

## **Before the Silver Cord Breaks: Remembering Our Creator Ecclesiastes 12:1–14**

**WHAT IS TRUE AND WHAT TO DO?** Live life to its fullest by turning to God and trusting in Jesus now before aging weathers your allotted time, and it is gone!

**BACKGROUND:** Solomon had just urged young people to enjoy the days of their youth in 11:9–10. They should rejoice, have a heart of good cheer, and strive to enjoy life, but also remember that God will hold us responsible and bring us to judgment for how we use our liberty and pursue life. We are not to be sorrowful but joyful. We are to avoid being discontented and agitated. Instead, we should think right, and act right. If you are always peeved with things around you, you cannot be cheerful and happy. Dispose of these things, for the “prime of life” will soon be gone and replaced by old age.

### **1.) Recognize and submit to the claims of your Creator in your youth (v. 1)**

A. Why should we do this? At least four reasons:

1. Old age will soon overtake you; you will not be capable of serving and enjoying the Lord in the same way forever
2. Hardness of your heart may come upon you, and there is a risk you may never serve God the longer you wait
3. You may make poor decisions that you deeply regret
4. Your life, as well as your soul, will be saved.

### **2.) The poetic description of old age and death (12:2–7)**

- A. Old age can bring evil/troubling days and offer little pleasure (v.1–2)
- B. Pictured as when life shines dimly and when storm clouds come (v.2)
- C. Detailed characterizations of old age/death (v.3–5):
  1. *Keepers of the house tremble*: **arms** (shaky/weakness)
  2. *Strong men bow themselves*: **legs**; not strong (Ps. 147:10)
  3. *Grinders cease and are few*: **teeth**; chewing difficult
  4. *Windows are darkened*: **eyes**; sight no longer clear
  5. *Doors leading into the street*: **ears**; hard hearing
  6. *Rises at the voice of a bird*: **cannot sleep** from small sounds
  7. *Daughters of music brought low*: **less ability to make music or songs**; all tones indistinct
  8. *Afraid of that which is high*: **high places/stairs, falling**
  9. *Fears are in the way*: **afraid of travel, the road, dangers**
  10. *Almond tree flourishes*: **hair turns white**
  11. *Grasshopper loses its spring*: **small loads burdens to carry**
  12. *The Caperberry Fails*: **mental/physical desires subside**
  13. *Mourners go about the streets*: **People await your death**

### **3.) Four illustrative pictures of death (12:6–7)**

- A. Silver cord breaking, causing a golden lamp bowl to crash to the floor
- B. A fragile earthen jar broken into pieces as it strikes the well's side
- C. Water-drawing wheel breaking down and cashing into the cistern
- D. Dust returns to the earth, and the Spirit returns to God who gave it

### **4.) Ecclesiastes *overall* thesis: Everything is absolute futility/vanity! (12:8)**

- A. Verses 12:1–7 were written to encourage us to serve the Creator in the days of youth. Everything is empty of anything that can give you permanent satisfaction. So, he restates his thesis and points us to the only thing that can eventually give a person real satisfaction.

### **5.) Solomon's method and inspiration in writing Ecclesiastes (12:9–11):**

- A. He set his mind on a creditable work
- B. Sought proverbs and sayings that were true and profitable
- C. Set his proverbs in order and not haphazardly; he arranged them
- D. Considered and sought pleasing and acceptable words to make them more likely to be received.
- E. As a master of the assembly (the teacher), he intends them to be like goads that prick you, and as nails that pin you down (like a tent peg)
- F. His words are divinely inspired; he says they are valuable because they are from God (“one Shepherd”), v. 9

### **THREE SUMMARY ANSWERS TO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS:**

- Q. What led Solomon to write Ecclesiastes (and Proverbs too)?
    - A. **Wisdom** (given by God, 1 Kings 3:5–12) compelled him to teach the people knowledge (v.9)
  - Q. How do we age gracefully and live in a world that is vanity?
    - A. **“Fear God and Keep His Commandments”** (V. 13–14)
  - Q. Why did Solomon write Ecclesiastes?
    - A. Solomon wants us to realize that God imposed a curse on the world (9:8, Gen. 3) to show us the meaninglessness of following our own devices and to drive us to Him. Thus, the point of Ecclesiastes, like every book of the Old Testament, is ultimately to make you wise for **salvation** through faith in **Jesus Christ** (2 Tim 3:15).
- ✓ At the conclusion of everything, **all** people are **responsible**, and **all** people are **accountable** to God. Turn to Jesus today!