

“Life’s Final Exam” (Ecclesiastes 12:9-14)

It is now the second week of June. The end of the school year is nearly upon us. What does this mean? Two words: summer vacation. But before you enjoy your summer vacation, I have two more words for you: final exams. That’s right! GULP! Final exams are a part of life. No student can escape them; they are inevitable. Yet, most people assume that final exams only belong in school. Today, however, we will discover that there are final exams in God’s Word. As we prepare to conclude our course in Ecclesiastes, we are going to be given a final exam. I want you to picture King Solomon at the front of the classroom, passing everyone a copy of the test. “Let’s test your wisdom,” he declares. “Use a number two pencil, and keep your eyes on your own scroll. The test is going to cover all twelve chapters of Ecclesiastes. You’ll be asked about life, death, pleasure, suffering, food, work, money, poverty, wisdom, foolishness—pretty much everything ‘under the sun.’” “That’s a lot of material,” you whisper in panic to the fellow in the next seat. “What if I don’t have a clue?” “Whenever you don’t know one, the probable answer is ‘vanity,’” your friend whispers back. “This works every time. When I’m stumped I just write, ‘Life is filled with such questions that can’t be answered. This too is vanity.’ Teacher likes that one.” You mutter, “I hope he was serious when he said that true wisdom is realizing how much we don’t know. If he sticks to that one, I’ll get an A.”

Interestingly, in Solomon’s final exam, he reverses the expected formula. For Solomon it is exam first, lessons later. In school, we study and then take an exam. Solomon claims that in the real world we face the exam, and *then* we study.¹ In Eccl 12:9-14, the final six verses of the book, Solomon gives us two homework assignments to pass life’s exam.

1. Take God’s Word seriously (12:9-12). In this first section, we will be reminded of the awesome power of God’s Word. Specifically, in 12:9-10 we discover the time, energy, and skill that went into the writing of Ecclesiastes. Solomon writes, **“In addition to being a wise man, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge; and he pondered, searched out and arranged many proverbs. The Preacher sought to find delightful words and to write words of truth correctly.”** Some scholars believe that 12:9-14 are the words of an editor that came along after Solomon penned this great book. Yet, it is more likely that in these verses Solomon speaks in the third person. Practically speaking, this is a simple way of boasting in God’s Word without coming across in an arrogant fashion. In 12:9-10, Solomon describes four activities of a wise sage. These activities are not just true of Solomon, but should be true of all Christian teachers and leaders. As you read through these activities, ask yourself how you can improve in each of these areas.

- ***A wise person faithfully teaches people knowledge.*** Solomon “taught people knowledge.” He could do so because he was a “wise man.” He became “wise” by growing old and learning from his experiences. Nothing teaches like life. This is why we say to wise and mature twenty and thirty year olds, “You are wise beyond your years.” It’s because you can read all the books that you want, but life is the ultimate teacher. Solomon says that those who have lived long and experienced life now have a duty to impart the wisdom learned to the next generation. The goal ought to be to keep future generations from making mistakes. So why is it that these groups never seem to cohabitate? Both parties can be guilty of pride and arrogance. The youth love to pretend that they don’t need help, despite the fact that their world is falling apart at the seams. The wise assume that the youth are just supposed to know how to do life. Furthermore, there are natural apprehensions and fears that keep the wise and young separate. Many young folks are scared to approach an older, wiser person. Many older, wiser folks do not feel like they have anything to offer anyone. Today, these trends must change. If you are an older, wiser person, will you commit to be a mentor? If you are a young person, will you seek out those who can help you?

