

“The Fear of God: The Whole Duty of Man”

Ecclesiastes 12:1, 8-14

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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”;

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

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.

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.

13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

For Further Reflection:

1. Why does the writer of Ecclesiastes say “Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth” (vv. 1-7; 11:9)? What are some things that help you to remember your Creator?
2. How would you describe the vanity that people experience today under the sun (vs. 8: 1:2; Gen. 3:16-19; Rom. 8:20)? In what way did God subject himself to greater futility than you will ever experience in this life (Matt. 27:45-46; Gal. 3:13)?
3. In what sense is the book of Ecclesiastes a primer for what it means to grow in the fear of the Lord (vs. 13; 3:14; 5:7; Acts 2:43; 9:31; 10:2; 13:26)? How is Jesus the greater Solomon and wisdom of God (Matt. 12:42; Lk. 11:31; 1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 2:2c-3)?
4. What is good and terrifying about the judgment of God (vs. 14; 3:17 11:9; Job 19:29; Prov. 1:7; Matt. 12:36; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:16; 14:10, 12; 1 Cor. 4:5; Gen. 18:25, Ps. 58:11)? How can you have confidence before God on the day of His judgment (Rom. 8:1-4; Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21)?
5. What does the vanity of this life and judgment of God say about the need for the gospel and discipleship of the current and future generations? How is your future shaping your present in terms of storing up treasure in heaven (Matt. 6:19-24; Lk. 12:13-21; 16:1-13)?