

KNOWING, ECCL.9:13-10:20

Something Worth Living For #8

◆**Intro:** As a church family, Sunrise has been studying through an ancient book in the Bible called Ecclesiastes. A lot of people have never read the wise sayings contained in the book of Ecclesiastes. But some of them are familiar because they go back deep in our culture. People say, "oh he's way on the right on that subject. She sides with the left." Check our 10:2. Did your mom ever find out something about you that you thought was a secret and she explained, "Oh a little bird told me." Check out 10:20b) Interesting isn't it.

◆Another thing I find interesting is that we as a church wanted to find a way just to bless our community and also point to the goodness of God, and so we are here at Mayflower Mill School today. Our original date was postponed, and low and behold, the subject of the text we are at in our study is knowledge and education! What do you make of that?

◆Here's a little quiz to test your knowledge:

◆1) How long did the Hundred Years War last? (116 years)

◆2) Which country makes Panama hats? (Ecuador)

◆3) From which animal do we get catgut?(sheep and horses)

◆4) What is a camel's-hair brush made of? (Squirrel fur)

◆5) The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal? (The Latin name was Insularia Canaria—Island of the Dogs)

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◆6) How long did the Thirty Years War last? (Thirty years, of course. From 1618 to 1648)

◆Don't feel bad if you did poorly on this test, even though your 5th grader probably knew the answers. I suspect somewhere along the line you were exposed to some of these as well. Which points out a little problem when it comes to knowledge.

◆If you're no longer in school, maybe you've noticed that even though you spent years in class, you still get plenty of things wrong in life. Maybe you've wondered at times, "Why isn't my life working out better than this?" Do I need to read a book? Do I need to go back to school? Can Dr. Phil give me some wisdom? Why isn't there a cure to cancer yet? How come we still need prisons? Why are there wars?

◆**1. Knowledge is not a secure savior. So maybe I should not place my highest hope in knowledge.** Funny thing about knowing stuff. There's no guarantee that it will rule the day.

◆**A.** Now let me be the first to agree that knowing is a blessing in the life of mankind. A little bit of know-how and life can get better, much better. Want to be able to ride your bike faster? Use gears! Most bikes today have multiple gears. When you're peddling as fast as your legs will go, put it in a higher gear and you peddle slower while maintaining the same high speed. Knowledge! Somebody figured out gears! You probably don't even know *why* that works, but you do at least know *that* it works. It's a start.

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◆Wisdom has power: This is one of the points the biblical writer is making.

◆Verse 14 tells us a King and his big army came against a itty bitty town but lost because there was a super smart guy in there that knew a way to win!

◆Verse 16 says "wisdom is better than strength".

◆Verse 18 says "wisdom is better than weapons of war."

◆Verse 10:10 says if your ax is dull, it a lot more work!
Sharpen the ax dude.

◆If you remember the movie *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*, maybe you recall how Will Turner was able to break Jack Sparrow out of prison because he *knew* the cell door was on a pin and socket hinge, and he knew that a long lever, like a bench could raise the heavy weight of the cell door with just one man pushing on it. It's all physics you learn in school!

Knowledge! What a gift!

◆I read about a missionary scientist in Mexico that discovered a little insect the villagers called the "Kissing Bug" was the culprit in carrying a disease that cause many of their children to die in their youth! Knowledge! What a blessing to find something out! We don't drink from cups made out of lead because lead can poison you. They found that Beethoven, the famous composer -not the dog, who turned deaf and died at 57 -had 100x more lead in his body than normal!

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◆**B.** But there are significant limitations on knowledge. I remember a young boy who was in jail, and his parents said to me, "I don't understand this. He's a good boy. He knows right from wrong." And yet he's been arrested and is in a cell. Apparently his knowing was not enough.

◆1) Knowledge can be lost. Have you heard of Stone Henge? It's a feat of engineering of giant stones that form a circle, each weighing as much as 50 tons. You've heard of The Great Pyramids near Giza, Egypt, comprised of 2.5 million limestone blocks with the average weight of 2.5 tons. These things were build thousands of years ago, and we still don't know how they did it.

