



## [Ecclesiastes 7:8-10](#)

(8) The end of a thing *is* better than its beginning;  
The patient in spirit *is* better than the proud in spirit.

(9) Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry,  
For anger rests in the bosom of fools.

(10) Do not say,  
"Why were the former days better than these?"  
For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.

*New King James Version*

Each comparison shows wisdom's significance to a successful life. The best way to perceive the counsel in Ecclesiastes is to recognize that it is written to God's converted children, not to [the world](#). Solomon's thoughts, then, tie directly into instructions and commands in other parts of God's Word. Much of this is counsel to endure the trials of life patiently and meekly because [God](#) is directly involved in them right alongside us. Hence, over the long haul, our trials will have a positive result. Consequently, we are urged not to fall into the trap of unreasoning haste to "just get rid of the problem," as it were. Knowing that Ecclesiastes is aimed at God's converted children, we grasp that the willfulness involved in haste is really nothing more than an expression of carnal pride.

Verse 8 bears explaining more thoroughly because it relates to a pertinent fact about these comparisons. They are not to be understood as absolutes but are useful helps according to the circumstances of life's trials. Each trial may present different nuances that we must think through. Though verse 8 seems to say otherwise, we know that the end of everything is most definitely, absolutely not always better than its beginning.

A clear example is sin. Sin almost invariably begins pleasantly, even pleurably. As with Eve, the fruit undoubtedly tasted good to her, but God kicked her and Adam out of the Garden, and they died. Judas, too, was undoubtedly pleased with his work on the night of Jesus' arrest, but then he hanged himself. These examples are so clear: Sin

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never, never, never ends well.

Circumstances and projects can end well only when they begin with a good purpose right from the start. Even so, they may *not* end well. In [Luke 11:24-26](#), Jesus provides an example of a good project ending badly:

When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, "I will return to my house from which I came," and when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

[II Peter 2:20-22](#) vividly illustrates how sin entering a project destroys its end being better than the beginning:

For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior [Jesus Christ](#), they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

Thus, we can see that even good projects must continue in the right way for the end to be better than its beginning, showing that these comparisons are not intended to be absolutes.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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