**CHARGE TO GRADUATES**

**Eccl. 12:1 & 13 *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh…Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.***

**King Solomon…***the wisest man who ever lived*, became *the most fleshly, worldly and ungodly man* who ever lived. He had riches beyond measure, hundreds of wives and concubines (mistresses), servants at his beck and call, Kings and Queens bowing before him, and was able to have anything his flesh desired! **He died a pauper from the spiritual standpoint.** The book of Ecclesiastes is the record of his foolishness. *I want to encourage you not to follow in his footsteps. He broke all 3 of God’s prime directives.*

I am going to give you a few tips on how to avoid Solomon’s bad example. His admonition in the verse above will help you. In fact it should be your prime goal **in all of life**, not just in your youth.

I also want to give you some practical advice from my 87 years on this planet…

I was only saved about 6 months when I enlisted in the **U.S. Army** at age 22 and was sent overseas to Germany after WWII. I had already completed almost 6 years in the **U.S. Navy**. Both of these military organizations had developed some strange but purposeful rituals that I didn’t at the time understand. I will start with one of them before getting into some other more biblical priorities…

**1. Make your bed the first thing each day!**

Our sheets and blankets had to have hospital corners and be so tight that the Petty Officer or Sergeant could bounce a coin on it. Why was this ritual important?

*First so you could accomplish something at the very* ***beginning of the day****. It would also help you at* ***the end of a frustrating day*** *to know that it wasn’t completely a waste of time.*

**2. Begin each day with God’s Word and prayer!**

Make this another *daily ritual*, but never allow it to become ritualistic.

 *No matter how pretty, smart, charming or practical you are* ***God knows more than you*** *so need to seek His wisdom and direction each day. You need to allow Him to speak to you and then you need to speak to Him.* ***“Seek ye first…”***

**3. Encourage others!**

 Especially those who may not be in your circle of friends or co-workers and may even be unkind to you. Help others to be what you strive to be.

This will help **you** more than it may help **them**. ***“Those who would have friends…” “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”***

You will find that even if not appreciated at the time it will come back to you later. (30 yrs)

 “***Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.”***

**4. Accept counsel but avoid critics and naysayers!**

People don’t always follow the advice they give to you, but at least give them a hearing. **Especially your pastor** and Christian leaders and friends and your parents, even if you don’t agree at the time. You may find that they are smarter than you think as you grow older. *Don’t be rude, but always evaluate others advice from a biblical perspective.*

 **Of course…LISTEN TO ME TODAY! 😊**

**CONCL.:** There are many things I could have said that I didn’t say, but **if you practice these four things,** you will be ahead of many others who are older than you or have more experienced than you.

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