

To Sum It Up!

Ecclesiastes 10:1-12:14 Ecclesiastes is a rather negative book written by one of the wisest men who ever lived. Solomon, however, saves his wisest words for the conclusion of Ecclesiastes. After sharing that all of life is vanity, Solomon does give the major priority of life. If we lived our lives on earth with what he shares as our first priority, the conclusion of our lives would not be vanity. The conclusion of our lives would be lives lived to the glory, honor and praise of God.

What is this priority? Solomon speaks these words of wisdom: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all" (Eccles. 12:13).

This admonition sounds very much like the statement made by the One who is all wisdom, Jesus Christ. Jesus replied to the question, "What is the greatest commandment?" with these wise words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 22:37-39, KJV).

Each day I live I am reminded to keep the main thing the main thing. Both Solomon and Jesus shared with us what the main thing is. To sum it all up: The main thing is to love God and love your neighbor. Why is it so hard to do this? Love benefits all concerned. Love benefits the one who gives love and the one who receives love. I often tell my husband, "Life would be so easy if people would just love one another." This is another "sum it all up" statement that is true. This does not mean life will be without difficulties and trials, but love will carry us through every trouble. The reason people find it so hard to love one another is simple. Love never fails. Satan knows this, so he works tirelessly to cause

division and strife, bitterness, jealousy, pride and anger in our lives. The price to love another is the same. It means laying down our pride. Pride causes selfishness, strife and jealousy. Another reason it is so hard for us to love God and others is because we cannot do it in our own strength. We must depend upon God to shed the love of God abroad from our hearts, and often we do not daily submit ourselves to Him for that wonderful work to be accomplished in us. Perhaps you will want to join me this morning in a prayer that sums it all up:

Lord, I love You. Help me to love today as Jesus loves. Amen.

READ: Ecclesiastes 10:1-12:14; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; Psalm 49:1-20; Proverbs 22:20-21