

(Eccl. 12:1) - All through this book of wisdom, the preacher, Solomon, has set forth the vanity of all life here on earth without knowing, worshipping, and serving God as He is revealed in the glorious Person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Life without Christ, His grace and truth, ends in eternal damnation and death. The last two verses of chapter 11 set the stage for chapter 12. Read *Ecclesiastes 11:8-10*. So - *“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.”* *“Thy Creator”* is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One cannot remember, worship, nor know one without the other. Our creation, existence, and life are attributed to all three Persons of the Godhead (*Mal. 2:10; John 1:1-4; Job 33:4*). This God should be remembered. The word *“remember”* is to recognize, think upon, and be mindful of God. Remembering our Creator is not a casual thought nor an indifferent glance, but to set Him always before us in truth, love, fear, and worship and never forget Him (*Psalm 146:1-2*). We are mindful that there is a God of great and glorious perfections (omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, holy, just, true) Who will judge the world in righteousness by the Lord Jesus Christ (*Isa. 46:9-13; Acts 17:31*). If we know and remember Him, we will run to and rest in Christ for all righteousness and salvation. We are mindful that God is, in Christ Jesus, a God Who is gracious and merciful, pardoning iniquity and sin by His obedience and death. We are mindful that the end for which we are made is to glorify Him (*Rev. 4:11*). If we are saved, resurrected on that great day, and conformed to the image of Christ, it will be by His grace, according to His mercy, through His own work, and for His glory (*1 Cor. 1:30-31*).

The *“evil days”* that are sure to come mean the days of old age. They are called the evil days not because sins of old age are any more evil than sins of youth, but because old age is attended by trouble, disease, and affliction. There are weakness of body, decay of intellect, and inability to discern, desire, or put together the hopes and mysteries of spiritual truth. Men and women who live their lives without God come to old age with no pleasure in thinking of death and eternity! Contrary to this, because of his standing in Christ, Paul viewed the past, present, and future with joy and delight (*2 Tim. 4:6-8*).

(Eccl. 12:2-8) - In these verses, Solomon metaphorically describes the infirmities of old age and the troubles that come upon us in order to encourage the young to seek the Lord early. *“The sun, light, moon, and stars will be darkened”* - This is the understanding, mind, judgment, and memory. All of these are greatly impaired or lost in old age. *“The clouds return after the rain”* - In youth troubles come, then there is sunshine and a clear day; but in old age as soon as one cloud arises and departs, another follows. *“The keepers of the house shall tremble”* - The house is the body, and the keepers are the arms and hands which in old age become weak. *“The strong men”* are the legs and feet which have supported the house. *“The grinders which cease because they are few”* are the teeth. *“Those that look out of the windows be darkened”* are the eyes.

“The doors be shut” must be the lips which are opened for speaking and eating; but in the aged they are shut more than opened for either. *“They rise up at the voice of the bird.”* - Old men usually retire early and rise early. *“The daughters of music shall be brought low.”* These are the lungs, throat, mouth, teeth, and lips, all of which are weakened by old age. *“They shall be afraid of high places,”* such as mountains, hills, and towers because of the feebleness of their limbs. *“The almond tree shall flourish.”* - This is the white hair which looks like an almond tree in bloom. *“The grasshopper”* is a very light thing, but the lightest load is a burden to the aged. *“Desire shall fail”* -- Desire for almost everything is weakened by old age. *“Man goeth to his long home.”* - The grave is the home of the body.

“The silver cord” is the bond between soul and body. *“The golden bowl”* is the brain, which stops functioning; and *“the pitcher broken at the fountain”* is the heart, which is the

fountain of life. The body, which is dust, shall return to the earth; and the spirit or soul shall return to God Who gave it. Now, when you consider all this vanity of the world and the flesh, is it not wise to remember, be mindful of, and seek to know the living God with whom we have to do? How foolish to invest all in decaying flesh!

(Eccl. 12:9-14) - *“The preacher was wise.”* God taught him and he taught the people the words of God. *“The preacher sought to find acceptable words,”* words of truth, delight, and promise. *“The preacher’s words are like sharpened sticks”* to prick sinners in heart and direct them in the true way, also like nails to fasten us to Christ. The conclusion of the whole matter, the sum and substance of the whole book is reduced to two things: (1) **“FEAR GOD,”** and (2) **“KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS.”** And he concludes it with, *“for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”* When this life comes to its end, the only thing that will matter is our relationship to Christ. The issue at judgment will be whether or not we are in union with Christ, both legally and spiritually, by God’s grace, or found standing before God on our own merits without Christ. To be IN CHRIST is to be forgiven of all sins by His precious blood and to be declared righteous by His righteousness imputed to us. To be IN CHRIST is to be found in God-given faith, looking to and resting in Him as our only ground and hope of salvation. To be standing before God on our own merits is to be found in sin and deserving of eternal damnation and death.

Fearing God describes sinners saved by grace who are looking to and resting in Christ by God-given faith. It is to know, worship, and serve the true and living God as He has revealed Himself to them through the glorious Person and finished work of Christ. Keeping His commandments, again, describes sinners saved by grace who believe in and follow Christ for all salvation. Their best efforts to obey Christ still fall short of the perfection of righteousness found only in HIM, but they rest in and follow Him as their only hope of salvation and eternal life. This is truly *“the whole duty of man”* as it pertains to salvation and eternal life.

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10) - This is not teaching that believers will be judged BY or BASED ON their works. If this were the case, the only way we could be qualified to enter heaven is if our works equaled the perfection of righteousness that can only be found in Christ. God never judges goodness and righteousness on a sliding scale. The Bible tells us plainly that God *“hath appointed a day, in the which He will JUDGE THE WORLD IN RIGHTEOUSNESS BY THAT MAN WHOM HE HATH ORDAINED; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead”* (Acts 17:31). We know that *“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth”* (Rom. 10:4).

This speaks of the judgment OF our works as to whether or not they are good works or evil deeds and as to whether or not they evidence a state of grace in Christ or a state of depravity and condemnation. Compare this with *Matthew 7:21-23* where Christ judged their works to be *“iniquity.”* Their works did not equal the righteousness that can only be found in Christ. When they presented their works seeking God’s favor, this evidenced that they were unbelievers walking after and minding the things of the flesh (*Rom. 7:5*). The works of true believers evidence, not what they have earned and deserve from God, but what God has done through them by His grace and power to glorify Himself in their lives (*Gal. 2:19-21; Php. 2:12-13*). Their works are evidence of *“fruit unto God”* (*Rom. 7:4*).