

Ecclesiastes 12 Commentary

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Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no delight in them";

KJV Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

NKJ Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them":

NET Ecclesiastes 12:1 So remember your Creator in the days of your youth— before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them";

BGT Ecclesiastes 12:1 κα μν σθητι το κτ σαντς σε ν μραις νε τητς σου ως του μ λθωσιν μραι τς κακας κα φθ σωσιν τη νος ρες οκ σιν μοι ν ατο ς θ λημα

LXE Ecclesiastes 12:1 And remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the days of evil come, and the years overtake thee in which thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.

CSB Ecclesiastes 12:1 So remember your Creator in the days of your youth: Before the days of adversity come, and the years approach when you will say, "I have no delight in them";

ESV Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them";

NIV Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them"--

NLT Ecclesiastes 12:1 Don't let the excitement of youth cause you to forget your Creator. Honor him in your youth before you grow old and say, "Life is not pleasant anymore."

YLT Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember also thy Creators in days of thy youth, While that the evil days come not, Nor the years have arrived, that thou sayest, 'I have no pleasure in them.'

NJB Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember your Creator while you are still young, before the bad days come, before the years come which, you will say, give you no pleasure;

NRS Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember your creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come, and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them";

RSV Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them";

NAB Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come And the years approach of which you will say, I have no pleasure in them;

GWN Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember your Creator when you are young, before the days of trouble come and the years catch up with you. They will make you say, "I have found no pleasure in them."

BBE Ecclesiastes 12:1 Let your mind be turned to your Maker in the days of your strength, while the evil days come not, and the years are far away when you will say, I have no pleasure in them;

- **Remember:** Ec 11:10 Ge 39:2,8,9,23 1Sa 1:28 2:18,26 3:19-21 16:7,12,13, 1Sa 17:36,37 1Ki 3:6-12 14:13 18:12 2Ch 34:2,3 Ps 22:9,10 Ps 34:11 71:17,18 Pr 8:17 22:6 Isa 26:8 La 3:27 Da 1:8,9,17 Lu 1:15 2:40-52 18:16 Eph 6:4 2Ti 3:15
- while: Ec 11:8 Job 30:2 Ps 90:10 Ho 7:9
- when: 2Sa 19:35

[William Barrick](#) introduces this last section - Ecclesiastes 12 Life Under a Setting Sun - In conclusion, the Preacher determines to fear God, obey God, and enjoy life (Eccl 9:1–12:14) Continuing the book's grand finale (Eccl 11:9–12:7), Solomon transitions from the enjoyment of "seeing the sun" to the approach of death. Assuming temporal existence for mankind "under the sun," "he broadens the range of his observation to include God, who is above the sun, and death, which is beyond the sun." (Estes, Handbook on the Wisdom Books, 373) When the wise contemplate death, they find all aspirations to grandeur and gain exposed as illusory visions of their own arrogance. Brown says of such contemplation, that it "purges the soul of all futile striving and, paradoxically, anxiety. . . . The eternal sleep of death serves as a wake-up call to live and welcome the serendipities of the present." (Borrow [Brown, Ecclesiastes, 108.](#)) Just as the setting sun signals the end of a day, so aging signals the approach of the close of one's life. Preparation for the end of life must begin even in youth. "Before" in Eccl 12:1, 2, and 6 sets up a time-oriented series of statements that favor understanding the text as a description of the time of death, rather than merely a depiction of the process of aging. (Borrow [Fox, Qohelet and His Contradictions](#), 286) The first seven verses of this chapter comprise one long sentence. (Whybray, [Ecclesiastes](#) online) If someone were to read it aloud as one sentence, he or she would be "'out of breath' by the end" (Borrow [Huwiler - Ecclesiastes, 215.](#))—a play on the key word hebel, which can also mean "breath," as well as "vanity," "futility," or "fleeting." However, the interpreter would be remiss to focus too much upon death in this section. Both preceding (Eccl 11:9)

and subsequent (Eccl 12:14) contexts identify God's judgment as the real focus. (Borrow [Kelley, The Burden of God, 142](#))

Remember also your Creator ([bara'](#); Lxx - [ktizo](#)) in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no delight in them" - **Remember** is a command and in the Septuagint is [mimnesko](#) in the [aorist imperative](#), a command meaning "Just Do It!" and a command that cannot be obeyed in our own strength but calls on us [to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#). The implication is that the only ones who can truly obey this command are believers in the Old and New Testament!

*Remembering one's **Creator** involves more than mere memory or acknowledgment.*

*For the Hebrew writers, **remember** involves action*

[William Barrick](#) Solomonic Advice (Eccl 12:1-7) - Just when one might expect either '**Remember death**' or '**Remember darkness**,' Solomon surprises readers with "**Remember your Creator**." (Borrow [Lohfink, Qoheleth](#), 137) **Creator** ([bara'](#)) is actually a plural form in the Hebrew—a typical means of expressing majesty and superiority. Solomon's choice of this title "is not by accident. It both looks back to the creation narrative, which plays so prominent a role in Ecclesiastes, and maintains the perspective of wisdom that a joyful life is found through adherence to the principles built into the creation."⁸ What Solomon has to say in these verses is for every man, woman, and child on the planet. Before one can "**remember**" the **Creator**, he or she must believe that "there is a **Creator** Who made us, not some naturalistic process of evolution." (Morris, The Remarkable Wisdom of Solomon, [Ecclesiastes 12](#)) The Hebrew word ([bara'](#)) for **Creator** involves a root that never takes a human being as the subject. Only God creates, as far as the Old Testament writers are concerned. Remembering one's **Creator** involves more than mere memory or acknowledgment. For the Hebrew writers, **remember** involves action, (Borrow [Kaiser, Ecclesiastes](#)) or allowing the objects of remembrance to "shape one's perspective in the present." (Bartholomew, Ecclesiastes, 346.) First, we must "drop our pretence of self-sufficiency and commit ourselves to Him." (Borrow [Kidner, 100](#)) If an individual neglects serving the Creator in intentional obedience to His Word, "the capacity for joy will be lost." (Borrow [Eaton, Ecclesiastes, 148](#).)

Before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no delight in them"-

[William Barrick](#) - "**Before the evil days come**" (Eccl 12:1) relates to the previous mention of '**the days of darkness**' in Ec 11:8+ and stands in contrast to "the days of your youth" (Ec 12:1a). Both refer to times of misery and trouble. The previous reference deals with the bad times throughout one's lifetime; the second refers to the end of life. The threefold occurrence of "**before**" (Eccl 12:1, 2, 6) in these concluding verses of Ecclesiastes emphasizes the brevity of life and the finality of death. (Fredericks, Ecclesiastes, 238)

Ray Pritchard - [Something New Under the Sun](#) - **REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR** Ecclesiastes 12:1-2

Have you ever stopped to consider how many young people in the Bible did something significant for God?

- Joseph, sold into slavery at age seventeen by his brothers, rose to become one of the rulers of Egypt and later saved his people in a time of famine (Genesis 37).
- Gideon was just a young man when the Lord used him to rescue Israel from the Midianites (Judges 6-7).
 - David was a teenager tending his father's sheep on the hillsides of Bethlehem when he rose up and slew Goliath (1 Samuel 16-17).
- Joash became king of Judah at age seven; he reigned for forty years and led the people in a major refurbishing of the Temple (2 Kings 12).
- Uzziah became king of Judah when he was sixteen years old; he reigned for fifty-two years and was counted as one of the great military leaders of the Bible. At one point, he led an army of 307,500 fighting men (2 Chronicles 26).
- Hezekiah became king of Judah at the young age of twenty-five and was Judah's greatest king; he reigned for thirty-one years (2 Kings 18-20).
- Josiah became king of Judah when he was only eight years old; he reigned for forty years and led the nation in a mighty religious revival (2 Kings 22-23).
- Daniel was taken captive as a teenager by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. God honored Daniels convictions, and he entered the king's service (Daniel 1).

The point must not be missed: God has always used young people to get His message to the world. He still does today. As I think about the next generation of Christian teenagers, I wish I could guarantee them a long life and much happiness. But I can't promise them that. If they decide to live by faith, there are no guarantees. Some of them may not live for seventy years. Some of them may be called of God to serve Christ halfway around the world. Some of them may end up great heroes of the faith; some of them may

end up among those who suffer for Jesus Christ.

To any teens and young adults reading these words, I cannot promise you an easy road if you decide to follow Jesus Christ. But I do promise this: If you "remember your Creator in the days of your youth," you will be blessed and you won't be sorry. You will discover that the life of faith is full of adventure, and you will be glad you weren't a couch potato but dared to make a difference in the world.

Lord, I don't want to remember You only when I'm dying. Help me to do it now, while it matters, and for the rest of my life. Amen.

SHINING THE LIGHT

- What does it mean to you to say that God is your creator?
- What would it look like if you were to truly "remember" God this week? In what areas are you most tempted to "forget" the Lord?

MORE LIGHT FROM GOD'S WORD Read Deuteronomy 8:17-18; Matthew 6:33; and Romans 12:1-2.

