

Ecclesiastes 12 New International Version (NIV)

¹ Remember your Creator
in the days of your youth,
before the days of trouble come
and the years approach when you will
say,
“I find no pleasure in them”—
² before the sun and the light
and the moon and the stars grow
dark,
and the clouds return after the rain;
³ when the keepers of the house
tremble,
and the strong men stoop,
when the grinders cease because they
are few,
and those looking through the
windows grow dim;
⁴ when the doors to the street are closed
and the sound of grinding fades;
when people rise up at the sound of
birds,
but all their songs grow faint;
⁵ when people are afraid of heights
and of dangers in the streets;
when the almond tree blossoms
and the grasshopper drags itself
along
and desire no longer is stirred.
Then people go to their eternal home
and mourners go about the streets.

⁶ Remember him—before the silver cord
is severed,
and the golden bowl is broken;
before the pitcher is shattered at the
spring,
and the wheel broken at the well,
⁷ and the dust returns to the ground it
came from,
and the spirit returns to God who
gave it.

⁸ “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the
Teacher.^[a]

“Everything is meaningless!”

⁹ Not only was the Teacher wise, but he
also imparted knowledge to the people.
He pondered and searched out and set
in order many proverbs. ¹⁰ The Teacher
searched to find just the right words,
and what he wrote was upright and true.

¹¹ The words of the wise are like goads,
their collected sayings like firmly
embedded nails—given by one
shepherd.^[b] ¹² Be warned, my son, of
anything in addition to them.

Of making many books there is no end,
and much study wearies the body.

¹³ Now all has been heard;
here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the duty of all mankind.

¹⁴ For God will bring every deed into
judgment,
including every hidden thing,
whether it is good or evil.

- a. [Ecclesiastes 12:8](#) Or *the leader of the assembly*; also in verses 9 and 10
- b. [Ecclesiastes 12:11](#) Or *Shepherd*

Discussion Questions

1. Is it easier for a young person (rather than old) to come into a right relationship with God?
2. Are you able to interpret each of the bodily metaphors contained in v.2-6?
3. If this was indeed written by Solomon, how should we react to the statements in v.9-10?
4. What, precisely, is the full interpretation of the warning given in v.11-12?
5. After all that we have read before it, has the author dampened or accentuated the relative importance of the final concluding statements given in v.13-14?