

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Ecclesiastes Chapter 12 — Remember Your Creator and Fear God

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Ecclesiastes Chapter 12 brings the entire book to its final conclusion.

The Preacher has examined:

Pleasure.

Work.

Wealth.

Wisdom.

Time.

Oppression.

Loneliness.

Authority.

Mortality.

Human desire.

Joy.

The uncertainty of life.

Now he gives the final answer.

He does not conclude:

“Nothing matters.”

He concludes:

Remember God.

Fear God.

Keep His commandments.

The chapter begins with an urgent command:

“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth.”

Do not wait until:

Strength fades.

Opportunities disappear.

Health declines.

Old age advances.

Death approaches.

Remember God now.

Verses 2–7 then give one of the most powerful poetic descriptions of aging and death found anywhere in Scripture.

The human body is pictured as a house slowly weakening.

Hands tremble.

Legs bend.

Teeth become few.

Eyes grow dim.

Hearing fades.

Sleep becomes difficult.

Fear increases.

Strength diminishes.

Desire declines.

Then death comes.

The body returns to dust.

The spirit returns to God who gave it.

After this picture of mortality, the Preacher repeats the theme with which the book began:

“Vanity of vanities ... all is vanity.”

But Ecclesiastes does not end there.

The final verses explain what gives life meaning.

The Preacher taught wisdom.

He arranged truth carefully.

He wrote upright words.

He reminds us that wise words come ultimately from:

One Shepherd.

Then comes the conclusion of the entire book:

“Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”

And finally:

God will judge.

Every work.

Every hidden thing.

Everything good.

Everything evil.

The central truth of Ecclesiastes 12 is:

Life is brief, aging is inevitable, death is certain, and judgment is coming; therefore, remember your Creator while you have opportunity, fear God, obey His commands, and live every day in view of eternity.

I. REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR WHILE YOU ARE YOUNG

Ecclesiastes 12:1 — Do Not Wait Until Later

“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you say, ‘I have no pleasure in them.’”

The chapter begins with one of the clearest commands in Ecclesiastes.

Remember your Creator.

Not merely:

Remember that God exists.

But:

Honor Him.

Serve Him.

Know Him.

Obey Him.

Live with Him in view.

And do it:

In your youth.

The Preacher warns against assuming:

“I will serve God later.”

Later may bring:

Less strength.

Less opportunity.

Less energy.

More difficulty.

Cross References

Psalms 71:5

Lord God, You have been my hope and confidence from the days of my youth.

Lamentations 3:27

It is good for a person to learn discipline and carry responsibility while still young.

Proverbs 22:6

Teach a child the right direction for life, and when he grows older the lessons planted early will continue influencing him.

Spiritual Principle

The best time to begin serving God is not someday.

It is now.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not give the world your strength and offer God only what remains.

II. THE BRIGHTNESS OF LIFE BEGINS TO DIM

Ecclesiastes 12:2 — Before the Darkness Comes

“Before the sun, the light, the moon, and the stars are darkened, and the clouds return after the rain.”

The Preacher begins his poetic description of old age.

The brightness of life begins to fade.

One difficulty follows another.

The clouds return after the rain.

In youth, a person may recover quickly.

In old age, one difficulty may be followed by another.

Cross References

Isaiah 13:10

The stars of heaven and their constellations will no longer give their light. The rising sun will be darkened, and the moon will not shine.

Joel 2:31

The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord arrives.

Matthew 24:29

Jesus said that after great tribulation the sun will be darkened, the moon will no longer give its light, stars will fall, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Spiritual Principle

Earthly brightness does not remain forever.

III. THE BODY BEGINS TO WEAKEN

Ecclesiastes 12:3 — Trembling Keepers and Dim Windows

“In the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, when the grinders are few and cease, and those who look through the windows grow dim.”

The imagery describes the aging body.

The “keepers of the house” likely picture the hands and arms.

They tremble.

The “strong men” picture the legs.

They begin to bend.

The “grinders” picture the teeth.

They become few.

The “windows” picture the eyes.

Vision becomes dim.

The Preacher is describing physical decline with poetic beauty.

