

Wisdom in Pursuit of Wind

 Saved

 Eric Grossman

 **Lecture 3:** The Quiet Life, The Good Life, The Better Life, and the Afterlife

קהלת ח'ב'-ז'

(ב) אֲנִי פִּי־מֶלֶךְ שְׁמֹר וְעַל דְּבַרְתָּ
שְׁבוּעַת אֱלֹהִים: (ג) אֶל־תִּבְהֵל מִפְּנֵי
תִלְךָ אֶל־תַּעֲמֹד בְּדִבְרֵי רָע כִּי כָל־אִשָּׁר
יִחְפֹּץ יַעֲשֶׂה: (ד) בְּאִשֶּׁר דִּבַּר־מֶלֶךְ
שְׁלֹטֹן וְיָמִי יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ מִה־תַּעֲשֶׂה: (ה)
שׁוֹמֵר מִצְוָה לֹא יֵדַע דִּבְרֵי רָע וְעַתָּה
וּמִשְׁפָּט יֵדַע לֵב חָכָם: (ו) כִּי לְכָל־חֹפֶץ
יֵשׁ עֵת וּמִשְׁפָּט כִּי־רַעַת הָאָדָם רַבָּה
עָלָיו: (ז) כִּי־אֵינָנו יֹדְעֵי מִה־תִּשְׁיָהּ כִּי
כָּאִשֶּׁר יִהְיֶה מִי יֵגִיד לוֹ:

Ecclesiastes 8:2-7

(2) I say, "Obey the king's orders in that it is an oath of God." (3) Leave his presence; do not take a stance concerning an evil matter, for he can do anything he pleases; (4) inasmuch as a king's command is authoritative, and none can say to him, "What are you doing?" (5) One who obeys orders will not suffer from the dangerous situation. A wise man, however, will bear in mind that there is a time of doom. (6) For there is a time for every experience, including the doom; for a man's calamity overwhelms him. (7) Indeed, he does not know what is to happen; even when it is on the point of happening, who can tell him?

קהלת ה'י"ב-י"ט

Ecclesiastes 5:12-19

(יב) יֵשׁ רָעָה חוֹלָה רָאִיתִי תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ
 עֹשֶׂה שְׁמֹר לְבַעֲלָיו לְרָעָתוֹ: (יג) וְאָבֵד
 הָעֹשֶׂה הֵהוּא בְּעֵנִין רָע וְהוֹלִיד בֶּן וְאִין
 בִּידוֹ מְאוּמָּה: (יד) כִּאֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִבֶּטֶן
 אִמּוֹ עָרוֹם יָשׁוּב לָלֶכֶת כְּשֶׁבָא וּמְאוּמָּה
 לֹא־יֵשֵׁא בַּעֲמָלוֹ שִׁילָף בִּידוֹ: (טו) וְגַם־זֶה
 רָעָה חוֹלָה כָּל־עֲמֶת שָׁבָא כֵּן יִלָּךְ
 וּמִה־יִּתְּרוֹן לוֹ שִׁיעֵמָל לְרוּחַ: (טז) גַּם
 כָּל־יָמָיו בַּחֲשֹׁךְ יֹאכֵל וְכַעַס הָרִבָּה וְחֲלִין
 וְקִצְף: (יז) הִנֵּה אֲשֶׁר־רָאִיתִי אֲנִי טוֹב
 אֲשֶׁר־יָפָה לֶאֱכֹל־וְלִשְׁתּוֹת וְלִרְאוֹת טוֹבָה
 בְּכָל־עֲמָלוֹ | שִׁיעֵמָל תַּחַת־הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ
 מִסֶּפֶר יְמֵי־חַיָּו אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים
 כִּי־הוּא חָלָקוֹ: (יח) גַּם כָּל־הָאֲדָם אֲשֶׁר
 נָתַן־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים עֹשֶׂה וְנִכְסִים וְהַשְׁלִיטוֹ
 לֶאֱכֹל מִמֶּנּוּ וְלִשְׁאֵת אֶת־חָלָקוֹ וְלִשְׁמַח
 בַּעֲמָלוֹ זֶה מַתַּת אֱלֹהִים הִיא: (יט) כִּי
 לֹא הָרִבָּה יִזְכֹּר אֶת־יָמָיו חַיָּו כִּי
 הָאֱלֹהִים מַעֲנֶה בְּשִׂמְחַת לְבָבוֹ:

