

Staring Out of the Window

Ecc 7:8-29

Introduction

Tonight we consider the importance of the way we think about or ponder life.

Meditative Verses: Ecclesiastes 7:13 (ESV) **Consider the work of God:** who can make straight what he has made crooked?
Ecclesiastes 7:14 (ESV) In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity **consider: God has made the one as well as the other**, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.

The Hebrew word translated as the word consider means to reflect upon with admiration and affection.

I. It's not about how you start out in life but how you finish

Ecclesiastes 7:8 (ESV) Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, **and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.**

A. Patience is far better than being quick tempered

Ecclesiastes 7:9 (ESV) **Be not quick in your spirit** to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools.

B. Wisdom sees life the way it really is.

Ecclesiastes 7:10 (ESV) Say not, "Why were the former days better than these?" For it is not from wisdom that you ask this.

C. Wisdom is more valuable than money.

1. Those who have money have a huge advantage over those who do not have money.

Ecclesiastes 7:11 (ESV) Wisdom is good with an inheritance, an advantage to those who see the sun.

2. However, that advantage exists only when money is used wisely.

Ecclesiastes 7:11 (ESV) Wisdom is good with an inheritance, an advantage to those who see the sun.

3. Wisdom can purchase what money cannot.

Ecclesiastes 7:12 (ESV) For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money, **and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of him who has it.**

II. Wisdom embraces God's providence.

A. Wisdom takes the time to ponder life.

1. Wisdom takes time to ponder what God has done and is doing.

Ecclesiastes 7:13 (ESV) **Consider the work of God:** who can make straight what he has made crooked?

2. Wisdom learns to recognize mankind's limitations.

Ecclesiastes 7:13 (ESV) Consider the work of God: **who can make straight what he has made crooked?**

3. Wisdom understands that what we consider to be both the good and bad aspects of life ultimately come from God.

Ecclesiastes 7:14 (ESV) In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity **consider: God has made the one as well as the other**, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.

4. Wisdom recognizes that there is a mystery to God's sovereignty.

Ecclesiastes 7:14 (ESV) In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, **so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.**

5. Wisdom recognizes that life does not always turn out the way we expect. God does not need to justify or explain Himself to us.

Ecclesiastes 7:15 (ESV) In my vain life I have seen everything. There is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evildoing.

Ecclesiastes 8:14 (ESV) There is a vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity.

III. Have a correct view of righteousness.

A. Guard against a self-made righteousness as a source of blessing.

Ecclesiastes 7:16 (ESV) Be not overly righteous, and do not make yourself too wise. Why should you destroy yourself?

“The warning not to be “overrighteous” or “overwise” is not an exhortation to do a little sinning.¹⁶⁹ The Teacher is not dealing here with the issue of personal sins as such. Rather, he is concerned with a philosophy of life that seeks the benefits of long life, prosperity, and personal happiness through the strict observation of religious and wisdom principles. A modern way to put it would be, “Do not be a fanatic.”

Garrett, Duane A. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs. Vol. 14. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993. Print. The New American Commentary.

B. One cannot obtain to entire sanctification or sinless perfection.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 (ESV) Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.

C. However, life’s choices do have consequences.

Ecclesiastes 7:17 (ESV) Be not overly wicked, neither be a fool. Why should you die before your time?

D. Now there is something that we should never lose sight of or never forget.

Ecclesiastes 7:18 (ESV) **It is good that you should take hold of this, and from that withhold not your hand**, for the one who fears God shall come out from both of them.

- E. We are to live our lives responsibly before God while trusting Him for the outcomes of our lives.

Ecclesiastes 7:18 (ESV) It is good that you should take hold of this, and from that withhold not your hand, **for the one who fears God shall come out from both of them.**

- F. We must not take ourselves too seriously and keep life in perspective.

Ecclesiastes 7:21 (ESV) Do not take to heart all the things that people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you.

- G. We must not hold people to a higher standard than we hold ourselves.

Ecclesiastes 7:22 (ESV) Your heart knows that many times you yourself have cursed others.

- IV. Solomon, the wisest man on earth could not discover the “keys” to life.

Ecclesiastes 7:23 (ESV) All this I have tested by wisdom. I said, “I will be wise,” but it was far from me.

Ecclesiastes 7:24 (ESV) That which has been is far off, and deep, very deep; **who can find it out?**

- A. Solomon was looking for an explanation as to why life turns out the way it does.

Ecclesiastes 7:25 (ESV) I turned my heart to know and to search out and to seek wisdom **and the scheme of things**, and to know the wickedness of folly and the foolishness that is madness.

1. The five keys
2. The ten steps
3. The spiritual secrets to a wonderful life.
4. If you just do the right things you will get the desired results.

- B. Solomon then reports on his findings.

1. Choices really do matter.

Ecclesiastes 7:26 (ESV) And I **find something** more bitter than death: the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and whose hands are fetters. **He who pleases God escapes her, but the sinner is taken by her.**

2. However, life cannot be explained simply by our choices.

Ecclesiastes 7:27 (ESV) **Behold, this is what I found**, says the Preacher, while adding one thing to another to **find the scheme of things—**

Ecclesiastes 7:28 (ESV) **which my soul has sought repeatedly, but I have not found.** One man among a thousand I found, but a woman among all these I have not found.

Life cannot be reduced to a spiritual formula.

3. True Godliness is extremely rare.

Ecclesiastes 7:27 (ESV) Behold, this is what I found, says the Preacher, while adding one thing to another to find the scheme of things—

Ecclesiastes 7:28 (ESV) which my soul has sought repeatedly, but I have not found. **One man among a thousand I found**, but a woman among all these I have not found.

Ecclesiastes 7:27 (ESV) Behold, this is what I found, says the Preacher, while adding one thing to another to find the scheme of things—

Ecclesiastes 7:28 (ESV) which my soul has sought repeatedly, but I have not found. One man among a thousand I found, **but a woman among all these I have not found.**

- a. It is interesting to note that Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. His wives turned his heart away from the Lord. None of these proved to be what he was looking for.

1 Kings 11:3 (ESV) He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart.

1 Kings 11:4 (ESV) For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

- b. Solomon was looking in the wrong places.

1 Kings 11:1 (ESV) Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women,

1 Kings 11:2 (ESV) from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love.

- 4. Mankind's sinfulness cannot be blamed upon God.

Ecclesiastes 7:29 (ESV) **See, this alone I found, that God made man upright**, but they have sought out many schemes.

- 5. The problem is that mankind rejects God's way and chooses their own way.

Ecclesiastes 7:29 (ESV) See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes.

V. Conclusion: