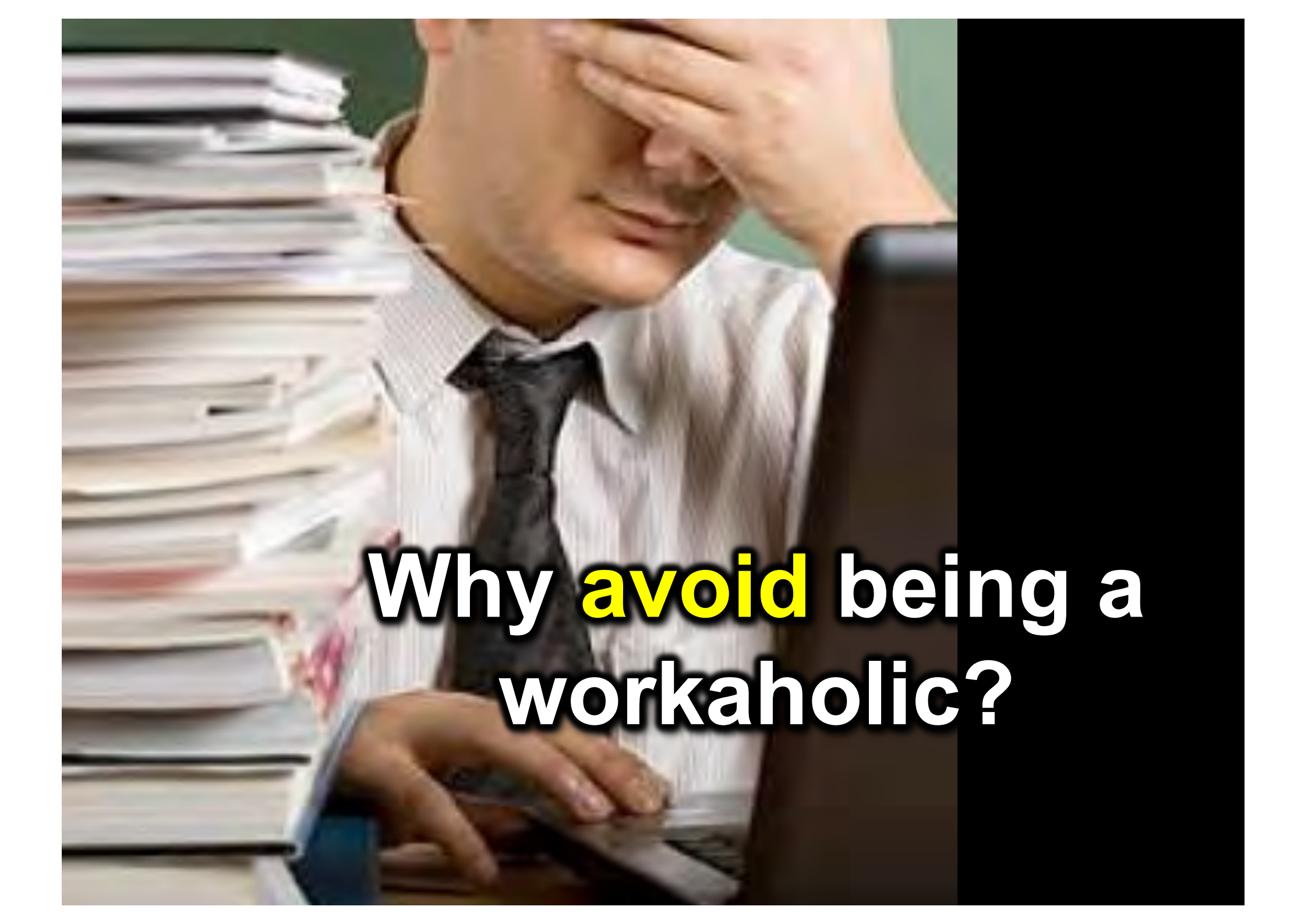
Ecclesiastes 4



Workaholic Woes

Ecclesiastes 4

Dr. Rick Griffith, Crossroads International Church
BibleStudyDownloads.org

A man in a white shirt and tie is sitting at a desk, covering his face with his hand. He is looking down at a laptop. To his left is a large stack of papers. The background is a solid black color.

Why **avoid being a
workaholic?**

Workaholic Woes
No Comforters

No Rest

No Followers

No Beneficiaries

No Friends

Work at not becoming a
workaholic.



Main Idea of Ecclesiastes 4


Ecclesiastes 5



How to Honor God

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

**Dr. Rick Griffith • Crossroads International Church Singapore
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A silhouette of a person with their arms raised in a gesture of worship or praise, set against a vibrant sunset sky with orange and yellow hues. The person's head is bowed, and their hands are pointing upwards. The background shows a body of water and distant land under a dramatic sky.

**Do you struggle
worshipping God?**



How can we **honor** God?

1. Honor God in your
worship (5:1-3).



A close-up photograph of a person's hands clasped together in a prayer position. The hands are positioned with palms facing each other and fingers pointing upwards. The person is wearing a dark grey t-shirt. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

**2. Honor God in your
vows (5:4-7).**

**Honor God in your
worship and vows.**

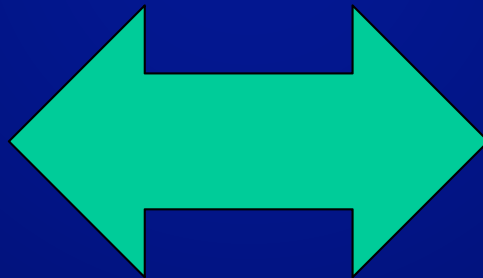


Main Idea of 5:1-7

Ecclesiastes 6

How can we do both?

enjoy life



fear God

I. Live as if **life** is fleeting
(1:1-11).



II. Live as if **work** is fleeting (1:12–6:9).



III. Live as if **wisdom** is fleeting (6:10–11:6).




Work & Wisdom Don't Last

Theme: Fleeting Nature of...	Work	Wisdom	Youth
1:1-11	1:12–6:9	6:10–11:6	11:7–12:14
Man's Humanity	Man's Hands	Man's Head	Man's Heart
Cycles	Work	Ignorance	Aging
Place: Earth (“under the sun”) about 935 BC			

Ecclesiastes 7



**Man is ignorant so he must rely
upon the immutable and wise
plan of God (7:1–9:10).**



Signs of Real Wisdom

Ecclesiastes 7:15-29

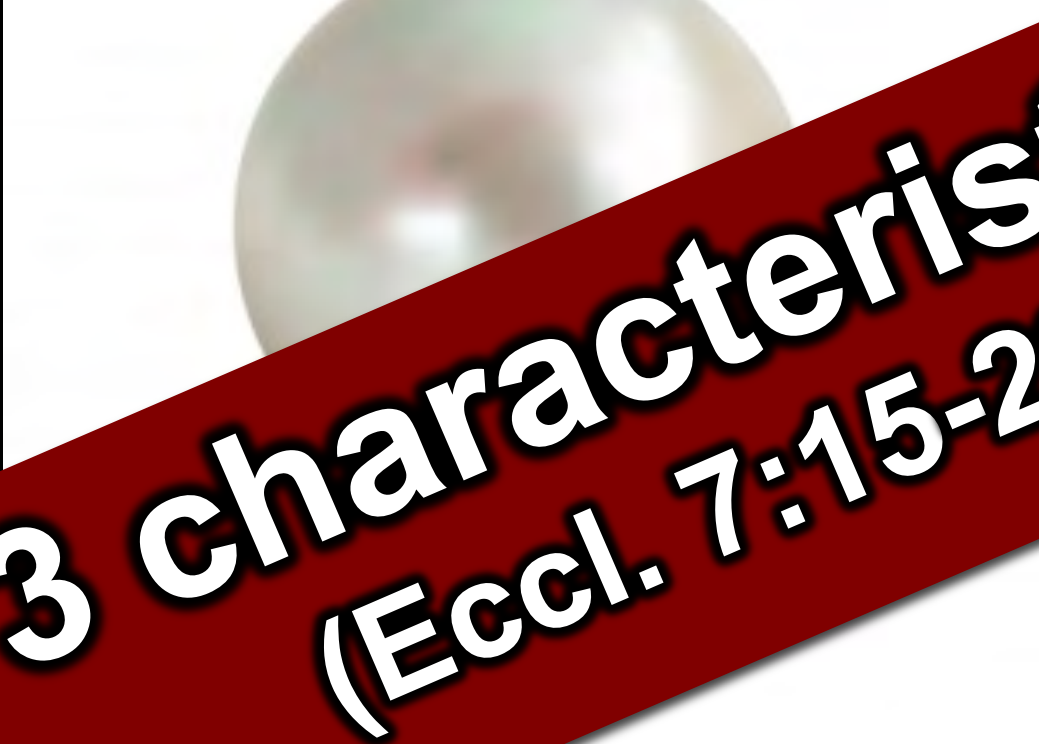
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Wisdom is Practical

