

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Inspiration from Ecclesiastes

Inspiration from Ecclesiastes - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/4/11 10:34

Ecclesiastes ranks among my favorite books because it deals with practical issues that are common to man - one that reaches across many millenia. Other than Proverbs, the other OT books deal with history and the call to repentance.

Ecclesiastes teaches one about values in life and what is important. We live in an age in which there is much that works to distract us from our walk with the LORD. The writer tried everything and his conclusions are simple "vanity, all is vanity." But it is fascinating to read why this is the case. Want to join me in this journey of looking at Eccles.? If you want to post on a different chapter, I suggest you do it from the lead post and type in the chapter number in the subject box.

One thing I would like to draw attention to are the questions Solomon asks, his conclusions and the reasons.

Ecclesiastes 1:1-8 NASB:

1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

2 "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher,
"Vanity of vanities! All is vanity."

3 What advantage does man have in all his work
Which he does under the sun?

4 A generation goes and a generation comes,
But the earth remains forever.

5 Also, the sun rises and the sun sets;
And hastening to its place it rises there again.

6 Blowing toward the south,
Then turning toward the north,
The wind continues swirling along;
And on its circular courses the wind returns.

7 All the rivers flow into the sea,
Yet the sea is not full.
To the place where the rivers flow,
There they flow again.

8 All things are wearisome;
Man is not able to tell it.
The eye is not satisfied with seeing,
Nor is the ear filled with hearing.

COMMENT:

The question: What advantage does man have in all his work
Which he does under the sun? v.3

Yes, why work? Why do I exist? What am I to accomplish?

One looks around and hears the wind? It keeps on coming and it goes and returns - continuously.

Or, look at the rivers - they run into the sea but the sea never gets full! Ever see the Mississippi pour its waters into the Gulf? But the ocean water stays at the same level.

And we love to look at nature: the mountains, the flowers, the animals, the scenery (man has been able to capitalize on t

his wonder by promoting tourism to see the beauties of nature). But we never tire of it. Neither do we tire of beautiful sounds: the song of the birds, the waterfalls, the rustling of the leaves, the sound of a newborn baby, the voice of a loved one and on and on...we never tire of it do we?

Why? How can this be? I feel overwhelmed with the largeness of it all. My imagination has a problem wrapping itself around this phenomena. I am little, I am me existing in the rural part of Mississippi...Nature, when studied, demonstrates an intelligence far beyond my imagination, does it not?

Why do I exist?

Re: Inspiration from Ecclesiastes - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2011/4/11 20:31

""""Why do I exist?""""

Because it pleases God.

Ephesians 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

I love you too, which pleases me

In Christ: Phillip

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/4/12 8:42

Quote:

-----Because it pleases God.

How well do we understand this principle?

Re: Ecclesiastes 1:9-11 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/4/12 8:55

Ecclesiastes 1: 9-11 NASB

9 That which has been is that which will be,
And that which has been done is that which will be done.
So there is nothing new under the sun.

10 Is there anything of which one might say,
"See this, it is new?"
Already it has existed for ages
Which were before us.

11 There is no remembrance of earlier things;
And also of the later things which will occur,
There will be for them no remembrance
Among those who will come later still.

COMMENT:

The original question: "What advantage does man have in all his work..?" burns within the human heart.

Why do I do what I do?

What motivates me to do what I do?

What motivates me to think like I do?

Solomon informs us that:

1. That which has been is what will be.
2. There is nothing new under the sun.
3. People forget what has been done in the past.
4. People will forget in the future what will be done today.

So, what advantage does man have in all his work? why work so hard? or work at all? You can't do anything new and what you do will be forgotten in time to come....

Why?

Re: Ecclesiastes 1:12-18 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/4/13 11:36

Ecclesiastes 1:12-18 NASB

12 I, the Preacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.

13 And I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven. It is a grievous task which God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with.

14 I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind.

15 What is crooked cannot be straightened and what is lacking cannot be counted.

16 I said to myself, "Behold, I have magnified and increased wisdom more than all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has observed a wealth of wisdom and knowledge."

17 And I set my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly; I realized that this also is striving after wind.

18 Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain.

COMMENT:

Solomon is in pursuit of answers to the question, "what advantage does man have in all his work?" v.3

Solomon was king over Israel and while doing so set his mind to learn by wisdom all that has been done under the sun. This pursuit was divinely energized. 1Kings 3:12.

(Wisdom - is doing the right thing based on knowledge. Or, knowledge applied.)

In his pursuit of wisdom he said he saw all the works that had been done under the sun. He noticed that what is crooked cannot be straightened and there is an overwhelming amount of things that need fixing. In the process he became very wise, much wiser than anyone before him. And his conclusion? Wisdom brings much grief, and increasing knowledge brings pain!

So what good can one accomplish by pursuing knowledge and wisdom if it brings grief and pain?

Re: Ecclesiastes 1: 12, 18 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/4/13 11:53

Ecclesiastes 1: 12, 18 NASB

12 And I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven. It is a grievous task which God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with.

18 Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain.

COMMENT:

"It is a grievous task which God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with." Why is this quest to seek knowledge and wisdom a grievous task? It is God given...Why? Solomon says it is grievous...

Then in v. 18 he says that wisdom brings grief and increasing knowledge results in pain... Why?

Look about you and we see much that needs fixing and we know beyond a shadow of a doubt what should be done. But we are helpless to initiate any fixing. No one wants our assistance and their refusal pains us because we know the outcome of the grief they will be inflicting upon themselves. It pains us...Since this is the case what can a person do other than pray? God seems to be so painfully slow because he is dealing with stubborn minds who refuse to bend their stubborn wills, among other things.

And there are other things that need fixing but resist it...doesn't do a whole lot for our emotional comfort...

But why did God inflict this task upon mankind?

Re: - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2011/4/13 20:55

Ecclesiastes 1:1-2 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

This is why God never intended man to live by his own wisdom and why Christ was slain before the foundation. God never intended man to live without a God nature, which is Christ in the believer. Adam chose a devil nature, "Your father is the devil".

God wanted us to have the Person of Christ in us that our nature would be of our Father God. That is why we must be born again.

Revelation 5:6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Revelation 5:12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Revelation 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Just for Gods elect; Ephesians 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

This is why God created man, He wanted children in His house, He wanted to be a Father, there is only One begotten and He is begotten in every son that believes.

Now we are the children of God and wisdom is for all eternity.

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Not in mans wisdom but God's wisdom in Christ.

In Christ: Phillip

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/4/13 21:21

Amen, Phillip!

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/4/15 11:45

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 NASB

1 I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself." And behold, it too was futility.

2 I said of laughter, "It is madness," and of pleasure, "What does it accomplish?"

3 I explored with my mind how to stimulate my body with wine while my mind was guiding me wisely, and how to take hold of folly, until I could see what good there is for the sons of men to do under heaven the few years of their lives.

4 I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself;

5 I made gardens and parks for myself and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees;

6 I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees.

7 I bought male and female slaves and I had homeborn slaves. Also I possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem.

8 Also, I collected for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men—many concubines.

9 Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me.

10 All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor.

11 Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun.

COMMENT:

Solomon decided it would test life with pleasure. His rule was that it would please the eye, provide pleasure for the heart and bring satisfaction. What were these things that he did?

1. Laughter. (Comedy?)
2. Wine -to stimulate the body and mind.
3. Built houses.
4. Planted vineyards.
5. Planted gardens and parks.
6. Planted all kinds of fruit trees.
7. Dug irrigation ponds.(large enough to irrigate a forest of trees!!!)
8. Had slaves, homeborn slaves.

9. Flocks and herds - larger than any who preceded him.
10. Collected silver and gold.
11. Acquired the treasure of kings (he had a throne overlaid with ivory).
12. Music.
13. Women - many wives and concubines.
14. Wisdom - so great that he even knew he was the greatest.
15. Self-satisfaction in his accomplishments.

In face of all this, he says it is vanity and striving after wind....

OBSERVATION:

To be able to accomplish all this would require a skilled staff of persons to manage it and bring it all to fruition. He must have had a wonderful, capable staff, one willing to work.

Have you ever noticed how so many times people who are so skilled, and accomplished are unhappy? Modern education is promoted to assure its students that if you get this degree or another you will be able to make a lot of money. Once people get more all it does is increase their appetite for more and it is never satisfied so more is acquired and more...thanks to credit cards!

Where do I find my satisfaction? Am I obsessed with the acquisition of things? Do they satisfy in the long run? Solomon says "no."

If works, accomplishments, women, music do not do this, where do I find satisfaction? This is a question one has to deal with daily...

"For Myself" - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/4/16 10:29

This expression "For myself" occurs six times in these verses. When I noticed it this bothered me..after thinking about it a while I knew why.

The fellow lived only for himself. What brought him pleasure and delight he got, nothing was denied him. Even in the acquisition of it all his wisdom stayed with him - he always did things rightly and correctly - sounds like a perfectionist.

But.

But he says all is vanity and striving after wind. OOOhhh...But is this not the way life is: when one lives only for his own pleasure, satisfaction with no regard for the welfare of others in the end it leaves one feeling so empty? Unless you have been bribing your friends with gifts, it will distance you from people although in Solomon's case this may not have been the case. (Scripture says God granted him peace with his neighboring kingdoms.)

This scripture reminds me of a motto many displayed on their walls when I was a child: "Only one life 'twill soon be past. Only what is done for Jesus will last."

Re: Ecclesiastes 2:12-17 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/4/19 10:25

Ecclesiastes 2:12-17 NASB

12 So I turned to consider wisdom, madness and folly; for what will the man do who will come after the king except what has already been done?

