

The Conclusion of the Whole Matter By Trey Sullins

What is the purpose of life? When the world considers this question, they will often conclude: to make money, to be successful according to your definition of success, or be happy and enjoy yourself in life. There are many answers you might here. In fact, growing up through school we were often told “you can be anything you want to be.” Statements like this are nice to think about especially considering the numerous options that we are blessed with in life. Is that really what life is all about? Is life nothing more than simply doing whatever you want as long as you chose it? One of the best answers for this question comes from the writer of Ecclesiastes, who is most likely Solomon. Let’s see what the Bible has to say about our purpose.

According to the writer life seems to be empty. The first eleven verses of the book express the cycles of life and the vanity therein. Therefore, in verses 1:12-13 the writer states that he “set his heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven.” His goal was to examine all of life’s offerings and determine what the point is. The for the next 11 chapters he mainly discusses the importance of being a good person and not seeking after the numerous vanities which he analyzed. Being a king, he was able to experience virtually everything without limit. Possibly the most important passage is found in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, his conclusion. After studying all of life he concluded, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including ever secret thing, Whether good or evil.”

The first instruction is to fear God. This means to reverence, honor, and respect Him. This fear of God should be reflected in our lives and actions and not only in our speech. Revelation 14:7 reveals that God certainly deserves this because He created, controls, and sustains all things. It is important to realize what kind of fear we should have. Our fear should not be such that we run from God or cannot properly serve Him. Our fear should be the type of fear that allows us to grow more and more in service to Him. In 2 Corinthians 7:1 the Bible says, “perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” This means that fear is a foundation upon which we become stronger Christians.

The next instruction is to obey God. Many in our society today live their lives in search of entertainment or momentary joy. They will often spend their time trying to figure out the next way to be entertained without a thought given for what God wants them to do. Great evidence of this is how Sunday has become “second Saturday” for millions of people. But for the Christian, this is not the way that God wants us to live. He wants to always make sure that we are obeying Him (2 Corinthians 13:5). Never forget the words of Peter in Acts 5:29, “We ought to obey God rather than men.”

Finally, the Ecclesiastes writer gives us the reason why these previous steps are important: “For God will bring every work into judgment” (Ecclesiastes 12:14). This is our motivation to fulfill our life’s purpose. There are many who believe that it doesn’t matter what you do so long as you love God, but God shows us over and over that obedience is required of Him (Genesis 6:5-8; James 2:14-26). It is only through proper biblical faith that we can be ready for this judgment that God is bringing upon mankind (1 Thessalonians 1:18).

As we consider the lives that we live, there are many different paths we could take. Hebrews 9:27 tells us that we get once chance, so we must make sure that we always fear God, follow God, and be ready for the judgment. The Ecclesiastes writer points out this life as the soul purpose for our existence. Let us take the advice of the man who tried it all in life and stick to serving the Lord God!