

God's Guidelines for Living

Scripture Reading: **Ecclesiastes 12:9-14**

Introduction

1. **No doubt you have heard people say “don't worry – be happy!”**
2. **God truly does want us to be happy and he certainly does not want us to be a worrying people.**
 - A. **Christians have so much to be happy about and God has promised to care for us – therefore we shouldn't worry.**
3. **Wise Solomon wrote:**

Eccl 1:3 What profit has a man from all his labor In which he toils under the sun?

Eccl 2:24-26 Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God. For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment, more than I? For God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight; but to the sinner He gives the work of gathering and collecting, that he may give to him who is good before God. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.

Ecclesiastes is an autobiography of Solomon

1. **The central theme that runs through the book is: “What is life all about?”**
 - A. **The KEY to the question is: “Put God where He should be in your life.”**
 - 1) **God is in heaven**
 - 2) **He rules all things to include the lives of men**
 - 3) **We are to “fear God and keep His commandments” (Eccl 12:13)**
2. **This morning, let's look at some of God's guidelines that he has established for happy living from the book of Ecclesiastes.**

Guidelines for Living

1. **Chapter 2:24-26:** In our reading of this particular verse we can see that **life was intended by God to be enjoyed.**

A. We must learn to be content on that which God has provided for us. Contentment breeds happiness

1 Tim 6:8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

B. We should also learn to **keep things in its proper perspective.** Even Solomon, with all of his advantages was dissatisfied with the accomplishments of this world.

C. Have an occupation in life that will make you happy, allowing you to be content in your service to God and family.

1) **Zerr's Commentary, Page 212, says this concerning verse 26:** "Those things mentioned are made possible to man through the providence of God. All have equal right to the favors of the Lord and if a man uses them as he should he will be acting according to the wisdom given of God. But if he chooses to act the part of hoarding the temporary things of this life, God will not prevent him from trying it. If he does, however, it will prove to be empty or vanity."

2. **Chapter 5:1-7:** **We are to worship in reverence.**

A. Vs 1 - Be careful what you do and say. This is especially important when entering the house of God.

1) A man who is hearing may be said not to be contributing anything. However, he could be showing more real devotion to God than is being offered by one who is praying or singing.

B. Vs 2 - Do not be hasty with one's mouth. Do not speak until you understand what should be said.

James 1:19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

C. Vs 4-7 - Don't forget your vows made before God

- 1) The marriage vow**
- 2) A morally pure vow**
- 3) A devotion to God vow (confession and baptism)**
 - a) A voluntary vow before God is serious. Since vows were not commanded, it would be better not to make one, than to break one.**
 - b) Don't try to break your commitment to God because He doesn't take them lightly**
 - c) When we fear or respect God, we will regulate our speech accordingly.**

3. Chapter 7:1-4: Some things are better.

A. A good name stands for something of value

- 1) It is part of one's character and it cannot be stolen or destroyed by accident.**
- 2) Costly perfume is a material substance and anyone with money can obtain it.**
 - a) If one maintains a good name until death, it can never be lost.**

B. Death is better than birth – WHY?

- 1) To those who are living righteously, death will bring them into an eternal rest with God!**
- 2) A house of mourning causes man to reflect on his life and moves him to face the reality of our time on earth.**

James 4:14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

4. Chapter 8:12-13: The righteous will not be forgotten.

- A. Life is not fair – but eternity is!**
- B. The apparent success of a sinner should not encourage others to do wrong. The wicked one will finally receive the reward due to him for his evil deeds.**
 - 1) The one who fears God will likewise receive the favor of the Lord to be forever with Him.**
- C. The seeming length of the wicked man's life will be seen to be as brief as a shadow when the wrath of God is finally brought upon him.**

5. Chapter 9:7-10: Give God the best you have to offer!

- A. In the life that we now enjoy on this earth we must give our best to God according to our ability.**
 - 1) We don't have an opportunity to do it later – now is the time, the time that we have been given.**
- B. It is alright to enjoy the things of this life, keeping things in its proper perspective and learning to be content.**
 - 1) These things of life have been given to us by the Lord.**
- C. There will come a time when our body will be laid to rest. Therefore, all things that can be done in the body should be done while on this earth in a manner pleasing to God.**
 - 1) When we do so, then our spirit will return to Him, to live in eternity!**

Eccl 12:7 Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Conclusion

1. There is an emptiness of everything apart from God (All is vanity).

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

2. Be diligent today and everyday to lay up for yourselves the treasures that really count.

Matt 6:19-21 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

3. May we take each step of life being truly focused on our heavenly Father and the mansion prepared for us (John 14:1-3).

Matt 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Col 3:2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

4. If we will simply apply God's guidelines for living then we will have peace and contentment in our life. Don't worry, be happy!

Invitation

Place _____ Date _____

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