

LIVING ON THE RAGGED EDGE:

Coming to Terms with Reality

Chasing the Wind

Ecclesiastes 1:1–18



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Boredom. Monotony. The unchanging drag of life is an inescapable, undeniable reality. Just look around. How many people do you know who regularly wake up each morning motivated about the day? How many individuals genuinely enjoy their occupation? Or anticipate a new week with delight? Or feel challenged and excited about their marriage? Or insert creative ideas and activities into their day to keep life full of zest and enthusiasm? Aside from a few exceptional occasions, most folks live lives of quiet desperation. They see no future in their employment, little hope for their marriage, a lack of challenge in whatever pursuit they might undertake, and strong doubt that things will ever change. Life to most adults is nothing more than chasing the wind . . . empty, futile, purposeless, grinding boredom. Such is one's existence “under the sun.” And to make matters worse, not even the alleged *enjoyments* bring lasting satisfaction—vacations, travel, cruises, extravagant possessions, sexual escapades, delicious food, booze, professional entertainment, and a dozen others. When the brief excitement ends, the inevitable monotony returns. This is the bold, dreary message of this lesson.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. Exposing the Lies about Life

There are several lies about life that are often repeated as proverbial axioms—as undeniable truths or heartwarming principles to help people smooth out life's ragged edges. Let's look at four examples of piping-hot concoctions from the world that can scald the unwary.

- “Laugh and the world laughs with you. Cry and you cry alone.”
- “Every day and in every way our world is getting better and better.”
- “There's a light at the end of every tunnel.”
- “Things never are as bad as they seem. So dream, dream, dream.”



Quotable

*Busy lives appear
to have substance.*

*But busyness is
often a cheap
substitute for a
life without God.*

—Charles R. Swindoll



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2. Telling the Truth about Existence (Ecclesiastes 1:1–18)

Why do people believe and spread lies about where to find meaning in life? They believe this world can provide purpose and happiness if they just hold on long enough. But the hope to which they cling ignores the fact that the world is corrupt, work is unfulfilling, and people are selfish. Life apart from God is not a bowl of cherries. Let's take a look at the truth about life "under the sun" as expressed most eloquently by King Solomon.



GETTING TO THE ROOT

A Studied Examination of Life

In Ecclesiastes 1:13, the Hebrew word translated "seek" is *darash* and means to study and seek out the application of wisdom.¹ The second word translated "explore" is *tur*, which means to "find out how to do something."² Solomon used his wisdom to find true meaning and joy in life. Together these two words imply a very in-depth, broad, and thorough search of both theoretical and practical knowledge.



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LET'S LIVE IT

Let's think through the practical ramifications of Solomon's words in the first chapter of Ecclesiastes. Stop and let these thoughts sink in:

- If there is nothing but *nothing* “under the sun,” our only hope must be beyond it.
- If a man who had everything investigated *everything visible*, then the one thing needed must be invisible.

Few people have learned the secret of seeing the invisible and hearing the inaudible. All others are merely “chasing the wind.” Are you living beyond the sun, or are you chasing the wind?

ENDNOTES

1. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2006), 205.
2. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 1064.



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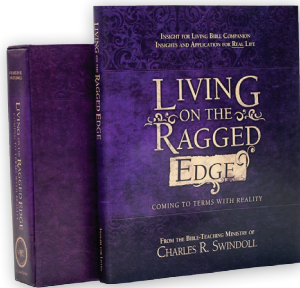
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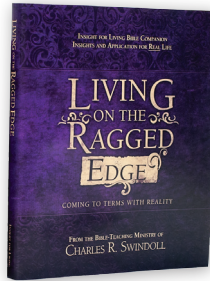
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Ecclesiastes 1:1–18



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