

Ecclesiastes 11:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.

Analysis

Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart (וְהִסַּר כָּעֵס מִלְבָקָה), vehaser ka'as milibbekha)—'and remove vexation from your heart,' from sur (to turn aside, remove) and ka'as (vexation, anger, grief). **And put away evil from thy flesh** (וְהַצְבֵּר בָּעֵה מִבְשָׁרָךְ), veva'aver ra'ah mibsarekha)—'and cause evil to pass from your flesh,' using avar (to pass over, remove). **For childhood and youth are vanity** (כִּי־יָלְדוֹת וּמִשְׁׁחָרוֹת הַבָּל), ki-hayalut vehashacharut havel)—'for childhood and the dawn-of-life are vapor,' using yalut (childhood) and shacharut (youth, from shachar, dawn).

Following Ecclesiastes 11:9's exhortation to rejoice in youth while remembering coming judgment, verse 10 adds urgency: remove ka'as (internal turmoil—anger, worry, grief) and ra'ah (evil, harm) from basar (flesh—physical life). Why? Because yalut and shacharut—childhood and youth, that precious 'dawn' of life—are havel (vapor, breath, fleeting). The message: youth passes quickly, so don't waste it on anxiety or evil. Paul counseled Timothy similarly: 'Flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness' (2 Timothy 2:22). The Preacher isn't promoting recklessness but mindful enjoyment—remove what harms, embrace what edifies, because this season vanishes. James 4:14 echoes: 'What is your life? You are a mist that appears briefly.'

Historical Context

Ancient life expectancy was lower than today, making youth's brevity even more pronounced. Many didn't survive childhood; those who did faced adulthood's responsibilities quickly. The 'vapor' imagery reflected daily observation of morning mist burning off under sun.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What 'vexations' and 'evils' might you need to intentionally remove from your life to embrace youth (or whatever season you're in) well?
2. How does recognizing youth's fleeting nature change priorities and daily choices?
3. What does it look like to 'remember your Creator in the days of your youth' (12:1) by removing sorrow and evil now?

Interlinear Text

מִבְשֶׁךְ בָּכְעַת הַנּוֹעַד רַיְשֵׁנָה וְעַתְּדִילָה
Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart and put away evil from thy flesh

H5493

H3708

H3820

H5674

H7451

H1320

בְּכָל: וְתִשְׁכַּח וְתִשְׁאַל וְתִשְׁאַל
for childhood and youth are vanity

H3588

H3208

H7839

H1892

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 7:1 (Parallel theme): Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 Timothy 2:22 (Parallel theme): Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 (Evil): Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

Ecclesiastes 1:14 (Parallel theme): I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Ecclesiastes 1:2 (Parallel theme): Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

Psalms 39:5 (Parallel theme): Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.

Job 20:11 (Parallel theme): His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.

Job 13:26 (Parallel theme): For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.

Psalms 25:7 (Parallel theme): Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.