

## Ecclesiastes 7 Better True North, Part 7

**I have entitled our study tonight in Eccl 7-8 Better!**

A) Better is a key word in Ch.7 – Solomon uses it at least 11 times.

B) Solomon is looking back on his life – and the 20 yrs he spent away from the Lord.

1) Ch.1-6 deal with his **yrs engaged in Hedonism** – the pursuit of please. {Vanity – Futility of such a pursuit

C) Ch.7-12 Swing the other way – **Solomon switches to the Moralist – Good guy**

1) Time to clean up the act if you would.

D) New focus – More – Now he concerned with Reputation

**Eccl 7:1**

**A good name is better than precious ointment,  
And the day of death than the day of one's birth;**

A) Solomon was not contrasting *birth* and *death*, nor was he suggesting that it is better to die than to be born, because you can't die unless you have been born.

B) He was contrasting two significant days in human experience:

1) The day a person receives his or her name and the day when that name shows up in the obituary column.

**C) The life lived between those two events will determine whether that name leaves behind a lovely fragrance or a foul stench.**

D) If a person dies with a good name, his or her reputation is sealed and the family is blessed.

E) In that sense, the day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth.

1) The life is over and the reputation is settled.

Been Said: "Every man has three names," says an ancient adage; "one his father and mother gave him, one others call him, and one he acquires himself."

A Good name is better than a Sweet fragrance – Character weighs more than appearance!

**Eccl 7:2**

**2 Better to go to the house of mourning  
Than to go to the house of feasting,  
For that is the end of all men;  
And the living will take it to heart.**

**Better to go to a funeral – than McDonalds**

A) People in a house of mourning are seriously thinking about life. – Open to listen.

B) Like to do funerals – interested audience.

**1) Eternity in our hearts – longing .....**

**C) There is a heightened awareness during those times.**

**D) More so than during a time everyone is feasting – party – Not thinking about any thing important.**

**Eccl 7:3-4**

**3 Sorrow is better than laughter,  
For by a sad countenance the heart is made better.  
4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,  
But the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.**

**I think all of us would choose laughter over sorrow.**

**A) Laughter is medicine for the soul.**

**B) But there is an Honesty and wisdom in the house of mourning**

**1) House of feasting or amusement – party house. – Foolish – people wanting to escape**

**C) A lot of pp look to laughter and comedy to escape reality – mask true feelings.**

**D) The Bible puts a premium on Sorrow and brokenness.**

**Psalm 34:18**

**“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted;  
he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.” NLT**

**Matthew 3:5 “Blessed are the Poor in Spirit  
For theirs is the kingdom of God.”**

**Great place to be with God – He supplies –**

**Matthew 3:6 “Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.”**

**Psalm 51:17**

**“The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit.  
You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.” NLT**

**It is good for us spiritually to assume that position of brokenness. - Honest before the Lord**

**A) Culturally this is unacceptable – But spiritually it is wise.**

**B) Because of our culture – Downer – it might not be wise to be real – but be real with God.**

**1) Fasting – don’t let pp know –**

**C) God knows – Good friend might know!**

**5 It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise  
Than for a man to hear the song of fools.**

**6 For like the crackling of thorns under a pot,  
So is the laughter of the fool.**

**This also is vanity.**

**Here King Solomon compared the praise of fools to the burning thorns in a campfire:**

**A) Small dry wood – cracks – pops – makes a lot of noise – wow – some fire – but little substance.**

**B) It doesn't last long! – Praise from a fool is like that –**  
1) Pp are fickle – love you one minute – think your and idiot the next.

**C) But a rebuke from a wise friend – that can have a lasting affect.**

1) I have learned this the hard way.

**One Sunday morning I was illustrating a point – how some pp wait for some big event to happen.**

**A) Store owner – Mom and pop – delivery hit sued – lost everything –**

**B) Started over – again – lost everything**

**C) Couch TV – Mama hit by a bus – Thank God my luck is changing!**

**D) Pastor Gaylord – begged me – don't tell – I didn't listen. – Wise rebuke –**

1) I was listening to all the fools who were – that was a great story!