Ecclesiastes 12:2 before the sun and the light, the moon and the stars are darkened, and clouds return after the rain;

KJV Ecclesiastes 12:2 While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:

NKJ Ecclesiastes 12:2 While the sun and the light, The moon and the stars, Are not darkened, And the clouds do not return after the rain;

NET Ecclesiastes 12:2 before the sun and the light of the moon and the stars grow dark, and the clouds disappear after the rain;

BGT Ecclesiastes 12:2 ως ο μ σκοπισθ λιος κα τ φ ς κα σελ νη κα ο στ ρες κα πιστρ ψωσιν τ ν φη π σω το ετο

LXE Ecclesiastes 12:2 While the sun and light are not darkened, nor the moon and the stars; nor the clouds return after the rain:

CSB Ecclesiastes 12:2 before the sun and the light are darkened, and the moon and the stars, and the clouds return after the rain;

ESV Ecclesiastes 12:2 before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain,

NIV Ecclesiastes 12:2 before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain;

NLT Ecclesiastes 12:2 Remember him before the light of the sun, moon, and stars is dim to your old eyes, and rain clouds continually darken your sky.

YLT Ecclesiastes 12:2 While that the sun is not darkened, and the light, And the moon, and the stars, And the thick clouds returned after the rain.

NJB Ecclesiastes 12:2 before the sun and the light grow dim and the moon and stars, before the clouds return after the rain;

NRS Ecclesiastes 12:2 before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return with the rain;

RSV Ecclesiastes 12:2 before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain;

NAB Ecclesiastes 12:2 Before the sun is darkened. and the light, and the moon, and the stars, while the clouds return after the rain;

GWN Ecclesiastes 12:2 Remember your Creator before the sun, the light, the moon, and the stars turn dark, and the clouds come back with rain.

BBE Ecclesiastes 12:2 While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, are not dark, and the clouds

come not back after the rain;

- the sun: Ec 11:7,8 Ge 27:1 48:10 1Sa 3:2 4:15,18
- nor: Ps 42:7 71:20 77:16

THE GATHERING STORM

before the sun and the light, the moon and the stars are darkened, and clouds return after the rain;

William Barrick - The Gathering Storm (Eccl 12:2) The second “before” (Eccl 12:2) speaks of “the sun and the light, the moon and the stars” being darkened. Mention of “light” causes confusion for some interpreters, but in the creation account “the light” (Gen 1:3–5) existed separate from sun, moon, and stars (Ge 1:14–16). Thus Solomon demonstrates his awareness of the Genesis account and puts some of its concepts to work for him in speaking of the Creator and the approaching death of a human being, one of the Creator’s creatures. Whether a reader understands the verse as a description of a storm or the coming of death, the context inevitably links the text to death. A gathering storm might depict the suddenness of death, “setting forth the fear, melancholy and desolation which grip a household upon which death has cast its shadow.” (Leahy in [Zuck](#)) The returning clouds might symbolize the repetitive occurrences of calamities and sorrows. (Borrow [Eaton](#))

Ecclesiastes 12:3 in the day that the watchmen of the house tremble, and mighty men stoop, the grinding ones stand idle because they are few, and those who look through windows grow dim;

KJV Ecclesiastes 12:3 In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

NKJ Ecclesiastes 12:3 In the day when the keepers of the house tremble, And the strong men bow down; When the grinders cease because they are few, And those that look through the windows grow dim;

NET Ecclesiastes 12:3 when those who keep watch over the house begin to tremble, and the virile men begin to stoop over, and the grinders begin to cease because they grow few, and those who look through the windows grow dim,

BGT Ecclesiastes 12:3 ν μ ρ ν σαλευθ σιν φ λακες τ ς ο κ ας κα διαστραφ σιν νδρες τ ς δυν μεως κα ργησαν α λ θουσαι τι λιγ θησαν κα σκοτ σουσιν α βλ πουσαι ν τα ς πα ς

LXE Ecclesiastes 12:3 in the day wherein the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the mighty men shall become bent, and the grinding women cease because they have become few, and the women looking out at the windows be dark;

CSB Ecclesiastes 12:3 on the day when the guardians of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop, the women who grind cease because they are few, and the ones who watch through the windows see dimly,

ESV Ecclesiastes 12:3 in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed,

NIV Ecclesiastes 12:3 when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop, when the grinders cease because they are few, and those looking through the windows grow dim;

NLT Ecclesiastes 12:3 Remember him before your legs-- the guards of your house-- start to tremble; and before your shoulders-- the strong men-- stoop. Remember him before your teeth-- your few remaining servants-- stop grinding; and before your eyes-- the women looking through the windows-- see dimly.

YLT Ecclesiastes 12:3 In the day that keepers of the house tremble, And men of strength have bowed themselves, And grinders have ceased, because they have become few. And those looking out at the windows have become dim,

NJB Ecclesiastes 12:3 the time when your watchmen become shaky, when strong men are bent double, when the women, one by one, quit grinding, and, as they look out of the window, find their sight growing dim.

NRS Ecclesiastes 12:3 in the day when the guards of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the women who grind cease working because they are few, and those who look through the windows see

dimly;

RSV Ecclesiastes 12:3 in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look through the windows are dimmed,

NAB Ecclesiastes 12:3 When the guardians of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, And the grinders are idle because they are few, and they who look through the windows grow blind;

GWN Ecclesiastes 12:3 Remember your Creator when those who guard the house tremble, strong men are stooped over, the women at the mill stop grinding because there are so few of them, and those who look out of the windows see a dim light.

BBE Ecclesiastes 12:3 In the day when the keepers of the house are shaking for fear, and the strong men are bent down, and the women who were crushing the grain are at rest because their number is small, and those looking out of the windows are unable to see;

- strong: 2Sa 21:15-17 Ps 90:9,10 102:23 Zec 8:4
- and those: Ec 12:2

in the day that the watchmen of the house tremble, and mighty men stoop, the grinding ones stand idle because they are few, and those who look through windows grow dim

[William Barrick](#) - The Household of the Deceased (Eccl 12:3–4) In verses 3 and 4, Solomon seems to depict a great house either in decline or anticipating the death of its master. The picture not only describes happenings within the house, but extends to the village and ultimately becomes a metaphor of death itself. According to Ec 12:3, four classes of people experience the fear and anxiety created by the proximity of death within the household. The “**watchmen**” represent the male servants who are responsible for protecting the household. “**Mighty men**” depict the freemen, the landowners, the family members of the estate or the heads of nearby estates. Following the two groups of men come two groups of women: the maidservants who grind the grain and the free women, the mistresses of the estate, who avoid the public eye in their grief. “**Those who look through the windows**” most naturally refers “to the women of the household who, according to Middle Eastern custom, were not allowed to mingle with the men in the business of the household, so they peered through the lattice-work of the house.” (C. Davis, [“Zuck](#)) Other biblical examples of women looking out from a house include Sisera’s mother (Jdg 5:28) and David’s wife Michal (2Sa 6:16–23). Whether due to death in the house, calamity in the village, or the arrival of a severe winter storm, these women have become more isolated from the life they once knew.

Ray Pritchard - [Something New Under the Sun](#) - **THE BUDDING OF THE ALMOND TREE** Ecclesiastes 12:3-5

Many—OK, perhaps most—of us don't like to think about growing older. The hands tremble, the back begins to stoop, our teeth don't work so well, and our eyesight grows dim. We wake up early but don't have the energy we once had. We worry about things that never bothered us before. Sexual ardor fades away. Life itself slows to a crawl.

The words of Ecclesiastes 12:3-5 describe in poetic language the toll that old age takes on the human body. Finally death comes, and man "goes to his eternal home" while his friends gather at his wake to tell a few stories and shed a few tears.

We may not wish to consider our later years, yet this is life as it really is—this is what is ahead for all of us if we live long enough. The

only people who escape this slow decline are those who die before they grow old. The rest of us will learn the truth of Solomon's words. I'm thinking as I write this of a friend of mine who uses a walker to get around because her legs are unsteady. Looking me straight in the eye, she proclaimed, "It's heck growing older." I did not doubt her at all.

There is another side to the story. Psalm 92:12-15 speaks of the vitality of the righteous in their old age. The righteous are blessed with long life and good health and fruitfulness even into old age. They don't dry up and wither away, but bear fruit until the end.

They leave this world, praising God all the way. They proclaim, "The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him" (Psalm 92:15). Only those who have seen life in all its fullness can say that with conviction. Here is a fundamental difference between the old and the young. The young know the words to the song; the old know the composer.

Perhaps you've heard the story of the young pastor who rose to preach on Psalm 23. He gave it his best effort but never connected with the audience. Afterward an old man got up to speak. He bowed his head, his hands quivering, his body worn from years of hard work. Gripping the podium, he began to recite, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." As he finished the audience sat in deep silence, profoundly moved. When the young pastor asked the old man why his words had made such a difference, the old man said

simply, "You know the psalm, I know the Shepherd."

Some things are learned only through hard experience. Only those who have known suffering and hardship can say with deep conviction, "The Lord is upright. All that He does is good. He makes no mistakes, and He made no mistakes in my life." It is only looking back that the testimony of the righteous is seen in its full power.

Lord of years, may all my days be spent serving You and may I come to the end without fear, ready to enter my eternal home through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

SHINING THE LIGHT

- Are you afraid of growing old? Why or why not?
- What will happen to you when you die?

MORE LIGHT FROM GOD'S WORD Read John 5:24; 11:25-26; and 1 John 3:1-3.

Ecclesiastes 12:4 and the doors on the street are shut as the sound of the grinding mill is low, and one will arise at the sound of the bird, and all the daughters of song will sing softly.

