

SPIRITUAL PLANNING – WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR LIFE**Ecclesiastes 1:12-18**

INTRODUCTION

- A. As Christians we cannot give up nor can we retire from being active in the Lord's church.
- B. New Year's resolutions are a good time to pause and reflect soberly on our life pursuits.
- C. On Judgment Day and time is no more, we will have lost interest in land, fancy furnishings, automobiles, credit ratings, and the pleasures of this life. Only things we have done for Christ will last.
- D. 1 CO 10:31. A life that fails to give glory to God is a failure, no matter what else may be accomplished in this life.
- E. A successful life is not measured in God's sight by earthly wealth, political power or social prestige. 1 TI 6:6-8.
- F. When we die and leave this world, we can take none of our material possessions with us. The only thing that matters is what service we have performed for God.
- G. The Book of Ecclesiastes presents the inward struggle of an honest man seeking to find the true meaning of life.
- H. Solomon was promised wisdom and wealth, but he allowed these blessings to lead him astray.
- I. The purpose of the Ecclesiastes is to convince men of the uselessness of any world view which does not rise above the horizon of man himself.
- J. The book seeks to teach us the right relationship to this earthly life.
- K. Our purpose will be to see what the wise man found out about the true meaning of life upon this earth.
- L. Solomon answers three important questions:
 - 1. What should we do with our lives?
 - 2. What will bring us the greatest good or happiness in this life?
 - 3. What will be the end or conclusion of my earthly life?

DISCUSSION

- I. SOLOMON'S EFFORT TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS
 - A. The answer is not in earthly knowledge and wisdom which brings grief and sorrow. EC 1:12-18.
 - B. As we increase knowledge; we increase responsibility, expectations and opportunities.
 - C. The answer is not found in laughter, intoxication, building, gardening, art, or theatre. EC 2:1-11.
 - D. The search for pleasure and happiness is a series of failed experiments. Name your failed experiments (I.e. dating, sports, humor, etc.).
 - E. The answer is not in earthly wealth and riches. EC 5:10-20.
 - F. This is no satisfaction with jewelry, precious metals, money, or possessions. People will always want more. 1 TI 6:10; LK 12:15.
 - G. The answer is not in human labor. EC 2:18-24.
 - H. People will despair over leaving your earthly things to others.
 - I. The answer is not in power, high estate, and popularity. EC 4:13-16.
 - J. It is better to be wise and poor than rich and foolish. There is no rejoicing in more responsibility and ruling over more people. Bottom Line: All is vanity!!! Life has no meaning apart from God.
 - K. What should we do with our lives? What will bring us the greatest good or happiness in this life? What will be the end or conclusion of my earthly life?"
 - L. Death is inevitable to all; make the best use of this life. Life is brief!!! EC 9:5-10. 99.9999+ % of our life will be spent in eternity, not on earth.

- M. This life is not the end of our existence. EC 12:6-7. HE 9:27.
- II. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF OUR LIFE? EC 12:13-14.
 - A. Fear God means reverence, respect and piety toward God as the controlling force in our lives.
 - 1. Fearing God is not a mere fear of His power and righteous retribution, but a wholesome dread of displeasing Him.
 - 2. Fear is reverence at the thought of God's infinite majesty, holiness and justice; gratitude for His loving-kindness and tender mercy; confidence in His wisdom, power, and faithfulness; submission to His will and delight in our communion with Him.
 - B. Keeping His commandments is the outward manifestation of an inward fear and respect for God. This is a means of testing our faith in God.
 - 1. Two elements constitute holiness: 1) a God-fearing spirit; 2) a blameless life.
 - 2. A fear of God which does not lead us to obey His commandments is not beneficial. MT 7:21-23.
 - C. Where God is honored and His will is cheerfully performed, there the whole duty of man is fulfilled, and we find the purpose of life.
- III. WHY SHOULD I FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS?
 - A. Ecclesiastes is a Book largely concerned with that which will bring happiness and success in this life. Solomon's discovery was made after a long and painful search is that the source of true happiness is to "fear God and keep His commandments."
 - 1. All else in life is but vanity and vexation of spirit.
 - 2. We should learn to be content and enjoy life by serving God to the best of our ability.
 - B. Judgment Day is Coming!!!
 - 1. The Judge is absolutely just and wise. His sentence will be final.
 - 2. If we regard our happiness in this life, then we should be moved to secure it by love and service to God. We need to control our thoughts, actions, and deeds knowing that we will give an account to God.
 - 3. The Bottom Line: Fulfill Your Duty and Purpose in Life Now!!! Fear God and Keep His Commandments.

CONCLUSION

- A. Prepare for eternity.
 - 1. Obey the Gospel of the Christ.
 - 2. Be faithful – be active!
- B. Each Christian needs to fulfill their duty and purpose in life while living.