

WISE WORDS TO THE YOUNG
ECCLESIASTES 11:7–12:8
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Introduction:

If you are older, this scripture is written **about** you. If you are younger, this scripture is written **to** you.

Who is being addressed?

Ecclesiastes 11:7-10 “young man,” “youth,” “youth,” “youth,” “dawn of life”;
Ecclesiastes 12:1 “youth”

Who is writing these words?

An old man:

- the perspective of the whole book
- Ch 1: “I have seen everything that is done under the sun”
- Ch 2 numerous building projects, great possessions
- Ch 12: he knows what it’s like to grow old

The preacher is an example to us. Older people should be sharing wisdom with younger people (Deut 4:9).

Ecclesiastes 11:7) Light in OT often represents life and its blessings.

Ecclesiastes 11:8) God commands us to enjoy the life he gives us.

“days of darkness”: hard days of life, but primarily speaking of death

“How can I rejoice thinking I’m going to die?”

In the OT, what life after death would be like is not so clear.

2 Tim 1:10 Jesus “brought life and immortality come to light through the gospel”

Ecclesiastes 11:9) “Follow your heart and your eyes.”

Numbers 15:39 says don’t follow your heart and eyes!

2 Tim 2:22

We are to enjoy God’s gifts. 1 Tim 4:4 “everything created by God is good”

1 Tim 6:17 God “richly provides us with everything to enjoy”

Ecclesiastes 11:10)

Ecclesiastes 12:1) Remembering our Creator is not just thinking about him once in a while.

“evil days” not moral evil but hard, difficult days

Remember him before you make bad decisions that will hurt your life and while you can still dedicate your life to serving him.

Ecclesiastes 12:2–7) There are different ways to translate and interpret this section: A decaying estate? A community facing disastrous times? An allegory for aging?

Ecclesiastes 12:7) Decay and death take us back to the opening words of Ecclesiastes 1:4. Death is the supreme example of vanity/brevity in the earthly realm.

Ecclesiastes 12:8) Everything is fleeting; nothing is ours to keep under the sun.

He has proven his case, so he closes the book of Ecclesiastes.

Conclusion: But in proving his case, he has left us with a gift.

Enjoy life at whatever stage you are in. Expect hebel, but enjoy life's blessing that come from a gracious God. Enjoy life within the boundaries God has set for our good.

Deut 28:47-48

Remember him because he remembers you.

“Every meal, every pleasure, every possession, every bit of sun, every night's sleep, every moment of health and safety, everything else that sustains and enriches life, is a divine gift”

Questions for Personal Meditation or Group Discussion:

1. What did you learn from Ecclesiastes 11:7–12:8? Did God impress anything from this scripture on your heart? Is there anything here you can put into practice in your life (something to do or a change in the way you think)?
2. Discuss the analogy of younger people being like the train engine and old people being like the train track.
3. The preacher is following the pattern of Deuteronomy 4:9 by giving wisdom to those who are younger. Whatever age you are, who are some younger people you can share wisdom with? How are you going to do that?
4. We all have struggles in life. Nevertheless, God wants us to enjoy the life he gives us (11:8). What are some of the blessings of life God has given you? Are you focused on your struggles or on your blessings?
5. What do you think of the counsel this old man gives to youth: “follow your heart and your eyes”? How does the rest of Ecc 11:9 and 12:14 give balance? How are both 11:9 and Numbers 15:39 true? Considering all these and other verses, what counsel would you give young people? (See also 2 Tim 2:22.)
6. How do you think God wants you to “remember” him as your Creator (12:1)?
7. Discuss 12:2–7. If you are older, how does this describe your experience with aging?