KJV Ecclesiastes 12:4 And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low;

NKJ Ecclesiastes 12:4 When the doors are shut in the streets, And the sound of grinding is low; When one rises up at the sound of a bird, And all the daughters of music are brought low;

NET Ecclesiastes 12:4 and the doors along the street are shut; when the sound of the grinding mill grows low, and one is awakened by the sound of a bird, and all their songs grow faint,

BGT Ecclesiastes 12:4 κα κλε σουσιν θ ρας ν γορ ν σθενε φων ς τ ς ληθο σης κα ναστ σεται ε ς φων ν το στρουθ ου κα ταπεινωθ σονται π σαι α θυγατ ρες το σματος

LXE Ecclesiastes 12:4 and they shall shut the doors in the market-place, because of the weakness of the voice of her that grinds at the mill; and he shall rise up at the voice of the sparrow, and all the daughters of song shall be brought low;

CSB Ecclesiastes 12:4 the doors at the street are shut while the sound of the mill fades; when one rises at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song grow faint.

ESV Ecclesiastes 12:4 and the doors on the street are shut-- when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low--

NIV Ecclesiastes 12:4 when the doors to the street are closed and the sound of grinding fades; when men rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint;

NLT Ecclesiastes 12:4 Remember him before the door to life's opportunities is closed and the sound of work fades. Now you rise at the first chirping of the birds, but then all their sounds will grow faint.

YLT Ecclesiastes 12:4 And doors have been shut in the street. When the noise of the grinding is low, And one riseth at the voice of the bird, And all daughters of song are bowed down.

NJB Ecclesiastes 12:4 When the street-door is kept shut, when the sound of grinding fades away, when the first cry of a bird wakes you up, when all the singing has stopped;

NRS Ecclesiastes 12:4 when the doors on the street are shut, and the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low;

RSV Ecclesiastes 12:4 and the doors on the street are shut; when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low;

NAB Ecclesiastes 12:4 When the doors to the street are shut, and the sound of the mill is low; When one waits for the chirp of a bird, but all the daughters of song are suppressed;

GWN Ecclesiastes 12:4 Remember your Creator when the doors to the street are closed, the sound of the mill is muffled, you are startled at the sound of a bird, and those who sing songs become quiet.

BBE Ecclesiastes 12:4 When the doors are shut in the street, and the sound of the crushing is low, and the voice of the bird is soft, and the daughters of music will be made low;

- all: 2Sa 19:35

and the doors on the street are shut as the sound of the grinding mill is low, and one will arise at the sound of the bird, and all the daughters of song will sing softly.

[William Barrick](#) - Eccl 12:4 continues the description of the stricken household and, perhaps, its village. **“Doors”** literally means “two doors.” However, most houses in ancient Israel possessed but one door. The dual number favors a reference to a city gate through which people would enter the bazaar and the nearby judgment seat where the elders of the city held court. **“The sound of the grinding mill is low”** thus indicates a decrease in the normal economic and commercial activities common to everyday life. The village activities slow nearly to a halt for the death of a key citizen and his funeral. Rising at the **sound of the bird** may refer either to being startled to action by the sound of a bird through the silent streets or to the hooting or cooing of birds viewed as harbingers of death. **“Daughters of song”** could refer to the women whose function involves singing laments for the dying master.

Ecclesiastes 12:5 Furthermore, men are afraid of a high place and of terrors on the road; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags himself along, and the caperberry is ineffective. For man goes to his eternal home while mourners go about in the street.

KJV Ecclesiastes 12:5 Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:

NKJ Ecclesiastes 12:5 Also they are afraid of height, And of terrors in the way; When the almond tree blossoms, The grasshopper is a burden, And desire fails. For man goes to his eternal home, And the mourners go about the streets.

NET Ecclesiastes 12:5 and they are afraid of heights and the dangers in the street; the almond blossoms grow white, and the grasshopper drags itself along, and the caper berry shrivels up— because man goes to his eternal home, and the mourners go about in the streets—

BGT Ecclesiastes 12:5 κα̅ γε̅ π̅ ψους̅ φον̅ται̅ κα̅ θ̅ μ̅βοι̅ ν̅ τ̅ ὃ̅ κα̅ ν̅ θ̅ σ̅ τ̅ μ̅ γ̅δαλον̅ κα̅ πα̅χυνθ̅ κ̅ ρ̅ς̅ κα̅ δια̅σκε̅δα̅σθ̅ κ̅ π̅πα̅ρις̅ τι̅ πο̅ρε̅ θ̅η̅ ν̅ θ̅ρω̅πος̅ ε̅ ς̅ ο̅ κον̅ α̅ νο̅ς̅ α̅ το̅ κα̅ κ̅ κ̅λω̅σαν̅ ν̅ γο̅ρ̅ ο̅ κο̅π̅τ̅ με̅νοι̅

LXE Ecclesiastes 12:5 and they shall look up, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall blossom, and the locust shall increase, and the caper shall be scattered: because man has gone to his eternal home, and the mourners have gone about the market:

CSB Ecclesiastes 12:5 Also, they are afraid of heights and dangers on the road; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper loses its spring, and the caper berry has no effect; for man is headed to his eternal home, and mourners will walk around in the street;

ESV Ecclesiastes 12:5 they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets--

NIV Ecclesiastes 12:5 when men are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets; when the almond tree blossoms and the grasshopper drags himself along and desire no longer is stirred. Then man goes to his eternal home and mourners go about the streets.

NLT Ecclesiastes 12:5 Remember him before you become fearful of falling and worry about danger in the streets; before your hair turns white like an almond tree in bloom, and you drag along without energy like a dying grasshopper, and the caperberry no longer inspires sexual desire. Remember him before you near the grave, your everlasting home, when the mourners will weep at your funeral.

YLT Ecclesiastes 12:5 Also of that which is high they are afraid, And of the low places in the way, And the almond-tree is despised, And the grasshopper is become a burden, And want is increased, For man is going unto his home age-during, And the mourners have gone round through the street.

NJB Ecclesiastes 12:5 when going uphill is an ordeal and you are frightened at every step you take- yet the

almond tree is in flower and the grasshopper is weighed down and the caper-bush loses its tang; while you are on the way to your everlasting home and the mourners are assembling in the street;

NRS Ecclesiastes 12:5 when one is afraid of heights, and terrors are in the road; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along and desire fails; because all must go to their eternal home, and the mourners will go about the streets;

RSV Ecclesiastes 12:5 they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along and desire fails; because man goes to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets;

NAB Ecclesiastes 12:5 And one fears heights, and perils in the street; When the almond tree blooms, and the locust grows sluggish and the caper berry is without effect, Because man goes to his lasting home, and mourners go about the streets;

GWN Ecclesiastes 12:5 Remember your Creator when someone is afraid of heights and of dangers along the road, the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and the caper bush has no fruit. Mortals go to their eternal rest, and mourners go out in the streets.

BBE Ecclesiastes 12:5 And he is in fear of that which is high, and danger is in the road, and the tree is white with flower, and the least thing is a weight, and desire is at an end, because man goes to his last resting-place, and those who are sorrowing are in the streets;

- the almond: Ge 42:38 44:29,31 Lev 19:32 Job 15:10 Ps 71:18 Pr 16:31 20:29 Isa 46:4 Jer 1:11
- because: Ec 9:10 Job 17:13 30:23 Ps 49:10-14 Heb 9:27
- the mourners: Ge 50:3-10 Jer 9:17-20 Mk 5:38,39

Furthermore, men are afraid of a high place and of terrors on the road; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags himself along, and the caperberry is ineffective. For man goes to his eternal home (Beth [Olam](#)) while mourners go about in the street.

All of these characteristics of the aging indicate that they are on their final journey to their "eternal home."

[William Barrick](#) - Aging: The Ultimate Harbinger of Death (Eccl 12:5) Fear of either climbing heights (which might result in a heart attack or stroke—at least being left with belabored breathing) or moving about in crowded streets characterize the elderly. The **blossoms of the almond tree** come toward the end of winter before the leaves even sprout. The white color of the **blossoms** crowning the whole tree reminds one of the white hair of the aged. A locust or **grasshopper**, when no longer able to hop about with youthful vigor, **drags** itself along as though burdened—much like the awkward gait of old men and women. The ancient peoples in the Near East prized the **caperberry** for stimulating appetite or sexual desire. In the advanced years, however, the **caperberry** no longer acts as an effective stimulant. Indeed, all of these characteristics of the aging indicate that they are on their final journey to their "eternal home." Jewish communities still refer to their cemeteries as Beth [Olam](#) (eternal), the same phrase as used here. Readers of the New Testament readily associate the description with a similar concept in 2 Corinthians 5:1+. Granted, Solomon does not refer to a heavenly habitation and Paul does not refer to the grave or the netherworld of departed spirits of Old Testament times. However, both texts speak of the state of existence following life "**under the sun**" as a "**house**"—a place of habitation. The reference to "**mourners**" going **about in the street** (Eccl 12:5) fits the ancient Hebrew custom of mourning the death of an Israelite (Amos 5:16–20; Jer 9:17–22; 22:18; 34:5).

Ecclesiastes 12:6 *Remember Him* before the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is crushed, the pitcher by the well is shattered and the wheel at the cistern is crushed;

KJV Ecclesiastes 12:6 Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

NKJ Ecclesiastes 12:6 Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed, Or the golden bowl is broken, Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, Or the wheel broken at the well.

NET Ecclesiastes 12:6 before the silver cord is removed, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is

shattered at the well, or the water wheel is broken at the cistern—

BGT Ecclesiastes 12:6 ως του μ νατραπ σχοιν ον το ργυρ ου κα συνθλιβ νθ μιον το χρυσ ου κα συντριβ δρ α π τ ν πηγ ν κα συντροχ σ τροχ ς π τ ν λ κκον

LXE Ecclesiastes 12:6 before the silver cord be let go, or the choice gold be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel run down to the cistern;

CSB Ecclesiastes 12:6 before the silver cord is snapped, and the gold bowl is broken, and the jar is shattered at the spring, and the wheel is broken into the well;

ESV Ecclesiastes 12:6 before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern,

NIV Ecclesiastes 12:6 Remember him--before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the well,

NLT Ecclesiastes 12:6 Yes, remember your Creator now while you are young, before the silver cord of life snaps and the golden bowl is broken. Don't wait until the water jar is smashed at the spring and the pulley is broken at the well.

