Bullets on the Back of the Book

Reflections From the Top

Session Eight - 06/28/07

"You can't tell a book by its cover." That's what they say, you know. I think that is old advice because publishers in our day seem to pour lots of effort into the covers of the books. The dazzle and hype that grace the fronts of the texts on the shelves are calling for the browsing buyer's attention.

It's on the back of the book however that you can learn the most. It's there that you discover the essence of the book. Its central thread, the identity of its author, the philosophy behind it, and the burning issue it exposes will be found in that space, or not at all. Books sell or sit based on the bullet points portrayed on the back cover.

Solomon's final volume concludes with just such a concise summation. His essence is discovered in the final few lines; if there have been questions about his outlook, they are cleared up for certain as he winds up his memoirs and stows his manuscripts.

■ The Bullets on the Back of the Book

1. The theme of the book

Ecclesiastes 12:8

2. The author of the book

Ecclesiastes 12:9-10

3. The source of the book

Ecclesiastes 12:11-12

4. The message of the book

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

The pressure is unbelievable. Everywhere I look around me, I'm being passed like I'm standing still. I'm giving everything I have to my work, and it isn't enough most of the time. I make a better income, live in a better place, drive a better car, wear better clothes, and have better things than my father did, or his father before him, but I don't feel like I've made it. I live in anticipation of being replaced one day by someone who has more ability, or youth, or education than I do. When people ask me how I'm doing, I tell them I'm great, because they don't want to hear the truth anymore than I want to tell it. My commitment to my career has made me incapable of significant relationships. I wish at times that I could open up to my marriage partner, but we're going in two different directions, and we never seem to get past surface chatter. So far as I know, I've never had a friend. Ever. The anticipation of old age, with the physical, mental, and financial problems that accompany it, leads me to sheer terror. If I could be sure that life ends at death, I would see relief in dying before things get any worse. Maybe the one who dies whith the most toys is the winner. Life, as best as I can tell, is a total waste.

A Life-Message of the Eighties

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