

Ecclesiastes 7:16-29  
Evaluating Inward Character  
Explain and Apply God's Plan—6:1-8:15

- 1) The balanced life of fearing God—7:16-18 (cf. 2:15)
  - a) Excess benefits no one—7:16-17
    - i) Avoid self-righteous—7:16 <sup>16</sup> *Do not be excessively righteous [tsaddiq] and do not make yourself excessively wise. Why should you ruin yourself?* (cf. Proverbs 3:7)
    - ii) Avoid foolish sinning—7:17 <sup>17</sup> *Do not be excessively wicked and do not be a fool. Why should you die before your time?*
    - iii) This is **not** saying, “Sin in moderation” or “Hail mediocrity.”
  - b) Live in awe of God—7:18 <sup>18</sup> *It is good that you take hold of this (true wisdom), and do not withhold your hand from that,* (cf. 7:16-17)
    - i) Why? *because the one who fears God comes forth with both of them.* (cf. 3:14; 5:7)
- 2) No one is exempt from sin, including you—7:19-22
  - a) Wise men are needed in society because of the universality of sin—<sup>19</sup> *Wisdom strengthens the wise man more than ten rulers that are in a city,* (cf. Proverbs 24:5-6; Ecclesiastes 9:13-16)
    - i) Why? <sup>20</sup> *because there is not a righteous [tsaddiq] man on earth who does good and never sins.* (cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 8:46)
  - b) The prevalence of sinful speech—<sup>21</sup> *Also, do not take to heart everything that people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you,*
    - i) Why? <sup>22</sup> *because your heart knows that you also have cursed others many times.* (cf. 10:20)
- 3) The elusiveness of wisdom and uprightness to fallen man—7:23-29
  - a) Undiscovered wisdom—7:23-24 <sup>23</sup> *I tested all this in wisdom. I said, “I will be wise,” but it was far from me. <sup>24</sup> What exists is remote, and exceedingly deep. Who can discover it?*
  - b) Deliberate pursuit—7:25-29
    - i) The Selfward pursuit—7:25 <sup>25</sup> *I myself turned my heart ① to know and ② to search out and ③ to seek wisdom and an explanation for things, and ④ to know the wickedness of folly, even the foolishness of insanity.*
    - ii) The results—7:26-28
      - (1) Temptation is dangerous—7:26 <sup>26</sup> *And I found more bitter than death the woman (is this Proverbs 9? or Proverbs 2:16-19; 5:1-14; 6:24-29; 7:1-27?) whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are chains. The one who is good before God escapes from her, but the sinner is captured by her.*
      - (2) Things don't always add up for us—7:27-28 <sup>27</sup> *Behold, this is what I found, says the Preacher, by adding one thing to another to find the explanation, <sup>28</sup> which my soul has repeatedly sought but I have not found. I have found one man among a thousand, but I have not found a woman among all these.*
        - (a) What godly woman would willingly place herself in Solomon's godless harem? (cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 11:1-8)
    - iii) We are accountable for our sin—7:29 <sup>29</sup> *Behold, this only have I found, that God made man upright [yashar], but they have sought out many schemes.* (cf. Genesis 6:5)
      - (1) God is not to blame for the lack of man's wisdom. Man abuses his freedom.