YLT Ecclesiastes 12:6 While that the silver cord is not removed, And the golden bowl broken, And the pitcher broken by the fountain, And the wheel broken at the well.

NJB Ecclesiastes 12:6 before the silver thread snaps, or the golden bowl is cracked, or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, or the pulley broken at the well-head:

NRS Ecclesiastes 12:6 before the silver cord is snapped, and the golden bowl is broken, and the pitcher is broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern,

RSV Ecclesiastes 12:6 before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern,

NAB Ecclesiastes 12:6 Before the silver cord is snapped and the golden bowl is broken, And the pitcher is shattered at the spring, and the broken pulley falls into the well,

GWN Ecclesiastes 12:6 Remember your Creator before the silver cord is snapped, the golden bowl is broken, the pitcher is smashed near the spring, and the water wheel is broken at the cistern.

BBE Ecclesiastes 12:6 Before ever the silver cord is cut, or the vessel of gold is broken, or the pot is broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the water-hole;

Remember Him **before the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is crushed, the pitcher by the well is shattered and the wheel at the cistern is crushed;**

[William Barrick](#) - **Death: Returning to God** (Eccl 12:6–7) The third “**before**” (Eccl 12:6) introduces the end of life when the opportunities to enjoy God’s gifts cease and the individual meets his or her Creator. The “**golden bowl**” might depict a lamp like that in Zechariah 4:2–3. The lamp befits the description of death, since texts like Proverbs 13:9 speaks of “the lamp” of an individual being put out at death (cp. Job 18:5–6; 21:17; Pr 20:20; 24:20). The **silver cord** could be the means of hanging the golden lamp, filled with oil. Putting fire to the wicks in the oil would give light as the oil in the wicks burned. If someone cuts the **cord** or it breaks, the lamp of oil crashes to the stone floor and the oil is spilled. Likewise, the **pitcher** that holds life-giving water drawn from a well or cistern cannot serve its task if the **pitcher** breaks. Crenshaw explains that, “The picture of a fountain in disrepair suggests that the water of life can no longer be drawn, and the end has come.”²¹ The “**wheel**” could be a pulley used to lower a pitcher into the depths of a well and to draw it back up when it is filled. Twice “**crushed**” occurs with the golden bowl as an object and then with “**the wheel**.” Interestingly, Hebrew derives its words for “bowl” and for “wheel” from the same root word meaning “roll” or “round.” (22 Provan, Ecclesiastes, 218. The Hebrew name Golgotha meaning “place of the skull”; Matthew 27:33+ comes from the same root.) Solomon might be depicting a violent death from a crushed skull and the failure of the destroyed cranium to retain the contents of the brain.

Ray Pritchard - [Something New Under the Sun](#) - **A MESSAGE FOR OLDER SAINTS** Ecclesiastes 12:6-7

Some blessings are given to the young—to marry, give birth, and raise a family for the glory of God, to set out to conquer the world, to find a mountain and climb it, to have a career, to rise in your chosen profession, to make a mark with your life. These things occupy the young.

But the old have a different calling. Most of these things they have already done, having persevered through years of struggle, long

nights of prayer, seeing their children grow up and go off to school. They have found satisfying careers, developed lasting friendships, and have a raft of memories that uniquely define who they are. Some have lived so long that they have outlived many of their friends. Perhaps they buried a husband or wife along the way.

God gives to those in the sunset years a unique privilege. At the age of forty-five I can testify only to my life so far. But the elderly have lived far longer and they know from experience things I have not yet discovered.

If you live long enough, you may say, as did the senior in the previous entry, "The Lord is upright. All that He does is good. He makes no mistakes." Perhaps you will be able to add some other personal testimony: "I have seen all that life has to offer, I have known joy and I have known sorrow. My Lord is a Solid Rock and I'm still standing on that Rock. My feet are planted on a firm foundation because the Rock Himself is holding me up.

"I've been battered, bruised, bumped, and done my share of bleeding. I've wept an ocean of tears and learned to laugh afterwards. I've known more than my share of setbacks and difficulties. I know how hard life can be. But the Rock of my Salvation has never failed, never moved, never trembled, for all these years; He has never sagged under the weight of all my problems."

Here is a worthy goal for those who have lived to see the crowning years of life. Do not go silently into the night. Do not let these precious days go by quietly. Speak up for the Lord. We need you more than you know. We need your testimony, your years of experience, and most of all, we need you to tell us, and tell us again, that the Lord is a Rock upon whom we can all rest. Help us fix our lives on the one Rock that cannot be moved. Show us the way and someday we will thank you by sharing with our children what you have told us.

Rock of Ages, grant that my faith may remain strong until I draw my dying breath and go home to be with Jesus. Amen.

SHINING THE LIGHT

- Think of the last person you knew who died unexpectedly. What lessons do you draw from that person's life and death?
- If you were to die today, what three things would your friends and family remember most about you?

MORE LIGHT FROM GOD'S WORD Read Genesis 3:19; Job 1:20-21; and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

KJV Ecclesiastes 12:7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

NKJ Ecclesiastes 12:7 Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it.

NET Ecclesiastes 12:7 and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the life's breath returns to God who gave it.

BGT Ecclesiastes 12:7 κα πιστρ ψ χο ς π τ ν γ ν ς ν κα τ πνε μα πιστρ ψ πρ ς τ ν θε ν ς δωκεν α τ

LXE Ecclesiastes 12:7 before the dust also return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return to God who gave it.

CSB Ecclesiastes 12:7 and the dust returns to the earth as it once was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

ESV Ecclesiastes 12:7 and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

NIV Ecclesiastes 12:7 and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

NLT Ecclesiastes 12:7 For then the dust will return to the earth, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

YLT Ecclesiastes 12:7 And the dust returneth to the earth as it was, And the spirit returneth to God who gave it.

NJB Ecclesiastes 12:7 the dust returns to the earth from which it came, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

NRS Ecclesiastes 12:7 and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the breath returns to God who gave it.

RSV Ecclesiastes 12:7 and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

NAB Ecclesiastes 12:7 And the dust returns to the earth as it once was, and the life breath returns to God who gave it.

GWN Ecclesiastes 12:7 Then the dust of mortals goes back to the ground as it was before, and the breath of life goes back to God who gave it.

BBE Ecclesiastes 12:7 And the dust goes back to the earth as it was, and the spirit goes back to God who gave it.

- dust: Ec 3:20 Ge 3:19 18:27 Job 4:19,20 7:21 20:11 34:14,15 Ps 90:3 Ps 146:4 Da 12:2
- the spirit: Ec 3:21
- God: Ge 2:7 Nu 16:22 27:16 Isa 57:16 Jer 38:16 Zec 12:1 Heb 12:9,23

then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Only by accepting the reality and naturalness of death, can a person face life with the kind of joy that Solomon encourages in the enjoyment passages

William Barrick - Although Eccl 12:7 does not specifically identify an afterlife, other texts in the Old Testament make the concept more explicit (cf. Ps 49; Da 12:2+). Elsewhere, the reference to human beings returning to **the dust** out of which they came (Job 34:14–15; Ps 104:29) make it clear that the biblical prophets and sages clearly understood the historical record of mankind's creation (cp. Ge 2:7+; Ge 3:19+). Only by accepting the reality and naturalness of death, can a person face life with the kind of joy that Solomon encourages in the enjoyment passages (cp. Eccl 9:2–10 and Eccl 11:7–10). For the wise believer, contentment with the brevity of life produces a freedom for living the life God gives in His service and for His glory. **Ryken** reminds his readers that aging and death consist of "some of the hardest experiences in life. The Bible is honest about this, but not bitter." (See [Ecclesiastes: Why Everything Matters](#)) The psalmist speaks of the death of God's saints as precious in His estimation (Ps 116:15). **Swindoll** offers three pieces of practical advice in the light of Eccl 12:1–7: (1) I must face the fact that I'm not getting any younger. (2) God has designed me to be empty without Him. (3) Now is the time to prepare for eternity. (Borrow [Living on the Ragged Edge](#), 385)

Ecclesiastes 12:8 "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "all is vanity!"

KJV Ecclesiastes 12:8 Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.

NKJ Ecclesiastes 12:8 "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "All is vanity."

NET Ecclesiastes 12:8 "Absolutely futile!" laments the Teacher, "All of these things are futile!"

BGT Ecclesiastes 12:8 μαται της ματαιοτ των ε πεν κκλησιαστ ς τ π ντα μαται της

LXE Ecclesiastes 12:8 Vanity of vanities, said the Preacher; all is vanity.

CSB Ecclesiastes 12:8 "Absolute futility," says the Teacher. "Everything is futile."

ESV Ecclesiastes 12:8 Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity.

NIV Ecclesiastes 12:8 "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Everything is meaningless!"

NLT Ecclesiastes 12:8 "Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "completely meaningless."

YLT Ecclesiastes 12:8 Vanity of vanities, said the preacher, the whole is vanity.

NJB Ecclesiastes 12:8 Sheer futility, Qoheleth says, everything is futile.

NRS Ecclesiastes 12:8 Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher; all is vanity.

RSV Ecclesiastes 12:8 Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity.

