



Ignorance is Bliss?

Open it

1. What is your favorite dessert?

Daily Devotions

Day 1 — Today's Theme: Explore It

Read Ecclesiastes 7:15–29.

2. What has Solomon observed of the wise man and the wicked man?
3. What cautions does Solomon give us?
4. What did Solomon find of his grasp on wisdom?
5. What did Solomon find in his pursuit of “wisdom and the scheme of all things”?

Day 2 — Today's Theme: Mental Trainwreck

Read Ecclesiastes 7:15–18.

Most of us have probably had some sort of mental trainwreck in a math class or science class. You know, that time when your teacher starts pretty much speaking a different language and expects you to understand what she's saying. Meanwhile, you're sitting in your seat, nodding your head while the wheels are turning hard just trying to make sense of what just came out of her mouth.

That's kind of where we are with Solomon here. Here's the guy who is considered to be the wisest man to have ever lived, and he's trying to wrap his head around why the good die young and the wicked seem to prosper. Many times in the Old Covenant, God promised that if His people would obey Him they would prosper. How is it that the opposite is true?

But alas, this was not just a predicament for Solomon a few thousand years ago. I've wondered the same thing today! Why is it that many good people find such hard lots in life while sometimes the biggest jerks and most devious people seem to just have unparalleled success?

Solomon's conclusion almost doesn't sound "Christian." Basically, it seems like he says, "Be good, but not too good. Still gotta live a little!" But is that really what he's getting at?

6. **Look at verse 18. What does it mean to fear God? What kind of attitudes and actions does the person who fears God have?**

7. **Look at verse 20. Solomon doesn't seem to have the highest view on the morality of humanity. His conclusion is basically, "Even the good ones aren't really that good." With this in mind, what kind of righteousness and wisdom do you think Solomon might have had in mind in verses 15–16?**

8. **How does self-righteousness and false wisdom ruin a person just the same as being a fool might bring someone to early destruction?**

Day 3 — Today's Theme: "Comments Moderator"

Read Ecclesiastes 7:21–22.

There are a lot of jerks out there who don't miss an opportunity to bully other people by calling them vicious names or insulting their interests, hobbies, looks, etc. These kinds of actions bring horrible pain on the people they target. So much pain, that we often find ourselves in our circles today doing whatever we have to do to try to fit in. We'll act like the people we want to like us, we'll dress like them, we'll listen to the same kind of music, etc. And all to just try to "fit in" and maybe even become the recipient of an ever so elusive compliment!

Solomon says, enough with that! He says, "Don't take to heart everything people say about you!" In other words, his point is that not everything that people say is even true in the first place and also, it doesn't always come from a place of trying to love and serve you. What Solomon DOESN'T mean is that we should just blanket ignore anything we don't like that people say. Sometimes we need to hear loving and constructive criticism so we can grow.

We need to learn sometimes to have a little thicker skin and not be offended by everything people say. But guess what? We can't always control the actions of other people. They shouldn't say awful things, but if they do, we also need to learn how to moderate the comments that come our way and learn how to know which ones we should listen to and which ones we should ignore.

Gaining wisdom will help us become the comment moderators in our own lives!

9. Why shouldn't we just ignore every comment about us that we don't like or that doesn't make us feel good? What value does loving, constructive criticism have for us?

10. Even loving and constructive criticism isn't always fun to receive. How can you receive that kind of feedback from other people in a positive way?

11. How can you tell what things you should "brush off" and what things you should "take to heart"?

Day 4 — Today's Theme: If You Know, You Don't Know

Read Ecclesiastes 7:23–24.

Dr. Harbin was one of my favorite professors in college. He was an older prof with a poofy white beard, and if he was about 100 pounds heavier, I might have mistaken him for Santa! I took his class on biblical hermeneutics (big word, if you wanna know what it means, ask me later) and I loved that class because he has to be one of the smartest guys I know. The man knows so much about the Bible, but one thing he said has stood out to me ever since I took his class almost 10 years ago. He said, “The more I learn about the Bible, the less I realize I know.” And he had a doctorate in Old Testament Studies!! The dude was brilliant!!

As I've grown in my own maturity, I've learned that what Dr. Harbin said that day in class is a true mark of maturity and true wisdom. The more you know, the more you realize you don't know!

In verse 23, Solomon says that he started out with the goal of being wise only to realize that it was far off from him. Does that mean that Solomon wasn't wise? I don't think so. But rather that the more wisdom he gained and the more he understood, the more he realized that the depths of wisdom cannot be plumbed by mortal men. That's why he says, “That which has been is far off, and deep, very deep; who can find it out?” In other words, there are simply some things that we cannot grasp, some things that we won't ever be able to fully wrap our minds around.

So the more you know, the more you don't know! If you know, you know.

12. What is something that you just can't wrap your mind around but you love thinking about?

13. Solomon says in verse 25 that he desires to seek out wisdom and the scheme of things. By “scheme of things” he basically means the understanding of why things are the way they are. Describe a time that you have wondered why God allowed something to happen the way He did. What have you learned from that situation?

14. Read Deuteronomy 29:29. Why do you think God hasn't told us everything?

Day 5 — Today's Theme: The Goodness of Humanity

Read Ecclesiastes 7:25–29.

When I was in high school, one of the girls in the grade below me died in a car accident. I can remember so many of my friends lamenting that she was such a good person and that it wasn't fair for this to happen to her. Now, I'm not sure if she knew Jesus as her Lord and Savior, but I certainly hope that she did and that she is with Him today in paradise.

People in our culture today look at the nature of humanity from the perspective that we are all pretty good people. Solomon had a slightly different take on human nature : "Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins," "One man among a thousand I found, but a woman among all these I have not found. See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes."

Basically, Solomon's take on the goodness of humanity is that, well, at one time we were created good, but ever since we've kind of messed it up a bit... like a lot. See, just trying to be "good people" doesn't do anything for us on the Day of Judgment because Solomon noted, there isn't even a good person on earth who isn't at least a little bad.

Now, the Bible offers good news. Good news that God hasn't left us in our sins but sent His Son to be our Savior and King. Good news that Jesus died on the cross to satisfy your debt of sin. Good news that Jesus rose from the grave on the third day to defeat sin and death once for all and set you free from its bondage in your life so you can have freedom and life in Him.

But that's only good news because of the bad news. And the bad news is that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God".

So how good is humanity? Not so good. Not without Jesus. We need that one good man out of a thousand, Jesus, to redeem us from our own sin and wickedness and make us new.

15. What is the tool that we should use to measure the goodness of humanity?

16. Why can it be dangerous to assume that all people are basically good?

17. If the Gospel is the Good News, why are we so afraid at times to share the bad news that makes it good news?