

Just a Breath | Assumptions

Ecclesiastes 11:1-10

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July 19, 2020

I. Common Assumptions

a. My life is under my control. (11:1-5)

...for you know not what disaster may happen on earth.

—Ecclesiastes 11:2b

*As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones
in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know
the work of God who makes everything.*

—Ecclesiastes 11:5

...for you know not what disaster may happen on earth.

—Ecclesiastes 11:2b

b. My success is up to me. (11:6)

*In the morning sow your seed, and at evening withhold
not your hand, for you do not know which will prosper,
this or that, or whether both alike will be good.*

—Ecclesiastes 11:6

c. My life is mine to live and enjoy. (11:7-10)

*So if a person lives many years, let him rejoice in them
all...*

—Ecclesiastes 11:8a

*Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart
cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of
your heart and the sight of your eyes...*

—Ecclesiastes 11:9a

...I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
—John 10:10b

*...But know that for all these things God will bring you
into judgment.*
—Ecclesiastes 11:9b

II. Allowing Wisdom to Change our Assumptions

*Cast your bread upon the waters,
for you will find it after many days.
Give a portion to seven, or even to eight,*
—Ecclesiastes 11:1-2a

a. Make generosity a way of life. (11:1-4)
*If the clouds are full of rain,
they empty themselves on the earth,
and if a tree falls to the south or to the north,
in the place where the tree falls, there it will lie.*
—Ecclesiastes 11:3

...for you know not what disaster may happen on earth.
—Ecclesiastes 11:2b

*He who observes the wind will not sow,
and he who regards the clouds will not reap.*
—Ecclesiastes 11:4

b. Accept that you don't know it all. (11:5-6)
*As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones
in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know
the work of God who makes everything.*
—Ecclesiastes 11:5

*There is nothing better for a person than that he should
eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I
saw, is from the hand of God*
—Ecclesiastes 2:24

In the morning sow your seed, and at evening withhold not your hand, for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good.

—Ecclesiastes 11:6

c. Make the most of your life, but don't forget God. (11:7-10)

Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun.

—Ecclesiastes 11:7

So if a person lives many years, let him rejoice in them all; but let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity.

Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes.

—Ecclesiastes 11:8-9a

...But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

—Ecclesiastes 11:9b

So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

—2 Corinthians 5:9-10

Remove vexation from your heart, and put away pain from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity.

—Ecclesiastes 11:10

Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth...

—Ecclesiastes 12:1a

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand

of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

—Colossians 3:1-10

Study Questions

1. Take a few minutes to identify some of the common assumptions we often make in life. Discuss the values and/or beliefs behind each assumption. Also, in light of our study of Ecclesiastes, identify some of the assumptions Solomon addressed throughout this book.
2. One assumption we tend to falsely hold is that we can actually control circumstances and outcomes. Read Ecclesiastes 11:5-6. How does Solomon challenge such assumptions? Explain. Also, how might recognizing that we're not in control set us free from a life of worry? Describe the role of God's sovereignty in finding such freedom.
3. Compare Ecclesiastes 11:8-9 to 2 Corinthians 5:10. Describe how the reality of a future judgment should shape how we live our lives here and now. In your own opinion, do you think it's wrong to allow future judgment to motive us toward holy living? Explain. Finally, in light of Colossians 3:1-10, how can we begin to live differently by "setting our minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. (Col. 3:2).