



[Ecclesiastes 7:26-29](#)

(26) I find more bitter than death
the woman who is a snare,
whose heart is a trap
and whose hands are chains.
The man who pleases God will escape her,
but the sinner she will ensnare. (27) "Look," says the Teacher, "this is what I have
discovered:
"Adding one thing to another to discover the scheme of things- (28) while I was still
searching
but not finding—
I found one upright man among a thousand,
but not one upright woman among them all. (29) This only have I found:
God made mankind upright,
but men have gone in search of many schemes."
New International Version

Solomon's conclusions are certainly not inspiring. He finds [the world](#) to be full of alluring but discouraging wickedness. Only one man in a thousand, he deems, actually lives what he considered to be a righteous life.

His findings on women reflect experiences of extreme disappointment. Blaming no woman in particular, he seems to cast all women with whom he had had personal experience as no more than snares to entrap him into some form of slavery. He must have felt that, because he was not pleasing to [God](#), God did not make a way for him to escape women of that nature. His experiences led him to assert that he could not find even one woman in a thousand who lived a righteous life!

He probably did not feel that way about all women, because in other places, such as in the Song of Songs and Proverbs 31, he speaks highly of them, and in Proverbs 4, 7, 8, and 9, he uses a woman to represent wisdom. It cannot be said, then, that he looked on

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woman as an evil creation, yet his personal experiences definitely color his comments here.

We can perhaps clarify this conclusion by restating it: He found that righteousness is rare indeed regardless of gender. Few people are living before God as they should.

Following these declarations, verse 29 provides an intriguing concluding statement about this search, and it triggers questions.

He calls what he is looking for “wisdom,” and it truly is wisdom because, within the context of his search, the answers would provide a clearer basis for making good choices in life. But considering what we have covered—beginning even with his statement in chapter 1:2, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity”—what he seems to be looking for are answers to why God has created all this and why life is so difficult and puzzling. He seems to be expressing the thought that, if he knew the answers to these questions, it would help his search a great deal.

It cannot be known how much Solomon searched the Bible for an overall answer, but the writings of Moses were available to him. Certainly, his father David knew a great deal, and being the godly man he was, it is impossible to imagine that he did not instruct his son from what Moses was inspired to write.

[Deuteronomy 29:29](#), available to Solomon, is recorded for our understanding: “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” The Bible indeed reveals a great deal, but apparently, Solomon did not understand that God chooses to reveal some matters personally and individually in the same way He has called us. God has clearly revealed much more to the elect, but the eyes of the uncalled are still blinded ([Romans 11:7-8](#)). Solomon understood a great deal but not every aspect of it.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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