

Eternal PERSPECTIVE Ecclesiastes

BIBLE TEXT | ECCLESIASTES 7:1-29

1 A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of birth.

2 It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart.

3 Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of face the heart is made glad.

4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

5 It is better for a man to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools.

6 For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fools; this also is vanity.

7 Surely oppression drives the wise into madness, and a bribe corrupts the heart.

8 Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

9 Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools.

10 Say not, "Why were the former days better than these?" For it is not from wisdom that you ask this.

11 Wisdom is good with an inheritance, an advantage to those who see the sun.

12 For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money, and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of him who has it.

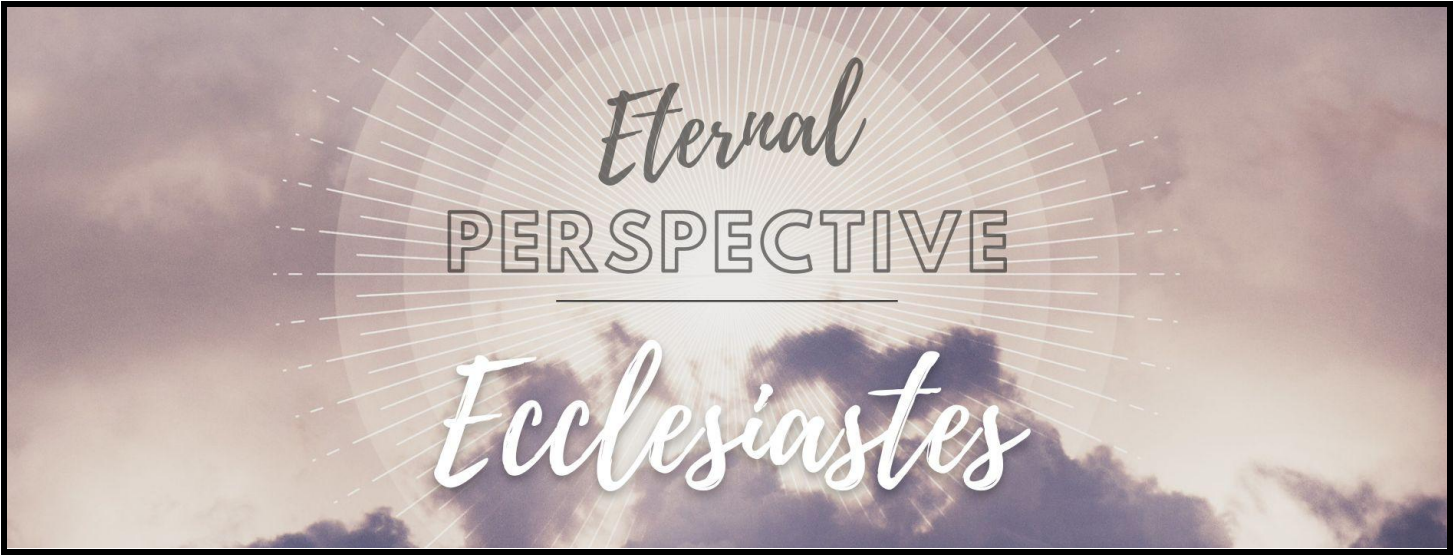
13 Consider the work of God: who can make straight what he has made crooked?

14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him. **15** 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 evil-doing. **16** Be not overly righteous, and do not make yourself too wise. Why should you destroy yourself? **17** Be not overly wicked, neither be a fool. Why should you die before your time? **18** 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.

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

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

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



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

25 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. **26** 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. **27** Behold, this is what I found, says the Preacher, while adding one thing to another to find the scheme of things— **28** 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. **29** See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many scheme