Cross References

Psalm 90:10

Our lives may reach seventy years, or eighty if strength continues, yet even those years contain labor and sorrow. They pass quickly, and soon we are gone.

Genesis 27:1

When Isaac became old, his eyesight became so weak that he could no longer see clearly.

Psalm 71:9

Do not cast me away in the time of old age. Do not abandon me when my physical strength begins to fail.

Spiritual Principle

Physical strength is temporary.

Application

Use your strength while you have it.

IV. HEARING, SLEEP, AND MUSIC BEGIN TO FADE

Ecclesiastes 12:4 — The Sounds of Life Grow Quiet

“The doors are shut in the streets, and the sound of grinding is low; one rises at the sound of a bird, yet all the daughters of music are brought low.”

The picture of aging continues.

Hearing weakens.

Ordinary sounds become faint.

Sleep becomes lighter.

The smallest sound can awaken a person.

Music itself may lose some of its former enjoyment because hearing declines.

Cross References

2 Samuel 19:35

Barzillai said, “I am now eighty years old. Can I still distinguish clearly between what is pleasant and what is not? Can I fully taste what I eat and drink? Can I still enjoy the voices of singers as I once did?”

Job 7:4

When I lie down, I wonder how long it will be before morning. The night seems to drag on, and I toss restlessly until daylight.

Psalms 71:18

Even when I am old and gray, God, do not abandon me until I have declared Your strength and power to the generation that follows.

Spiritual Principle

The abilities we often take for granted may not remain forever.

V. FEAR INCREASES AND STRENGTH DECLINES

Ecclesiastes 12:5 — Man Goes to His Eternal Home

“They are afraid of heights, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails. For man goes to his eternal home, and mourners go about the streets.”

The imagery becomes even clearer.

Fear increases.

Walking becomes more difficult.

The “almond tree blossoms” likely pictures white hair.

The grasshopper dragging itself along pictures reduced physical strength.

Desire diminishes.

Then comes the most important statement:

“Man goes to his eternal home.”

The mourners gather because death has arrived.

Cross References

Genesis 42:38

Jacob said that his gray hair would be brought down to the grave in sorrow if further tragedy came upon his family.

Isaiah 46:4

God says, “Even into your old age I am the same. Even when your hair becomes gray, I will carry you. I made you, and I will sustain and rescue you.”

Job 17:13

If the grave becomes the home I expect, then darkness becomes the place where my earthly body rests.

Spiritual Principle

Old age reminds us that earthly life is moving toward eternity.

Key Truth

Aging is not merely moving away from youth.

It is moving toward eternity.

VI. THE FINAL BREAKING OF EARTHLY LIFE

Ecclesiastes 12:6 — The Silver Cord and Golden Bowl

“Before the silver cord is snapped, the golden bowl is broken, the pitcher shattered at the spring, and the wheel broken at the well.”

These pictures describe death.

A cord snaps.

A bowl breaks.

A pitcher shatters.

A wheel stops functioning.

The machinery of earthly life finally ceases.

The imagery emphasizes:

Fragility.

Finality.

The preciousness of life.

Cross References

Psalms 31:12

I am forgotten as though I were already dead, like something broken and discarded.

2 Corinthians 4:7

We carry this spiritual treasure in fragile human bodies like valuable treasure stored in ordinary clay jars, so that the extraordinary power may clearly belong to God and not to us.

Job 4:19

How much more fragile are human beings who live in bodies made from dust, whose earthly lives can be crushed as easily as something delicate?

Spiritual Principle

Human life is precious.

But human life is fragile.

VII. THE BODY RETURNS TO DUST AND THE SPIRIT RETURNS TO GOD

Ecclesiastes 12:7 — Death and the Creator

“Then the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.”

This verse brings us back to creation.

God formed humanity from the dust.

God gave the breath of life.

At death:

The body returns to earth.

The spirit returns to God.

Death separates earthly body from spirit.

Cross References

Genesis 3:19

You will eat your food through hard labor until you return to the ground from which you were taken. You are dust, and to dust you will return.

