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Kierkegaard and Ecclesiastes: The Relationship Between Sorrow and the Possibility of More Knowledge

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This article seeks to examine the concept of knowledge from the Old Testament's perspective embodied in the figure of the Preacher from the book of Ecclesiastes. The key verse from the main literary source, i.e. Ecclesiastes 1:18, serves as the foundation for biblical interpretation. The findings uncover an exponential relationship between knowledge and sorrow. This phenomenon is then compared with Kierkegaard's understanding of knowledge based on his *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*. In the 'Every Good and Every Perfect Gift Is from Above' discourse, Kierkegaard links the origin of knowledge to the tree of the knowledge between good and evil in the Garden of Eden. Similarly to Ecclesiastes, Kierkegaard links knowledge – connected with consciousness and spirit – with sorrow. The more one progresses in one's level of existence, knowledge grows, the spirit culminates, and one is left sorrowful because despite this growth in knowledge, it becomes more evident that full knowledge is unattainable and remains solely as a possibility.