



Daily Verse and Comment

Ecclesiastes 7:23-29

(23) All this I have proved by wisdom.
I said, "I will be wise";
But it *was* far from me.
(24) As for that which is far off and exceedingly deep,
Who can find it out?
(25) I applied my heart to know,
To search and seek out wisdom and the reason *of things*,
To know the wickedness of folly,
Even of foolishness *and* madness.
(26) And I find more bitter than death
The woman whose heart *is* snares and nets,
Whose hands *are* fetters.
He who pleases God shall escape from her,
But the sinner shall be trapped by her.
(27) "Here is what I have found," says the Preacher,
"*Adding* one thing to the other to find out the reason,
(28) Which my soul still seeks but I cannot find:
One man among a thousand I have found,
But a woman among all these I have not found.
(29) Truly, this only I have found:
That God made man upright,
But they have sought out many schemes."

New King James Version

[God](#) is allowing us some insight into Solomon's heart and life. He gifted Solomon with a proclivity for understanding and [wisdom](#), but this passage reveals that achieving them did not come easy.

The true God gifts us to enable us to fill our place in the Body of [Christ \(I Corinthians 12:1-11\)](#), but this does not mean He gives the gifts in full-blown perfection so we can fulfill that role without effort ([Matthew 25:14-30](#)). His gifts must be developed, fine-tuned, and polished until they are truly fit to be used—even then they are still less-than-perfect in actual practice.

Solomon is confessing a truth that we, too, discover as we continue our conversion. Finding wisdom is difficult and not as satisfying as we might think. These verses are a confession by the author that, despite all the great intellectual gifts given him, in the end what he did not know far exceeded what he actually knew.

This section is a reminder of Solomon's purpose, as stated in [Ecclesiastes 1:12-13](#): “I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; this grievous task God has given to the sons of man, by which they may be exercised.” He was indeed gifted, but God in no way drilled a hole in the top of his head, stuck a funnel in the hole, and poured wisdom in, requiring no effort on Solomon's part. He had to participate in the search to reach his goal. It became a lifelong pursuit.

This pursuit took earnest effort. His goal was set; his was no superficial overview. With earnest, exhaustive thoroughness, he applied himself to discover what lay behind the conduct he observed. He wanted to know the reason of things, as verse 25 shows. Why did he search so thoroughly? “Wisdom strengthens the wise more than ten rulers of the city” (verse 19). He was looking for spiritual strength through understanding. The fruit of that search would be wisdom to equip him to make better choices.

Wisdom, spiritual sagacity, can be an extremely valuable resource. *Sagacity* indicates “discernment,” that one is “keen,” “perceptive,” and “sound in judgment,” insuring that one's choices produce good fruit. Through verse 19, the Bible is showing us that wisdom can govern thought, the will, and one's actions to produce good results. This is not to say that he found them all, but that is what he was determinedly seeking.

The deep insights he found revealed the order and harmony supporting the things he witnessed from the outside. However, we should understand that

seeking wisdom exacts a price. It is interesting how the Bible compares the costs of achievement: by the value of what a person might buy on the market. It declares that one pays more for wisdom than for goods that people expect will fetch a high price on the open market. Wisdom's costs are largely in terms of time, attention, and discipline to achieve (see [Proverbs 3:13-15](#); [8:11](#); [16:16](#)).

Solomon looked at problems from all sides, and even analyzed the opposite of the way he first saw things. He uses terms like “wickedness,” “folly,” and “madness,” showing that he was looking deeply at human behavior. He examined these things so closely that he believed that at least emotionally, he experienced a small measure of the characteristics—even the bad ones—he was searching into.

What did Solomon learn from this? [Ecclesiastes 7:23-24](#) reveals it was humbling: “All this I have proved by wisdom. I said, 'I will be wise.' But it was far from me. As for that which is far off and exceedingly deep, who can find it out?” It was far more difficult than he imagined when he began. If we measure our gifting against his, what kind of wise plan could we produce that would impress God to remove the burden of a trial? As we can see, searching for wisdom is a necessity but difficult. The answers are rarely right on the surface.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Ecclesiastes 7:23-29
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