

1. Introduction

The important question:

Eccl 6:12 - "For who knows what is good for a man during his lifetime, during the few years of his futile [vapor] life?"

Nine nails that help us live according to what is good for our lives as defined by God.

2. Embrace the _____ of Mourning (1-4)

The NET Bible

Sober reflection on the brevity of life and reality of death has more moral benefit than frivolous levity.

Shaw (90): But Solomon does not want his readers to be distracted. Go to the funeral, he says. That is your end as well. Do not forget it. Let it sit in your mind.

Shaw (91): Sorrow and grief remind us of the vanity of life, whereas joy distracts us from it.

Shaw (91-21): Thus, things and events that cause an evil countenance make us think. They improve our minds, our understanding. That is the point of the house of mourning. It reminds us of our end, and the responsibility facing us.

3. See the _____ of the Fool's Happiness (5-6)

The laughter of fools is like the thorns. Thorns burn quickly under the pot but don't warm the contents of the pot very much and neither will they warm the soul of the fool. His crackling is hevel.

4. Avoid Unwise _____ to Oppression (7-10)

Shaw (93): The Hebrew reads, 'better is length of spirit than height of spirit.' The English versions have captured the meaning, but have lost the image in the process. The image itself is worth reflecting on. The word 'long' here is often used in the phrase 'long of anger' (for example, Prov. 14:29) where the idea is that of being slow to get angry. Thus a long spirit is a spirit with much patience. The word 'high' is often used in the sense of 'exalted' or 'haughty'...

Shaw (94): The wise man, on the other hand, recognizes the true state of the world. Thus he is not much surprised by the inequities and injustices of the world.

Now there is some room for a righteous anger when it is focused on the fact that God's name is being attacked. However, much of my anger is centered around how things aren't "fair" for me, or that I think I deserve better than what I'm getting.

5. Find the _____ of Wisdom (11-12)

The NET Bible:

7:11 Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing;
it benefits those who see the light of day.

6. Consider God's _____ Work (13-24)

Shaw (100): But there is a concreteness to 'see' that is lost by the more abstract 'consider.'
Look around. See the work of God. There's no fixing it. There's no changing it.

Shaw (101): Enjoy what you can when you can.

7. Pursue a _____ Approach to Life (15-18)

Shaw (102): Verses 16-17 are a commentator's nightmare.

Kaiser (137): Few verses in Ecclesiastes are more susceptible to incorrect interpretations than 7:16-18.

The net translates the phrase: “perishes in his righteousness” as “in spite of his righteousness”

Kaiser (139): The real clue to this passage, as George R. Castellino demonstrated, is that the second verb in verse 16, "to be wise," must be rendered reflexively (for it is the Hebrew Hithpael form) as "to think oneself to be furnished with wisdom." Furthermore, Castellino observed, even if this valid point about the reflexive nature of the verb is rejected for some reason, "Do not be wise" in verse 16 is to be understood as it is in Proverbs 3:7: "Be not wise in your own eyes" (Esv, emphasis added).

The NET Bible

Rather, the proper fear of God will prevent a person from trusting in righteousness and wisdom alone for his security, and it will also prevent indulgence in wickedness and folly.

8. Use Wisdom to See Ourselves _____: None Righteous (19-22)

True wisdom brings us humbly back to the cross where forgiveness and grace is found.

Shaw (103): For our tendency is to hold others to a much stricter account than we hold ourselves.

9. Recognize that Infinite _____ Is Beyond Our Grasp (23-24)

10. See the Hopelessness of Our Own _____

Verse 26 is a personification of Lady Folly (vs Lady Wisdom) like we see in the book of Proverbs.

This is surely an indictment on his choices as king and on his choice of Lady Folly for many of his years.