

A Practical Study of ECCLESIASTES

“Where Your Heart and Treasure Meet”

Study Number Seven – Eat, Drink, and Be Merry: For Tomorrow We Die – Ecclesiastes 9:1-10:20

One guy said:

A mid-life crisis is like standing in the poll line when Carter and Reagan were running against each other and have the news commentators already project that Reagan was the winner. The decision has ready been made and you're just going through the motions.
(source unknown)

In essence that is what a mid-life crisis is a lot like because in many ways we feel like we're just going through motions because God has got a sovereign plan or purpose and we're bumping up against it.

One wife says:

My life is like a hamster habitrail. I'm busier than the dickens but I just keep covering the same ground. Running up this tube, Down this one, in this room, make the beds, bake the cookies, wash the clothes, clean the house, buy the groceries, drive the car pool, call the plumber, fix the lunches, bathe the kids. [She says] Mother's don't have time to have a mid-life

crisis. And probably that's the reason why some of them don't have one.

(source unknown)

Willa Cather put it this way:

There are only two or three real human stories and they go on repeating themselves as fiercely as if they had never happened before.

(source unknown)

Now we have talked pretty much from a negative point of view when it comes to going through crisis in our lives.

But I think we also need to be reminded of what Gail Sheehy says in the book *Passages* and that is, "out of times of crisis can come times of tremendous growth." And she makes the observation of the lobster. "When the lobster gets ready to expand or grow the lobster sheds its shell. Vulnerable for a period of time, regrows the shell, goes on for a while, then sheds another shell. Vulnerable and grows."

(source unknown)

In essence what she's saying is, a mid-life crisis doesn't always have to be negative.

I remember running with a guy one night in Houston after I'd finished teaching the class and he said: "My mid-life crisis came last year and through it I came to know Jesus Christ in a personal way."

And to me, that's a growing experience. That's a recognition of something positive that comes out of something that could be very negative.

One writer put it this way:

Mid-life is the time when someday becomes now. Or sometime becomes now.
(source unknown)

It's here I've got to deal with it. I've got to contend with the issues.

In Sheehy's book *Passages* there's the cutest cartoon. And I think it kind of describes the process that leads up to the mid-life crisis.

1. And in the first little frame is the picture of the 5 year old. He's being dragged to school. And he is crying on the way to school "I'm not ready!"
2. And then in the second frame, the same child is now 10 being dragged to camp. And the same words "I am not ready!"
3. In frame number three you see him drafted at 19 and he's saying "I am not ready!"
4. In the next frame you see him married at 23 and he's saying "I am not ready!"

5. In the next frame you see him fathering a child at 24, 25, 26 and 27 and he's saying "I'm not ready, I'm not ready, I'm not ready, I'm not ready!"

6. And then finally at 50 he runs away from his wife, his grandchildren, his responsibilities. And in the last picture he's sitting in a little cave and you can hear the words of the family crying "George! Daddy! Grandpa!" And his response is "I'm not coming out because I'm not ready!"
(source unknown)

And in some ways that's a mid-life crisis.

Thus far in our series, if I can bring you up to speed—some of you have not been here—let me just kind of summarize.

I'm taking the position that Solomon is not an old, bitter, resentful man who's about ready to die. That's the typical response to Ecclesiastes. That's the only way they could take this book and explain it being in the cannon of the Scriptures. Is to say that Solomon, when he was wise wrote Proverbs, and when he was in love he wrote the Song of Solomon, and when he got old and bitter and resentful and was ready to die he wrote Ecclesiastes.

And he says such ugly things in this book that you almost hate to think about old age when you put it in that perspective.

Alright, let's pull it back and put it in the middle of life and it just comes alive.

1. For instance, he starts out with the foundation of a mid-life crisis and that is:

“Meaningless, meaningless, utterly meaningless”—everything I’m doing has no real meaning.

And so he says THREE THINGS:

1. there’s no gain in what I’m doing,
2. there’s nothing really new under the sun, and
3. on top of that, nobody’s going to remember who I am anyway.

And tell me that you haven’t been there, if you’ve been through one of these. You know, that’s the foundation for it.

2. So in chapter 2 he launches on the journey of trying PLEASURE—“eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die”—which we’re going to look at today. Drinking from the bottle and having fun with the chicks and just doing his thing.

And pleasure didn’t have the answers so he turned to projects. And we couldn’t believe some of the stuff he tried to do. Building houses, getting involved in the sheep and cattle business, and always working on bigger and better things but

then he got frustrated because everything he was acquiring he's going to have to leave to somebody who wasn't going to appreciate it.

3. And when we got to chapter 3 he's frustrated because he is restrained by the sovereign purpose of God. He keeps bumping up against this restraint and he's frustrated.

You can always tell when you're in a crisis when you first are aware that God's sovereign restraining hand is working on you. You know, it's incredible. When you're just cooperating with God and you're going along and really enjoying life, you're not even aware that it's there. But just bump up against it once and you're aware that God just puts it to you.

Well he's facing that. He says funny, "there's a time and a season for every activity" and I can't fight it.

A crisis would not be a crisis unless there was resistance in some area of your life. And you're not aware of it until you bump into it.

And then finally at the end of chapter 3, on top of that, he's frustrated by the fact that he's going to be accountable for his relationship to that sovereign restraining hand in his life.

4. In chapter 4 he's upset by the fact that the powerful oppress the weaker. And I call that "Caught in the Corporate Squeeze."

I mean, here's a guy, he's got a job, he does everything for the corporation and then the corporation when it gets time almost retirement, BAM, he loses his job. And all of the things that he has to say in chapter 4 relate to that sort of thing and how frustrated he is.

And when he comes to the end of the fourth study he says don't get overly religious when you're going through a crisis. He says be careful about what you say and what you vow to God when the bullets are whizzing around you and you're in the foxhole in the big decisions that you make.

He says be awful careful about the vows and the commitments that you make at that point.