"Biblical wisdom includes the art of being skillful and successful in one's relationships and responsibilities in life... An individual is 'successful' as he directs his life in accord with God's divine design, His plans for the world."

Roy B. Zuck, *A Biblical Theology of the OT*, 213





3 characteristics (Eccl. 7:15-29)

What are the **qualities** of
wisdom?

1. Wisdom is **balanced**:

Avoid the extremes of depending on righteousness and living in sin (7:15-18).



2. Wisdom is **strong**:

Avoid the weakness from blindness to your own faults (7:19-22).



3. Wisdom is insightful:
Avoid thinking you have all the answers
but still show insight (7:23-29).



Main Idea

**Wisdom is
balanced,
strong,
and
insightful.**





Balance: Is wisdom guarding me from extremes?

Strength: Is wisdom keeping me stable?

Insight: Is wisdom clearing my mind to see reality?

Questions

(Swindoll, *Living on the Ragged Edge Study Guide*, 73).

Ecclesiastes 8

Submission & Joy



Ecclesiastes 8

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**How should we respond to
authority
—to both God and man?**



1. **Obey** authorities due to the many advantages (8:1-9).

2. We punish the **wrong** people
—so it puzzles us (8:10-14).



Who do we punish?

**We don't
punish bad
people
(8:10-13).**

**We punish
good people
instead
(8:14).**

3. Enjoy life and **submit** to God even though He won't tell us His reasons (8:15-17).



"So I recommend having fun, because there is nothing better for people in this world than to eat, drink, and enjoy life."

**"That way they will experience some happiness along with all the hard work God gives them under the sun"
(8:15 NLT).**



Main Idea of Ecclesiastes 8

Humbly submit to man and
God—and you'll get **joy!**

Where do you need to...

- Submit to authority?
- Recognize your limited understanding?



Ecclesiastes 9

The Future



How do most people deal with our uncertain future?



- **Materialism**
- **Hedonism**
- **Humanism**
- **Fatalism**

Ecclesiastes 9:1-10



***Our
Reality
(1-6)***



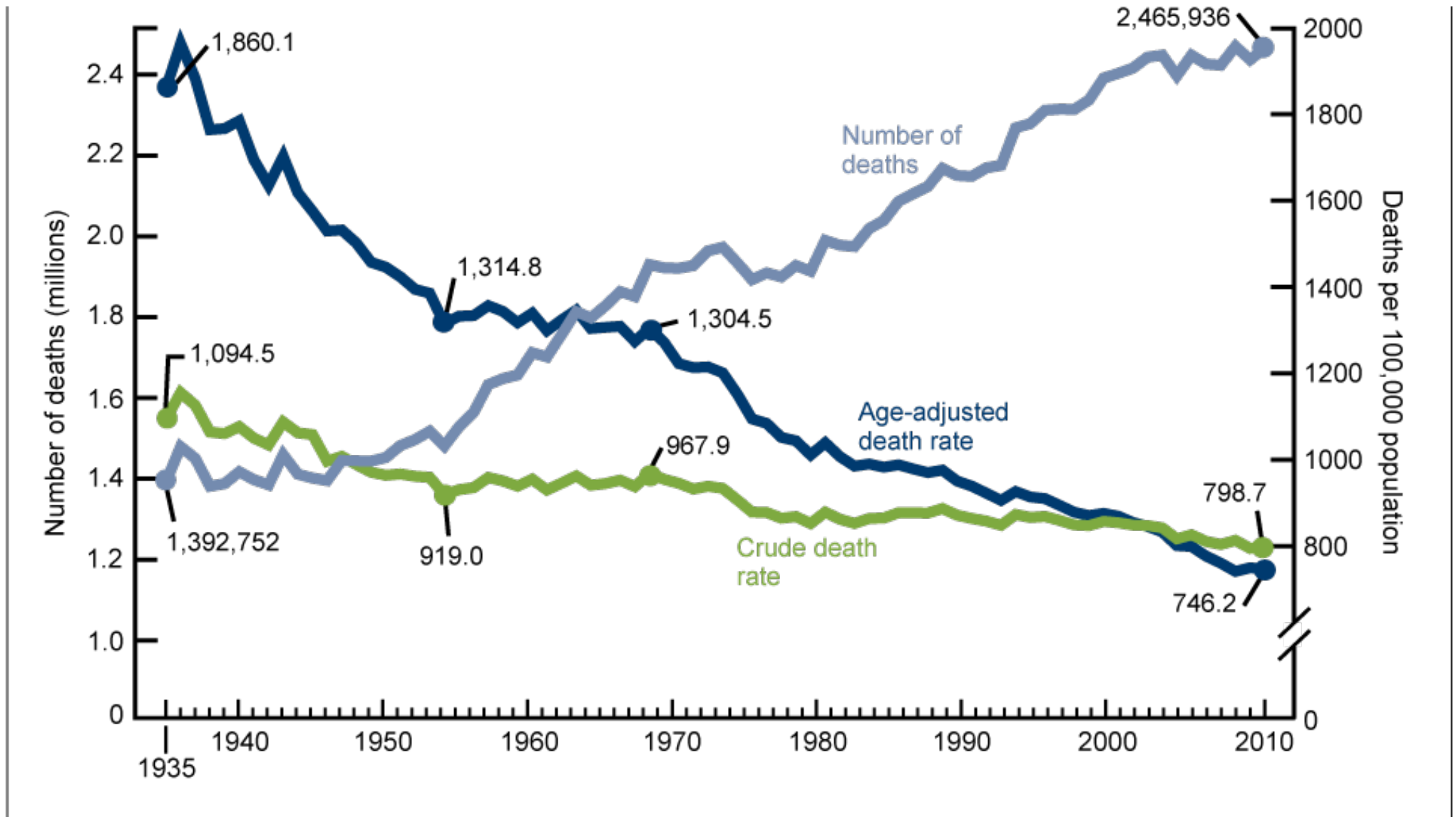
***Our
Response
(7-10)***

**How should we respond to
an **uncertain** future?**

1. Your **uncertain** future includes **certain** death (9:1-6).



75 Years of Mortality in the United States, 1935–2010



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov)

World Mortality Rate



Death Rate 1992-1996




2. Since you'll die, **enjoy life
and work **hard** now (9:7-10).**

"So go ahead. Eat your food with joy, and drink your wine with a happy heart, for God approves of this!" (9:7 NLT).



Main Idea of Ecclesiastes 9:1-10

A hand is shown from the wrist up, with the index finger pointing towards a glowing, translucent square. The background is a solid blue color with many other translucent squares of various sizes floating around, creating a sense of depth and movement. The text is positioned to the right of the hand, with the words 'the future' highlighted in yellow.

**Since you don't
know **the future**,
work hard and
enjoy life!**

Ecclesiastes 10



Why doesn't wisdom
always lead to success?

