

# Ecclesiastes

## Chapter 7

Ultimately the Teacher will return to the theme that obedience is possible even though we cannot discover the whole plan of God for us. The Latin saying *Solvitur ambulando* (“It is solved by walking”) suggest that some problems are elucidated only as one goes forward in practical action (*cf.* Isa 30.21; as we go, the Lord guides).  
*J. Stafford Wright*

**7.1** Bereavement, while painful, is a more effective prod to growth in spiritual wisdom and maturity than the elation one feels over a newborn child.

*~ESV Study Bible*

**7.10-12** Wise people certainly learn from the past, but they live in the present with all its opportunities.  
*J. Stafford Wright*

“The good old days”: often, the combination of a bad memory and a good imagination.  
*~ Chuck Missler*

Wisdom is better than a generous inheritance. Money can lose its value, or be stolen; but true wisdom keeps its value and cannot be lost, unless we become fools and abandon it deliberately. Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish, and you feed him for life. The person who has wealth but lacks wisdom will only waste his fortune, but the person who has wisdom will know how to get and use wealth.  
*~ Chuck Missler*

**7.13-14** It is easy to blame God when things go wrong and to forget to thank him when good things come.  
*J. Stafford Wright*

Job reminded his wife of this truth when she told him to curse God and die: “What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil [trouble]?” (2.10). Earlier, Job had said, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (1.21).  
*~ Chuck Missler*

The wicked appear to prosper *only if you take the short view of things.*     *~ Missler*

**7.16-19** Being “overrighteous” is an obvious synonym for that type of Pharisaiism that Christ warned against (Matt 5.20; 23.1-36).... By balancing the two verses, we have the advice not to model ourselves after either the prig or the villain. Neither can lead us to the full life.

Wisdom is not the knowledge of accumulated facts but the inner strength that comes from a God-instructed conscience. Hence we see the link between the fear of God (v.18) and the true wisdom that gives inner strength (v.10), which is here contrasted with mere power.

*J. Stafford Wright*

Solomon made it clear in verse 20 that there are no righteous people, so he cannot be referring to true righteousness. He was condemning the self-righteousness of the hypocrite and the false wisdom of the proud, and he warned that these sins led to destruction and death.

*~ Church Missler*

**7.20-22** The good life has to be lived with the awareness that there is no such thing as sinless perfection (v. 20).

*J. Stafford Wright*

## Chapter 8

**8.1** Chapter 7 concluded with a pessimistic view of man's attainment of wisdom. Great teachers sometimes use exaggerated language to make their point (*cf.* Matt 19.24). Here the Teacher shakes himself out of his depression. There are true wise men; and while true wisdom must be realistic, it need not make a person perpetually gloomy.

*J. Stafford Wright*

**8.5-6** The wise servant understands that "time and judgment" must be considered in everything we do.... Joseph didn't impulsively reveal to his brothers who he was, because he wanted to be sure their hearts were right with their father and their God. Once he heard them confess their sins, Joseph knew it was the right time to identify himself. His handling of this delicate matter was a masterpiece of wisdom (see Gen 43-45).

*~ Church Missler*

**8.14-15** Not only is it an inexplicable vanity that the wicked appear to escape judgment and receive blessings (vv. 10-13), there is also no satisfying explanation for the fact that the righteous receive the treatment due to the wicked. Since this mystery cannot be completely solved, one should not become so obsessed with attempting to unravel it that he neglects to enjoy God's gifts.

*~ESV Study Bible*

Until Jesus Christ sets up His righteous kingdom, there will always be injustices in our world. It is one of the "vanities" of life, and we must accept it without becoming pessimistic or cynical.

*~Chuck Missler*

**8.15** Once more the Teacher advocates the joy of life. As in 2.24-25, the gifts that God has given can be properly enjoyed only if they are accepted as God's gifts for use, not misuse. Both passages speak of the toil, or work, that God has given us to

do to provide for our food and drink (cf. Gen 3.19; Ps 104.23). The verses say much the same as Jesus said in the Sermon on the mount. Do not let your life be burdened with anxiety; relaxed enjoyment comes through seeking first the kingdom of God and taking food, drink, and clothing from the hands of your Father (Matt 6.25-34). So the Teacher refers to God-given work, God-given food and drink, and God-given joy. It is the realization of this that he commends.

*J. Stafford Wright*

This admonition is not the foolish “eat, drink, and be merry” philosophy of the unbelieving hedonist. Rather, it is the positive “faith outlook” of God’s children who accept life as God’s special gift and know that He gives us “all things richly to enjoy” (1 Tim 6.17). Instead of complaining about what we don’t have, we give thanks for what we do have and enjoy it.

*~ Church Missler*

**8.17** True wisdom includes the humility to admit that man cannot fully “figure out” all of reality in a fallen world.

*~ESV Study Bible*

Historian Will Durant surveyed human history in his multi-volume *Story of Civilization* and came to the conclusion that “our knowledge is a receding mirage in an expanding desert of ignorance.”

*~ Chuck Missler*