



March 18, 2018  
“A Fulfilled Life”  
Ecclesiastes 12  
Pastor Gary Hamrick

Solomon’s epilogue for the book of Ecclesiastes helps us know more about how he looked at life and how he understood God. Solomon seems to have come full circle, in that he lived much of his life without God, only to come to realize that life without God is utterly meaningless. In his search for fulfilment he filled his life with wine, women, work, and wealth. In the end, he personally recognized the truth that no one or nothing can bring satisfaction in life like a relationship with the Lord.

### Remember Your Creator

1. **Ecclesiastes 11:9-10** - *“Be happy, young man, while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things God will bring you to judgment.”*
2. Pastor Gary said: “What [he was] really trying to express [was] enjoy life while you’re young and while you’re able, and don’t do what I did! ... Don’t pursue pleasure to the exclusion of God. Pursue God and then you will understand how fulfilling life can really be. ... When you live life the way God designed it [to be lived], it [will] go better for you. [But] when you decide that you are smarter than God and you want to live life the way you jolly-well want, it won’t go as well for you. [Life] will be more miserable [for you].”
3. **Proverbs 13:15** - *“Good understanding wins favor, but the way of the unfaithful is hard.”*
4. **Ecclesiastes 12:1** - *“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, ‘I find no*

*pleasure in them.’ ” (Emphasis added)*

5. [Psalm 8:3-4](#) – *“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?”*
6. Pastor Gary encouraged us to lead a God-focused and God-surrendered life.
7. Pastor Gary shared an overview of the poetic language Solomon used to describe what happens in the aging process.
  - a. Remember your creator:
    - i. Before you enter the gloomy season of life – [Ecclesiastes 12:2](#)
    - ii. Before you get weak arms and stooped shoulders – [Ecclesiastes 12:3](#)
    - iii. Before your teeth fall out – [Ecclesiastes 12:3](#)
    - iv. Before your eyesight fails – [Ecclesiastes 12:3](#)
    - v. Before you lose your appetite – [Ecclesiastes 12:4](#)
    - vi. Before you lose your hearing – [Ecclesiastes 12:4](#)
    - vii. Before you become fearful about many things – [Ecclesiastes 12:5](#)
    - viii. Before your hair turns white – [Ecclesiastes 12:5](#)
    - ix. Before you can’t walk very well – [Ecclesiastes 12:5](#)
    - x. Before your sex drive goes away – [Ecclesiastes 12:5](#)
    - xi. Before you die, and people mourn your death – [Ecclesiastes 12:5](#)
    - xii. Before you have trouble with your spine, head, lungs, and heart – [Ecclesiastes 12:6](#)

### Fear God

8. [Ecclesiastes 12:13](#) – *“Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter; **Fear God** and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”* (Emphasis added)
9. [Exodus 20:20](#) – *“Moses said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.’ ”*
  - a. We need to understand from this verse that we are not to be afraid of God, but at the same time we are to fear God.
10. Pastor Gary said: “A healthy fear of God depends on a healthy view of God. If you don’t have the right view of God, you won’t understand the right way to fear God. So, for some people [their] view of God is that [he] is always angry, [vengeful, and] always having a bad day! ... And, he just wants to nail somebody; almost with delight! ... As a result, when you have that view of God, the fear of God means that you don’t even want to approach him. You’re scared of him. You don’t want to draw near to him. ... [A] healthy view of God [is] that God is just, [and perfect,

holy, righteous, pure, and loving]. ... The right view of God makes you want to run to God when you sin, because the fear of God means that [you] don't want to do anything to disappoint or dishonor God. [You're] cut to the heart... [because] your sin is displeasing and dishonoring to God... [Instead] of running from God, [you] understand that as well as being a just and holy God, he's also a loving and compassionate God, so [you] run to him because [you] find forgiveness in his loving arms. That is a healthy view of God. It's a right view of God."

11. A basic understanding of what it means to fear God would be that there is a deep, profound, unmatched reverence and respect for Almighty God.
  - a. [Acts 9:31](#) - *"Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, **living in the fear of the Lord.**"* (Emphasis added)
  - b. [Exodus 3:5](#) - *" 'Do not come any closer,' God said. 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.' "*
  - c. [Mark 4:41](#) - *"They were terrified and asked each other, 'Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!' "*
  - d. [Luke 23:39-40](#) - *"One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: 'Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!' But the other criminal rebuked him. 'Don't you fear God,' he said..."*
12. Pastor Gary said: "The fear of God must be recaptured in the life of a Believer. We can't just walk glibly and carelessly in the sight [and] the presence of a holy and majestic God. He is worthy of our praise! He is to be revered! He is to be honored! He is to be loved! He is to be cherished and respected with deep reverence!"

### Keep God's Commandments

13. [Ecclesiastes 12:13](#) - *"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter; Fear God and **keep his commandments**, for this is the whole duty of man."* (Emphasis added)
14. Pastor Gary said: "Friends, people who say they love God and don't do what God says are either ignorant or disobedient. ... Now, if you're disobedient - meaning [that] you know what God says [but] you are willfully doing the opposite - then the solution is that you need to call it a sin, own it, and repent of it. That's how you get right with God. ... But, for those of you who are ignorant, who don't understand, maybe you're new to the faith [or] you don't even understand the whole thing of being a Christ follower and [what that means]... For you, let me just quote the words of Jesus, who said in [John 14:15](#): *'If you love me, you will obey what I command.'* And, [Jesus added] in [John 14:24a](#): *'He who does not love me will not obey my teaching.'* John [the apostle] would write in [1 John 5:3](#): *'This*

*is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.* ... [It's as if God said], 'If you really want to enjoy life to its fullest, then live life the way that I've prescribed.' So, when we follow his commands we [will] enjoy life because we do it the way God says."

15. Pastor Gary said: "When you do life God's way it brings God great glory, and it brings you great joy!"
16. Cultural Christianity basically teaches that all we need to do is put Jesus in the backseat [of our car], so to speak, meaning that we add Jesus to the way we talk, to the places we go, to the things we do, and the way we live our life.
17. Biblical Christianity teaches that we should live a life of surrender - our will our thoughts and our life - to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

### The Conclusion

18. Pastor Gary said: "Jesus is either your Lord or not. There is no in-between. If you want a fulfilled life remember your Creator, fear God, and keep his commandments, and it will go well with you."
19. Pastor Gary said: "I'm giving Solomon the benefit of the doubt. Again, some Bible scholars would disagree with me on this, but I think that when you read the conclusion, Solomon [came] full circle, and [came] back to God. [This] is an important conclusion, because [this] is also the story of a lot of people. Not only have a lot of people realized how meaningless and empty life is when they try to find fulfillment apart from God, [many also come back] to God and get right with God and find the fullness of life in knowing [the Lord]."

### Discussion Questions

1. Read [Ecclesiastes 11:9-10; 12](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Read and discuss [Proverbs 13:15](#) and [Psalm 8:3- 4](#).
3. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about the aging process and refer to Pastor Gary's remarks concerning the poetic language Solomon used. (See #7 above)
4. How is the Holy Spirit helping you live a God-focused and God-surrendered life?
5. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks on what it means to have a healthy fear of God. (See #8 through #12 above)

6. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's comments about following God's commandments. (See #14 above)
7. In what ways are you bringing glory to God in your daily life?
8. In what ways are you experiencing joy in your life because you're living life by God's Word and the leading of the Holy Spirit?
9. Allow the people in your group to share their thoughts about the difference between cultural Christianity and biblical Christianity. (See #16 through #18 above)
10. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).