Genesis 2:7

The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed life into him, and the man became a living being.

Psalms 146:4

When a person's breath leaves him, his body returns to the earth, and on that day his earthly plans come to an end.

Spiritual Principle

Life originates with God and ultimately returns to His authority.

Key Truth

Death is not the end of accountability.

The spirit returns to God.

VIII. EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN IS TEMPORARY

Ecclesiastes 12:8 — Vanity of Vanities

“‘Vanity of vanities,’ says the Preacher, ‘all is vanity.’”

The Preacher repeats the declaration from the beginning of the book.

Everything earthly is:

Temporary.

Fleeting.

Unable to bear the full weight of eternal meaning.

The word “vanity” does not mean absolutely nothing has value.

It means earthly things become empty when treated as ultimate things.

Cross References

Ecclesiastes 1:2

“Utterly temporary and fleeting,” says the Preacher. “Everything under the sun becomes empty when treated as the ultimate purpose of life.”

Psalms 39:5

You have made my days very short, and my entire lifetime is almost nothing compared with You. Every person, even when standing strong, is only a passing breath.

Romans 8:20

Creation was subjected to frustration and futility, not because it willingly chose that condition, but because God allowed it as part of His larger redemptive purpose.

Spiritual Principle

Temporary things make poor eternal gods.

IX. THE PREACHER TAUGHT PEOPLE WISDOM

Ecclesiastes 12:9 — Teaching and Arranging Truth

“Because the Preacher was wise, he continued to teach the people knowledge. He weighed, explored, and set in order many proverbs.”

The Preacher was not merely collecting information for himself.

He taught others.

He:

Studied.

Considered.

Organized.

Communicated.

Wisdom should be passed on.

Cross References

1 Kings 4:32

Solomon spoke three thousand proverbs and composed one thousand and five songs.

Proverbs 1:1

These are the proverbs connected with Solomon, the son of David and king of Israel.

2 Timothy 4:2

Proclaim the Word faithfully. Be ready whether the opportunity seems convenient or inconvenient. Correct, warn, and encourage people with great patience and careful teaching.

Spiritual Principle

Wisdom becomes more valuable when it is faithfully passed to others.

X. TRUTH SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED CAREFULLY

Ecclesiastes 12:10 — Delightful Words and Words of Truth

“The Preacher sought to find delightful words, and uprightly he wrote words of truth.”

The Preacher cared about:

What he said.

And:

How he said it.

Truth should not be distorted for the sake of style.

But truth should be communicated clearly and carefully.

Cross References

Psalms 19:14

May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing before You, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

John 17:17

Jesus prayed, “Set them apart through Your truth. Your Word is truth.”

Proverbs 8:8

All the words wisdom speaks are righteous. Nothing in them is twisted, deceptive, or corrupt.

Spiritual Principle

Truth deserves both accuracy and careful expression.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Never make truth attractive by making it less true.

XI. WISE WORDS CORRECT AND STABILIZE

Ecclesiastes 12:11 — Goads and Firmly Embedded Nails

“The words of the wise are like goads, like firmly embedded nails, given by one Shepherd.”

A goad was used to move an animal in the right direction.

Wise words can:

Correct.

Prod.

Convict.

Redirect.

A firmly embedded nail provides stability.

Wise words also:

Anchor.

Strengthen.

Secure.

And ultimately, the Preacher says these words are:

“given by one Shepherd.”

Truth ultimately comes from God.

Cross References

Acts 9:5

Saul asked, “Who are You, Lord?” The Lord answered that Saul was fighting against Jesus and that resisting divine correction was only harming himself.

John 10:11

Jesus said, “I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd willingly gives His life for the sheep.”

Hebrews 4:12

God’s Word is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword. It penetrates deeply and exposes the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Spiritual Principle

God’s truth both corrects our direction and anchors our lives.

XII. HUMAN STUDY HAS LIMITS

Ecclesiastes 12:12 — Many Books and Much Study

“And further, my son, be warned: of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the flesh.”

The Preacher is not condemning:

Books.

Learning.

Study.

He has spent the whole book doing those things.

The warning is that knowledge by itself cannot give ultimate meaning.

