



THE WISDOM OF ECCLESIASTES

07.17.16 | TRUE WISDOM | ECCLESIASTES 7

When evaluating life through demonstrated circumstances or evidenced character of people we can be unwise in our conclusions. Solomon is pointing us to true wisdom with our focus on God not on man.

1. Wisdom's view of circumstances:

- Seeing reputation and death as positive (7:1,2)
- Seeing the value and lessons of grief (7:3,4)
- Seeing rebuke as valuable (7:5,6)
- Seeing the reward of waiting (7:8,9)
- Seeing patience as better than clarity and immediacy (7:10-13)

Rejoice in prosperity and consider God is at work in difficulty. (7:14)

2. Wisdom's view of character:

- Real character is judged by God. (7:15-19)
- Real character based on God's wisdom is rarely found. (7:19-22)
- Real character begins with humility. (7:23-29)

Foolishness and sin are so much a part of humanity that only by submitting to the Lord in the fear of God will anyone be able to understand both the wisdom of God and the stupidity of wickedness.

FURTHER STUDY

1. Read Ecc.7:1-4. At first glance this seems like the ranting of a deeply depressed man. In fact "the Preacher" (Ecc 1:1-2; Ecc 7:27) here is giving reason for hope in the most difficult of circumstances. What do you find gives you hope in these first four verses?

2. How does the hope you found in the last question specifically address a situation in your life right now?

3. Read Ecc. 7:5-14. Solomon compares the wise with the humble and gives examples of their different outlooks on life. As you read these verses what is the Holy Spirit highlighting in your heart that helps you relate one of these outlooks?

4. Verse 10 warns against using a kind-of rose-colored glasses when you look back on your past and then compare the past to your present. Why do you think this is such a dangerous practice? (See also Phil. 4:10-13)

5. Read verse 13. Think about your current circumstances in life. Would you say the "path" you have been on lately is straight or crooked? What do those words mean to you? What criteria did you use to decide? If you think of "crooked" as the way you wouldn't have chosen to go, how does this passage help you see the difficulties differently?

6. Read Ecc. 7:15-19. Solomon hasn't done a 180 from the first half of the chapter and now is encouraging us to not be righteous or wise. Rather, he is warning against having too high an opinion of ourselves. How is the advice here similar to that of Paul in 1 Cor. 10:12-13?

7. How does a healthy, honest view of our own weakness and sinfulness help us filter what we hear from others according to verses 20-22? What are some practical ways this could help you reflect on conversations you have had recently or prepare for other conversations you may have this week?

8. Read Prov. 8 then finish reading Ecc. 7. Assuming that the "woman" spoken of in the last few verses of this chapter is wisdom, why do you think she is so hard to find under the sun?

9. How do you spend time searching for wisdom that is under the sun and where else might there be to look?

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