NAB Ecclesiastes 12:8 Vanity of vanities, says Qoheleth, all things are vanity!

GWN Ecclesiastes 12:8 "Absolutely pointless!" says the spokesman. "Everything is pointless!"

BBE Ecclesiastes 12:8 All things are to no purpose, says the Preacher, all is to no purpose.

Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "all is vanity!"

William Barrick - **The Epilogue to Ecclesiastes** (Eccl 12:8–14) **Most commentators hold that an editor added these final verses.** A Jewish tradition attributes them to Hezekiah's men who penned them as a conclusion to all canonical Solomonite writings. (Borrow Reichert [Ecclesiastes](#)) Some, like **Longman**, believe that the final editor added Eccl 12:8–14 in order to express a positive and orthodox theology, because the editor was unhappy with the ultimate conclusion of the book as a whole. (Ecclesiastes, 284.) Such a viewpoint finds little support from a careful reading of Ecclesiastes. Concepts of divine judgment, human accountability, and divine demands or imperatives surface throughout the book (cp. Eccl 2:26; 3:1, 17; 5:1, 2, 4–7; 7:29; 8:12, 13; 9:7–10; 11:9; 12:14). Crenshaw states that the presence of the refrain ("**Vanity of vanities, . . . all is vanity**") in Eccl 12:8 "refutes the claim that Qohelet hoped for immortality of the soul." (Borrow [Crenshaw](#)) Such a negative treatment of the teachings of Solomon languishes for adequate support. **(1)** Elsewhere in the book, Solomon speaks clearly of future judgment (Eccl 11:9; 12:14; cp. 1 Cor 4:5; Heb 9:27). **(2)** Crenshaw's declaration that the writer "hoped" for immortality rests upon an unknowable—the writer himself must specifically identify his hopes in order for later readers to claim their existence. **(3)** The fact that the spirit returns to God speaks of hope—implies that the spirit does not cease existence with the dissolution of the body in the grave. (Longman, 284.) **Ryken** cites a set of syllogisms: "If there is no God, then there is no Judge. If there is no Judge, then there will be no Final Judgment. If there is no Final Judgment, there is no ultimate meaning to life. Nothing matters." (See [Ecclesiastes: Why Everything Matters](#)) But, "The final message of Ecclesiastes is not that nothing matters but that everything does." (See [Ecclesiastes: Why Everything Matters](#)) In other words, Solomon's argument goes this way:

- God exists—He is the Creator.
- Since God is the Creator, He is also the Judge.
- If God is the Judge, there will be a final judgment.
- Since there will be a final judgment, everything we do (how we live) matters.
- Therefore, even though life is but a fleeting breath, it is not futile and insignificant.

All things continue as they were from the beginning. From the fall of man (cp. Eccl 7:29), vanity or futility entered the creation through mankind's sins. Death came because of sin (Rom 5:12). Because of death, life is fleeting. The use of hebel ("vanity" or "breath") in verse 8 follows the mention of "spirit" in Eccl 12:7 so closely that the text seems to indicate that "Human breath is the metre not only of one's life but of the duration of all that is done under the sun." (Fredericks, Ecclesiastes, 240.)

Ray Pritchard - [Something New Under the Sun](#) - **NAILS FROM THE SHEPHERD** Ecclesiastes 12:8-11

The experiment has ended. With the words "meaningless, meaningless," Solomon ends where he began—with the utter vanity of life apart from God. Taking the standpoint of a man "under the sun," he has searched every possible avenue to find the key to the meaning of life. His search led him to wealth, wisdom, education, pleasure, possessions, achievement, fame, folly, and eventually to the house of sorrow. He examined it all and discovered that without God, life is truly meaningless.

No matter what you accomplish in this life, death trumps everything else. Since we all die and no one knows what happens afterwards, nothing is left but to enjoy the short life God gives you.

The last few verses of Ecclesiastes 12 are Solomon's personal epilogue to the reader. They summarize the journey and apply the truth to the human heart. Verse 11 reminds us that Solomon's wisdom came from God. They also tell us how hard he worked to write this short book—how he arranged the stories and proverbs to produce a pleasing result.

We also discover why he wrote as he did. His words are like sharp goads—meant to stick in the mind. If you find yourself arguing with something in Ecclesiastes, all the better, because Solomon fully intended to nail the truth to your heart. His is no mere devotional book, meant to be picked up and read casually. To the contrary, only serious readers will appreciate his literary creation.

Solomon himself acknowledged the wisdom contained in the book came from God—the "one Shepherd" (verse 11). This should answer forever those critics and commentators who doubt the value and inspiration of Ecclesiastes. The same Shepherd who gave Romans to Paul gave Ecclesiastes to Solomon.

This brings us face-to-face with the inspiration of Holy Scripture. No question could be more fundamental. Christians believe and teach that the Bible alone is the Word of God. When the Bible speaks, God speaks. What the Bible says, God says.

The Bible stands alone because it was given by one Shepherd to many authors over 1,500 years. No other book can remotely be compared to it. No one who reads it with an open mind will ever be disappointed.

O God of truth, I thank You for the Holy Scriptures, for in them I discover the way to life eternal. May the truth of Your Word be etched on the tablets of my heart. Amen.

SHINING THE LIGHT

- What does it mean to you to say that the Bible is the Word of God?
- What "nails" of truth have you gained from this study of Ecclesiastes? Which passages were like "goads" that seemed to stick in your mind?

MORE LIGHT FROM GOD'S WORD Read Psalm 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; and Hebrews 4:12-13.

Ecclesiastes 12:9 In addition to being a wise man, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge; and he pondered, searched out and arranged many proverbs.

KJV Ecclesiastes 12:9 And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.

NKJ Ecclesiastes 12:9 And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs.

NET Ecclesiastes 12:9 Not only was the Teacher wise, but he also taught knowledge to the people; he carefully evaluated and arranged many proverbs.

BGT Ecclesiastes 12:9 κα περισσ ν τι γ νετο κκλησιαστ ς σοφ ς τι ὁ δαξεν γν σιν σ ν τ ν λα ν κα ο ς
ξιχνι σεται κ σμιον παραβολ ν

LXE Ecclesiastes 12:9 And because the Preacher was wise above others, so it was that he taught man excellent knowledge, and the ear will trace out the parables.

CSB Ecclesiastes 12:9 In addition to the Teacher being a wise man, he constantly taught the people knowledge; he weighed, explored, and arranged many proverbs.

ESV Ecclesiastes 12:9 Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care.

NIV Ecclesiastes 12:9 Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs.

NLT Ecclesiastes 12:9 Keep this in mind: The Teacher was considered wise, and he taught the people everything he knew. He listened carefully to many proverbs, studying and classifying them.

YLT Ecclesiastes 12:9 And further, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge, and gave ear, and sought out -- he made right many similes.

NJB Ecclesiastes 12:9 Besides being a sage, Qoheleth taught the people what he himself knew, having weighed, studied and emended many proverbs.

NRS Ecclesiastes 12:9 Besides being wise, the Teacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs.

RSV Ecclesiastes 12:9 Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging proverbs with great care.

NAB Ecclesiastes 12:9 Besides being wise, Qoheleth taught the people knowledge, and weighed, scrutinized and arranged many proverbs.

GWN Ecclesiastes 12:9 Besides being wise, the spokesman also taught the people what he knew. He very carefully thought about it, studied it, and arranged it in many proverbs.

BBE Ecclesiastes 12:9 And because the Preacher was wise he still gave the people knowledge; searching out, testing, and putting in order a great number of wise sayings.

- he still: 1Ki 8:12-21 10:8
- he gave: 1Ki 4:32 Pr 1:1 10:1 25:1

In addition to being a wise man, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge; and he pondered, searched out and

arranged many proverbs

[William Barrick](#) - Eccl 12:9–10 give implicit, if not explicit, testimony to the reality of the writer's historical existence. (Fox, Qohelet argues that this might be a common literary device to cause readers to "suspend disbelief" in order to accept the book itself as credible) Eccl 12:9, even if written by an editor, seems to point to the book of Proverbs, which the writer attributes to "the Preacher." That implies that the author of Proverbs is the same as "the Preacher." Solomon's pursuit of wisdom displays a pastoral tone more than an academic or professional tone. (Borrow [Eaton, Ecclesiastes](#)) "**Pondered**," "**searched out**," and "**arranged**" all reflect Solomon's knowledgeable pursuit of wisdom and the issues involved in life "under the sun." "**Pondered**" (literally, "weighed") "points to careful evaluation, indicating his honesty, caution and balance"; (Borrow [Eaton, Ecclesiastes](#)) "searched out" implies his "thoroughness and diligence"; (Borrow [Eaton, Ecclesiastes](#)) and, "arranged" points to orderliness and an artistic skill in his presentation (cp. 1 Kgs 4:32). (Borrow [Eaton, Ecclesiastes](#)) The description of the author reminds readers of the introduction to the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:1–4) and of the various inscriptions found in the Book of Proverbs 24:23; 30:1; 31:1. All are a straightforward account of how the respective book or collection (in Proverbs) came to be written.

Ecclesiastes 12:10 The Preacher sought to find delightful words and to write words of truth correctly.

KJV Ecclesiastes 12:10 The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.

NKJ Ecclesiastes 12:10 The Preacher sought to find acceptable words; and what was written was upright-- words of truth.

NET Ecclesiastes 12:10 The Teacher sought to find delightful words, and to write accurately truthful sayings.

