

Brass Tacks and Bottom Lines

Description

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Ecclesiastes 12:6-14

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of learning English as a second language can be understanding various idioms used to express meaning. Native English speakers can hear terms like “get down to brass tacks,” “cut to the chase,” or “what’s the bottom line” and understand the need for basic facts, the most important elements, and what’s expected as a result without knowing that the origins of these phrases came from finishing upholstery, making movies, and negotiating contracts.

The teacher of Ecclesiastes had put his wisdom to work in examining the human situation and defining life as meant to be lived. He had used idioms of his own in verses 6-8 to emphasize the urgency of his message and the desperation that would come from ignoring it. His conclusion, his “bottom line,” was this: a loving reverence for the One who created us and obedience to His instructions is what will give life purpose. One question then remains for each of his readers, and for each of us: “Will you sign on this bottom line?”

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