Perhaps you've heard the story of a young pastor who rose to preach on Psalm 23. He gave it his best effort but never connected with the audience. Afterward, an old man got up to speak. He bowed his head, his hands quivering, and his body worn from years of hard work. Gripping the podium, he began to recite, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." As he finished the audience sat in deep silence, profoundly moved. When the young pastor asked the old man why his words had made such a difference, the old man said simply, "You know the psalm, I know the Shepherd." The truth is some things are learned only through experience.²

Later in our service Pastor Hilton Jarvis will lead us in communion. Hilton has been a pastor for 49 years. Even now, at the ripe young age of 75 he is still preaching! I am 37 years old and have been in pastoral ministry for 15 years. Do you think that I can and should seek to learn from this man? Of course! His pastoral experience and spiritual maturity far surpass my own. Similarly, is there a man or woman in your life who you respect who can take you to the next level? Perhaps, like Solomon, it is an author you can read, or a preacher you can listen to, or it may even be a person you can meet with on a regular basis. Do so today!

- ***A wise person carefully studies God's Word.*** Solomon "pondered,³ searched out many proverbs, and arranged many proverbs." 1 Kgs 4:32 informs us that Solomon wrote thousands of proverbs. A proverb is an earthly saying containing heavenly truth. The word's basic meaning is "to be straight" (cf. 1:15; 7:13). It's distilled wisdom, a practical word for a complicated world. Proverbs are God's "sound bites."⁴ The term "proverbs" refers to the entire book of Ecclesiastes. Solomon did not merely share with people the first thing that came into his head. He thought before he spoke. He spent time searching out what he was going to teach. This activity is part of the editing/compiling process, which took place over many years. This implies a labor of study. Solomon's work is similar to a description of a scribe's work in Ezra 7:10: study, practice, teach. If you are a leader or teacher, does this describe you? Do you take God's Word seriously? Even if you don't consider yourself a teacher or leader, as a Christian we are all to understand God's Word for ourselves (Acts 17:11). How are you presently fulfilling your responsibility?
- ***A wise person effectively communicates.*** Solomon "sought to find delightful words." He had a sense of God's presence and power, using them to communicate His will to others. Furthermore, he was on a quest to articulate God's Word to others. It was not enough to have knowledge. It was not even enough to have it arranged intelligently. The Preacher also labored to speak in a pleasing manner. The NIV says that he picked "just the right words." He gave thought and effort to communicating in a way that would capture the attention of his readers. In your class or small group, do you seek to craft your words in a way that people can hear? Do you work hard at perfecting your speech and content? Or are you currently satisfied with your abilities? It has been said, "A teacher is someone who talks in other people's sleep." My prayer is that this is not true of any teacher or leader in our church. Even if you are not a formal teacher or leader, in your conversations do you seek to be an effective communicator? Is your speech gracious and seasoned with salt (Col 4:6)? Is it filled with grace and truth (John 1:14)?
- ***A wise person correctly presents truth.*** Solomon "sought to write words of truth correctly." He had a sense of God's presence and power, using them to communicate His will to others. Furthermore, he was on a quest to communicate truth. We live in a relativistic age. People have bought into the idea that truth is relative. We hear that something might be "true" to one person but not true to another. The Bible knows nothing of such a concept. Truth IS. A style of teaching means nothing without truth. A lie all dressed up in eloquence is still a lie. This tells me something important about the book of Ecclesiastes. In spite of its often dark and gloomy view, it is a book that teaches truth. It is written to give us a realistic view of life that, as a result, we might live for the Lord.

Think about it. Most cults do not outwardly reject God's Word, but they offer new revelations that add to God's Word. Most cults are begun by founders disenchanted with the existing church and its beliefs, so they formulate distinctive doctrines to give them a new identity. Individuals do the same. More than ever, people are viewing God's Word like a buffet line in a restaurant, taking what they like—maybe a little bit of what is good for them—and leaving the rest for someone else. In effect, the diet a person receives is more a matter of what is palatable to them than what will truly nourish them.⁵ Yet, Vance Havner said, "The Word of God is either absolute or obsolete." Will you proclaim the truth regardless of the consequences? Will you refuse to compromise?