13 And I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness.

14 The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I know that one fate befalls them both.

15 Then I said to myself, "As is the fate of the fool, it will also befall me. Why then have I been extremely wise?" So I said to myself, "This too is vanity."

16 For there is no lasting remembrance of the wise man as with the fool, inasmuch as in the coming days all will be

forgotten. And how the wise man and the fool alike die!

17 So I hated life, for the work which had been done under the sun was grievous to me; because everything is futility and striving after wind.

COMMENT:

Just what good does wisdom do a body?

Both the fool and the wise die. And are buried.

And in time no one will remember the wise person. His memory recedes into the misty arena of forgottenness, just like the fool.

It is true that wisdom excels folly, but when all is said and done, what lasting value is in it?

We want to make a difference in life, one that will succeed in making the world a better place than when you were born.

But you know what? It ain't a bit better now than it was when I was born; if anything, worse. So, what have I accomplished in my sojourn of 64 years? Many wiser men than me have lived and are living, yet it is no better.

Do I consider life, my work grievous? Perhaps if I am doing it to make a name or hope to do something that impresses people...is this my goal? Solomon says it is vanity and striving after wind.

"Striving after wind" - one can never catch it, can never see it, but you can see its effects. If it is a strong one, it brings destruction. If it is a breeze, it will pollinate flowers, producing fruit and seeds...Still, you can never catch it nor hoard it for future use. So is wisdom.

What do I expect to accomplish today? and for what reason? and purpose?

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/4/19 10:32

Quote:

-----Many wiser men than me have lived and are living, yet it is no better.

More commentary on this observation.

My generation is so very intelligent, or at least they think so. I have heard great minds work to understand the complexities of life, the mysteries of the WORD, reasoning and thinking more. All acting very wise, believing they got it all figured out with the end result being that they think they know better than God what man should do or be.

And you now have apostasy.

All because men think they are so wise.

Ecclesiastes 2:18-23 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/4/21 11:09

Ecclesiastes 2:18-23 NASB

18 Thus I hated all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under the sun, for I must leave it to the man who will come after me.

19 And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the fruit of my labor for which I have labored by acting wisely under the sun. This too is vanity.

20 Therefore I completely despaired of all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under the sun.

21 When there is a man who has labored with wisdom, knowledge and skill, then he gives his legacy to one who has not labored with them. This too is vanity and a great evil.

22 For what does a man get in all his labor and in his striving with which he labors under the sun?

23 Because all his days his task is painful and grievous; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is vanity

COMMENT:

The question Solomon asks "what advantage does man have in all his work? is reiterated here.

Solomon says "I have worked hard with wisdom, knowledge and skill to create all these things, but for what good? The man who comes after me has not worked with them (or shown any interest in them?)" ...implying he is ignorant in knowing how to care for all these things which means they will likely go to pot.

Solomon worked hard, he acted wisely. He laid awake at nights pondering whether the man who comes after him will be a wise man or a fool.

Who will benefit from my hard work? Who will be able to maintain it? and I worked so hard and no one else is interested enough in it. (Then he leaves his legacy to one who has not labored with them.)

Two important points:

1. In training children, parents need to bring their children alongside them and teach them the value of work and how to progress on with it after your demise. (Last week my 56 YO cousin died unexpectedly. Just two weeks earlier he sat down with his sons and explained to them all about his business, how it works..at the time they thought it odd but now consider this act Providential.)

2. How many times will our gifts be appreciated? If someone has not worked for it, will it be respected and revered? Will they know how to care for it and maintain it?

So, then, what good does all my work?

Re: Ecclesiastes 2:18-23 NASB - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2011/4/21 14:35

""So, then, what good does all my work?""

I guess that depends on who we work for and where our treasure is.

In Christ: Phillip

Ecclesiastes 2:24-26 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/4/22 11:35

""So, then, what good does all my work?""

Phillip wrote:

Quote:
-----I guess that depends on who we work for and where our treasure is.

And this is exactly what the next verses teach us. Let us take a look!

Ecclesiastes 2:24-26 NAS

24 There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen th

at it is from the hand of God.

25 For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?

26 For to a person who is good in His sight He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, while to the sinner He has given the task of gathering and collecting so that he may give to one who is good in God's sight. This too is vanity and striving after wind.

COMMENT:

Aaahh...doing it with God and for God! that is where the delight enters in. Makes everything worthwhile.

When God is involved in your work it produces satisfaction, pleasure on the personal level. There is no drudgery. To understand that God is interested in our work, that our work reflects Him bring honor and glory to Him!

Working without God brings a lot of drudgery. One feels like he is spinning his wheels for - who? Someone else...

How to be content is a lost art in our world of excessive consumerism. That is not where God is and it produces depression because you will never have enough; obsession with collecting is an indication of dissatisfaction..

In my walk with the LORD I noticed a wonderful blessing bestowed upon me: the blessing of creativity. I am one born with none whatsoever - I am dreadfully practical, all the way. However, as I grow in my walk I am finding that God is giving me the ability to think outside the box and figure out how things can be made beautiful. And in the process there is so much pleasure and joy. And I know this all comes from God - I ain't got it naturally.

In my work in the GHs, I get so tired and it becomes a drudgery. Then I recall how God led us to this business and the opportunities to witness to the public...ahhh. Then I remember this is the forum upon which God placed me to minister to those that need encouragement - and how wonderful this is! Since my emotions run out of gas quickly, I must get a daily refill to enable me to go on...

Work is a delight, a joy, a pleasure when you are yoked up with Him!

Ecclesiastes 3:1,2 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/4/26 9:27

Ecclesiastes 3:1,2 NASB

1 There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven—

2 A time to give birth and a time to die;
A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted.

COMMENT:

In v. 2-9 the writer discusses issues, none of which involve sin, but things we confront in life: do I do it this way or that? When a body is young and naive, one believes that he has life all sorted out and knows exactly how things are and should be done ALWAYS, will sometime find himself at a crossroads, not knowing for sure which road to take. And you will find that sometimes you do one thing and at times the opposite will be done - and it is right for the moment and the future. The following verses are clear that one cannot with any certainty say "I always do...this way!" like as though it is an absolute. If this is your mentality you will eventually find yourself in a place where you will do the unthinkable.

There is a time for everything...

A time to give birth....once conception has occurred there will be a birth, whether it will be alive or dead, there will be a birth. You cannot wish it away. A female body has only a limited time in which it can conceive and birth a child. Yes, there is a time and not a time when it can happen. God ordained it to be so - and he is so very wise...many seniors are ever so thankful it is such.

There is a time to die...Oh, a controversial topic. Yes, there is a time to die. It is unavoidable, it is certain. Man works to postpone it but it is inevitable. Since this is the case one must prepare himself for this inevitability.

How much resources are expended to prevent this from happening? It is shameful, is it not? My sister, who is an RN, informs me how so many patients are confined to the ICU in the hospital with no chance of recovery...and who pays for this care and the meds? Is it right to expect others to pay for something that has no chance of recovery? Where is God in all this mix? Why is it so difficult to lay this before the heavenly throne and tell God you surrender this persons' well-being to his care? Are we so afraid God will choose to take this life? And if you are ready to go, why fight it? Are you uncertain about your salvation?

On the other hand, no violence is done to take meds to make life comfortable. "Take a little wine for your stomach's sake" so says Paul to Timothy....and Osteo Bi-Flex does work to ease arthritic pain...:-)

Yes, there is a time for birthing and a time to die....when this reality sinks into our consciousness it will make a huge difference in how we view life and take it seriously, that we are here for only a short time and for a purpose. And what is that? Are we squandering our life in selfish pursuits? Or, are we living to please God? to walk with Him?

Ecclesiastes 3:3 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/4/28 9:57

Ecclesiastes 3:3 NASB

3 A time to kill and a time to heal;
A time to tear down and a time to build up.

COMMENT:

Life has provided us with an object lesson on this principle yesterday and within the recent two weeks when a rash of storms laced with tornadoes swept through the south, including our area.

God allowed these tornadoes to rip up, tear down and scatter. Living through something like this makes one think seriously about his standing before a holy and righteous God. I would guess most of these people that died because of the storm had no idea their lives would be shortened before the day was out. And so it can be for anyone. Storms are not a respecter of persons, wealth or privilege: it is an equal destroyer.

Did I panic yesterday when told a tornado was headed our way? My DH said I did. I think I was just being sensible in that I wanted to get out NOW and don't want to be here when it came. And it came, roared over our town and touching down in the countryside destroying grain bins, etc.

A time to heal. God will be there to heal those who suffered emotional trauma if they want it. And it all begins by making certain you have all your sins under the blood. No other means will work in the long term.

And there were many incidents where God's protecting hand kept people from injuries. Here are two:

1. Our DIL got the call from the school that she needed to get the children NOW because a tornado is coming. She did but upon leaving decided to take another road, a gravel road west instead of heading south like she always did. Had she gone south she could have driven almost into it (It touched down several hundred feet east of this road.). This tornado scattered tin along the road moments later, right where she was.

2. A tornado struck Scooba, MS. The weather service called a school at Geiger, AL warning them that it is headed their way and that they had only 8 minutes to evacuate. They did and 8 minutes later the tornado ripped off the roof of this building.

Storms give God an opportunity to manifest his care for his creatures. When things go well, we take it all for granted. Human nature.

God is good, even in the middle of storms.

Ecclesiastes 3:4-6 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/4/30 18:15

Ecclesiastes 3:4-6 NASB

4 A time to weep and a time to laugh;
A time to mourn and a time to dance.

5 A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones;
A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing.

6 A time to search and a time to give up as lost;
A time to keep and a time to throw away.

COMMENT:

The past week we had so much drama that it provided us with a different perspective of these verses, something that would not have occurred without it.