1. Life is unfair
(9:11–10:7).



**2. Life is uncertain
(10:8-11).**





**Don't trust
wisdom—
trust God!**

FOOLS.



FOOLS

We all know one.



FOOLS


We've all been one.



**How should we deal with a
fool?**



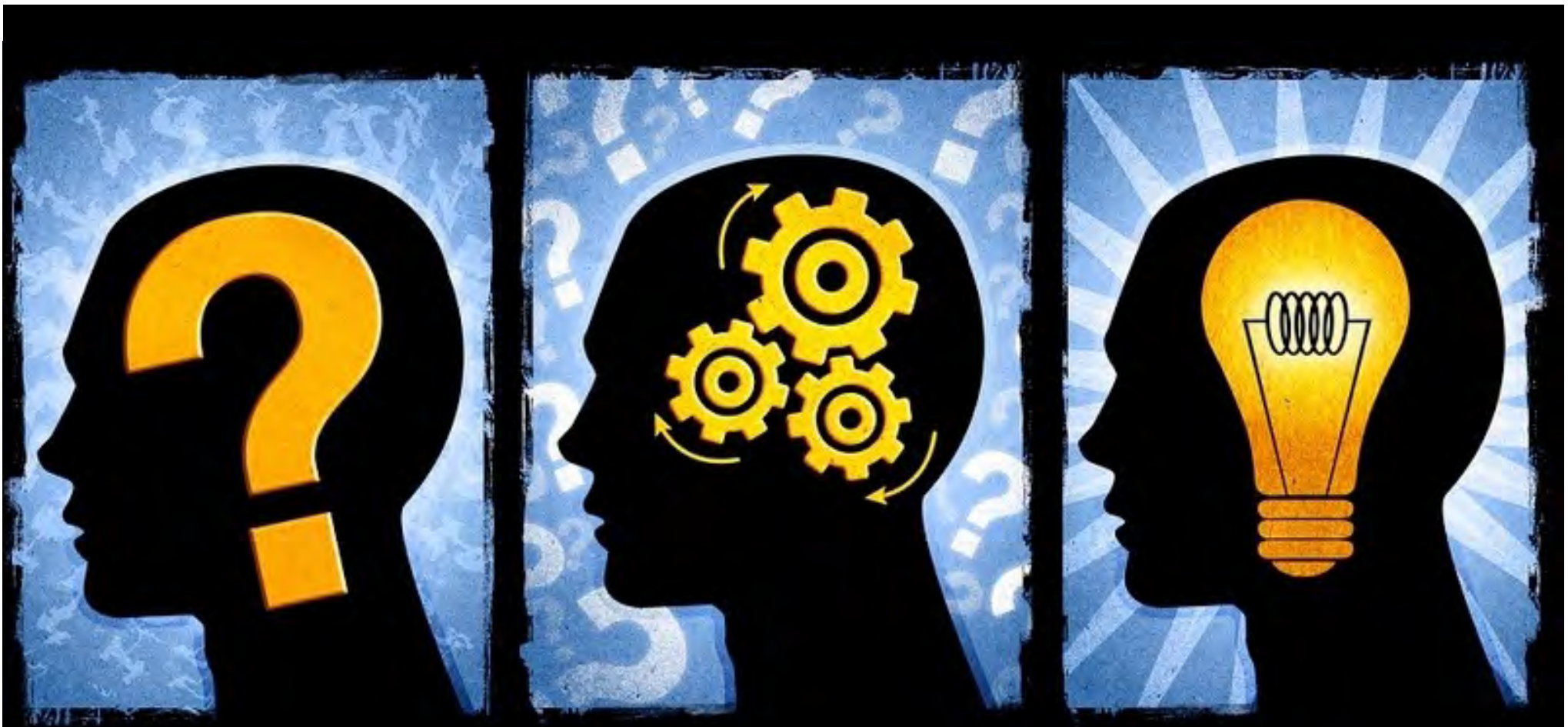
1. Description:
The speech
and actions of
a fool are
destructive
(10:12-19).



2. Warning: Don't even privately criticize foolish authorities because they may find out (10:20).




**Don't criticize your foolish leader
(Main Idea of 10:12-20)**



**Have you criticized a superior?
"It takes little size to criticize."**

Ecclesiastes 11

**How does
the
uncertainty
of the future
affect you?**

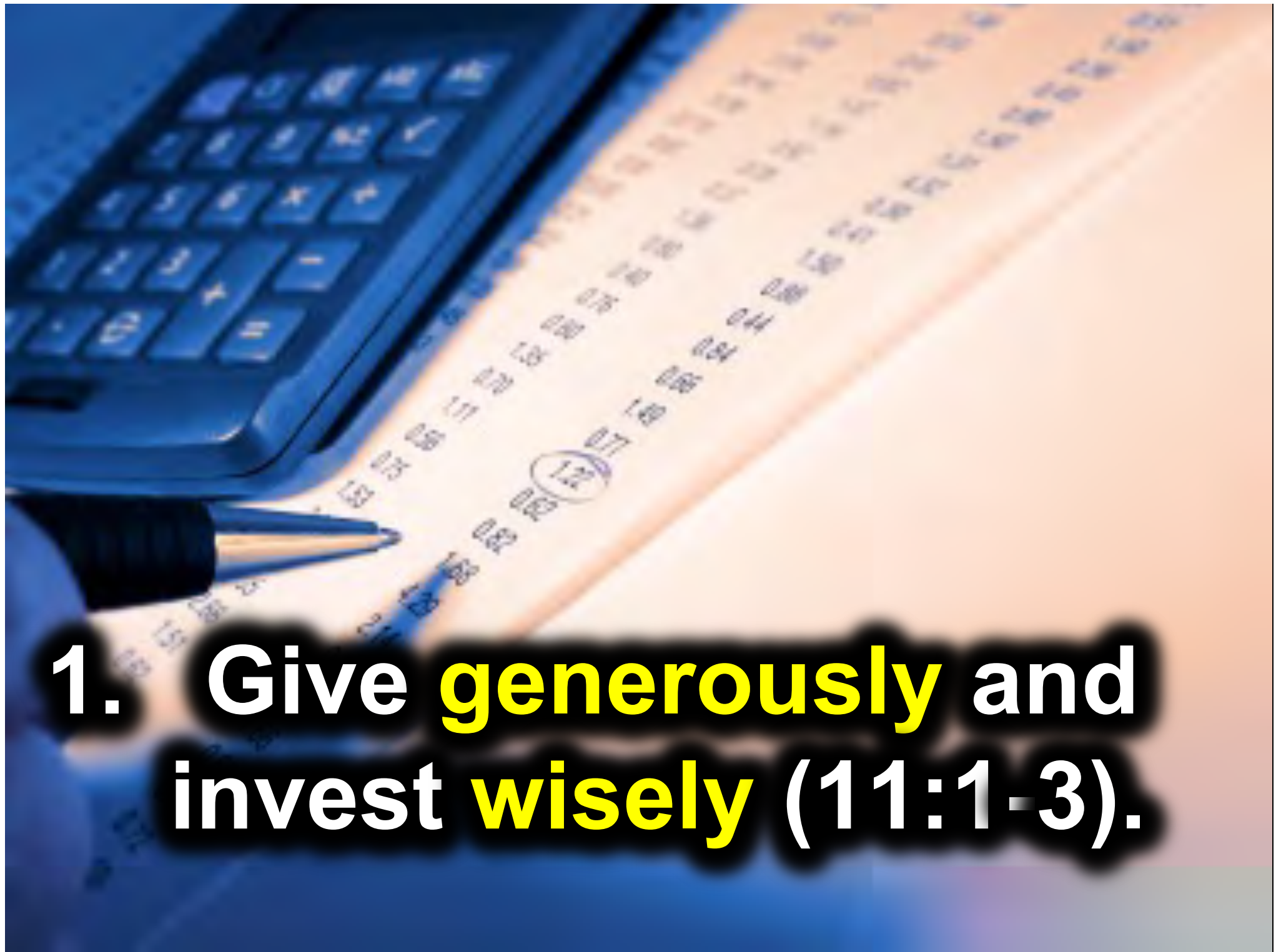


• Giving? • Investments? • Work?


