



## Daily Verse and Comment

### [Ecclesiastes 7:1-4](#)

(1) A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth. (2) It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. (3) Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. (4) The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

*King James Version*

The first concept Solomon mentions in this chapter is the importance of one's reputation, that is, having a good name ([Ecclesiastes 7:1](#)). His concern is weighted, not so much toward a person's reputation before other people, but toward his reputation before [God](#). He does this because people often do not know how to judge the true value of character traits. A good reputation is built on [faithfulness](#) to God and His way of life.

[Proverbs 22:1](#) confirms the value of a good reputation: "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold." God's desire for faithfulness in us is seen in His many reminders to us to keep His commandments. A good continuing relationship with Him is established on trust, dependability, and responsibility in His children, who speak wisely and keep their word.

The second point Solomon touches on is that a person must prepare for his death ([Ecclesiastes 7:1](#)). That we will die is a reality. Especially during youth, we easily overlook the reality of approaching death as we focus on the present. More importantly, Ecclesiastes is written primarily for the benefit of the converted, which means we get only one chance to make the most of our calling. Thus, when we die, there is no changing our reputations from the reality of how they turned out to what they might have been. [Proverbs 10:2](#)

tells us bluntly, “Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but righteousness delivers from death.”

The third element Solomon broaches is that we learn more from difficult times than from the times we would consider “good” ([Ecclesiastes 7:2](#)). We may not enjoy days of difficulty, but if we are seriously considering the consequences of our choices, we find that the difficult times force us to consider our ways and make corrections. “Fun,” on the other hand, influences us to remain as we are.

Solomon is not saying we should go out of our way searching for difficulty, but that difficulty is a part of every life, and we must face it if we are to be more fully developed. [Proverbs 21:25](#) reminds us, “The desire of the lazy man kills him, for his hands refuse to labor.” If an individual does not work, he does not produce, and his life is without value.

His fourth point reinforces the third by modifying the illustration ( [Ecclesiastes 7:3-4](#)). He reminds us that the wise person's heart disciplines him to make profitable use of difficult times, while those in the house of fools consistently look for fun, fun, fun. The lesson: Life does not reward a person of no achievement, and achievement requires effort. The apostle Paul sharply charges us by his example in [I Corinthians 9:26-27](#): “Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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