

IN CONCLUSION ... FEAR GOD AND OBEY HIS COMMANDS



THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM,
AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY ONE IS INSIGHT.

(PROVERBS 9:10 ESV)



1. The Preacher was very wise and taught the people what he knew with great care, 12:9.

- (Ecclesiastes 12:9 ESV) Besides being wise, the Preacher also **taught the people** knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs **with great care**.
- (2 Timothy 4:2 NASB95) Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, **with great patience and instruction**.



2. The Preacher sought just the right words to directly and accurately communicate truth to the people, 12:10.

- (Ecclesiastes 12:10 ESV) The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth.
- (2 Timothy 2:14–15 NASB95) Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God **not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers**. 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does **not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth**.



3. The Preacher used the words of wisdom in a way that honored the Shepherd who gave them, 12:11.

- (Ecclesiastes 12:11 ESV) The words of the wise are like **goads**, and like **nails** firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are **given by one Shepherd**.
- A. The words of the wise are action words—goads that prod us along the path and well-driven nails that stabilize us on the path.**
- B. The words of the wise are all given by one Shepherd—Jesus Christ.**
- (Psalm 23:1 ESV) **The LORD is my shepherd**; I shall not want.
 - (Hebrews 13:20 ESV) Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead **our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep**, by the blood of the eternal covenant.
 - (John 10:11 ESV) **I am the good shepherd**. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
 - (John 10:14 ESV) **I am the good shepherd**. I know my own and my own know me.

- (1 Peter 5:4 ESV) And when **the chief Shepherd** appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

C. The words of the Shepherd are spoken to the sheep through his undershepherds.

- (1 Peter 4:11a ESV) **Whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God**.

The Gk word for oracles is λόγιον [logion] meaning utterances of God. This thought runs parallel to what the Preacher in Ecclesiastes refers to – divine messages that are gathered together to form a collection.

D. Faithful undershepherds are diligent to preach the words of the Shepherd.

- (Luke 9:26 NIV) **Whoever is ashamed of me and my words**, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

E. Faithful undershepherds teach as true wise men teach—using words of knowledge and truth as goads and nails in service to the Shepherd.

F. Faithful undershepherds use the words of the wise to goad (prod) the sheep to follow the Shepherd.

****Twenty times in the gospels the Lord calls us to follow him.*

- (Matthew 10:38 ESV) And whoever does not take his cross **and follow me** is not worthy of me.
- (Matthew 16:24–27 ESV) Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross **and follow me**.”
- (John 10:27–28 ESV) **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me**. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

G. Faithful undershepherds use the words of the wise to firmly fix (as with nails) truth in the minds of the sheep to stabilize them as they follow the Shepherd.

- (Isaiah 35:3–4 ESV) **Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees**. 4 **Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not!** Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. **He will come and save you.”**

Preaching God's word produces righteousness which brings peace and stability to the sheep.

- (Hebrews 12:11–15 NIV) No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. 12 **Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees.** 13 **“Make level paths for your feet,”** so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. 14 Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. 15 See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.
- (Isaiah 32:17 ESV) And **the effect of righteousness will be peace,** and **the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.**



4. The faithful undershepherd will not go beyond the teaching of Scripture in search of wisdom to feed the Shepherd's sheep, 12:12.

- (Ecclesiastes 12:12 ESV) My son, **beware of anything beyond these.** Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.
- A. He knows that going past the Scriptures in his study brings weariness, not strength and rest.
- B. He knows that seeking truth beyond the Scriptures is delusional and fraudulent.
- C. He knows that in reality a person cannot go beyond Scripture as it is the very words of God.
- (2 Timothy 3:16–17 ESV) **All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for** teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 **that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.**
 - (1 Peter 1:23–25 ESV) Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, **through the living and abiding word of God;** 24 for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 **but the word of the Lord remains forever.**” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.
 - (1 Thessalonians 2:13 ESV) And we also thank God constantly for this, that when

you received the word of God, which you heard from us, **you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.**

D. He knows that the preacher who does not remain in the teaching of Scripture deceives the sheep.

- (2 John 7–9a NASB 2020) **For many deceivers have gone out into the world,** those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. 8 **Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished,** but that you may receive a full reward. 9 **Anyone who goes too far and does not remain in the teaching of Christ, does not have God.**



5. When all has been said the conclusion is—fear God and obey his commandments because we will all give an account for all we do, 12:13-14.