In 12:11-12, Solomon continues to describe how Ecclesiastes can be used in people's lives. In 12:11 he writes, **"The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given⁶ by one Shepherd."** Solomon states that the words of Ecclesiastes are powerful.⁷ He uses two memorable metaphors that refer to how Ecclesiastes stimulates us to action.⁸ "Goads" are long wooden rods with an iron point used for driving oxen and other animals.⁹ A goad is poked at the animal to make him move in the desired direction. It represents moral guidance and stimulus in human affairs.¹⁰ Nails were used by shepherds to fasten their tents. They are hammered to keep something in place. Goads are designed to motivate the sluggish and nails are intended to secure the drifting.¹¹ The book of Ecclesiastes (and the whole of Scripture) accomplishes both of these purposes. It "afflicts the comfortable and it comforts the afflicted." If you are comfortable with your life, God's Word acts as a goad to move you out of your comfort zone. It pushes you to do those things you ought to do.¹² If you are burdened and tossed to and fro by the winds of life, it provides a haven of stability.¹³

Ecclesiastes has this type of power because the book is "given by one Shepherd." In the Old Testament, the title "shepherd" is often used of God.¹⁴ Solomon is saying that his words are given straight from God. This is a very strong argument for the inspiration of Ecclesiastes. It seems clear that Solomon went out of his way to emphasize this doctrine because he figured many would have problems with his book. Boy, was he ever right! Some have felt that this book should not have been canonized because of some of the seemingly contradictory verses that appear. But Solomon is clear that this book is from God and it can be trusted in its entirety. I have found this to be true in my own personal experience. My wife, Lori, persuaded me to teach Ecclesiastes. I thought it might be too heavy for the start of a new year. Yet, this book has impacted me more than any other book I've studied. It has taught me more about contentment, the brevity of life, and priorities than any other book of the Bible.

Solomon concludes this section in 12:12 with these words: **"But beyond this, my son,¹⁵ be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body."**¹⁶ This is a favorite verse for high school and college students who are weary of study. But Solomon isn't telling us not to love and appreciate books. If he was, I would be in deep trouble. The contrast is not between the study of canonical versus noncanonical wisdom but between failure to appreciate wisdom on the one hand and excessive zeal for study on the other.¹⁷ Solomon is warning us that we shouldn't study other books to the exclusion of Scripture. Other books were given for our information, but the Bible was given for our transformation.¹⁸ I don't read many secular works. It's not that they're bad; it's that they're just eye candy to me. Every time I start reading something outside the Bible, I think about what I am missing: words of eternal life. It's like that commercial tagline: "I could've had a V8." I could've been reading Ecclesiastes.¹⁹ I challenge you to make sure that you are consistently reading God's Word and prioritizing God's Word over other reading. Do you read the newspaper before you read the Bible? Do you check your email or your favorite web page instead of reading the Bible? We need to be careful not to put human writings above the divine Word of God.

[Why should we take God's Word seriously? Because God's Word is powerful and can make an eternal difference in the lives of people. The second homework assignment that Solomon gives is...]

2. Consider God's judgment appropriately (12:13-14).²⁰ In the final two verses, Solomon urges us to prepare for judgment day by fearing God and keeping His commands. These two verses summarize the book of Ecclesiastes and ultimately the whole of Scripture. In 12:13, the teacher writes these pointed words: **"The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person."** To "fear God and keep His commands" are not suggestions or options—they are commands! Solomon commands you and me to fear Him and obey His commands. In other words, take God seriously and do what He says.²¹ But we need to look at this a little more carefully.

First, the phrase "fear God" is terribly misunderstood and rarely proclaimed; however, it is paramount throughout the Scriptures.²² The Bible speaks of our love to God, His name, His law, and His Word, a total of 88 times. This breaks down to 45 references in the Old and 43 references in the New Testament. The Bible speaks of our trusting in God, His name, and His Word, 91 times. This breaks down to 82 times in the Old and 9 times in the New Testament.²³ When we come to the subject of the fear of God, the Bible speaks of it 278 times! I am referring to all of the places in Scripture where it speaks of men fearing God, His name, His Law, or His Word. In the Old Testament there are 235 references to the fear of God. In the New Testament there are 43 references to the fear of God, which, by the way, is the same number of references as man's love to God.²⁴ So whatever the phrase "fear God" means, it is everywhere throughout the Bible, therefore, it is critical for us to understand.

