

# (Through the Bible) Ecclesiastes 7-12

by Chuck Smith

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*In this sermon, Chuck Smith explores the themes of Ecclesiastes, emphasizing the emptiness of life without God and the importance of finding true meaning in Christ.*

**Duration:** 1:19:29

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 17:14-20, Ecclesiastes 9:5-6, Ecclesiastes 9:10, Luke 16:19-31

**Topics:** "Youth Ministry", "Gods Sovereignty"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of remembering God in one's youth. He highlights that most conversions to Jesus Christ happen during the teenage years and encourages young people to commit their lives to God before the challenges of old age come. The preacher also discusses the idea that life is governed by time and chance, and that there is no purpose or guiding hand in life. He warns against misinterpreting God's patience and long-suffering, as it can lead people to think they can get away with evil actions.

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## Transcript

Tonight we want to return again to the Book of Ecclesiastes, beginning with chapter 7. And as we return to the Book of Ecclesiastes, again, it is important that we make note of the fact that the Book of Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon in his later years, after he had assiduously pursued to find the purpose, the meaning of life in so many different things, in wisdom, in wealth, in fame, in building, in pleasures. And after his pursuit, which carried him into every area and experience of life, he came up with the conclusion that life is empty and frustrating. Solomon made the mistake of searching for purpose in life under the sun.

And if your purpose is limited to under the sun, chances are you will come up as Solomon with the conclusion that life is a mistake, that it is not worthwhile, that everything is only filled with emptiness and frustration. But God did not intend for you to live a life under the sun. God intended that you should experience real life in the sun.

In 1 John we read, and this is the record that God has given unto us, even eternal life. And this life is in the sun. And he who has the sun has life.

There is real life. There is real meaning and purpose to life when you find the life in Jesus Christ. But life apart from him, apart from the spiritual dimension, living a life on the animal plane of a body conscious experience and a body conscious level will lead a person to despair, even as the philosophies of today

have concluded.

That man will be led by reason to despair. Life is hopeless. Thus man must take a leap into the upper story of experience and man must have some kind of a non-reasoned religious experience to save him from the despair of reality.

And so the philosophy led man to the point of despair by reason and then his only suggestion for man is jump out of reason, become unreasonable, take a leap of faith into a non-reasoned religious experience in order that you might not despair because life is hopeless. This is the conclusion that Solomon drew after trying everything. Now, as we read the book of Ecclesiastes, it is a book of despair.

Vanity, vanity, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. The conclusions that Solomon came to are conclusions of natural human reasoning apart from God. Therefore, they are not to be taken as doctrinal truths.

You are dealing with a man searching for life apart from God and his conclusions are not doctrinal truths, except that they do bring to you the end result of natural reasoning but not divine wisdom. So they show you man apart from God and the despair and hopelessness of man apart from God and the conclusions that are drawn are in that kind of a background. They're not doctrinal truths because if you take the step into the spiritual level, you'll come to a far different conclusion of life.

Back in the book of Deuteronomy, when God was giving the law to Moses and because God could foresee down through time to that particular time in the history of the nation of Israel when they would demand a king and because God knew that one day they would no longer be satisfied with him being king over them and would want a king, God incorporated even into the law of Moses 400 years before they ever had a king. God incorporated laws for the kings because God knew that 400 years down the line the people were going to come to Samuel and say, hey, we want a king like the other nations around us. And because God knew they were going to say that, he incorporated into the law in the book of Deuteronomy laws for kings.

Now it is interesting as we look at the 17th chapter of Deuteronomy as God is setting up the laws for the king. Beginning with verse 14 of the 17th chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, the Lord said, when thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me like as all the nations that are about me. And that's exactly what they said to Samuel, set us up a king over us that we might be like the other nations.

Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose. One from among your brothers shalt thou set king over thee. Thou mayest not set a stranger over thee which is not thy brother.

But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to the end that he should multiply horses. For as much as the Lord hath said unto you, ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself that his heart turn not away.

Neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be when he sits upon the throne of his kingdom that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priest and the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein in the days of his life, that he may learn the fear of the Lord his God and to keep all of the law and the statutes to do them.

That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and the children, his

children in the midst of Israel. But verse 17, neither shall he multiply wives to himself that his heart turn not away. It seems prosaic to declare God understands human nature and God's laws are written for our admonition, and they weren't written in vain.

When you set up a king, one thing a king isn't to do, he's not to multiply wives, lest they turn his heart away. Now let's turn to First Kings chapter 10. As we are reading of Solomon, remember he wasn't to multiply gold unto himself or silver or horses.