5. In study #5 we talked about the misfortunes of making a fortune. I mean making money is alright. But when you're viewing life selfishly and apart from God and the grave is the end, you're vulnerable to live only for materialistic goals and so you become a workaholic.

In chapter 5, in study #5 that's in essence what we see.

6. And then last week we had wisdom from the pits. We had him depressed. He was way down there.

And I shared with you that there are several reasons why you become depressed in the midst of a crisis.

1. You become LONELY,

2. You become REJECTED,
3. You kind of become a MISFIT and you feel of NO VALUE—your self-esteem is at zero. And frankly you just don't want to go on and so you're in the pit.

Now today I've called this:

“Eat, Drink and Be Merry for Tomorrow We Die.”

In essence that's true. But at the beginning of today's study, through the end of the book—which we'll look at next week—he's on the way up out of it.

Some of this stuff he's going to say has really got a lot of sound wisdom and good judgment. And there is some light at the end of the tunnel. We're beginning to see some things that are going to really help us.

What did he say about depression last week? Two things you've got to really remember:

1. Don't ever say “where are the good old days” because when you're saying that, you're saying today's lousy compared to what it was.

And talk about something to throw you in the pit, you didn't even know that was in the Bible and I didn't either until I saw it, you know, in this particular study.

Any time you say that, you're looking back and you're saying the past was better than the present. Naturally you're going to be in the pit.

And then second:

2. He says "don't pay attention to what people say about you." I mean, if you're always concerned about what they're saying about you, you know, you're always going to be a victim and vulnerable to being down because you're going to start believing what they're saying.

Now as we come to this seventh study, we're going to see him focus on some things that are really going to be helpful.

Pick up with me at verse 1 in chapter 9 and we'll just get going here and see what we can find for ourselves today.

v. 1 So I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands, but no man knows whether love or hate awaits him.

"So I reflected on all this"—now that's the other 8 chapters. He's starting to reflect—"and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands,"—boy isn't that a good one?—"but no man knows whether love or hate awaits him."

What he's saying is these are some valid observations in light of the journey I've taken through this crisis, and I want to reflect on it with you for a little bit.

And this first principle is, all that you are—"the righteous"—and all that they do "are in God's hands."

You and what you do are in God's hands. You're in good hands with All State, you know. Now you're in good hands when you're in the Father's hands.

It's interesting, that statement comes out in Christ's ministry when He talks about eternal life. It's one of the greatest statements of scripture on eternal security.

John 10:28, 29

I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man take them out of my hand. My Father's hands are greater than all and no one shall take them out of my Father's hand.

Isn't that neat?

I mean, once you come into this relationship with Christ, you're placed in the Father's hands and His reputation's at stake. And he ain't lost one yet. Just don't get shook. If you put yourself there and you're in His hands, you've received Him as Savior then you begin to realize you're very, very safe.

All the search and all of the struggle concludes with the fact that he's in God's hands.

And that's a good place to begin to recognize the fact that that's where it is. And God's eternal purpose—that's the overriding situation that we've seen through the whole book.

God's got this purpose and in my crisis, I'm bumping against it. What I need to do is to learn to cooperate with rather than to fight against it. We've seen that back in chapter 3.

But notice that next phrase:

“but no man knows whether love or hate awaits him.”

He said “the faithful and their fruit are in God's hand...” but we don't know “whether love or hate awaits [them].”

Does that trouble you a little when you look at the future?

What is the meaning of that?

I mean, we know God loves us unconditionally.

Romans 5:8 says:

Romans 5:8

God committed His love toward us and yet while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

God is not affected in His love toward us by what we do or what we don't do.

God so loved the world—agapé—it was a decision. It was a commitment. He loves us unconditionally. And He doesn't love someone in this room more than He does somebody else. He loves us all equally, totally, sacrificially, completely.

He loves us independent of what we are or what we do.

Well then how can you say you don't know "whether love or hate awaits [you]"?

I thought for a little while on that. You know, when the Lord gives us what we want, that equals LOVE. Doesn't it?

But when the Lord denies us what we want and gives us what we need, that's HATE. Isn't it?

Now think about that for a minute. You have the hardest time adjusting to the fact that God says no to you when you pray about something earnestly. It's almost like "God I hate You and I know You hate me because You didn't give me what I wanted!"

Your children have said that to you. You know. You didn't give them what they wanted. You gave them what they needed.

Your heavenly Father does that.

In essence he says when I'm bumping up against the eternal purpose of God and I don't get what I want, then God must hate me. Or God must be mad at me.

No, God still loves you unconditionally.

Now there's one other realm where this fits. And that's what comes into your life.

You know, the typical response is when you're going through a crisis, is your self-righteous brother coming up with his long boney finger and his 17 admonitions and his poem and his challenge to say "My, my! You must have done something terrible to deserve that from the hand of God!"

Boy that brings comfort, doesn't it? And in essence, we are victims of when circumstances that are traumatic or that are negative come into our lives, we say "Boy, God must really be ticked. God is back and He's mad, you know. He's really after me. What I've sown now I'm going to reap."

And we get those feelings inside. We've got to rise above that.

Solomon here tonight, I think is saying this. He's saying, you know, "If it's what I want and God gives it then He shows His love. And if He doesn't give me what I want but what I need, then it equals hate." And we know that's not true.

Verse 2.

v. 2 All share a common destiny—the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad, the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not. As it is with the good man, so with the sinner; as it is with those who take oaths, so with those who are afraid to take them.

“All share a common destiny...”

Now you look at that and you say “Oh my goodness! That means that everybody’s the same.” No.

“All share a common destiny”—that is that God has a sovereign purpose and you’re going to bump into it somewhere along the way. All of us face that. Every one of us faces sovereign purpose. Just like the pilot charts the course, flies the plane, determines the destination, so God works all things together for good (Romans 8:28).

“All share a common destiny—the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad, the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not. As it is with the good man, so with the sinner; as it is with those who take oaths, so with those who are afraid to take them.”

