



[TOP](#)

## Daily Devotional - Monday, September 30, 2024 - Don't Miss this Message

SEPTEMBER 30TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Daily Devotional - Monday, September 30, 2024 - Don't Miss this Message

In Ecclesiastes, the Teacher has emphasized a few key points in his Genesis-shaped discussion of life. First, this life is marked by vanity or futility; it has been turned upside down because of sin. Sometimes there is wickedness in the place of righteousness; sometimes the fastest runner doesn't win the race; sometimes the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. This "upside-downness" may tempt us to despair, but the Teacher tells us how to thrive in this sin-riddled world. Second, God has given us many things to enjoy. These gifts point us back toward the garden of Eden and forward to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Enjoying God's gifts brings a small taste of life before sin and life when sin no longer reigns.

Third, our lives must be lived in relationship with God. In verse 13 we read that fearing God and keeping His commandments is the "whole duty of all mankind." The word "duty" is absent in the original Hebrew text. Translators have supplied that word to try to make sense of what the Teacher is saying. In Hebrew he says that "*the whole*" or "the *all* of humanity" is fearing God and keeping His commandments. It is not our *duty* to be in relationship with God; it is our *whole*. It's what it means to be human.

Genesis 1 teaches that all humans are created in God’s image, created to live in a relationship with Him as his co regents on planet Earth. We sinned and were expelled from His presence, but God did not abandon us. No, He worked to re-establish our true purpose of loving Him. He did this in many ways throughout the Old Testament, and in the New, He inaugurated the new covenant in the blood of His Son, Jesus—the only way to have forgiveness of sins and restored relationship with God.

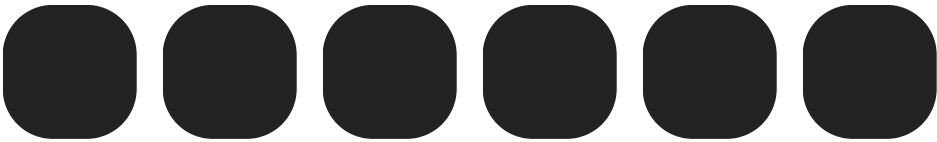
Are you living as a *whole* human being? Or is something crucial missing in your life?  
If you haven’t trusted in Jesus, do so today!

Lord, thank You for your covenant love and never-ending faithfulness! Your love reaches to the farthest, hidden corners of our lives. Search our hearts and show us where we need Your forgiveness and Your mercy. Amen

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[TOP](#)

# Daily Devotional - Monday, September 23, 2024 - The Great Equalizer

SEPTEMBER 23RD 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Daily Devotional - Monday, September 23, 2024 - The Great Equalizer

Do you fear death? The fear is understandable, given that ten out of ten people die. Not only will we face death, but everyone we love is in the same predicament. As the author of Ecclesiastes says, we “all share a common destiny—the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad” (v. 2). Everyone, whether rich or poor, famous or ordinary, will die in the end.

In Ecclesiastes 9:1–6 the Teacher gives voice to what many of us may have thought before: “This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all” (v. 3). This passage is difficult to understand,

particularly since Christians today have the benefit of the New Testament, which clearly teaches the resurrection of the dead and eternal life for those who trust in Jesus (John 11:25; Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:12, 42).

*All share a common destiny—the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad*

**ECCLESIASTES 9:2**

Does Ecclesiastes contradict the New Testament? I don’t think so, for a few reasons. First, even though the Teacher expresses his frustration that death is the great equalizer, he has repeatedly expressed his faith in God and highlighted the importance of living in relationship with Him.

Second, the concept of progressive revelation teaches that as time progressed, God more fully revealed Himself in Scripture. Thus, Ecclesiastes does not contradict the resurrection of the dead, because God had not yet fully revealed that truth. Now that we have the fuller revelation of Scripture, we can affirm even more fully the Teacher’s reflection on the “evil” of death as the great equalizer. In fact, death is so evil, so abhorrent to the Lord of life, that the Son died on the cross in order to conquer death and atone for sin. So we can agree with the Teacher, while also rejoicing that death has been defeated! “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” (1 Cor. 15:55).

[Go Deeper](#)

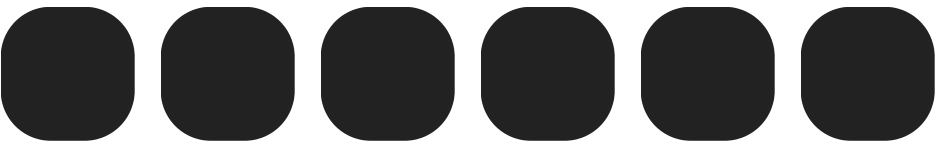
Do you fear death? How might acknowledging the sting of death help you communicate the gospel to others?

**Pray with Us:** Loving Father, thank You for Your presence in our lives. In Christ, You see us and draw near to us with abiding love. Jesus, knowing that You are with us helps us overcome our fears, even fear of death.

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[Go to post](#)



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TOP

# Daily Devotional - Monday, September 16, 2024 - THERE MUST BE SOMETHING MORE

SEPTEMBER 16TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, September 16, 2024 - THERE MUST BE SOMETHING MORE

One of the earliest video games was Pac-Man. To play, you would use a controller to navigate a yellow, pie-shaped character through a maze while eating dots and fruit. The goal, of course, was for Pac-Man, and later Ms. Pac-Man, to avoid being eaten by the ghosts. Don't slow down or you will be eaten and lose the game!

In Ecclesiastes 6:7–12, the Teacher calls us to slow down. He transitions into a long section of proverbs, or short sayings, that continue into chapters 8, 10, and 11, before closing out with the famous poem on death and dying and his final word on what it means to be a human: living in right relationship with our Maker.

*Everyone's toil is for their mouth, yet their appetite is never satisfied.*

**ECCLESIASTES 6:7**

These proverbs can feel like puzzles, and their meaning is not always obvious upon first reading. That's by design! So, let's answer the Teacher's call to think deeply and meditate on Scripture. In our fast-paced world, it can seem countercultural to slow down our rapid-achievement pace and absorb these truths.

Let's consider today's verse: "Everyone's toil is for their mouth, yet their appetite is never satisfied" (v. 7). What does the Teacher mean? The obvious answer is that humans can be a lot like Pac-Man. We work so we can eat, and then we get hungry again. But let's consider this proverb a bit more. He uses the negative word "toil" when he could have used the more neutral word "work." What's more, "appetite" in Hebrew is *nephesh*, which also means something like one's "being" or "life." Why use that term? What does he mean by "satisfied"? And what else does the Teacher say isn't satisfied in his book? Is he saying that we can be a bit like Pac-Man, moving endlessly through a maze?

## Go Deeper

Will you accept the Teacher's invitation? If so, what are some practical steps you can take to make slowing down and meditating on God's Word a more regular part of your life?

**Pray with Us:** Thank You, for Your life-giving Word! Guide us, Jesus, in the study of Scripture, deepen our understanding of its truths. "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path" (Ps. 119:105).

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

## Daily Devotional - Thursday, September 12, 2024 - Speak with Care

SEPTEMBER 12TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Daily Devotional - Thursday, September 12, 2024 - Speak with Care

Have you ever been pulled over for speeding and prayed, “Lord! I’ll never speed again if you just don’t let the officer give me a speeding ticket!”? We don’t think of that sort of prayer as a vow, but that’s exactly what it is.

While the Bible doesn’t prohibit vows, it does make clear that they are fraught with danger, “do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God” (Eccl. 5:2).

Numbers 30 outlines the regulations for making vows, the key issue being that when one

makes a vow to the Lord, “he must not break his word but must do everything he said” (Num. 30:2). God does not require anyone to make a vow to Him, but He *does* expect the fulfillment of vows made. “It is better not to make a vow than to make one and not fulfill it” (v. 5). The Mosaic law treated rash or foolish vows to be a sin and made provisions for them (Lev. 5:4–5; see also Num. 30:6–8). God takes our words seriously.

*Do not be quick with your mouth, and do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God.*

**ECCLESIASTES 5:2**

In Ecclesiastes, the Teacher offers wise advice: “Let your words be few.” When we speak to God and to others, we should recognize God’s holiness: “God is in heaven and you are on earth so let your words be few” (v. 2). In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus taught His disciples (and us) to use simple words that recognize who God is, ask Him for our needs, and trust Him to supply them (Matt. 6:9–13). Rather than piling up words to impress our friends or convince God to help us, Jesus said, we should approach God humbly and in faith (Matt. 6:6). God hears our words. Even so, He already knows what we need, so we should not make empty promises in a prideful attempt to bargain with the Creator of the universe.

Go Deeper

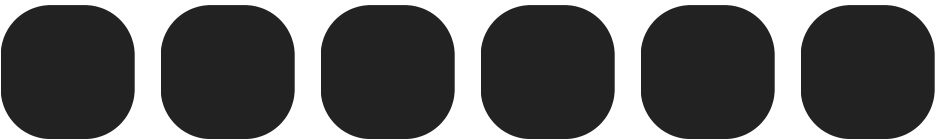
Have you ever made a vow to God? Why do you think God takes our words so seriously?

**Pray with Us:** Father, thank You for the valuable life lessons You are teaching us in the book of Ecclesiastes. One of the most difficult—how to use our words wisely and to be people of few words. Help us, Lord, to glorify you with everything we say.

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TOP

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, September 11, 2024 -

# The Joy of Companionship

SEPTEMBER 11TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Daily Devotional - Wednesday, September 11, 2024 - The Joy of Companionship

In May 2023 the U.S. Surgeon General released a report detailing the effects of loneliness on the American population, claiming that “lacking social connection can increase the risk for premature death as much as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day.” In addition, loneliness resulted in a “29% increased risk of heart disease and a 32% increased risk of stroke.” Isn’t it strange that in a world more connected than ever through technology, the scourge of loneliness still strikes a lethal blow?

The Teacher tackles social isolation in today’s passage. In verses 7–8 he states that he has observed a pattern in the world that seemed futile to him. This man was completely alone, “with neither son nor brother,” and yet he worked tirelessly. Surely this

*Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor.*

**ECCLESIASTES 4:9**

should not be, for God created humans in the Garden of Eden to be in relationship with others. In fact, the only not good thing God observed in His six days of Creation was isolation: “It is not good,” the Lord said, “for the man to be alone” (Gen. 2:18).

God’s solution to this “not good” aspect of creation is to “make a helper suitable for him” (Gen. 2:18). The Teacher’s solution is the same (minus the creation part!). In 4:9–12 he details the benefits of companionship: a higher return on your work, help when you fall, warmth during cold nights, and protection from attackers. Perhaps the Teacher didn’t have in mind the dangers of stroke and heart disease, but he knew that humans need one another because that is exactly how God designed us. And developing meaningful relationships with others is one way the church can present a compelling witness to the world around us. We are called to be in community with our fellow believers. “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).

### Go Deeper

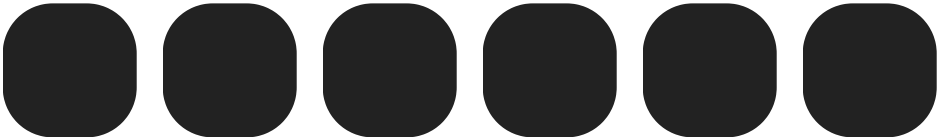
Have you experienced connection in your local church family? How can you nurture a relationship with another believer today?

**Pray with Us:** Jesus, thank You for the gift of fellowship. We are not alone—You saved us into a family of believers. In Your steadfast love and gentleness, teach us how to love one another as You have loved us.



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