

THANK YOU FOR  
JOINING US TODAY!

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### Gospel Class

8 week class that goes through basic Doctrine in Christianity and what Element believes specifically. Continues today at 1pm, childcare is available.

### Elementary Kids Event:

#### GLOW Party

Kids in 1st through 5th grades are welcome to join us for this fun event designed to connect them to each other and to Jesus.

September 27 from 6-8 pm.

Kids should wear neon clothes or clothes that react with blacklight and their friends! Help is needed for event, please see the Welcome Center for more.

### Gospel Community (GC)

GC's are our primary organizing structure here at Element. It's where we see Disciple Making take place when we orient our lives together, on and around the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is where we commit to grow as a disciple, disciple others, and make disciples; to share our lives so they are visible and accessible.


**DISCIPLE:** A disciple is one who increasingly submits their life to the all-empowering Lordship of Jesus Christ.


**JOIN:** Connect with a Group by emailing [connect@ourelement.org](mailto:connect@ourelement.org) or visiting the Welcome Center.



### Join Our Weekly Email Update

Sign up using a Connect Card located under the seat in front of you or by going to [ourelement.org](http://ourelement.org).

### Follow Us Online

 [www.ourelement.org](http://www.ourelement.org)

 [info@ourelement.org](mailto:info@ourelement.org)

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# Ecclesiastes

## The Existential Hangover



## Week 23: God Over Vapor

### Ecclesiastes 8:14-17

### TODAY'S VERSES:

Ecclesiastes 8:14  
1 John 4:18  
Proverbs 28:14  
Proverbs 18

Psalm 130:4  
Psalm 19:9  
Ecclesiastes 8:13-17  
Ecclesiastes 3:14

Ecclesiastes 5:1, 7  
Ecclesiastes 12:13  
Luke 23:39-43

# Week 23: God Over Vapor

## Ecclesiastes 8:14-17

Today in Ecclesiastes we are going to look at what the fear of God means, and how God stands over our meaninglessness. Ecclesiastes is a look at how the wisest man in the world ended his days in reflection of all he accomplished; he comes to the conclusion that following God is the only way to truly live. Solomon keeps reminding us that what we build with our hands under the sun is like a vapor and that only life with God lasts. We trust God for what He reveals and also trust Him for what we don't understand.

**Do you carry the weight of “having to work/do” everything all of the time?**

**Do you feel like if you stopped working then God would stop working in your life?**

**How do you need to better enjoy life *with* God?**

Solomon will speak about how the wicked do not fear God properly. The concept of “fear God” is a hard one as a culture because we don't like the word “fear,” especially if it relates to God in any way. The writer of Ecclesiastes says that the solution to our lives is not “keep God's commandments,” but to “fear God” (in the right way) which leads to a keeping of God's commandments not out of fear, but out of love.

**How do you explain the fear of God?**

**How have you seen that the “wicked” do not fear God properly?**

**Discuss the differences between the two types of fear Aaron shared.**

There are only two ways to view obeying God. Obeying so that He *will* accept you, or obeying because through Jesus, and what He did, He *has* already accepted you.”

In one case, obedience becomes the means of our salvation; we become our own savior because of what we have done (in our own eyes). In the other case, we obey God to know and to please our Savior, as we want to become like our Savior who fulfilled the law for us. Those are two different motives, one is out of fear of being hurt, the other is out of proper fear/reverence/awe of God's grace. This is why 2 people can view the same set of “rules,” commandments of God, with two different motives and will have two different experiences, which will result in two completely different lives.

**Read Ecclesiastes 8:12-15.**

**Describe who God is, and what He has done that brings an inner condition of awe, amazement, and wonder.**

**How is this kind of fear “clean?”**

**In which way do you tend to obey God: 1) so He will accept me; 2) because of what Jesus did, He has accepted me?**

Solomon's words are meant to bring us to the realization that as we understand God's greatness, it will also come with a realization of His nearness. Those who fear God are said to “fear before Him,” meaning that they know they are in His presence. To live a God-fearing life is to live in constant awareness of the presence of God, who is even closer than we could ever dream.

**Do you live with the realization that you are in God's presence every moment of the day?**

**In particular, in what areas do you need to be more aware of God's presence?**

**How would that knowledge change most circumstances?**

Proper hope and fear brings Solomon to a place that directs us to real and true joy. If you don't take a day off, laugh, and enjoy life you will never comprehend that God is the one who is working when we are not. You will lie awake at night fretting about the future, fearing the future, and not trusting in the one who *holds* the future. Solomon reinforces that a proper fear of God, whether we see it or not, will bring about rest, security, and hope for us in days to come.

**When do you find yourself focusing on yourself? If this is an issue, what side effects do you experience because of trying to be in control?**

**Do you experience hope, freedom, and joy that comes from proper fear?**

The same fear of God that leads us to eternal life also helps us find enjoyment in the here and now. Without the saving, personal knowledge of Jesus, it is hard to have real joy because one day we will die. Unless we know Christ, we will live in the fearful expectation of judgment. The beauty of the Gospel is that when we do know Him, that fear is changed to an awe of His saving grace, love and power.

**Who in your life needs to hear how God is near?**

**How is this *good news* that your neighbors, coworkers, friends and family need to hear?**