(12) Here is a grave evil I have observed under the sun: riches hoarded by their owner to his misfortune, (13) in that those riches are lost in some unlucky venture; and if he begets a son, he has nothing in hand. (14) Another grave evil is this: He must depart just as he came. As he came out of his mother's womb, so must he depart at last, naked as he came. He can take nothing of his wealth to carry with him. (15) So what is the good of his toiling for the wind? (16) Besides, all his days he eats in darkness, with much vexation and grief and anger. (17) Only this, I have found, is a real good: that one should eat and drink and get pleasure with all the gains he makes under the sun, during the numbered days of life that God has given him; **for that is his portion.** (18) Also, whenever a man is given riches and property by God, and is also permitted by Him to enjoy them and to take his portion and get pleasure for his gains—that is a gift of God. (19) For [such a man] will not brood much over the days of his life, because God keeps him busy enjoying himself.

משנה אבות ד'א'

(א) בן זומא אומר, איזהו עשיר, השמח
בחלקו, שנאמר (תהלים קכח) יגיע
כפיד כי תאכל אשריך וטוב לך.
אשריך, בעולם הזה. וטוב לך, לעולם
הבא.

Pirkei Avot 4:1

(1) Ben Zoma said: Who is rich? One who rejoices **in his portion**, as it is said: “You shall enjoy the fruit of your labors, you shall be happy and you shall prosper” (Psalms 128:2) “You shall be happy” in this world, “and you shall prosper” in the world to come.

קהלת ה'א'-ו'

(א) אל־תִּבְהֵל עַל־פִּיךָ וְלִבְךָ אֲלִימָהָר
לְהוֹצִיא דָּבָר לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי הָאֱלֹהִים
בְּשָׁמַיִם וְאַתָּה עַל־הָאָרֶץ עַל־כֵּן יִהְיוּ
דְּבָרֶיךָ מְעֻטִּים: (ב) כִּי בָּא הַחֲלוֹם בְּרֹב
עֲנָן וְקוֹל כְּסִיל בְּרֹב דְּבָרִים: (ג) כַּאֲשֶׁר
תִּדְרֹךְ לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים אֲל־תִּתְאַחֵר לְשַׁלְּמוֹ כִּי
אֵין חֶפֶץ בַּכְּסִילִים אֶת אֲשֶׁר־תִּדְרֹךְ שְׁלָם:
(ד) טוֹב אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִדְרֹךְ מִשִּׁתְּדוֹר וְלֹא
תִשְׁלָם: (ה) אֲל־תִּתֵּן אֶת־פִּיךָ לַחֲטִיא
אֶת־בִּשְׁרֶךָ וְאֲל־תֹּאמַר לִפְנֵי הַמִּלֶּאכָה כִּי
שָׁגָגָה הִיא לָמָּה יִקְצֹף הָאֱלֹהִים
עַל־קוֹלְךָ וְחָבֵל אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ: (ו) כִּי
בְּרֹב חֲלָמוֹת וְהִבָּלִים וּדְבָרִים הִרְבֵּה כִּי

Ecclesiastes 5:1-6

(1) Keep your mouth from being rash, and let not your throat be quick to bring forth speech before God. For God is in heaven and you are on earth; that is why your words should be few. (2) Just as dreams come with much brooding, so does foolish utterance come with much speech. (3) When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it. For He has no pleasure in fools; what you vow, fulfill. (4) It is better not to vow at all than to vow and not fulfill. (5) Don't let your mouth bring you into disfavor, and don't plead before the messenger that it was an error, but fear God; else God may be angered by your talk and destroy

אַתְּהָאֵלֶּהִים יֵרָא:

your possessions. (6) For much dreaming leads to futility and to superfluous talk.