How should your
uncertain future
influence you?



Photography by Constantine Volk



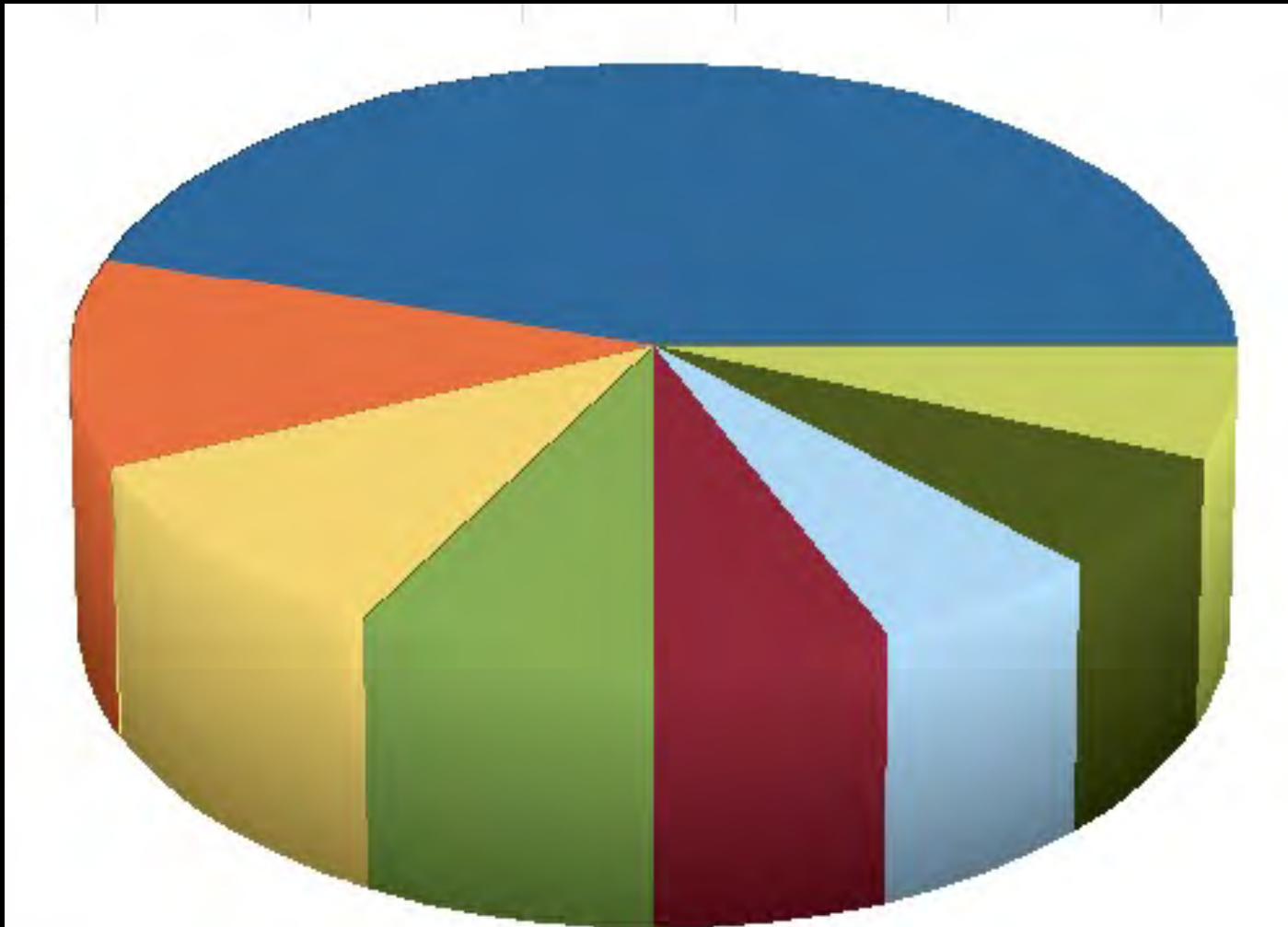
1. Give generously and invest wisely (11:1-3).



**"Send your
grain across
the seas, and
in time, profits
will flow back
to you"
(11:1 NLT).**

**"Cast your
bread upon the
waters, for
after many
days you will
find it again"
(11:1 NIV).**

"But divide your investments among many places, for you do not know what risks might lie ahead" (11:2 NLT).





2. Work **hard due to your uncertain future (11:4-6).**

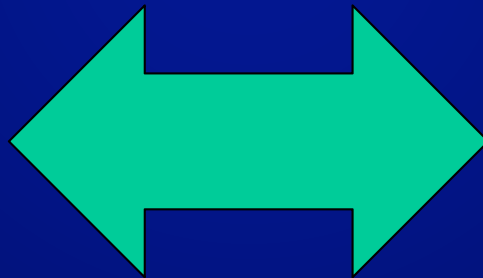
Main Idea of 11:1-6

A close-up photograph of a hand reaching towards a pile of coins on a wooden surface. The lighting is warm and golden, creating a soft glow. The hand is positioned in the upper right, with fingers slightly curled as if about to pick up a coin. Numerous coins are scattered across the wooden table, some in sharp focus and others blurred in the background. The overall mood is one of careful consideration or financial management.

Give **generously**, invest **wisely**
and work **hard** since you don't
know your future.

How can we do both?

enjoy life



fear God

I. Live as if **life** is fleeting (1:1-11).



II. Live as if **work** is fleeting (1:12–6:9).



III. Live as if **wisdom** is fleeting (6:10–11:6).



IV. Live as if **youth** is fleeting (11:7–12:14)



Work & Wisdom Don't Last

Theme: Fleeting Nature of...	Work	Wisdom	Youth
1:1-11	1:12–6:9	6:10–11:6	11:7–12:14
Man's Humanity	Man's Hands	Man's Head	Man's Heart
Cycles	Work	Ignorance	Aging

Place: Earth (“under the sun”) about 935 BC

How to Enjoy Your Youth



Ecclesiastes 11:7–12:7

Dr. Rick Griffith, Crossroads International Church
BibleStudyDownloads.org



Are you a youth?



What are the stages of life?

Three Stages for Women



**1. Annoying her
dad**



**2. Annoying her
husband**



**3. Annoying her
son-in-law**



Three Stages for Men

1. You believe in Santa 2. You don't believe 3. You are Santa

What should youth
pursue in life?