A time to weep; a time to search and a time to give up as lost; a time to keep and a time to throw away.

What do we need to throw away? or give up as lost? When should a person laugh? or, when is it inappropriate?

As we viewed the destruction caused by the tornadoes I get the sense that God cares nothing for material things. Buildings shredded, debris everywhere. Yet, in the midst of the shredding process there are stories of God's protection of people, so marvelous that it defies any explanation other than divine intervention. But then, not all experienced it. So, how can one explain that? But such is life and it is a waste of energy to try to understand.

Time to keep and a time to throw away - a time to relinquish our hold on what we consider dear so we can reevaluate what really is important. Things do not last, but souls do.

In the midst of all this people are becoming so much aware of their own mortality and the endtimes, like one older gentleman told me, "what happened is what I have been told would since I was a young boy." "What is that?" I asked. "That these things will happen in the end times, just before Jesus returns."

Perhaps we needed this reminder about the fragility of material things...big strong structures pushed over like toothpicks.

..

Yes, all of us have a tornado story and it is good for us...

Ecclesiastes 3:7 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/5/2 9:58

Ecclesiastes 3:7 NASB

7 A time to tear apart and a time to sew together;
A time to be silent and a time to speak.

COMMENT:

These verses - a time to and a time to- opposites, both true depending on circumstances. This should make us aware that there are things that are not absolute and we do well to live this way, kind of knocks the props out from under your opinions and/or way of doing things.

Now, a time to shut up and a time to speak. Or, if you want to say it nicer, a time to listen and a time to speak.

Listening. How well do we listen? It is by listening that one can speak wisely, speak with grace empowered by the Holy Spirit. How many times do we listen with our emotions and respond accordingly? and we get into trouble? Some people do not have the speaking skills that others do and can easily be misunderstood, so clarification is essential for good communication. So, how well do I listen? Do I listen with my spirit and mind? Makes a huge difference on how well you respond when this is done.

Another aspect of speaking....sometimes it just plain ain't appropriate to speak, even when you know what is up or down . You know that speaking will evoke a firestorm of a sorts so how should one respond? At CPC we were given wise counsel: "Choose your battles wisely, not all things are worth fighting for or against." This can only become a rule in our heart when the Holy Spirit dwells there.

Thank God for wise counsel....

Re: Ecclesiastes 3:9-11 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/5/3 16:25

Ecclesiastes 3:9-11 NASB

9 What profit is there to the worker from that in which he toils?

10 I have seen the task which God has given the sons of men with which to occupy themselves.

11 He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.

COMMENT:

Once again, why am I here for? In chapter 1:13 the writer informs us, " I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven. It is a grievous task which God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with."

These questions about life, reason for living is God given. He wants us to ask, to search and experience a sense of frustration with our ignorance. Only when we have arrived at this point in our knowledge will one be receptive to his revelation.

God set eternity in our hearts is a fascinating concept! It is the sense that perhaps there is a beginning somewhere and there certainly must be more to life after the physical death one sees all around us. People seems to know, hence the search for meaning. Even the most primitive cultures have a sense of a supreme being who controls what man cannot.

Ahh, God is so wise...it is when man works to justify his sin that he turns a deaf ear to the obvious...(I heard something similar a few days ago when discussing the tornadoes that ravished parts of the south....the speaker worked to discount the divine implications of these storms, in contrast to many who say that God is warning us...) God does use nature to speak to us - if we want to see and hear .

EDITED for clarity

Ecclesiastes 3:12-13 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/5/5 10:46

Ecclesiastes 3:12-13 NASB

12 I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime;

13 moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor—it is the gift of God.

COMMENT:

How well do I enjoy working? V. 13 informs us that to enjoy it is a gift from God. You have this gift?

Can we look at our work as an effort that operates out of a well of joy and delight, that brings pleasure?

When I was a child I hated work and so did most of our children, especially when it came to cleaning their bedrooms and washing dishes. As I grew older and my walk with the LORD became more intimate my attitude towards work changed. My creativity also changed - changed from following instructions to the letter to thinking 'outside the box'.

It is a wonderful testimony to those we meet when they can see we are Christians who thoroughly enjoy working,, that it is honorable, bringing pleasure to those who exercise themselves therein. This can be among the best sermons one can preach to those we meet: enjoy your work and in so doing give God the honor when it is due.

In working and being creative one quickly discovers gaps in knowledge and wisdom. There will be vexing times of things going wrong and how do I fix it? After all, our work is still cursed...how do we cope? With glum and pessimism? or, can we bring this matter to the LORD for his assistance? No, I cannot expect Him to deliver me out of this situation, but I do expect Him to lead me to knowledge and wisdom in learning how to deal with it.

(In our business, many will think that with an ideal environment we should have no problems...but the fact is that with an ideal environment it also is an ideal environment for insects and who knows what all. Our wisdom is challenged such that we at times wonder whether we know anything at all!)

Enjoy your work and when you meet others allow them to witness your pleasure in it! Might be the best sermon they will see all day!

Ecclesiastes 3:14-15 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/5/6 10:50

Ecclesiastes 3:14-15 NASB

14 I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him.

15 That which is has been already and that which will be has already been, for God seeks what has passed by.

COMMENT:

God has instilled within humans the desire, ambition to create, to work. However, within this desire there is the challenge to overcome hindrances to this creativity. But the laws of nature will never change, regardless of man's attempts to do so ; among them is death. Man has never been able to eradicate it from human's existence. Neither has man been able to create anything out of nothing: all must use components created by God and therefore subject to the laws these components demand.

Since this is the case, why work? what profit is there in working? You cannot add to it or take away from God's laws of nature, so why work?

Is it not true that in being creative one will come up to a barrier that challenges man's knowledge/wisdom and in doing so that person is left with a sense of awe?

We are hemmed in by laws of nature set in place by God and these laws cannot be overturned by man. They are absolute - only God can change them. THIS is essential in our serving God: we are not God and it is important we realize our limitations in whatever we do. This is true materially and spiritually: we cannot overcome the consequences of sin scientifically.

God is and will always be. So, how will this impact our life? our occupation? our problem solving skills?

Ecclesiastes 3:18-22 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/5/11 8:23

Ecclesiastes 3:18-22 NASB

18 I said to myself concerning the sons of men, "God has surely tested them in order for them to see that they are but beasts."

19 For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same. As one dies so dies the other; indeed, they all have the same breath and there is no advantage for man over beast, for all is vanity.

20 All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all return to the dust.

21 Who knows that the breath of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth?

22 I have seen that nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities, for that is his lot. For who will bring him to see what will occur after him?

COMMENT:

Two major insights:

One: "God has surely tested them in order for them to see that they are but beasts.Â" When left to himself man acts like animals. Man is given to strife, conflict, will eat and devour another. All motivated by greed and pride, working to top the other and woe on you if you get in my way! This why I would understand why God allows evil to exist to demonstrate that without his influence man will kill and devour another, just like animals - except for one thing: they do it for survival, literally. Man does it mostly for prides' sake.

TWO: How are we different from the animals? Both live and die. Both when dead rot and return to dust. Both breathe the same air. Now why is man different? what is his purpose for living? Solomon suggests the best thing for an to do is to enjoy life NOW. He cannot see what is in the future for his efforts, just do what brings enjoyment. Enjoy your work...To work for something far into the future, you have no clue how the future will treat your work.

Enjoy life and make life happen today. Now! Enjoy it! It is a gift from God! (v. 12) (BTW: this is the message God gave me when I was told our 25 YO was terminally ill. I followed His command and was richly blessed by it.:))

Ecclesiastes 4:1-3 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/5/12 10:31

Ecclesiastes 4:1-3 NASB

1 Then I looked again at all the acts of oppression which were being done under the sun. And behold I saw the tears of the oppressed and that they had no one to comfort them; and on the side of their oppressors was power, but they had no one to comfort them.

2 So I congratulated the dead who are already dead more than the living who are still living.

3 But better off than both of them is the one who has never existed, who has never seen the evil activity that is done under the sun.

COMMENT:

Oppression. Ecclesiastes 7:7 NASB: Oppression makes a wise man mad....

Power corrupts. Many use power to elevate their personal well-being, but it happens by walking over people, trampling as they go to reach the top. The trampled cried as the oppressors worked his way to the top.

Yet, the oppressor is a human being with feelings, emotions like the people he trampled on his way up the ladder. Once he gets to the top, it is lonely. People around him know they need to tread softly with him lest he becomes another victim in his quest to remain secure. Or, his close associates will work to secure the oppressor because they know their own security is dependent on the others'.

But they are lonely, too.

(A very rich lady lived in our town. Her husband was the chairman of a well-known company in the USA. She hobnobbed with the rich and famous. But she was an alcoholic and a member of the local Methodist church. In her last days she had a Christian black lady who cared for her who ministered to her, tried to bring her to the LORD, but failed...I admire this black sister..)

One can look at Hitler and Stalin, among the best known oppressors in the 20th century. But they were lonely: Hitler and his wife committed suicide. Stalin did not trust his associates or acquaintances; had an over-active imagination and eliminated those whose loyalty he suspected, justified or not. Lonely.

But we are not oppressors, are we? As children of the eternal King, can we look at these oppressors as God does and know they will spend eternity - somewhere? Can we look at bin Laden and others and know they are mere men, like we? Does a possessor of position and power impede our willingness to minister to these people? It is easy for Christian to render benevolence to the oppressed but what about the oppressor? But, then, they are so arrogant just like Obadiah 1:3 says: "who will bring me down to earth?"

In any case, Solomon ends his observation with a hyperbole: that the one who never lived is better off than the one who has: he will be lonely, whether he is the oppressor or his victim.

Where do we find ourselves in this mix?

