

'All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.'
2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

The Book of Ecclesiastes

Chapter 8



Kerrville Bible Church

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Ken Johnson



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

¹Who is like the wise man and who knows the interpretation of a matter? A man's wisdom illumines him and causes his stern face to beam.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER – Authority (8:1 – 9)
- ❑ Here Solomon presents a wise man – a man who FEARS God and nothing else
- ❑ Wise man has advantages:
 - God's Wisdom gives him a measure of understanding, perspective, insight, discernment ...
 - Even his countenance "***beams***" – it reflects his Wisdom, Peace and Joy



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

¹Who is like the wise man and who knows the interpretation of a matter? A man's wisdom illumines him and causes his stern face to beam.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER (7:19 – 8:17)
- ❑ Solomon has been asking: Does Wisdom – with God in the picture – give life meaning and purpose?
- ❑ In this Chapter, Solomon looks at how Wisdom can help with evil/oppression/injustice in the world by examining three key areas of life:
 - Authority (8:1-9)
 - Inequity (8:10-14)
 - Mystery (8:15-17)



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

^{2a}I say, "Keep the command of the king ...

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER – Authority (8:1 – 9)
- ❑ Solomon says **obey authority** - command of the king
- ❑ He would, wouldn't he?
- ❑ Wise man knows that human government is a divine institution ... appointed by God (Daniel 2:21)
- ❑ When rulers and judges carry out that divine intention – both they and their people are blessed by God.
- ❑ Wisdom starts from the premise that submission and obedience are the wise course of action.

"It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding." Daniel 2:21



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

^{2a}I say, "Keep the command of the king ...

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER - Authority (8:1 – 9)
- ❑ God has also put parents, bosses, teachers, husbands ... in positions of authority over us – for His purposes
- ❑ Often – we don't like what we are being told to do!
- ❑ What if wise man is required by an authority to do something he doesn't like, or something evil?
- ❑ How does Wisdom help in those situations?



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

²I say, "Keep the command of the king because of the oath before God.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER - Authority (8:1 – 9)
- ❑ Solomon uses the picture of a strong king to make his points in this section
- ❑ Simply put ... we are to humbly submit to authority because God commands it
- ❑ Therefore, Wisdom argues one should "honor his oath" and obey those in authority over him!



Ecclesiastes

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- ❑ But man ... so often ... doesn't want someone in control over him! What then?



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

3a" Do not be in a hurry to leave him.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER - Authority (8:1 – 9)
- ❑ Fleeing Authority.
 - Running away will only make the situation worse.
 - Display of irresponsibility, disrespect, disgust will not be forgotten by one in authority
 - Loss of income, position, prestige, power, reputation
 - The offended authority has opportunity to inflict very hurtful consequences.
 - Wisdom argues that Fleeing is not wise!



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

^{3b}"Do not join in an evil matter, for he will do whatever he pleases."

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER - Authority (8:1 – 9)
- ❑ Rebellion.
 - If you flee, don't join in with a group trying "to overthrow the king."
 - Odds are against you ... he will get his way
 - He has all the power ... even unto death!
 - Wisdom argues that Rebellion is not wise!



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

⁴Since the word of the king is authoritative, who will say to him, "What are you doing?"

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER - Authority (8:1 – 9)
- ❑ Challenging Power.
 - The one in authority has sovereign power to enforce and retaliate.
 - Therefore, respect the power of the authority ... and obey ... and you will be unharmed.
 - Wisdom argues that challenging an authority with supreme power is not wise!



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

⁵He who keeps a royal command experiences no trouble, for a wise heart knows the proper time and procedure.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER - Authority (8:1 – 9)
- ❑ Summary:
 - In situations you cannot change, the healthy response is humility
 - Humbly submit to authority and stay safe
- ❑ Wisdom knows the “proper time and procedure” to resist
 - If authority rules according to God’s word – submit to authority
 - If authority disobeys God’s word – submit to God



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

⁶For there is a proper time and procedure for every delight, though a man's trouble is heavy upon him.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER - Authority (8:1 – 9)
- ❑ How do we submit to God instead of the authority?
- ❑ When his “trouble is heavy upon him” because the authority is disobeying God’s word
- ❑ Wisdom and Discernment will show the wise man the right thing to do:
 - Protest, Legal action, Flee (if possible), Use force to defend self
 - At the right time



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

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- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER - Authority (8:1 – 9)
- ❑ Think of the Apostles – the courage of standing up for righteousness
 - Arrested and persecuted (ACTS 4-5)
 - Showed respect to those in authority
 - Willing to suffer for their faith
 - Lord honored and protected them

"But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men.'" (ACTS 5:29)



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

⁶For there is a proper time and procedure for every delight, though a man's trouble is heavy upon him.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER - Authority (8:1 – 9)
- ❑ Martyrs - the courage of standing up for righteousness ... and suffering the consequences of that action
 - Every Apostle except John
 - Wycliff, Huss, Tyndale ...
 - Bonhoeffer, Jim Elliott ...

"But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men.'" (ACTS 5:29)



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

⁷If no one knows what will happen, who can tell him when it will happen?

