


A person stands in silhouette, facing a massive, ancient tree with thick, gnarled roots and a dense canopy. The scene is set against a bright, hazy sky with scattered clouds and falling leaves. The word "WISDOM" is written in large, bold, yellow capital letters across the upper portion of the image, centered over the tree's canopy.

WISDOM

for the journey

A person is silhouetted against a large, ancient tree with a bright light emanating from its center. The scene is set in a dark, misty environment with many small birds flying around. The overall mood is contemplative and majestic.

*“A wise man will hear
and increase in learning,
and a man of
understanding will
acquire wise counsel.” –
Proverbs 1:5*

ORDER SHATTERED!

A person stands with their back to the camera, looking up at a massive, ancient tree. Sunlight filters through the dense canopy, creating a warm, golden glow. The scene is set in a lush, tropical environment with other trees and foliage visible in the background. The overall mood is one of awe and contemplation.

WISDOM

for the journey

We need help to make decisions about work; all relationships – in speech and conduct; who to trust or avoid; along with being measured by the plumbline of true character. Wisdom from Proverbs offers insight into the concrete experiences of human life that help us take charge of our lives.

Proverbs is about **how to** live out your faith in God. There is no true wisdom apart from Jesus. Fools are those who rely on their own knowledge to navigate life.

In this study, we will look and listen to hear God's voice and see his Son shining through the book of Proverbs. We will be equipped in every way for our journey!

GOD'S ORDER SHATTERED!

1. **BROKEN – Ecclesiastes 2:15,16** → The relationship between behavior and reward is—not completely but to a significant degree—disrupted or shattered. It's possible to overread Proverbs to teach that “good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people.” But here in Ecclesiastes we are reminded that often a good, wise person is no more honored than a fool. In our broken world good behavior does not always lead to favorable outcomes.
2. **MEANINGLESS – Ecclesiastes 1:1-11** → The author is observing that we reach so few of our goals, and the goals we do reach are not nearly as fulfilling as we thought. There seems to be no gain. The author asks us to imagine trying to live under the sun—with no God or eternity beyond this world. This world is separated from God by the sin of the human race, so it does not function as it was created to, and that therefore even believers encounter a great deal of human life's vanity or meaninglessness. We must anchor our lives in the eternal (II Cor. 4:16-18).

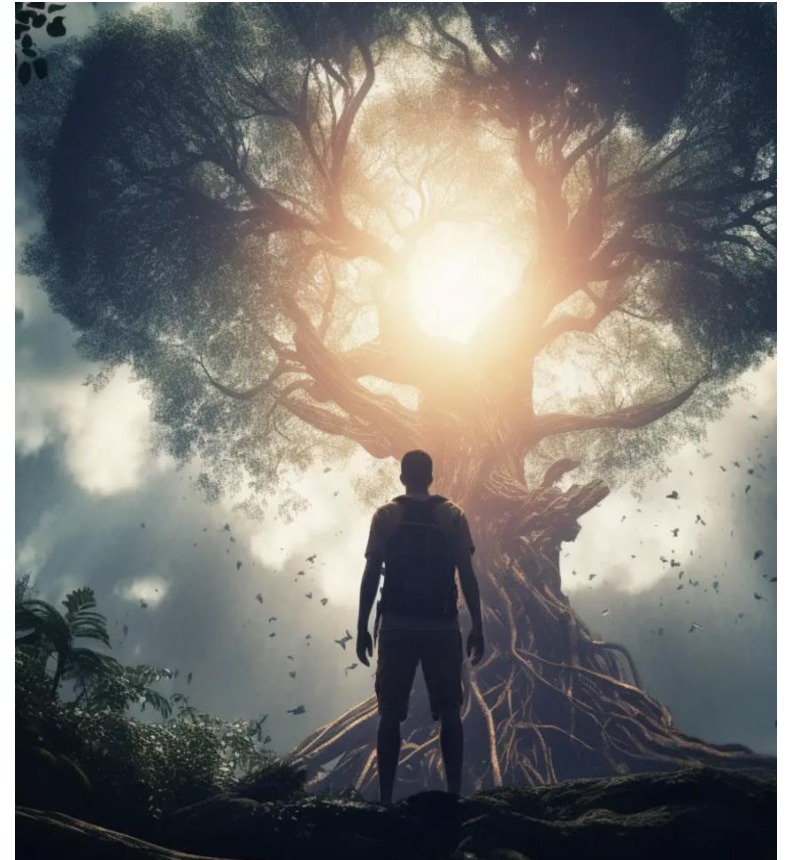
GOD'S ORDER SHATTERED!

