

Solomon concludes the book by answering the questions, “How do I remember my Creator and why should I remember my Creator?” These questions are meant to provide us four gifts which we’ll find by answering these questions.

1. How should you remember your Creator? (9-12)

a. The Gift of Pleasure: Finding Pleasure in God’s Word (9-10)

i. “The word “acceptable” in verse ten literally means “pleasurable.”

1. Solomon’s purpose in writing this book was to bring us joy!
2. It’s a sad irony that many find Ecclesiastes to be a gloomy, confusing book, rather than one that shows us to enjoy life to the fullest.

ii. Truth brings joy!

1. When we refuse the truth of God’s Word we forfeit God’s joy and beauty.
2. Illustration: Many today try remove God from their lives. They see God’s Word as anything but true or beautiful. Yet their own lives are a mess. They live for themselves, and their relationships become distorted and even destructive, and much of their lives become emotionally chaotic. Without God’s truth in their lives, there is also an absence of beauty. Without the Bible’s conception of pleasure, they must construct their own which will always be self-centered and isolating.
3. Remembering your Creator by taking pleasure in His Word sets you up for a lifetime of joy and beauty.
4. If you do not enjoy God’s Word, you do not know God well.

b. The Gift of Pain: Accepting the Goads of the Shepherd’s Staff (11-12)

i. Goads were staffs used by herd drivers to keep animals on a straight path.

1. The animals have very thick skin, so the shepherds would fix nails to the end of their staff to prod the animal in the right direction. When the animal strayed it experienced pain.
2. God’s Words are as goads, in that they confront our sin and cause us pain.

a. Painful Scriptures in Ecclesiastes

ii. Remember your Creator by letting His Word dispel your lies and confront your folly even if it hurts.

c. Application: Evaluate yourself by your relationship to the pleasure of God’s Word and the pain of God’s Word.

i. You can measure whether you find the Bible delightful by always expecting it to teach you something you did not already know.

1. Never lose your child-like wonder and curiosity of God’s Word.
2. David expresses this well in Psalm 19:7-10.

ii. Evaluate your relationship to the pain of God’s Word by asking yourself, when was the last time you submitted to it and acted on what it says, even when you did not like it?

1. When was the last time God’s Word rebuked you, humbled your pride, reversed your expectations, upset your priorities, offended your behavior, challenged your thinking?
2. How did you respond? We remember our Creator by submitting to His prodding.

2. Why should we remember our Creator in these ways? (13-14)

a. The Gift of Perspective: Fear God and Keep His Commandments (13)

i. This is the “whole duty” – every single duty or responsibility we have toward anyone or anything else, we have toward God first and foremost.

1. Why be a submissive spouse? “as unto the Lord” (Ephesians 5:22)
2. Why be an obedient child? “obey in the Lord” (Ephesians 6:1)
3. Why be an involved father? “to bring them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”
4. Why be a respectful employee? “as unto Christ” (Ephesians 6:5-7)
5. Why be a good employer? “knowing that your Master is in heaven” (Ephesians 6:9)

- ii. If we would think of doing everything for God first and foremost, it would radically change what we do for one another. It would make us bolder, more concerned about God's approval than man's, more kind and gentle, more joyful and less grumpy, more generous, and more alive.
 - 1. Proverbs 9:10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."
 - 2. Fearing the Lord and remembering our Creator makes us wise, because it teaches us to live on our knees; it humbles us as the creature and exalts God as the Creator who knows what's best.
- b. The Gift of Preparation: Preparing for the End (14)
 - i. Ecclesiastes is meant to shake us from our slumber and urge us to prepare for the day of judgment.
 - 1. For the lost man, life is one long exercise in avoiding reality and ignoring what is coming toward him – death and coming judgment. Ecclesiastes is meant to awaken them before it's too late to prepare.
 - a. Hebrews 9:27 "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"
 - b. Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."
 - c. Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life..."
 - d. Romans 5:8 "But God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
 - e. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life."
 - f. Romans 4:5 "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."
 - g. Romans 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."
 - 2. For the believer, death and judgment are not things to fear.
 - a. Philippians 1:21 "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."
 - b. Paul knew that in Christ, living and dying mean a win-win for the Christian. We can labor for Christ while we live, and we can live with Christ when we die.

Conclusion:

1. Do you take pleasure in God's Word? Do you approach the Bible expecting to learn something new?
2. How do you respond when God's Word causes you pain? Do you push back, or do you submit to it?
3. What difference would it make to your life to realize that every duty you have toward someone else, you have toward God first and foremost?
4. Are you preparing for judgment? What changes will you make to your life in the light of Ecclesiastes?