

## Wisdom for the Young Ecclesiastes 11:8-12:7

Introduction:

A key element in Ecclesiastes is understanding the basics of enjoying life.

Ecclesiastes 11:8 (ESV) **So if a person lives many years, let him rejoice in them all;** but let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity.

In education there are the three “r”s - Reading, Writing and Arithmetic.  
Obviously spelling is not one of them.

In learning to enjoy life there are 3 r’s in our text. Rejoice, Remove, Remember

Ecclesiastes 11:9 (ESV) **Rejoice**, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.  
Ecclesiastes 11:10 (ESV) **Remove** vexation from your heart, and put away pain from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 (ESV) **Remember** also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, “I have no pleasure in them”;

I. In order to enjoy life we need to rejoice in the time of our youth.

A. We are to be glad while we are young.

Ecclesiastes 11:9 (ESV) **Rejoice, O young man**, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes.

1. There are 12 different Hebrew words translated into English as “rejoice.
2. The word used here has the primary idea of “smiling.” It is to be cheerful, free from care, having a merry countenance.
3. Thus, when we are young we are to enjoy life.

B. Who is in view when it says “young.”

1. There are a number of different Hebrew words in verse 9 that have all been translated as “young” or “youth” in the ESV

Ecclesiastes 11:9 (ESV) Rejoice, O **young** man, in your **youth**, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your **youth**. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes.

2. The NASB supplies us with a more precise translation.

Ecclesiastes 11:9 (NASB95) Rejoice, **young man**, during **your childhood**, and let your heart be pleasant during the **days of young manhood**. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.

3. Thus, it is addressing a period of time extending from childhood into young adulthood.

4. The “young” man is a person possessing natural strength. It is one who is in the prime of life.

- C. The young are exhorted to do that which brings joy to their hearts.

Ecclesiastes 11:9 (ESV) Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, **and let your heart cheer** you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes.

Ecclesiastes 11:9 (NASB95) Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and **let your heart be pleasant** during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.

1. Choose to do something with your life that you will really enjoy.
2. Avoid the mid-life crisis of coming to the conclusion that you do not enjoy what you are doing, or that what you are doing is not fulfilling or meaningful.

- D. The way in which that joy is to be experienced is through following one’s hopes and dreams.

Ecclesiastes 11:9 (NASB95) Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. **And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes.** Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.

1. Youth is a time to dream big.
  2. It is a time to dream about what you want to do with your life.
  3. Then it is the time to set goals for yourself in achieving those dreams.
  4. And it is the time to buckle down and work with a view of accomplishing those goals.
  5. Do not let the pessimism of others pour water on your dreams.
- E. However, there is a caution. Do not make your plans and dreams apart from the will of God.

Ecclesiastes 11:9 (NASB95) Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. **Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things**

1. So the question is more than simply, “What do I want to do with my life?”
  2. The question must revolve around the issue, “What does God want me to do with my life?”
- II. In order to enjoy life, we must remove from our lives that which will bring misery.

Ecclesiastes 11:10 (ESV) Remove vexation from your heart, and put away pain from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity.

- A. There are 24 different Hebrew words translated into English as “remove.”
- B. The word that is used here is to distance oneself from something. It is to remove yourself from it.

Ecclesiastes 11:10 (ESV) Remove vexation from your heart, and put away pain from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity.

C. Youth is a time when many important decisions are made that will have long lasting consequences that will affect the rest of our lives. So we want to make decisions that will not lead to regrets.

1. We are to distance ourselves from that which will bring emotional and psychological misery.

Ecclesiastes 11:10 (ESV) **Remove vexation from your heart**, and put away pain from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity.

Ecclesiastes 11:10 (NASB95) **So, remove grief and anger from your heart** and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting.

2. We are to distance ourselves from that which will bring physical harm to our bodies.

Ecclesiastes 11:10 (ESV) Remove vexation from your heart, **and put away pain from your body**, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity.

D. We are to keep in mind that we are not in the prime of our lives forever.

Ecclesiastes 11:10 (ESV) Remove vexation from your heart, and put away pain from your body, **for youth and the dawn of life are vanity**.

Ecclesiastes 11:10 (NASB95) So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, **because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting**.

1. The days are coming when we will not be able to do what we could do when we were young.
2. As a result, some decisions are no longer options for us as we get older.
3. It is too late for us to merely start over.
4. Therefore, it is important to make decisions with an eye to the future.

III. In order to enjoy life we must remember God in the times of our youth.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 (ESV) **Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth**, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, “I have no pleasure in them”;

- A. We must give ourselves to accomplish God's purposes while we are still young enough to do so.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 (ESV) **Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth**, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, “I have no pleasure in them”;

- B. We are to take pleasure in our youth because difficult days lie ahead.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 (ESV) Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, **before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, “I have no pleasure in them”**;

- C. Difficult days lie ahead because of the weakness of our bodies.

1. We will become feeble.

Ecclesiastes 12:3 (ESV) **in the day when the keepers of the house tremble**, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed,

2. Those who were strong will eventually slouch.

Ecclesiastes 12:3 (ESV) in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, **and the strong men are bent**, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed,

3. Our teeth are going to fall out.

Ecclesiastes 12:3 (ESV) in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, **and the grinders cease because they are few**, and those who look through the windows are dimmed,

4. Our eyesight will deteriorate.

Ecclesiastes 12:3 (ESV) in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, **and those who look through the windows are dimmed,**

5. We will become more fearful in our older age.

a. We will be afraid to wander outside.

Ecclesiastes 12:4 (ESV) **and the doors on the street are shut—when** the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low—

b. We will become hard of hearing.

Ecclesiastes 12:4 (ESV) **and the doors on the street are shut—when the sound of the grinding is low,** and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low—

c. We will be startled by the slightest noises though we do not hear very well.

Ecclesiastes 12:4 (ESV) **and the doors on the street are shut—when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low—**

d. We will become afraid of heights.

Ecclesiastes 12:5 (ESV) **they are afraid also of what is high,** and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets—

e. We will be afraid of violence in the streets.

Ecclesiastes 12:5 (ESV) they are afraid also of what is high, **and terrors are in the way**; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets—

6. Our hair will turn gray.

Ecclesiastes 12:5 (ESV) they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; **the almond tree blossoms**, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets—

7. We will not be able to walk very well.

Ecclesiastes 12:5 (ESV) they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, **the grasshopper drags itself along**, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets—

8. Our natural appetites that bring us pleasure wane.

Ecclesiastes 12:5 (ESV) they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, **and desire fails**, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets—

9. We are going to die.

Ecclesiastes 12:5 (ESV) they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, **because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets—**

- D. Keep God in view while you can still serve Him in the strength and vitality of youth.

1. Serve God while you have the capacity to serve Him with vigor. Before we begin falling apart.

Ecclesiastes 12:6 (ESV) before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern,

2. Serve God before you die.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 (ESV) and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

#### IV. Conclusion: