

Final Words

Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

I. Seek God's Wisdom (vv.9-11).

*The words of the wise are like goads, and
like nails firmly fixed are the collected
sayings; they are given by one Shepherd.
(v.11)*

“The title ‘Shepherd’ is one of the noble titles for God in the Old Testament, not only in Psalm 23 but also in places like Psalm 80, where he is called ‘Shepherd of Israel’ (v. 1). Thus the *one Shepherd* in Ecclesiastes 12 is the one and only Shepherd — God Almighty.”

– Philip Ryken

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B. It will sometimes delight us (v.10).

C. It will often pain us (v.11a)

“Goads were employed by herd drivers in the ancient world to keep animals on a straight path. They were staffs with sharp nails embedded in them and were used to poke and prod the animal. If it went to the left, there would be pain; if it went to the right, pain; if it stopped, more pain. The only way the animal could avoid pain was to go the way the shepherd wanted to go.”

- David Gibson

“For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.” As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? If God doesn’t discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all. (Heb.12:6-8)

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II. Accept Life's Mysteries (v.12).

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II. Accept Life's Mysteries (v.12).

III. Fear God and Keep His Commandments
(vv.13-14)

What strikes me here is the comprehensive totality of the statement —my “whole duty”— is to fear and to keep. This is the perspective to adopt on life.

We don't tend to think like that. We compartmentalize our life. We have hopes and dreams and aims and ambitions, and in the midst of that we think of our responsibilities to others: spouses, children, parents, work colleagues, friends.

But the Preacher reminds us that every single duty or responsibility we have toward anyone or anything else, we have toward God first and foremost.

Why do you need to be a certain kind of employee? Because you have to fear God and keep his commandments.

Why do you have to be a certain kind of child? Because you fear God and know that he wants you to honor your parents.

Everything I do for you, I do because I do it for God first and foremost: that's the kind of person Ecclesiastes is teaching me I ought to be.

Perhaps if we were to think of doing everything for God first and foremost, it would quite radically change what we do for one another.

It might make us bolder in what we say, more concerned for God's truth than one another's approval.

It might make us more kind and more gentle, realizing that God has commanded us to forgive one another as he forgave us.

It will make us more joyful, less grumpy, and more generous. It will make us more alive.

- David Gibson

God has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead (Acts 17:31).