

# SERMON OUTLINE Ecclesiastes 2:12-17

Wisdom, Madness, and Folly

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **WISDOM, MADNESS, AND FOLLY (12)**

*The Wise*

*The Mad*

*The Fool*

### **THE RESULTS (13-17)**

*There Are Important Differences Between the Wise and the Fool (13-14a)*

*At the Same Time, the Wise and the Mad-Fool Experience the Same Things in the End (14b-16)*

*All Is Still Vanity (16-17)*

## **CONCLUSION**

# SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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## MAIN POINT

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The big idea of this passage is that God moves in mysterious ways. And the main takeaway is to trust God's Word and promises rather than our interpretation of our circumstances.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. What were your thoughts on the text/sermon? What most stood out? How was it helpful? Confusing?
2. What are your thoughts on the Preacher's attempts to find meaning and significance under the sun? How can you relate?
3. How would you describe the Preacher's third attempt in your own words (2:12-17)?
4. Of under-the-sun wisdom, madness, and folly, which are you most prone to? How does it tend to work out? How have you seen each play itself out in the world around you?
5. Do you spend much time observing others—how they choose to order their lives and the results of that ordering?
6. How have you found proverbial wisdom to be of more gain than folly? Have you ever experienced greater gain in folly?
7. How much do you think of your own death? When you do, what tends to be the line of thinking? Can you understand the Preacher's frustration with the fact that in the end, we all die no matter what we do on earth?
8. Does dying or being quickly forgotten seem worse to you? Why?
9. Have you ever felt like it just doesn't matter what you do? Have you ever thought that everything is simply out of your control and heading toward a predetermined end regardless of whatever attempts you might make to steer things differently?
10. Whose faith and outcome can you consider in obedience to Hebrews 13:7 (as the Preacher ought to have)?
11. In what way/s did the sermon help you see the greatness of God?

## AREAS OF APPLICATION

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12. Consider your quest to find meaning and significance in your life. Write it out. Name the various outcomes.
13. Ask a non-Christian to describe their search for meaning and significance.
14. Pick one Proverb to apply this week (like 15:1). Pay careful attention to the result of living in light of it.
15. Write out one paragraph describing what you hope people remember about you after you die.
16. Find a Hebrews 13:7 person this week. Consider the outcome of their way of life. Imitate their faith in specific ways.
17. Artistically attempt to capture the Preacher's heart and/or face after finding that all his attempts fell short.
18. Ask two different people in your family or DG (1) One thing they got from this sermon, and (2) How you can pray for them.
19. Pick one specific thing you mean to do differently, with the Spirit's help, as a result of the things you heard in this text/sermon.

## PRAYER POINTS

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20. Adoration. Praise God that He is sovereign, wise, and good. Praise God that He is the King of kings. Praise God that He is eternal and will never be forgotten. Praise God that He is light and life. Praise God that He can shepherd the wind.
21. Confess. Confess your sins of living according to under-the-sun wisdom, madness, or folly. Confess walking in darkness. Confess your fear of death. Confess your sins of looking to the wrong people to make sense of life. Confess your failure to live entirely in light of God's Word and promises. Confess your lack of faith in Jesus.
22. Thanksgiving. Thank God for someone who has been a model of faith for you. Thank God for His promises and Word. Thank God for the Preacher's failed attempts to find meaning and significance. Thank God for our chance to be in Ecclesiastes.
23. Supplication. Ask God to cause some specific person in your life to look to Him for satisfaction. Ask God to help us trust in His promises and not our own interpretation of our circumstances. Ask God to comfort the broken hearted.