

## Prayer List

Gene  
Veda  
Wallace  
Sheila  
Ophelia

## Services:

### **Sunday**

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.  
Assembly 10:00 a.m.  
Assembly 11:00 a.m.

### **Wednesday**

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

## Elders:

Brad Behrens - [bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com](mailto:bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com)  
Michael Odom - [MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com](mailto:MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com)  
Ernie Sprinkel - [preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com](mailto:preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com)

## This Week's Question:

What Old Testament prophet mentions the Lord's "book of remembrance"?

## Answer To Last Week's Question:

Nathan - 1 Chronicles 29:29

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# *Pinole Tidings*

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## **"Let Us Hear the Conclusion of the Whole Matter"**

**(Ecclesiastes 12:13f)**

by Ira Lynn

ECCLESIASTES 12:8–14 sums up the "this is your life" tone of the entire book. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity. And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of the assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. 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."

Solomon's search as related to life under the sun is punctuated often by the refrain, "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity." This is Solomon's final assessment of the godless life—the summation of frustration—vanity! Solomon cast God overboard and, consequently, allowed the material things of life to destroy him. True happiness is not found in "things." Solomon's main "things" were wine, women, and song. He lived by the pleasure principle (Ecclesiastes 2:1–11). He states the result of such indulgence when he says in 2:11: "... behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." We immediately see the much-needed application of this book in our lives if we would truly be wise people. As we look and consider the entire galaxy of pursuits for happiness on the part of Solomon, we hear him say, "This is all vain; a striving after the wind."

But Solomon also tells us what is real. He tells us what he had learned: that for man to truly be "whole" he needs to have the right attitude toward God ("fear") and the right response toward God ("keep his commandments"). "Fear God" is an attitude of life. It is to be one's permanent posture. The root of religion is the fear of God reigning in the heart, a reverence of His majesty, a deference to His authority, and a dread of His wrath. "Keep his commandments" is life's response to heaven and involves self-crucifixion and renunciation. Heed, keep, observe and obey the commandments of God. Faithful obedience has ever been God's desire for man. "Trust and obey;" thus, true happiness must come at the spirit level. True happiness is based on attitude, because flowing out of the right attitude is obedience and I must have an implicit respect for and trust in God and

then be willing to serve Him regardless of what happens in life. So, independent of all circumstances (good or bad), I will trust and obey, "for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13 is Solomon's "search-ending" verse. Any other response to God is to operate in a vacuum. "Trust and obey" is the big picture—the stratagem for happiness.

Why "fear God and keep his commandments"? Because this is applicable to every person and God shall bring every act, "everything which is hidden, to judgment, whether it be good or evil." One day we will be hurled into the presence of God to be judged for all our decisions and deeds of life (see Ecclesiastes 11:9; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:12). There will be "payday someday," a final accounting. We are, Solomon says, morally responsible people. One had said, "My most serious thought has been that of standing before God and giving an account to Him for how I have lived." Most people are totally oblivious and absolutely unconcerned about this final reckoning. Earthly-centered thinking and the practice of pleasure are ever-present obstacles to a sober and realistic reflection upon this solemn day of judgment by an all-knowing God.

Solomon's message is the epitome of realism, for in drawing from the tragedy of his own life, he but illustrates that man was not created to pursue fleshly interests, but finds purposeful living only as his life reflects the designer of his soul. Life's cup is full when I put God in the picture.

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