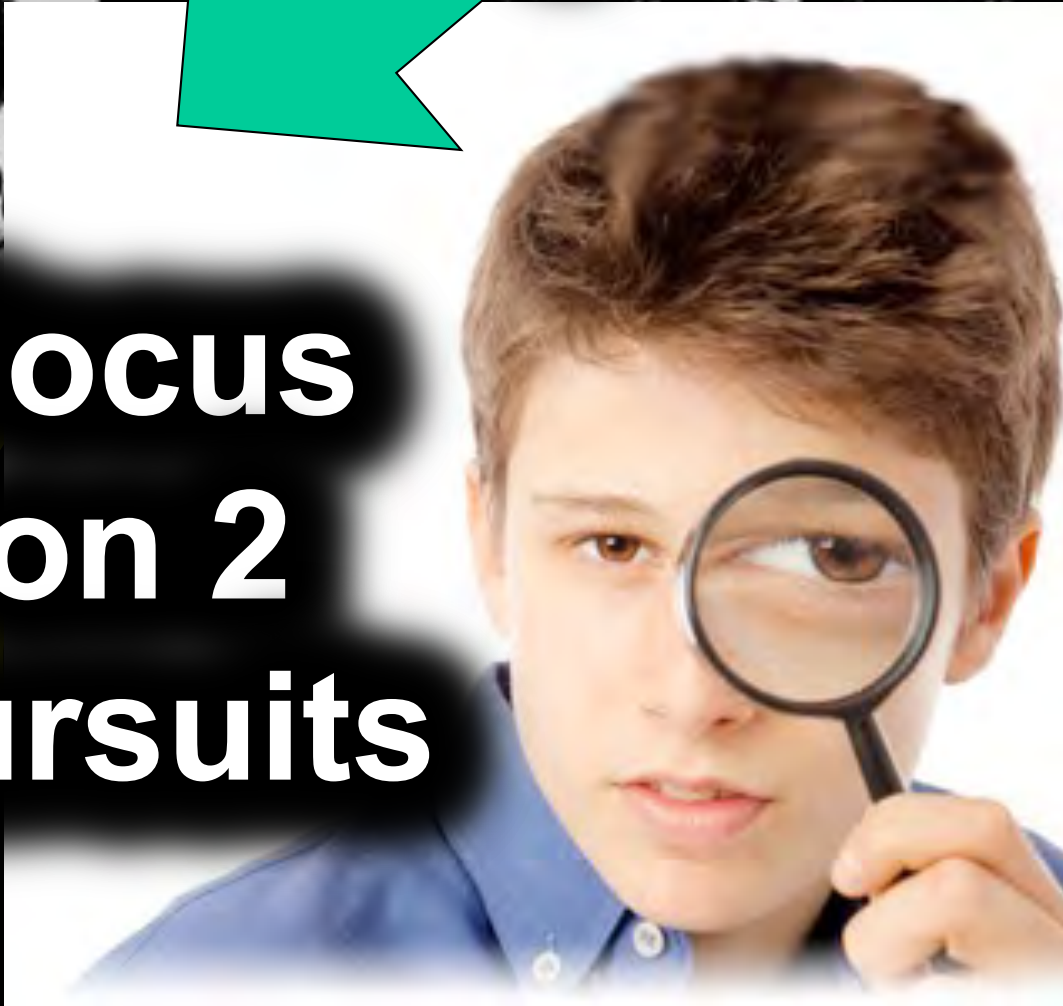
Youth
0-30

Mid-Life
30-60

Elderly
60-90

Life has three stages

**What should youth
pursue in life?**



**Focus
on 2
pursuits**

**Ecccl. 11:7
–12:7**



1. **Enjoy life** now before
judgment and death comes
(11:7-10).

A person is seen from behind, standing in a field of tall, golden-brown grass. They are wearing a dark blue t-shirt, a black backpack, and a black watch on their left wrist. Their arms are raised high in the air, palms facing forward, in a gesture of praise or worship. The background shows a hazy, mountainous landscape under a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is one of awe and connection with nature.

**2. Honor God as Creator
before you grow old and die
(12:1-7).**

Ecclesiastes 12

"Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth..." (12:1 NAU).

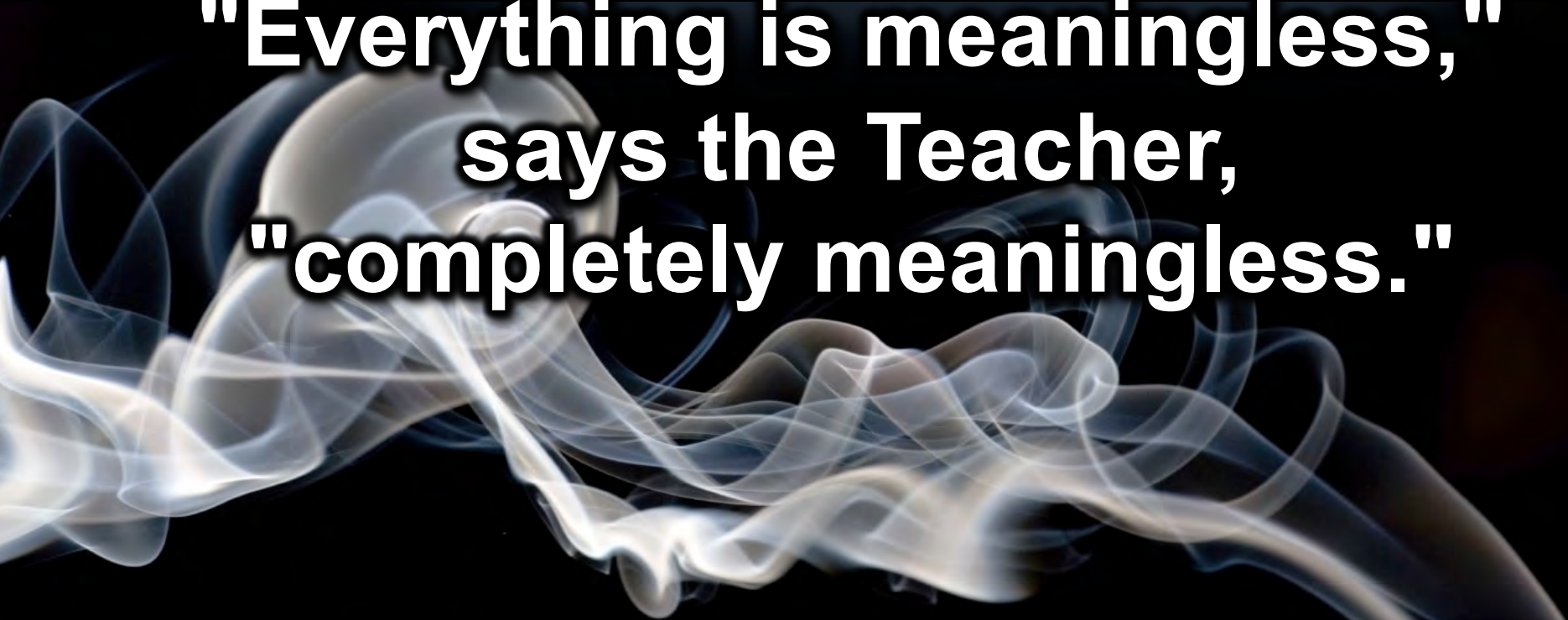
**"Don't let the excitement of youth cause you to forget your Creator. Honor him in your youth before you grow old and say, 'Life is not pleasant anymore'"
(12:1 NLT).**