He’s reflecting on this and he says “You can’t comprehend God’s eternal purpose.” But we all have that same destiny. We’ve got to face that eternal purpose that He has for our lives.

Verse 3.

v. 3 This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of men, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead.

“This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of men, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead.”

Boy, you don't have to be very far today to see that do you? Man, just the incredible sadistic things that are happening in our society just drive you up the wall.

I was driving down to Temple yesterday and this guy comes on the news and he says “We have now got the tamper-proof cap for our medicines. And it's going to go on top of the childproof cap.” And the guy says “Why do we need it?” He says “Why hasn't it been developed before?” He says “We haven't needed it.”

What else have we got to do with our sadistic drug-filled minds to destroy human life? You know, you don't have to go far.

Psalm 51:5

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Society today says “Go for it man! Give it your best shot! Grab for all of it! You only go around once! Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you die! Eat, drink and be merry, the bombs may fall tomorrow!”

Romans 3:23

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Romans 6:23

The wages of sin is death....

We know that.

In essence he’s telling you that. That’s the results of all of this.

Boy! The first thing that we see in tonight’s study is God’s determination—that’s His sovereign purpose. And now he turns to death.

If there are two things that he’s learned out of his crisis, is that boy its lonely fighting against God and you’re going to lose.

His sovereign purpose is out there. It has determined the

course of my life and I better just let Him fly it.

But secondly, death is closer than when I was born. And I've lived more than I'm going to get to live. And I'm on the downhill side of this thing babe and I'm sliding down the tube coming to the end of the route. And that's what these next verses show you.

Verse 4.

v. 4 Anyone who is among the living has hope—even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!

“Anyone who is among the living has hope—even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!”

I mean, you can have this regal king of the beasts laying in the thicket dead. And you can have this miserable cur that wanders around the street with life. At least where there's life, there is hope. Huh? Even for the contemptible dog.

v. 5 For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten.

“For the living know that they will die,”—that's the problem in the crisis—“but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten.”

Remember what we said in the crisis, the grave is the end?

He's right back there again. He's saying here, "you're not even going to remember me." He said that back in chapter 1. He says that one of the biggest hassles in this whole thing is that nobody's going to remember "how I lived and how I gave my life." That's the frustration of it.

But he says:

"they have no further reward."

I've got to take issue with this though.

You know, the apostle Paul, when he spoke of death for the believer, he spoke of it in totally different perspective in here. You know, I'm amazed at how many people go along in their lives with the Lord for so long and they're not really ready to face physical death, whether it's for themselves or for people who are very close to them.

I guess it's something we just don't talk about. We think it's going to happen to our friends and so as parents we don't prepare our children for it. And as parents we haven't been prepared for it. And when it comes, we're lousy witnesses for the Lord because we've been totally unprepared.

Mark it down in your little book. When a friend dies or a member of the family, [that's] your greatest opportunity to be a witness for the Lord. You're going to have people around you at that time who are going to be looking at you to see whether or not your faith really stands.

You know, you look at a guy like the apostle Paul, when he is young he says “O death, where is thy sting? And O grave, where is thy victory? Ah ha! You’re not going to bother me!”

Alright then man, let’s put it down there 20 years when you’re getting ready to have your head roll in the street as soon as Nero decides that it’s all over and you’re sitting in that worm-infested sewer of a Mamertine prison in Rome. You’re going to die tomorrow! What are you going to say then?

2 Timothy 4:6-8

I am ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished the course; I kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only but unto all those also who love his appearing.

Paul always looked forward to physical death because he said this:

I am absent from the body, I am instantaneously present with the Lord. (2 Cor. 5:8)

I’ll always remember this because back when I was in college I had a very dear friend die in an automobile accident. It was Christmas holidays and I had to stay over because I was playing varsity basketball and we were having a bunch of

games during the holidays and it was my first Christmas away from home and he and I were playing a game of H.O.R.S.E. down in the gym. And he was getting ready to leave to go be with his family and he died that night. And we were very, very close friends.

I always remember my professor saying “Saints are immortal until their work on earth is done.” And that next week when we got back to classes, the Greek professor told us we could take any verse in the Bible and study it.

And I took that verse in Philippians 1:23 where Paul says “I am having a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better.” And I studied the word “depart.” Do you know what that word means? “I have a desire to depart to be with Christ.” It means to pull up the tent stakes, fold up the tent and go to the house. You’re on vacation here. You’re a pilgrim. The time comes when you pull up the tent stakes and you fold up the tent and you head to the house.

He says I’ve got a desire to do that because “eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things which the Lord hath prepared for them that love Him.” (1 Cor. 2:9)

Friend, absent from the body, present with the Lord.

For me to live is Christ while I’m here, but to die is to gain more of Christ because I’m going to be with Him, instantaneously.

So Solomon really doesn't have the full-orbed picture of what it's like. The time of reward, the time of finishing the race, the time of acknowledgment, of being with the Savior is the instant reality of the person who breathed His last here.

The best way to describe death for the believer is "come on in, I've got some new assignments for you."

"Well done thou good and faithful servant. Enter into the joys I've prepared for you." (Matt. 25:23)

You know you need to share that with your kids. You need to talk about those things, maybe at the death of a pet or something of that sort, where you can really begin to bring reality to them so they're not totally devastated by some emergency that might come.

v. 6 Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun.

"Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun."

What are we saying? The game is over. The gun has sounded. You aren't going to run this race again. You really do go only around once. And you blow it and you goof up and you mess it up. But friend, there comes the time when you don't get to run

anymore. You finish and that's what he's saying.

It's vanished. They'll never "have a part in anything that happens under the sun."

Turn the page for the rest of the story.

Aw you're doing so great tonight I can't believe it.

Alright, what two things has he talked about?

Determination—God's got a purpose and everything we do is in His hands.

Death—it's an inescapable event for all of us. What am I supposed to do?

With everything determined and death in view, I could get depressed. I could really get down. I go back in the pits again.