But as we read in verse 14, now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents. He had traffic of spices of merchants, all the kings of Arabia. He made 200 targets of beaten gold, 600 shekels of gold went into one target.

He made 300 shields of beaten gold, three pounds of gold went into one shield, and the king put them in the house in the forest of Lebanon. Moreover, he made a great throne of ivory, who overlaid it with the best gold. Down in verse 21, all of the drinking vessels were of gold, the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold, none were of silver, for silver was counted as nothing in the days of Solomon.

Verse 27, and the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones and cedars to be as the sycamore trees in the valley for the abundance. And Solomon had brought horses out of Egypt. He's not to multiply horses, not to go back to Egypt.

Solomon's so far getting an F for the course. And as we get into chapter 11, but King Solomon loved many strange women together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, Hittites, and of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, you should not go unto them, neither shall they come in unto you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. Solomon clave unto these in love, and he had 700 wives.

He's not to multiply wives. Oh, flunk him. 300 concubines.

And what does it say? And his wives turned away his heart. 400 years earlier, God had warned about this very thing. God had forbidden this very thing with the warning lest they turn his heart away.

Solomon thought he could beat God. He thought he knew better than God. He thought he knew better than the law of God.

But you don't. God knows your human nature better than you know it yourself. And God has given laws to protect you, for God knows what the consequence of the violation of these laws will be.

So it came to pass when Solomon was old that his wives turned away his heart after other gods. His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God as his was the heart of David, his father. For Solomon went after the pagan gods of Asherah, the goddess of the Sidonians, and of Malcol, the abomination of the Ammonites.

And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord and went not fully after the Lord as did David, his father. Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem. Actually, it's on the, if you've been over to Jerusalem, that hill that goes on up to the Mount of Olives down at the area of Gihon Springs.

That is the hill where he built all of these. And it's in the sight of all Jerusalem. It's right across the valley and it's in the sight of all Jerusalem.

He began to build these pagan temples, a place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And also, likewise, he did for all of his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. So every time he'd marry a wife from some different area, he'd build a temple for her so she could go over and burn incense to her god right across the hill where all of Israel could see.

So Solomon had turned his heart away from God and in turning his heart away from God, he lost the meaning of life and the purpose of life. And now he is an old man and he is writing of his experience. The consciousness of the greatness of Jehovah, God of Israel, has passed from his mind and he's trying to find life apart from God.

And he finds that life apart from God is nothing but emptiness. Therefore, you cannot take as scriptural doctrine the conclusions that Solomon came to in regards to life and death, because he is reasoning, this is the reasoning of man apart from God, and you need to look at the book of Ecclesiastes of that. Human wisdom, perhaps in its highest expression, yet apart from God, is foolish.

As God said in Romans chapter one, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. And anytime you and your human wisdom seek to find a purpose of life apart from God, it's foolish. Your wisdom has led you to foolishness.

Now, chapter seven of Ecclesiastes is a series of Proverbs. And of course, Solomon was filled with Proverbs. We just have completed the book of Proverbs of which the majority were written by Solomon.

And in chapter seven, he does go into another series of Proverbs, sort of unrelated again to each other, but just little sayings of human wisdom. A good name is better than precious ointment. Better to have a good name than to have good perfume.

And the day of death than the day of one's birth. Now, that sounds pretty much in despair, doesn't it? Oh, the day of a person's death is better than the day of his birth. That's one who has become cynical because he has sought to find life apart from Jesus Christ.

And in that case, it may be true, but living with Christ is a glorious life. It is better to go into the house of mourning than the house of feasting. For that is the end of all men.

And the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter. For by the sadness of the countenance, the heart is made better.

The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of merriment. So he has taken a very jaundice view of life, a very jaundice view of pleasure, of joy. Because apart from the Lord, it is all emptiness.

It is all a sham. And because he was seeking it apart from God, he experienced the emptiness of it, and thus he became a bitter old man, bitter with life. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools.

For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool. It's just emptiness. Surely oppression makes a wise man mad, and a gift destroys the heart.

Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof. And the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools.

Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou does not inquire wisely concerning this. You always hear them talk about the good old days. They say that's not always so true.

The good old days when we didn't, when you women didn't have automatic dishwashers, and vacuum cleaners, and wall-to-wall carpeting in your house, and supermarkets down the block. But you all grew your own gardens, ground your own flour, used the scrub board. Oh, the good old days.

Now we have it pretty nice, you know. We always look back though, and we think about the days of our youth when Orange County wasn't crowded, when it was full of orange trees instead of subdivisions. But there are advantages both ways.

Wisdom is good with an inheritance, and by it there is profit to them that see the sun. For wisdom is a defense, and money is a defense. But the excellency of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to those that have it.