- (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 ESV) The end of the matter; all has been heard. **Fear God and keep his commandments,** for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God will bring **every deed into judgment, with every secret thing,** whether good or evil.
- (Deuteronomy 10:12–13 ESV) And now, Israel, **what does the LORD your God require of you,** but to **fear the LORD your God,** to **walk** in all his ways, to **love** him, to **serve** the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to **keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?**

A. There is **one question** in life that needs answered.

It is impossible to answer or to even know all the questions of life under the sun. But there is one question we must answer.

B. **THE QUESTION WE MUST ANSWER—How can I be in right standing before my Creator?**

Now the Preacher answers that one question. How can we be right before a holy God? What is my duty, my responsibility, my obligation as a human before my Creator?

C. **THE ANSWER—Fear God and keep his commandments.**

D. **First, let's understand that we are to fear God as taught by God and not as taught by humans.**

- (Isaiah 29:13b ESV) And the Lord said: “Because this people draw near with

their mouth and honor me with their lips, **while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men.**"

E. Fearing God per God's instruction, God undoes the foolish rationalizations and plausible answers of our fallen human minds and brings us to understand the blessing of the fear of God.

- (Jeremiah 32:39–40 ESV) **I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them.** 40 I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. **And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me.**

Did you catch that? God gives us one heart and one way so that we will fear him forever. Fearing God is not merely an "earth thing" to keep us on the straight and narrow but a wonderful part of the glory of heaven. Fearing God keeps us forever turned to God.

F. Fearing God and obeying his commands are obedient steps of faith that bring us into the presence of God and open our eyes that we might see him for who he is **and** come to him.

- (John 5:39–40 NIV) You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. **These are the very Scriptures that testify about me,** 40 **yet you refuse to come to me to have life.**

G. Fearing God delivers us from the "vanity of vanities" of life under the sun ... and brings us to the opposite end of the spectrum where we experience ultimate meaning and significance in life as God opens our eyes to who we are and why we are here.

H. Fearing God we find our place in the universe and see that the totality of our existence—why we are here—is to worship God.

Now maybe we better understand the expressions of elation and exclamation of those who fear the LORD.

I. We have found the fountain and blessing of life.

- (Proverbs 14:27 ESV) **The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,** that one may turn away from the snares of death.
- (Psalm 112:1, 6-8 ESV) Praise the

LORD! **Blessed is the man who fears the LORD,** who greatly delights in his commandments! ... 6 For **the righteous will never be moved;** he will be remembered forever. 7 **He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm,** trusting in the LORD. 8 **His heart is steady;** he will not be afraid, until he looks in triumph on his adversaries.

- (Psalm 128:1 ESV) **Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD,** who walks in his ways!
- (Proverbs 28:14 ESV) **Blessed is the one who fears the LORD always,** but whoever hardens his heart will fall into calamity.
- (Psalm 33:18–21 ESV) **Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him,** on those who hope in his steadfast love, 19 that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine. 20 Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. 21 **For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name.**
- (Psalm 111:10 ESV) **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding.** His praise endures forever!
- (Proverbs 1:7 ESV) **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;** fools despise wisdom and instruction.

J. Fearing God and obeying his commands blesses us with a daily awareness that we are accountable for our good and evil thoughts and actions.

- (2 Corinthians 5:9–10 NIV) **So we make it our goal to please him,** whether we are at home in the body or away from it. 10 **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,** so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.
- (Matthew 12:36 ESV) **I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak.**
- (Romans 14:12 ESV) So then **each of us will give an account of himself to God.**
- (Hebrews 4:13 ESV) And no creature is hidden from his sight, but **all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.**