Instead of doing that as a believer, he tells you to delight yourself in several things. He gives you a three-point job description. This is why I believe he's coming out of it.

Verse 7.

v. 7 Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for it is now that God favors what you do.

“Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for it is now that God favors what you do.”

The command is:

Don't get depressed because God's got everything determined.

Don't get depressed because you're going to die.

I mean, live it up! Let's go for it! When it comes time to go out and eat, go out and eat and have a good time!

Consider the POSITIVES instead of always spending your time on the NEGATIVES.

You know much of your life is determined by attitude. Now I know you don't agree with me, but I go along with these Zig Ziglar's and some of these guys who're coming across with this powerful, positive attitude because it makes all the difference in the world. And it's biblical!

Listen to these verses if you don't believe me—if it all starts up here in the head. Remember last week I said when you wake up in the morning, somebody's talking to you.

Immediately, first conscious thought, self is saying “Oh my God it's morning” or “Good morning God.” That's the way you start and that's the beginning of the day right there. Bam! First consciousness, there you are.

How about this:

1 Peter 1:13

Gird up the loins of your mind.

That means, pull up those trailing thoughts and put them together. Get after it.

How about:

Philippians 2:5

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ.

Man you don't see him negative, down and depressed.

How about:

2 Corinthians 10:5

Bring every thought captive unto the obedience of Christ.

That's positive stuff!

Over and over again the Word emphasizes this and Paul says "I forget those things which are behind, I press toward those things which are in front." (Phil. 3:13) The Lord's mercies are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness." (Lam. 3:23)

You can't do anything about yesterday, it's gone already. Let's

forget it. Let's go on today and make it something pretty super and special.

You know, as I started thinking along that line I went back—one of the advantages I have in my Bible study and I do it for this reason is I plaster my desk with a chart. In fact, my big desk has got John 13-17 spread all over it from clear down to this end, to clear down to that end. And every time I walk into that office, I'm living John 13-17. I'm washing the disciples feet and I'm listening to the Lord say "stop being troubled in your hearts." And I'm listening to him pray in John 17. Every time I hit my office, that's where my study is right now.

I have Ecclesiastes on my desk a couple of years ago. And so every time I walk in, I'm hitting one of these verses. And I marked in blue all of the positive statements. And you know, I came up with a bunch of them. Here they are.

Interspersed in this, are those little glimpses of the solution to the crisis.

Ecclesiastes 2:24

A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work.

Ecclesiastes 3:12

I know there is nothing better for man than to be happy and do good while they live.

Ecclesiastes 3:22

I saw there is nothing better for a man than to enjoy his work...

Ecclesiastes 5:18

Then I realized that it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labor...

Ecclesiastes 6:12

For who knows what is good for a man in life, during the few and meaningless days he passes through like a shadow? Who can tell him what will happen after he is gone?

Ecclesiastes 8:15

So I commend the enjoyment of life because nothing is better for a man under heaven...

He's telling you enjoy it!

We so often take that statement "eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die" and we plaster that on the guy who's not a Christian. And we say "this is the way the guy lives who's not a Christian because he's just grabbing for everything he can get." I'm saying that's a great verse for a Christian when you

see it in its right perspective.

You ought to be eating and drinking and being merry because tomorrow you are going to die! But He came to give you life and life more abundant! That verse really fits us if we're on top of it and we're cooperating with the sovereign purpose. He came to give us life and enjoy it and not to take it away! Some people just get the feeling that God comes as a joy-robber and takes everything away that's fun.

You know, I tell everybody when I get to go skiing and I get to play racquetball and I get to run and I get to go to all these places and do all these things. Boy, it's terrible to be a Christian. You never get to have any fun.

It's just incredible what the Lord has taken out of my life. Oh, I'm so sad. I never have any fun! Man, I'm looking forward to dying because I'm one of the most unfulfilled individuals in the world as far as what God has given me and what I'm enjoying in life.

Verse 8.

v. 8 Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil.

“Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil.”

WHITE GARMENTS are symbols of PURITY and

FESTIVITY.

And the OIL is the symbol of JOY.

Alright, he says “eat.”

And then he says “enjoy.”

But look at verse 9.

v. 9 Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun.

“Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun.”

Some of you guys are single tonight and you’re saying “Hey, I can’t fill that one.”

Well, I’ve got to tell you, in the Hebrew text this says “Enjoy life with a wife.” So you single guys realize get out there and find it, you know. That’s what you’re supposed to do.

1. First you’re supposed to “EAT”!

2. Then you're supposed to "ENJOY life with a wife." God brought that woman into your life to be enjoyable.

Remember chapter 3, verse 11?

Ecclesiastes 3:11

He makes all things beautiful in His time.

Here: "whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life."

Why are women so special and why are they supposed to make life so beautiful and why are you supposed to enjoy it?

I was reading Jim Elliot's memoirs and his diary. I just picked it up. And as a junior in high school, he's talking about he's reading a passage in Genesis about Abraham's servant going to get a bride. And he says:

Lord, I can't give her jewels. She's got to live in a tent and bring me comfort.

(source unknown)

And of course we understand that he became a missionary to the Aucas in 1956 along with four other guys, gave his life trying to reach those Indians. But he had some definite objectives in view of how this woman was to function in his life to meet his needs.

I got the THREE B's gals. If you're functioning in the man's

life:

1. you're a BLESSING,
2. you're BEARABLE, and
3. you're BEAUTIFUL.

That's the way you function.

Some women can get so selfishly involved in all the activities of the children and the community and neglect the greatest responsibility. And that's to help her man through a mid-life crisis. And many times out of mid-life crisis comes an awareness on the part of the woman of the fact that she has a very, very important function in the life of her husband which she has always taken for granted, and realizes in the midst of the struggle, that she has really failed to be these things to him.

A man should have one place that he can go where he can really enjoy life. And that is, life with his wife.

Bask in the sunshine of her love. Be something that is very, very special. This is your portion in life.