משנה אבות ג'י"ג

(יג) רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אוֹמֵר ... סִיג לְחֻכָּמָה,
שְׁתִּיקָה:

Pirkei Avot 3:13

(13) Rabbi Akiva said: A fence to wisdom is silence.

קהלת ו'י"א-י"ב

(יא) כִּי יִשְׁדָּבְרִים הָרַבָּה מְרַבִּים הֶבֶל
מִה־יֵּתֶר לָאָדָם: (יב) כִּי מִיִּיּוֹדֵעַ מִה־טוֹב
לָאָדָם בְּחַיִּים מְסַפֵּר יְמֵי־חַיֵּי הֶבֶל
וַיַּעֲשֶׂם כָּצֵל אֲשֶׁר מִיִּיגִיד לָאָדָם
מִה־יִּהְיֶה אַחֲרָיו תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ:

Ecclesiastes 6:11-12

(11) Often, much talk means much futility. How does it benefit a man? (12) Who can possibly know what is best for a man to do in life—the few days of his fleeting life? For who can tell him what the future holds for him under the sun?

שבת ל' ב

בְּקִנְשׁוֹ חֻכָּמִים לְגַנוּז סֵפֶר קֹהֶלֶת מִפְּנֵי
שְׁדָבְרָיו סוֹתְרִין זֶה אֶת זֶה.

Shabbat 30b

The Sages sought to suppress the book of Ecclesiastes and declare it apocryphal

because its statements contradict each other.

קהלת ז':א'-ה'

(א) טוֹב שֵׁם מִשָּׁמֶן טוֹב וַיּוֹם הַמָּוֶת
מִיּוֹם הַוָּלָדוֹ:

(ב) טוֹב לָלֶכֶת אֶל-בֵּית-אָבִל מִלֶּכֶת
אֶל-בֵּית מִשְׁתָּה בַּאֲשֶׁר הוּא סוֹף
כָּל-הָאָדָם וְהָחֵי יִתֵּן אֶל-לִבּוֹ:

(ה) טוֹב לִשְׁמָע גְּעֵרַת חָכָם מֵאִישׁ שִׁמְעַ
נְשִׁיר כְּסִילִים:

(ח) טוֹב אַחֲרִית דָּבָר מִרֵּאשִׁיתוֹ טוֹב
אֶרֶךְ-רוּחַ מִגִּבַּה-רוּחַ:

Ecclesiastes 7:1-8

(1) A good name is better than fragrant oil, and the day of death than the day of birth.

(2) It is better to go to a house of mourning than to a house of feasting; for that is the end of every man, and a living one should take it to heart.

(5) It is better to listen to a wise man's reproof than to listen to the praise of fools.

(8) The end of a matter is better than the beginning of it. Better a patient spirit than a haughty spirit.

קהלת ז':י'

Ecclesiastes 7:10

(י) אֶל־תֹּאמַר מָה הָיָה נְשִׁימִים
הָרִאשׁוֹנִים הָיוּ טוֹבִים מֵאַלֶּה כִּי לֹא
מַחֲכָמָה שְׂאֵלָתָ עַל־זֶה:

(10) Don't say, "How has it happened that former times were better than these?" For it is not wise of you to ask that question.

שבת קי"ב ב

אָמַר רַבִּי זִירָא אָמַר רַבָּא בַּר זִימוּנָא:
אִם רִאשׁוֹנִים בְּנֵי מַלְאָכִים — אָנוּ בְּנֵי
אָנָשִׁים. וְאִם רִאשׁוֹנִים בְּנֵי אָנָשִׁים —
אָנוּ כַּחֲמוּרִים.

Shabbat 112b

Rabbi Zeira said that Rava bar Zimuna said: If the early generations are characterized as sons of angels, we are the sons of men. And if the early generations are characterized as the sons of men, we are akin to donkeys.

