



[Ecclesiastes 7:18](#)

(18) *It is good that you grasp this,
And also not remove your hand from the other;
For he who fears God will escape them all.*

New King James Version

Perhaps the most important counsel regarding the paradox of [Ecclesiastes 7:15-22](#) appears in verse 18: "He who fears [God](#) will escape them all." He means that the God-fearer will escape all the paradox's pitfalls. Notice he says escape, which means we will face them, not miss them entirely.

Why is the fear of God the solution for the godly? David explains in [Psalm 34:11](#) that the fear of God is a resource the godly must have, but they must learn it. We do not have it by nature. Why? Consider first that the carnal mind is enmity against God. Yet, to fear God is to have a deferential, reverential respect for Him. Those qualities are direct opposites. An individual does not even begin to grasp God's character until he is called and experiences a close, intimate relationship with Him, coming to know somewhat of God's power, purpose, and character as a result.

That knowledge is why the deference and respect are part of his thinking. The fear of God thus includes some measure of experience with Him and therefore trust of Him. When we trust Him, we know He is involved. He never tries us beyond our abilities, and He is ever-faithful. With that package, we are equipped to face our trials with humility, letting Him carry on with His creative purposes without our getting in the way by doing our own thing, as the super-righteous would surely attempt. This combination opens the door to true wisdom.

The apostle Paul's example shows, certainly in his revelation of his own fight with his sinful nature ([Romans 7:13-25](#)), we will come through the trial knowing that God has delivered us by His grace. There will be absolutely no room for boasting before Him,

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which, if done, could very well seal our doom by keeping us from His Kingdom. Regardless of what others are doing in their situations, those with the fear of God will strive by [faith](#) to face life's trials humbly and patiently. This principle will guide and guard us from the temptations that the evil fall into so easily.

The wisdom for us lies in having faith that [Christ](#) is our righteousness, our wisdom, our sanctification, and our redemption ([I Corinthians 1:30](#)). Christ in us is our hope of glory ([Colossians 1:27](#)). Salvation is by grace through faith ([Ephesians 2:8](#)). Therefore, we do not need to put ourselves under the frustrating pressure of super-righteousness, to manufacture our own righteousness and wisdom that will never measure up anyway.

True wisdom is that we must patiently discipline ourselves not to allow ourselves to be persuaded or even goaded by the misdirection that the unconverted can fall into because Christ has revealed more important matters for us to attend to. He encourages us to have a “single” eye ([Matthew 6:22](#), KJV), that is, to be single-minded in following our Savior. We must let God do His creative works at His pace and not try to outdo Him by our own misguided efforts. We are preparing for an eternity of cooperating with Him. So let Him do His perfect work.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Ecclesiastes and Christian Living \(Part Twelve\): Paradox, Conclusion](#)

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