Money's good, but wisdom will give life to those that have wisdom. Consider the work of God, for who can make that straight which he hath made crooked? Well, who can actually do anything against the work of God? You know, we're powerless and helpless against the work of God. In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider God also hath set the one over against the other to the end that a man should find nothing after him.

All things have I seen in the days of my vanity, and there is a just man that perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongs his life in his wickedness. I've observed this. There have been good men who perished, died young in their righteousness.

There were wicked men who lived many years. Therefore, his conclusion, now it's not scriptural, it's not biblical, I mean it's not in the sense, it's not godly. Human, looking at life, seeing that, you know, a righteous man died young, and a sinner lived to be a D.O.M., became a dirty old man.

He came to this conclusion, truly just pure human wisdom. Don't be overly righteous. Don't, you know, get too involved in righteousness.

Neither make thyself over wise. Why should you destroy yourself? Now, it's a wrong thing. The righteous don't always die young.

There are some beautiful old saints of God, but don't be overly righteous. Why should you kick off soon? Also, don't be overly wicked. Be moderately wicked.

Neither be thou foolish. Why should you die before your time? So, purely human type of reasoning of life. It is good that you should take hold of this.

Yes, also from this withdraw not thine hand, for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all. Wisdom strengthens the wise, more than ten mighty men which are in a city. For there is not a just man upon earth

that doeth good and sinneth not.

Now, in this he was correct. The Bible said, there is none righteous, no, not one. The Bible says, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

A human observation that is correct. Also, take no heed unto the words that are spoken, lest thou hear your servant curse thee. They say that an eavesdropper rarely hears anything good about himself.

You know, you're that kind of person that's always trying to eavesdrop on others' conversations. And so, he's sort of warning you against that. Don't take heed into words.

Don't, you know, be trying to listen to what they say. You're going to find out they're cursing you. For you know how that oftentimes in your own heart, you have likewise cursed others.

All this have I proved by wisdom. Not by God, I've proved it by wisdom. But the wisdom of man, the Scripture said, is foolishness with God.

I said, I will be wise, but it was far from me. That which is afar off and exceeding deep, who can find it out? I applied my heart to know and to search and to seek out wisdom and the reason of things and to know the wickedness of folly, even the foolishness and madness. And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets and her hands as bands.

Who so pleases God shall escape from her, but the sinner will be caught by her. Behold, this I have found, saith the preacher or the debater or the, oh, the word, it was translated into the Septuagint in Ecclesiastes, the assembler. One by one to find out the account which yet my soul seeks, but I have not found or find not.

One man among a thousand have I found, but a woman among all those have I not found. So in all of his thousand wives, he didn't find a decent one. Now he did find one man out of a thousand, so men have a little better record as far as Solomon is concerned.

But you might, of course, also observe he didn't marry any of the men and you don't really know a person until you marry them. But if he, you know, was, you know, people, it's interesting, people seem to repeat mistakes. And you find a person who has been married five, six, seven times.

It really can't be that the other person was wrong all the time. You say, well, it might be, it might be the person who has been married that many times is just a poor judge of character. And they're following a pattern because we often do.

We marry the same kind of a person. And always you think, oh, the second I'm around, you know, I'd be wiser and I'll make a better choice and all. But we are bound by certain patterns.

And if, of course, you get a godly, righteous woman, her price is far above rare rubies. And you'll find one in a thousand every time you find one who loves the Lord. How glorious it is, how beautiful it is to have a wife who loves God, who calls upon the Lord.

What a blessing and what an asset they are to our lives. Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions. God made us straight, but boy, how we have searched otherwise.

Who is a wise man and who knows the interpretation of a thing? A man's wisdom makes his face to shine and the boldness of his face shall be changed. I counsel thee to keep the King's commandment and that in regard of the oath of God, be not hasty to go out of his sight. Stand not in an evil thing, for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him.

Where the word of the King is, there is power. And who may say unto him, what are you doing? The King stands as the authority. You can't really come to the King and say, hey, what are you doing? And the same is true of God.

Paul said, who are you to say unto him that has created you, why hast thou made me thus? The sovereignty of the King, which also speaks to the sovereignty of God. Whoso keeps the commandment shall feel no evil thing and a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment. Because to every purpose there is a time and judgment.

Therefore, the misery of man is great upon him. For he knoweth not that which shall be. For who can tell him when it shall be? So you don't really know what's going to be, when it's going to be.

The future is so uncertain. There is no man that has power over his spirit to retain the spirit. Neither hath he power in the day of death.

And there's no discharge in that war. Neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it. No man has any power over his spirit.