Now look at verse 10.

v.10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there

is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.”

Alright, what’s the third thing?

3. Your WORK—your vocation.

I mean:

1. eat your meals with gladness,
2. “enjoy life with a wife,”

and then:

3. go for it in your work.

And I tell you how to go for it in you work and that’s realize that that’s sacred just as much as everything else is.

When you personalize your work and you realize that that is what God wants you to do, it makes all the difference in the world.

I try to teach kids in camp that there’s no division between the sacred and the secular. And for kids, this just blew them

away.

You are no more spiritual riding that horse than you are sitting in a Bible class. Of course they love my philosophy and it's true. Whatever you do, you do to the glory of God. Whether you're paddling a canoe or you're eating a meal with a counselor or you're sitting in a Bible study. In God's sight, that's all sacred.

And what he's saying here is, if it's worth doing, "do it with all your might."

Colossians 3:23

Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men.

Dr. Pentecost says:

With the will you can obey the master. With the heart you can love the Lord. He says whatever you do, do it as to the Lord, from the heart for you serve the Lord Christ. Housewife, as you work in your home, do all the dusting [and] cooking because you are the Lord's servant and this is the Lord's will. You serve the Lord Christ. If it is God's will for you to be a housewife, then you are tested on how you perform a housewife's function. [If] it is God's will for you to be a secretary, you are tested by what kind of a secretary you are. (source unknown)

If in his will, you are a student, you are tested by what God's will is for you today, what you do in school. [If] it is God's will for you to be in business, you are tested by what you did at the office. You are there as a servant of the Lord, no matter what He gives you to do and your love for Him should transform that which is routine and burdensome and monotonous so that it becomes your joy.

One of the secrets of dealing with monotony is to personalize that which you are doing. If you doing it for an organization, that's one thing. If you are doing it to please a person, that's something entirely different.
(source unknown)

And so he says personalize it. Make it something very special. Do it the very best you can.

Alright:

1. "eat,"
2. "enjoy life with your wife,"

and the third one:

3. endure enthusiastically what you have to do.

Now I realize some guys turn that around.

They eat and they endure enthusiastically their lives with

their wives and they enjoy their work and become workaholics. But that's not what he says here. He says [it] the other way around.

There's a little poem that goes so well when it talks about doing it with all your might and it's like this:

If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill,
Be a scrub in the valley,
but be the best little scrub
by the side of the rill.

Be a bush if you can't be a tree.
And if you can't be a bush, be a bit of grass
And some highway happier make.
If you can't be a musky, then just be a bass,
But the liveliest bass in the lake.

We can't all be captains, some have to be crew.
There's something for all of us here.
There's work to be done, we've all got to do
Our part in a way that's sincere.

If you can't be a highway, then just be a trail,
If you can't be the sun, be a star.
It isn't by size that you win or fail.
Be the best of whatever you are.
(source unknown)

Since the future is determined and death is coming, I'm to do

THREE THINGS:

1. “eat,”
2. “enjoy life with my wife,” and
3. endure enthusiastically the work that I have to perform—
“do it with all my might.”

Verse 11.

v.11 I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all.

“I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all.”

Ok, he makes FIVE STATEMENTS there. And he says I’ve been observing this.

1. He says the race is not always won by the swift.

I mean, you just have to run a few races to realize that some guys start off like a house of fire and they end up [losing] their cookies about two or three miles out. And some of the others

just flat don't make it because they get exhausted and they burn it all up early. And it isn't to the swift.

It's interesting that Paul comes over in the New Testament and he makes life as a Christian like a race. You know, I'm going to write a book on that some day.

Ann Kiemel wrote that one *Run to Win*. She took all my verses when she wrote it.

And after I run Boston in '84 I'm going to run mine and I'm going to call mine *The Finisher*. I just thought of that the other day when I got through. I think that I can take the 2 Timothy passage and come up with something better than hers.

(source unknown)

2. The battle to the strong!

Ephesians chapter 6—the battle to the strong.

Take the whole armor of God.

3. "...nor does food come to the wise"—no, you've got to work for it.

4. "...or wealth to the brilliant"—not necessarily.

"You seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" and then He'll take care of that.

5. “...or favor to the learned”—no, rather to the obedient.

“...time and chance happen to them all.”

You know, time depletes your strength, it reveals your priority and it releases you of certain goals that you have because you realize you just aren’t going to make it.

Verse 12.

v.12 Moreover, no man knows when his hour will come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so men are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them.

“Moreover, no man knows when his hour will come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so men are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them.”

You don’t know when your hour is going to come. Christ is the only One!

He says “my hour is not yet come....my hour is not yet come.” In John 13 he says to those guys: “My hour has come. It’s here. I’m going to die.”

You don’t know. I mean, just during this tour I’ve had the funeral for a little 3 ½ year old boy. I’ve had a funeral for a guy who’s 43. Both of them gone to be with the Lord.

The queen died at 50. Little baby was crushed by a pet python here in a crib not too long ago. All of these things happen. We don't know!

And just like the fish is caught in the trap and the bird's caught by the snare, so evil times fall unexpected. We can't explain it. But we know our lives are in His hands.

v.13 I also saw under the sun this example of wisdom that greatly impressed me:

"I also saw under the sun this example of wisdom that greatly impressed me:"

What is wisdom? Wisdom is rightly relating to God's eternal purpose. That's what wisdom is. And so he's going to talk about that now for just a second.

v.14 There was once a small city with only a few people in it. And a powerful king came against it, surrounded it and built huge siegeworks against it.

"There was once a small city with only a few people in it. And a powerful king came against it, surrounded it and built huge siegeworks against it."

v.15 Now there lived in that city a man poor but wise, and he saved the city by his wisdom. But nobody remembered that poor man.

“Now there lived in that city a man poor but wise, and he saved the city by his wisdom. But nobody remembered that poor man.”

v.16 So I said, “Wisdom is better than strength.” But the poor man’s wisdom is despised, and his words are no longer heeded.

