



Ecclesiastes 12:8-14

God-centeredness is the foundation of life

Perspective in life matters (12:8)

⁸ *Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity.*

- Solomon begins the summation of the book the same way he started it
 - Ecclesiastes 1:2
- This is an assessment of an earthbound and man-centered life
- Solomon speaks to life from the vantage point of the wisdom he was given through his experiences
- God brought Solomon to repentance later in life and Ecclesiastes is the written testament to the wisdom God gave him as the fruit of repentance
 - Life without God brings short-lived pleasures leaving people unfulfilled, guilty, and ashamed
 - Life focused on God and guided by truth becomes purposeful, satisfying, and delightful
 - Ecclesiastes 2:24-26
- Failure to live a God-centered life brings the deterioration of life that ends in hopeless death

Appreciating the purpose of the author and the authority of what he writes (12:9-12)

The book is written with great care to be influential (9-10) - ⁹ *Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care.* ¹⁰ *The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth.*

- Solomon didn't just throw this book together
- May we appreciate affirmingly that Solomon took “*great care*”
- The teachings of Solomon in this book are not self-serving and self-aggrandizing
- Solomon didn't write for entertainment, but for enlightenment and edification
- The Apostle Paul shared a similar conviction
 - 1 Timothy 1:15-17
- May Gospel hope bring the light of deliverance into the darkness of your world!

Appreciating the purpose of the author and the authority of what he writes (12:9-12)

The book prods and bolsters with the authority of God (11-12) - ¹¹ *The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd.* 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.*

- *The words of the wise are like goads,*
- “*goad*” - wooden rod with a point used to promote the movement and direction of livestock
- God uses Scriptural wisdom to prod and direct his people
- Conviction from truth is usually not pleasant, but it is necessary to get our attention and move us in a different direction
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - Hebrews 4:12-13
- If the word of God is making you uncomfortable, don't dismiss it and disobey it

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- Solomon describes the construction of the teachings of this book to be “*like nails firmly fixed*”
 - Matthew 7:24-25
- “*are given by one Shepherd*”
 - The Lord God is described as the Shepherd of Israel
 - Psalm 80:1
 - Jesus describes Himself as the Shepherd of His people
 - John 10:11
 - Our gracious God Shepherds us throughout life by His word for His glory and our good
 - John 10:26-27

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- ¹² *My son, beware of anything beyond these*
 - Seeking wisdom and guidance for life outside the inspired text of Scripture is dangerous and destructive
 - Colossians 2:8
 - We need biblical discernment
- *Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh*
 - Royal libraries were full of books
 - The people of God should make sure they are consistently well versed in the teaching of Scripture so that they can be biblically discerning of all they read and all they hear

The governing summation of the book (12:13-14)

Revere and obey God (12:13) - ¹³ *The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.*

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- Solomon is ready to summarize his fundamental assessment of what should characterize wise people

Fear God

- The realization that you stand before the Almighty Creator God every moment of every day should cause reverential awe and much tremble
 - Philippians 2:12-13
- Without proper fear, true growth in understanding and wisdom will not occur
 - Proverbs 1:7

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- Genuine trust in God stirs the heart to desire to honor and obey the Lord
- Fear and obedience of God will not occur unaided
 - Romans 3:20
 - Romans 3:22-26
- Fearing God and having the desire and ability to obey God is the fruit of Gospel life and grace
- If we are to live with delight on earth and for eternity, we must be empowered to fear the Lord and keep His commandments
 - John 14:15-16
 - 1 John 5:2-5

The governing summation of the book (12:13-14)

- God will examine all actions and thoughts (12:14) - *¹⁴ For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.*
 - For those who lead godless and self-centered lives, every deed will be brought into judgment - condemnation
 - For those who live Christ-centered and others-oriented lives, every deed will be brought into judgment - reward
 - 2 Corinthians 5:10
 - May the reality of this fact press us all into gospel grace found only in Jesus

Questions to Consider

- Considering the truths of Ecclesiastes, how do you think God wants you to reorient your perspective?
- How will you honor God by reading this book more thoughtfully and prayerfully?
- In what ways is it important for the truth of God's word to "prod" you?
- What examples can you give of strength and stability coming to your life through God's word?
- How is your reading and learning guided by the truth of God's word?
- What is the evidence that the knowledge of divine judgment is causing you to fear and obey God?



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