קהלת ח':י"ב-י"ד

(יב) אֲשֶׁר חָטָא עָשָׂה רָע מְאֹד וּמֵאֲרִיךְ
לּוֹ כִּי גַם־יִוָּדַע אָנִי אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה־טוֹב
לִירְאֵי הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִירָאוּ מִלְּפָנָיו: (יג)
וְטוֹב לֹא־יִהְיֶה לְרָשָׁע וְלֹא־יֵאָרִיךְ יָמָיו
כַּצֵּל אֲשֶׁר אֵינְנוּ יֵרָא מִלְּפָנֵי אֱלֹהִים: (יד)
יִשְׁהָבֵל אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר |
יֵשׁ צַדִּיקִים אֲשֶׁר מַגִּיעַ אֱלֹהִים כַּמַּעֲשֵׂה
הָרָשָׁעִים וַיֵּשׁ רָשָׁעִים שְׂמִינִיעַ אֱלֹהִים
כַּמַּעֲשֵׂה הַצַּדִּיקִים אֲמַרְתִּי שְׂגִם־זֶה

Ecclesiastes 8:12-14

(12) The fact is that that a sinner may do evil a hundred times and his [punishment] still be delayed. For although I am aware that "It will be well with those who revere God since they revere Him, (13) and it will not be well with the scoundrel, and he will not live long, because he does not revere God"— (14) here is *hevel* that occurs in the world: sometimes an upright man is requited according to the conduct of the scoundrel; and sometimes the scoundrel is requited according to the conduct of

הַבֵּל:

the upright. I say all that is *havel*.

קהלת ט':ז-י'

Ecclesiastes 9:7-10

(ז) לֶךְ אֲכַל בְּשִׂמְחָה לַחֲמֶךְ וּשְׂתֵה
בְּלִב־טוֹב יִינֶה כִּי כָבֹד רָצָה הָאֱלֹהִים
אֶת־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ: (ח) בְּכָל־עֵת יִהְיוּ בְּגָדֶיךָ
לְבָנִים וְשֶׁמֶן עַל־רֹאשְׁךָ אַל־יִחָסֵר: (ט)
רְאֵה חַיִּים עִם־אִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר־אַהַבְתָּ
כָּל־יְמֵי חַיֵּי הַבָּלְךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לְךָ תַּחַת
הַשָּׁמַשׁ כֹּל יְמֵי הַבָּלְךָ כִּי הוּא חֻלְקֶךָ
בְּחַיִּים וּבְעַמְלֹךְ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה עֹמֵל תַּחַת
הַשָּׁמַשׁ: (י) כֹּל אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא יָדְךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת
בְּכַחֲךָ עֲשֵׂה כִּי אֵין מַעֲשֵׂה וְחִשְׁבֹּן
וְדַעַת וְחִכְמָה בְּשֵׂאוֹל אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה הֹלֵךְ
שָׁמָּה:

(7) Go, eat your bread in gladness, and drink your wine in joy; for your action was long ago approved by God. (8) Let your clothes always be freshly washed, and your head never lack ointment. (9) Enjoy happiness with a woman you love all the fleeting days of life that have been granted to you under the sun—all your fleeting days. For that alone is what you can get out of life and out of the means you acquire under the sun. (10) Whatever it is in your power to do, do with all your might. For there is no action, no reasoning, no learning, no wisdom in Sheol, where you are going.

בראשית מ"ב:ל"ח

Genesis 42:38

(לח) וַיֹּאמֶר לְאֶיְרֹד בְּנִי עִמָּכֶם...וּקְרָאָהוּ
אֶסּוֹן בְּדֶרֶךְ ... וְהוֹרְדָתֶם אֶת־שִׁיבְתִּי
בִּיגּוֹן שְׂאוֹלָה:

(38) But [Jacob] said, "My son [Benjamin] must not go down with you... If he meets with disaster ... you will send my white head down to Sheol in grief."