Typically, the "fear of God" is defined as "reverential awe." There is truth to this definition as it pertains to God as Creator. I have been to Niagara Falls, the Grand Canyon, and the Swiss Alps. On each of these occasions when I have gazed on God's majestic handiwork, I felt small, fearful, and awestruck. God wants us to stand in awe of who He is and all that He is. But our definition of the fear of God must also encompass His judgment (see 12:14). This leads us to also include in our definition downright fear or terror. If you and I understand that our God is a consuming fire that is able to destroy both body and soul in hell and that as believers we will give an account of our lives to Jesus Christ,²⁵ we will have some holy fear. But many of us do not fear God. What do we fear? Among the top ten fears of parents are saving for retirement, dying before the children are grown, gas prices, the threat of terrorism, and traffic.²⁶ It seems that we fear everything and everyone but God. This is sheer insanity! Oswald Chambers (1874-1917) once said, "The remarkable thing about fearing God is that, when you fear God, you fear nothing else; whereas, if you do not fear God, you fear everything else."²⁷ This is the way the believer should live.

In Prov 1:7 Solomon writes, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge." In Isa 66:2b the Lord declares, "But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word." The man or woman that God uses most powerfully is the one who expresses both awe and obedience. God longs for you and me to humble our hearts and prostrate our souls before Him. If you and I are to fear God properly, we must have a high view of God. Many years ago, A.W. Tozer said, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."

Second, to "keep His commandments" is to obey the Law.²⁸ Fortunately for us, Jesus summed up the commandments into one central, basic command: "To love the Lord your God" and "your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:34-40). This is the chief end of humankind. This phrase literally reads, "because this is all of man" or "because this is the all of man." The implication is that "this is the whole duty of man."²⁹

If you know me very well, you know that I am not a handyman. Honestly, I'm a complete moron when it comes to doing much of anything. Whenever I have to do anything, I can't experiment or hope that I find my way. I have to follow the instructions. I am always so impressed with men who can just toss the directions and dive right into a project. Yet, I have seen such men confound themselves and have to return to the discarded directions. Similarly, God created life and He alone knows how it should be managed. He wrote the "instruction manual" and wise is the person who reads and obeys. "When all else fails, read the instructions!"

So why are we called to fear God and obey His commands? In 12:14 Solomon states, **“For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden,³⁰ whether it is good or evil.”³¹** Winston Churchill’s (1874-1965) epitaph reads, “I am ready to meet my maker. Whether my maker is prepared for the great ordeal of meeting me is another matter.” Apparently, Churchill did not understand the fear of God and the judgment that is awaiting him. The Bible teaches that there is an appointed day of judgment where we will have to give an account of our lives. Through the Lord Jesus Christ, God will hold us accountable for our thoughts, motives, words, and deeds.³² Everyone is answerable to God for everything, whether obvious or concealed, good or evil. I find it mildly horrifying that even the hidden things will be judged. The implication is that the glory and reward we enjoy on earth and in eternity will depend on the lives we live here on earth. The natural and inevitable conclusion is that you and I had better live our lives appropriately in light of God’s judgment.

I know many people who struggle with questions of right and wrong—especially in those areas for which we have no explicit guidance in the Bible. They truly want to please the Lord, but worry about their daily decisions. Here’s a simple question that will replace many of the dos and don’ts: Can I do this to God’s glory? That is, if I do this, will it enhance God’s reputation in the world? Will those who watch me know that I know God, from my behavior? Or will I simply have to explain this away or apologize for it later.³³

A friend of mine planted a church in Gresham, OR called *Coram Deo* Fellowship.³⁴ *Coram Deo* is a Latin phrase which means “under the face of God.” It’s a reminder that God is always watching everything we do. His eyes are always on us, nothing escapes His notice, and all of life must be lived for His approval.