Ecclesiastes 4:4-6 - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/5/13 11:05

Ecclesiastes 4:4-6 NASB

4 I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is the result of rivalry between a man and his neighbor. This too is vanity and striving after wind.

5 The fool folds his hands and consumes his own flesh.

6 One hand full of rest is better than two fists full of labor and striving after wind.

COMMENT:

Work. Why do I work? to compete with another? And what good does this do? It calls it rivalry and oppression. The opposite is to sit and do nothing. Verse 5 says laziness will consume your flesh...Where is the balance?

Since we are self-employed v. 4 is ever before me - on the practical level - we have to deal with it. We know there are people out there who will want all kinds of information so they can upstage you, compete with you. How much info do I share? To maintain peace of mind, we limit the info shared with others. We know what is vital and protect it. Knowing the weaknesses of human nature we are working to maintain a cordial relationship with potential competitors. On the one hand it is tragic, but it is life...while protecting vital information we can still be kind and gentle. My husband taught me that.

Yes, this is where life meets the road and how do I relate to others on the business level?

Re: Ecclesiastes 4:4-6 - posted by mama27, on: 2011/5/13 11:51

I don't always comment, Ginnyrose, but I love your Ecclesiastes series and the wisdom you have to share! It is one of my favorite books as well :)

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/5/14 0:26

Oh, thank-you, Mama! Your comment is so encouraging. I know many folks do not enjoy the book thinking it is too negative...Hey! I even heard preachers say that! But I love it because it is so full of wisdom, so practical. It also demonstrates that God is so very much interested in how one lives, how one responds to life where the rubber meets the road. God explains so much of the 'whys' of vexing problems that we encounter in life.

God bless you mama for your encouraging words.

ginnyrose

Ecclesiastes 4:8 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/5/16 20:53

Ecclesiastes 4:8 NASB

There was a certain man without a dependent, having neither a son nor a brother, yet there was no end to all his labor. Indeed, his eyes were not satisfied with riches and he never asked, "And for whom am I laboring and depriving myself of pleasure?" This too is vanity and it is a grievous task.

COMMENT:

More insights about work.

The writer specifically is looking at an individual who has no dependents to benefit from his work. He notes that in his acquisition of wealth he is never satisfied. So why are you so busy working when you have no dependents to benefit from your work?

A couple major points: after working hard, accumulating things, when will a person admit he has enough? and why work so hard and not enjoy life?

And the eyes are never satisfied! We love to look at more and more. If we accumulate some and it was not all that hard, let us get more and more - hey! this is fun and see what I did! and can do! - yes, eyes are never satisfied. And who will benefit?

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/5/18 11:57

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 NASB

9 Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor.

10 For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.

11 Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone?

12 And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.

COMMENT:

The value of close friendships...

Amos 3:3 echoes these sentiments when he says: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" The obvious answer is "no".

The value of a close friend...

1. There is a good return for their work....

2. When one falls another will be there to help him get up.

3. When faced with opposition they will be able to withstand its pressure. Alone one can be more easily overpowered. (It uses the number 3 - is the third cord God? I suspect it is...)

Christians need each other. No one can stand alone long. It gets lonely. The human cries for companionship, we are made social beings. We need to feel the love and acceptance of others, especially one other person. Without this love from another one can easily give into compromise.

Another value of a close associate is that when discussing issues, the insight gained by listening to another will trigger yo

ur own thinking to a concept you were blinded to which will then lead you down a more productive path.

Ahhh, how wonderful are the insights of a friend whose goals match yours, who can share insights that challenge me to better growth, new heights. Perhaps this is the reason why Christians need to be so careful who we choose to be our confidants; who we choose to fellowship with on a regular basis.

A friend will always be there to help you rise up when you fail, when you fall. Woe to the person who has no friends like this! Still, God is there, but having a godly friend will reinforce God's support.

Am I the friend God can use to bolster a weak person?

Ecclesiastes 4: 13-16 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/5/19 10:00

Ecclesiastes 4: 13-16 NASB

13 A poor yet wise lad is better than an old and foolish king who no longer knows how to receive instruction.

14 For he has come out of prison to become king, even though he was born poor in his kingdom.

15 I have seen all the living under the sun throng to the side of the second lad who replaces him.

16 There is no end to all the people, to all who were before them, and even the ones who will come later will not be happy with him, for this too is vanity and striving after wind.

COMMENTS:

What do people look for in a leader? The writer declares that a poor lad with a teachable spirit is better than an old king who is not.

But where do people look for a leader? They may throng to the person released 'from prison' hoping he would have the ability to understand life as they see it. In the end they will be dissatisfied and will look for another.

Ahhh...sounds like moderns. Many people will emerge from who-knows-where, work to get your confidence/votes, promising the moon to all who will vote for him/her. If they win the election and fails to fulfill his promises, they will look for another..and so the cycle continues.

When will man learn that trusting in another human to fix whatever ails the world cannot be done politically? You trust in that person to correct but once in a powerful position they seem powerless to act. Somehow it seems as though there are forces at work that man cannot buck.

Human nature has not changed any, has it?

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/5/21 9:15

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 NASB

1 Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil.

2 Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few.

3 For the dream comes through much effort and the voice of a fool through many words.

4 When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow!

5 It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.

6 Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands?

7 For in many dreams and in many words there is emptiness. Rather, fear God

COMMENT:

How does one pray? What do you say? The disciples also had this question asking Jesus how one ought to pray. If one were to analyze the LORD's Prayer, one could easily see its principles the same as here.

How does one conduct himself in the presence of the LORD?

1. Be careful, guard your steps.
2. Listen.
3. Do not speak impulsively.
4. Do not allow your imagination motivate your commitments to the LORD.
5. Be very slow in making any vow to the LORD.
6. Be very cautious in criticizing a messenger of the LORD.

How often does a body make demands of the LORD that in time will prove to not have been wise? (A case comes to mind of a young boy who was in an accident. He was in ICU at the hospital and almost died. He lived and now has severe spiritual problems. How much better off would he have been to have died...)

Sometimes when we are in severe straits, we promise God that we will do this or that IF he does such. God complies and after the stress is a mere memory we are inclined to rationalize away our promise. V. 5 says it is better to not vow than to vow and not pay.

Much more can be said but I must run...surely someone else has inspiration from these verses to share?

Ecclesiastes 5:8 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/5/24 15:23

Ecclesiastes 5:8 NASB

8 If you see oppression of the poor and denial of justice and righteousness in the province, do not be shocked at the sight; for one official watches over another official, and there are higher officials over them.

9 After all, a king who cultivates the field is an advantage to the land.

COMMENTS:

These verses come back to haunt me, challenge me whenever I hear of oppression carried out by a gov towards its people. Still, this is in God's word and I believe the Holy Spirit inspired Solomon to write it.

Does this refer to religious persecution? Am not sure..the writer does not indicate it to be such...In any case, oppression will not go on forever, even though it may seem like it. Life under these circumstances will be a serious challenge, giving God a glorious opportunity to demonstrate his power to the Believer.

Ecclesiastes 5: 10 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/5/26 10:48

Ecclesiastes 5: 10 NASB

10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.

COMMENT:

The rest of this chapter talks about money, but will make a comment on v. 10 at the moment.

Hoarding money. We have all heard of people who have hoarded money while depriving themselves of basic necessities of life.

Then there are those who are so tight with their money they squeak when they walk. They feel like everyone is after their money, so self-absorbed are they.

And neither one enjoys the benefits that come with possessing money. Acquisition/hoarding is an obsession that becomes an addiction, if you will, who only gives its possessor a brief moment of satisfaction, but after that the drive to get more kicks in and the cycle continues. And Solomon calls it vanity, or useless, or no good...

Ecclesiastes 5: 10-20 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/5/31 9:57

Ecclesiastes 5: 10-20 NASB

10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.

11 When good things increase, those who consume them increase. So what is the advantage to their owners except to look on?

12 The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much; but the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep.

13 There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun: riches being hoarded by their owner to his hurt.

14 When those riches were lost through a bad investment and he had fathered a son, then there was nothing to support him.

15 As he had come naked from his mother's womb, so will he return as he came. He will take nothing from the fruit of his labor that he can carry in his hand.

16 This also is a grievous evil—exactly as a man is born, thus will he die. So what is the advantage to him who toils for the wind?

17 Throughout his life he also eats in darkness with great vexation, sickness and anger.

18 Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward.

19 Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God.

20 For he will not often consider the years of his life, because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart.

COMMENT:

Money. No subject will evoke as much discussion as that of money: either how to invest it to make more or how to spend it, whether it be wisely to finance self-indulgences. And are all self-indulgences sin? Ahhh...there in lies the rub...is it wrong to buy an ice cream cone?

These verses discuss one's attitude towards acquired wealth.

1. Does one hoard it?

2. Does one invest it where the family is deprived of necessities? v. 14. (How many of us have seen dads make foolish investments - while a child could have used some help - and then the investment goes sour? Yet, if the child had some misfortune with the money given by dad the parent would have been upset?)

3. Money is intended to be enjoyed - you were born without it and you will die without it, so use it where it will bring delight.

ht and joy. You cannot take it with you.

4. Live and enjoy the blessings that come your way. This is part of being thankful. Fear will evoke hoarding and that is a joy-robber.

5. Be wise and enjoy life. This is a gift from God: v.20: For he will not often consider the years of his life, because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart

God is good - do we appreciate the temporal blessings he has allowed into our lives? and are we wise in its use?

Re: Ecclesiastes 6:1-7 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/1 10:06

Ecclesiastes 6:1-7 NASB

1 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun and it is prevalent among men—

2 a man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor so that his soul lacks nothing of all that he desires; yet God has not empowered him to eat from them, for a foreigner enjoys them. This is vanity and a severe affliction.