במדבר ט"ז:ל"ב-ל"ג

(לב) וַתִּפְתָּח הָאֲרֶץ אֶת־פִּיהָ וַתִּבְלַע
...אֶת כָּל־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר לְקֹרַח... (לג) וַיֵּרְדּוּ
הֵם וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם חַיִּים שָׁאֵלָה...

Numbers 16:32-33

(32) The earth opened its mouth and
swallowed ... all Korah's people ... (33)
They went down alive to Sheol...

שמואל א כ"ח:ז'-ט"ו

(ז) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂאוּל לַעֲבָדָיו בִּקְשׁוּ־לִי אִשָּׁת
בַּעַל־תְּאוֹב וְאִלְכָה אֵלֶיהָ וְאִדְרָשָׁה־בָּהּ
וַיֹּאמְרוּ עֲבָדָיו אֵלָיו הִנֵּה אִשָּׁת
בַּעַל־תְּאוֹב בְּעֵין דּוֹר:

(יא) וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֶת־מִי אַעֲלֶה־לָּךְ
וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת־שְׁמוּאֵל הָעֶלְי־לִי

וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֶל־שְׂאוּל אֱלֹהִים רָאִיתִי
עֲלִים מִן־הָאָרֶץ: (יד) וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ
מֶה־תֵּאָדָּרוּ וַתֹּאמֶר אִישׁ זָקֵן עֹלֶה וְהוּא
עֹטָה מְעִיל וַיֵּדַע שְׂאוּל כִּי־שְׁמוּאֵל
הוּא... (טו) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל־שְׂאוּל

I Samuel 28:7-15

(7) Then Saul said to his courtiers, "Find
me a woman who consults ghosts, so
that I can go to her and inquire through
her." And his courtiers told him that
there was a woman in En-dor who
consulted ghosts.

(11) At that, the woman asked, "Whom
shall I bring up for you?" He answered,
"Bring up Samuel for me."

And the woman said to Saul, "I see a
divine being coming up from the earth."

(14) "What does he look like?" he asked
her. "It is an old man coming up," she
said, "and he is wrapped in a robe."

לָמָּה הִרְגַּזְתָּנִי לְהַעֲלוֹת אֹתִי...

Then Saul knew that it was Samuel...

(15) Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me and brought me up?"

קהלת ט':י"ד-ט"ז

Ecclesiastes 9:14-16

(יד) עִיר קְטַנָּה וְאֲנָשִׁים בָּהּ מְעַט
וּבֶאֱלֹהֶיהָ מֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל וְסָבַב אֹתָהּ וּבָנָה
עָלֶיהָ מְצֻדִים גְּדֹלִים: (טו) וּמָצָא בָּהּ
אִישׁ מְסֻכֵּן חָכָם וּמְלִטָּה הוּא אֶת־הָעִיר
בְּחָכְמָתוֹ וְאָדָם לֹא זָכַר אֶת־הָאִישׁ
הַמְסֻכֵּן הַהוּא: (טז) וְאָמַרְתִּי אֲנִי טוֹבָה
חָכְמָה מִגְּבוּרָה וְחָכְמַת הַמְסֻכֵּן בְּזוּיָהּ...

(14) There was a little city, with few people in it; and to it came a great king, who invested it and built mighty siege works against it. (15) Present in the city was a poor wise person who saved it with wisdom, but nobody remembered that person. (16) So I observed: Wisdom is better than manly strength; but a poor person's wisdom is scorned...

