

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

Int.

1. Aim: To show that life is really decided by how we follow directions.
2. Text - Eccl. 12:1-7
 - a. In the conclusion of this book we learn how to not end up like Solomon at the time of the writing of this book:
 - b. Remember God while young and you won't have the regrets later in life
 - i. An old man who has not followed God all of his life is a pitiful sight.
 - ii. He is often bitter, often carrying hatred and anger, and finding no hope in life any longer because he has nothing to look forward to.
 - c. But the one who lives his life by remembering God doesn't end up in this pitiful condition.

Discussion

I. HO-HUM

- A. Life is a journey
 1. Birth to death -
 - a. There is "A time to be born, and a time to die;..." Eccl. 3:2
 - b. Heb. 9:27
 2. Earth to Eternity - Eccl. 12:5 "...Man goeth to his long home,..."
- B. We are on our journey to eternity
 1. We are told to remember God in our youth, before difficult days come in which there will be found little pleasure.
 2. Such days are described through a series of illustrations that depict the feebleness of old age and eventual death.
 3. When we die the body will decay back to dust, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

II. WHY BRING THAT UP ?

- A. Success on this journey depends upon following instructions
1. "Life is but one continual course of instruction." - Rowland Hill
 2. Jer. 10:23 "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - a. Man of himself does not know what to do
 - b. We need instructions - guidelines
 3. Eccl. 12:13-14 "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
 4. II Tim. 3:16-17 - our instructions today are found in this inspired book
- B. The way we respond to instruction reveals our character

III. FOR INSTANCE

- A. You can do either one of two things about instruction! Receive or reject
1. Receive instructions = called Wise
 - a. Pro. 21:11b "and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge."
 - b. Pro. 8:33 "Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not."
 - c. Pro. 9:9 "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning."
 - d. Pro. 19:20 "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end."

- e. Prov. 15:31 "The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise."
- f. Prov. 18:15 "The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge."
- g. Prov. 1:5 "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:"

(1) We learn a great deal in life from other people

(2) Nobody is a first-hand expert in all fields - he can profit by the wisdom of others in that field.

2. Reject Instruction = called Foolish

- a. Pro. 16:22 b "Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly."
- b. Pro. 15:32 "He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding."
- c. Jer. 17:23 "But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction."

B. Life is composed of many things involving instruction

1. From our parents

- a. If we would please God it is necessary that we give the proper consideration to our parents.
- b. Paul says, "Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." (Eph. 6:2).
- c. "A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke." (Prov. 13:1).

2. From government -

- a. Rom. 13:1 "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."
- b. We must render unto Caesar the things that are his. - Mk. 12:17

3. From our employer -

- a. Tit. 2:9 "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;"
- b. Tit. 3:1 ASV "Put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready unto every good work,"
- c. Col. 3:22 "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:"

4. From God

- a. 1 Sam. 15:22 "And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."
- b. Acts 5:29 "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."
- c. Matt. 22:21 "They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

C. So life is filled with people giving us instructions Telling us what to do....

IV. SO WHAT

- A. You must decide what you'll do about instruction
 - 1. Can you be taught? Or do you think you "know it all?"
 - 2. Are you willing to listen and give diligence that you may learn "more about Jesus" and His will?

- B. Will you follow the directions of life?
 - 1. Jesus gave instruction to his disciples
 - a. Matt. 7:24-27
 - b. Wise man or foolish man - depends upon our decision !
 - 2. Ps. 119:11 "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
 - 3. James 1:22 "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

- C. Consequences of your decisions
 - 1. Prov. 1:24-32 - those who refuse to follow directions
 - a. "I have called and ye refused"
 - b. "then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer"
 - c. "hated knowledge"
 - d. "would have none of my counsel"
 - e. "Your destruction cometh as a whirlwind"
 - 2. Prov. 1:33 - 2:9 - those who will listen and follow directions
 - a. "But whoever listens to me"
 - b. "incline your ear to wisdom"
 - c. "For the Lord gives wisdom"
 - d. "He is a shield to those who walk uprightly"

D. **Choices and Responsibility** The words of Eleanor Roosevelt ring true:

"One's philosophy is not best expressed in words. It is expressed in the choices one makes. In the long run, we shape our lives and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility."

Little House on the Freeway, Tim Kimmel, p. 143

E. Heb. 11:24-26 "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

Conclusion

1. What are you doing about the directions given to you by God?
2. If you would like to become a Christian then you must follow the directions given by God:
 - a. Hear Believe Repent Confess Baptized
 - b. Then live a faithful life of service unto God.
3. If you are an erring Christian then you must follow the directions given by God:
 - a. Repent
 - b. Confess
 - c. Pray
4. What will you do ?