

QUESTION: How are we to live life, with all its brokenness?

Ecclesiastes 9:10–12, ¹⁰ Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.

¹¹ I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all. ¹² Moreover, no man knows when his hour will come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so men are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them.

SERVE GOD'S PURPOSES WHILE YOU CAN

Ecclesiastes 9:13–18 (NIV84) ¹³ I also saw under the sun this example of wisdom that greatly impressed me: ¹⁴ There was once a small city with only a few people in it. And a powerful king came against it, surrounded it and built huge siegeworks against it. ¹⁵ Now there lived in that city a man poor but wise, and he saved the city by his wisdom. But nobody remembered that poor man. ¹⁶ So I said, "Wisdom is better than strength." But the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are no longer heeded. ¹⁷ The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools. ¹⁸ Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

LET WISDOM INFORM YOUR WORK

Ecclesiastes 11:1–6 (NIV84) 1 Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again. 2 Give portions to seven, yes to eight, for you do not know what disaster may come upon the land. 3 If clouds are full of water, they pour rain upon the earth. Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there will it lie. 4 Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap. 5 As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things. 6 Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well.

DO THE RIGHT THING AND TRUST GOD FOR THE RESULTS

For further study . . .

1. Read and consider these Bible passages on foolishness: Ps. 14:1; Prov. 10:10–14; Eccles. 2:14–19; Luke 12:13–21. How do they describe the fool?
2. There are five examples of foolishness in Ecclesiastes 10:8–10. Think of instances in your own life that parallel these. How can you avoid these in future?
3. Uncover some keys to leadership in Ecclesiastes 10:16–20?
4. Generosity was a hallmark of the New Testament church. Read Philippians 4:10–20. What hinders believers from being generous? Suggest a few ways to overcome a lack of generosity.