



# **Wisdom to Avoid Extremes**

Ecclesiastes 7:15-29

# Balanced Living

- Eccl 7:15-18 I have seen everything in my days of vanity.. There is a just *man* who perishes in his righteousness, And there is a wicked *man* who prolongs *life* in his wickedness.<sup>16</sup> Do not be overly righteous, Nor be overly wise: Why should you destroy yourself?
  - Why do good people not always outlive bad people?
  - Don't be overly righteous/wise won't lengthen life
  - Overly strict, showing yourself wise will cause problems

# From one extreme to other

- 7:17-18 Do not be overly wicked, Nor be foolish: Why should you die before your time? <sup>18</sup> *It is good that you grasp this, And also not remove your hand from the other; For he who fears God will escape them all.*
  - Don't relax all restraint.. overly righteous to overly wicked
  - Not saying a little wickedness is okay.. always keep control
  - By fearing God we can have restraint on extremes

# Wisdom strengthens the wise

- 7:19-20 Wisdom strengthens the wise More than ten rulers of the city. <sup>20</sup> For *there is* not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.
  - Wisdom does more for us than 10 rulers can do for the city
  - We must depend on God.. Not one of us is without sin
  - 1 Kings 8:46 Rom 3:9-20

# Use of the tongue

- 7:21-22 Also do not take to heart everything people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you. <sup>22</sup> For many times, also, your own heart has known that even you have cursed others.
  - Don't listen too closely to what people say about you
  - Recall that you have spoken unkind things also
  - Wisdom will help us avoid extremes.. Be merciful

# Ultimate wisdom is beyond us

- 7:23-25 All this I have proved by wisdom. I said, “I will be wise”; But it *was* far from me. <sup>24</sup> As for that which is far off and exceedingly deep, Who can find it out? 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 admits he was unable to attain ultimate wisdom
  - He learned valuable lessons, but not full essence

# An experience worse than death

7:26-28 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. <sup>27</sup> “Here is what I have found,” says the Preacher, “*Adding* one thing to the other to find out the reason, <sup>28</sup> 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.

- Solomon’s great failure in his choice of wives (1 Kings 11:1-8)
- He extols the value of a godly wife Eccl 9:9 Prov 12:4 31:10-31

# Our failures are on us

- 7:29 Truly, this only I have found: that God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes.”
  - Adam and Eve were created in innocence
  - Man/woman both chose to sin
  - Man has sought out many schemes (explanations)
- 8:1 Who *is* like a wise *man*? And who knows the interpretation of a thing? A man’s wisdom makes his face shine, And the sternness of his face is changed.



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