When the time comes for you to die, you don't have any power over your spirit to retain it, to cause your spirit to remain. No power in death. The only one who really did exercise that kind of power over his spirit was Jesus Christ.

When on the cross it said he bowed his head and dismissed his spirit. He had earlier said unto them, no man takes my life from me, I give my life. And in order to keep with what he said, no man takes my life.

When he was hanging there on the cross after he cried, it is finished. Father into thy hands I commend my spirit. He bowed his head and it said, and he dismissed his spirit.

He said, okay, you can go now. And he died. He had power over his spirit to dismiss it.

We don't have that power. All this have I seen and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun. There is a time when one man rules over another to his own herd.

And so I saw the wicked buried who had come and gone from the place of the Holy. And there were forgotten in the city where they had so done. This also is vanity.

I see life moving on. People are soon forgotten after they die. Life is empty now because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily.

Therefore, the heart of the sons of men is fully set and then to do evil. One of the common mistakes that people make is that of misinterpreting the nature of God. One aspect of God's nature is his tremendous patience with rebelling man.

God is in exceedingly long suffering. God puts up with so much. He doesn't strike immediately, but oftentimes forestalls judgment for months, for years.

And thus it appears that the evil man is getting away with his evil actions, his evil deeds. And people begin to misinterpret the long suffering of God because he doesn't execute his sentence speedily, because he doesn't immediately come down with a fist of judgment upon a man. A man many times thinks he's getting away with his evil.

Thinks he's put one over on God. Thinks that he has been clever and has hid his sin from God. Or worse yet, thinks that God is condoning what he has done.

Because I'm still blessed and I'm prosperous. You know, I'm a prosperous cheat. So God, you know, is condoning my cheating.

It doesn't matter to God that I cheat. It doesn't matter to God that I lie or I steal or whatever, because look, I'm blessed. It doesn't matter to God that I'm living in a moral life, because, you know, look at all that I have.

And people begin to misinterpret God's grace and God's long suffering as God's approbation for their actions and for their lives. Not so. That's a fatal mistake to me.

God does know. God does see. God does care.

God will judge. But because God doesn't judge immediately, because the sentence of God isn't executed speedily, because God is giving you opportunity to turn. God is giving you opportunity to repent.

God is giving you the opportunity to come out of your sin and to be saved. And he's very patient with you. God's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come into repentance.

You see, the real delay in the return of Jesus Christ is just God's unwillingness that men should perish. As Peter is talking about the second coming of the Lord, he said, hey, in the last days, there are going to be scoffers that are going to come saying, oh, where's the promise of Jesus coming again? They've been talking about that for years. He hasn't come.

And he's not going to come. Things just continue as they were from the beginning. But Peter said, hey, God isn't slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness.

But he's faithful to us. But he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Therefore, consider ye actually this time as God's patience in order that men might be saved.

So because God has waited so long, because God hasn't speedily executed his sentence against the evil, people begin to assume that God has just withdrawn himself, that Jesus isn't coming again, that all of the talk of the rapture of the church and the return of Jesus Christ is just pipe dreams, a misinterpretation of scriptures. And they begin to make fun of the return of Jesus Christ. They begin to scoff at it, even as Peter said they would.

It's because they are misinterpreting the patience of God waiting for men to be saved, because God is not willing that any should perish. So God is very kind. He's very loving.

He's very patient. He's very long-suffering. He's giving you chance after chance after chance.

But it is tragic when people misinterpret God's patience and God's kindness. And thus they give their hearts over to evil, because they think that God is too remote to care. It doesn't really matter to God how I

live.

God doesn't really know. And they give their hearts and their lives over to evil, to live an evil life. That is a tragic, fatal mistake of misinterpreting God's grace and God's goodness to you.

So though a sinner do evil a hundred times and his days be prolonged. Remember he was talking about how he saw that the, you know, the ungodly man was living a long life. The righteous were dying young and the ungodly were living long.

So though a sinner do evil a hundred times and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God which fear before him. Now in the end the best life is a life of fearing God, walking with God. Fear of the Lord is to depart from evil.

So I know that in the long run that life is the best. It's going to be well with the man who has departed from evil, but it shall not be well with the wicked. In the end God's judgment will come.

You can't escape it. God's judgment will come and thus I surely know it will be well with those that fear God, but it shall not be well with the wicked. Neither shall he prolong his days which are as a shadow because he fears not before God.

Now there is a vanity which is done upon the earth and there be just men unto whom it happens according to the work of the wicked. Again there be wicked men to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous. So I said this also is vanity.

