

ECCLESIASTES SERIES ELEVEN
WISDOM APPLIED
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Ecc 8:1

Who is like the wise man? Who knows the explanation of things?
Wisdom brightens a man's face... and changes its hard appearance.

Q:

What does a wise person look like?
Think of the people you know who seem wise... they have a pleasant and attractive demeanor... there's something about them.

Review

Last week we looked at chapters 6 & 7 where it asks who needs wisdom?

We defined wisdom as...

○ The ability to see and live with rare godly objectivity.

- 1) We need the contentment wisdom brings.
- 2) We need the balance it provides, and the
- 3) We need the protection it brings.

Two Ways of Engaging Wisdom:

Prayer

Because wisdom is not my good ideas... but Gods... asking God for His insight becomes important.

Scripture

At one level anyone can apply wisdom if... they simply look to the Bible.

Wisdom from Scripture

1. Seek advice and instruction from others

Pro 9:9

Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still;
teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.

(Story)

The *Arizona Republic* (4/25/95) Steve Tran of California, activated 25 bug bombs in his house at once. When the concentrated spray reached the pilot light of the stove, it ignited, blasting his screen door across the street, breaking all his windows, and setting some of his furniture ablaze.

"I really wanted to kill all the cockroaches," he said. "I thought if I used a lot more, it would last longer." The instructions said he only needed 2 cans to do the whole house. **He killed the cockroaches' all right, along w/ his furniture.**

2. A wise person knows when to not say anything

Pro 10:19

"When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise."

3. A wise person saves and plans for the future

Pro 21:20

In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and

4. A wise person speaks with grace and understanding

Ecc 10:12-13

"Words from a wise man's mouth are gracious, but a fool is consumed by his own lips."

- Wisdom is: The ability to see and live with rare godly objectivity.

Ecc 8:2-4 Obey the king's command, I say, because you took an oath before God. ³Do not be in a hurry to leave the king's presence. Do not stand up for a bad cause, for he will do whatever he pleases. ⁴Since a king's word is supreme, who can say to him, "What are you doing?"

Solomon is using a kind of mini parable here. And we've got a servant or manager who's resistant to a command the King has made... What do you do?

He has some sort of deep disagreement.

Ecc 8:6b "...though a man's misery weighs heavily upon him."

I love this. This is so practical. This is everyday kinds of stuff...

Situations: Maybe it's supervisor who asked you to do something that's very aggravating...
Maybe it's a teacher or professor who's given you a ridiculous assignment.
You have a huge disagreement w/ a neighbor

1. Seek first to submit... and take the right action in the right time.

Ecc 8:5 Whoever obeys his command will come to no harm,
and the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure.

First reaction is:

~ I'm going to tell him off, I'm going to tell him how it goes... or
~ I'll give her nominal agreement right now, but when she unaware I'm going to passively move things my direction... because I think I'm right, she's wrong.

God's perspective... wisdom applied here is not...

Seek first to submit... if your boss is not asking you to do something immoral, or illegal... submit... submit as if submitting to God.

↳ Solomon is saying, it's not going to hurt you... you may not like it... but be careful about what you take a stand on.

(Chris) True story... Talking with a man who had lost his job... he was already living on the edge financially... and recently became homeless.

In the course of the conversation he tells me he quit his job. Why did you quit your job? You've lost your apartment, without another job no one will let you sign a lease... you're staying in hotels as you can afford it. (very capable individual)

"They switched my supervisor to a woman... and I don't think I should have to work for a woman... true story..." "You quit your job w/o finding another job first, because you didn't want to have a woman for a boss?" "Yea"

Friends... - I don't normally call people stupid to their face... But on this occasion... in a moment of weakness... I think I did. "you quit your job, had your car repossessed, and now you can't get an apartment..."

He told me that scripturally he believed a man should never work for a woman...
What about Ester... God appointed her king, how many hundreds of thousands of men
had to submit to her?

~ God says seek first to submit to those w/ authority... If they ask you to do
something immoral or illegal... don't submit... otherwise see if you can.

2nd part of this wisdom is:

2. Look for the opportunities God has put before you.
Ecc 8:5b ... and the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure. (Ecc 3)

Sometimes submitting opens up a greater opportunity at a later time.

(Story) (Jack) Talking to a guy about where he worked... The boss didn't like people to leave a Bible anywhere
in plan site. The boss was not a Christian... didn't like Christians... thought it was a
crutch for weak minded people.

Q: So how do you handle it if... you're the person asked not to even put your Bible on
your desk... that a little unfair...

Submit... Submitting isn't a compromise of faith... You can still read your Bible
on your own time...

- Don't expect a secular work place to promote Christian values.

We have 3 choices about timing and procedure....

Ecc 8:7 1) **Submit**, wait for a different time... who knows what will happen in the future.
Since no man knows the future, who can tell him what is to come?

2) **Withdraw** and leave... quietly find another job somewhere.

3) Passively work your agenda, because you believe you're right... you're not overtly
going against your boss, but that's **rebellion**.

Here's the deal friends...

Submitting, or withdrawing are proper and wise... But the 3rd... is improper... why?
To passively work your own agenda... is **rebellion**.