BGT Ecclesiastes 12:10 πολλὰ ζήτησεν κλησιαστὸς τὸ εὐρεῖν λόγους θελήματος καὶ γεγραμμένον ἐθήθη λόγους ἀληθείας

LXE Ecclesiastes 12:10 The Preacher sought diligently to find out acceptable words, and a correct writing, even words of truth.

CSB Ecclesiastes 12:10 The Teacher sought to find delightful sayings and write words of truth accurately.

ESV Ecclesiastes 12:10 The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth.

NIV Ecclesiastes 12:10 The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true.

NLT Ecclesiastes 12:10 The Teacher sought to find just the right words to express truths clearly.

YLT Ecclesiastes 12:10 The preacher sought to find out pleasing words, and, written by the upright, words of truth.

NJB Ecclesiastes 12:10 Qoheleth took pains to write in an attractive style and by it to convey truths.

NRS Ecclesiastes 12:10 The Teacher sought to find pleasing words, and he wrote words of truth plainly.

RSV Ecclesiastes 12:10 The Preacher sought to find pleasing words, and uprightly he wrote words of truth.

NAB Ecclesiastes 12:10 Qoheleth sought to find pleasing sayings, and to write down true sayings with precision.

GWN Ecclesiastes 12:10 The spokesman tried to find just the right words. He wrote the words of truth very carefully.

BBE Ecclesiastes 12:10 The Preacher made search for words which were pleasing, but his writing was in words upright and true.

- **Preacher:** Ec 1:1,12
- **delightful words** Pr 15:23,26 16:21-24 25:11,12 1Ti 1:15
- **to write words:** Pr 1:1-6 8:6-10 22:17-21 Lu 1:1-4 Joh 3:11 Col 1:5

The Preacher sought to find delightful words and to write words of truth correctly- NET = "and to write accurately truthful sayings." GWN = "He wrote the words of truth very carefully."

[William Barrick](#) - Solomon attributes both delightfulness (cf. Prov 25:11) and dependability to the words that he sought (Eccl 12:10). These two characteristics of instruction in Ecclesiastes reveal a balance. "To be upright but unpleasant is to be a fool; to be pleasant but not upright is to be a charlatan." (Borrow [Eaton, Ecclesiastes](#)) The positive message of Ecclesiastes as presented in the enjoyment passages and in the book's closing exhortations argue against a pessimistic approach to the teachings of the book. **Kaiser** concludes, "In no way can that be a description of the work of a pessimist, nihilist, or Epicurean with an 'eat-drink-and-be-merry-for-tomorrow-we-die' mentality." (Borrow [Kaiser, Ecclesiastes](#))

Ecclesiastes 12:11 The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd.

KJV Ecclesiastes 12:11 The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.

NKJ Ecclesiastes 12:11 The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.

NET Ecclesiastes 12:11 The words of the sages are like prods, and the collected sayings are like firmly fixed nails; they are given by one shepherd.

BGT Ecclesiastes 12:11 λ γοι σοφ ν ς τ βο κεντρα κα ς λοι πεφυτευμ νοι ο παρ τ ν συναγμ των δ θησαν κ ποιμ νος ν ς κα περισσ ν ξ α τ ν

LXE Ecclesiastes 12:11 The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails firmly fastened, which have been given from one shepherd by agreement.

CSB Ecclesiastes 12:11 The sayings of the wise are like goads, and those from masters of collections are like firmly embedded nails. The sayings are given by one Shepherd.

ESV Ecclesiastes 12:11 The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd.

NIV Ecclesiastes 12:11 The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails--given by one Shepherd.

NLT Ecclesiastes 12:11 The words of the wise are like cattle prods-- painful but helpful. Their collected sayings are like a nail-studded stick with which a shepherd drives the sheep.

YLT Ecclesiastes 12:11 Words of the wise are as goads, and as fences planted by the masters of collections, they have been given by one shepherd.

NJB Ecclesiastes 12:11 The sayings of a sage are like goads, like pegs positioned by shepherds: the same shepherd finds a use for both.

NRS Ecclesiastes 12:11 The sayings of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings that are given by one shepherd.

RSV Ecclesiastes 12:11 The sayings of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings which are given by one Shepherd.

NAB Ecclesiastes 12:11 The sayings of the wise are like goads; like fixed spikes are the topics given by one collector.

GWN Ecclesiastes 12:11 Words from wise people are like spurs. Their collected sayings are like nails that have been driven in firmly. They come from one shepherd.

BBE Ecclesiastes 12:11 The words of the wise are pointed, and sayings grouped together are like nails fixed with a hammer; they are given by one guide.

- as goads: Jer 23:29 Mt 3:7 Ac 2:37 2Co 10:4 Heb 4:12
- masters: Joh 3:10
- given: Ge 49:24 Ps 23:1 80:1 Isa 40:11 Eze 34:23 Joh 10:14 Heb 13:20 1Pe 5:4

The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one

Shepherd.

Walter Kaiser - Accordingly, Qoheleth's words are designed to prod the sluggish into action. They "goad" him into doing something. But they are also meant to be "nails" that are "fastened" as definite points in the sluggard's mental furnishings to give him anchorage, stability, and perspective on life. At one time they are pricking his conscience, perhaps with a single proverb; at another time they are fixing themselves on the memory like a central nail on which the important, everyday articles of clothing or cooking are kept. (Borrow [Ecclesiastes](#))

William Barrick - Interpreters variously take the "**one Shepherd**" as either Solomon, wisdom writers in general, or God (Ec 12:11). Since the book addresses the author as "the Preacher," it seems better to understand "**Shepherd**" as a title of deity rather than another title for the human author. This title for God in this context implies a doctrine of divine superintendence in the writing of Scripture (cp. 2Pe 1:21). (Borrow [Eaton](#)) "**Shepherd**" refers to God Who "is the real source of the words of this book; not cynicism, not skepticism, not worldliness." (Borrow [Kaiser](#)) The agricultural reference to **goads** (cf. 1Sa 13:21) provides a vehicle for saying that "**Words and goads** are tools to guide people on the right path, though making them uncomfortable in doing so." (Fox, Qohelet) The "**well-driven nails**" appear to be something like tent pegs for the herdsman's tents or pegs driven into beams for use in hanging utensils from them. The two figures represent the stimulation and the steadying effects of wise words, or, as Kidner notes, "they spur the will and stick in the memory." (Borrow [Kidner](#))

Ecclesiastes 12:12 But beyond this, my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body.

KJV Ecclesiastes 12:12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

NKJ Ecclesiastes 12:12 And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh.

NET Ecclesiastes 12:12 Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. There is no end to the making of many books, and much study is exhausting to the body.

BGT Ecclesiastes 12:12 υ μου φ λαξαι ποι σαι βιβλ α πολλ ο κ σιν περασμ ς κα μελ τη πολλ κ πωσις σαρκ ς

LXE Ecclesiastes 12:12 And moreover, my son, guard thyself by means of them: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

CSB Ecclesiastes 12:12 But beyond these, my son, be warned: there is no end to the making of many books, and much study wearies the body.

ESV Ecclesiastes 12:12 My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

NIV Ecclesiastes 12:12 Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body.

NLT Ecclesiastes 12:12 But, my child, let me give you some further advice: Be careful, for writing books is endless, and much study wears you out.

YLT Ecclesiastes 12:12 And further, from these, my son, be warned; the making of many books hath no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

NJB Ecclesiastes 12:12 Furthermore, my child, you must realise that writing books involves endless hard work, and that much study wearies the body.

NRS Ecclesiastes 12:12 Of anything beyond these, my child, beware. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

RSV Ecclesiastes 12:12 My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

NAB Ecclesiastes 12:12 As to more than these, my son, beware. Of the making of many books there is no end, and in much study there is weariness for the flesh.

GWN Ecclesiastes 12:12 Be warned, my children, against anything more than these. People never stop

writing books. Too much studying will wear out your body.

BBE Ecclesiastes 12:12 And further, my son, take note of this: of the making of books there is no end, and much learning is a weariness to the flesh.

ASV Ecclesiastes 12:12 And furthermore, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

DBY Ecclesiastes 12:12 And besides, my son, be warned by them: of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

BHT Ecclesiastes 12:12 wūyōtēr mēhē^ammâ Būnī hizzāhēr `āsōt sūpārīm harBĒ `ên qēc wūla^ahag harBĒ yūgī`at BāSār

- **But beyond this** Lu 16:29-31 Joh 5:39 20:31 21:25 2Pe 1:19-21
- **wearying to the body:** Ec 1:18

But beyond this, my son, be warned ([zahar](#); Lxx - [phulasso](#) - be on guard) **the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body.**

Walter Kaiser - Another function found in Ecclesiastes is admonishment (v. 12). Whereas books may multiply and men may weary themselves with study of the ever enlarging library of volumes, the inspired words of Ecclesiastes will instruct, warn, and admonish. (The Hebrew word [zahar](#) does not appear in Proverbs, but it is found in Eccles. 4:13, where it means “to take advice.”) Only one true source of the book could cause Solomon, the human author, to have such a high estimation of this book of Ecclesiastes: the “one Shepherd” (Ec 12:11). This can only mean Jehovah (or, more accurately, Yahweh), the Shepherd of Israel (Psalm 80:1). He is the real source of the words of this book; not cynicism, not skepticism, not worldliness—not any of these sources. He gave the ideas and aided Solomon in the composition of Ecclesiastes. (Borrow [Kaiser](#))

William Barrick - In Eccl 12:12–13, the imperatives fill the air with a sense of urgency. (Crenshaw, Ecclesiastes) Eccl 12:12 provides the only occurrence of the phrase “**my son**” in Ecclesiastes. Some commentators apply the nomenclature to students, rather than to actual sons. (Borrow Crenshaw, [Ecclesiastes](#)) The context does not resolve the meaning for the reader. Either interpretation might be correct. One commentator takes the position that “**the writing of many books is endless**” means “‘Making many books is a thing of no purpose’. Writing is praiseworthy, but there is no point in overdoing it.” (Fox, Qoheltet) Another sees the statement as a warning about the many pagan writings from other nations that claim to offer wisdom. (Borrow [Eaton](#)) Understanding it as a warning, another identifies it with “poring over unsuitable literature,” which will only weary and do harm. (Whybray, [Ecclesiastes](#) online) In other words, the writer intends more the “use” of **books** than the writing of them. (Fredericks, “Ecclesiastes,” 244.)

