



BETTER Remember

#npbetter

Week 12
12 of 12

August 23, 2020

Bottom Line: Fear God and obey His commands, for this is everyone's duty.

Icebreaker: Who is the first teacher you remember from your school days? Who is the teacher who had the most positive impact on you? Why?

Key Verse: *Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty.* Ecclesiastes 12:13

Solomon finally comes to the final page of his journal. He has been searching for meaning and purpose in life. At first he did an exhaustive and exhausting search under the sun. Then at the end of that search he moves above the sun and returns to God, the place of wisdom. He understands that life is short, and he urges us to prioritize God when we are young, as it will set the course for our lives. A typical human being's worldview is set by the time he/she is 13 years old. It is much harder to get life aligned with God after that. Our patterns are huge, and they direct our lives.

Here at NewPointe, we are helping to set these **patterns** as foundations for our lives. It is a big head-start when we have been raised to know the Lord—it's the frame of reference from which we respond. It's also so important because of the **pressures** life brings. It is important to have our foundation firmly in place before the tough times come. Growing older intensifies pressures, and there is less physical strength. Young people can complicate their futures by decisions made when they were young. Solomon describes the diminishing **physical** capacities as a time when we really need the patterns we have established to carry us through. Our patterns of godliness established when we are young will give us a satisfying **perspective** to carry us through our lifetimes. The bottom line of the whole book of Ecclesiastes is to make our relationship with our Creator **personal**. The secret of personal wholeness is to "fear God and keep His commands." It's not a feeling of terror, or seeing Him as a threat. The **FEAR** of God is a powerful developer in our personal lives. The **F is Faith**, faith in His existence. We cannot come to God without believing He is there. **E is Experience His grace**. He is a God of mercy, grace, and forgiveness. We cannot properly relate to Him until we know what kind of a God He is. **A is Awe at who He is**. He is a marvelous, majestic, wise, and wonderful God! Awe at all God is leads to properly fearing Him. **R is Resolve**. Resolve to obey Him, to do what He says. The better the foundation, the more durable the building. If we establish an early foundation, we will more easily endure the storms of life and remain strong. The patterns we set in Christ in our youth are vital.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

If you are currently a Jesus-follower, how old were you when you came to know Christ? What are the benefits you experienced in your life and acquaintances by coming to Christ early?

What is a pattern or value you set in your young life that still impacts you today?

Establishing a pattern of righteousness in a child will help them return even if they go through a rebellious stage. Reflect and discuss.

Solomon describes in allegorical language our physical frailties as we grow older. Why is it important to have our spiritual-coping mechanisms in place before the physical decline begins? Who have you observed do this well? How did it set them apart from other elderly people?

The last things to leave us are our earliest memories. Reflect and discuss the significance.

LOOK IT OVER <<<

There will be nothing more satisfying in old age than to be able to look back and see the hand of God from your youth to your death. Agree? Disagree? Why?

"Those who grow up without God tend to get more despondent as they grow older." Have you observed this?

The secret of personal wholeness is fearing God and keeping His commands. How have you seen or experienced that? What has it meant for you to "fear" God?

What inspires awe of God in you, and how does it help you follow Him?

Solomon said that God will bring every secret thing into judgment, whether it is good or bad. What does that mean to you? Does it inspire trepidation or is it motivating? Explain.

What is your best takeaway from Ecclesiastes?

NEXT STEPS

1. Who gave you help building a great foundation when you were young? Write them a thank-you letter.
2. Evaluate your FEAR of God. What area could use strengthening? Take an intentional step to grow it.
3. Consider a young person you love and with whom you are in relationship. Plan and carry out a way to build a good memory for their future.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Fear God and obey His commands, for this is everyone's duty.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: Proverbs 22:6

Tuesday: Matthew 22:37

Wednesday: Romans 12:1

Thursday: 2 Timothy 2:22

Friday: 2 Timothy 1:5

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)