WORDS TO LIVE BY

Coming to Terms with Reality – Part 9

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**Proverbs 1:7 (NIV) – Memory Verse**  
The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

**Ecclesiastes 7:1-14 – Scripture Reading**

We’ve reached the halfway point in Solomon’s journal. By now we have a pretty good handle on the man’s mental perspective as well as his method of pursuit. But something has been conspicuous by its absence — wisdom. This comes as a surprise because Solomon had considerable, God-given wisdom. That’s true except for a strange period in his life when he tossed restraint to the wind and acted out a role altogether unusual for a man of his heritage, his position, and his stature. Had Solomon lived in our generation, perhaps we would explain his escapades as the result of a midlife crisis. Things that were once important and dear to him, he began to view with cynicism, especially the simplicity and purity of a walk of faith. Wisdom took a back seat as rebellion took control.

**WISE COUNSEL**

* **Protect Your Integrity**

**Ecclesiastes 7:1 (NIV)**   
A good name is better than fine perfume,

* **Don’t Ignore The “Dash”**

**Ecclesiastes 7:1-3 (NIV)**   
and the day of death better than the day of birth. It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, because a sad face is good for the heart.

* **Learn From The Past, Don’t Repeat It’s Wrongs**

**Ecclesiastes 7:4-10 (NIV)**   
The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure. It is better to heed a wise man's rebuke than to listen to the song of fools. Like the crackling of thorns under the pot, so is the laughter of fools. This too is meaningless. Extortion turns a wise man into a fool, and a bribe corrupts the heart. The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride. Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools. Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?" For it is not wise to ask such questions.

**WHAT WISDOM DOES**

* **Keeps Us From Making “Dumb” Mistakes**

**Ecclesiastes 7:11-12 (NIV)**   
Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing and benefits those who see the sun. Wisdom is a shelter as money is a shelter, but the advantage of knowledge is this: that wisdom preserves the life of its possessor.

* **Allows Us To See Life From God’s Perspective**

**Ecclesiastes 7:13-14 (NIV)**   
Consider what God has done: Who can straighten what he has made crooked? When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, a man cannot discover anything about his future.

**If wisdom is “seeing life from God’s perspective”:**

Never make a major decision without asking for wisdom from God. (James 1:5)

We cannot see the whole picture without drawing on God’s wisdom. (Genesis 50:20)