



ECCLESIASTES 7:7-13

WISDOM IS NOT ALWAYS PLEASANT, BUT IT IS DESIRABLE (PART 2)

THE DANGER OF CORRUPTION

- *7 Surely oppression drives the wise into madness, and a bribe corrupts the heart*
- Being wise does not grant the ability to escape corrupt people who have the power to do wrong and afflict harm
 - Ecclesiastes 4:1
- The wise are typically desirous of doing what is right and best
- The wise, who embrace the standards of biblical truth, will be attacked
- “*drives the wise to madness*” – oppression can cause the wise to falter in good judgment
- Once characterized by God-centered and others-oriented objectivity, self-centered preoccupations destroy the ability to process information wisely
- “*a bribe corrupts the heart*” – opposition, difficulty, and suffering can open the “once wise” to self-centered motivations for peace and safety
- Insecurity can lead to desires for self-protection and comfort
- Self-preserving compromises lead to corruption
 - 2 Timothy 4:1–5
- It is sad to see the “once wise” become self-protecting compromiser

THE DANGER OF IMPATIENCE (7:8)

⁸ *Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.*

- It is better to finish well than to start strong
- Coming up with ideas is not the same as thinking things through
- Creative thinking needs to be wedded to seeing a task to completion
- Perseverance and forbearance are the ways of wisdom that sustains God's people faithfully to the end
- Counting the cost of making a commitment is the fruit of objective and God-given wisdom
 - Luke 14:25–33
- *“the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit”*
- Those who are patient in spirit know that pursuing a goal comes with challenges and hardships
- When things get tough, the proud in spirit justify cutting and running
- Enduring hardship does not look successful, and most importantly to them, it doesn't feel successful

Qualification:

- It is not wise to think that every creative practice or ministry must continue
- The *“proud in spirit”* attach their identity to undertakings rather than the glory of God

THE DANGER OF ANGER (7:9)

⁹ *Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools.*

- In the midst of challenges that can cause corruption and create quitters, defensiveness can produce frustration and anger
- “*quick in your spirit to become angry*” – a readiness and commonness to react with irritation and resentment
 - There are valid and righteous reasons for anger
 - But when anger is our natural and normal response, this is a display of walking in the flesh, not walking in the Spirit (Cf. Galatians 5:19-24)
 - Wise and godly people don’t have a short fuse
- The power necessary for this type of self-control is impressive and uncommon
 - Proverbs 16
- Anger never changes anyone’s heart
 - James 1:19–20

THE DANGER OF LONGING FOR DAYS GONE BY (7:10)

¹⁰ Say not, “Why were the former days better than these?” For it is not from wisdom that you ask this.

- Our recollection of the past can be distorted
- Reflecting on “*the good old days*” recalls the positives, filtering out the negatives
- God is working His plan and we are to trust His purpose in it all
- We should humbly submit to God’s plan and purpose even if we don’t understand it
 - Romans 8:28–39
- All that is happening now is for God’s glory and for our good
 - The fool sees himself as a victim, mistreated by men and God
 - Wisdom maintains trust in God and His sovereign purposes in life

WISDOM IS PROTECTION FOR THOSE WHO HAVE IT (7:12-13)

¹² 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.

- Money functions as the means for us to secure provisions and protection
- Wisdom is also a viable means to secure provisions and protection
 - Proverbs 1:7
- The best investment of knowledge is to guide one's learning and maturing by the fear of the Lord
 - It is not just insight and superior information that is sought
 - It is learning to humbly depend on the truth of God and the power of God
 - Fools feel superior because of what they know, not humble because of Who they know and depend on

WISDOM IS PROTECTION FOR THOSE WHO HAVE IT (7:12-13)

13 Consider the work of God: who can make straight what he has made crooked?

- God is sovereign over what is crooked in this world
- We must learn to honor God in all the bent and straight ways He has designed for His purposes and His glory
 - “*Consider*” – open your eyes and see what God is doing all over His earth
 - God does not ask us to understand or approve
 - He wants us to trust and obey
 - Romans 11:33–36
 - Rather than resistance, we need to come before Him with reverence

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Are you honoring God in the oppression and affliction you experience, or are you allowing the frustrations you face in life to corrupt you?
- How are perseverance and forbearance displays of God's grace that will bring you faithfully to end of your days on earth?
- How is your short fuse evidence of walking in the flesh?
- How does reflecting on "the good old days" enable you to live as victim mistreated by God and man?
- In what ways can you make a better investment of biblical knowledge and wisdom?



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