

Look Out for Its Later Than You Think

Eccl 11:9-12:14

9 Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things. 10 So, remove vexation from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting.

12 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"; 2 before the sun, the light, the moon, and the stars are darkened, and clouds return after the rain; 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; 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. 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. 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; 7 then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it. 8 "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "all is vanity!"

9 In addition to being a wise man, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge; and he pondered, searched out and arranged many proverbs. 10 The Preacher sought to find delightful words and to write words of truth correctly.

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. 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.

13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. 14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. NASB

For some graduation is like being released from prison. For others it is like the end of a great party. But probably most of our students lie in between somewhere. In reality it is more like the training is over and now you will have to live your own life.

That can be kind of scary and attractive at the same time. The time to take more and more responsibility for your own life and your own actions is coming. Although in most cases the parents will still be there, they will not be able to soften the blows as they once did.

So Solomon has some advice for you today. He was an old man when he wrote this and had lived it all, done it all so to speak, but look at his perspective on life. For a man who had greater

wealth than anyone living today; For a man who had done everything that he ever wanted to do; Who had built and bought everything he wanted, he has a wealth of wisdom. Listen to his words.

- I. **Enjoy life while you are young.** *Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes.*
 - A. God is not the cosmic killjoy.
 1. Some have the idea that if they were to surrender their lives to Him that they would be bored out of their minds.
 2. God is the one who made the stars glisten like diamonds of black velvet.
 3. God is the one who painted the sky a very pleasant blue.
 4. He made the rivers and streams, the oceans, the majestic mountains.
 5. Even you were fearfully and wonderfully made.
 - B. Children know how to enjoy a summer day without thinking of all the work they should be doing.
 - C. All the labor and toil, the disappointments of life are because of the sin of man, not the plan of God.
- II. But be aware that God will hold you accountable for sin.
 - A. Satan wants people to think that you can't have real enjoyment unless it is sinful.
 - B. But when you are older and you look back on your life, you will find that the things that Satan advertised as the sweetest fruits really only left you with a bitter taste in your mouth and a gnawing pain in your stomach.
 - C. And really the fun ends where another's pain begins.
 1. When people injure others in their quest for enjoyment, they need to know that God is keeping track, and judgment day will come.
 2. Some judgment will come upon you in this life, but a much surer judgment awaits in the next.
 - D. So don't forget, as in the words of R. G. Lee, there is a Payday Someday.
- III. Life is fleeting.
 - A. When you are young it seems that summer and Christmas come along every 3 years.
 1. But when you get older it seems they come along every 3 months.
 2. The young are so busy living life that they can't seem to cram any more into it.

3. But later in life those days will seem like a fleeting thought, a dream in the night.
 4. All the great times and the bad times will seem like a fading memory of a long ago life.
- B. For those of you graduating from college, do you realize that your life is about 1/3 to 1/4 past, depending on how long you live.
1. And remember that the best years, the years without dimness of eye, or faintness of ear are now.
 2. The days when the legs still respond to your wishes and your back can bend every which way without pain.
 3. But those days do not last forever.
- C. Listen again to the words of Solomon
1. when you will say, "I have no delight in them"; 2 before the sun, the light, the moon, and the stars are darkened, and clouds return after the rain; 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; 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. 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. 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; 7 then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it. 8 "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "all is vanity!"

IV. **Therefore the idea of Solomon is to live life for God.** *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"*

- A. Fill it with things that will matter for eternity not just for a day, month or year.
- B. Don't live like the grasshopper in Aesop's fable who squandered the summer while the ant was preparing for the future.
- C. Young people, stop for a moment, ask some older person what they would have done different when they were your age. You might get a good education if you ask the right person.

V. Solomon's Conclusion

- A. 13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. 14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.
- B. Fear God
 - 1. Fear is the beginning of wisdom.
 - 2. Only a fool would not respect a king or a judge while in his presence.
 - 3. But you are always in the presence of God.
- C. Keep His commandments.
 - 1. That is the proof of the pudding so to speak.
 - 2. Jesus said that if you love me, you will keep my words.
 - 3. Here, Solomon is saying that if we fear God we will keep His commandments.
- D. Nothing is hidden from God. *For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.*
 - 1. You may fool parents, sometimes parents make that pretty easy.
 - 2. You can fool the preacher, he sees you about once a week.
 - 3. You might even fool your friends, but usually they are co-conspirators.
 - 4. But you will hide absolutely nothing from God.

Well graduation is just a little ways off. Your life is before you as an unwritten page. The story is yours to tell. Consider carefully what you will write on those pages. For someday the Great Editor will give you a grade that will matter forever. Fear God, keep His commandments.