For years, the opening of ABC’s *The Wide World of Sports* illustrated “the agony of defeat” through the painful ending of an attempted ski jump. The skier appeared in good form as he headed down the slope, but then, for no apparent reason, he tumbled head-over-heels off the side of the jump and bounced off the supporting structure. What viewers didn’t know was that *he chose to fall*. Why? As he explained later, the jump surface had become too fast, and midway down the ramp he realized that if he completed the jump, he would land on the level ground, beyond the safe landing zone, which could have been fatal. As it was, the skier suffered no more than a headache from the tumble. The fear of the slope, the fear of flying too high, and the fear of the fall led him to change course.³⁵

In the same manner, a proper fear of God ought to lead to a course correction. For this passage and the entire book of Ecclesiastes teaches that *the fear of God leads to life*. A biblical fear of God will lead to life in this world and the world to come. If you think you have been enjoying life, but haven’t been fearing God, think again. *The fear of God leads to life*...and only the fear of God will lead to life. Today, is there an area of your life that the Lord wants to correct? Will you respond to His goads and nails? Will you rest in your Shepherd and trust that He alone can satisfy you?

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Scripture Reading

Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

Proverbs 22:20-21

Proverbs 1:6-7

Deuteronomy 10:12

Micah 6:8

2 Corinthians 5:10-11

1 Corinthians 4:5

Study Questions

1. How is the description of Solomon (12:9-10) similar to the description of a scribe's work in Ezra 7:10? In what way(s) should my life be similar to those of Solomon and Ezra? Even though I am not in vocational ministry, how is the Lord calling me to step up my own spiritual disciplines and public ministry?
2. What is my favorite book besides the Bible? How has this book impacted my spiritual growth? How many books have I read in the past twelve months? In what ways have these books benefitted me? How can I balance my reading of the Bible and my reading of books?
3. What does it mean to "fear God" (12:13)? How would I define this in my own words? Is there an illustration or analogy that I could use? In what ways do I exhibit a fear of God? Where do I need to still grow in this area? Who do I know that really seems to fear God? What can I learn from him or her?
4. Does it seem difficult to "keep God's commands" (12:13)? Why or why not? How should we understand 1 John 5:3, which says that God's commandments "are not burdensome?" What about Jesus' own words, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt 11:30)? How can I make sense of these verses when they do not seem to be true of my experience? In what area of my life do I find it the most difficult to obey God?
5. Am I prepared for my future judgment (12:14)? If Jesus were to come today and I was called to give an account of my life, would I be ready? Does a day of future reckoning motivate me or paralyze me? How can I possess a proper motivation? Read 1 Peter 4:8 and 1 John 4:17-18. What will it take for me to hear Jesus say, "Well done, good and faithful slave" (Matt 25:21, 23)?

Notes

¹ David Jeremiah, *Searching for Heaven on Earth* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 301-302.

² Ray Pritchard, *Something New Under the Sun: Ancient Wisdom for Contemporary Living* (Chicago: Moody, 1998), 292-293.

³ The verb “pondered” (*azan*) is only used here in the OT, but it comes from the same root that comes from “to give ear to.”

⁴ Jeremiah, *Searching for Heaven on Earth*, 303.

⁵ Wayne Schmidt, *Soul Management* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 216.

⁶ The verb “given” (*nathan*) is often used in Ecclesiastes to refer to God’s activity (cf. 1:13; 2:26; 3:10; 5:18, 19; 6:2; 8:15; 9:9; 12:7, 11).

⁷ Heb 4:12 says, “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” In 2 Tim 3:16-17, Paul writes, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

⁸ Goads are temporary; while nails are permanent.

⁹ The form *darebonah* (“goads”) is found only here.

¹⁰ Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs: New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman, 1993).

¹¹ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Ecclesiastes: Total Life* (Chicago: Moody, 1979), 124.

¹² Wisdom Literature was to be a guide and discipline from God to challenge and encourage humans in this life and point them to the next.