“So I said, ‘Wisdom is better than strength.’ But the poor man’s wisdom is despised, and his words are no longer heeded.”

Why? We’re impressed with strength not with wisdom!

Ok, I’m going to say three letters and then I’m going to say three more letters. And tell me which one you would come to listen to.

Here’s the first one: P-H-D.

Here’s the second one: N-F-L.

You’re impressed with strength. Man, if they were playing right now. You’d be here. I mean, everybody wants to hear somebody from the NFL.

PhD—dime a dozen.

Got a little bit he wants to share, man it’ll be boring I know it.

Phd—Piled Higher and Deeper. You know, I mean, that's all that is.

Don't want to listen to any of that stuff.

We're just like that you know. It's the strength, it's not the wisdom. This poor guy saved the city by his wisdom. Everybody forgot him! Rejoicing in the fact of their salvation.

Verse 17.

v.17 The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools.

“The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools.”

v.18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

“Wisdom is better than the weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.”

I love this next verse.

10:v. 1 As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.

“As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.”

As he moves into chapter 10, he's saying you know a fool can destroy more than a wise guy can put together. And in the Bible you see that is true.

I mean you see Ananias and Sapphira in Acts chapter 5 get blown out of the tub.

You see Adam in the garden.

You see Achin at the time of the destruction of the city of Jericho—keep them from winning the battle at Ai and it has to be dealt with before it's taken care of.

“As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.”

How did dead flies get in the perfume? And why does it make something that's supposed to smell so pretty, stink so bad? Somebody left the cap off. And a little bit of that goes a long way. And because of the carelessness that happens.

You know, one of the most impressive things about Solomon is in his relationship with Shulamith in the Song of Solomon, there is a statement that is classic for every couple.

Solomon says to Shulamith: “Honey”—I'm putting this in terminology that you can relate to—“we've got to catch the foxes before they spoil the vine.”

“Little foxes” is what’s translated.

What he’s saying is, “Honey there are going to be a lot of things in our lives that can spoil the vine that is blossoming of love before us. And we’ve got to catch those foxes before they spoil it.”

In other words, we’ve got to be careful to deal with the little things that ruin and take away the sweetness and make it stink and make it sour.

I remember I was teaching this back in 1980 and I came to my office one day and I walked into Pearl’s office and on her desk was Pearl’s Ecclesiastes and I thought oh my gosh, she’s going through a mid-life crisis. And she started a little article by saying “Home isn’t the way it used to be.” And then underneath it she had three things that ate my lunch.

1. Running,
2. racquetball, and
3. hundreds of activities.

That was preached to me and left not by chance on the desk.

Home’s not like it used to be because of some little things that became big things that were more important, creating a tension and a crisis.

What he's saying here is just a little carelessness, just some things that seem to be more important than they really are can create some tremendous difficulty.

I thought of the Arab poem called "The Camel's Nose." It's classic but it just describes exactly what I'm saying. Have you ever heard it?

The Camel's Nose

Once in his shop a workman wrought
With languid head and listless thought,
When through the open window space,
Behold, a camel thrust his face.

"My nose is cold," he meekly cried.
"Oh let me warm it by thy side."
Since no denial word was said,
In came the nose, in came the head.

As sure as sermon follows text,
The long and scraggly neck came next.
And then as falls the threatening storm,
In leapt the whole ungainly form.

Aghast, the owner gazed around
And on the ugly invader frowned.
Convinced as closer still he pressed,
There was no room for such a guest.

Yet more astonished heard him say,
“If thou art troubled, go your way,
For in this place I choose to stay.”

O youthful hearts to gladness born,
Treat not this Arab lore with scorn.

To evil habits earliest wile
Lend neither ear nor glance nor smile
Choke the dark fountain ‘ere it flows
Nor e’en admit the camel’s nose.

(source unknown)

1 Corinthians 5:6 says:

1 Corinthians 5:6

...a little leaven has a tendency to leaven the whole lump.

I was driving down the road yesterday afternoon to Temple and I happened to see a two-toned pussy cat that had been run over laying in the middle of the road and a little bit of that goes a long way. I want to tell you, I carried that smell with me in the car at least for 10 or 15 miles. And I thought of this verse. The dead flies can cause a real stink. And that’s what he’s saying. You’ve got to be careful about that.

Verse 2.

v. 2 The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left.

“The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left.”

Now this is not a political verse.

Some of you already got that didn't you. Huh?

Somebody said that when Reagan took office, he put two right wings on the eagle of the president's emblem.

What does he mean by that?

“The heart of the wise inclines to the right”—that is, he learns how to live comfortably with authority.

Authority, sovereignty, right and wrong are real issues in a mid-life crisis. And he says:

“The heart of the wise [person] inclines toward the right...”

“[And] the heart of the fool toward the left.”

He still keeps on fighting it. You see, he's beginning to solve his own problem now by being a wise person or a fool.

Verse 3.

v. 3 Even as he walks along the road, the fool lacks sense and shows everyone how stupid he is.

“Even as he walks along the road, the fool lacks sense and shows everyone how stupid he is.”

You just have to see the way a person walks sometimes, you can tell whether they got their head together or not.

v. 4 If a ruler's anger rises against you, do not leave your post; calmness can lay great errors to rest.

“If a ruler's anger rises against you, do not leave your post; calmness can lay great errors to rest.”

What do you do in wisdom when authority gets mad at you? I mean, how do you handle that?

Well don't act prematurely. Don't take your toys and go to the house.

Wisdom's strength is always in control.

Now remember that with your kids. Rather than react, respond to the circumstances with a child. It's so easy to react, put them on restriction and probation, and take away all the joy that you're going to have because you're going to have to live with it.

Don't react—respond under control and handle the

circumstance. Wisdom is on your side. Calmness can lay some great errors to rest.

