



Eat, Drink, and Be Joyful!

Introduction

Ecclesiastes 8

I have had the joy of experiencing a few root canals! Since I have had more than one, I have learned that it basically goes like this:

- Tooth is sensitive to hot and cold.
- Sensitivity actually is painful but doesn't last.
- Dull aching causes chewing to occur on the other side.
- Dull aching becomes constant pain.
- You then begin to feel your heartbeat in your tooth - time for a root canal!

That sounds terrible, and it is to some degree, but the joy comes when the procedure is completed! You are out of pain and you can think clearly again! The knowledge that I have tells me that relief is found in that procedure.

Wisdom is more than knowledge - it is the ability to apply that knowledge and to live accordingly which makes it wisdom.

Ecclesiastes 8 is filled with knowledge about things we will experience in life: on how to live under authority, on how to live when the wicked seem to prosper, on how to live when we experience suffering, etc. These things can be very painful and difficult. But we can be wise about these things in life to trust that in all things our good God is in control. We can enjoy life! We can eat, drink, and be merry, because we know God is in control and joy is in store for those who love Him!

The wise person has much to be joyful about!

Open It

1. **What is your favorite type of food? Where is the best place for you to enjoy that food?**

Read It

Ecclesiastes 8

Explore It

2. **What does wisdom do to a man's face?**
3. **Whose commands are we told to keep?**
4. **What is the word of the king?**
5. **Who has the power over the timing of their death?**
6. **What does the lack of punishing wickedness speedily produce?**
7. **What does Solomon commend to us and why in verse 15?**

Apply It

Among the "vanities" in life is living in circumstances over which we have little control. Such as the kind of government ruling the country in which we live. The Preacher observed that evil men are often in positions of power, and offers his counsel for enduring such "vanity."

Wisdom is helpful, capable of softening one's countenance (so one is not overly troubled?). Submitting to governing authorities is important, especially in view of the power wielded by those in authority. There will be times when the wicked rule, bringing misery. Be patient, while judgment against such evil may be delayed it will come in its own time and the wicked will soon be forgotten after their demise. In the meantime, it is best to fear God (1-13).

Another "vanity" is how the righteous sometimes suffer while the wicked prosper. The Preacher reiterates his conclusion that it is best to seek to enjoy what good God gives in one's labor under the sun. Even the wisest man is unable to discern all that God is doing, no matter how hard he tries. A lesson similar to the one taught in the book of Job (14-17).¹

8. **How has wisdom helped you face the challenges of life? How does wisdom impact your relationships?**

¹ https://executableoutlines.com/guides/ecclesiastes/ecc_08.html

So when a king or someone in authority gives a command, you do well to obey it. Why? Because either you or he swore an oath to God. It's possible that this was referring to an oath that the citizens of a kingdom would make regarding obeying the king during his coronation. Or maybe it's saying that the king himself made an oath to God concerning his duties while in office.

The US doesn't coronate kings, but we do inaugurate our presidents. And each President thus far has put his hand on a Bible and recited an oath that begins "I do solemnly swear..." and ends with "So help me God."

Again, the idea is that you ought to obey the king because both you and he have a solemn obligation to each other.²

9. What do the following scriptures say about a Christian's relationship to their governing authorities?

Romans 13:1-7

1 Peter 2:13-17

Acts 5:27-29

Titus 3:1-2

1 Timothy 2:1-3

Matthew 22:17-21

10. How would you discern the time to live a "peaceable and quiet life" with the time to speak up, (which Peter did), and "obey God rather than man"? Give an example of a law which you don't like but you comply with.

² <https://explainingthebook.com/2015/08/02/ecclesiastes-8-summary/>

Solomon has observed that there are those who do wickedly to others, taking advantage of them and exercising authority over them to their detriment. Yet these wicked men also die, for they cannot put off death when it comes for them. They get buried, and to the watching world, there seems to be no justice. They seem to have gotten away with their evil deeds, and this motivates others to continue in evil as well. Yet just because the consequences aren't immediately visible does not mean that the wicked get away with their wickedness. (As a side note, in this narrative, the wicked used to be very religious, doing the religious rituals of entering the holy place. Yet their hearts were evil and bent on doing wrong. Thus, their religion was empty and futile.) God is not fooled by empty religion, but He knows the heart and will judge accordingly. Some may sin and sin again, even living longer because of it, but it will not be well for them in eternity. God will judge them, and they will have to face His wrath. Those who are righteous and who stand for truth openly even if it costs them their lives have assurance that it will be well with them in eternity.³

- 11. Sometimes the wicked prosper. Sometimes those who fear the Lord suffer. How have you seen these two truths play out in your own life? Have you been tempted to sin like others, especially when it was glorified in our culture?**

“And I commend joy, for man has nothing better under the sun but to eat, drink and be joyful, for this will go with him in his toil through the days of his life that God has given him under the sun.”

- 12. What are some activities that bring you joy? How often do you enjoy them? Do you sometimes feel guilty for enjoying life? Why or why not?**

³ http://www.relevantbibleteaching.com/site/cpage.asp?cpage_id=140015233&sec_id=140001

13. Jesus Christ ultimately gives his followers a joy that lasts longer than this life. He is true wisdom! Have you believed in Jesus as your Savior - trusting that He paid for your sin on the cross? Are you living for Jesus as your Lord - following His ways and growing in holiness? If the answer is yes, are you experiencing the joy of the Lord right now no matter the circumstances? Why or why not?

"Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with JOY that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

1 Peter 1:8-9