

Men-Sharpen-Men
November 11, 2016
Scripture: Ecclesiastes

Scripture: Ecclesiastes, Philippians 3:7-11, 4:12-13

Introduction: Ecclesiastes 1: 1-11

- 1) Who was Solomon? Identify and discuss Solomon's accomplishments and failures.
- 2) Who (what) are the Ecclesiastes?
- 3) I have highlighted several passages throughout Ecclesiastes; after each selection discuss what you think the author means by the statement. What is going on in his life? Ask yourself is this applicable in my life. What is to be learned?

1:18 Much learning earns you much trouble. The more you know, the more you hurt.

2:15-16 When I realized that my fate's the same as the fool's, I had to ask myself, "So why bother being wise?" It's all smoke, nothing but smoke. The smart and the stupid both disappear out of sight. In a day or two they're both forgotten. Yes, both the smart and the stupid die, and that's it.

3:15 Whatever was is. Whatever will be, is. That's how it always is with God.

3:19-22 Humans and animals come to the same end—humans die, animals die. We all breathe the same air. So there's really no advantage in being human. None. Everything's smoke. We all end up in the same place—we all came from dust, we all end up as dust. Nobody knows for sure that the human spirit rises to heaven or that the animal spirit sinks into the earth. So I made up my mind that there's nothing better for us men and women than to have a good time in whatever we do—that's our lot. Who knows if there's anything else to life?

4:5-6 The fool sits back and takes it easy, His sloth is slow suicide. One handful of peaceful repose is better than two fistfuls of worried work—More spitting into the wind.

5:18-20 After looking at the way things are on this earth, here's what I've decided is the best way to live: Take care of yourself, have a good time, and make the most of whatever job you have for as long as God gives you life. And that's about it. That's the human lot. Yes, we should make the most of what God gives, both the bounty and the capacity to enjoy it, accepting what's given and delighting in the work. It's God's gift! God deals out joy in the present, the *now*. It's useless to brood over how long we might live.

6:14 So what advantage has a sage over a fool, or over some poor wretch who barely gets by? Just grab whatever you can while you can; don't assume something better might turn up by and by. All it amounts to anyway is smoke. And spitting into the wind.

7:14 On a good day, enjoy yourself; On a bad day, examine your conscience. God arranges for both kinds of days so that we won't take anything for granted.

8:12-13 Even though a person sins and gets by with it hundreds of times throughout a long life, I'm still convinced that the good life is reserved for the person who fears God, who lives reverently in his presence, and that the evil person will not experience a "good" life. No matter how many days he lives, they'll all be as flat and colorless as a shadow—because he doesn't fear God.

9:4-6 Still, anyone selected out for life has hope, for, as they say, "A living dog is better than a dead lion." The living at least know *something*, even if it's only that they're going to die. But the dead know nothing and get nothing. They're a minus that no one remembers. Their loves, their hates, yes, even their dreams, are long gone. There's not a trace of them left in the affairs of this earth.

10:5-7 Here's a piece of bad business I've seen on this earth, an error that can be blamed on whoever is in charge: Immaturity is given a place of prominence, while maturity is made to take a backseat. I've seen unproven upstarts riding in style, while experienced veterans are put out to pasture.

11:7-8 Oh, how sweet the light of day, and how wonderful to live in the sunshine! Even if you live a long time, don't take a single day for granted. Take delight in each light-filled hour, remembering that there will also be many dark days and that most of what comes your way is smoke.

12:11-13 The words of the wise prod us to live well. They're like nails hammered home, holding life together. They are given by God, the one Shepherd. But regarding anything beyond this, dear friend, go easy. There's no end to the publishing of books, and constant study wears you out so you're no good for anything else. The last and final word is this:

Fear God.

Do what he tells you.

- 4) Did Solomon fear and obey God?
- 5) What does "fear God mean to you? Ecclesiastes 5:7, 12:13
- 6) Have we been taught to fear God? Is it something you think about routinely?
- 7) What influenced Solomon to write Ecclesiastes? Is he despondent?