

Twelve Quick "Takeaways" from Ecclesiastes
August 25, 2013
Allen Power

Theme of the Book:

Solomon was unlike any man before or since. He had wisdom, straight from God...the wisest man who ever lived. He had power as king. He had ANYTHING money could buy and MORE OF IT than anyone had ever amassed. Yet, as he was growing older he felt life was "meaningless!" Like "chasing after the wind."

If someone like Solomon says life is meaningless, what's the point for you and me? There IS a point. Solomon DID come to a conclusion.

What Have We Learned? 12 Quick Takeaways from Ecclesiastes:

1. Apart from God there is NO MEANING in life. And, apart from Him there is NO ENJOYMENT. No matter how much you accumulate...money, power, even knowledge...life apart from God is FUTILE, meaningless, EMPTY.
2. God has ordained that parts of life are a MYSTERY. He lovingly and sovereignly made it that way. This is not to confuse or frustrate his children. The UNKNOWN in life compels us to TRUST Him no matter what.
3. Everything we experience in life is a part of God's plan for us, even the unpleasant stuff. The key to living with PEACE and JOY is to TRUST God and COOPERATE with His plan even when we don't understand it all.
4. Life is not meant to be lived on our own. Godly family and friends soften the "blows" and enhance the "joys" of life!
5. Money is not the problem. It's the PRIORITY we choose to GIVE money in our lives that leaves us either GREEDY or CONTENT when it comes to material things.
6. God has equipped us to make a living. However, if we spend all our time and energy accumulating and never ENJOYING what we earn, what's the point?
7. We can only ENJOY material possessions when we see them as God intended: As a gift from Him, and NEVER a BARRIER in our relationship with Him and those we love. As a wise person said: "*Money is a great servant but a bad master.*"
8. How can we keep our JOY in the midst of the twists and turns of life? We don't have to figure out God's purposes or to try to be "good enough." We only have to "...be filled with joy in good times and filled with faith in hard times, accepting both from God's hand and trusting Him to work out His plan."
9. We just need to remember and live out two words: TRUST and OBEY.
10. Never take life for granted; it could end tomorrow. Love your family and friends as if it is your last day.
11. We are to be good stewards of our time here on earth. We should study our Bible, spend time in prayer, love our family and friends, and work hard in our chosen occupation!
12. Takeaway #12 is Solomon's own conclusion to his search for meaning: Ecclesiastes 12:13 (ESV) *The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.*

David Jeremiah writes of the end of Solomon's search:

Having held the world's greatest jewels, built the world's greatest temple, and led the world's greatest nation, Solomon has sought the final treasure—no less than the meaning of life itself. He has hungered for the image of heaven on earth, the foretaste of heaven divine. So much flashes before him: the world's great libraries, wise men from around the world, priests and princes and prophets, ships from exotic lands previously unknown. And all of it comes down to . . . nothing.

Never was there the brief hint of heaven on earth. But there was something Solomon's father taught him, something known to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, to Joseph and all the brothers and their tribes, some simple little thing you might hear on the tongue of the poorest peddler down in the street. And somehow this brief word trumps all the wisdom and learning of the world.

You could have no riches, no power, no glory, none of life's ordinary pleasure, and if you knew that one thing—simple enough for any child—you would have the map to finding heaven on earth. Eternity is fixed in our hearts; light calls to light; deep calls to deep. Therefore we must travel or be forever wretched, miserable creatures. Fear God: that's the point of departure. Keep His commandments: that's the path. Travel it seriously, eyes fixed ahead as you walk the narrow way, and you will indeed see glimpses of the Eternal City.

Jeremiah, David (2007-09-18). Searching for Heaven on Earth (p. 310). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.