



# When Bad is Actually Good

## Open it

1. What has been the best day of your life so far?

## Daily Devotions

Day 1 — Today's Theme: Explore It

Read Ecclesiastes 7:1–14.

2. For each pair, check which one is better.
  - A good name **OR** fine perfume
  - The day of birth **OR** the day of death
  - House of feasting **OR** house of mourning
  - Laughter **OR** frustration
  - Heed the rebuke of a wise person **OR** listen to the song of fools
  - The beginning of the matter **OR** the end of the matter
  - Patience **OR** pride
3. What corrupts the heart?
4. What shouldn't we say?
5. How is wisdom a better shelter than money?
6. How should you respond in times of prosperity?
7. What should one consider in times of adversity?

## Day 2 — Today's Theme: What Makes You Stop and Think About Life?

### Read Ecclesiastes 7:1–6, 8–9.

Many teenagers will put off getting serious about life until they get older because they are young and have a whole lifetime ahead of them. I have heard several students say once I am 18 and out of high school then I'll start taking life seriously. The truth is that tomorrow is not promised to any of us.

The author of Ecclesiastes tells us that the day of death is better than the day one is born and that it's better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting. When you are hanging out with your friends and having a great time you give very little thought to life. But when you go to a funeral, it makes you pause and think about not only how you miss the person who died, but also where this person you care about is now—is he in heaven? It may cause you to think one step further— what will happen to you when you die one day? The opening verse of Ecclesiastes 7 talks about the temporary and fleeting effect of perfume which points to the brevity of life. You can't spray on perfume today and expect the scent to last more than a day. But a good name in the eyes of God is better than perfume, and the day of death for the one who has a good name in God's eyes is better than his day of birth because he has come to know God somewhere along the way in his life.

The author of Ecclesiastes says you are foolish if you just live to enjoy today and not stop and think about eternity and ultimately where you stand in your relationship with God!

**8. What would God say about you? Do you have a good name in His eyes? Why would you say that you have a good name or a bad name in God's eyes?**

**9. How can the pleasures of life keep you from thinking about what's really important in life?**

## Day 3 — Today's Theme: Convictions

### Read Ecclesiastes 7:7.

Do you have convictions?

Convictions are deep-rooted beliefs and principles that you live by, and that no one or anything can cause you to compromise and go against what you believe.

At Kaneland High School, we have a Christian graduation ceremony called the bacculaureate at the end of every school year. A number of years ago, a parent had a complaint to the principal, and she requested that all faiths, including Muslim, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, etc. equally share in the ceremony. I have a deep-rooted conviction that no one should share the stage with Jesus, and if I was required to include other religious beliefs, then I would not be a part of that type of ceremony. Fortunately, the principal supported my convictions, and to this day, we have continued to have Christian graduation ceremonies at Kaneland High School.

Today's verse talks about living with integrity and not letting the temptation of money, whether a bribe to not uphold the truth or the opportunity to unfairly take more than one should (extortion) from someone. "Money talks, and it can confuse those who would otherwise judge fairly. We hear about bribes given to judges, police officers, and witnesses. Bribes are given to hurt those who tell the truth and help those who oppose it. The person who is involved in extortion or takes a bribe is indeed a fool, no matter how wise he thought he was beforehand. It is said that everyone has a price, but those who are truly wise cannot be bought at any price."<sup>1</sup>

**10. What is so appealing about taking a bribe or charging more (extortion)?**

**11. Why is it important to have convictions? What are some of the convictions that you have?**

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<sup>1</sup> Life Application Bible study note for Ecclesiastes 7:7. Page 1143, 1991

## Day 4 — Today's Theme: Remember the Good Old Days

### Read Ecclesiastes 7:10.

Have you ever had one of your grandparents or parents tell you stories from the “good old days”? When someone uses that phrase, they are implying that life today is worse compared to some time in the past. We all remember life before Covid, before facemasks, before quarantining, before zoom classes, etc. We could say that those were “the good old days.” Yes, there are some great memories that you created, but you don't want to live in the past.

Solomon says it's not wise to ask the question, “Why were the good old days better than these?” The best time for you to be focusing on is right now, in this moment, that God has sovereignly placed you in. I love what Acts 17:26–28a (NIV) says: “From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each of us. For in him we live and move and have our being..”

God has placed you exactly where He wants you to be today to live for Him!

**12. Why is it important to live in the moment and not relish the past (or live in regret from your past)?**

**13. What are the things you can thank God for that He is doing today?**

## Day 5 — Today's Theme: The Value of Wisdom

### Read Ecclesiastes 7:11–12.

When someone dies, they usually leave a will to pass on whatever possessions they owned to those they love. Sometimes this can be quite a large amount of money. This is called an inheritance, and to receive an inheritance is a good thing.

Not everyone may receive an earthly inheritance, but everyone has the opportunity to receive wisdom, which is like an inheritance, but even more valuable than receiving a large sum of money. There is a level of security and protection in money, but in a more advantageous way, wisdom provides more security and protection because it preserves life. “The Hebrew word for this expression can also mean “gives life” or “renews life.”<sup>2</sup>

So how do you receive wisdom? It's by pursuing Christ. I was listening to a sermon by J. Vernon McGee about this passage and he says that wisdom is actually Christ. If you replace “wisdom” with “Christ” every time you read that word “wisdom,” the same truths apply. Jesus is an inheritance, a shelter, and He also preserves those who have Him in their life.

So pursue Jesus, and gain wisdom through reading His Word, meditating on it, and applying it to your life!

#### 14. How can you practically pursue wisdom?

#### 15. What benefit is there in having wisdom over money?

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<sup>2</sup> NIV Study Bible commentary

## Day 6 — Today's Theme: God is in Control

### Read Ecclesiastes 7:13–14.

Jesus said that He has come to give us life to the full.<sup>3</sup> When things are going well in life, God wants us to be happy and enjoy life!

But sometimes things are bad. When times are bad, remember that God is in control, and He is working everything out for our good and His glory.<sup>4</sup>

God is not the author of evil.<sup>5</sup> When God saw everything He created, He said it was “very good.”<sup>6</sup> Evil came into the world when Adam chose to sin, thus affecting all of creation.<sup>7</sup> Any sin or evil in the world does not originate from God, but He allows it. Anything bad that comes in your life has to have God's permission as we see from Job, where Satan had to ask permission to do evil to Job's life<sup>8</sup>. As we see at the end of Job's life, God allowed evil for his good and God's glory.

**16. What is something good that has happened in your life that made you happy?**

**17. What bad thing have you seen in your life or in someone else's life that you have seen God use for their good and God's glory?**

Note: This study was written by Pastor Mario Arindaeng . [www.villagebible.church/students](http://www.villagebible.church/students).

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<sup>3</sup> John 10:10

<sup>4</sup> Romans 8:28-29

<sup>5</sup> James 1:13

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1:31

<sup>7</sup> Romans 8:18-21

<sup>8</sup> Job 1