

Ecclesiastes: Living with Reality - Pt. 4
“And now, in closing...”
Ecc. 11:7-12:14
July 22, 2018

- I. He's WINDING it all DOWN. (11:7-10)
- A. Fully ENJOY the GIFTS of God. (11:7-9)
 - B. But LIVE with a deeper AWARENESS. (11:8-9)
 - C. Let that AWARENESS inform your CHOICES. (11:10)

Today we close out 4 weeks on Ecclesiastes. As most teachers do, as they move to close they tend to reiterate the main points that they have been making in the lesson or ideas that they have been sharing. The “Teacher” in this book is no different. There is a summary to what he has been saying over the past 10 chapters.

1. What has been the most important thing you have learned as we have journeyed through Ecclesiastes? How will you act on that?
2. What are some of the gifts of God you are currently experiencing?

- II. A POETIC description of AGING. (12:1-8)
- A. MENTAL capacity will WANE. (12:1-2)
 - B. PHYSICAL ability gets LOST. (12:3-6)
 - C. Eventually it's just YOU and GOD. (12:1,7; Ps. 16:5).
 - D. EVERYTHING else is “HEVEL”. (12:8)

Chapter 12 is one of my most favourite passages in Ecclesiastes because it cryptically describes the aging process. The teacher does this not to mock the weakening of our minds and bodies due to the passage of time, but to help us live in light of what is coming to all of us, should we live long enough. In the end the truth seems clearer, because all the things we use to run from the truth have failed us.

3. Can you identify with the descriptions given in 12:1-8? If so in what ways?
4. We often see aging as loss. Does this passage challenge that idea? In what ways?

- III. And NOW, in CLOSING... (12:9-14)
- A. These WORDS of WISDOM... (12:9-10)
 - B. ...COME from one SOURCE... (12:11)
 - C. ...and are INCOMPLETE without ACTION. (12:11-14; James 1:22-25)

After 11 chapters of being quiet, the writer/author returns to the scene to sum up all that the teacher has said. These are good words, wise words, and they should inspire

action and obedience. At some point we have to stop talking and thinking and start living.

5. In what way have you been “goaded” by wisdom in your life?
6. “There is no wisdom without action.” What is your reaction to that statement?

IV. Two QUESTIONS from “the TEACHER.”

- A. Are you seeing “SMOKE” or REALITY? (Is. 40:6-8; I Jn. 5:11-12)**
- B. Are you pursuing KNOWLEDGE or WISDOM? (James 3:13-18; Col. 2:2-3)**

So what does the Teacher leave us with? Two questions that we should seek to answer, not only conceptually in our minds, but also tangibly in the way we live our lives.

7. How can we know if what we are pursuing is “*hevel*” or reality?
8. “Knowledge is informational, wisdom is relational.” Agree or disagree? Is this an oversimplification?