

LOOKING FOR TRUE MEANING: YOUTH

Ecclesiastes 11:7-12:14

In Ecclesiastes 11:7-12:14 Solomon reaches the conclusion of his whole argument. He has spoken of the vanity of life on earth. Life without God is meaningless. Nevertheless, in this final section, he teaches that we should accept life as a gift and learn to enjoy all that God shares with us. In all of this, however, Solomon wants his readers to understand the necessity of living responsibly before God, since, ultimately, we must give an account of our lives to Him. This is particularly relevant for young people for whom life can seem 'eternal' with little urgency for acting wisely. We can act responsibly by obeying four commands:

1. REJOICE (11:7-9).

- Does the clear call to rejoice and enjoy life surprise you? (Compare 1 Timothy 6:17b.) How do you think God looks at you when you're having fun?
- How does the last phrase, "*But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment*" (11:9c), affect your free expression of joy?

2. REMOVE (11:10).

- In this verse young people are told to remove two things from their lives. Explain each one and why it's so important for their progress that they remove them.
 - "*Remove vexation from your heart.*" (Compare Matt. 6:34).
 - "*Put away pain from your body.*" KJV: "*Put away evil from your flesh.*" (Compare 2 Timothy 2:22).
- To what extent does the following quotation, directed to young people, reflect your own life? "Living an anxiety-free life or one that doesn't get entangled in the sins of the flesh doesn't come with adulthood. The good news here is that you can begin to work on a worry-free, faithful-to-God life in your youth as you walk with God. This is possible, and in fact, God's will for you. After all, He wants your best."

3. REMEMBER (12:1-8).

- How would you explain to a thirteen-year-old the need to "*Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth*"? (compare Matthew 6:33.)
- What could you do personally to help young people be God-centred in life?

4. REVERE (12:9-14)

- Corrie ten Boom said, "The measure of a life, after all, is not its duration but its donation." If our lives are to count, we must fulfil three obligations, verses 13 and 14. Explain each one and apply it personally:
 - Fear God (v. 13).
 - Keep His commandments (v. 13).
 - Prepare for final judgment (v. 14).