



Ecclesiastes: From Vanity to Victory - Ecclesiastes 12

ADAM LONG | Week of Sunday July 12th, 2020

SERMON TEXT // Ecclesiastes 12 English Standard Version

¹Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them"; ²before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain, ³in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed, ⁴and the doors on the street are shut—when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low— ⁵they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets— ⁶before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, ⁷and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. ⁸Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity.

⁹Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care. ¹⁰The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth. ¹¹The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd. ¹²My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. ¹³The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

SERMON SUMMARY // Solomon He had spent much of his younger days **chasing** the things of this world - the **life under the sun** - but never asked himself the question of what would happen if he caught the things he was chasing after. It was only in his later years did he realize he was chasing meaning in his purist of wisdom, pleasure, work, and possessions. Everything he chased revealed itself to be meaningless, empty, or to use his word of choice: **vanity**. This led him to write this warning for his readers to chase after the right things - to **pursue** the things that matter before time gets away from us.

SERMON GUIDE // In order to keep the ultimate things ultimate we must:

1. Pursue the things of God **immediately**. (vv.1-8)
2. Pursue the things of God **by rightly handling wisdom**. (vv.9-12)
3. Pursue the things of God **by living in victory**. (vv.13-14)

SERMON APPLICATION // If we are focused on vanity we will never experience victory. God has put eternity into the heart of man (Ecclesiastes 3:11) - He has given us a sense and a yearning for the life that is to come. We cannot see that life when we chase after the vanities of this world. We will only see the eternity God has set aside for His children by pursuing the things of God right now, rightly handling wisdom, and living in the victory that is ours in Jesus - that is what is ultimate. Let us pursue the ultimate.



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COMMUNITY GROUPS | Week of Sunday July 12th, 2020

Question 1 // Read **Ecclesiastes 12**. What is something from the text that resonated with you, a truth that encouraged you, or even a question you may have surrounding the text theme?

Question 2 // Solomon chased after the things of this world looking for meaning in his younger years. Now that he is older, he writes to believers encouraging them to pursue God **immediately** - do not wait - for He is the only source of meaning. **Over the years you have been a Christian, what vanities stood in your way from pursuing the things of God? What caused you to shift your focus from those things? Is there something, right now, that you need to leave behind and pursue the things of God immediately?** Take some time to share. Your past struggle may help someone with their present struggle.

Question 3 // In verses nine through twelve Solomon specifically talks about the difference between chasing knowledge; which is good, and pursuing Godly wisdom; which is ultimate. So many of the "good things" God enables us to chase can easily become ultimate things in our lives when we should be focused on pursuing the things of God. **How do we fight the drift of good things becoming ultimate things? It may happen without notice but it will not be stopped without our attention.** Share ideas for the fight in pursuing the ultimate. (i.e. fight clubs, discipleship relationships, accountability)

Question 4 // Often times when we gather in gospel communities we look at ways we can grow and areas that need to change in our walk. We have done a few of those things already during the previous questions. But Solomon exhorts his readers to pursue the things of God by **living in victory**. We live in victory when we fear God, **keep His commandments, and are prepared for judgement** with Christ as our Advocate. **Let's take time now to just identify some clear victories that we are experiencing in the Lord right now.** Be encouraged by the stories of God's victories in the lives of His people!

Reflection & Prayer

If we are focused on vanity we will never experience victory. As we close in prayer, let's identify a few ways individually, as a community group, and as a church we can pursue the things of God over chasing the vanities of this world.