

Ecclesiastes 12:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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;

Analysis

This opening verse of Ecclesiastes' concluding exhortation commands 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.' The Hebrew 'zekor' (זָכַר, remember) is an imperative meaning more than mental recall—it denotes covenant faithfulness, active relationship, and lived acknowledgment of God's claims. The word 'Creator' (bore'ekha, בּוֹרְאֶיךָ) emphasizes God's ownership and authority over human life—He made you, therefore you belong to Him. The phrase 'days of thy youth' (yemei bechurotekha, יְמֵי בְּחֻרוֹתֶיךָ) refers to the season of vigor, potential, and choice before age brings limitations. The urgency comes from the following clause: 'while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.' Old age ('evil days') brings physical decline, reducing capacity for service and enjoyment. The verse teaches that youth is the strategic season for establishing lifelong patterns of devotion—don't wait until options narrow and energy fades. Remembering the Creator young establishes spiritual foundation sustaining through all life's seasons.

Historical Context

Solomon's personal history lends poignancy to this exhortation. He received God's gift of wisdom in youth (1 Kings 3:5-14) and built the Temple during his prime. However, he gradually compromised through foreign marriages, building pagan temples and syncretistic worship (1 Kings 11:1-8). Writing Ecclesiastes late in life, Solomon regrets wasted years and urges youth to avoid his mistakes—establish

godly patterns early rather than spending decades in spiritual wandering before late-life repentance. Ancient Israelite culture emphasized teaching children God's ways early (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Proverbs 22:6). Bar Mitzvah tradition recognized adolescence as the threshold of religious accountability. The New Testament similarly urges young believers toward spiritual maturity (1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 John 2:13-14). Church history provides examples: Augustine's youth squandered in immorality versus Timothy's childhood faith. Modern culture often treats youth as a time for experimentation and self-discovery, deferring serious spiritual commitment. Ecclesiastes counters this: youth is precisely when to establish covenant faithfulness that will endure through all subsequent seasons.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does it mean practically to 'remember your Creator' in daily life decisions, relationships, and priorities during your youth?
2. How does recognizing God as Creator—the One who made you and therefore owns you—affect your sense of purpose and obligation?

Interlinear Text

וְזָכַר	אֶת	בַּיּוֹמָא יְהוָה	יָמֵי	בְּחֹרֶתְךָ יְהוָה	עַד	אֲשֶׁר	לֹא
Remember	H853	now thy Creator	days	of thy youth	H5704	H834	H3808
H2142		H1254	H3117	H979			
אוֹ	יָבֹא	יָמֵי	הַרְעָה	וְהָגְעוּ	שָׁנֵי יָמִים	אֲשֶׁר	
come		days	while the evil	draw nigh	not nor the years	H834	
H935		H3117	H7451	H5060	H8141		
תֹּאמַר	אֵין	לִי	בְּהֵמָה	חֶפְצִי:			
when thou shalt say	H369	H0	H0	I have no pleasure			
H559				H2656			

Additional Cross-References

Lamentations 3:27 (Parallel theme): It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

Ecclesiastes 11:8 (Parallel theme): But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.

Proverbs 22:6 (Parallel theme): Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Luke 18:16 (Parallel theme): But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Psalms 34:11 (Parallel theme): Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

2 Timothy 3:15 (Parallel theme): And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 90:10 (Parallel theme): The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

Proverbs 8:17 (Parallel theme): I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Ecclesiastes 11:10 (Evil): Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.

2 Samuel 19:35 (Evil): I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?

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