

IMPACT

I Must **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Ecclesiastes 11:9-19 “Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God will bring you into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity.”

Quote: “The question is not, ‘How much may I indulge in and still be saved?’ God forbid! I must rather ask, ‘What about Christ’s will and the example I set for my fellow Christians?’” Robert A. Cook

Solomon knew what he was talking about! Individuals may pursue after their desires, but Solomon warns that there will come a day of reckoning. He said, “Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my reward from all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done and on the labor in which I had toiled; and indeed *all was vanity and grasping for the wind*. There was no profit under the sun. Then I turned myself to consider wisdom and madness and folly; for what can the man do who succeeds the king? Only what he has already done. Then I saw that *wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness*.”¹ “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, *but fools despise wisdom and instruction*.”²

For a time Solomon lost his way spiritually. He did not practice the fear of the Lord. He was a prisoner of his own passions. Men respected him for the great things he accomplished. Yet, when he thought about all that he had experienced, he realized that it was futile. He said that whoever followed him could not accomplish anything more than he had done, and yet all of it left him feeling empty. Looking back on his life, Solomon gave wise advice. “Remember now your Creator *in the days of your youth*, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, ‘I have no pleasure in them.’”³ What a contrast to Paul who wrote, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”⁴ Like him, we must “Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace

with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”⁵ A person reveals his heart by what he flees from, what he follows after, and with whom he does both!

Fleeing the lusts of the flesh and following God’s Word involve personal choices to bow the knee to the pre-eminence of the Savior and not the pleasures of sin. Paul wrote, “*Reckon* (judge) yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore *do not let sin reign in your mortal body*, that you should obey it in its lusts. And *do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin*, but *present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God*. For sin shall *not* have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? *Certainly not!* Do you not know that to *whom you present yourselves slaves to obey*, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?”⁶

Paul is not speaking of earning salvation. He is saying that the “proof is in the pudding!” “Actions speak louder than words!” Are we bowing the knee to our flesh or to faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ? Are we practicing sin or righteousness? John warned, “And now, little children, abide in [Christ], that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that *everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him*.” “Whoever abides in Him does not [practice] sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor *known Him*. Little children, *let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous*.”⁷ Our lifestyle reflects our allegiance and our priorities. If we are part of the bride of Christ, we are to live as a loyal “help meet” through what we say and do! Friendship with the world’s values and failure to restrain the flesh may lead to spiritual adultery—a sinful betrayal of Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us!⁸

Restrain the Flesh

1 Eccl.2:10-13 2 Prov.1:7 3 Eccl.12:1 4 II Tim.:4:7 5 II Tim.2:22 6 Rom.6:11-16 7 I Jn.2:28, 29; 3:6,7 8 James 4:4; I Jn.2:15-17