

Wisdom and Folly Contrasted

7:1

A^aGOOD name is better than a good ointment,
And the^b day of *one's* death is better than the day of one's birth.
2 It is better to go to a house of mourning
Than to go to a house of feasting,
Because¹ that is the^a end of every man,
And the living² *it* to³ heart.
3^a Sorrow is better than laughter,
For^b when a face is sad a heart may be happy.
4 The¹ mind of the wise is in the house of mourning,
While the¹ mind of fools is in the house of pleasure.
5 It is better to^a listen to the rebuke of a wise man
Than for one to listen to the song of fools.
6 For as the¹ crackling of^a thorn bushes under a pot,
So is the^b laughter of the fool,
And this too is futility.
7 For^a oppression makes a wise man mad,
And a^b bribe¹ corrupts the heart.

8 The^a end of a matter is better than its beginning;
^bPatience of spirit is better than haughtiness of spirit.
9 Do not be¹ *eager* in your heart to be angry,
For anger resides in the bosom of fools.
10 Do not say, "Why is it that the former days were better than these?"
For it is not from wisdom that you ask about this. Wisdom along with an
inheritance is good
11 And an^a advantage to those who see the sun.
12 For^a wisdom is¹ protection *just as* money is¹ protection.
But the advantage of knowledge is that^b wisdom preserves the lives of its
possessors.
13 Consider the^a work of God,
For who is^b able to straighten what He has bent?
14^a In the day of prosperity be happy,
But^b in the day of adversity consider—
God has made the one as well as the other
So that man may^c not discover anything *that will be* after him.

15 I have seen everything during my¹ *lifetime* of futility; there is^b a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is^c a wicked man who prolongs *his life* in his wickedness. 16 Do not be excessively^a righteous, and do not^b be overly wise. Why should you ruin yourself? 17 Do not be excessively wicked, and do not be a fool. Why should you^a die before your time? 18 It is good that you grasp one thing, and also not¹ let go of the other; for the one who^a fears God comes forth with² both of them.

19^a Wisdom strengthens a wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city. 20 Indeed,
^athere is not a righteous man on earth who *continually* does good and who never sins. 21

Also, do not ¹take seriously all words which are spoken, lest you hear your servant ^acursing you. 22 For ¹you also have realized that you likewise have many times cursed others.

23 I tested all this with wisdom, *and* I said, “I will be wise,” ^abut it was far from me. 24 What has been is remote and ^aexceedingly ¹mysterious. ^bWho can discover it? 25 I ¹^adirected my ²mind to know, to investigate, and to seek wisdom and an explanation, and to know the evil of folly and the foolishness of madness. 26 And I discovered more ^abitter than death the woman whose heart is ^bsnare and nets, whose hands are chains. ^cOne who is pleasing to God will escape from her, but ^dthe sinner will be captured by her.

27 “Behold, I have discovered this,” says the Preacher, “*adding* one thing to another to find an explanation, 28 which ¹I am still seeking but have not found. I have found one man among a thousand, but I have not found a ^awoman among all these. 29 “Behold, I have found only this, that ^aGod made men upright, but they have sought out many devices.”

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^a Prov. 22:1

^b Eccl. 4:2; 7:8

¹ I.e., death

^a Eccl. 2:14, 16; 3:19, 20; 6:6; 9:2, 3

² Lit., *gives*

^b Ps. 90:12

³ Lit., *his heart*

^a Eccl. 2:2

^b 2 Cor. 7:10

¹ Lit., *heart*

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^a Ps. 141:5; Prov. 6:23; 13:18; 15:31, 32; 25:12; Eccl. 9:17

¹ Lit., *voice*

^a Ps. 58:9; 118:12

^b Eccl. 2:2

^a Eccl. 4:1; 5:8

^b Ex. 23:8; Deut. 16:19; Prov. 17:8, 23

¹ Lit., *destroys*

^a Eccl. 7:1

^b Prov. 14:29; 16:32; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:2

¹ Lit., *hasty in your spirit*

^a Prov. 14:17; James 1:19

^a Prov. 8:10, 11; Eccl. 2:13

^a Eccl. 7:19; 9:18

¹ Lit., *in a shadow*

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^b Prov. 3:18; 8:35

^a Eccl. 3:11; 8:17

^b Eccl. 1:15

^a Deut. 26:11; Eccl. 3:22; 9:7; 11:9

^b Deut. 8:5; Job 2:10

^c Eccl. 3:22

¹ Lit., *days*

^a Eccl. 6:12; 9:9

^b Eccl. 8:14

^c Eccl. 8:12, 13

^a Prov. 25:16; Phil. 3:6

^b Rom. 12:3

^a Job 22:16; Ps. 55:23; Prov. 10:27

¹ Lit., *rest your hand*

^a Eccl. 3:14; 5:7; 8:12, 13; 12:13

² Lit., *all*

^a Eccl. 7:12; 9:13-18

^a 1 Kin. 8:46; 2 Chr. 6:36; Ps. 143:2; Prov. 20:9; Rom. 3:23

¹ Lit., *give your heart to*

^a Prov. 30:10

¹ Lit., *your heart knows also*

^a Eccl. 3:11; 8:17

^a Rom. 11:33

¹ Lit., *deep*

^b Job 11:7; 37:23; Eccl. 8:17

¹ Lit., *turned about*

^a Eccl. 1:15, 17; 10:13

² Lit., *heart*

^a Prov. 5:4

^b Prov. 7:23

^c Prov. 6:23, 24

^d Prov. 22:14

¹ Lit., *my soul still seeks*

^a 1 Kin. 11:3

^a Gen. 1:27

ⁱ*The New American Standard Bible*, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977.