3 If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, however many they be, but his soul is not satisfied with good things and he does not even have a proper burial, then I say, “Better the miscarriage than he,

4 for it comes in futility and goes into obscurity; and its name is covered in obscurity.

5 “It never sees the sun and it never knows anything; it is better off than he.

6 “Even if the other man lives a thousand years twice and does not enjoy good things—do not all go to one place?”

7 All a man’s labor is for his mouth and yet the appetite is not satisfied.

COMMENT:

What good does it do to work hard, accumulate but then not get to enjoy the fruits of your labors? You work so hard, you become an work-alcoholic - your children will not even give you a proper burial...You have alienated your family in the process of acquisition but you cannot enjoy the results of your work. What benefit is there?

What drives a person to such extremes? In v.7 it informs us it is the appetite, hunger. The fear of being hungry - "gotta get it so I will not be hungry or naked." But you die anyways and your legacy will die with you, you will go into obscurity.

What a tragedy.

Who am I living for today? What is life for? What do I expect to accomplish? How long will it last?

Ecclesiastes 6:8-12 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/2 10:13

Ecclesiastes 6:8-12 NASB

8 For what advantage does the wise man have over the fool? What advantage does the poor man have, knowing how to walk before the living?

9 What the eyes see is better than what the soul desires. This too is futility and a striving after wind.

10 Whatever exists has already been named, and it is known what man is; for he cannot dispute with him who is stronger than he is.

11 For there are many words which increase futility. What then is the advantage to a man?

12 For who knows what is good for a man during his lifetime, during the few years of his futile life? He will spend them like a shadow. For who can tell a man what will be after him under the sun?

COMMENT:

What are my goals in life? I want to be wise but...

What good does more learning do? Others have done that and know more than you!

You can discuss and haggle but what good does that do?

The good you do is merely a shadow...Ah, of what? Now we're getting somewhere.

You can do a lot of good but that does not mean it will endure after you are gone. Working to be good is futile...

Negative? Yes. But when one's focus is on self, it will all be negative. Too many times we get caught in this trap unknowingly. We are told to be goal driven; we are told to work for the future but miss living today. We are only sure of the moment and for some that is all they have, life can make unexpected radical turns in a moment, like those caught in a tornado.

Do I really live? Really live? and how does one achieve this? Ecclesiastes does answer this question - eventually. But before we can understand this answer, one must be aware of the hindrances to living a full life.

Ecclesiastes 7:1-4 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/3 22:29

Ecclesiastes 7:1-4 NASB

1 A good name is better than a good ointment,
And the day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth.

2 It is better to go to a house of mourning
Than to go to a house of feasting,
Because that is the end of every man,
And the living takes it to heart.

3 Sorrow is better than laughter,
For when a face is sad a heart may be happy.

4 The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning,
While the mind of fools is in the house of pleasure.

COMMENT:

Death. Most folks shy away from discussing it; hate to go to funerals - cannot take the grief displayed there, or simply do not like to be in the presence of death..

Solomon says it is better to go to the house mourning than the house of feasting. Why is this so? Why is the day of one's death better than the day of one's birth?

Verse two says, "Because that is the end of every man, And the living takes it to heart." When one goes to a funeral or a wake, we always are reminded that one day this fate will befall us as well. Since this is the case, what am I doing to get ready for this event?

Ever notice what people are saying at a wake or funeral? Ever been to one where the Spirit of the LORD was so keenly present? ever been to one where there was an unsettled, disturbed feeling in the air? Ever attended the funeral of a suicide victim? This should teach us something - if we listen and take it to heart.

The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning - he considers his own end and will work to assure all is well between him and God. The fool, on the other hand, will pursue pleasure to silence the voice of the spirit in his soul.

Which one am I? the fool or the wise one?

Re: Inspiration from Ecclesiastes - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/6 9:32

For the next two weeks I likely will not be able to post any insights from Ecclesiastes.

I am working to prepare for the classes of teens I plan to teach at VBS, beginning on June 13.

The LORD is leading that I would teach the beatitudes taken from Matthew 5 which means I will have to write out my own lessons which will be time consuming.

If the Holy Spirit prompts you to pray for this, please do so. In the meantime if someone else wants to go ahead and share insight from Ecclesiastes, I would welcome that - I am not the owner of this thread! I know the book has the dubious reputation of being negative, but I consider this tragic - so many principles of life exposed here...

God bless...

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/18 18:53

Just an update on VBS...

It was held this week instead of last week as was originally planned.

The turnout this year was around a third less than previous years. We do not know why, but I for one did pray that the rowdy ones would not show up. And they didn't. The quietness was remarkable.

My girls were good - reverent, participated when asked to. At the end they asked why I do not help with Kidz Klubs! This was a real honor....Before they asked me this, the idea was floating in my mind that perhaps I should. In the meantime, much prayer has to go into this endeavor.

These teenagers are very knowledgeable about the WORD and what God expects of his people. If only one can help them realize the sacrifice is worth it all.

The children that come to our VBS come from likely the poorest, and the most dysfunctional homes in the county. The town is dreadfully poor. The organizers are not aware of any homes headed by a dad, all single parent homes. For God to redeem this town would involve a major miracle, even greater than the healing of the lame! I am serious.

Earlier this year one of our Kidz Klubz teachers was told by a black pastor in the area how they are noticing a difference in the children that come. This was a real encouragement because so many are discouraged - it seems they work and see so little progress. Then this week, the audience was more subdued...

There is one thing that we did differently: more classes were held in the woods. Years ago our church purchased a wooded area that surrounds our property. The boys clubs cleared out winding paths among the trees, creating rooms with benches. My girls' classes were held in a pavilion built by these boys and their sponsor. What effect does being out in nature have on children given to disruptive behaviors?

In any case, it was a good week and we all feel a lot has been accomplished - perhaps someday there will be more fruit.

ginnyrose

Ecclesiastes 7:7-9 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/20 13:30

Ecclesiastes 7:7-9 NASB

7 For oppression makes a wise man mad,
And a bribe corrupts the heart.

8 The end of a matter is better than its beginning;
Patience of spirit is better than haughtiness of spirit.

9 Do not be eager in your heart to be angry,
For anger resides in the bosom of fools.

COMMENTS:

Life consists of many decisions made and needing to be made: it is done all day long.

But some decisions are vexing: if one would only know the probable end it would be a whole lot easier, or so one thinks.

In any case some decisions are difficult and what are the issues that make them so? let us see what Solomon says:

1. Oppression. Someone more powerful is in control, someone who refuses to relinquish his power and authority to common sense because it might impact his income.
2. Bribery. Someone has paid money to a powerful person protect his own interest at the expense of common sense and a weaker person.
3. Sometimes situations anger a person. Anger will always cloud a persons' judgement, his ability to make rational decisions.

These are the challenges one faces. How is one to deal with it? This is the question and a partial answer is "do not get angry." A clear, Holy Spirit inspired mind will be open to ways to deal with complex, annoying situations. Anger, frustration cloud this ability, always.

Now, if I could always remember this....

Ecclesiastes 7:10 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/22 11:33

Ecclesiastes 7:10 NASB

10 Do not say, "Why is it that the former days were better than these?"
For it is not from wisdom that you ask about this.

COMMENT:

This verse seems to be inserted here in the middle of other topics and one is left wondering why it is placed here? Regardless where it is placed, its message is powerful.

When I am given to reminiscing, comparing the old vs the modern, I always feel a check in my spirit because of this verse. As one ages the differences one sees in life now vs years ago is stark, maddening. The NT teaches us that things will get worse towards the end. John, the Revelator, had a similar message to the churches "remember from whence you are fallen..." So, to make this observation must not be wrong. So, then what is Solomon saying?

When we look back, recall life as it appeared years ago, we really do not know what went on in the hearts of people. People were skilled hypocrites, putting on a religious front leading people to think they were godly when they were corrupt at the core. People had a persona to protect and their sins were swept under the carpet, so to speak. Many lived a double lifestyle.

I remember as a young woman when I first heard of an evangelist who molested a young girl, impregnating her and the results - other than a pregnancy. (Actually, Catherine Marshal shared a similar story in her book "Christy". While I know it is a work of fiction, I am aware these things did happen in real life.) And I was shocked.

Now, since I know this to be the reality, this is knowledge.

Wisdom dictates that I refrain from saying, and believing, that life was better back then.

Oh. OH.

Since this is the case, it forces the individual to live in the here and now and make decisions based on the Holy Spirit's leading NOW; not based on what appeared to have served us well in the past.

When I think of this I am always reminded of Moses. Twice he got water from the rock for the Israelites. The first time he was told to strike the rock. Exo. 17:6. Since he was told to do so the first time, he proceeded to do so the second time in violation to God's command to speak. God is very particular that we follow him - now - absolutely, regardless of our past. What worked back then may not now.

Yes, LORD....we do need you to teach us to recognize your voice when you speak....

Re: Ecclesiastes 7:10 NASB - posted by mama27, on: 2011/6/22 12:51

Thank you, Ginnyrose...I have been guilty COUNTLESS times of lamenting to my children about "the good old days". But really the good old days were no better - things were just more "covered up". The Lord has brought this verse to my mind many times as well. I am blessed by your Ecclesiastes series...

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/23 17:09

Quote:

-----I have been guilty COUNTLESS times of lamenting to my children about "the good old days".

Join the crowd - it is crowded...

EDIT: I love the book of Ecclesiastes - ranks as among my favorite OT books. It is so practical, blunt, to the point. Teaches profound truths about life and how we fit into the scheme of it. My goal in this series is to awaken others to the riches included therein.

