

Bread upon the waters.
Bread. Food, sustenance.
Bread, the basics.
Bread, money, buying power.
Bread, life, hope,
our daily needs.
Bread. Alone.
The side it's buttered on.
So toss it.
Where?
Waters. Muddy, cool clear.
The Roman spa at Bath.
Oceans, streams, down by the crick.
Any waters, that's the point,
waters move, leave, change, evolve.
Beyond my control.

What I value most, what's most basic
to me, I release, I toss,
trusting I'll get it back,
in spades, God. But remind me
the point is I don't keep control,
can't do it for the promise. Just believe.

- 11.2 Give portions to seven, yes to eight, for you do
not
know what disaster may come upon the land.
- 11.3 If clouds are full of water,
they pour rain upon the earth.
Whether a tree falls to the south or to the
north,
in the place where it falls, there will it lie.^(NIV)

Give and you'll get.
Share, and you'll receive.
Teach somebody to learn the subject.
Cut out the "what if's."
Trust in God's goodness,
in his bounty.
But know it's better to give
than to receive, and giving
enhances the bounty received.

God, I'm centered in me unless
with your help
I have the joy of really participating
in your creation. Help me.

11.4

Whoever watches the wind will not plant;
whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.

11.5

As you do not know the path of the wind,
or how the body is formed in a mother 's
womb,
so you cannot understand the work of God,
the Maker of all things.

11.6

Sow your seed in the morning,
and at evening let not your hands be idle,
for you do not know which will succeed,
whether this or that,
or whether both will do equally well.^(NIV)

What if?
Contingency plans
in case
by chance
the worst should happen,
the end of time,
the big one,
global conflagration,
in the eventuality of
the unlikely,
the worrier is likely
not to lose
for, taking no action,
making no plans,
nothing's there,
come hell,
high water —
or good fortune ignored.

I have now, and now only,
but I can trust, work, prepare
for the bounty available,
the promises received.

Remember Your Creator While Young

- 11.7 Light is sweet,
and it pleases the eyes to see the sun.
- 11.8 However many years a man may live,
let him enjoy them all.
But let him remember the days of darkness,
for they will be many.
Everything to come is meaningless.
- 11.9 Be happy, young man, while you are young,
and let your heart give you joy in the days of
your youth.
Follow the ways of your heart
and whatever your eyes see,
but know that for all these things
God will bring you to judgment.
- 11.10 So then, banish anxiety from your heart
and cast off the troubles of your body,
for youth and vigor are meaningless.^(NIV)

Shadow makes the painting.
Sorrow colors life, gives it depth.
A child draws with bright colors,
side by side
and we see it with loving eyes
so it touches us.
Youth and vigor offer great joy and fun
perhaps,
but who would go back
and live it again
without change?
Life is good. Live it.
Rejoice in life,
no matter what.

God, we can't see the full tapestry of our lives
but we trust you, the master weaver.
I believe.
Heal my unbelief.

Chapter Twelve

- 12.1 Remember your Creator
in the days of your youth,
before the days of trouble come
and the years approach when you will say,
“I find no pleasure in them” —
- 12.2 before the sun and the light
and the moon and the stars grow dark,
and the clouds return after the rain;^(NIV)

Youth need not be wasted
on the young.
Nature may lead a child
to myopia
but grandparents,
teachers,
occasionally a parent
wise beyond years,
may plant seeds of
prescience, of discernment,
of faith.
Blessed indeed
is the beneficiary
of such a
bequest.

God, let me remember you now,
even when my youth has passed.
Let me remember you in sunlight and gloom,
in fair weather and foul.
Let me find pleasure in each day,
with you.

- 12.3 when the keepers of the house tremble,
and the strong men stoop,
when the grinders cease because they are
few,
and those looking through the windows grow
dim;
- 12.4 when the doors to the street are closed
and the sound of grinding fades;
when men rise up at the sound of birds,
but all their songs grow faint;
- 12.5 when men are afraid of heights
and of dangers in the streets;
when the almond tree blossoms
and the grasshopper drags himself along
and desire no longer is stirred.
Then man goes to his eternal home
and mourners go about the streets.^(NIV)

Hurdler,
colonel, engineer,
captain of the band.
Baritone, tinner,
mayor, leader —
you could do everything
but hula-hoop and fix my Timex.
Now muddled of mind,
breathless, a stranger
in your own head,
you plan the ordinary,
relearn the routine.
The chasm gapes.
Daddy, can I be the child again?

Thank you God for an eternal home
where mourners know the pain is gone.

- 12.6 Remember him – before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the well,
- 12.7 and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.
- 12.8 “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Everything is meaningless!”^(NIV)

Death comes suddenly,
like a lamp suspended by a cord
falls, shattering.
Slowly like a pitcher oozing water
through cracks
or like a well wheel refusing
to continue its gift of life.
Ashes to ashes,
dust to dust.
God continues.
Meaningless?
How did meaningless
become meaningful?
It has, you know.

God who was and is and is to be,
I trust you.

The Conclusion of the Matter

12.9-10

Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. ¹⁰The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true.

12.11-12

The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails – given by one Shepherd. ¹²Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them.

Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body.

12.13

Now all has been heard;
here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the whole duty of man.

12.14

For God will bring every deed into judgment,
including every hidden thing,
whether it is good or evil. ^(NIV)

Of making many books, no end.
I've added to the pile.
Much study wearies the body,
makes the eyes burn,
but sometimes, just occasionally,
an idea springs forward,
a light,
a beacon.
Fear God.
Keep his commandments.
This is your whole duty.
What a glorious duty it is.

Praise God for life as it comes.
Praise him in sorrow, in joy, in loneliness,
from the masses,
hidden in my closet.
Praise God for giving life
meaning
even when it all seems meaningless.

About the Author

David had one son who became king, Solomon, and only Solomon was king over Israel, the only king other than David over all Israel, not merely the northern kingdom or southern kingdom, but this writer speaks of all the kings before him when only David and Saul ruled in Jerusalem over the Jews. He calls himself the “qohéleth” which translated into Greek as *ekklésiastes* and meant teacher/preacher/speaker. Scholars who discount Solomon as the author – among other reasons because he doesn’t use the most common Hebrew word for God – place him in the post-exilic period, perhaps 250 to 200 years before the Christian era. Whatever the time of writing, the prose and poetry is timeless, acknowledging longing in the human soul and, ultimately, the deity and nature of God – that he reveals himself and conceals himself, but ultimately is transcendent and sovereign. God is in charge. So says The Teacher.

About the Author

Barbara B. Rollins, like The Teacher, looks back on life after decades, after pursuing happiness and meaning through various courses – teacher, Christian educator, secretary, lawyer, judge, and writer. Married for decades, mother of grown sons, Sunday school teacher, Rotarian, Toastmaster, genealogist, historian, editor, and publisher, she’s experienced the ups and downs of life. A student of the history of Twelve-Step programs, she draws understanding from eclectic literature and correspondents around the world. Her previously published works include a forensic series for children (*Blood Evidence, Cause of Death, Ballistics, and Fingerprint Evidence*), the young adult novel *Syncopaed Summer*, and the anthologies of Silver Boomer Books: *Silver Boomers, Freckles to Wrinkles*, and *This Path*. Barbara is a principal in Silver Boomer Books and makes her home in Abilene, Texas.

May God bless this offering.

These last two pages will be about the other books.