Things happen to both good and evil man. Same kind of experiences to both. A righteous man gets cancer, an unrighteous man gets cancer.

A righteous man is prospered, an unrighteous man is prospered. He makes this observation. What happens to one happens to the other.

It's emptiness. Then I commended merriment because a man hath no better thing and this is his human philosophy and human reasoning coming out again. Hey it's great to be merry because the man has no better thing under the sun and it's probably true under the sun man life is just very shallow and you live life on a very shallow level and under the sun the best thing to do is just to eat and drink and be merry because man that's all she wrote.

That's the sum of life for you. So you might as well live it up because you're going to be burning after a while so you know live it up now. Life under the sun for that shall abide with him of his labor the days of his life which God gives him under the sun.

Might as well enjoy what you got now because man is going to be tough later. When I applied my heart to know wisdom and to see the business that is done upon the earth for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes. Then I beheld all of the work of God that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun because though a man labor to seek it out yet he shall not find it.

Yay farther. Though a wise man think to know it yet shall he not be able to find it. A man cannot find out the work of God though you search it out.

For all of this I considered in my heart even to declare all this that the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God and no man knows either love or hatred by all that is before them. All things

come alike to all. There is one event to the righteous and to the wicked to the good and to the clean and to the unclean.

To him that sacrifices to him that sacrifices not. As is the good so is the sinner and as he that swears and as he that fears and oh this is an evil among all things that are done under the sun that there is one event unto all. Also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil and madness is in their heart while they live and after that they go to the dead.

So one thing happens to everybody they die whether you're good or bad sacrifice or don't sacrifice doesn't matter you're all gonna die. And as far as Solomon was concerned that was horrible. You know all of your wisdom can't cause you to escape death.

All of your wealth can't cause you to escape death. How dies the rich man is the poor. How dies the wise man is the fool.

They all die. You can't escape death was the conclusion of his human wisdom but Jesus taught us how to escape death. Jesus said he who lives and believes in me shall never die.

You can escape death by living and believing in Jesus Christ but the human mind human wisdom won't bring you to that. It takes the revelation of God and if you're only coming at life from the human level and trying to find God from the human level you'll never make it. God must reveal himself to you by his spirit and God has revealed himself through his word and God has revealed and this is the record that God has given to us eternal life and this life is in the son and he who has the son has life.

He that lives and believes in me Jesus said will never die. For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope for a living dog is better than a dead lion. I guess so.

For the living know that they shall die but the dead don't know anything. Neither have they any more a reward for the memory of them is forgotten. Now those who teach the annihilation of the soul immediately turn to this as their scriptural proof.

The book of Ecclesiastes a book that deals with human reason human intellect apart from God and they pick out this scripture to prove soul annihilation. For the living know that they shall die but the dead know nothing neither have they any more reward for the memory of them is forgotten. And then in verse 9 there's second proof text.

Nah beg your pardon. No the second text is right in here somewhere close. But anyway Jesus tells us that there was a certain rich man who fared sumptuously every day.

Moreover there was a poor man who was daily brought at his gate full of sores baking bread and eating bread that fell from the rich man's table. And the poor man died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom and the rich man also died and in hell lifted up his eyes being in torment and said father Abraham have mercy on me and send Lazarus unto me that he might take his finger and dip it in water and touch my tongue for I am tormented in this heat. And Abraham said unto him son remember that in thy lifetime you had good things.

Now that's what Jesus said. The consciousness that exists after death. Solomon with human reason and understanding said but the dead don't know anything.

Well this guy knew that his tongue was tormented. He knew Lazarus and he knew that he had brothers back on earth who were still living sinful lives. And he could remember his past sinful lives.

Now you have to either accept the word of Jesus or the word of Solomon in a backslidden state as he is trying to find the reason and purpose of life apart from God. Life under the sun. It is wrong to take the book of Ecclesiastes for biblical doctrine.

Better to turn to the words of Christ. He surely knew much better than did Solomon in his backslidden state. Also their love that is of the dead and their hatred and their envy is forgotten.

And it's perished. Annihilated. Neither have they anymore a portion forever of anything that is done under the sun.

They're through. It's over. It's all.

It's the end. So go thy way. Eat your bread with joy.

Drink your wine with a merry heart. For God now accepts your works. Let your garments be always white and let your head lack no ointment.

Live joyfully with a wife whom thou lovest all the days of your life. All of the days of your empty life which he hath given you under the sun. All the days of your emptiness.

For that is your portion in this life and in thy labor which you take. Understand that's that's all you're going to get man. So you might as well go for it.

That's life. Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might. For there is no work nor device nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave.

That's their other proof text. No work, device, knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going. It's not what Jesus said.