3. INSIGNIFICANCE - Ecclesiastes 1:9-11 →

Ecclesiastes asks us to imagine how fulfilling things can possibly be if what we see in this world and life is "all that is or ever was or ever will be." This is devastating insight. It means that if life under the sun is all that there is, then whether you spend your life helping people or killing people, in the end it makes not a whit of difference. The fleeting pleasures of life are senseless, useless, and insignificant if we try to live without reference and gratitude to God.

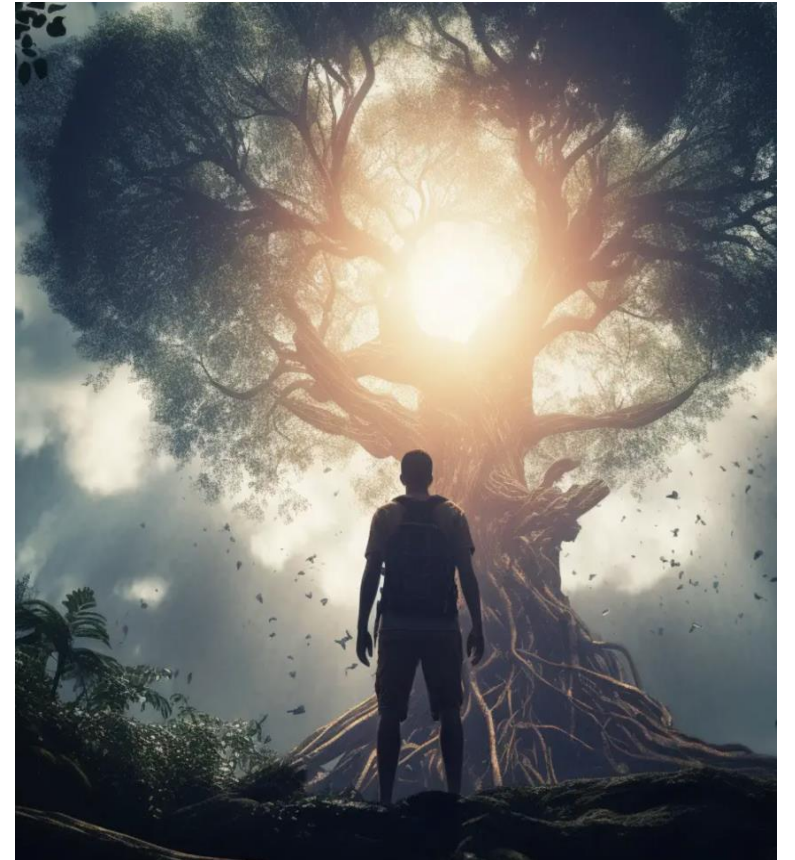
ORDERED SHATTERED – MEANINGLESSNESS

1. **ACHIEVEMENT – Ecclesiastes 2:20-23** → Proverbs points to the satisfaction work can bring, but Ecclesiastes reminds us that we often feel the “thorns and thistles,” the grinding frustration that is the curse on work in a fallen world (Gen. 3:17-19). Work and achievement, without the peace of God in our lives through the Spirit, will never be enough.
2. **PLEASURE – Ecclesiastes 2:1-3,11** → Ecclesiastes explores the way of hedonism and self-expression as a solution to the futility of life. Pleasure in Hebrew (simha) are meaningless and vain in their own terms. In this world, pleasures are fleeting. The more you look to the things of this world to give you your deepest pleasures and satisfactions, the more frustrating they will be.