DEVOTIONAL FOR ECCLESIASTES 7:1-29

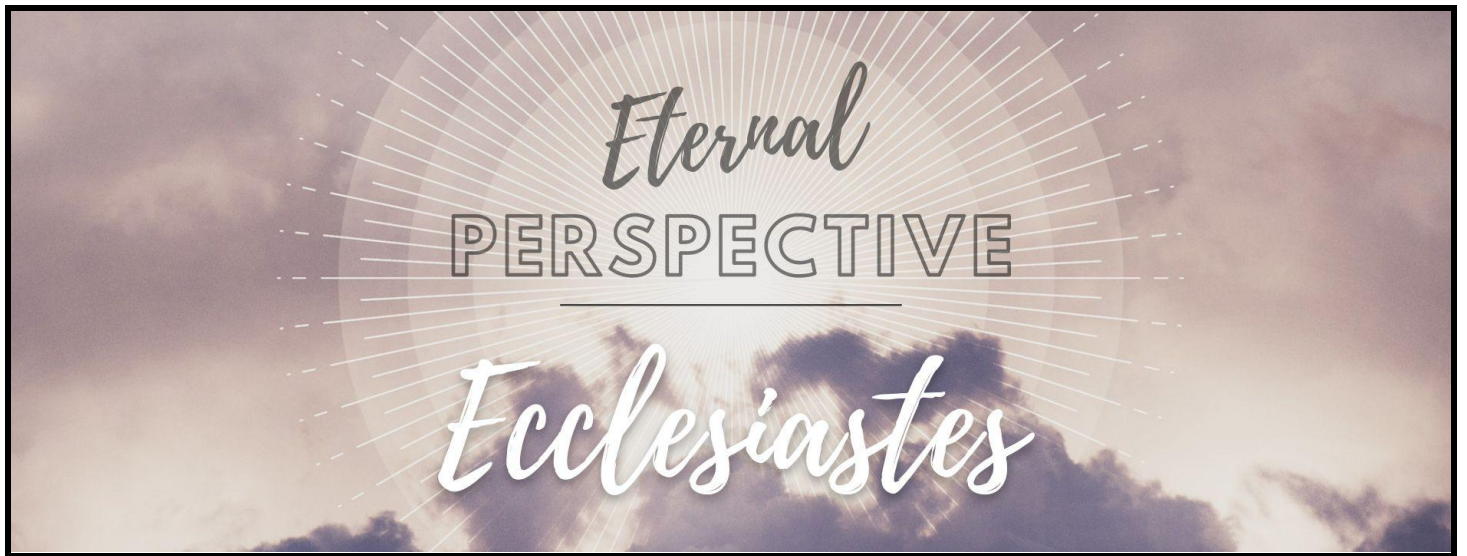
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There are two things in this world that can be considered a constant, until Jesus returns, taxes and death. I have buried over thirty-five people in my life. Each one brings the long and quiet moments of reflection while in mourning. I cannot count the hours that I have pondered over the lives of others after their death. Coming face-to-face with mortality can be a paradigm shifting experience that God can use to move us closer toward Him.

In Ecclesiastes 7, the author is in mourning and begins to reflect on why mourning and grieving are so important. To mourn, or grieve, is one of the immutable characteristics of our Creator. As a part of His ministry on earth Jesus knew he had to exemplify how we are to live life, and he had to reveal to us every part of him, and so he grieved, mourned, and wept. In John 11:32, Jesus wept when he saw the anguish at the loss of Lazarus. In Luke 19: 41-42, Jesus wept with a broken heart because of the blindness to truth of Jerusalem. In Hebrews 5:7, Jesus wept in the Garden of Gethsemane. Our loving and gracious God's heart breaks for us. He experiences the heartache of loss, and because He loves us, He feels every moment of rejection that we inflict upon Him when we choose not to walk in obedience.

In Genesis 6:6 the Bible says, "And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart." God however did not let his grief stop him, hold him back, or cause him to turn away from us. God chose to draw nearer to us by giving us a plan of redemption. I can only imagine the countless number of times that my past sins grieved the Father, but I am so grateful to now have Jesus standing before Him on my behalf.

To understand mourning leads to a greater understanding of God. As the author of Ecclesiastes faced his own feelings of loss, he began to see the wisdom in exploring the truths that come with loss. The end of life on earth for a



believer means so many things, and so we should examine every aspect of our lives, while we still have the chance, to ensure that our life is a true reflection of Jesus.

Questions:

1. How have you grieved the Lord?
2. When faced with loss of any kind do you run toward God or away from Him?
3. Practice writing your obituary. Do you see Jesus in your life?