

# LIFE UNDER THE SUN



STUDIES IN ECCLESIASTES

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הביל

“Beware of self-righteousness. The black devil of licentiousness destroys his hundreds, but the white devil of self-righteousness destroys his thousands.”

— Charles H. Spurgeon

## Ecclesiastes Part II - “*Biblical Self-Awareness*”

**Introduction:** How well do you know yourself?

God has graciously given to us the means by which we can gain a proper sense of self-awareness:

I. \_\_\_\_\_ →

2. \_\_\_\_\_ →

### Qohelet’s Observations Regarding the Human Condition—Ecclesiastes 7:15-29

**Key Verse:** Ecccl. 7:15a—In my vain life I have seen everything.

- In 7:1-14 he has spoken about the condition of the world and how it is better to live wisely during the days of our lives than it is to persist in folly. He turns now to speak about the human condition based on his own observations and experiences.

**Key Point:** These observations reflect his interactions with \_\_\_\_\_ as well his own personal \_\_\_\_\_.

### The Dangers of Self-Righteousness & Folly—Ecclesiastes 7:15-18

I. **How our lives unfold is not solely dependent upon the choices we make.**

Ecccl. 7:15b—There is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evildoing.

⇒ While there are general \_\_\_\_\_ that lead to general \_\_\_\_\_ in life, there are ultimately no guarantees because we live in a fallen world.

2. **There is a natural human tendency towards either self-righteousness or foolishness.**

Ecccl. 7:16—Be not overly righteous, and do not make yourself too wise. Why should you destroy yourself?

Ecccl. 7:17—Be not overly wicked, neither be a fool. Why should you die before your time?

⇒ What both these extremes have in common is a focus on \_\_\_\_\_.

3. **The fear of the Lord guards mankind from these two extremes.**

Ecccl. 7:18—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.

⇒ The fear of the Lord involves recognizing who He truly is and thereby understanding who we are in \_\_\_\_\_ to Him.

**Observation:** The Teacher once again shows us that the worship of God serves to \_\_\_\_\_ us from ourselves.

### The Benefits of Wisdom but the Reality of Our Unrighteousness—Ecclesiastes 7:20-22

I. **There is great gain found in wisdom.**

Ecccl. 7:19—Wisdom gives strength to the wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city.

## 2. Wisdom does not, however, come naturally to us because we are not by nature righteous.

Eccl. 7:20—Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.

Eccl. 7:21-22—<sup>21</sup> Do not take to heart all the things that people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you. <sup>22</sup> Your heart knows that many times you yourself have cursed others.

**Observation:** There is wisdom in learning to recognize our own \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ of others.

### The Teacher's Personal Reflections—Ecclesiastes 7:23-29

Eccl. 7:23-29—<sup>23</sup> All this I have tested by wisdom. I said, “I will be wise,” but it was far from me. <sup>24</sup> That which has been is far off, and deep, very deep; who can find it out? <sup>25</sup> I turned my heart to know and to search out and to seek wisdom and the scheme of things, and to know the wickedness of folly and the foolishness that is madness. <sup>26</sup> And I find something more bitter than death: the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and whose hands are fetters. He who pleases God escapes her, but the sinner is taken by her. <sup>27</sup> Behold, this is what I found, says the Preacher, while adding one thing to another to find the scheme of things—<sup>28</sup> which my soul has sought repeatedly, but I have not found. One man among a thousand I found, but a woman among all these I have not found. <sup>29</sup> See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes.

#### 1. All people are by nature \_\_\_\_\_ (7:23, 29)

“*the scheme of things*”—הַשְּׂבוּן (*heshb·bōn*)—An account, a reason, an explanation. An understanding of why things are the way they are and how things work.

“*schemes*”—הַשְּׂבוּן (*heshb·shā·vōn*)—Literally a machine built for war, such as a ballista, used in ancient combat. Figuratively, a contrivance, machination; a scheme or device.

⇒ We want to understand how the world works so that we can \_\_\_\_\_ both circumstances and people for our own benefit.

**Prime Example:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. A scheming \_\_\_\_\_ is particularly dangerous and is to be avoided (7:26)

⇒ His warning here echoes what he says about the ‘forbidden’ woman (adulteress) in Prov. 5-7.

Prov. 7:4-5—<sup>4</sup> Say to wisdom, “You are my sister,” and call insight your intimate friend, <sup>5</sup> to keep you from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words.

#### 3. There are very few examples among mankind of people who are characterized more by \_\_\_\_\_ than by scheming (7:27-28)

⇒ We must recall that his observations are based on his own experience as king.

⇒ We must recall that his observations are based on his interactions with those with whom he chose to surround himself with.

#### 4. We have no one to blame for our condition but \_\_\_\_\_ (7:29)

“*upright*”—יָשָׁר (*yashar*)—Literally straight or smooth; upright, correct, right.

⇒ God placed a curse on creation because of mankind’s sin, but he never cursed mankind in general (Gen. 3:17). We are sinners (schemers) by both nature and choice.

### The Obedience & Righteousness of Jesus

1. Jesus demonstrated wisdom and righteousness by being obedient to the will of the Father (John 6:38)

2. Jesus did not seek to manipulate circumstances (Luke 4:1-12) or people (John 18:33-40) for His own gain.

3. Jesus’ work on our behalf secures a righteous standing before God for we who are unrighteous.

Rom. 3:21-25a—<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— <sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.