



Life is Not a Straight Line

Ecclesiastes 7

Lessons in Hard Times (vv1-6)

- A wise person contemplates important matters concerning death, while the foolish person does not (vv1-4)
 - Value and establish a good reputation, as this brings honor at your time of death (v1)
 - Seriously consider important matters in life, as this has far greater benefits than living life frivolously (vv2-4)
- A wise person values the correction of others, while the foolish person is focused on having fun (vv5-6)
 - Listen and learn from the feedback of wise people (v5)
 - Remember that the singing and laughter of fools has no lasting value (v6)

Lessons in Confusing Times (vv7-29)

- A wise person is patient when facing life's challenges and doesn't idolize the past (vv7-10)
 - Don't allow impatience to cause you to be angry, which leads to sinful, quick, and foolish decisions (vv7-9)

Romans 8:28 ²⁸And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

Lessons in Confusing Times (vv7-29)

- A wise person is patient when facing life's challenges and doesn't idolize the past (vv7-10)
 - Don't allow impatience to cause you to be angry, which leads to sinful, quick, and foolish decisions (vv7-9)
 - Don't allow impatience to cause you to idolize the past, which discounts the value of the present (v10)

Galatians 5:22 ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, **patience**, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Lessons in Confusing Times (vv7-29)

- A wise person considers the protection of wisdom and the good and sovereign plans of God (vv11-14)
 - Remember the superior advantages of wisdom and knowledge (vv11-12)
 - Consider that God is sovereign in life's circumstances (v13)
 - Be happy in days of prosperity and trust God during days of adversity (v14)

Lessons in Confusing Times (vv7-29)

- A wise person fears God in this fallen world (vv15-19)
 - Recognize that there are sometimes unexplained outcomes for the righteous and wicked (v15)
 - Avoid the dangers of self-righteousness and wickedness (vv16-17)

Ecclesiastes 7:16–17

¹⁶Do not be excessively righteous
and do not be overly wise.

Why should you ruin yourself?

¹⁷Do not be excessively wicked
and do not be a fool.

Why should you die before your time?

Lessons in Confusing Times (vv7-29)

- A wise person fears God in this fallen world (vv15-19)
 - Recognize that there are sometimes unexplained outcomes for the righteous and wicked (v15)
 - Avoid the dangers of self-righteousness and wickedness (vv16-17)
 - Fear God in order to avoid these dangers (v18)
 - Embrace wisdom which gives surpassing strength (v19)

Lessons in Confusing Times (vv7-29)

- A wise person considers the sinful depravity of man (vv20-29)
 - Remember that there is no righteous person on earth, including yourself (vv20-22)

Matthew 7:12 ¹²“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Lessons in Confusing Times (vv7-29)

- A wise person considers the sinful depravity of man (vv20-29)
 - Remember that there is no righteous person on earth, including yourself (vv20-22)
 - Don't forget that our human limitations can't find all the answers (vv23-24)

Isaiah 55:9⁹“For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Deuteronomy 29:29²⁹“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

Lessons in Confusing Times (vv7-29)

- A wise person considers the sinful depravity of man (vv20-29)
 - Remember that there is no righteous person on earth, including yourself (vv20-22)
 - Don't forget that our human limitations can't find all the answers (vv23-24)
 - Resist the enticing and sinful traps that lead to bitter difficulty (vv25-26)
 - Know that while man makes himself sinful, only God can make him upright (vv27-29)

Questions for Discussion

- Do you think deeply about death and order your life and reputation such that you will be honored in that day and prepared to face the Lord?
- Do you really trust God and believe in His good and sovereign plans during the difficulties and uncertainties of life?
- Do you fear God and understand that He alone is divine and you are not?
- Have you come to recognize your own sinfulness and that only God through Christ can save you and set you upright?