

“The Conclusion, When All Has Been Heard. . .”

(Ecclesiastes 12:9-14)

Summary of the Preacher’s Main Points So Far:

1. The Whole of Life is *vanity* – a mere breath in which none of our personal accomplishments or legacies will survive or be remembered (Ecclesiastes 1).
2. Even those specific things that are precious to us, that we hold onto so tightly and invest so much in, also have little or no lasting satisfaction (Ecclesiastes 2).
3. Life is not about struggling to gain; but rather letting go, and learning to simply receive and enjoy life as a gift -- accepting this is the beginning of true Joy, Hope, and Freedom (Ecclesiastes 3).
4. A) Making life about “ME” is the source of most pain.

B) Making life about others -- you will find true joy and contentment that cannot be matched elsewhere under the sun (Ecclesiastes 4).
5. Religion, like any other pursuit, is vanity if approached for personal gain, rather than as a platform for giving (Ecclesiastes 5).
6. Don’t try to control your life, or you will suffer the tragedy of never finding contentment (Ecclesiastes 6).
7. Let Death be your teacher and learn to live life backwards and choose wisdom over escapism; but know that even wisdom is limited (Ecclesiastes 7).
8. Learning to respect authority and doing what’s right even when it seems to make no difference has significance beyond life under the sun (Ecclesiastes 8).
9. Life is a gift, not Gain. But be careful to worship God and not the gifts (Ecclesiastes 9).
10. Life under the sun is full of Wisdom, uncertainty, and irony (Ecclesiastes 10:1-11:6).
11. Rejoice in the Blissful Gift of Life; But Live with It’s Inevitable End in View (Ecclesiastes 11:7-12:8).

Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

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* (the whole of) every person. ¹⁴ For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

Which of the following themes have made the biggest impression on your understanding of Ecclesiastes – AND – which has had the biggest impact on the way you live?

Joy

“Delightful Words of Truth”

Pain

“Words Like Goads & Well-Driven Nails”

Frustration

“Endless,” “Excessive,” & “Wearying”

Purpose

“The whole of every person”

Perspective

“Every act to judgment, hidden...good or evil”