

Reflection Questions: Ecclesiastes 12:1-14

For the message, "The End of the Matter" given by Pastor John Ferguson at Mercy Hill Church in Bryan/College Station, Texas, on October 18, 2020

These reflection questions are designed to help you apply the message from the Scriptures by helping you think through application to your personal life, your church life, and your city's life. You can use these by yourself for reflection, or with your family or small group for discussion. To review the message, go to MercyHillBCS.org/resources/messages.

INTRODUCTION

Pray. Take a moment to pray asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture text.

Read the Scripture text: Ecclesiastes 12:1-14

1 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"; **2** before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain, **3** 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** 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— **5** 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** 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, **7** and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. **8** Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity.

9 Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care. **10** The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth.

11 The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd. **12** My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. **14** For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

QUESTIONS

1. Let's think about how this text applies to our lives as individuals.

- Be honest: what emotions do you feel reading through this text? Do you find it encouraging? Depressing? Sobering? And why?
- Verse 8 leaves off where the book began (1:2): Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Here the author tells us that everything seems to be fleeting, so temporary. Are you surprised then that verses 9-14 tell you that it is not? How does verse 14 emphasize that everything matters in our fleeting lives?

- Restate verse 13 in your own words. How do you understand what is meant by the phrase, “Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man”? What thoughts or questions does this produce in your mind?

2. Let’s think about how this text applies to us as a community of Jesus’ followers.

- It seems like Christians of all people ought to be able to freely talk about life and death, and even the process of growing old and aging. After all, the Apostle Paul teaches that outwardly we are wasting away but inwardly we are being renewed day by day (2 Corinthians 4:16ff).
 - Have you found this to be the case in Christian community you’ve experienced?
 - How could we as a community of faith grow in speaking about this topic? In helping one another process the fears and anxieties that might accompany this topic?

3. Let’s think about how this text applies to our city.

- How does this text challenge the thinking of our city? In other words, why does our city need to hear the message of Ecclesiastes 12:1-14? How might it serve as a wake-up call?
- What kind of new life / future in Christ this text call our city to experience? In other words, how does the good news of Jesus shed light and hope on the ending of Ecclesiastes?

CONCLUSION QUESTION

What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life?

PRAYER

What are some ways you can turn what you are learning into prayer? List them as bullet points....

- _____
- _____
- _____