

STUDY 6 || *ECCLESIASTES 9-12*

# REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

In life, sometimes it's hard to know what to do next. Maybe that's why IKEA flat-pack furniture is so popular. It all comes pre-packaged, with step-by-step instructions. If ever you get stuck, just check the instructions and you can find out what to do next. But the reality is, sometimes it's still not easy. There are usually a lot of pieces to put together, and the instructions aren't always as clear as you'd like.

When have you found it difficult to do something even when you've been given step-by-step instructions?





**Read Ecclesiastes 11:7-12:14.**

3. In 12:1 the Teacher encourages people to ‘remember their Creator.’ This is actually the first time he’s referred to God as ‘Creator’ in this book. In light of Genesis chapters 2 and 3, what’s the benefit of ‘remembering your Creator’ in everyday life?
  
4. Before the book’s concluding section (12:9-14), the Teacher offers 12:8 as his final conclusion. What does this conclusion say about the limits of human efforts to ‘grasp life’ on our terms?
  
5. What does verse 12 tell us about the limitations of our pursuit of wisdom and knowledge?
  
6. The last two verses bring our journey in Ecclesiastes to a close. If life and work are ‘vapour’, how does the prospect of God’s judgement feel?

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## GOSPEL WISDOM

The Teacher has attempted to understand life, the universe and everything. As he said in chapter 1, “I applied my mind to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under the heavens.” (v13). The result is hardly inspirational. In the end it seems our work, lives, and loves are all a ‘vapour’. All we seek to gain for ourselves is here one day, gone the next. And it seems that God is a long way off, watching us as we sweat it out – waiting to judge us for our actions. Surely there’s more to life than vapour!?

And there is. Into this world - where so much is temporary - stepped Jesus. The God who seemed so distant in the eyes of the Teacher, has stepped into human history. In Jesus, how we see life, death, and God's judgement is all transformed. In his life and teaching Jesus sets before us a godly example of living in God's kingdom. In his death, Jesus deals with the sin God must inevitably judge. And in his resurrection Jesus offers us new life and hope - in this life, and throughout all eternity. Here's how Paul explains the difference Jesus makes . . . **Read 2 Corinthians 5:9-17.**

**2 Corinthians 5:9-17**

<sup>9</sup> So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. <sup>11</sup> Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others . . . <sup>14</sup> For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. <sup>15</sup> And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. <sup>16</sup> So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

7. What goals does Paul have for life? What motivates these goals?
  
8. In this old creation where we struggle onwards only to die in the end, what does Paul mean when he talks about 'the new creation' already being here?
  
9. The world is busy 'grasping' at life. How (in light of verses 11 and 14) can we seek to persuade people of the realities of life and the solution offered by Christ?

There's no denying that sin and death have wrecked the old creation. And as Christians we don't escape the effects of that. Often our lives and work will be frustrated and broken, long after coming to know Jesus. But alongside the old creation, the resurrection of Jesus has already launched the new creation! And as we die to our old life of selfish gain, and live instead a new life of gratitude to Jesus, we experience something of the new creation even now. A new creation that can't be wrecked by sin and death, because Jesus has defeated them. A new life that isn't vapour - it's meaningful and substantial - a life in Jesus that will last forever. For the Teacher there really was nothing better than to enjoy life as gift from God, even if it is marred by sin and shortened by death. But Jesus offers something better. Now you can enjoy life as an eternal gift from God. And you can invite everyone else along for the ride. Why don't you?