**E) Right or wrong – A lot of pp weren't ready for my sense of humor –**

1) Wife reminded me – took time!

**Eccl 7:7**

**7 Surely oppression destroys a wise man's reason, And a bribe debases the heart.**

**A) Beware of “easy” routes; they often become expensive detours that are difficult and painful.**

**B) Bribery appears to be a quick way to get things done but it only turns a wise man into a fool**

1) And encourages the corruption already in the human heart.

**C) Far better that we wait patiently and humbly for God to work out His will than that we get angry and demand our own way**

**D) Wisdom in waiting – no short cuts – he continues**

**8 The end of a thing is better than its beginning; The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.  
9 Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools.**

**Pride and anger often prompt us to respond quickly in the flesh about things – open mouth – lash out**

**A) Proverbs 16:18 “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”**

**B) There is only one time in my life that I can say I regretted waiting – not speaking.**

**C) There are many times I have regretted not waiting and just responding**

1) Regretted rushing into a situation thinking I know the answer – I know how to fix this.

**D) Patient in Spirit is way better than being proud in Spirit.**

**Eccl 7:10**

**Do not say, "Why were the former days better than these?" For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.**

A) When life is difficult and we are impatient for change, it is easy to long for “the good old days” when things were better.

B) It has been said that “the good old days” are the combination of a bad memory and a good imagination, and often this is true. {Israel with Egypt

C) Yesterday is past and cannot be changed, and tomorrow may not come; **so make the most of today.** “Seize the day!”

D) This does not mean we shouldn’t learn from the past or prepare for the future, because both are important.

1) It means that we must live *today* in the will of God and not be paralyzed by yesterday or hypnotized by tomorrow.

**A Victorian writer wrote, “While you are dreaming of the future or regretting the past, the present, which is all you have, slips from you and is gone.”**

A) One of the marks of maturity is the ability to look at life in perspective and not get out of balance.

B) When you have God’s wisdom, you will be able to accept and deal with the changing experiences of life.

**11 Wisdom is good with an inheritance, And profitable to those who see the sun.**

**12 For wisdom is a defense as money is a defense, But the excellence of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to those who have it.**

**A) Wisdom is better than a generous inheritance.**

**B) Money can lose its value, or be stolen; but true wisdom keeps its value and cannot be lost,**

1) Unless we become fools and abandon it deliberately.

**C) Wisdom is like a “shelter” to those who obey it; it gives greater protection than money.**

**13 Consider the work of God; For who can make straight what He has made crooked?**

A) Sometimes God allows things to get crooked- out of joint – and there is nothing man can do to straighten it

**B) Jer 18 Vessel was marred in the potter’s hands –**

1) Clay can’t say – why do that – remain soft

**C) I will make your life complicated enough - so that you will know that you need me**

**1) Man can't make straight what God has made crooked**

D) Day coming – when what is crooked is made straight – 2<sup>nd</sup> coming

**Eccl 7:14 14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, But in the day of adversity consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, So that man can find out nothing that will come after him.**

**Rejoice in times of Prosperity as well as in times of Adversity.**

**A) We need to realize that God is just as engaged in the days of adversity as He is in the days of Prosperity.**

**B) He is with us in both times – therefore Embrace your trouble.**

**Came across and interesting Article from Phillip Yancey – Book – Where is God when it hurts.**

Phillip Yancey

Imagine for a moment that your **world is dark, safe, secure.** You are bathed in warm liquid, cushioned from shock. You do nothing for yourself; you are fed automatically, and a **murmuring heartbeat** assures you that someone larger than you fills all your needs.

Your life consists of simple waiting—you're not sure what to wait for, **but any change seems far away and scary.** You meet no sharp objects, no pain, no threatening adventures. **A fine existence.**

**One day you feel a tug.** The walls are falling in on you. Those soft cushions are **now pulsing and beating** against you, crushing you downwards. Your body is bent double, your limbs twisted and wrenched. You're falling, upside down. **For the first time in your life, you feel pain.**

You're in a sea of rolling matter. There is more pressure, almost **too intense to bear.** Your head is squeezed flat, and you are pushed harder, **harder into a dark tunnel.** Oh, the pain. Noise. More pressure. You hurt all over.