Warned (teach) ([02094](#)) [zahar](#) means to teach, to admonish or to warn. For example in Ps 19:11⁺ David says that “Moreover, by them (**judgments** in Ps 19:9) Your servant is **warned** ([zahar](#)); In keeping them there is great reward.” In Da 12:3⁺ the sense is different = “Those who have insight will shine ([zahar](#)) brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven.” **Summary** - 1) to admonish, warn, teach, shine, send out light, be light, be shining 1a) (Niphal) to be taught, be admonished 1b) (Hiphil) 1b1) to teach, warn 1b2) to shine, send out light (in Da 12:3)

Zahar - give them warning(1), receive instruction(1), take warning(2), taken warning(1), teach(1), took warning(1), warn(6), warned(7), warns(1). - Ex 18:20; 2 Ki. 6:10; 2 Chr. 19:10; Ps. 19:11; Eccl. 4:13; Eccl. 12:12; Ezek. 3:17; Ezek. 3:18; Ezek. 3:19; Ezek. 3:20; Ezek. 3:21; Ezek. 33:3; Ezek. 33:4; Ezek. 33:5; Ezek. 33:6; Ezek. 33:7; Ezek. 33:8; Ezek. 33:9; Dan. 12:3

Ray Pritchard - [Something New Under the Sun](#) - **MAKE UP YOUR MIND!** Ecclesiastes 12:12

As a careful reading of Ecclesiastes makes clear, Solomon enjoyed the challenge of mastering a new topic. He didn't mind doing the hard work of research necessary in order to find the truth. But eventually the time comes when you have to make up your mind. You can't sit on the fence forever. If your studies don't lead you to the Lord, then perhaps you've been studying the wrong things.

It meant taking a long motorcycle ride over the dusty, hot roads of northern India, but I jumped at the chance to see the actual village work. When we arrived in a small village in the state of Bihar, my guide introduced me to two local Christian leaders. Together we sat down on the mat and I listened with awe as the two men sang original songs they had written in the local dialect of the Hindi language. Indian music sounds nothing at all like Western music—the pitch, tone, and rhythms are completely different. But they sang with enthusiasm and obvious joy in the Lord, accompanied only by a tambourine that one man beat against his shin.

The leader of the local congregation came from a warrior caste. His people had a long and proud history that stretched back many centuries. How did he become a Christian? It started a few years ago when someone told him about the Bible. Although he was illiterate, he tried to read it, and as he did a light shined from heaven upon Matthew 5:5 and gave him the meaning. This miraculous insight appeared to him several more times, each time teaching him more about Jesus.

When he finally accepted Christ, his wife threw him out of their house, whereupon he moved to this village and joined the small band of believers. With great pride he showed me the stones in the ground for the new church they hoped to build. It wasn't large—about 11 feet by 17 feet—but his face glowed with joy at the thought of having a proper building for God's worship.

Through a translator he told me five other men in this village had a name identical to his. Therefore, his official address consists of his name plus the word "Christian," because he was the only believer by that name in the village.

Although it's not easy for him to be known as Mr. Christian, he smiled as he told me the story. He thinks that God is going to do something great in his village. I believe he's right, because God honors those who aren't ashamed of Jesus' name.

Lord, I ask for the courage to make up m y mind, so that I won't be guilty of always searching but never quite finding the way of truth. Amen.

SHINING THE LIGHT

- Name someone you know who is "sitting on the fence" spiritually. What will it take to move the person to a decision one way or the other
- In what areas of your life do you need to make up your mind? What is holding you back?

MORE LIGHT FROM GOD'S WORD Read Psalm 119:89-91; John 17:17; and 2 Timothy 3:6-7.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.

KJV Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

NKJ Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.

NET Ecclesiastes 12:13 Having heard everything, I have reached this conclusion: Fear God and keep his commandments, because this is the whole duty of man.

BGT Ecclesiastes 12:13 τ λος λ γου τ π ν κο εται τ ν θε ν φοβο κα τ ς ντολ ς α το φ λασσε πι το το π ς νθρωπος

LXE Ecclesiastes 12:13 Hear the end of the matter, the sun: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole man.

CSB Ecclesiastes 12:13 When all has been heard, the conclusion of the matter is: fear God and keep His commands, because this is for all humanity.

ESV Ecclesiastes 12:13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

NIV Ecclesiastes 12:13 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

NLT Ecclesiastes 12:13 That's the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty.

YLT Ecclesiastes 12:13 The end of the whole matter let us hear: -- 'Fear God, and keep His commands, for this is the whole of man.

NJB Ecclesiastes 12:13 To sum up the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments, for that is the duty of everyone.

NRS Ecclesiastes 12:13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone.

RSV Ecclesiastes 12:13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.

NAB Ecclesiastes 12:13 The last word, when all is heard: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is man's all;

GWN Ecclesiastes 12:13 After having heard it all, this is the conclusion: Fear God, and keep his commands, because this applies to everyone.

BBE Ecclesiastes 12:13 This is the last word. All has been said. Have fear of God and keep his laws; because this is right for every man.

- Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: or, The end of the matter, even all that hath been heard is
- Fear: Ec 5:7 8:12 Ge 22:12 De 6:2 10:12 Ps 111:10 112:1 145:19 147:11 Pr 1:7 23:17 1Pe 2:17 Rev 19:5
- for: Ec 2:3 6:12 Job 28:28 Ps 115:13-15 Pr 19:23 Lu 1:50

The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: **fear God and **keep** His commandments, because this applies to every person.**

Walter Kaiser - What then is the grand conclusion (end) of all these things? If we have been following our author's aim carefully, we should have added up all the parts of the preceding argument and concluded that the chief end of man is to "fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the 'manishness' of a man and 'womanliness' of a woman" (Ecc 12:13). What is the "profit" of living? What does a man get for all his work? He gets the living God! And his whole profit consists of fearing Him and obeying His Word. ([Borrow](#))

William Barrick - Eccl 12:13–14 form the ultimate conclusion of Ecclesiastes. The Masoretes, preservationists of the ancient Hebrew text from around 700–1200 A.D., instruct the public reader to repeat Eccl 12:13 after Eccl 12:14 so that the reading does not end upon a negative note. Ending with verse 14 makes "evil" the final (and ominous) word of Ecclesiastes. (Reichart and Cohen, Ecclesiastes) The Hebrew text in Eccl 12:13 emphasizes "**God**" and "commandments." (Borrow [Eaton](#)) The logical order of the two imperatives ("fear" and "obey") supplies additional significance. As **Eaton** explains, "Conduct derives from worship. A knowledge of God leads to obedience; not vice versa." (Borrow [Eaton](#)) The teaching in these final verses reflects instructions in the book of Deuteronomy 4:6, 10; 6:2, 24; 8:6; 10:12–13. **Every person** (literally, "the whole of man"; Eccl 12:13) occurs also in Ec 3:13 and Ec 5:19. According to **Greidanus**, "The Hebrew does not have the word 'duty,' so it reads literally that fearing God and keeping his commandments 'is the whole of everyone.' It's not just our duty, it's our essence." (See [Preaching Christ from Ecclesiastes - Page 309](#)) In Psalm 109:4 the psalmist uses a similar construction to indicate that he is characterized by prayer: "I am prayer." The same type of construction appears also in Psalm 120:7 ("I am peace") and Job 8:9 ("we are yesterday"). The point is that the attribute is the defining essence of the person or persons to which it is ascribed. Thus, it is mankind's very essence to **fear God** and obey Him. The truths of Ecclesiastes apply to everyone (cp. Ro 2:14–16+). Here is the answer to the opening question (Eccl 1:3+, "What advantage [or, profit] does man have in all his work which he does under the sun?"): "He gets the living God! And his whole profit consists of fearing Him and obeying His Word." (Borrow [Kaiser](#)) Or, as Estes puts it, the advantage "resides not in human achievement apart from God, but rather in human connection with God." Solomon's pursuit of wisdom and investigation of mankind's condition "under the sun" results in "an incitement to true piety. The insignificance of all that is done under the sun leaves him awestruck and silent before God." (Borrow [Garrett](#))

Ray Pritchard - [Something New Under the Sun](#) - THE LAST WORD AND THE FIRST RULE Ecclesiastes 12:13

Where can we find meaning in life? Answer: Life makes sense if you fear God and keep His commandments. And conversely, nothing makes sense if you don't. If life is like a long, dark tunnel, then this is the light at the end.

Fear God! Keep His commandments! This is your whole duty. This is why you were born. Everything else is just details. That is Solomon's conclusion at the end of his journey to find ultimate meaning.

Several weeks ago a friend e-mailed me with the news that his mother's cancer surgery had been successful. He ended his message with this statement: "God is God, good, and great." As I pondered his words, I was struck at once by their simplicity and profundity. How much truth those six little words contain. They summarize an entire Christian worldview.

