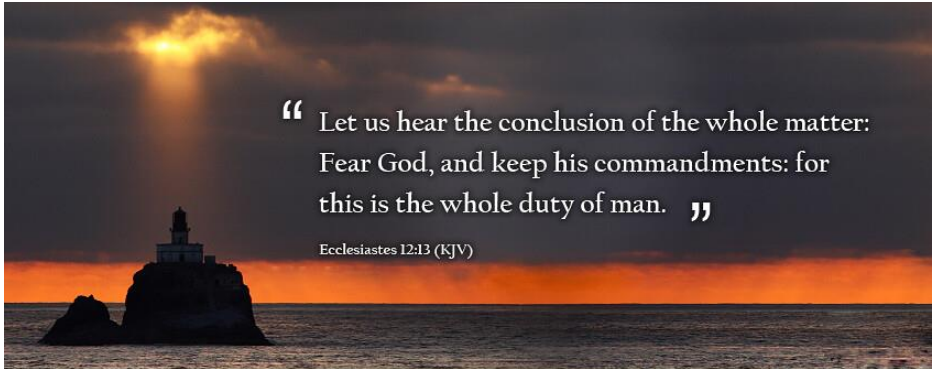


# The Whole Duty of Man



“ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:  
Fear God, and keep his commandments: for  
this is the whole duty of man. ”

Ecclesiastes 12:13 (KJV)

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By  
**William E. Thrasher, Jr**

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*“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” Ecclesiastes 12:13*

The book of Ecclesiastes derives its name from the Hebrew word “Koheleth”, which means one who speaks at an assembly; an Ecclesiastic or a preacher. The author of this book obviously sees himself a preacher who is willing to wrestle with life’s greatest challenge, the very meaning of life. Though his name is not mentioned, the information provided by the author overwhelmingly supports the Jewish tradition that Solomon was the Ecclesiastic.

As previously mentioned, the Ecclesiastic wrestles with the hard questions of life and then questions the futility of it all. He looks for answers that even to this day may not be fully answered; questions such as what is the point of wisdom, if the fool and the wise man must both come to the same end. Why gather riches if once you’re gone

you lose it all anyway. Why do we engage in this mad race for pump and power when all is altogether vanity? Why do we strive to be unique, when there is no new thing under the sun?

Clearly the message of this book suggest life's futility given the nature of such previously mentioned questions, but this is not the whole of the message, for there is also the suggestion that should live life to the fullest. If you can have your cake and eat it too then by all means go for it. The Ecclesiastic is not saying go and party like there's no tomorrow. No, in fact his idea of living life to the fullest is to live a God centered life totally focused on pleasing Him. What does that life look like? It is one that is divinely guided and obedient to God's will and His word. Thus we find ourselves at this word in our text for today: *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is **The Whole Duty of Man.**”*

At the end of his search for life's true meaning, he comes to the inescapable conclusion that life has no meaning apart from God. I believe it was the Apostle Paul, whose

discourse on Mars Hill further supports this truth; He describes God's relationship with man by stating "*in Him we live and move and have our being*" Acts 17:28a And Christ Himself proclaims in John 15:5 "*For without Me ye can do nothing*"! There can be no doubt then but what ***The Whole Duty of Man*** is first and foremost, to fear God. Fearing God does not mean that we should be afraid of Him. It means that we should revere Him, hold Him in the highest of esteem. See Him as the one, true and living God worthy of our worship and our praise. We must know that He is the Supreme Sovereign over our lives and that He is first in our lives over anything or anyone. It was Christ who said "*seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness...*" ***The Whole Duty of Man*** is to make God #1 in our lives. If you want all that life has to offer make God first. Place Him at the top of your list of priorities and "*all these things will be added.*"

Not only does the Ecclesiastic admonish us to fear God, but he further instructs us that ***The Whole Duty of Man*** is to keep His commandments. As New Testament followers of Christ, we know that Christ is the fulfilment

of the law. In Matthew 5:17 Jesus say's "do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them." Does this mean that we are free from obedience to the law? No. For Christ being the fulfillment of the law gives us a new commandment. In John 15:12 Jesus says "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." Now this truly is ***The Whole Duty of Man!*** Fear God and love one another.

James echoes this sentiment in his epistle when he suggest that the essence of ***The Whole Duty of Man*** is to put into practice the principles of pure religion. In James 1:27 he says "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world. What does unspotted from the world mean? Paul perhaps can best answer that: For Paul unspotted means not to be controlled or influenced by the world. In Romans 12:1&2 he says:

*"Therefore I urge you, brothers, on account of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifices, holy*

*and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”* In the King James Translation the phrase spiritual service is translated reasonable service which is just Paul’s way of saying **The whole Duty of Man.**

*“**2**Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God”.*

What is **The Whole Duty of Man**? Fear God, Make Him your first priority and keep His commandments. What are His Commandments? **“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 neighbor as thy self. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”** Matthew 22:37-40 **This is The Whole Duty of Man!**