And I always give James 1:19-20:

James 1:19-20

This you know, my beloved brethren, but let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger, [Guys that will work great with your wives too] But anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

Verse 5.

v. 5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun, the sort of error that arises from a ruler:

“There is an evil I have seen under the sun, the sort of error that arises from a ruler:”

v. 6 Fools are put in many high positions, while the rich occupy the low ones.

“Fools are put in many high positions, while the rich occupy the low ones.”

v. 7 I have seen slaves on horseback, while princes go on foot like slaves.

“I have seen slaves on horseback, while princes go on foot like

slaves.”

This is the misuse and mistakes of authority because of who you know.

v. 8 Whoever digs a pit may fall into it; whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake.

“Whoever digs a pit may fall into it; whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake.”

v. 9 Whoever quarries stones may be injured by them; whoever splits logs may be endangered by them.

“Whoever quarries stones may be injured by them; whoever splits logs may be endangered by them.”

We never know what’s going to happen to us.

v.10 If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill will bring success.

“If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill will bring success.”

Sharpen the thing before you go out there.

v.11 If a snake bites before it is charmed, there is no profit for the charmer.

“If the snake bites before it is charmed, there is no profit for the charmer.”

That’s for sure.

He doesn’t make any money if he bites somebody before he’s charmed. Probably lose his life in the process.

v.12 Words from a wise man’s mouth are gracious, but a fool is consumed by his own lips.

“Words from a wise man’s mouth are gracious, but a fool is consumed by his own lips.”

Just always talking.

v.13 At the beginning his words are folly; at the end they are wicked madness—

“At the beginning his words are folly; and at the end they are wicked madness—”

v.14 and the fool multiplies words. No one knows what is coming—who can tell him what will happen after him?

“and the fool multiplies words. No one knows what is coming—who can tell him what will happen after him?”

Fools rush in where wise men fear to tread. Huh?

v.15 A fool's work wearies him; he does not know the way to town.

“A fool's work wearies him; he does not know the way to town.”

Or we use it this way, he doesn't have enough sense to come in out of the rain.

v.16 Woe to you, O land whose king was a servant and whose princes feast in the morning.

“Woe to you, O land”—after you turn the page, huh? Is it time to turn? Turn it!

“Woe to you, O land whose king was a servant and whose princes feast in the morning.”

What does that mean? Lazy leaders. They're taking their privilege. They're taking their power and they're taking their personal advantage and that issues in pleasure.

There is a process in leadership that goes like this:

1. first POWER,
2. then PRIVILEGE,
3. then PERSONAL ADVANTAGE, and

4. then PLEASURE.

Woe to a land that's got its princes eating in the morning, having a big time and not doing their work.

v.17 Blessed are you, O land whose king is of noble birth and whose princes eat at a proper time—for strength and not for drunkenness.

“Blessed are you, O land whose king is of noble birth and whose princes eat at a proper time—for strength and not for drunkenness.”

v.18 If a man is lazy, the rafters sag; if his hands are idle, the house leaks.

“If a man is lazy, the rafters sag; if his hands are idle, the house leaks.”

You know, God has a great sense of humor.

I always speak in the Northwest in the month of August and we get to stay in the missionary cabin and it is really a missionary cabin.

I was sitting in one of the—there's four bedrooms in it and I always make one of them into a study and I have this great big piece of plywood laying out on the bed and its got my Ecclesiastes on it see, and I'm sitting there and I'm reading

and I come down to this verse and its pouring down rain outside. And just a few minutes before I have put buckets under all the places and we've got 7 or 8 bottles tingling and pinging in the background and I come to this verse. And it says "If a man is lazy, the rafters sag; and if his hands are idle, the house leaks." And then "ping, ping, ping, ping" in the background. All of it taking place with the buckets and I'm thinking, boy what message is coming across here. I need to share this with the maintenance man of this place.

v.19 A feast is made for laughter, and wine makes life merry, but money is the answer for everything.

"A feast is made for laughter, and wine makes life merry, but money is the answer for everything."

Boy, that's what some people think.

v.20 Do not revile the king even in your thoughts, or curse the rich in your bedroom, because a bird of the air may carry your words, and a bird on the wing may report what you say.

"Do not revile the king even in your thoughts, or curse the rich in your bedroom, because a bird of the air may carry your words, and a bird on the wing may report what you say."

Careful what you say about the king.

I was thinking of in 2 Kings chapter 6 it's so cute.

Elisha the prophet knows what the king of Assyria is going to do so when the king of Assyria sends his troops down, Elisha says “Hey, king of Israel, don’t let the people go that way because the king of Assyria. Come this way.” And so this is the dialogue in 2 Kings 6:12. It’s so good.

2 Kings 6:12

And one of his servants said “No, my lord, O king, but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.”

I mean, he knows all about you! And he knows exactly what you said and he tells the king everything.

Honor the king. Be careful that you’re wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove.

I got these six lessons out of the study.

Lesson #1: The righteous and the wise and what they do are in God’s hands.

The righteous and the wise and what they do are in God’s hands.

His sovereign purpose is determined for our lives.

Lesson #2: Eat your food with gladness. Enjoy life with a wife.

And what your hands find to do, do it with all your might.

Eat your food with gladness. Enjoy life with your wife. And what your hand finds to do, do with all your might.

Lesson #3: Big Ben is just about over there.

Lesson #3: No man knows when his hour will come.

And you can put that in two perspectives.

No man knows when his hour will come for trial or for death.

You don't know when that emergency's going to hit you.

No man knows when the hour of his trial or the hour of his death will come.

Lesson #4: The quiet words of the wise are more important than the shouts of the fool.

The quiet words of the wise are more important than the shouts of the fool.

Lesson #5: A little folly spoils the whole life.

A little folly spoils the whole life.

That's what is meant by that dead flies spoil the perfume.

A little folly spoils the whole life.

And the last one:

Lesson #6: Do not revile the authority that is over you.

Do not revile the authority that is over you.

You realize that you're rebelling against authority on this level is only revealing a rebellion against the authority on that level. And that, in essence, that's what he's talking about in this study tonight.