Ecclesiastes 7:13-14 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/23 17:25

Ecclesiastes 7:13-14 NASB

13 Consider the work of God,
For who is able to straighten what He has bent?

14 In the day of prosperity be happy,
But in the day of adversity consider—
God has made the one as well as the other
So that man will not discover anything that will be after him

COMMENT:

What all does the work of God include?

1. Bent things
2. Prosperity
3. Adversity

OH, really? Yup...

God bents things? Says so.

God blesses people with prosperity? We like this.

God responsible for adversity? Yes, madam/sir.

Why so? to remove the predictability of life.

When God chooses to bend things it brings with it adversity. And it does no good to fight it. We may complain, rail against God for allowing it but who wins then? You? not at all. But the devil sure will.

When we find life unpredictable - and who doesn't - we learn first hand about the importance of learning to trust the LORD because even our best laid plans can, and do, go awry.

And this is where God wants us: to teach us the uncertainty of our best laid plans, the unreliability of strong people, the fragility of the best secure systems in the world. God wants us to trust him unconditionally. If we do so, the situations one finds himself in will be regarded by us as a tool God is using to teach us.

Are we up to it?

Ecclesiastes 7:15-18 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/24 11:10

Ecclesiastes 7:15-18 NASB

15 I have seen everything during my lifetime of futility; there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness.

16 Do not be excessively righteous and do not be overly wise. Why should you ruin yourself?

17 Do not be excessively wicked and do not be a fool. Why should you die before your time?

18 It is good that you grasp one thing and also not let go of the other; for the one who fears God comes forth with both of them.

COMMENT:

This is perhaps the most difficult portion in Ecclesiastes to understand... "Do not be excessively wicked" sounds like it is ok to be a little wicked. But I will share what it teaches me.

The topic here deals with righteousness and wickedness: being right or wrong.

Being righteous does not promise a person that life will be easy - in fact it will likely evoke opposition and maybe persecution. One does not pursue righteousness with God as a means to prolong his life. It may kill you in the prime of life.

On the other hand one sees the ungodly and observes how life seems to be so pleasant and easy - assuming they do follow a moral code (and many do, or at least portions of one).

Now then, is it ok to let go of this sticky point that gets me in trouble to save my hide? to make life easier? Then one has to ask: is this point a matter of conviction based on the Word, or a matter of opinion based on personal preferences? Preferences can always be compromised without sacrificing conviction.

(At times it is hard to distinguish personal preferences from conviction. For many they can be so entwined that its possessor cannot tell the difference.)

Then there is perfectionism vs excellence - big difference between the two. Perfectionism is never satisfied; it appears to be excellence wrapped up in pride. The perfectionist is never satisfied but the person who pursues excellence is. This is how I would understand v. 16.

In our community we have a couple churches who used to excommunicate members very quickly. Then it was noticed how these people would go out into the depths of sin. Their mindset was that since I am going to hell, anyways, I am really

y going to live it up, enjoy the pleasures of sin to the max. And they did. But when they do come back to the LORD they had so terrible much baggage to deal with...Yes, excessive wickedness will kill.

In the end, realize your options, the advantages and disadvantages. You can live for self and prolong your life - if you follow a moral code. You can also live for the LORD and die young. But be sure you are not foolish in hanging onto to things that do endanger your life that have no eternal value in itself. Be objective and keen to the teaching of the Holy Spirit in these touchy matters as well as all of life.

How do y'all understand this passage?

Ecclesiastes 7:19-29 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/27 9:56

Ecclesiastes 7:19-29 NASB

19 Wisdom strengthens a wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city.

20 Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.

21 Also, do not take seriously all words which are spoken, so that you will not hear your servant cursing you.

22 For you also have realized that you likewise have many times cursed others.

23 I tested all this with wisdom, and I said, "I will be wise," but it was far from me.

24 What has been is remote and exceedingly mysterious. Who can discover it?

25 I directed my mind to know, to investigate and to seek wisdom and an explanation, and to know the evil of folly and the foolishness of madness.

26 And I discovered more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are chains. One who is pleasing to God will escape from her, but the sinner will be captured by her.

27 "Behold, I have discovered this," says the Preacher, "adding one thing to another to find an explanation,

28 which I am still seeking but have not found. I have found one man among a thousand, but I have not found a woman among all these.

29 "Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices."

COMMENT:

Solomon makes the observation that wisdom strengthens a wise man more than ten rulers - a very strong statement. This could be the motivation for him to work to plumb its depths. Having said this his conclusion in 1:17 was that it is striving after wind...how is that? one cannot catch wind... So, to fully understand it, be controlled by it always is elusive? still, as a wise man he worked to to always be wise...consider his observations here in 7:19-29.

Observations:

1. There is no righteous man that continually does good and never sins.
2. Do not take seriously everything you hear. If you do, people will mistrust you because you will be making decisions based on faulty information. (My interpretation.)
3. History's lessons are incomplete in teaching wisdom.
4. Researching the answers to life is elusive.
5. One cannot look to man for absolute answers. (Philosophy is faulty.)
6. The worst thing that can happen to a man is to be ensnared by a devious woman.

7. That God made man to be upright but he looks for ways to walk away from it.

Oh. Oh...

Man just just not have it within himself to be wise at all times, does he? Good ego buster... So, then, what is the solution ? Let us continue, the answer is forthcoming - the problem is not without a solution.

Ecclesiastes 8:1-9 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/28 9:36

Ecclesiastes 8:1-9 NASB

1 Who is like the wise man and who knows the interpretation of a matter? A man's wisdom illumines him and causes his stern face to beam.

2 I say, "Keep the command of the king because of the oath before God.

3 "Do not be in a hurry to leave him. Do not join in an evil matter, for he will do whatever he pleases."

4 Since the word of the king is authoritative, who will say to him, "What are you doing?"

5 He who keeps a royal command experiences no trouble, for a wise heart knows the proper time and procedure.

6 For there is a proper time and procedure for every delight, though a man's trouble is heavy upon him.

7 If no one knows what will happen, who can tell him when it will happen?

8 No man has authority to restrain the wind with the wind, or authority over the day of death; and there is no discharge in the time of war, and evil will not deliver those who practice it.

9 All this I have seen and applied my mind to every deed that has been done under the sun wherein a man has exercised authority over another man to his hurt.

COMMENT:

Authority. How does one relate to authority? to those who wield power over us? The NT uses the word 'submit'. Here in the OT it shares details on how this can be done and the results of the failure to do so. Let us take a look.

How do I relate to authority?

1. Keep a cheerful face. One that looks pickled, angry is one that communicates distrust. You want this authority figure to trust you or mistrust you?

2. Submit to the Authority because he is placed there by God.

3. When in his presence, do not rush him. v3. You need to learn how he functions, his will. This is essential in getting along. v5. He will do as he pleases regardless of you.

4. Do not get involved in any evil deed because Authority has the power to respond to it and get you into trouble.

5. Do not question the authority of the powers that be.

6. You will save yourself a lot of grief by submitting to Authority.

7. Things take time. Procedures must be followed. When you are in trouble this perspective is lost to the emotions.
8. Authority does not know everything, either.

Limitations of Authority

1. There are limits.
2. Authority cannot prevent death.
3. In a conflict, Authority cannot remove you from it and the ensuing battle.
4. When in trouble Authority cannot save you from its consequences.

How do I regard Authority figures over me? Solomon says that to disregard it brings a body to hurt...

Ecclesiastes8:10-15 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/29 9:32

Ecclesiastes8:1-15 NASB

10 So then, I have seen the wicked buried, those who used to go in and out from the holy place, and they are soon forgotten in the city where they did thus. This too is futility.

11 Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.

12 Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly.

13 But it will not be well for the evil man and he will not lengthen his days like a shadow, because he does not fear God.

14 There is futility which is done on the earth, that is, there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked. On the other hand, there are evil men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I say that this too is futility.

15 So I commended pleasure, for there is nothing good for a man under the sun except to eat and to drink and to be merry, and this will stand by him in his toils throughout the days of his life which God has given him under the sun.

COMMENT:

The life of an evil person is contrasted with the righteous one.

Consider the life of the evil person:

1. Both live and die, and are buried. And their memory is soon forgotten. v10
2. An evil person's deeds may go unchecked and he will persist in his wickedness
3. An evil person just might lengthen his days. v11
4. It will not be well for the evil person. v. 13
5. Evil folks may experience ease of life. v14

The Righteous person:

1. Lives and dies and will soon be forgotten
2. It will be well for those who fear God openly (note this word: openly)
3. Life will not be fair for the righteous. He will experience adversity.
4. Life may not be predictable for the righteous.

So, then, how can life for the righteous still be superior to the wicked man's? Is it because he has the capacity to enjoy life at the present? He can enjoy the blessings that come his way, every moment - appreciate it? Does Trust not free one from worry and relax a body, enabling a person to enjoy life at the moment? even in the face of adversity? Does adversity not expose a person to an opportunity for God to step in and show himself for who he is: demonstrate his power, his might and love?

Re: Ecclesiastes 8:10-15 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/29 9:38

More comment concerning:

Quote:
-----11 Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.

This verse informs us how important it is to confront evil when it is committed. For many of us it includes the discipline of children when they disobey. "Just wait until daddy gets home" is not wise. Moms need to take a stand against disobedience immediately, not postpone it until dad gets home.

On the social level, when evil men are not restrained it will only encourage more evil because they have eluded justice: they become bolder and more wicked with time. Some could use this verse to justify the need to hurry the process in which the offender will face the judge/jury.

My thoughts...obviously.

Ecclesiastes 8:16-9:1 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/30 10:50

Ecclesiastes 8:16-9:1 NASB

16 When I gave my heart to know wisdom and to see the task which has been done on the earth (even though one should never sleep day or night),

17 and I saw every work of God, I concluded that man cannot discover the work which has been done under the sun. Even though man should seek laboriously, he will not discover; and though the wise man should say, "I know," he cannot discover.

