



[Ecclesiastes 7:25-27](#)

(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,

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Solomon makes clear that wisdom is found, not on the surface of events, but only by those willing to work, to dig, to study, and to analyze to uncover it. Truth and error are most often mixed together in the same problem, so they must be disentangled from each other. We are discovering in the current liberal bent of our nation that some forms of human evil are so bold and irrational that they almost defy description. By way of contrast, Satan was so subtle in deceiving Eve that he slid the lies right in front of her, and she, in her naïveté, missed seeing the trap altogether.

We cannot expect, then, to have wisdom and safety always clearly spelled out for us. Some evil does not collect its due until a long time has passed. For example, Adam and Eve did not die for many years. Solomon's phrasing at the end of verse 25 suggests that he is searching for the most vivid examples of the most painful aspects of evil that he can find.

Wisdom has two major elements. The Bible emphasizes practical wisdom, which, in actual usage, is skill in living. In [the world](#), though, the emphasis is on sagacity, which is

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more intellectually slanted, but also has practicality in being helpful in giving or receiving counsel. Both of these elements are good, especially when enhanced with God's truths.

In this section, Solomon is weaving the two elements together, which is why he uses such strong terminology. He uses “folly,” “foolishness,” and “madness”—significant terms—as descriptors. He wants to grasp the full gamut of wisdom; he digs deeply. In one sense, this is a warning: Do not be fooled by initial feelings. Everything that is not truly wisdom never satisfies for long, but it inevitably becomes more difficult to bear and overcome. The folly and madness of sin, which is never wisdom, always eventually appears. Its fruit cannot be hidden.

We can deliberately hide from its folly, but it is there. A lack of wisdom is always destructive. The Hebrew terminology in verse 27 indicates that he carefully made this search and that he apparently wrote Ecclesiastes late in life.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

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