

TO LIVE IS CHRIST**What Is Good in Life Ecclesiastes 7:1—8:1**

*“When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider:
God has made the one as well as the other.” Ecclesiastes 7:14a*

Days 1 and 2: Read Ecclesiastes 7:1–4.

1. Throughout the first six chapters, the Teacher has often alluded to the transience, absurdity, frustration, and futility of life. What question posed in Ecclesiastes 6:12a does he now attempt to begin to answer in chapter 7?
2. What is better than fine perfume? (vs. 1) Explain what the Teacher is getting at by this statement.

3. Read Ecclesiastes 7:1b–4. List the things that the Teacher compares:

_____ is better than _____
 _____ is better than _____
 _____ is better than _____

4. How would you characterize the things on the left side of the above list—the “better” things? Are they the things that you typically would prefer to experience?
5. By his unusual preferences, what is the Teacher’s message?

Day 3: Read Ecclesiastes 7:5—8:1.

6. Summarize verses 5–6. How many of your friends are willing to confront you? What is wrong with surrounding yourself with people who say only what you want to hear?
7. What things does the Teacher warn against in verses 7–10, and why are these things dangerous?
 - Verse 7:
 - Verse 8:
 - Verse 9:
 - Verse 10:

8. Let's look at several verses to see what the Teacher has learned about wisdom:
 - a. If anger resides in the lap of fools, what does this say about the wise? (7:9)

 - b. What question does the wise person not ask? (7:10)

 - c. How is wisdom a shelter? (7:11–12)

 - d. How do the wise live? (7:16–18)

 - e. What does wisdom bring? (7:19)

 - f. What effect does wisdom have on an individual? (8:1)

Day 4: Read Ecclesiastes 7:13–26.

9. What does the Teacher say about the limits of human wisdom? To what end does a search for wisdom lead?

10. Compare the tone of verses 13–14 and 15–18. What impression does this comparison give you about the reliability of the Teacher as a source of true wisdom?

11. Going beyond Ecclesiastes 7, what is the source of true wisdom? (See Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; 9:10.)

12. Think of an example from your own life where you have seen the fear of God directly connected to wisdom.

Day 5: Read Ecclesiastes 7:27–29.

13. With what startling, bitter verdict does the Teacher wind up this chapter? What might you guess has been the quality of the Teacher's relationships with women?

14. What is the Teacher's conclusion about human nature in verse 29? His thoughts in this chapter have been sometimes inconsistent, but here he gets it right. Skim Genesis 1–3. What has he gotten right here at the end of the chapter?