18 For I have taken all this to my heart and explain it that righteous men, wise men, and their deeds are in the hand of God. Man does not know whether it will be love or hatred; anything awaits him.

COMMENT:

In this portion Solomon cuts to the heart of the matter.

Solomon's goal was learn all he could about life, about nature around him. And he did a very impressive job. Consider the testimony he left:

1 Kings 4:30-34 NASB

30 Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt.

31 For he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was known in all the surrounding nations.

32 He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005.

33 He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that grows on the wall; he spoke also of animals and birds and creeping things and fish.

34 Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

When he says that he was wiser than others, it is no idle boast, but a fact.

In any case, when he studied and learned all he could about life, whether it be human nature, or plants, animals or birds or...he had one conclusion: it is impossible to know it all. And even if man were to try to learn it all, it is a gesture doomed to failure.

Solomon attributed the creation to the Work of God. Let us think about this a bit: if one can know everything there is to know, then that would mean man has the capability of knowing as much as God. Sounds to me like God made things to confound man, to impress upon him his own limitations. Once man realizes this fact, we can only fall on our face and say like Thomas, "Oh, my Lord and my God!"

Since man is finite, man cannot accurately predict the future, not even tomorrow. We do not know whether we will encounter love or hatred.

It is not when we encounter the unexpected that we usually trip up because we are taken by surprise, and our responses are spontaneous, which comes from the heart? Ooohhh, kind of demonstrates what we are at heart, does it not?

All of our life is in the hand of God. Since this is the case, we do well to cooperate with this all-powerful God. Man has never fought God successfully and never will. He will always fail. Always.

(NOTE: about the way the physical world works. Whenever man invents something, it is subject to break down, will eventually wear out and become useless and/or obsolete. Then man has to improve or discard previous instruments. God, on the other hand made his creation to multiply, like with like, generations after generations. Even mutations are similar from which they come from. God never had to reinvent, redesign anything..Awesome! This is MY GOD! Hallelujah!)

Ecclesiastes 9:2-9 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/7/1 10:05

Ecclesiastes 9:2-9 NASB

2 It is the same for all. There is one fate for the righteous and for the wicked; for the good, for the clean and for the uncleanness; for the man who offers a sacrifice and for the one who does not sacrifice. As the good man is, so is the sinner; as the swearer is, so is the one who is afraid to swear.

3 This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives. Afterwards they go to the dead.

4 For whoever is joined with all the living, there is hope; surely a live dog is better than a dead lion.

5 For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten.

6 Indeed their love, their hate and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun.

7 Go then, eat your bread in happiness and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works.

8 Let your clothes be white all the time, and let not oil be lacking on your head.

9 Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun.

COMMENT:

All die, the righteous and the wicked. Righteousness may not prolong your life.

The dead cannot come back to advise you; their zeal, their hate has perished.

You are alive now and what are you going to do with this life you have now? To hang onto the will of a now dead person

is futile. There is enough wickedness to deal with presently... Men who persist in living wickedly have insanity in their hearts which demands prompt attention by the now living. Dead persons are useless to advise the now living. Do not live in the past.

How shall a person live his day? Enjoy life! enjoy the food God provided for you. Keep yourself physically clean; enjoy your spouse because this is God's gift to you!

Don't you just love that?!

(Live life now! So the Holy Spirit impressed on my mind when faced with terminal illness in the life of our only daughter. By experience I can say He is absolutely right on! When a crisis occurs He will be there with the tools to walk you through that but they will not be given before you need it. Living life now entails walking with the LORD NOW before a crisis hits.)

Ecclesiastes 9:10-12 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/7/5 16:46

Ecclesiastes 9:10-12 NASB

10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.

11 I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise nor wealth to the discerning nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all.

12 Moreover, man does not know his time: like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them

COMMENT:

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might" has inspired me for many years to give whatever I am doing my best. Why is this so important? Because you can't do it after you are dead, so you better get with it.

There are many excuses that come one's way to deter you from this pursuit...but the writer informs us the race is not to the fast, nor to the strong or the one who seems so well equipped to battle, or the rich, or talented folks. The command still stands: give it your all, regardless of ability: do your best - ALWAYS. The time will come when you no longer will be able to do so... perhaps the opportunity will pass by you or death will overtake you.

When we are yoked together with Jesus, this means we are working with Him. He is the lead 'partner' and you must be willing to give it your all. For you to dig in your heels and not move when the lead partner wants to move means you are a worthless partner.

When the LORD asks us to do something NOW, He means NOW and do not procrastinate. We get in trouble and the opportunity to do so may never appear again.

Yes, whatever we are asked to do, even if it means cleaning toilets, do a good job, give it your best. Ah...the satisfaction that follows is so gratifying!

Ecclesiastes 9:13-18 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/7/7 11:12

Ecclesiastes 9:13-18 NASB

13 Also this I came to see as wisdom under the sun, and it impressed me.

14 There was a small city with few men in it and a great king came to it, surrounded it and constructed large siegeworks against it.

15 But there was found in it a poor wise man and he delivered the city by his wisdom. Yet no one remembered that poor man.

16 So I said, "Wisdom is better than strength." But the wisdom of the poor man is despised and his words are not heeded.

17 The words of the wise heard in quietness are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.

18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

COMMENT:

Where is wisdom found? Who are its possessors? the rich? the famous? the powers-that-be? the poor person? the least among us?

Solomon noticed a king who had at his disposal experts in conquering ... but they were outwitted by a poor man, one who had wisdom.

The well-known are listened to, they shout out their words, but they do not necessarily carry with them any wisdom.

Where does wisdom reside? Not where one expects it. The possessors of it may be unknown, are not even recognized by the those in power, authority, wherever in whatever that may be.

Experts have learned the value of brain storming. Get a wide range of people together, share the problem and ask for insights on how to deal with it. Wise people have learned that the janitor may have the solution, or at least share an insight that will lead to one.

Marilyn von Savant, the lady with the highest IQ found in a woman, has said that she has never met a person but what she has not learned something from them.

The point is that one needs to be able to listen to those who do not appear to be all that knowledgeable, be they poor or rich or....especially those we tend to regard as ignorant.

Wise counsel, Solomon...

Ecclesiastes 10:1-20 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/7/8 11:12

Ecclesiastes 10:1-20 NASB

1 Dead flies make a perfumer's oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor.

2 A wise man's heart directs him toward the right, but the foolish man's heart directs him toward the left.

3 Even when the fool walks along the road, his sense is lacking and he demonstrates to everyone that he is a fool.

4 If the ruler's temper rises against you, do not abandon your position, because composure allays great offenses.

5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun, like an error which goes forth from the ruler—

6 folly is set in many exalted places while rich men sit in humble places.

7 I have seen slaves riding on horses and princes walking like slaves on the land.

8 He who digs a pit may fall into it, and a serpent may bite him who breaks through a wall.

9 He who quarries stones may be hurt by them, and he who splits logs may be endangered by them.

10 If the axe is dull and he does not sharpen its edge, then he must exert more strength. Wisdom has the advantage of giving success.

11 If the serpent bites before being charmed, there is no profit for the charmer.

12 Words from the mouth of a wise man are gracious, while the lips of a fool consume him;

13 the beginning of his talking is folly and the end of it is wicked madness.

14 Yet the fool multiplies words. No man knows what will happen, and who can tell him what will come after him?

15 The toil of a fool so wearies him that he does not even know how to go to a city.

16 Woe to you, O land, whose king is a lad and whose princes feast in the morning.

17 Blessed are you, O land, whose king is of nobility and whose princes eat at the appropriate time—[^]for strength and not for drunkenness.

18 Through indolence the rafters sag, and through slackness the house leaks.

19 Men prepare a meal for enjoyment, and wine makes life merry, and money is the answer to everything.

20 Furthermore, in your bedchamber do not curse a king, and in your sleeping rooms do not curse a rich man, for a bird of the heavens will carry the sound and the winged creature will make the matter known.

COMMENT:

Foolishness. This portion deal with it and how it contaminates life everywhere. It is not limited to any particular segment of society.

Consider how it contaminates, how destructive it is:

1. Contaminates like dead flies do a perfumers oil.
2. A foolish heart cannot even make decent decisions.
3. Is careless, not observant in his work, whether it be digging a ditch or tearing down a wall.
4. Lazy - will not sharpen his ax before using.
5. Flies off the handle - speaks before thinking.
6. Talks too much - talks all the time.
7. Is afraid of effort.
8. Will not work to maintain his living quarters.
9. Thinks money is the answer to everything.

A wise person, on the other hand....

1. Has a heart that will pursue righteousness.
2. Maintains his composure in the face of an angry person.
3. Sticks to his principles even when confronted by a ruler's foolishness.
4. Sees what needs to be done to make the work easier and does it.
5. Is discerning and wise in the use of words.
6. Understands this limitations of knowing the future.
7. Knows the value of food, the proper time to feast and not to feast.
8. Knows the value of restraining his tongue - especially when voicing his insights about the powers that be because in some way they will learn of it and it may come back to haunt you.

In short, a little foolishness will cause great harm to its possessor. It can impact his whole future because of some stupidity.

A little foolishness has such wide ranging implications that there is no facet of life that cannot be touched by it - whether you be a king or a slave. And neither one is immune from it nor is wisdom limited to position or wealth - or its lack.

How can I be wise? and not foolish?

Ecclesiastes 12: 1 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/7/11 10:03

Ecclesiastes 12: 1 NASB

1 Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days.

COMMENT:

This verse has taught me so much in the past and still does.

