

ECCLESIASTES 11:7-12:7 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

THE SECRET TO FINDING TRUE JOY - [\(SERMON MP3\)](#)

God commands us to enjoy our lives (Ecc 11:7-8)? Do you? What evidence can you provide? What would your spouse or your children say? What about your coworkers or neighbors?



- Solomon says that the way we express our enjoyment of life by R_____. (11:8) What ways does God want you to cultivate the discipline of rejoicing? How can you reflect the simple joy of Ecc. 9:7-10?

Some people can't rejoice, because they base their joy on a particular circumstance or relationship or achievement. Read the statements below and write down how you see them in your own life. Then read the accompanying passages. How does God's word counsel us in each area?



- I'll be happy when I have all the things I've ever wanted. (Luke 12:15, John 10:10)
- I'll find joy when I have this person (friend, spouse, child) in my life. (Ps 41:7-9, Mark 14:31, 50)
- I'll be able to enjoy life once this trouble goes away. (Matt. 5:10-12, James 1:2-4, 12, 5:11)
- I'll rejoice when I achieve this goal or realize my dreams. (James 1:11, 1 Tim. 1:5)

The commentator Derek Kidner says that "Joy was created to dance with goodness, never alone." A key to joy in life is consistently _____ those things that vex our hearts. (11:10)



- The Apostle Paul would agree with Solomon. He says that we ought to _____ to _____ what vexes our hearts. (Col. 3:5).
- How do these heart level sins and life patterns rob us of joy? (Romans 6:6, 12-14) John Piper says this, "What you love about sin is not the bondage, it's the pleasure." Jesus longs to free us from the bondage of sin into full joy in Him! (John 8:34-36)

True biblical joy is found in remembering your Creator. To remember God is more than a mere mental exercise. What happened when the Lord remembered Hannah in 1 Sam. 1:19? _____. When God remembered her, He acted on her behalf. To remember our Creator calls for decisive action based on recollection and reflection on all that God is and has done for us.



- What is the link between remembering God and finding joy? (Psalm 16:11, 37:4, 100:2, 137:6, Rom 14:17, 15:13)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: In verse 8, with the experience of the whole book behind us, and finally with this chapter's haunting pictures of mortality to enforce the point, we come back to the initial cry "Vanity of vanities," and find it justified. Nothing in our search has led us home; nothing that we are offered under the sun is ours to keep. But we are forgetting the context. This very passage points us beyond anything 'under the sun', in the words, your Creator, and it invites response to Him. It also points us to the present, as the time of opportunity. **Death has not yet reached out to us: let it rattle its chains at us and stir us into action!**" Derek Kidner, *The Message of Ecclesiastes*

LOOKING DEEPER AT JOY (FOR EXTRA PERSONAL STUDY)

G. K. Chesterton once said that joy is the gigantic secret of the Christian life, and there are far too many Christians alive today who would be surprised by his words. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit and a sign that God is at work in us.

Take a moment to think through this overview* of Christian joy. In the space below each statement, write 2 or 3 personal applications for each principle.

- **Christian joy cannot be earned.** Read Ecclesiastes 5:19. *Some would tell you that joy is a reward for wisdom, wealth, or intellect, but true joy is a gift. Thanks to Jesus, all of us, no matter what the circumstance, can know joy. It's the reason Paul and Silas could sing like crazy in prison, because joy is given, not earned. Trust Christ, and joy is yours to tap into in abundance.*

- **Christian joy is eternal, not temporal.** Read Psalm 16:11. *It's not something that is fleeting but that instead will last throughout all eternity. If you know that God is the source of joy, this fact connects your temporal joy to eternal joy.*

- **Joy and sorrow will appear in your life whether you're a Christian or not.** Read James 1:2-4. *You'll see both joy and sorrow throughout your time on earth, sometimes right alongside each other. The question that we each need to ask ourselves is, which one will win out in the end? Will joy win out, or will suffering? According to the gospel, if we do not trust in Jesus, then sorrow and death will have the victory. But if we trust in Christ, then eternal joy wins. Death ceases to be something that we need to fear, and joy marks the start of a new beginning.*

- **Christian joy is deep, not shallow.** Read Col. 3:23. *Joy gives even the small things in life a deeper meaning. Whatever we do, we should work hard at it, not forgetting that we work ultimately for God and His glory. Everything has purpose for the one who knows Christian joy.*

- **Christian joy is God centered rather than self-centered.** Read Psalm 37:4. *That means we're not just grasping for what we can get from other people like rampant consumers. No, our joy finds satisfaction in God; therefore we can be generous toward other people.*

- **Christian joy is indestructible, and not fragile.** Read 1 Cor. 15:54-58. *A hope that the grave can destroy is not a hope worth having, but a hope that can destroy the grave is. If you do not have this eternal, indestructible gift of joy, then you simply have not yet met Jesus. What you have in your heart is a case of divine homesickness. Maybe you've looked at everything under the sun in search of a home, but your bags remained packed and your shoes laced. Your restlessness is a sign that there is something yet to be discovered. Trust in Christ who gave everything for you, the Source who came to you so that you could have joy and have it to the full.*

PRAYER REQUESTS

* Adapted from *Better: How Jesus Satisfies the Search for Meaning*, David C. Cook. Kindle Edition.