Human study has limits.

There will always be:

Another book.

Another argument.

Another theory.

Another question.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 8:1

Knowledge by itself can produce pride, but love builds people up and strengthens them.

John 21:25

Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were recorded in complete detail, the world itself could hardly contain all the books that could be written.

Ecclesiastes 1:18

With greater wisdom often comes greater awareness of life's sorrow, and increasing knowledge can increase the burden of what a person understands.

Spiritual Principle

Education is valuable.

But information cannot replace God.

XIII. THE CONCLUSION OF THE ENTIRE MATTER

Ecclesiastes 12:13 — Fear God and Keep His Commandments

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”

Here is the answer to Ecclesiastes.

After:

Twelve chapters.

Experiments.

Questions.

Observations.

Pleasure.

Wealth.

Wisdom.

Work.

Suffering.

Mystery.

The conclusion is simple:

Fear God.

Keep His commandments.

The fear of God means:

Reverence.

Awe.

Submission.

Recognition of His authority.

Obedience demonstrates that reverence is genuine.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 10:12

What does the Lord your God require from you? Fear Him, walk in His ways, love Him, serve Him with all your heart and soul,

Micah 6:8

God has shown you what is good. He requires you to practice justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.

Matthew 22:37

Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."

Spiritual Principle

The meaning of life is not found in possessing everything.

It is found in knowing and obeying God.

Key Truth

Ecclesiastes begins with vanity.

It ends with God.

XIV. EVERY WORK WILL COME INTO JUDGMENT

Ecclesiastes 12:14 — Nothing Is Hidden Forever

“For God will bring every work into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil.”

The final verse of Ecclesiastes gives life eternal seriousness.

God sees:

Public actions.

Private actions.

Words.

Thoughts.

Motives.

Good works.

Evil works.

Nothing remains permanently hidden.

Cross References

Revelation 20:12

John saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God’s throne. Books were opened, and the dead were judged according to what had been recorded about their works.

2 Corinthians 5:10

Every one of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each person receives what is appropriate for the things done while living in the body, whether good or bad.

Matthew 25:31

Jesus taught that when the Son of Man comes in His glory with His angels, He will sit upon His glorious throne to exercise judgment.

Spiritual Principle

What is hidden from people is never hidden from God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Live privately in a way you would not fear having examined publicly before God.

XV. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM ECCLESIASTES 12

1. Remember God Early

Do not postpone your relationship with God.

Principle:

Serve God while strength and opportunity remain.

2. Aging Is Part of Earthly Life

Strength fades.

Eyes weaken.

Hearing changes.

Bodies decline.

Principle:

Do not build your identity on abilities that cannot remain forever.

3. Death Is Certain

The body returns to dust.

The spirit returns to God.

Principle:

Live today knowing that earthly life has an ending.

4. Earthly Things Are Temporary

Everything under the sun eventually changes.

Principle:

Do not ask temporary things to provide eternal meaning.

5. Wisdom Should Be Shared

The Preacher taught what he learned.

Principle:

Truth should be received, organized, lived, and passed on.

6. Fear God and Obey Him

This is the final conclusion.

Principle:

Life makes sense only when God occupies His rightful place.

7. Judgment Is Coming

Every work will be evaluated.

Principle:

Every choice matters because every life ultimately answers to God.

XVI. WHAT ECCLESIASTES 12 TEACHES ABOUT YOUTH

Youth is not merely a season for:

Entertainment.

Experimentation.

Self-discovery.

It is a season for:

Knowing God.

Serving God.

Building character.

Developing wisdom.

Establishing habits.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The patterns formed in youth often become the pathways walked in later life.

XVII. WHAT ECCLESIASTES 12 TEACHES ABOUT AGING

Aging is described honestly.

The body changes.

Abilities diminish.

Strength fades.

But aging does not mean usefulness must end.

Psalms 71 reveals the prayer:

Even when old and gray:

Let me still declare God's power to another generation.

Spiritual Principle

Age may change what you can do.

It does not remove the possibility of faithfulness.