◆2) Knowledge can be ignored. 9:15 told us of a wise man who saved the city. 9:16 tells us because he was poor they forgot about him and stopped listening. On September 3, 1989, Varig Airlines Flight 254 was at Brazil's Maraba Airport preparing for takeoff. Under normal circumstances the hop to nearby Belém would only take 48 minutes. Captain César Garcez punched in coordinate 270 instead of 0270. Two hours later the plane crashed 700 miles off in the Amazon jungle. The first officer figured it out after the first hour, but the captain brushed him off. 13 of 48 passengers were killed. They had the knowledge! The captain ignored it.

◆3) Human evil can overpower human knowledge. The captain was too proud to consider he had made some

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mistake. When the passengers noticed the flight was too long, he lied and told them he was circling the airport due to a power failure below. In our text the writer brings the problem of sin into the picture. (9:18b -*One sinner can destroy much good.*) You see folks, evil and sin are a human reality, which makes human knowledge by itself as potentially destructive as it is good. This, I think, is the writers point in v5-9. Here he lists a series of reversals where what we think the answer on the test should be, is not what happens.

◆v6 *foolish people have governing positions*

◆v7 *the servants is on the horse and the prince is walking*

◆v8 *you dig a well, a potentially good thing, but you fall in.*

◆v9 *you're smart enough to split logs and build, but then one falls on you.*

◆D. L. Moody, the great American evangelist, once said,

◆"If a man is stealing nuts and bolts from a railway track, and, in order to change him, you send him to college, at the end of his education, he will steal the whole railway track."

◆So, learning and knowledge are great blessings that can make life so much more beautiful. But by itself it's not a sure thing. Is there something that is.

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◆ **2. Seek more than knowledge, seek wisdom.** Wisdom is knowledge used and lived rightly. Wisdom is understanding and handling truth, education, learning for the good. Which is why more than seven times in the books of the Bible we find this statement.

◆ *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Proverbs 9:10*

◆ A. So what we are really saying is, seek more than knowledge, seek God.

◆ You say, "I taught my kid the right thing to do. Why doesn't he do it? He's graduated from college, why is he still in my house? And furthermore, I never taught my kid to talk back. I never taught her to be selfish, or to break a rule. They do that all on their own, without practice even!"

◆ Well yes! The prophet Isaiah wrote 600 years before Jesus was born that, according to God's standard, no one does right. Everyone chooses sin. The sooner we admit this the sooner we become wiser.

◆ You say, "Well my daughter as always been impulsive, since she was a little girl. She was born that way, I guess.

◆ The Apostle Paul wrote in a first century letter to people living in Galatia that self-control is actually a fruit of the Spirit of the Living God. You want your kid to learn self-control, get her near God somehow!

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◆B. Maybe you're here thinking, "Why would I want to get near God. God just wants to make me feel bad about myself. But did you know God wants you to have wisdom?

◆*If any of you lacks **wisdom**, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5)*

◆Maybe you're thinking, Why would I want to get near God. He's gonna freak out when he finds out my dirt. Then he'll be mad. But did you know that God already knows all about your dirt and he wants you to be free of it?

◆*Ephesians 1:7-8 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.*

◆**Conclusion:** Maybe you've wondered at times, "Why isn't my life working out better than this?" Do I need to read a book? Do I need to go back to school? Can Dr. Phil give me some wisdom? How come we still need prisons? Why are there wars? Why don't I pick the right thing all the time?

◆I'll tell you why? Education, learning, knowledge will never fix human problems because the human problem is a spiritual sickness. It needs a spiritual answer.

◆"The knowledge of God without that of our wretchedness creates pride. The knowledge of our wretchedness without that of God creates despair. The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the middle way, because in

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Him we find both God and our wretchedness." *Citation:* Blaise Pascal in *Pensees*

◆ *1 Corinthians 1:30 Christ Jesus ... has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.*

◆ It's there for the asking, friends. Ask God for forgiveness. Ask God for wisdom. Ask God for his Son Jesus.