**You hear a groaning sound and an awful, sudden fear rushes in on you.** It is happening—your world is collapsing. **You're sure it's the end.** You see a piercing, blinding light. Cold, rough hands pull at you. A painful slap. Waaaahhhh!

**Congratulations! You've just been born.**

**I like that there is a wonderful spiritual truth illustrated in Child birth –**

**A) Child birth can be a pretty – intense experience – maybe even call it adverse.**

**B) So often in adversity we think our world is collapsing In reality something has just been born**

Everything is going wrong – it is painful, but the reality is God is birthing a whole new dimension, a whole new reality, a whole new aspect in your walk with Him.

Day of Prosperity – be joyful but in the Day of adversity remember that God is there as well. He is working – He is birthing something special.

### **RDV. 15-20**

Verses 16–18 have been misunderstood by those who say that Solomon was teaching “moderation” in everyday life: don’t be too righteous, but don’t be too great a sinner.

A) “Play it safe!” say these cautious philosophers, but this is not what Solomon wrote.

B) In the Hebrew text, the verbs in verse 16 carry the idea of reflexive action.

1) Solomon said to the people, “Don’t claim to be righteous and don’t claim to be wise.”

C) In other words, he was warning them against *self-righteousness and the pride that comes when we think we have “arrived” and know it all.*

D) Solomon made it clear in verse 20 that there are no righteous people, so he cannot be referring to true righteousness.

1) Paul said none righteous no not one!

Solomon was condemning the self-righteousness of the hypocrite

A) And the false wisdom of the proud, and he warned that these sins led to destruction and death.

B) Verse 18 balances the warning: we should take hold of true righteousness and should not withdraw from true wisdom,

C) And the way to do it is to walk in the fear of God. **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”** (Proverbs 9:10).

D) Reverence for God!

Those who seek to walk in the fear of God are going to face Criticism. Solomon instructs

21 Also do not take to heart everything people say, Lest you hear your servant cursing you.

A) The wise person pays no attention to the gossip of the day because he has more important matters which to attend.

Charles Spurgeon told his pastoral students that the minister ought to have one blind eye and one deaf ear. “You cannot stop people’s tongues,” he said, “and therefore the best thing to do is to stop your own ears and never mind what is spoken. There is a world of idle chitchat abroad, and he who takes note of it will have enough to do” Charles Spurgeon

## **Ministry you need thick skin !**

A) Media Generation

B) Reality - People will talk about you but

22 For many times, also, your own heart has known  
That even you have cursed others.

C) Guilty! **I have been guilty –  
I want to know no man after the flesh –**

**V. 23-25**

**23 All this I have proved by wisdom.**

**I said, "I will be wise"; But it was far from me.**

**24 As for that which is far off and exceedingly deep,  
Who can find it out?**

**25 I applied my heart to know,  
To search and seek out wisdom and the reason of  
things, To know the wickedness of folly, even of  
foolishness and madness.**

**Solomon was on a search for wisdom – to try and  
figure out why people do what they do!**

A) Single word answer – Sin! -

**Eccl 7:26-28**

**26 And I find more bitter than death**

**The woman whose heart is snares and nets,  
Whose hands are fetters.**

**He who pleases God shall escape from her,  
But the sinner shall be trapped by her.**

**27 "Here is what I have found," says the Preacher,  
"Adding one thing to the other to find out the reason,  
28 Which my soul still seeks but I cannot find:  
One man among a thousand I have found,  
But a woman among all these I have not found.**

**Here is the implication: In his search for answers –  
Solomon sought counsel from a member of the  
opposite sex – someone not his wife.**

**He said – the person that does that gets trapped –  
snare –**

**How many adulterous affairs started by one person  
confiding in a person at work – opposite sex**

**Counseling Men with men – women with women**

A) Avoid problems –

**29 Truly, this only I have found:  
That God made man upright,  
But they have sought out many schemes."**

**God made man right but man keeps messing up –  
man shows he is not right**