XVIII. WHAT ECCLESIASTES 12 TEACHES ABOUT DEATH

Death is described as:

The breaking of the silver cord.

The shattering of the bowl.

The breaking of the pitcher.

The stopping of the wheel.

Then:

The body returns to dust.

The spirit returns to God.

Key Truth

Death ends earthly opportunity.

It does not remove divine accountability.

XIX. WHAT ECCLESIASTES 12 TEACHES ABOUT THE WORD OF GOD

Wise words are compared to:

Goads.

And:

Nails.

A goad moves.

A nail anchors.

God's truth does both.

It:

Convicts.

Corrects.

Directs.

Stabilizes.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Sometimes God's Word comforts you.

Sometimes God's Word confronts you.

You need both.

XX. WHAT ECCLESIASTES 12 TEACHES ABOUT KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is valuable.

But knowledge has limitations.

You can read thousands of books and still fail to answer the most important question:

What will you do with God?

Spiritual Principle

Knowledge that does not lead toward truth, humility, and obedience has missed its highest purpose.

XXI. WHAT ECCLESIASTES 12 TEACHES ABOUT THE FEAR OF GOD

The fear of God is the conclusion of the entire book.

It means:

Recognizing His holiness.

Honoring His authority.

Submitting to His Word.

Taking His judgment seriously.

Loving what He loves.

Rejecting what He condemns.

Key Truth

The fear of God is not merely being afraid of punishment.

It is living with deep reverence for who God is.

XXII. WHAT ECCLESIASTES 12 TEACHES ABOUT OBEDIENCE

The Preacher does not say:

Fear God and merely talk about His commandments.

He says:

Keep them.

Faith affects conduct.

True reverence produces obedience.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A faith that never affects behavior has not yet shaped the whole life.

XXIII. WHAT ECCLESIASTES 12 TEACHES ABOUT JUDGMENT

The book closes with judgment.

That is important.

Ecclesiastes does not ultimately teach:

“Enjoy life because nothing matters.”

It teaches:

“Enjoy God’s gifts because life matters enormously.”

God will judge:

Open deeds.

Secret deeds.

Good.

Evil.

Spiritual Principle

The certainty of judgment gives eternal significance to temporary decisions.

XXIV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What does it mean to “remember your Creator”?

It means more than simply remembering that God exists.

It means living consciously before Him with:

Faith.

Reverence.

Worship.

Obedience.

Question 2

Why should God be remembered in youth?

Because youth provides:

Strength.

Opportunity.

Energy.

Time to establish patterns that may influence the rest of life.

Question 3

What do verses 2–5 describe?

They poetically describe the gradual decline associated with aging.

Question 4

What do the “keepers of the house” likely represent?

They picture the hands and arms, which may begin to tremble with age.

Question 5

What do the “grinders” represent?

They picture the teeth, which may become fewer with age.

Question 6

What do the “windows” represent?

They picture the eyes and the decline of vision.

Question 7

What happens at death according to verse 7?

The body returns to the earth, while the spirit returns to God who gave it.

Question 8

Why does the Preacher again say “all is vanity”?

Because everything earthly is temporary and cannot provide ultimate meaning apart from God.

Question 9

Why are wise words compared with goads and nails?

Goads move a person in the right direction.

Nails provide stability.

God’s truth both corrects and anchors.

Question 10

Does verse 12 condemn books or education?

No.

It warns that endless human study cannot replace the ultimate truth of knowing and obeying God.

Question 11

What is the final conclusion of Ecclesiastes?

Fear God.

Keep His commandments.

Question 12

Why is judgment the final subject of the book?

Because every human choice has eternal significance before God.

Nothing is permanently hidden from Him.

XXV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Ecclesiastes 12 asks the most important questions in the book.

Am I Remembering My Creator Now?

Or am I assuming I will become serious about God later?

Am I Using My Present Strength Wisely?

What can I do today that may become more difficult later?

Am I Preparing Spiritually for Old Age?

Am I building faith strong enough to carry me when physical strength declines?

Am I Living With Death in View?

Do my priorities make sense if earthly life is temporary?

Am I Passing Wisdom to Others?