The solution to the crisis is to submit to the determinations of a sovereign God who is working it together for good and He loves you. Now trust Him.

You know, I want to share something with you tonight. It's almost ironic how this happens and yet it's not. Some of His sovereign purpose.

As I came down in my notes, I wrote these notes originally in 1980 and of course I've had two years to work on them now.

When I wrote them originally I had down at the bottom of my paper—Duane. He came to know Christ the other night in a class in a west Texas city. This is what Duane said:

Mine was just a problem of acceptance. I have heard the gospel a lot but I know that last Tuesday was different.

He and I sat together in the office after the study and he invited Christ into his life. He's a vice-president of a savings and loan. [He] invited Christ into his life.

I have not seen that guy other than I have sent him materials and kept in touch with him through the newsletter until this week I got this letter and I love it.

It has been a long time since we last talked—almost two years. I'm not sure if you even remember who I am, [But I do] but even if you don't it is not really important. During your visits to [our town] I gave my life to Christ. I had a long way to go but fortunately the Lord is patient and was willing to spend some time on me. Sometimes I think the Lord has to run us into a brick wall to knock some sense into our head. At least that is the way it happened with me. About three months ago after months of struggling with my job, I was fired. It was a devastating experience and frankly I felt like the Lord had deserted me. I suffered through a couple of weeks until I realized that in all of my prayers I was trying to manipulate the Lord. I was disappointed when things didn't go my way which at the time I thought was the only way. Finally I hit my knees and asked for forgiveness. I asked that the Lord's will be done regardless of what I thought about it. I pledged to trust in Him no matter what happened. From that moment I have experienced a peace that I have never experienced before.

A few days after that I took a job selling real estate. I haven't

sold anything yet and I am flat broke but I am working hard and I have never been happier. The Lord is with me, He loves me, and He provides for me.

I tell you all of this because I believe that night I was with you and confessed the Lord Jesus was a pivotal point in my life.
(letter from anonymous friend)

And he goes on to thank God for that experience of Christian love.

You know to me a letter came across all those miles to get on my desk so that I saw it Sunday that perfectly fits tonight's study. He really, really has been through everything we've looked at in this study. He comes down to the end of it and he says I'm flat broke but I'm working hard and I've never been happier and the Lord is with me.

And that's what it's all about friend. That's a guy telling you at gut level and layman's terminology what Solomon's been trying to tell you through the whole thing. And if you're going through it, it's your own fault. Surrender—Yield—Give up and allow God to begin to work in your life.

Father, if there's someone here tonight that really doesn't have it together with You yet, I would pray that Your Holy Spirit would really convict them and they wouldn't put this off any longer, that we might slip together in one of the back bedrooms and just have an opportunity to pray and share. Or if that's embarrassing that one of the little booklets could be

taken on how to have a happy and meaningful life and that prayer could be prayed at home by themselves or with their wives or with other members of the family. Lord, it's just a matter of surrendering ourselves to You and to Your purpose and Your will for our lives. And I pray that You'll teach us that that's the way out and that's the solution to the mid-life crisis. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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Study Number Seven – Eat, Drink, and Be Merry: For Tomorrow We Die – Ecclesiastes 9:1-10:20

NOTES

v. 1 So I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands, but no man knows whether love or hate awaits him.

v. 2 All share a common destiny—the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad, the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not. As it is with the good man, so with the sinner; as it is with those who take oaths, so with those who are afraid to take them.

v. 3 This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of men, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead.

v. 4 Anyone who is among the living has hope—even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!

v. 5 For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten.

v. 6 Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun.

v. 7 Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for it is now that God favors what you do.

v. 8 Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil.

v. 9 Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun.

v.10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.

v.11 I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all.

v.12 Moreover, no man knows when his hour will come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so men are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them.

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v. 3 Even as he walks along the road, the fool lacks sense and shows everyone how stupid he is.

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v. 5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun, the sort of error that arises from a ruler:

v. 6 Fools are put in many high positions, while the rich occupy the low ones.

v. 7 I have seen slaves on horseback, while princes go on foot like slaves.

v. 8 Whoever digs a pit may fall into it; whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake.

v. 9 Whoever quarries stones may be injured by them; whoever splits logs may be endangered by them.

v.10 If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill will bring success.

v.11 If a snake bites before it is charmed, there is no profit for the charmer.

v.12 Words from a wise man's mouth are gracious, but a fool is consumed by his own lips.

v.13 At the beginning his words are folly; at the end they are wicked madness—

NOTES

v.14 and the fool multiplies words. No one knows what is coming—who can tell him what will happen after him?

v.15 A fool's work wearies him; he does not know the way to town.

v.16 Woe to you, O land whose king was a servant and whose princes feast in the morning.

v.17 Blessed are you, O land whose king is of noble birth and whose princes eat at a proper time—for strength and not for drunkenness.

v.18 If a man is lazy, the rafters sag; if his hands are idle, the house leaks.

v.19 A feast is made for laughter, and wine makes life merry, but money is the answer for everything.

v.20 Do not revile the king even in your thoughts, or curse the rich in your bedroom, because a bird of the air may carry your words, and a bird on the wing may report what you say.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Ecclesiastes 9:1-10:20 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. Summarize Solomon's conclusions in chapter 9:1-3.

3. Find the three commands that are stated in verses 7-10.

4. What are Solomon's observations in verse 11?

5. What is Solomon's illustration of wisdom in verses 13-16?

6. What can calmness do, according to chapter 10:4?

7. State the verdict and the question in verse 14.

8. What are we asked not to do in verse 20?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands.

LESSON #2: Eat your food with gladness, enjoy life with your wife, and what your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.

LESSON #3: No man knows when his hour will come, either of trial or death.

LESSON #4: The quiet words of the wise are to be heeded more than the shouts of the fool.

LESSON #5: A little folly spoils the whole life.

LESSON #6: Do not revile the authority that is over you.