I returned and saw unto the son that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong. Neither bread to the wise nor riches to men of understanding nor yet favor to men of skill. But time and chance happens to them all.

There is no purpose in life. There is no guiding hand in life. It's all a matter of time and chance.

That's his conclusion. That is not a scriptural doctrine. Only Solomon's conclusion of looking at things.

Life is just time and chance. It doesn't matter how swift or slow, weak or strong, wise or foolish. Life is just time and chance.

For a man also knows not his time as the fish that are taken in an evil net, the birds that are caught in a snare. So are the sons of men snared in an evil time when it falleth suddenly upon them. This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great to me.

Now this is what I observed. It seemed like a great thing. There was a little city and a few men within it, and there came a great king against it and besieged it, and he built great bulwarks against it.

Now there was in this little city found a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city, yet no man remembered that same poor man. Then I said, wisdom is better than strength. Nevertheless, the poor man's wisdom is despised and his words are not heard.

The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that rules among fools. Wisdom is better than the weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good. So his conclusions of observing a city spared by a wise man.

Chapter 10, dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking odor. So does a little folly to him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor. There are certain men that just should not be doing foolish things.

We are reading quite a bit lately about the Bohemian Club, and we are told of all of the important people in the United States, men who are part of this Bohemian Club, men who should know better, but evidently don't. And of course, we are told that our President and Vice President and former President Richard Nixon, David Rockefeller, and the, you know, the elitist of the United States, members of this Bohemian Club. And they have a little retreat north of San Francisco where they go once a year for a retreat where they entertain themselves by putting on foolish costumes and dancing around and going through different types of rites and so forth in this Bohemian Club.

But even as dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to stink, so does a little folly to him who is in reputation for wisdom and honor. In other words, men who are in reputation for wisdom and honor, it's just folly in their life is out of place. A wise man's heart is at his right hand.

I only bring that up because you're going to be reading more and more about the Bohemian Club. The liberal press has decided to expose its activities because they are sort of ridiculous. And of course, they are out to get some of our leaders and to sort of demolish them as idols in our eyes.

And so you're going to be reading more and more about the Bohemian Club. And so when you read about it or hear about it, you'll say, I heard about that someplace. Where did I hear about that? Oh, yeah, you know, so.

But it's something that they are zeroing in on, even as they've zeroed in on Nancy Reagan's fancy clothes and all. They're zeroing in on the Bohemian Club as one of the things. But you see, the problem is by belonging to it, they have given them and going along with the folly of this springtime retreat up there as they celebrate the coming of spring by putting on their little flowered tutus and dancing around and all.

They're exposing themselves to this. You know, I mean, if you're really, you know, a man who is of reputation and everything else, it's just out of place. It's just like flies in the ointment of the apothecary.

It's just a stinking thing. And so it's tragic that wise men can do such foolish things. Trying to somehow, you know, it's amazing to me what dumb things wise men can do, you know, and leaders can do and all.

When we were little kids, you know, we would make up our clubs with our secret oaths and our initiations and our passwords and, you know, the whole thing. And we were, you know, had our own little mafias and secret organizations and, you know, blood men and just, you know, we were brothers and this whole thing. Well, that's great when you're a little boy and living in a world of unreal fantasies.

But when you grow up and you still get into these secret clubs and you have your secret passwords and your secret handshakes and your, you know, special little robes and clothes and hats and you just haven't grown up and that's your problem. Paul said, when I was a child, I thought as a child, I spoke as a child and acted as a child. But when I was old, I put away the child's things.

When you get old, it's time to put those things away. But some people just don't grow up and thus they are exposing themselves to ridicule and to the press, which will expose them. Now, a wise man's heart is at his right hand, but a fool's heart is at his left.

Now, I don't know that there's any scientific, I don't know what he's saying. Help. I think I'm getting a heartbeat.

Yea, also when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him. And he saith to everyone that he is a fool. I mean, when you're a fool, you just, you know, it's obvious that you express it.

If the spirit of a ruler rises up against thee, leave not thy place, for yielding will pacify great offenses. Oh, how much better it is to yield a point than to, you know, hang on and all. If we would only learn just to yield a point, it can pacify great offense.

It can stop, you know, big arguments. It can actually save your life at times. There's some really nuts out there in the world.

And a lot of people have been killed by insisting on their right of ways. No, I'm not going to move. It's my right of way, you know.

And you can insist on your right of way, but get wiped out. So, yielding can pacify great offenses. Give in to the point.

What difference does it make whether there were five or six fish in that basket? You know, you can get in the biggest arguments over some stupid thing like that. Get angry. Get, you know, where you don't speak for a day or two because there's five.

