



## [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*

This entire section examines wise judgment, whether the source of our problems is [God](#), fellow man, or ourselves. We must ask ourselves if we are truly making an effort to pursue [holiness](#), without which, Paul says in [Hebrews 12:14](#), "no one will see the Lord." Is that where our problem lies? Are we really making an effort worthy of the treasure we have been freely

given? Do we have something to [repent](#) of regarding the time and energy we expend? Our conclusion will parallel his conclusion to some degree: It is no wonder that salvation must be by grace!

[Ecclesiastes 3:11](#) balances this: “He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.” We will never have complete answers because God in heaven is also working things out in our lives, and His purposes take precedence over our weak efforts and conclusions. Much is beyond our control.

Two major truths are revealed from Solomon's confession: First, a truly wise person will be humbled realizing that he does not know everything, and this lack of knowledge will affect his choices and conduct because he knows he is terribly ignorant. Second, the humbling will move him to be cautious in his judgments so that he does not condemn God, others, or even himself. Recognizing these truths tends to balance our thinking because we know that what we have now is marvelous—but crumbs compared to what is coming. Thus, we can see that a study of the path Solomon took, though difficult, can be beneficially humbling.

The children of God must be constant learners. Why? We are not merely looking for salvation but also preparing for the [Kingdom of God](#) and for service to Him and mankind in that Kingdom. However, we must submit to the fact that the knowledge of God is like a distant star, a destination so far off that we will never reach it in dozens of lifetimes. This reality points to why we need everlasting life. We must humbly accept this truth now, knowing we will never reach it, but keep earnestly working toward it to be as prepared as possible.

[I Corinthians 4:1-8](#) presents a hurdle we must deal with regarding the accumulation of knowledge or position:

Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified

by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you have not received it? You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us—and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!

A pitfall exists even in the earnest search for [wisdom](#) and truth: Human nature sometimes follows the path of flaunting it. We must strongly resist this. The wise person knows this is true and resists self-glorification, making him wiser.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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