

# Signs of Real Wisdom (Part 2)

Ecclesiastes 7:15-29

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A. God is sovereign.

Everything about our life – our days of prosperity and our days of adversity ultimately come through the hands of God.

*In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other . . . (v.14a).*

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We can learn to trust God and rest in His sovereign goodness, as Paul encourages us to do: *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

“Today, as I look back, I am convinced that the whole ordeal of my paralysis was inspired by God’s love . . . . When we learn to lean back on God’s sovereignty, fixing and setting our thoughts on that unshakable, unmovable reality, we can experience great inner peace.

Our troubles may not change. Our pain may not diminish. Our loss may not be restored. Our problems may not fade with the new dawn. But the power of those things to harm us is broken as we rest in the fact that God is in control.”

- Joni Erickson Tada

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*In my vain life I have seen everything. There is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evildoing. (v.15)*

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B. We need to carefully examine why we live the way we live (vv.16-17).

1. God cannot be manipulated by our attempt to be super-spiritual (v.16).

*Be not overly righteous, and do not make yourself too wise. Why should you destroy yourself? (v.16)*

*As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”*

*(1 Peter 1:14-16; cf. Lev. 11:44)*

*Be not wise in your own eye (Prov.3:7a).*

2. God will not overlook our disrespectful, willful disobedience (v.17).

*Be not overly wicked, neither be a fool. Why should you die before your time? (v.17)*

C. We need to get serious about developing sincere reverence and respect for God (v.18).

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*It is good that you should take hold of this, and from that withhold not your hand, for the one who fears God shall come out from both of them. (v.18)*

*Be not wise in your own eyes;  
fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.  
(Prov.3:7)*

“To fear God is to revere God. It is to know that he is God and we are not. It is to hold him in awe for his majestic beauty. It is to have respect for his mighty and awesome power. Having the true and proper fear of God will help us not to be so self-righteous.

We will know that God sees us as we really are, and this will teach us not to pretend to be something we are not. The fear of God will also keep us from living a wicked life, because when we understand his holiness, the last thing we will want to do is fall under his judgment.”

- Phillip Ryken

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as  
it is in heaven. (Mt.6:9-10)*

III. A wise person accepts that life is filled with both blessings and burdens; wisdom is not magic.  
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A. Wisdom gives strength (v.19).

*Wisdom gives strength to the wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city. (v.19)*

*A wise person has the strength of a well-governed city. Wisdom governs thought; so the wise person knows how to think about things in a God-centered way. Wisdom governs the will; so the wise person knows what choices to make in life. Wisdom governs speech; so the wise person knows what to say and what not to say. Wisdom governs action; so the wise person knows what to do in any and every situation. Take hold of wisdom, and it will make you strong.*

**- Phillip Ryken**

B. Wisdom does not make anyone perfect (v.20).

*Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins. (v.20).*

C. Wisdom teaches us not to take every slight personally (v.21-22).

*Do not take to heart all the things that people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you. Your heart knows that many times you yourself have cursed others. (vv.21-22)*

“To take too seriously what people say of us is asking to get hurt, and in any case we have all said some wounding things in our time.”

- Derek Kidner

D. Wisdom does not solve all the mysteries of life  
(vv.23-24)

*All this I have tested by wisdom. I said, “I will be wise,” but it was far from me. That which has been is far off, and deep, very deep; who can find it out?  
(vv.23-24)*

E. Wisdom prepares us to deal with temptation and disappointment. (vv.25-28)

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*I turned my heart to know and to search out and to seek wisdom and the scheme of things, and to know the wickedness of folly and the foolishness that is madness. And I find something more bitter than death: the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and whose hands are fetters. He who pleases God escapes her, but the sinner is taken by her.*

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*Behold, this is what I found, says the Preacher, while adding one thing to another to find the scheme of things—which my soul has sought repeatedly, but I have not found. One man among a thousand I found, but a woman among all these I have not found. (vv.25-28)*

*For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. (1 Kings 11:4)*

F. Wisdom teaches us that the problems of life are not God's fault. (v.29)

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*See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes.  
(v.29)*

*The God I Love: A Lifetime of Walking With Jesus*

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