שמואל ב כ':ט"ו-כ"ב

II Samuel 20:15-22

(טו) וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיִּצְרוּ עָלָיו בְּאֵלֶּלָה בֵּית
הַמַּעֲכָה וַיִּשְׁפְּכוּ סִלְלָה אֶל־הָעִיר וַתַּעֲמֵד
בְּחָל וְכָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אֶת־יֹאָב מִשְׁחִיתָם
לְהַפִּיל הַחוּמָה: (טז) וַתִּקְרָא אִשָּׁה
חָכְמָה מִן־הָעִיר שְׁמֹעוֹ שְׁמֹעוֹ אָמְרוּ־נָא
אֶל־יֹאָב קִרְבַּ עַד־הֵנָּה וְאִדְבָּרָה אֵלָיְךָ:
(יז) וַיִּקְרַב אֵלֶיהָ וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה הֲאֵתָה

(15) [Joab's men] came and besieged him in [the city of Abel]; they threw up a siege mound against the city and it stood against the rampart. All the troops with Joab were engaged in battering the wall, (16) when a woman who was wise shouted from the city, "Listen! Listen! Tell Joab to come over here so I can talk to him." (17) He approached her, and

יוֹאָב וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ שְׁמַע דְּבָרִי
 אֲמַתְךָ וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמַע אָנֹכִי: (יח) וַתֹּאמֶר
 לֹא־אֶמַר דִּבֶּר יְדַבְּרוּ בְּרֹאשֹׁנָה לֹא־מֶר
 שְׂאוֹל יִשְׁאַלוּ בְּאַבֵּל וְכֵן הָתֵמוּ: (יט)
 אָנֹכִי שְׁלָמִי אֲמוֹנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתָּה מִבְּקֹשׁ
 לְהָמִית עֵיר וְאֵם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לָמָּה תִּבְלַע
 נַחֲלַת יְהוָה: {פ}(כ) וַיַּעַן יוֹאָב וַיֹּאמֶר
 חָלִילָה חָלִילָה לִּי אִם־אֶבְלַע
 וְאִם־אֲשַׁחֲתִי: (כא) לֹא־כֵן הִדְבֵּר כִּי אִישׁ
 מִהָר אֶפְרַיִם שָׁבַע בֶּן־בִּכְרִי שָׁמוּ נָשָׂא
 יָדוֹ בַּמֶּלֶךְ בְּדוֹד תְּנוּ־אֹתוֹ לְבָדוֹ וְאִלְכָה
 מֵעַל הָעֵיר וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֶל־יוֹאָב
 הִנֵּה רֹאשׁוֹ מִשְׁלָךְ אֵלָיְךָ בְּעַד הַחוֹמָה:
 (כב) וַתְּבוֹא הָאִשָּׁה אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם
 בַּחֲכָמָתָהּ וַיִּכְרְתוּ אֶת־רֹאשׁ שָׁבַע
 בֶּן־בִּכְרִי וַיִּשְׁלְכוּ אֶל־יוֹאָב וַיִּתְקַע בַּשֹּׁפָר
 וַיִּפְצְצוּ מֵעַל־הָעֵיר אִישׁ לְאֹהֲלֵיו וַיּוֹאָב
 שָׁב יְרוּשָׁלַם אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ: {ס}

the woman asked, "Are you Joab?" "Yes,"
 he answered; and she said to him,
 "Listen to what your handmaid has to
 say." "I'm listening," he replied. (18) And
 she continued, "In olden times people
 used to say, 'Let them inquire of Abel,'
 and that was the end of the matter. (19) I
 am one of those who seek the welfare of
 the faithful in Israel. But you seek to
 bring death upon a mother city in Israel!
 Why should you destroy GOD's
 possession?" (20) Joab replied, "Far be it,
 far be it from me to destroy or to ruin!
 (21) Not at all! But a certain man from
 the hill country of Ephraim, named
 Sheba son of Bichri, has rebelled against
 King David. Just hand him alone over to
 us, and I will withdraw from the city."
 The woman assured Joab, "His head
 shall be thrown over the wall to you."
 (22) The woman came to all the people
 with her wise plan; and they cut off the
 head of Sheba son of Bichri and threw it
 down to Joab. He then sounded the
 horn; those attacking the city dispersed
 to their homes, and Joab returned to the
 king in Jerusalem.