Faith is a decision



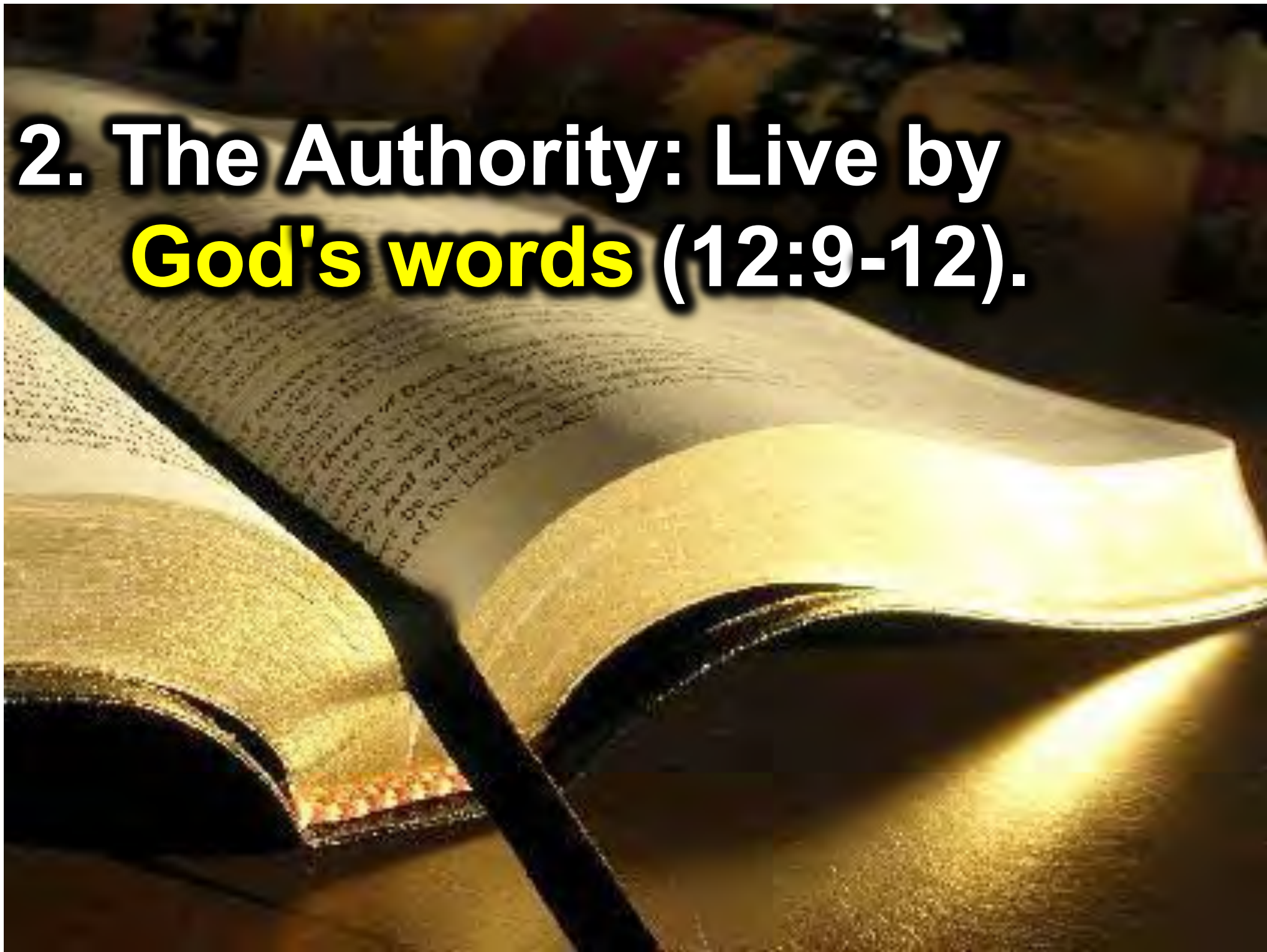
1. The Theme: Life is **fleeting** (12:8).

**"Everything is meaningless,"
says the Teacher,
"completely meaningless."**



Key Word of Ecclesiastes

2. The Authority: Live by **God's words** (12:9-12).

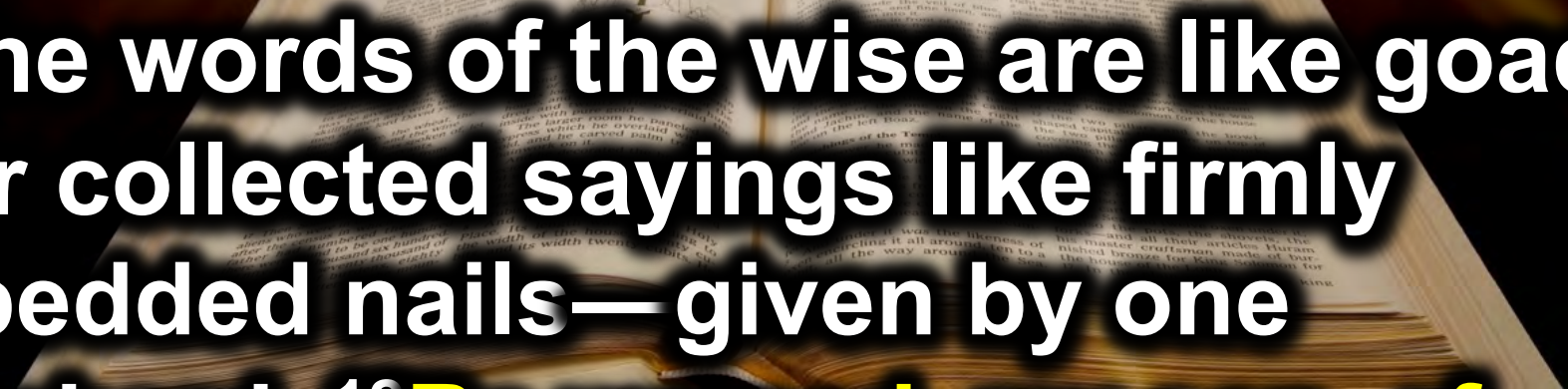


"⁹Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. ¹⁰The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true" (Eccl. 12:9-10 NIV).

