

Recognizing Wisdom and Folly

Ecclesiastes 7

Outline

- 1-14 | The Preacher encourages awareness of the temporariness of life
- 15-18 | Don't live in extremes: not overly righteous or wise nor overly wicked or foolish
- 19-22 | Everyone sins, even the righteous man; all people complain, even me
- 23-26 | Wisdom can be undone by those who's every intent is deception
- 27-29 | God made men upright but they've pursued many "devices"

Reflections

The Preacher is reflecting on a lifetime of seeking after wisdom and finds that there needs to be a balance in life. Consider the following.

Ecclesiastes 7:4 NASB The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning, While the mind of fools is in the house of pleasure.

Ecclesiastes 7:13-14 NASB 13 Consider the work of God, For who is able to straighten what He has bent? **14** In the day of prosperity be happy, But in the day of adversity consider— God has made the one as well as the other So that man will not discover anything that will be after him.

Ecclesiastes 7:15-18 NASB 15 I have seen everything during my lifetime of futility; there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness. **16** Do not be excessively righteous and do not be overly wise. Why should you ruin yourself? **17** Do not be excessively wicked and do not be a fool. Why should you die before your time? **18** It is good that you grasp one thing and also not let go of the other; for the one who fears God comes forth with both of them.

A proper view of God and a balanced life will provide a good outlook on life. If all you do is spend time gathering wisdom but never experience the joys, and sorrows, that can be found in life, you will have lost out in the end. Conversely, if all you do is spend your time pursuing pleasure, you will lose out as well because you will be tricked into believing a lie and not know the difference.

Finally, the Preacher concludes this.

Ecclesiastes 7:29 NASB "Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices."

God creates man with an understanding that God is real. Consider the words of both Jesus and Peter regarding this idea (underlining added).

2 Peter 1:2-3 NASB 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; **3** seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

Luke 16:29-31 NASB 29 "But Abraham *said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' **30** "But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' **31** "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

In His Word, God has given us everything we need to live to honor God in our lives, but we can be deceived by others or by ourselves in the pursuit of pleasure or wealth apart from God. In that lies the

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heart of sin. Here is a quote from John MacArthur regarding sin.¹

Sin is what you do when you aren't satisfied with God.

Learn to be satisfied with God and you will do well in both this life and the one to come.

Lord, thank You for Your Word that instructs us to know You and to be satisfied in You. Lead us in the righteous way and help us to experience the joys of life and appreciate the sorrows that will come, knowing that You can be found in them all. Thank You for granting to us the wisdom to recognize folly and temptation and the ability to resist when confronted by them. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Key Words: Old Testament, Wisdom, Ecclesiastes, Righteousness, Folly, Sin, Pleasure, Balanced Life

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¹ MacArthur, John. *Faith*. Panorama City, CA: Grace To You, 1996. Audio Recording. Fundamental Christian Attitudes. (gtv.org)