No, there's six. No, five, you know. No, maybe there were five.

You know, yield it. Why argue? It's dumb to just argue over things like that. Yielding can pacify great offenses.

Good advice. There is an evil which I have seen under the sun as an error which proceeds from the ruler. Folly is set in great dignity and the rich sit in a low place.

I have seen servants upon horses and princes walking as servants upon the earth. You know, there seems to be oftentimes inconsistencies. He that digs a pit shall fall into it and whoso breaks a hedge, the serpent will bite him.

They used to hedge about to keep the serpents out. You break the hedge, serpent will bite you. You dig a pit, you'll fall into it.

These are just sort of proverbs. Whoso removes the stone shall be hurt therewith and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby. If the iron be blunt and he do not sharpen the edge, then must he put in more strength.

But wisdom is profitable to direct. So figure it out, man. If you're trying to chop wood with a dull iron, a dull hatchet or dull axe, it's going to take more strength.

Sharpen it, takes less strength. This makes sense. Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment and a babbler is no better.

He'll bite too. The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious, but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness and the end of his talk is mischievous madness.

A fool also is full of words. A man cannot tell what shall be and what shall be after him who can tell him. We don't know the future.

People talk so confidently of the future and all. You don't know what's going to be after you. You don't know what the future holds.

The labor of the foolish worrieth every one of them because he knows not how to go to the city. Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child and thy princes eat in the morning. That means they were drunk all night, so they eat in the morning.

Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles and thy princes eat in the due season for strength and not for drunkenness. By much slothfulness the building decayeth. Now you that are managers of buildings and so forth, you might choose that to put above the time clocks for the maintenance men.

And through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through. A feast is made for laughter and wine maketh merry, but money answers all things. Now my wife believes that this is a scriptural truth, but I was trying to tell you this is Solomon and he's talking about worldly wisdom and it's amazing how that the world thinks that money is a cure-all.

Money will answer everything. Curse not the king, no, not even in your thoughts. And curse not the rich in your bedroom, for a little bird of the air will carry the voice and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

It's amazing how, you know, you say something about someone to a person in confidence thinking that that's, you know, won't go any further, but it's amazing how many times it'll get right back to the person and then you have the phone call and say, did you say, you know, what did you mean when you said and oh, so better not to. Little birds. That's where they got the phrase, a little bird told me, came from this.

Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven and also to eight, for you don't know what evil are going to, shall be upon the earth. You don't know when you're going to be in trouble.

So, you know, be generous, give out a portion to seven people or eight people, because there might be a time when you're going to be needing a handout yourself. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth. And if a tree falls towards the south or towards the north and the place where the tree falls, there it shall be.

He that observes the wind will not sow and he that regards the clouds will not reap. As you know, not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child. Even so, you know, not the works of God who makes all.

Things that we just don't understand how the bones grow in the womb, the way of the spirit. Jesus said, the wind bloweth where it listeth. Thou hearest the sound thereof, but you cannot tell from whence it is coming or where it is going.

So is he that is born of the spirit. So, we don't know the works of God who makes all. In the morning, sow your seed.

In the evening, withhold not your hand. For you know not whether it shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good. Truly, the light is sweet and the pleasant thing is for the eyes to behold the sun.

But if a man live many years and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. All that cometh is emptiness. You might live a lot of years, but remember you're going to, you know, you're going to be dead longer than you're alive.

I mean, so you live to be 105, but those that back in, you know, the year 547 lived up to 680 even, you know, they've been dead a long time. That's what he's saying. You might see the light for many years, but you're going to see the darkness longer.

But again, that's life under the sun. Rejoice, young man, in thy youth. Let your heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth.

Walk in the ways of your heart and in the sight of your eyes. Poor advice. But know thou that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

Now do what you want, but just remember God's going to judge you. Therefore, remove sorrow from your heart. Put away evil from thy flesh for childhood and youth are vanity.

Too soon, old, too late, smart. You know, someone said it's a shame that youth has to be wasted on the young. You know, you think now, though, if you could only go back to your youth with the advantage of all of your experience and advantage of life.

Now, man, what you could do, you know, if you were just a teenager again, back in high school with all of your knowledge and understanding at this point. I think of all of the wasted time that I had. I think of all of the opportunities that I had to learn and I didn't take full advantage of them.

It was a crazy thing, but I really didn't decide to learn until I got into college. And then even at that point, I look back to my high school years and I thought, oh, how ridiculous that I bragged that I never took a book home from school through high school. What a stupid boast.

Oh, of course I got my grades for college, but yet I could have learned so much more. I wasted my youth in many ways. But what can you do? You can't go back.

Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth. It's interesting that most conversions are made during the teenage years. Seven-eighths of every decision for Jesus Christ is made while in your teenage years.

That's why it's an important injunction. Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth. While the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when you shall say, I have no pleasure in them.

Don't wait till you get old to serve the Lord, to give your life to Jesus Christ. Commit your life while you're young. Before those evil days come you say, oh man, life is, you know, no more pleasure.

And so we have now an interesting sort of graphic description of the aged person. While the sun or the light or the moon or the stars be not darkened or the clouds return after the rain. As you get older, you start putting stronger light bulbs in the sockets.

My first awareness of my need for glasses is when the light wasn't bright enough and I had to get a brighter light in order to read. And somehow the lights go dimmer as you get older. The muscles of your eyes don't contract as they should in the adjustment of the pupil and all.

And so you need more light in order to read. So remember, you say I'm on the other end of the stick now. When the years draw nigh.

In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble. That's when you begin to get the palsied shakes of the old age. Your knees and your legs begin to, you walk sort of shakily.

You're, it's hard to have a smooth script as you're writing. You know, you can, the keepers of the house are trembling. And the strong men shall bow themselves.

You begin to hunch over your back. The grinders are your teeth. And they cease because they be few.

Of course, in those days, they didn't have the spare sets. And those that look out of the windows be darkened. Again, the reference to, to the eyes, the windows of your body, the eye.

And, and they, you begin to become blind. And the door shall be shut in the streets when the sound of the grinding is low. And he shall rise up at the voice of the bird and all of the daughters of music shall be brought low.

Your hearing gets bad. And, you know, as the singing, yeah, what, you know, it's great life to look forward to, isn't it? You start waking up, you know, early in the morning, the first song of the bird. You don't, you know, you don't sleep so long anymore.

You don't need so much sleep. And when they shall be afraid of that which is high, you start getting these fears. And fears shall be in the way.

The almond tree shall flourish. And the grasshopper will be a burden. Oh, there's a grasshopper.

Oh, what shall I do? I was visiting a while back in one of the retirement homes, one of our members. And as I was going to leave, as I got to the elevator, I was on the 17th floor. And when I got to the elevator, this little old lady came running up to me.

And she said, help, help, help. And I said, what's the matter, ma'am? And she said, there's a man. He came right into my room.

I didn't invite him. He came right into my room. And he's still there in my room, and I can't get him out.

And I said, well, I'll get him out for you, ma'am, you know. She was a little old lady, so I figured it must be a little old man, you know, to handle that. So I went back to her room with her, and we went into her room.

And here I was ready to, you know, assume my authority and order the guy out. What are you doing in this room? I didn't invite him. And looked around.

I said, well, ma'am, I don't see anybody here. She said, well, he came flying right in that window there. And he landed right there in the sink and was just staring at me for a while, you know.

Even a grasshopper can become a burden or a fly. Your desires shall fail because man goes to his long home, and the mourners will be in the streets. Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken at the cistern.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Vanity of vanity, saith the preacher. All is vanity.

You come to the end of the road, man, this is it. The mourners are out in the street. The pitcher's been broken at the fountain.

It's all over. And what is life? Vanity, vanity. Your body's gone back to dust.

Spirit's gone back to God who gave it, and it was just one vast emptiness. That's life apart from God. And if you live apart from God, you will experience the same thing.

You can't escape it. There is no real meaning in life apart from God. Apart from serving God, there is nothing worthwhile.

Vanity, vanity. All is empty. And moreover, because the assembler-preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge, yea, he gave good heed and sought out and said in order many proverbs.

The assembler-preacher sought to find out acceptable words, and that which was written was upright, even the words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads and as nails fastened by the masters of the assemblies which are given from one shepherd. And further by these, my son, be admonished.

Of making of many books there is no end, and much study is weariness of the flesh. I used to have that in my room when I was in school. Now let's hear the conclusion of the whole matter.

This is it. Fear God, keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil.

This is it. The best way to live is just to fear God, keep his commandments, because one day God is going to bring every work into judgment, even the secret things, whether good or evil. Shall we stand? I pray that the Lord will give you a closer walk with him, that you'll begin to understand life from the divine perspective, that you'll experience much more than the emptiness of life after the flesh under the sun, but will begin to experience the rich fulfillment of life in the sun after the Spirit.

And so may God lead you by his Spirit into that full, rich life that he wants you to know and to experience in Jesus Christ. And may you begin to experience that which Jesus said was life more abundantly that he had come to bring to you. So may the hand of the Lord be upon your life this week, and may you walk with him in love.

In Jesus' name.

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