ORDERED SHATTERED – MEANINGLESSNESS

3. **KNOWLEDGE – Ecclesiastes 1:12-19** → This almost by definition is the scientific enterprise – the effort to find a natural (not supernatural) cause for absolutely everything. But this project is proclaimed a failure. We can't fix human problems with mere technology and knowledge – what is crooked cannot be straightened (Eccl. 1:15). Science can't change the heart.
4. **MORALITY – Ecclesiastes 9:1-3** → The sinful human race does indeed have the world it deserves, in which good and bad behavior are not rewarded neatly and appropriately. Through the work of the Christ all the areas of death, decay, and evil that still need to be addressed in your own heart.

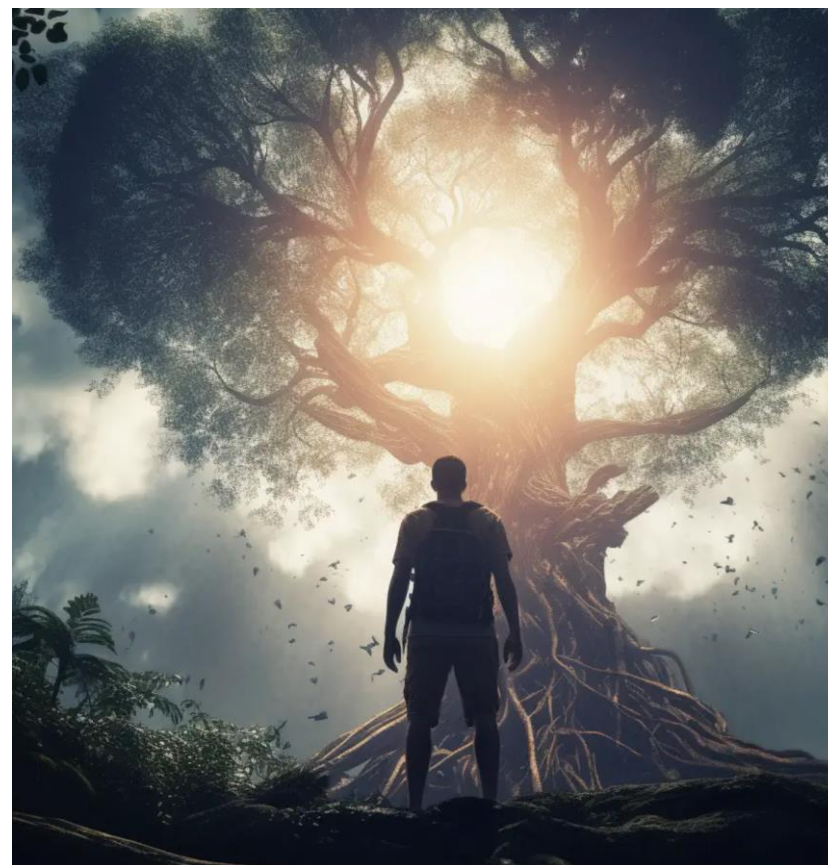


ORDER SHATTERED – ORDER RESTORED!

1. ENJOY YOUR LIFE – Ecclesiastes 11:7-10 →

In these verses, we are given a set of practical guidelines for enjoying life despite it all. How do we that?

1. REALISTIC → First, be realistic. We should expect not only times of sorrow but also that, even believing in God, life will sometimes feel meaningless (Romans 8:18).
2. GOOD CONSCIENCE → Remember God's judgment. Enjoy yourself, but don't do things you cannot justify before God. Enjoy yourself but keep your conscience clear.
3. ACCEPT GETTING OLDER → Don't mourn over youth and vigor when they fade.





ACTION: JOURNAL THIS!

1. What are the most profound challenges of your life?
2. What attempts have you made to make your life work?
3. Do you find yourself stuck in self-pity or being a victim because of the hardship of life?