

# Goads And Nails

Eccl. 12:9-14

## ➤ Introduction

- In the KJV and ASV, the word “duty” is italicized showing that it has been supplied by the translators.
  - The text tells us that the “whole” of man is to fear God and keep his commandments.
  - When this is not a part of our lives, then the most important aspect of our lives is missing.
  - Luke 2:52 details four dimensions of human life:
    - And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. (mental, physical, spiritual, social)
    - With the spiritual missing, we are grievously incapacitated. (cf. I Cor. 13:2-3)

## ➤ Ecclesiastes --The Book

- The theme: The fear of the Lord (cf. Prov. 1:7; 9:10; Ps. 17:4)
- The perspective: Takes a long hard look at man’s circumstances “under the sun” and moves from a valley of despair to the high ground of faith in God and reverence for his word. A vacuum that only he can fill. (Eccl. 3:11)
- The source of the Preacher’s words: (12:10-11; Ps. 80:1)
- The search for meaning: Who am I? Why am I here? What should I be doing to fulfill my purpose? (1:12; 2:3)
- The experience shared: Chapter 2:1-18
  - Life tested. (1:13; 2:1ff)
  - Life detested. (2:17-18)
    - Life without God in view.

## ➤ Goads and Nails

- Eccl. 12:11 → “The words of the wise are as goads and nails fastened by masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.”
  - Goads → sharp stick used to get an animal moving. To provoke to thought and action. Delivers a sharp sting driving into a desired path.
  - Nails → Hold things together; God’s words nail down truth and give us absolutes on which to hold.
- *Things don’t last, but people will.*
  - “Better is a handful with quietness than both hand full with travail and vexation of spirit.” (4:6)
  - “Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth no in the abundance of the thing which he possesseth.” (Lk. 12:15)
  - “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. (I Tim. 6:7)
  - Give me...make me...Lk. 15:11,19
- *People need others and everyone needs God.*
  - 8 There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labor; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labor, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.
  - 9 Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. 10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. 11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? 12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.
  - God has made us as social beings to relate, love, care, communicate with, and seek the best for others: (Gen. 2:18; Acts 2:42-46; I Cor. 12:25-26; Phil. 2:4; Rom. 14:7; Heb. 13:5-6)
- *Spiritual growth is often accompanied by pain.*
  - “A merry spirit doeth good like a medicine.” (Prov. 17:22; 15:15)

- “Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.” (Eccl. 7:3) “sober reflection is good for the heart...” (NET)
- That which produces some of the greatest growth and stability as our lives go forward, can be very painful at a given moment in time. (Heb. 12:11; James 1:2-4)
- *Choices have consequences.*
  - “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” (8:11)
  - “If you think you can get something for nothing in this life, you just haven’t got the bill yet.”
  - Gal. 6:7-8 → 7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (Num. 32:23)

➤ The Conclusion

- 9 Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. 10 Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity. 11 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them...13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. (Eccl. 12:9-14)