It teaches me that one should never be reluctant to do the right thing, especially when the results are questionable or appear as futile. Results always belong to God - that is His responsibility, not mine. Mine is obedience - always.

Let us visualize what happens when you throw a piece on bread onto water. It disintegrates rapidly with no signs of it ever having been there. None. Gone - slap out gone. Where is it? can't see it...you sure you threw it out there? Yes, madam, sho' did!

Scripture says it will return after many days. How can that be? Only by an act of God. Many times this describes faith very well. We act in obedience to the LORD, knowing full well we do not understand the logic or reasons for his commands, but we do it, nevertheless, because He says so. And what happens?

Cast your griefs, concerns before the LORD and wait on Him. Cast means to throw it down and leaving it there....and in God's time he will pick that up and do a recreation. Awesome!

And so it is when we speak the WORD of God or share, do good anywhere - some deliberate but most not - God will use it somewhere.

The flip side of this principle is that if one lives in sin, pursues it, or even harbors secret sin, the results of this lifestyle will come back to haunt you...it will. The NT calls this the law of sowing and reaping...

Everyday we sow - what am I sowing today?

Let us not become weary in well doing...in time we shall reap if we faint not. So says Brother Paul. 2Thes. 3:13; Gal.6:9

Ecclesiastes 1:2-6 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/7/13 8:15

Ecclesiastes 1:2-6 NASB

2 Divide your portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth.

3 If the clouds are full, they pour out rain upon the earth; and whether a tree falls toward the south or toward the north, wherever the tree falls, there it lies.

4 He who watches the wind will not sow and he who looks at the clouds will not reap.

5 Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things.

6 Sow your seed in the morning and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed, or whether both of them alike will be good.

COMMENTS:

This portion is teaching one how you should plan your farming operations.

1. Diversify. Years ago when farms were small, family operated, diversity was the norm. A man planted several kinds of grains on his farm; he also raised several different kinds of animals and fowls - cows, be they beef or dairy, hogs, chickens....

2. Weather is unpredictable. What is and will be will be: man cannot change it, so therefore, you need to diversify your operation so you will have something at the end of the year. If there is one crop that fails another may yield abundantly..
3. Since weather is a farmers partner, you still cannot depend on the direction of the wind to inform you whether it will rain or not.
4. You must plant when you can, whether it is in the morning or evening. Weather can change quickly rendering work in the field impossible.

Reasons for this advice? God works and to man His works are unpredictable, especially weather-wise... a farmer is totally dependent on the weather bringing him rain when he needs it and dry days so he can harvest.

Chapter 8:17: and I saw every work of God, I concluded that man cannot discover the work which has been done under the sun. Even though man should seek laboriously, he will not discover; and though the wise man should say, "I know," he cannot discover.

This is life, unpredictable. Do what you can when you can because you never know how God will work. God does not reward sloth or laziness.

Farming the land teaches one his dependence upon a power beyond his control. The farmer knows he is at the mercy of God who controls the weather. Not a bad place to be, actually.

Re: Ecclesiastes 1:2-6 NASB - posted by enid, on: 2011/7/13 8:47

If only Christians would realise how dependant on God we are, we would then see Him at work in our lives the way in which it should be.

Just like the farmer depends on the weather, we should depend on God.

But do we?

Ecclesiastes 11:7-10 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/7/15 10:32

Ecclesiastes 11:7-10 NASB

7 The light is pleasant, and it is good for the eyes to see the sun.

8 Indeed, if a man should live many years, let him rejoice in them all, and let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many. Everything that is to come will be futility.

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 grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting.

Comment:

Young man, enjoy life!

What do you want to do? pursue it!

See something you want? go for it!

But..remember...God sees and will hold you responsible. You will have to give account for your decisions.

Opps! you mean there is a price? Obviously...remember the days of darkness, when you groped about with no direction? Remember the dire consequences? Let them teach you...

Still, when you live with the LIGHT of the WORLD illuminating it, you will enjoy it. Life is fleeting, make the best of it...

And how is this done? Chapter 12 will give us more insights...

Ecclesiastes 12:1-8 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/7/18 9:45

Ecclesiastes 12:1-8 NASB

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";

2 before the sun and 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!"

COMMENT:

A well known chapter, one often quoted by teachers to youth about the brevity of life. Now that I am older, I can relate, absolutely.

The bottom line is to remember your CREATOR. Remembering carries with it the idea that you must allow your Creator to teach you for two reasons:

1. Because you will remember your past and what you did will linger in your memory and will come back to either haunt you or comfort you. v.1
2. You must do the right thing NOW because time will run out on you. v.2. Do not wait until you get old to listen to God. Failure to do so will earn you the regrets inherent to foolish living that is bound to come to you with age. Make no mistake!

Youth, you will get old, unless you die young from illness or an accident. With ageing there comes a slowing down of your body's capability to move fast, to see well, to hear well. Your ambition slows because your physical capabilities are limiting your ability to pursue your dreams or desires.

Remember Him NOW because you will die. Make no mistake, you will die and some day you will be graveyard dead. Stop one cold. Too late to change. And people will walk over your grave and recall your life - if they remember - but with time even you will be forgotten by man, but not by God and that can either be comforting or scary.

But what will you do in the interval - between youth time and old age? The writer says to remember God. Allow him to teach you and be obedient. There are many folks who look back to their youth with deep regrets because they decided to take their own way and now these memories haunt them. Sure, God forgives, but the flesh (the body) does not.

Nothing else counts, ladies and gentleman, brothers and sisters. Life is all about serving God and to do otherwise invites

disaster, tragedy. Every time.

Life is brief, temporary. Make it count.

Ecclesiastes 12:9-14 NASB - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/7/19 11:02

Ecclesiastes 12:9-14 NASB

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.

COMMENT:

In the end, the writer presents his own credentials and the conclusion of this whole matter.

Consider his credentials: according to the writer he was a wise man, a teacher who taught people these things; he researched and worked to communicate these truths correctly. History reveals more details about his wisdom in

1 Kings 4:29-34:

29 Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore.

30 Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt.

31 For he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was known in all the surrounding nations.

32 He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005.

33 He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that grows on the wall; he spoke also of animals and birds and creeping things and fish.

34 Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

Indeed. A man so endowed by God Almighty should be listened to.

Now, what is the value of wisdom, proverbs? They function as goads to prod people to do the right thing, gives them insight to human nature, God's modus operandi in the midst of human nature.

Goads. Whenever I think of goads my mind goes back to the 1950s whenever I saw Dad loading up cattle, hogs to be taken to the sale barn. To load them the driver used goads because these animals did not want to walk up this ramp. Whenever they bumped them with this prod, the animal jumped and WENT! lol You see this prod was electrical - when pressed into the hide it released an electrical current and shocked them! This is the mental picture I get whenever I consider the word 'goads'. Not a bad one, do you think?

So, do we jump and MOVE whenever we are confronted with words of wisdom that challenge us?

The conclusion of the whole matter is to fear God and keep his commandments! This not just for some but for all - no exceptions! Why? Because God will bring into judgement all you have done, whether it be good or bad, even the things that have been done in secret God will expose.

Bro. Paul teaches us in 1 Timothy 5:24:

24 The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after.

25 Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.

Concealing our sins is the most nonproductive thing one can do. It has eternal consequences, make no mistake. God will expose them. Likewise so He will do to the good we do. Ahhh, now ain't that a blessing?! But what good have we done? Perhaps that is why we need these proverbs, words of wisdom to guide us in our walk with the LORD. Now that is wisdom!

fear God and keep His commandments - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/7/26 9:17

"fear God and keep His commandments".

COMMENT:

Fear: from Strong's

Strong's H1497; H1512; H1488; H1492;

yir'Áçh

yir-aw'

Feminine of H3373; fear (also used as infinitive); morally reverence: - X dreadful, X exceedingly, fear (-fulness).

Fear. How much are we really scared of God? So scared we have an abiding fear?

To think that one could love something you fear sounds like an absolute contradiction.

Let me illustrate with a fact from life.

In our greenhouses we sometimes buy a hive of bumble bees to pollinate our flowers. Not only will the bees pollinate our flowers, they do have a stinger and they can sting. But they are quite docile insects - most of the time. They go about their work and I go about mine. I can be working on the tops of the plants and they can be working 12 inches away from me and we work well - together. BUT. I fear them. I love their work but I also know what I can and cannot do. I know right well what will anger them and what that anger sounds like and feels like!

I love these insects, but I will revere them, respect them and it all began as fear. My respect is an outgrowth of accepting the fear and allowing it to teach me my limitations and the bees' strength.

So it is with God. Our first response to him is one rooted in fear. After one accepts that, understands its value, you will have a complete change of heart towards Him.

Fear is a great motivator. It teaches you of your own limitations, sometimes in very rude, painful ways. Ignorance will not spare you from its consequences, hence motivating you to learn what you can about this thing that has so much power over you. So it is with God. We learn what we can and in the process we develop an awesome respect and admiration for this person who is so much bigger and greater than we.

It is this loss of fear of God that has hastened apostasy in the western church. Back in the 1970s people were saying fear does not mean being scared of God but it means loving God, hence removing from Him the Awe that He deserved. Instead of God being the great awesome being that He is, this teaching downgraded God to a warm fuzzy teddy bear status.

When one fears God, walking with Him becomes so much easier, his commandment will not be troublesome. But if or w

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Inspiration from Ecclesiastes

When they are, he will lift us up because we are yoked together with him - picture a team of animals yoked together pulling a carriage, a plow, anything. They work together, pulling. In a team there is always a lead animal where the others will follow. Is this not a beautiful analogy of God walking with us, enabling us to live in obedience to Him? I think so.

When everything has all been said and done this is the sum of it all: "The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person."