To say that God is God is simply to remind ourselves of the First Rule of the Spiritual Life: He's God and we're not. When I read my Bible it seems to pop up on every page and in every biblical story. Because God is God, He does whatever pleases Him and works in every situation of life in ways I cannot see and would not understand if I could see. This is a humbling truth because it brings me

to my knees and forces me to admit that God alone is running the universe and I'm not running any part of it—not even the part I think I'm running.

To say that God is good means that His heart is inclined toward kindness. This gives me courage to pray for mercy in times of trouble. It also helps me to keep a positive perspective when life tumbles in around me. We often say that all things work together for good—and they do (Romans 8:28)—but that's true only because God Himself is good. That means I can be content right now because I have everything I need at any given moment. If I truly needed anything else, God would give it to me.

To say that God is great means that He isn't limited by my circumstances but can work through them for my good and His glory. Let these six simple words lift your spirits: "God is God, good, and great." God is God; be humbled. God is good; be encouraged. God is great; be thankful. Center your life on Him and in the end you will have no regrets.

Almighty God, to know You is life's highest goal and the reason for which I was created. May I be satisfied with nothing less. Amen.

SHINING THE LIGHT

- What does it mean to fear God? What are the marks of a person who fears God?
- Why is this the first step in the spiritual life?

MORE LIGHT FROM GOD'S WORD Read 1 Samuel 12:24; Proverbs 9:10; and Hebrews 12:1-3.

Ray Pritchard - [Something New Under the Sun](#) - THE TRUEST BOOK IN THE BIBLE Ecclesiastes 1:2; 12:13

When I set out to write this book, several of my friends wondered whether this was a worthwhile project. A number commented on how rarely they had read Ecclesiastes. At least one person cautioned that Ecclesiastes could not be trusted because Solomon wrote it in a spiritually backslidden condition. My viewpoint is almost entirely the opposite. It seems to me that Ecclesiastes is the truest book in the Bible. I doubt that I would have said that twenty years ago—on reflection, I know that I wouldn't have—because I simply didn't appreciate the depth of Solomon's brutal candor about the ragged edges of life. Over the years, this book has become more and more familiar to me until at last it seems as natural and honest as anything in the Bible.

Not long ago I commented to my congregation that as a pastor I am very weary of doing funerals. After two decades of visiting mortuaries and doing graveside services, I have seen all the death I ever want to see. I've done funerals for babies, for young people, for adults who died suddenly, and many services for older people who died after a long illness. It's not that I don't find a profound satisfaction in bringing God's comfort to grieving hearts. I do, and I thank God for calling me into the ministry. But of death itself I am very tired. I long to see a few resurrections. In feeling that way, I am in good company because Solomon struggled mightily with the awesome reality of human death.

But I know something Solomon never knew. I know that Jesus Christ has come back from the dead. There is no other reason to think that we will ever see our loved ones again. The New Testament again and again connects our resurrection with His. Ours will happen in the future because His happened in the past. Sometimes when I stand by the grave of someone I know, I can almost hear a voice from beneath the ground saying, "I'm coming up." To unbelievers that may sound like wishful thinking, but to me it's nothing but solid biblical faith. In the words of the Apostles' Creed, I believe in the resurrection of the dead.

Ecclesiastes is true and when it comes to the human condition, this may be the truest book in the Bible. But it's not the final word.

Lord Jesus, thank You for solid answers to life's hardest questions. Amen.

SHINING THE LIGHT

- Which parts of Ecclesiastes are hardest for you to understand? Which parts seem to ring true to your own experience?
- Do you believe in the resurrection of the dead?

MORE LIGHT FROM GOD'S WORD Read Psalm 111; Romans 8:31-35; and Revelation 19:1-5.

Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

KJV Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

NKJ Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

NET Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will evaluate every deed, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.

BGT Ecclesiastes 12:14 π σ ν π ν τ πο ημα θε ς ξει ν κρ σει ν παντ παρεωραμ ν ν γαθ ν κα ν πονηρ ν

LXE Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will bring every work into judgment, with everything that has been overlooked, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

CSB Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will bring every act to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil.

ESV Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

NIV Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

NLT Ecclesiastes 12:14 God will judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing, whether good or bad.

YLT Ecclesiastes 12:14 For every work doth God bring into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether good or bad.'

NJB Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will call all our deeds to judgement, all that is hidden, be it good or bad.

NRS Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.

RSV Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

NAB Ecclesiastes 12:14 because God will bring to judgment every work, with all its hidden qualities, whether good or bad.

GWN Ecclesiastes 12:14 God will certainly judge everything that is done. This includes every secret thing, whether it is good or bad.

BBE Ecclesiastes 12:14 God will be judge of every work, with every secret thing, good or evil.

- Ec 11:9 Ps 96:13 Mt 12:36 25:31-46 Lu 12:1,2 Joh 5:29 Ac 17:30,31 Ro 2:16 14:10-12 1Co 4:5 2Co 5:10 Rev 20:11-15

For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

Walter Kaiser - What is more, “every work” and “every secret deed,” no matter “**whether it is good** or whether it is bad” (12:14), will be brought under the searching light of God’s judgment in that day when all men shall personally face Him to give an account of the deeds done in the body. So echoed Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:10 (Bema Seat for Believers). Men are responsible beings, not brutes, who are destined to live to confront the past with the God that they either feared or flouted. No formula of legalism is this “keeping of His commandments.” Neither is it a method of earning favor to be used when facing God. It is a summary of the beginning, middle, and end of life as we know it on this earth: coming to know and trust the living God; receiving the gifts of life’s goods; learning how to enjoy those mundane gifts; understanding the major part of the plan of God; and being guided into joyous and strenuous activity in the art of living, even while portions of life remain enigmatic. What a book! What a good God! What a life! And what a plan! ([Borrow](#))

William Barrick - The reader’s course is clear:

- Remember God, the Creator (Eccl 12:1).
- Fear God, the Creator (Eccl 3:14; 5:7; 8:12; 12:14).
- Keep the commandments of God (Eccl 12:14).
- Enjoy the life God gives (Eccl 9:7–10).
- Prepare for leaving life “under the sun” (Eccl 12:1).
- Prepare to stand before God in a future judgment where we will be held accountable for enjoying what He has given and for living in accord with His commands (Eccl 11:9; cf. Rom 2:16; Heb 9:27).

Here are a few questions to ponder as we bring this fascinating, enigmatic book to a close...

- What am I chasing that might turn out to be striving after the wind?
- Do I fear God and live with His Bema Seat judgment in mind (2Co 5:10+)?
- Am I enjoying today as a gift from God or resenting the lot He has given me (1Th 5:18+)?
- How does the brevity of my life and the certainty of death sharpen my focus to redeem the time of my life (Jas 4:14, Eph 5:15-16+)?
- Am I living in a way I would not regret if my life ended today (Ps 90:12+)?

[William Barrick](#) - Questions for study:

1. What does it mean to "Remember your Creator"? How can we do that?
2. Why is death sometimes very unpleasant and even frightening?
3. What are the characteristics of aging for most people?
4. How should we prepare ourselves for old age and death?
5. Explain the reasons for believing that the text of Ecclesiastes actually hints strongly at a life beyond the sun?
6. How does the writer of Eccl 12:9–11 describe the book of Ecclesiastes? How does that compare to a pessimistic or skeptical approach to the book?

Ray Pritchard - [Something New Under the Sun](#) - **CORAM DEO** Ecclesiastes 12:14 (See online discussion of [Coram Deo](#))

Solomon's final argument in favor of serving God may come as a surprise. Instead of ending on an "up" note, he reminds us one final time of the coming day of judgment when our lives will pass under His all-seeing eyes. This means that everything we do and say is important. Since nothing is hidden, everything ultimately matters.

I know many people who struggle with questions of right and wrong—especially in those areas for which we have no explicit guidance in the Bible. They truly want to please the Lord, but worry about their daily decisions. Here is a simple question that will replace many of the dos and don'ts: Can I do this to God's glory? That is, if I do this, will it enhance God's reputation in the world? Will those who watch me know that I know God from my behavior? Or will I simply have to explain this away or apologize for it later?

That brings us back to Question 1 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism: What is the chief purpose of man? "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever." We were made to glorify God. Nothing works right when we don't.

In putting the matter this way I am calling for nothing less than a God-centered life. That means intentionally making your decisions so that God's reputation is enhanced in the world. The Puritans often used the Latin phrase *coram Deo*, which means "under the face of God." It's a reminder that God is always watching everything we do. His eye is always on us, nothing escapes His notice, and all of life must be lived for His approval.

J. S. Bach carved the words *Soli Deo Gloria* on his organ at Leipzig, Germany, to remind him that all his music be composed and performed for the glory of God. The initials SDG appear at the end of his compositions: "To God alone be the glory." That's what I mean by intentional God-centered living.

All I am saying may be summed up this way. People watch what we do and say and draw huge conclusions from our tiniest personal decisions. Living in the light of God's glory means to live so that others will draw the right conclusions as they watch us.

Ruth Bell Graham defines a saint this way: "A saint is someone who makes it easy to believe in Jesus." May God help us to live that way every day.

Righteous Judge, help to me to live in such a way that I will not be ashamed when I stand before You. Amen.

SHINING THE LIGHT

- Name three practical ways you can glorify God this week.
- How does it make you feel to know that God is watching you this very moment? Is there anything in your life that you would be ashamed for God to bring to light when you stand before Him?

MORE LIGHT FROM GOD'S WORD Read Romans 14:9-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; and 1 John 2:28.