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER - Authority (8:1 – 9)
- ❑ Man cannot predict the future
- ❑ **God uses good and bad rulers for His purposes**
- ❑ Provide for Yourself ... protect yourself
- ❑ Don't resort to wickedness to alleviate misery:
 - If it is God's will, He will provide a way out for you
 - If it is not ... you may suffer but it is still certain, judgment will come in His time
- ❑ Wisdom argues God is Sovereign and best protection is to obey human rulers and Trust God for His providence



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

⁸No man has authority to restrain the wind with the wind, or authority over the day of death; and there is no discharge in the time of war, and evil will not deliver those who practice it.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER - Authority (8:1 – 9)
- ❑ Men love to be in control. But they cannot:
 - Control the wind and weather
 - Extend their own life
 - Prevent wars
 - Deliver themselves from their evil deeds
- ❑ Wisdom proves you are not God ... you are totally dependent on Him!



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

⁹All this I have seen and applied my mind to every deed that has been done under the sun wherein a man has exercised authority over another man to his hurt.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER - Authority (8:1 – 9)
- ❑ Part of man's misery on earth is to be ruled by others oppressively.
- ❑ This too is a part of God's plan.
- ❑ If one rashly or impulsively resists authority ... that may interfere with God's plan.
- ❑ But ... be certain of this ... God's purposes will be accomplished ... His plan is proceeding perfectly!
- ❑ Wisdom argues God is Sovereign and best protection is to obey human rulers and Trust God for His providence



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

¹⁰So then, I have seen the wicked buried, those who used to go in and out from the holy place, and they are soon forgotten in the city where they did thus. This too is futility. ¹

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER – Inequity (8:10 – 14)
- ❑ Again! ... Frustration that the evil seem to “get away with it”:
 - Wicked men get honorable funeral
 - Their wicked deeds are soon forgotten
 - No Justice ... this is futility!
- ❑ Wisdom reminds us that the day of judgment will come and the wicked man will not escape.



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

¹¹Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER – Inequity (8:10 – 14)
- ❑ More Frustration ... this time with delayed punishment
- ❑ Sentences not executed quickly
- ❑ Law loses its power to dissuade people from evil
- ❑ Actually increases evildoing



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

¹²Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER - Inequity (8:10 – 14)
- ❑ The wicked appear to get away with evil forever ... “a hundred times”
- ❑ **Major Change**: Solomon declares “I know”
 - Until now, everything has been “havel” ... can’t know
 - Now he knows – that is conviction – that is faith!
 - It **will be well** for those who fear God openly ...



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

¹³But it will not be well for the evil man, and he will not lengthen his days like a shadow, because he does not fear God.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER - Inequity (8:10 – 14)
- ❑ It will not be well for evil man ...
- ❑ Because he does not Fear God
 - Notice – in V12 he “lengthened his life”
 - But in V13 he “will not lengthen his days”
- ❑ Again, Wisdom reminds us judgment is coming

*“So, you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.”
(MAL 3:18)*



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

¹⁴There is futility which is done on the earth, that is, there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked. On the other hand, there are evil men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I say that this too is futility.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER - Inequity (8:10 – 14)
- ❑ Frustration that life seems upside down - wicked seem to prosper while righteous suffer
- ❑ This “injustice” can only be understood by the wisdom found in FEAR OF GOD
- ❑ Only then can one understand the plan of God
 - He is in complete control
 - Judgment will come in His time

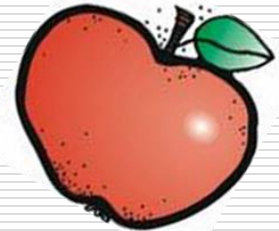


Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

¹⁵So I commended pleasure, for there is nothing good for a man under the sun except to eat and to drink and to be merry, and this will stand by him in his toils throughout the days of his life which God has given him under the sun.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER – Mystery (8:15 – 17)
- ❑ Solomon comes to his familiar plea that we find pleasure by accepting God’s special gift of life “under the sun”
- ❑ This is the positive faith of God’s children
 - Those who FEAR GOD ...
 - Those who know that He gives us “all things richly to enjoy” (1 TIM 6:17)





Ecclesiastes

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- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER – Mystery (8:15 – 17)
- ❑ Don't let the "*hebel*" under the sun distract you from God's gift of this life
- ❑ Instead of complaining about what you don't have and desperately seeking possessions
- ❑ Give thanks for what you do have and enjoy it



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

¹⁶When I gave my heart to know wisdom and to see the task which has been done on the earth (even though one should never sleep day or night),

¹⁷and I saw every work of God, I concluded that man cannot discover the work which has been done under the sun. Even though man should seek laboriously, he will not discover; and though the wise man should say, "I know," he cannot discover.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER – Mystery (8:15 – 17)
- ❑ Solomon concedes that there are insoluble mysteries in all that God has divinely provided.
- ❑ Man may try as hard as he might ... but human insight, understanding and reason cannot rise to God's level.
- ❑ Even the wisest man cannot discern all that God is doing.

"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and our children forever that we may follow all the words of this law." (DEUT 29:29)



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- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER – Mystery (8:15 – 17)
- ❑ Solomon concludes that Godly wisdom is of much value to the person who wants to get the most out of life:
 - It can't explain every mystery
 - It can't solve every problem
 - But it can help us exercise discernment in our decisions



Ecclesiastes

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- FACE LIFE STRONGER – Mystery (8:15 – 17)
 1. What is greater than God ... more wicked than the devil ... and if you eat it, you will die?
 2. What is it that God has never seen ... that great men see from time to time ... and that you and I see every day?

The Book of Ecclesiastes



"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Psalm 111:10