Who is receiving spiritual truth from my life?

Am I Merely Studying Truth or Obeying It?

Has knowledge changed the way I live?

Do I Fear God?

Does reverence for Him guide my choices?

Am I Keeping His Commands?

Where does obedience need to become more complete?

Am I Living With Judgment in View?

Would I live differently if I remembered that even hidden things will be examined by God?

XXVI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Do Not Wait Until the End of Life to Discover What Life Was For”

Ecclesiastes has searched everywhere.

Pleasure could not answer.

Money could not answer.

Work could not answer.

Achievement could not answer.

Human wisdom could not answer completely.

Long life could not answer.

Possessions could not answer.

The answer was always above the sun:

God.

Principle:

Life cannot be understood correctly while the Creator is removed from it.

XXVII. REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR BEFORE THE DIFFICULT DAYS

The Preacher does not say:

Remember your Creator only when:

You are dying.

You are sick.

You are frightened.

You are old.

He says:

Remember Him before those days.

Build your relationship with God:

Before crisis.

Before weakness.

Before loss.

Before decline.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not wait until you need an anchor to discover you never secured one.

XXVIII. THE POETRY OF AGING

Ecclesiastes 12 gives dignity to aging by describing it poetically.

The body is like a house.

Its keepers tremble.

Its strong men bend.

Its grinders become few.

Its windows become dim.

Its doors close.

Its music quiets.

This is not written to mock old age.

It is written to remind younger people:

Strength is temporary.

Spiritual Principle

Respect the aged.

One day, if God gives you enough years, their experience may become yours.

XXIX. THE BODY RETURNS TO DUST

Human beings often invest enormous energy into the body.

We:

Feed it.

Dress it.

Exercise it.

Protect it.

Treat it.

Care for it.

And rightly so.

But eventually:

The body returns to dust.

That truth should keep physical appearance from becoming our ultimate identity.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Care for the body God gave you, but prepare the soul for eternity.

XXX. THE SPIRIT RETURNS TO GOD

Ecclesiastes does not end human existence at the grave.

Verse 7 says:

“The spirit returns to God who gave it.”

This immediately prepares for the final truth:

Judgment.

Life comes from God.

Life returns before God.

Therefore, every life is accountable to God.

Spiritual Principle

You belong to the God who gave you life.

XXXI. THE PREACHER’S FINAL ANSWER

After twelve chapters, Solomon does not conclude:

Get more.

Experience more.

Earn more.

Know more.

Build more.

He says:

Fear God.

Obey God.

This is wonderfully simple.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The purpose of life is not finally discovered by looking farther under the sun.

It is discovered by looking to the God above it.

XXXII. THE FINAL JUDGMENT

Every hidden thing.

That phrase should make us think.

There are things:

Other people do not know.

Families do not know.

Friends do not know.

Churches do not know.

Governments do not know.

But God knows.

Spiritual Principle

Secrecy from people is never secrecy from God.

XXXIII. ECCLESIASTES FROM BEGINNING TO END

The book began:

“Vanity of vanities.”

It ends:

“Fear God and keep His commandments.”

That movement explains the book.

Life viewed only:

Under the sun.

Ends in frustration.

Life viewed:

Before God.

Finds purpose.

Key Truth

Without God:

Everything temporary eventually feels empty.

With God:

Even temporary things can be received with eternal perspective.

XXXIV. TWELVE GREAT TRUTHS FROM THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

1. Life Is Brief

Our days move quickly.

2. Pleasure Cannot Satisfy the Soul

Enjoyment is a gift, not a god.

3. Work Has Limits

Achievement cannot defeat death.

4. There Is a Time for Everything

God rules over every season.

5. Relationships Matter

Two are better than one.

6. Wealth Cannot Provide Ultimate Security

We leave with nothing in our hands.

7. Contentment Is Greater Than Endless Desire

Better what the eyes see than wandering desire.

8. Wisdom Is Better Than Folly

But human wisdom still has limits.

9. Death Comes to Everyone

Therefore, live faithfully now.

10. Small Foolish Choices Can Destroy Much Good

Guard your life carefully.

11. Life Is Uncertain

Therefore, sow faithfully and trust God with results.

12. Fear God and Keep His Commandments

This is the final conclusion.

XXXV. FINAL APPLICATION

Ecclesiastes Chapter 12 brings us to the end of the journey.

The Preacher has searched:

Everywhere.

He has asked:

What lasts?

What satisfies?

What gives meaning?

And now he tells us.

Remember your Creator.

Do not wait.

If you are young:

Remember Him now.

If you are older:

Remember Him now.

If you have wasted years:

Remember Him now.

If you have lived faithfully:

Continue remembering Him.

The chapter reminds us that life changes.

Strength does not remain.

Eyes grow dim.

Hearing weakens.

Bodies become frail.

One day:

The silver cord breaks.

The golden bowl is shattered.

The pitcher breaks.

The wheel stops.

Then:

The dust returns to the earth.

The spirit returns to God.

What matters then?

Not:

How much money you accumulated.

How many possessions you owned.

How popular you became.

How impressive you appeared.

What matters is:

Did you know God?

Did you fear Him?

Did you obey Him?

Did you live faithfully before Him?

The final answer of Ecclesiastes is not:

Life is meaningless.

The final answer is:

Life without God cannot carry the weight of ultimate meaning.

Therefore:

Remember Him.

Fear Him.

Obey Him.

Serve Him.

Walk with Him.

And remember:

Every hidden thing will come into judgment.

That makes every day important.

Every choice important.

Every word important.

Every act of obedience important.

So while you have:

Strength.

Time.

Opportunity.

Life.

Use them well.

Remember your Creator before the difficult days come.

Remember your Creator when the difficult days come.

Remember your Creator when strength fades.

Remember your Creator when death approaches.

And when earthly life finally ends:

Entrust yourself to the God who gave you life in the first place.

That is the final wisdom of Ecclesiastes.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for carrying us through the wisdom of Ecclesiastes.

Thank You for reminding us that life is brief.

Teach us to remember You while we have strength.

Teach young people to honor You before the difficult years come.

Give them:

Wisdom.

Purity.

Courage.

Faith.

Discipline.

Purpose.

Help those who are older to remain faithful.

When strength fades, be their strength.

When eyesight dims, help them continue seeing Your goodness.

When hearing weakens, keep their hearts attentive to Your voice.

When their bodies become frail, remind them that You remain faithful.

Father, teach all of us to live with death in view without living in fear.

We know our bodies will return to dust.

We know our spirits will return to You.

Prepare us for eternity.

Help us hold temporary things lightly.

Keep us from worshiping:

Money.

Pleasure.

Work.

Possessions.

Achievement.

Human wisdom.

Let us enjoy Your gifts without allowing them to replace You.

Thank You for Your Word.

Let it be a goad when we need correction.

Let it be a firmly planted nail when we need stability.

Help us receive truth.

Help us teach truth.

Help us live truth.

Protect us from knowledge without obedience.

Protect us from religion without reverence.

Protect us from hearing without doing.

Father, teach us to fear You.

Not with hopeless terror.

But with:

Reverence.

Awe.

Love.

Submission.

Obedience.

Help us keep Your commandments.

Remind us that every work will come into judgment.

Every public deed.

Every hidden deed.

Every good work.

Every evil work.

Cleanse what is sinful.

Strengthen what is weak.

Correct what is wrong.

And guide us into faithful living.

May we not reach the end of life only to discover that we spent our lives chasing the wind.

May we spend our days knowing You.

Serving You.

Loving You.

Obedying You.

And when our earthly lives are over, may we stand before You having lived with eternity in view.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Key Verse

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” — Ecclesiastes 12:13

Central Truth

Life is temporary, aging is inevitable, death is certain, and judgment is coming; therefore, remember your Creator, fear God, keep His commandments, and live every day with eternity in view.

Ecclesiastes 12 in One Sentence

The Preacher closes Ecclesiastes by urging us to remember our Creator before strength fades, recognize the certainty of death and judgment, receive God's truth with humility, and embrace the final purpose of life: to fear God and keep His commandments.