¹³ Jesus said, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt 11:28).

¹⁴ See Gen 48:15; 49:24; Ps 23:1; 80:1; 95:7; Isa 40:11; Jer 31:10; Ezek 34:11. Jewish tradition identifies “the one shepherd” with Moses (i.e., Targums, Rashi). However, Moses is never called shepherd, but he does carry the “rod of God” (shepherd’s staff). Moses also warned of not adding or taking away from God’s revealed truths (cf. Deut 4:2; 12:32).

¹⁵ In Israel’s Wisdom Tradition the teacher was called “father” and his male students “sons” (cf. Prov 1:8; 4:1).

¹⁶ The verbal “excessive” (*lahag*) is used twice in this verse: (1) making of many books; (2) excessive devotion. The noun is found only here in the OT. In Arabic it means “to be devoted,” “to be attached,” or “to apply oneself assiduously to something.” It is uncertain if (1) the writing; (2) compiling; or (3) study of books is the focus of the warning. The problem is that human wisdom is helpful, but not ultimate!

¹⁷ Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*

¹⁸ Ruth Bell Graham was once asked the best way to become wise. Her reply, “Read, read, read—but use the Bible as home base.” Quoted in Jeremiah, *Searching for Heaven on Earth*, 305.

¹⁹ Tommy Nelson, *The Problem of Life with God* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 199.

²⁰ Some scholars argue that Eccl 12:13-14 was added by some late redactor wanting to make sure Ecclesiastes remained in the scriptural canon. Yet, there is no manuscript evidence to suggest that this alleged pious ending was dropped into place. All available manuscripts reflect the present ending, so the supposition of its being an addition must remain just that: a supposition. See Walter C. Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997, c1996), 296.

²¹ To “fear God” is one of the major themes of wisdom literature in the OT:

- Job 28:28: “And to man He said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.’”
- Psalm 111:10: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.”
- Proverbs 1:7: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

²² The admonition to “fear God” is a repeated theme (cf. Eccl 3:14; 5:7; 7:18; 8:12-13).

²³ We shouldn’t make the mistake of assuming that because it is mentioned so many times in the OT, that it is not really important today, we must understand that the NT assumes what the OT has already established. So, the NT assumes such virtues as trusting in God because it was clearly taught in the OT.

²⁴ See David Fairchild, “Well-Driven Nails” (Eccl 12:9-14): <http://www.kaleochurch.com/sermon/Well-driven-Nails>.

²⁵ Heb 12:29; Matt 10:28; 2 Cor 5:10.

²⁶ “The Parenting Fear Factor”: <http://www.sermonnews.com/MembersOnlyStory.asp?ID=1143>. Data collected from *Little Grad*, the Saving for College Company.

²⁷ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Satisfied*, Electronic Ed.

²⁸ The terms “fear” and “commandments” appear together in Ps 112:1. Some question whether the phrase “keep His commands” is in keeping with Solomon’s theology. However, a review of Ecclesiastes reveals exhortations to obey the king’s commands (8:5a; cf. 8:2), which is akin to submitting to God. Furthermore, the motivation to obey the king (8:5b-6a) is the same motivation to fear God—impending judgment (12:14; cf. 3:15b, 17; 11:9c).

²⁹ The Westminster Confession captures the same essence of this statement when it says, “This is the chief end of man.”

³⁰ The verb “hidden” (*alam*) refers to intentional and unintentional sins (cf. Ps 19:12; 90:8; 139:23-24).

³¹ Glenn argues that this judgment only refers to earth and not eternity. Donald R. Glenn, “Ecclesiastes” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, edited by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton: Scripture Press/Victor, 1985), 1006-7.

³² This anticipates Paul’s words in 2 Cor 5:10 where he writes, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

³³ Pritchard, *Something New Under the Sun*, 306.

³⁴ <http://www.coramdeofellowship.com>.

³⁵ Preaching Today citation: Jeff Arthurs, “Clearing the Debris,” PreachingToday.com.