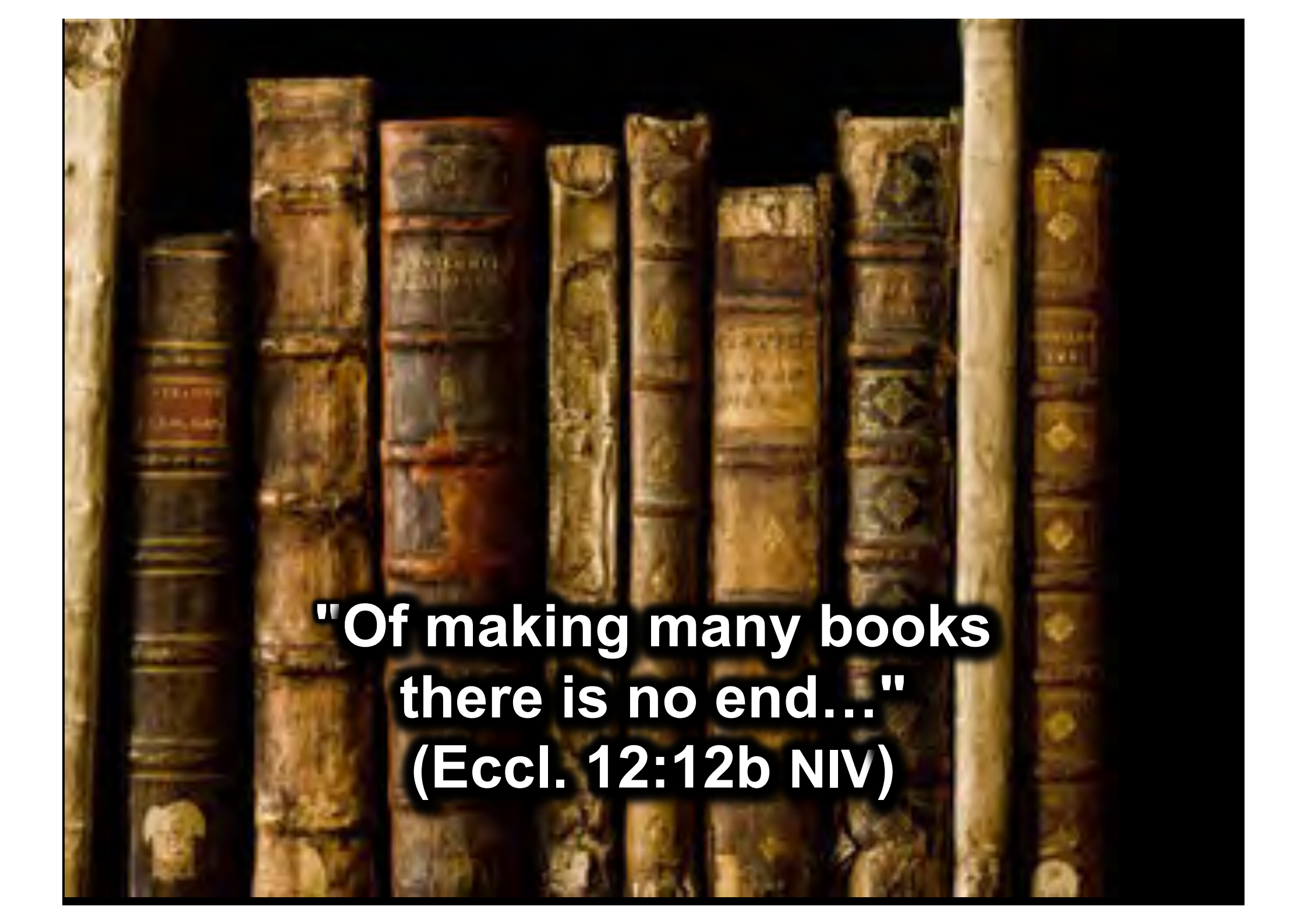


The Bible's Wisdom

78

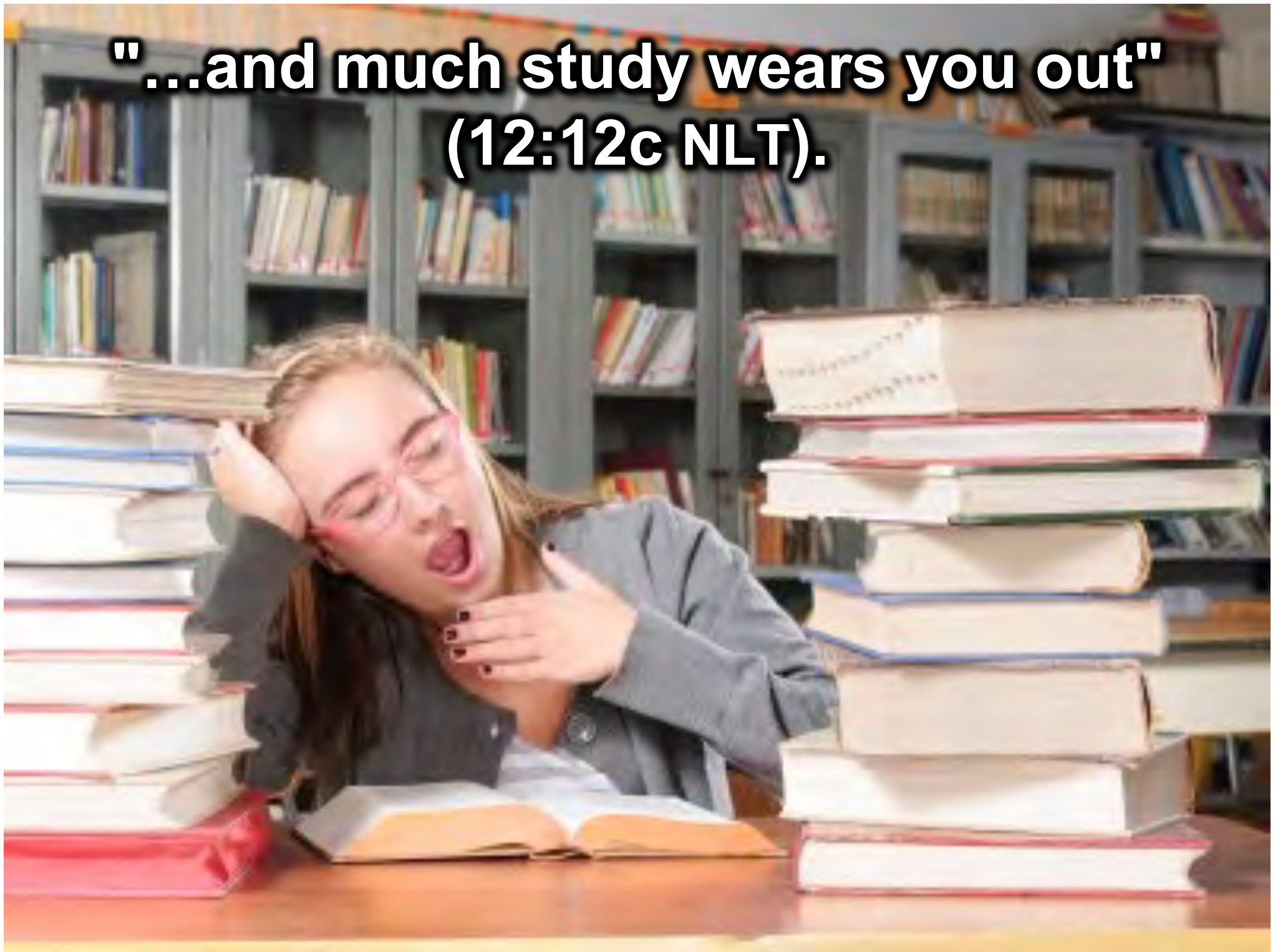


**"¹¹The words of the wise are like goads,
their collected sayings like firmly
embedded nails—given by one
Shepherd. ¹²Be warned, my son, of
anything in addition to them."
(Eccl. 12:11-12a NIV).**

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a row of old, worn books standing upright on a shelf. The spines of the books are visible, showing various colors like brown, tan, and dark red, with some decorative patterns and wear. The lighting is warm, highlighting the textures of the old leather or cloth.

**"Of making many books
there is no end..."
(Eccl. 12:12b NIV)**

**"...and much study wears you out"
(12:12c NLT).**



**3. The Conclusion: Respect
and obey God because this
applies to **everyone**
(12:13-14).**



**"That's the whole story.
Here now is my final conclusion:
Fear God and obey his commands"
(12:13a-b NLT).**

A photograph of a person seen from behind, standing with their arms raised high in a gesture of praise or worship. The person is silhouetted against a very bright sun that is low in the sky, creating a strong lens flare. The sky is a deep blue with scattered white clouds. In the background, there are faint, hazy outlines of mountains or hills. The overall mood is one of spiritual joy and devotion.

But why?

"That's the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, **for this is everyone's duty" (12:13 NLT).**



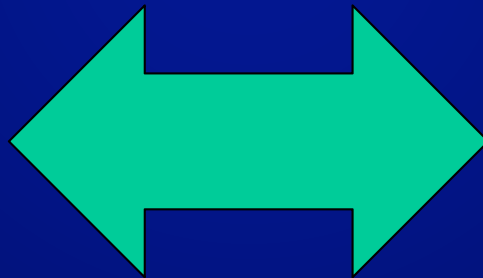
Said differently...

Respect and **obey** God
to finish well.



How can we do both?

enjoy life



fear God



Main Idea:

**Be intentional to live as if
life is **fleeting**—including
work, wisdom and youth.**

I. Live as if **life** is fleeting
(1:1-11).



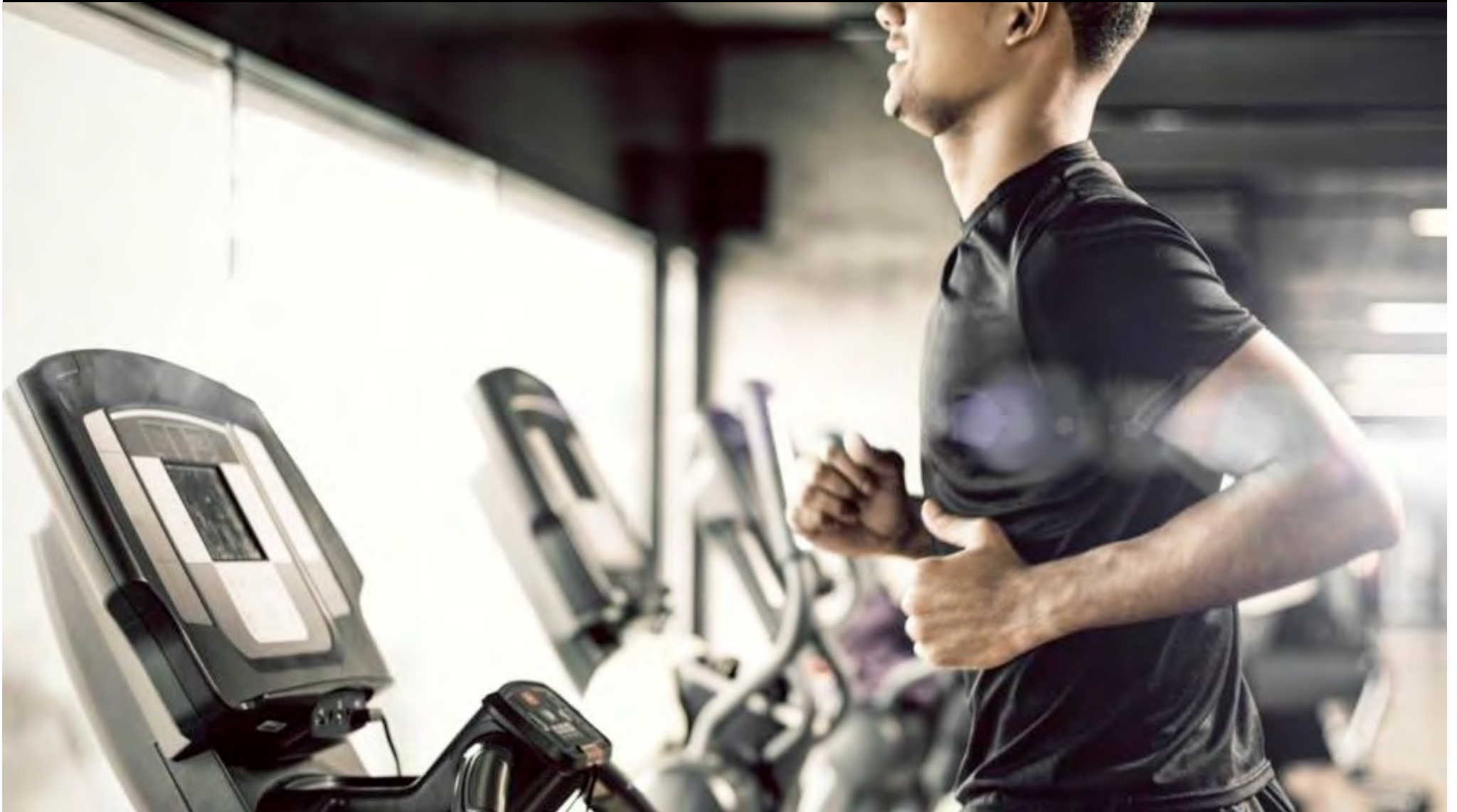
II. Live as if **work** is fleeting (1:12–6:9).



III. Live as if **wisdom** is fleeting (6:10–11:6).



IV. Live as if **youth** is fleeting (11:7–12:14)



**"That's the whole story.
Here now is my final conclusion:
Fear God and obey his commands"
(12:13a-b NLT).**

A photograph of a person seen from behind, standing with their arms raised high in a gesture of praise or worship. The person is silhouetted against a bright, sunlit sky filled with scattered white clouds. The sun is positioned directly behind the person's head, creating a strong backlight effect. In the background, there are faint, hazy outlines of mountains or hills. The overall mood is one of spiritual joy and devotion.

But how?

Your Pursuit?



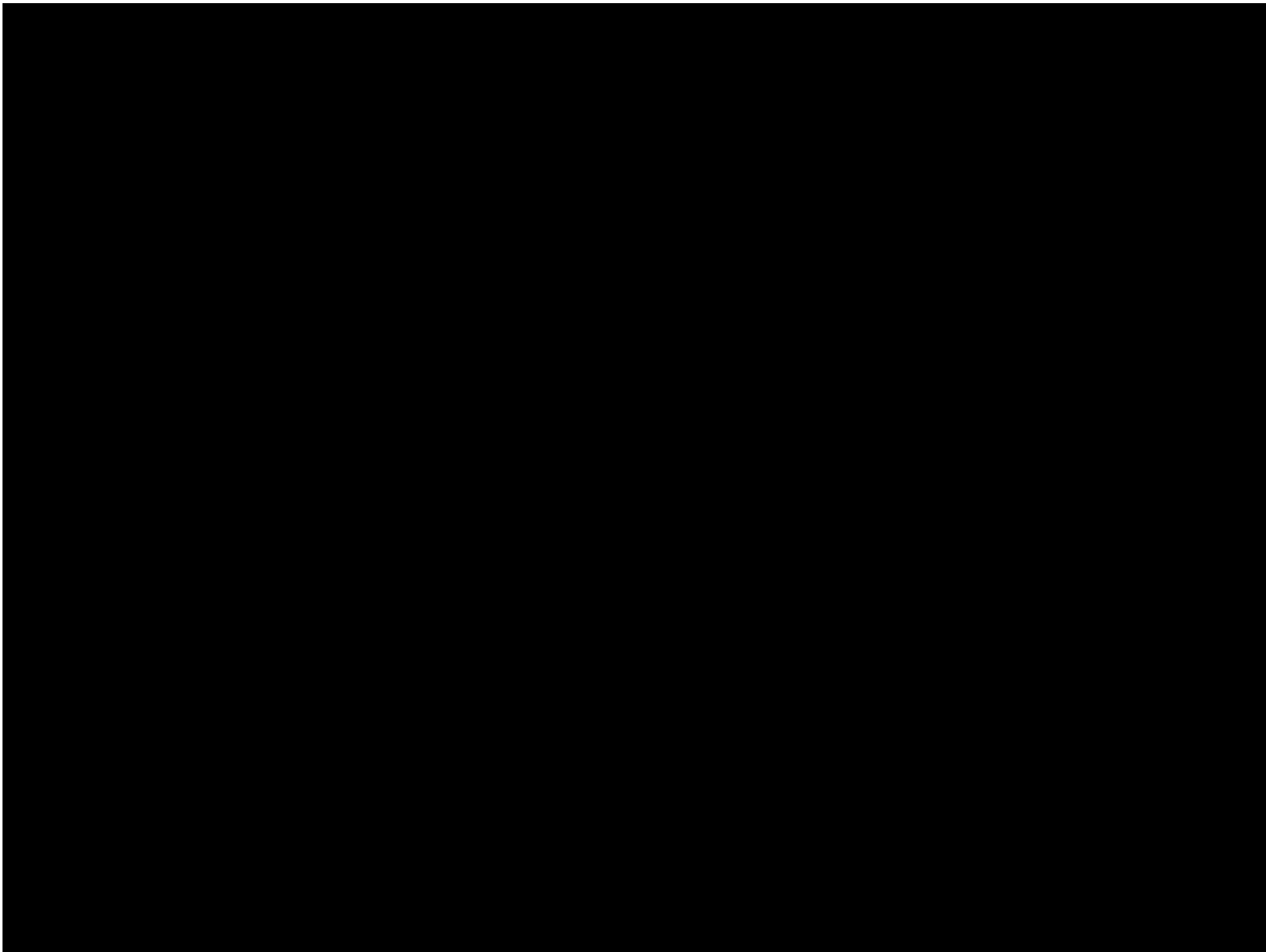
**Do you
hunger for
God's
Word?**



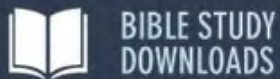


5 min./day = 1/288th of a day

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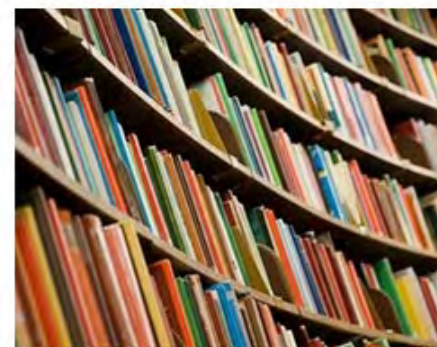
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A large banner image showing a pair of hands holding an open, small, black leather-bound book with yellowed pages. The hands are weathered and the background is blurred.

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