

Just a Breath | True Purpose

Ecclesiastes 12,
Hebrews 4:12, Romans
12:1, John 10:11

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I. Review:

The bad news of death is actually good news for our soul.

II. Acknowledging the Complete Arc of Life:

1. The potential of youth (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

*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"*

—Ecclesiastes 12:1

2. The decline of old age (Ecclesiastes 12:2-5).>

3 ...the keepers of the house tremble...the strong men are bent...the grinders cease because they are few...those who look through the windows are dimmed...4 ...the doors on the street are shut...one rises up at the sound of a bird... 5 ...the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along... —

Ecclesiastes 12:3-5

3. The inevitability of death (Ecclesiastes 12:6).

*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,*

—Ecclesiastes 12:6

4. The reality of eternity (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

—Ecclesiastes 12:7

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.

—Ecclesiastes 12:9-11

III. Discovering the True Purpose of Life:

1. We discover our true purpose as we pursue, proclaim and protect truth
(Ecclesiastes 12:9-12, Hebrews 4:12).

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

—Hebrews 4:12

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

—Ecclesiastes 12:13

2. The only life worth living is one of relationship with and response to God
(Ecclesiastes 12:13, Romans 12:1).

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

IV. Conclusion:

For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

—Ecclesiastes 12:14

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

—John 10:11

Only our response to the Gospel will determine whether judgment leads to condemnation (Ecclesiastes 12:14, John 10:11).

Study Questions

1. Read Ecclesiastes 12:1-8. What strikes you most about these verses? How well does your approach to life reflect an awareness of the complete arc Solomon describes? Have you ever experienced something that changed your perspective on what really matters? If so, describe the situation and how it impacted you. What might you need to pay more or less attention to in response to this week's message?
2. Read Ecclesiastes 12:9-12. Which of the following are you most comfortable with and why do you think that is: pursuing truth, proclaiming truth, or protecting truth? Which do you find most challenging, and what are some specific things you can do to grow in that area?
3. Read Ecclesiastes 12:13. How would you describe what it means to "fear God" to an unbeliever or new believer? What is the difference between "relationship with and response to God" being part of your life and being your life? How do you feel about where you are on that spectrum? In what situations might God be challenging you to rethink what it means to "fear God and keep his commandments"?
4. Read Ecclesiastes 12:14. In what ways does this verse

encourage you and in what ways does it convict you? What New Testament scriptures would you reference to explain the reality of judgment and necessity of the Gospel? Do you ever find yourself believing or behaving like something other than – or in addition to – the Gospel makes you acceptable to God? If so, how do you think that happens and what helps you get back on track?

5. As you think back over the entire series, what has impacted you most? In what ways have you been challenged to grow in your own discipleship journey? How has the series helped you understand the perspective of those who don't know Jesus and how to reach out to them? Spend some time praying for growth in your own life and opportunities to share the Gospel with specific people God brings to mind.