

Our Purpose In Life

1. What Is The Point?

Eccl. 12:1-14

Introduction:

Ecclesiastes is Solomon's search for meaning in this life. And it is noted for its pessimism. And also for being misquoted and quoted out of context. But Solomon discusses a variety of important things in Ecclesiastes.

1. He says we are all on a spiritual search. We're trying to find meaning in our lives in the things of this world. But his conclusion to all these worldly things is "Meaningless! Meaningless! Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless!" (NIV)
2. All the thrills and accomplishments of this life are incapable of satisfying our search for meaning. And Solomon shares his attempts in this area. He tried every avenue to find meaning in life: wealth, pleasure, education, prestige, and work. But his conclusion to all these achievements is that nothing under the sun satisfies.
3. The more Solomon searched for the meaning of life, the more he discovered that life is unfair, that human wisdom is insufficient for the task, and that death awaits everyone.
4. Despite the unfairness in life and the reality of death, Solomon says that we have to resolve to enjoy life and live it to the fullest. **Eccl. 9:10a** – "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might..."
5. Finally, Solomon says that we should live life in a way that pleases God. **Eccl. 11:9b** – "Follow the impulses of your heart and the desire of your eyes, yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things."

I. SOLOMON'S REMINDERS ABOUT LIFE – 12:1-8

A. SET THE RIGHT COURSE

1. Great men of God served Him from their youth (e.g., Joseph, Samuel, David, Solomon, Mary)
2. Jesus provided the proper example as well – **Lk. 2:41-52**
3. Timothy, who had known the Scriptures from childhood, was to be an example to others – **2 Tim. 3:15; 1 Tim. 4:12**
4. Serving God is not just for the elderly

B. SERVING GOD WILL HELP YOU MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICES

1. Even as it helped Joseph – **Gen. 39:7-12**
2. And as it helped Daniel – **Dan. 1:8**

C. AGE BRINGS DIFFICULTIES

1. They will be days in which little pleasure will be found – **12:1**
2. The darkening of the lights of heaven denoting a time of affliction and sadness (Barnes) – **12:2**
3. He uses various figures to depict the body in old age and death – **12:3-7**
4. For man goes to his eternal home, And the mourners go about the streets – **12:5b**

D. HIS CONCLUSION – IT'S ALL A WASTE OF TIME!

1. Death comes to everybody. It is inescapable. When death comes, it is too late – **12:6-7**
2. Then life truly becomes what Solomon describes – **12:8** "Meaningless! X2" says the Teacher. "Everything is meaningless!"

II. SOLOMON'S REMINDERS ABOUT WISDOM – 12:9-12

A. THERE IS VALUE IN WANTING KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

1. Teachers are important.
 - a. Our parents served as our teachers.
 - b. Some of us had good teachers in school or in college.
 - c. Some of us have even had excellent teachers on our jobs.
2. If you were to hire a teacher, what would you want in a teacher?
 - a. Perhaps someone interesting – who could maintain your interest and keep you engaged in the topic
 - b. Second, you would want someone wise.
 - i. It wouldn't matter if they were interesting if they didn't know what they were talking about.
 - ii. You would want someone not only smart but experienced in what they teach.
 - c. Third, you would want someone relevant.
 - i. Someone who can address real issues in life and give us practical advice in living the teaching.
 - ii. Someone who could live out what they're teaching and give the right example.
3. Solomon is described as that kind of teacher – **Eccl. 12:9-10**
 - a. His conclusion about life's vanity did not lead him to despair or inactivity!
 - b. But he recognised a distinction – **12:11**
 - i. Godly wisdom will sometime be counterintuitive and hurt, but a goad is used to guide on the right way
 - ii. And like nails that hold a house together, godly wisdom holds our lives together.
 - iii. **ILLUSTRATION:**

A man was on a practice green when he saw the golf pro bring a student out to the driving range for a lesson. The pro watched the student swing several times and started making suggestions for improvement. Each time the student interrupted with his own ideas.

After several minutes of listening to the student's ideas, the pro began just nodding his head. At the end of the lesson, the student paid the pro and thanked him for being such a wonderful teacher.

The man watching went to the pro and asked him why he quit teaching and just started agreeing with the pompous student. The pro said, "I learned a long time ago that it's a waste of time to sell answers to a man who wants to buy echoes." Are you listening to echoes or seeking after true wisdom?

III. SOLOMON'S REMINDERS ABOUT JUDGMENT

A. FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS

1. This is **"the whole duty of man"** (KJV, ESV) – **12:13**
 - a. This summarizes the answer to his own question – **Eccl. 2:3**
 - b. This is man's reason for being, his "prime directive" for his existence
 - i. Solomon had lived his life to satisfy himself, and it was an empty life
 - ii. The more Solomon lived for himself, the more empty he felt

2. To “fear God”

- a. That is, to revere God, to hold Him in awe
 - i. Sometimes this concept of fearing God is confusing to Christians.
 - ii. Is this saying that we should be terrified of Him?
 - iii. How do you balance this with the concept that we are to love God?
 - iv. **ILLUSTRATION;**

CS LEWIS Chronicle of Narnia; One of the children enquires about Aslan and asks someone, “Is he safe?” “Oh no, he’s not safe...but He’s good.” Live for the right person and fear God.

- a. This is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge – **Prov. 1:7; 9:10**
- b. This reverence will help prolong life, and protect one from much evil – **Prov.10:27**

1. To “keep His commandments”

- a. A charge given to the nation of Israel – **Deut. 13:4; 30:16**
- b. A charge given to the disciples of Jesus – **Jn. 14:15**
- c. The basis by which we know that we know and love God – **1 Jn. 2:3-4; 5:3**
 - i. Epitaph on a gravestone: “Only one life will soon be passed. Only what’s done for Christ will last.”
 - ii. Solomon’s conclusion: This life is to be lived with eternity in mind

Conclusion:

People have often searched for the meaning of life; asking questions like: “**Why am I here?**” “**What is my purpose for life?**”

-- Many have concluded that there is no purpose, and fallen into despair, because a life with me at the zenith or the centre truly is “vanity of vanities, all is vanity!”

But a search that begins with the wrong assumptions invariably leads to the wrong conclusion.

- Such as assuming that there is no God, nor life after death
- If what we see in this life is all there is, then truly it is “vanity of vanities, all is vanity!”

“What’s the world coming to?” The world is coming to a day when a trumpet will sound, and will return as the Judge of all, living and dead.

“What’s the world coming to?” The world is coming to a day when every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Solomon searched for meaning in his life and he understood...

“Godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come.” – **1 Tim. 4:8**