Even if you're right... don't act in rebellion,

Story cont

The guy I told you about who worked at place where the boss wouldn't allow them to
have a Bible on their desk or work space... He was the boss... didn't want anything
Christian around.

Then one day... his life starts to come un-glued... marriage is on the rocks... guess
who he quietly turned to for support and advice...?

An employee who w/ as *Ecc 8:1* says the man w/ bright face... a godly, attractive
demeanor... **the guy who years earlier submitted to not leaving his Bible on his
desk...**

I don't know who he was... but he wise... he knew when to submit... he knew the
proper time proper time and procedure for action.

Here's the principle at work...

Ecc 8:8 "No man has power over the wind to contain it"

Don't waist time trying to control what you have no control over... Learn to submit and work in the right time and procedure... you will be a happier person, and who knows things my change in your favor... you might gain great influence.

Submission to God

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There's so much in chapter 8, there's one more lesson I just don't want to skip...

Ecc 8:12-13

Although a wicked man commits a hundred crimes and still lives a long time, I know that it will go better with God-fearing men, who are reverent before God. 13 Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them, and their days will not lengthen like a shadow.

Solomon brings in this age old debate about how smart it is to submit one's life over to God

Sometimes it seems like God fearing people don't have it any better... people who reject God and his principles have it better...

3. The wise person constantly seeks to know and understand God

Ecc 8:12b

"I know that it will go better with God-fearing men, who are reverent before God.

Ps 14:1

"The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."

The world will always wrestle with the questions of God.

Q:

Is there a God?

Q:

Are all religions the same?

Q:

Is the Bible really the word of God?

These are questions that will never go away... But it is a wise person who never gives up on seeking and believing in God.

Atheist, anti-theist
Christopher Hitchens

"There may be many things to be said against atheism – I'm not an atheist anyway, I'm an anti-theist. It would be horrible if it were true, that we were designed and then created and then continuously supervised throughout all our lives waking and sleeping then continue to be supervised after our deaths – if that were true, it would be horrible. I'm very glad there's absolutely no evidence for it at all. It would be like living in a celestial North Korea."

He's a fool. He refuses to seek or believe in God

~ He has a completely false understanding of what the Bible teaches about God, and he's closed his mind to even considering the possibility of God.

- (ILL) Let's say that I'm wrong... Let's say I'm deluded... every time...
- ✓ I felt God's nudge and direction
 - ✓ Very time I followed my conscience
 - ✓ My belief in Jesus Christ
 - ✓ Times of worship where I felt God's presence... Let's say I was wrong and deluded... everytime...
 - Jesus is was nothing more than a mix up, confused teacher

- Q: What have I lost?
- My marriage is stronger
 - My joy factor is higher
 - My sacrifice w/ time and money has helped fellow people
 - I belong to a community that cares and ministers and encourages me, and gives me the opportunity to do the same.
 - I live w/ a dee sense of God's love and grace.

I'm hard pressed to see how I've lost anything.

Play it the other way

- Let's say Christopher is wrong
- ✓ The Bible is the word of God
 - ✓ God has been present in worship service
 - ✓ God does speak in people's spirits
 - ✓ The Holy Spirit is alive and active in the hearts of followers of Jesus Christ.

- Q: What has the anti-theist lost? Everything...

~ They have cut themselves off from God's wisdom
 ~ From seeing, or considering anything pointing them toward a God who wants to be known.

It's a fool who tells God you must prove yourself on my terms.
 What if God is actually speaking and reaching

- Never feel bad about inviting people to "come and see" to taste and see if God is real. Never feel bad about inviting people who do not know Jesus to explore who God is... God in his own way tends to reveal himself in his own way to those who seek him.

Chuck

I did a grave side service for a very dear friend and mentor this past week. Chuck Hubbard. He was a Sunday School teacher, camp councilor for me for many years.

He was a tough hard core Marine who had a deep, deep relationship w/ Jesus Christ. He would always tell us these great war stories. One of them was a time when he served in the early days of Vietnam before he were officially involved in the war.

One day he was standing in the opening of a bunker. Sand bags piled up all around. Everyone called him Chuck or Charles, and as he was standing their someone called him by a childhood name that only his mother used... frank. In the same tone and inflection as when he was a child..."Frank"

It caught him as being so strange he snapped his head around... and just as he did so he heard the snap of a lone bullet hit a wood beam right behind his head followed by the sound of the gun fire.

From hundreds of yards away a sniper aims his gun and one of a few American soldiers. Fires... that bullet is traveling faster than the speed of sound. As that bullet is traveling toward Chuck he called by his childhood name... He turns head and the bullet misses his head by a fraction of an inch... snap the bullet hits the wood beam, and as he turns his head back round to see a bullet lodged in the wood, the sound of the gun fire reaches his ears.

Q: "Who called me Frank?" No one... One of only a few Americans there at the time, no one else is even named Frank.

Chuck dug that bullet out of the wood, For the rest of his life... that bullet was a reminder to him... (That a wise man believes, seek, and longs for God)

Review:

- The ability to see and live with rare godly objectivity.
Seek it... Engage God's wisdom in prayer,
Engage God's wisdom through scripture.