

# Just a Breath | Wisdom of Death

## Ecclesiastes 7:1-29

Shane Freeman

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### I. The hard truth of Ecclesiastes is that life is hard.

(Ecclesiastes 7:13-18)

*In my vain life I have seen everything. There is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evildoing.*

—Ecclesiastes 7:15

#### a. Life is hard for everyone. (7:15-18)

*In my vain life I have seen everything. There is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evildoing.*

—Ecclesiastes 7:15

*Be not overly righteous, and do not make yourself too wise. Why should you destroy yourself?*

—Ecclesiastes 7:16

*Be not overly wicked, neither be a fool. Why should you die before your time? 18 It is good that you should take hold of this, and from that withhold not your hand, for the one who fears God shall come out from both of them.*

—Ecclesiastes 7:17-18

*Wisdom gives strength to the wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city. 20 Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.*

—Ecclesiastes 7:19-20

*He who pleases God escapes her, but the sinner is taken by her.*

—Ecclesiastes 7:26b

*One man among a thousand I found, but a woman among all these I have not found.*

—Ecclesiastes 7:28b

*Consider the work of God: who can make straight what he has made crooked? 14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.*

—Ecclesiastes 7:13-14

b. Recognize life's moments and respond accordingly. (7:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:8-9; James 1:2-3)

*For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.*

—2 Corinthians 1:8-9

*Count it all joy, my brothers,[a] when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

—James 1:2-4

**II. Accepting the brevity of life and the reality of death.**  
(Ecclesiastes 7:1-12)

*It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart.*

—Ecclesiastes 7:2

a. Death is a great teacher. (7:1-4)

b. Life is short. (7:2-3)

*You do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.*

—James 4:14

*O Lord, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting I am!*

—Psalm 39:4

*Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of face the heart is made glad. 4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.*

—Ecclesiastes 7:3-4

*A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of birth.*

—Ecclesiastes 7:1

c. Character is most important. (7:1)

*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

—Phillippians 1:21

d. Death helps put life into perspective. (7:5-12)

*For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money, and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of him who has it.*

—Ecclesiastes 7:12

*See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes.*

—Ecclesiastes 7:29

## **Study Questions**

1. When was the last time you attended a funeral? What do you

remember about the message at the funeral? Also, describe what you were feeling as you sat there and reflected on the life of the person who had died. If applicable, explain how this funeral caused you to reflect on your own life.

2. Reflect on Ecclesiastes 7:13-14. In your own words, describe how accepting God's sovereignty over life can help us appreciate whatever life might bring. Think of a time when you were able to thank God for adversity. What made such gratitude possible? Explain.

3. Identify as many verses as possible on the brevity of life. After reading each verse, talk about how these verses might compel you to live differently. Be specific. Read again Ecclesiastes 7:1-3. What is one primary takeaway you have from what Solomon says here? Explain. How might you begin to live differently today in light of this truth.