

No Regrets

Ecclesiastes 11:9-10 – 12:1

Dr. Paul Cannings

A. Enjoy Your Youth (vs. 9):

1. Rejoice, young man – The Lord commands our youth to enjoy spontaneous joy and happiness. When they feel this way, they need to be totally engaged.

a) The Preacher has constantly described a life of faith as an enjoyment (2:24-26; 3:12f, 22; 5:18-20; 9:7-10; 11:8-10). Now, he presents another aspect: where God has been neglected, the capacity for joy will be lost. The passing years will pass, and the unheeding reader will self-confess (you will say) despair. (NASU Study Bible)

b) Solomon reiterated his advice to enjoy life (cf. v. 8), emphasizing that a person should do so in his youth. Elsewhere Solomon had said that enjoying life consists of eating and drinking (2:24; 3:13; 8:15; 9:7), wearing nice clothes and pleasant lotions (9:8), enjoying marital bliss (9:9), and finding satisfaction in one's work (2:24; 3:22; 5:18). [\[1\]](#)

2. Let your heart be pleasant—When a young person is feeling joyous and happy, they need to allow the Lord’s wisdom to influence their innermost feelings so that they learn to do good and live a life that is committed to pleasing the Lord in whatever they choose to do (Colossians 3:17).

3. During the days of young manhood, Young people need to develop this attitude while they nurture the development of a righteous character and are trained up “in the way they should go” (Proverbs 22:6).

4. Follow the impulses of your heart – Because the youth are allowing their heart to be pleasant, they should allow this behavioral pattern to become a lifestyle. Their way of life becomes a natural integration of God’s Word, shaping their character and the moral course by which they live.

5. Desires of your eyes – When the young person’s character is shaped by the Holy Spirit it is fine for them to follow the impulses that are stirred by the various things they see.

6. Yet know—Every young person must maintain a high level of consciousness of the omnipresence of God, who is holy. They must be able to sense God's presence in their lives, knowing that He is aware of everything they do.

7. God will bring to judgment - Because God is supreme over everything, there is absolutely no escaping how He determines the outcome of our life decisions because He will constantly evaluate what we do against His righteous standards. *“The one who despises the word will be in debt to it. The one who fears the commandments will be rewarded. The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, to turn aside from the snares of death.”* (Proverbs 13:13-14)

a) The prospect of divine praise or blame makes every detail of life significant rather than meaningless. To know this gives direction to our hearts and discrimination to our eyes. (NASU Study Bible)

b) As previously noted (cf. comments on 2:24–26; 3:17; 7:15–18), there is no reason to believe from either explicit or implicit arguments in this book that Solomon believed this judgment would take place in the afterlife. Instead, like other wisdom writers of his era, he emphasized a temporal judgment within a man's lifetime (cf. comments on 2:24–26 and see 7:17). [\[2\]](#)

B. Remove Distractions (vs. 10):

1. Remove grief and anger – A young person must willfully turn away from those things that create painful feelings, and also those things that can cause them to be immoral or have a negative attitude towards the Word of God being taught to them or being required of them to apply. This negative attitude can drive them to be unhappy, or fretful, and angry (the word for anger means becoming resentful towards the things of God).

a) They must turn away or depart from provocation and fretfulness or trouble that the triggering of hurt feelings (grief) as well as anger [The Hebrew for "sorrow" or 'anger' [ka`ac (heb 3708)] expresses any mental excitement, whether from anger (a tendency of the young especially), jealousy, ambition, etc. Remove these, and all the self-indulgences that cause them, and retain the serene tranquility of a

godly mind]. They must take these things from the deepest inner feelings (wisdom, understanding, or their will) of their life and put away pain from weak flesh.

2. Your heart – Young people must not allow their emotions to control their innermost feelings or determine the decisions they need to make.
3. Put away pain in your body – Young people must protect themselves against anything that stops them from rejoicing and having a pleasant heart. Nothing should hinder them, especially in the early stages of their lives, from being trained to submit their lives to the will of God. From a young age, this trains them to make divinely inspired decisions. It is these decisions that protect them against pain and a meaningless life.
4. Childhood and the prime of life is fleeting - For youth to live without the influences of the Lord God, their childhood would become meaningless, which can then be disastrous and harmful.

C. Remember (Chapter 12:1):

1. Remember your Creator – Because a young person's life can be fleeting and have many impulses that can be easily influenced, Solomon commands them to provide God with their full attention by mediating on who and what He has done.

a) Remembering the creator should lead to fearing God, which in turn leads to keeping His commands, which protects me from being judged for evil.

b) Solomon does not call for mere mental cognizance of the person of God; in robust biblical terms he calls for the appropriate actions that go along with that recollection of the living God. For example, when the Lord “remembered” Hannah (1 Sam. 1:19), He did more than call her to mind; He acted on her behalf and she conceived a child. Our “remembering” of Him is to be in thought, word, and act. [\[3\]](#)

2. Before the evil days come – Because “bad company can corrupt good character...” (1 Corinthians 15:33), it is important that young people be conscientious about remembering what was said and then apply these principles to their lives. By applying the principles, they establish the lifestyle pattern described in chapter 11:9. This shapes their lives so that they are trained in the way they should go before evil becomes a present danger.

a) It is better to remember God before evil begins to create damage.

3. The years draw near—As young people grow up, the years added to their lives bring changes. The years added have such power on the young person's life that they are definitely going to bring positive or negative results. Because they will bring changes,

the young person needs to be aware of them by allowing God to shape their lives before these years are added.

4. Say, 'I have no delight in them' – The ultimate achievement is for a young person to have no attraction to anything that displeases the Lord. The hope for this process is that they would continually respond when faced with those who seek to persuade them have no attraction to being outside the will of God.

[1] Glenn, D. R. (1985). [Ecclesiastes](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1004). Victor Books.

[2] Glenn, D. R. (1985). [Ecclesiastes](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1004). Victor Books.

[3] Radmacher, Earl D. ; Allen, Ronald Barclay ; House, H. Wayne: *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*.

Nashville : T. Nelson Publishers, 1999, S. Ec 12:1