

Message #32**Ecclesiastes 9:11-12**

There is absolutely no doubt that we should work hard. Whatever we do we should give it our best (10:9). But just because we do this does not automatically mean we will succeed. The one determining factor as to whether or not we do is the sovereignty of God.

**THE WISE WAY TO LIVE LIFE IS TO RECOGNIZE AND ACKNOWLEDGE
GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER OUR SITUATIONS AND TO RECOGNIZE AND
 ACKNOWLEDGE OUR OWN LIMITATIONS.**

Solomon came to realize the sovereignty of God more and more as his thinking started to become stable.

REALIZATION #1 – Success is not determined by one's own ability . **9:11**

Illustration #1 - The swift runner may still lose the race . **9:11a**

The truth of this verse is you can be as fast a runner as you want or as persistent a runner as you can be and still lose.

Now here is Solomon's point—you can train as much as you want and become as fast as you can become and still not win. Our own training and ability does not determine whether we win, God determines it.

Illustration #2 - A strong military may still lose the war . **9:11b**

Undoubtedly, Solomon thought about his father David. David had personally gone one-on-one with the most impressive military man in the most powerful military force of its day—the Philistines. David was nothing more than a shepherd boy and he walked out into a valley to face the most intimidating soldier of his time—his name was Goliath. David not only defeated Goliath, but the Israelites started chasing the Philistines and they started running away like cowards. Even with all of their size and strength, they lost.

Think of the political powers that have gone down when they turned against little Israel. First, there was Egypt, then there was Assyria, then came the Babylonian power, then there was the Medo-Persian power and then there was Greece. Who could forget Rome; all roads led there. Yet, one by one these major powers were destroyed. With all of their size and strength, they still lost.

We need to realize that our size and strength has little to do with victory. If God is on our side, He is all we need to win. God is the key to victory, not our speed, not our size and not our strength.

Illustration #3 - A strong mind does not mean one will prosper. **9:11c**

Just because one is wise or discerning does not mean he will be rich. Sometimes wise people end up on this earth with very little; in fact, most of the time that is true.

People who are highly committed to God's Word, people who are really wise don't always wind up with much in this life.

If God classifies one as wise, in the next life he will be extremely wealthy.

Illustration #4 - A great ability does not mean one will be avored. **9:11d**

Truth is in this life one can have great abilities and never be favored, or take a long time until he is favored. One can look to the life of Joseph. It was years before this man was favored by anyone. In the illustration of the man in 9:13-15, he was never favored.

Great ability does not always mean one will be favored. Sometimes the best players don't even make the team. Sometimes the hardest working students are passed by for the scholarships and awards. Sometimes the one on the job who knows the most never gets promoted. In fact, promotions pass him by.

We must all ask what is it or who is it that determines the outcome? The answer of course, is God! God is the one who sovereignly determines the outcome of everything. It is truly all of Him.

Solomon, at the end of **verse 11** names two things over which man has no control—time and chance. The word “chance” includes events and incidents.

We are limited by time and we are limited by unplanned and unscheduled events over which we have no control. The words of Roland Murphy in his commentary are worth citing: “...no matter what one's talents, because of events beyond human control, one never has a sure grip on success. The ‘time of calamity’ is an unfortunate time, a fortuitous event that happens when one cannot cope with it. It refers to death, but also to any serious adversity” (p. 94).

REALIZATION #2 – Situations in life are not controlled by man. **9:12**

1) Man does not know his own time limit. **9:12a**

We do not know how much time God will give us on this earth and wise is the individual who uses the time he has for the glory of God.

We don't know when or how we will die. We do not know how long God will grant us life on this earth.

2) Evil times can come upon any man. **9:12b**

We have no control over adverse and evil things that happen to us. I have said this many times: God is a sovereign God. He can grant us prosperity and He can grant us adversity. We naturally would choose prosperity but that is not always what God grants us (Eccl. 7:14). God can send evil spirits to trouble us and terrorize us (i.e. I Sam. 16:14-15).

God does not apologize for the fact that He sovereignly controls everything. In fact, it is this very reality that should cause us to fear Him, love Him and live for Him. This is the key to a meaningful and happy life.