

Date: 11-21-2021

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 8

Please read the chapter. You will be best served by reading it in several different translations (English Standard Version, New International Version, New Living Translation, Amplified Bible, Message, or other).

Wisdom:

1) Please read the following: 1 Kings 3:6–9 (ESV)

⁶And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. ⁷And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. ⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?"

a. What did Solomon request?¹

¹ **Translations - 1 Kings 3:9**

1. ***Understanding Heart:*** Darby, YLT, 1901 ASV, AV, AV 1873, KJV 1900, WSKJV, NKJV, D-R, NAB, NAS, NIV, NIrV, TNIV, NLT, NCV,
2. ***A Heart that listens:*** GW, Message, The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament Translated into English,
3. ***Obedient Heart:*** HCSB
4. ***Wisdom:*** GNB
5. ***Discerning Mind:*** RSV, NRSV, ESV, NET



- b. What does Solomon's request reveal to us about wisdom?
- c. Where does wisdom begin?
- d. What does it look like?
- e. How should we gain wisdom when approaching a situation?

Wisdom: Ecclesiastes 8:1-9

- 2) What is wisdom?
- 3) Ecclesiastes 8:6 says that there is a time and a way for everything.² How does wisdom relate to one's context? Does wisdom change depending upon the circumstance, or does wisdom dictate different action depending upon circumstance? Is wisdom context-dependent?
- 4) What cues do you look for to guide your approach to a sticky situation or difficult conversation?
- 5) What is an example of a time when you blew it?
- 6) What would you advise someone walking into the same situation to do that you wish you would have done?

² Ecclesiastes 8:5-6 (ESV) ⁵... the wise heart will know the proper **time** and the just **way**. ⁶ For there is **a time** and a **way** for everything, although man's trouble lies heavy on him.



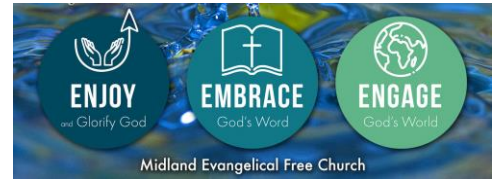
God will make it right: Ecclesiastes 8:10-13

[T]he problem of evil in the world [is] a problem that no thinking person can honestly avoid. **It is not *unbelief* that creates this problem, but *faith*.** If there is no God, then we have nobody to blame but ourselves (or fate) for what happens in the world. But if we believe in a good and loving God, we must face the difficult question of why there is so much suffering in the world. Does God know about it and yet not care? Or does He know and care but lack the power to do anything about it?¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Satisfied*, "Be" Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 95.

- 7) Why do bad things happen? How does the second half of verse eleven help us understand the explanation for evil?
- 8) Ecclesiastes acknowledges that bad things do happen. Ecclesiastes also acknowledges that often a perpetrator gets away with evil. Yet, even though the wicked seem to prosper, what does faith assure (vs 12-13)?
- 9) Why can we trust God?
- 10) Why can we trust God to make things right?
- 11) What evidence does Easter give that things will be made right?



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“Enjoy the Adventure.” Ecclesiastes 8:14-17

- 12) Think about a theme park. What types of rides will they have? How do they engineer or factor in uncertainty into the ride? How does that enhance the experience?
- 13) Think about life. What is the theme? How does uncertainty factor in? How does that enhance the ride? And how does that help get us where God wants us to go?
- 14) Verse 17 emphasizes the mystery of life by emphasizing “cannot find out” three times. What are some of the things we cannot find out in this life?
- 15) What are some specifics about your life that you have come to believe will never be understood this side of heaven?
- 16) Who engineered that? Who wrote the script?
- 17) Since a Sovereign greater than ourselves engineered our ride and wrote the script, the author encourages us to merely buckle up and enjoy the ride. Verse 15 says, “I commend joy.” How does faith in God lead to joy in life?
- 18) How does Thanksgiving (giving thanks) help us to accept our portion and enjoy the ride?