

Ecclesiastes 7 New International Version (NIV)

¹ A good name is better than fine perfume,
and the day of death better than the day of birth.

² It is better to go to a house of mourning
than to go to a house of feasting,
for death is the destiny of everyone;
the living should take this to heart.

³ Frustration is better than laughter,
because a sad face is good for the heart.

⁴ The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,
but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure.

⁵ It is better to heed the rebuke of a wise person
than to listen to the song of fools.

⁶ Like the crackling of thorns under the pot,
so is the laughter of fools.
This too is meaningless.

⁷ Extortion turns a wise person into a fool,
and a bribe corrupts the heart.

⁸ The end of a matter is better than its beginning,
and patience is better than pride.

⁹ Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit,
for anger resides in the lap of fools.

¹⁰ Do not say, "Why were the old days better
than these?"

For it is not wise to ask such questions.

¹¹ Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing
and benefits those who see the sun.

¹² Wisdom is a shelter as money is a shelter,
but the advantage of knowledge is this:
Wisdom preserves those who have it.

¹³ Consider what God has done:
Who can straighten what he has made crooked?

¹⁴ When times are good, be happy;
but when times are bad, consider this:
God has made the one as well as the other.
Therefore, no one can discover
anything about their future.

¹⁵ In this meaningless life of mine I have seen
both of these: the righteous perishing in their righteousness,

and the wicked living long in their wickedness.

¹⁶ Do not be overrighteous, neither be overwise – why destroy yourself?

¹⁷ Do not be overwicked, and do not be a fool
— why die before your time?

¹⁸ It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other. Whoever fears God will avoid all extremes. ^[a]

¹⁹ Wisdom makes one wise person more powerful than ten rulers in a city.

²⁰ Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous,

no one who does what is right and never sins.

²¹ Do not pay attention to every word people say,

or you may hear your servant cursing you—
²² for you know in your heart that many times
you yourself have cursed others.

²³ All this I tested by wisdom and I said, "I am determined to be wise"—
but this was beyond me.

²⁴ Whatever exists is far off and most profound
— who can discover it?

²⁵ So I turned my mind to understand,
to investigate and to search out wisdom
and the scheme of things
and to understand the stupidity of wickedness
and the madness of folly.

²⁶ I find more bitter than death the woman who
is a snare, whose heart is a trap
and whose hands are chains.

The man who pleases God will escape her,
but the sinner she will ensnare.

²⁷ "Look," says the Teacher, ^[b] "this is what I
have discovered: "Adding one thing to another
to discover the scheme of things" ²⁸ while I was
still searching but not finding—

I found one upright man among a thousand,
but not one upright woman among them all.

²⁹ This only have I found:

God created mankind upright, but they have
gone in search of many schemes."

^[a] Ecclesiastes 7:18 Or will follow them both

^[b] Ecclesiastes 7:27 Or the leader of the assembly

Discussion Questions

1. How do you feel about the sentiment of v.1-4? Does it seem still relevant and helpful in our world today?
2. The guidance shared in v.5-14 ends with an assertion about our future. Is this assertion actually true? If not, how should we treat the preceding verses?
3. The arguments of v.15-18 appear to advocate for a life of moderation. Is this guidance for the believer today? If so, how can we live this out?
4. The statement of v.20 should seem familiar. Where else is this quoted in Scripture?
5. The author then interjects yet another despairing digression in v.23-26. What insight should this give us today? *Hint:* How is our circumstance very different from that of the author?
6. The chapter ends with a smattering of misogyny and more despair about all of mankind. If the author is indeed Solomon, do we have any clues as to the source of his apparent depression?

[a] [Ecclesiastes 7:18](#) Or will follow them both

[b] [Ecclesiastes 7:27](#) Or the leader of the assembly