I. SOLOMON LOOKS AROUND HIMSELF- (Vs. 3-7)
A. In vs. 4 HE SEES A COURSE THAT’S UN-ENDING-
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II. SOLOMON LOOKS BEHIND HIMSELF- (Vs. 8-11)
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B. SOLOMON SEES NOTHING IS FRESH- (Read Verse 9-10)

III. SOLOMON LOOKS WITHIN HIMSELF- (Vs. 12-18)
A. HE FOUND EXALTATION/PROMOTION DOES NOT BRING HAPPINESS- Vs. 12
B. HE FOUND EDUCATION DOES NOT BRING HAPPINESS-Vs. 13-18

Intro- ILL- October 6, 1993 was a significant day in sport’s history. A man who was unarguably the game’s finest player called a press conference and retired at age 30. He retired with more money than he could spend in a life time, and at an age when many are only beginning to taste career success. His last season as a player netted him $40 million. He had won three world championships and seven consecutive NBA scoring titles. As he faced the assembled crowd of media personnel, Chicago Bulls superstar Michael Jordan told them the game offered no more challenges to motivate him. Michael Jordan had accomplished everything basketball could ask of him and he simply felt it was time to call it a career. WHY would a man with everything under the sun walk away? Bear in mind that Jordan’s father was murdered earlier that year. He told reporters, “One thing about my father’s death was that it reinforced how (life) can be taken away from you anytime.”

The “STUFF” of life lost its meaning for Michael Jordan. As he looked ahead at the prospect of another NBA season, in his heart he must have said, “Been There. Done That. Now What?” (1)

Years ago, a man with more power, more money and more fame than Michael Jordan also asked, What is the meaning of life? His name was
Solomon. In his search for the answer he recorded his findings in a book called Ecclesiastes.

**ILL- Forbes Magazine** devoted its seventy-fifth anniversary issue to a single topic: **“Why We Feel So Bad When We Have It So Good?”** Americans live better than any other people on the planet. Our generation is reaping the luxuries of technology and advancement. Life that once required exhaustive labor has been replaced by easy living. The article pointed out a *loss of values, a loss of absolutes* and *a loss of meaning in life*. In spite of all this stuff we have to enjoy, why are we so bored? (2)

The Answer: Inside of every man and woman boy and girl is a gnawing desire to know what life is all about. WHO am I? and WHY am I here?

**ILL- LIFE Magazine** questioned some people on **“WHY ARE WE HERE.”** The responses span a broad range. Jose Martin, a taxi driver, saw it this way: “We’re here to die, just live and die. I do some fishing, take my girl out, pay taxes, do a little reading, then get ready to drop dead. Life is a big fake… You’re rich or you’re poor. You’re here or you’re gone. You’re like the wind. After you’re gone, other people will come. The only cure for the world’s illness is nuclear war- wipe everything out and start over.”

Jason Gaes, an eleven year old cancer victim, had a stronger sense of purpose, despite his grim circumstances: “I think God made each of us different for a reason. If God gives you a great voice, maybe he wants you to sing. If God makes you seven feet tall, maybe he wants you to play for the Lakers or The Celtics. When my friend Kim died from her cancer I asked my mom, if God was going to make Kim die when she was only six, why did he make her born at all? My mom said, even though she was only six, she changed people’s lives. I used to wonder why did God pick on me and give me cancer. Maybe it was because he wanted me to be a doctor who takes care of kids with cancer…” (3)

Solomon seemed to be wrestling with this same question. In this chapter Solomon seems to a Serious Look at some things. **He Looks AROUND himself. He Looks BEHIND himself. And then, He Looks WITHIN himself.**

**I. SOLOMON LOOKS AROUND HIMSELF- (Vs. 3-7)**
*Ecclesiastes 1:3* 3What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? *(Is Life Really worth living?)*

As Solomon looks around himself he sees:

A. **In vs. 4 HE SEES A COURSE THAT’S UN-ENDING**-
One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. (Ecclesiastes 1:4)

(Can you picture Solomon sitting at his breakfast table with his morning newspaper? He’s reading the birth announcements on one page, and the obituaries on the next page. At one house in the neighborhood they are celebrating a birth. At another house they are congregating for a death.)

LIVING and DYING are part of a Course that’s Un-Ending!

Just as Time does not slow down or stop, Death does not slow down or stop. Death marches on toward all of us like a marching army!

ILL- A Rabbi told of a man that came to him for counseling. The man said, “two weeks ago, for the first time in my life I went to the funeral of a man my own age. I didn’t know him well, we worked together, talked to each other from time to time, had kids the same age. He died suddenly over the weekend… It could have just as easily been me. That was two weeks ago. They have already replaced him at the office. I hear his wife is moving out of state to live with her parents. Two weeks ago he was working fifty feet away from me, and now its as if he never existed…Rabbi, I’ve hardly slept at all since then. I can’t stop thinking that it could have been me, and a few days later I will be forgotten as if I had never lived. Shouldn’t a man’s life be more than that?” (Is all there is to life, getting up, going to work, coming home, eat and watch TV then go to bed only to get up and do it all over again?)

B. In vs. 5-7 HE SEES A CYCLE THAT IS UN-CHANGING- 
1- THE CYCLE OF THE SUN IS UN-CHANGING- Vs. 5 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. (Solomon did not know that the SUN does not revolve around the earth. The earth revolves around the sun! This planet of our circles the sun. As it circles the sun, it brings us Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall… herein lies before a spiritual picture of how all things revolve around the SON…) 

2- THE CYCLE OF THE WIND IS UN-CHANGING- Vs. 6 The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. (Solomon seems to have been fascinated by the wind. He mentions it 6 times in Proverbs and 14 times in Ecclesiastes.

ILL- Do you remember the song “Dust In The Wind…All we are is Dust in the Wind?”
3- THE CYCLE OF THE WATER IS UN-CHANGING-  Vs. 7 All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. (Solomon understood something about God’s Un-Changing Water Cycle… how it evaporates from the ocean up into the clouds, the clouds move across the mountains bringing rain that falls on the mountains and runs down the rivers and creeks into the ocean again. It is one continues un-changing cycle!)

Scientist tells us that, at any given time, 97% of all the water on earth is in the ocean and 1/1000% is in the atmosphere, available for rain. You say, it does not sound like much water available for rain…that’s enough water in the clouds for 10 days of rain.

II. SOLOMON LOOKS BEHIND HIMSELF- (Vs. 8-11)
Here Solomon looks back and sees how that man is always Longing for something. Man is always Looking for something that will bring satisfaction! Solomon seems to be FRUSTRATED with Life!

A. SOLOMON SEES NOTHING IS FULFILLING- (Read Verse 8)

In 1985 the average American home had 18.8 TV channels.
In 2010 the average American home had 118.6 channels.  
(www.nielson.com) 
I heard recently Television is close to having 500 plus Cable Channels. Get Your Remote Controls Ready Men! Grab some extra batteries. 

Have any of you women noticed that during the commercials, men are frantically searching the channels wondering if there is something better on TV?

B. SOLOMON SEES NOTHING IS FRESH- (Read Verse 9-10)
Solomon is saying there is nothing new under the sun… What about Space Stations? Pacemakers? Lap-Top Computers? Laser Surgery? All of these things are new to us. But the elements of these inventions have always been with us! It reminds me of the verse in the book of Daniel referring to the last days

Daniel 12:4 4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

ILL- A reporter from the Jacksonville Daily Progress by the name of Chris Ross, filed his last column. Here is what he had to say: “If I’ve learned anything in my days at the Progress, it’s there really
isn’t anything new under the sun... The longer I worked as a reporter, the more I realized I’m doing the same stories over and over again. Some of the names and places change, but essentially it was the same old story different day.” (5)

III. SOLOMON LOOKS WITHIN HIMSELF- (Vs. 12-18)
As King of Israel, Solomon had all the resources necessary for finding out what it was that made life worth living. Solomon had the “Bucks” & he had the “Brains!” What did he find when he looked within?

A. HE FOUND EXALTATION/PROMOTION DOES NOT BRING HAPPINESS-
Verse 12 says “I the Preacher was king over Israel.” Solomon had been elevated to the highest office in the world... KING! And yet still he was not satisfied! I'm reminded of what our Lord said in:
Mark 8:36 36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (Solomon was at the top, yet he still had an emptiness gnawing at him on the inside!)

B. HE FOUND EDUCATION DOES NOT BRING HAPPINESS-
Ecclesiastes 1:13-18
Solomon concludes the first chapter by expressing that even great learning does not bring fulfillment.

ILL- Dr. James Dobson, of the Focus on the Family ministry, told a story about a young girl named Karen Cheng. She was 17 years old and she was from Fremont California. She scored a perfect 1600 on her SAT test. She also got a perfect 8000 on the rigorous University of California acceptance index. Never before had anyone accomplished this.

Karen was a straight-A student at Mission San Jose High School. She described herself as a typical teenager who munches on junk food and talks for hours on her cell phone. Karen’s teachers called her “Wonder Woman” because of her unquenchable thirst for knowledge and her uncanny ability to retain whatever she read. But when a reporter asked her, “What is the meaning of Life?” Karen’s reply was surprising. She replied, “I HAVE NO IDEAD, I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MYSELF.” (6)

Conclusion- Why do we feel so Bad when we have it so Good? Because True Happiness and Fulfillment can only be found in ONE Person... that is The Lord Jesus Christ. Are you searching for meaning in your life?
Have you come to the realization that Position, Pleasure & Possessions do not bring true meaning to life? The only ONE who can bring true meaning and fulfillment to your life is the Lord Jesus Christ. The Son of God who gave himself for your sins, was buried and rose again the third day. Will you receive HIM today?

Acknowledgements:

(1) Book by Ed Young Been There Done That Now What. Pg 7
(2) Book by Ed Young Been There Done That Now What. Pg 8
(3) Book by Ed Young Been There Done That Now What. Pg 11-12
(4) Book by David Jeremiah Searching for Heaven on Earth Pg 7
(5) Book by David Jeremiah Searching for Heaven on Earth Pg 15
(6) Book by David Jeremiah Searching for Heaven on Earth Pg 23