

## Ecclesiastes 8:1-9 "Honor man because you love God"

In verse 20 of chapter 7 Solomon reminds us of the doctrine of sin. Specifically that we all are sinners. 20... For *there is* not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.

**Solomon's observation is correct. Paul picks up this same theme in Romans when he says there is none righteous, no not one (Romans 3:10).**

**WE all were born in the same sinking boat... All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory... the wages of sin are death! "Great sinners" in need of "great forgiveness" which was provided for by our "GREAT SAVIOR".**

He also reminds us of how ugly our **Unruly mucus membrane** known as the tongue can be. Solomon says, "Just as you have talked about others, you can be sure others are talking about you"—not a comforting thought, but true.

If we are wise, we will make sure that our own words pass a few simple tests before we dare to speak. Would I say this if that person could hear me say it. Am I saying this for the glory of God and for the love of my brother or sister, or am I only saying it to vent my own frustration? **Is it true? Is it harmless? Is it necessary? Am I part of the problem or solution?** If not... cállate la boca. Zip those lips! **THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU SPEAK ONCE...**

**His bad track record with woman comes out in verse 26** And I find more bitter than death The woman whose heart *is* **snare**s and **nets**, Whose hands *are* **fetter**s. He who pleases God shall escape from her, But the sinner shall be trapped by her.

Solomon was a sinner trapped by her... will you be or will you be like Joseph and Daniel and purpose in your heart not to defile yourself.

**CHARACTER IS FORGED IN THE SMALL MOMENTS OF LIFE AND REVEALED IN THE BIG ONES.**

**Joseph was careful to never be alone with his temptation.**

**"He never let his hand get near the cookie jar" Men, LISTEN**

**CAREFULLY!** Mrs. Potiphar is calling for you to **lie with her**<sup>99</sup> **The Deliah's are screaming tell me of your strength and let me then cut**

**your hair...** She calls to you from the computer screen, she screams to you from the T.V. She calls from the beaches, **THE SPORTS EVENTS... SHE HAS DESTRUCTION IN HER EYES.** She will never give up until she has ruined you.

**DANIEL HAD A RESOLVE!** He **predetermined**, He **purposed** in his heart. An unshakeable purpose... literally he **“set upon his heart”** not to defile himself. **It was a firebrand on his soul . . .**

We need **conviction** not just **belief** ... more than just **intellect** but our **will**

One says, “I am **convinced**.” The other says, “I am **committed**”.

**Fail to plan and plan to fail . . .** that’s what a purposed heart does... rehearses in the mind success and resistance to evil.

**Honesty, integrity, character...** the world can take a lot from us but it can’t take these... we have to give them away... **Character**... what you are when no one is watching but God...

**Dare to be a Daniel, Dare to be a Joseph...** They lived among pagan people, worked in pagan institutions, schooled in pagan philosophy, surrounded by

**pagan practice** – yet they remained fiercely loyal to God. May we as well!

**PRAY**

**8** Who *is* like a wise *man*? many scholars think the answer is, “No one.” Chapter 8 will teach us to exercise wisdom in our own submission to authority. As one man notes, “*These verses give us practical guidance for dealing with earthly government, whether good or evil, even in matters of life and death.*”

**Verse 1 continues...** A man’s wisdom makes his face shine, And the sternness of his face is changed. And who knows the interpretation of a thing?



**We know the wisdom of the gospel turns the frown of sin into**

## the smile of grace.

Ryken points out, “In saying this, he is not just telling us to **‘put on a happy face.’** Instead he is saying what the psalmist said, that people who look to the Lord **“are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed”** (*Psalm 34:5; Exodus 34:29-35; Proverbs 15:13*). **This is more than a metaphor.** True wisdom brings a joy to life that changes everything, including people’s appearance.

**Proverbs 15:13...** A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.



Who is more merry than the one whose sins are forgiven and eternal salvation secure?

### MY STORY... MR. BORNERMAN IN COLLEGE

**“The shining face generally speaks of favor”** **Number 6:25...** The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you...

**2 Corinthians 3:18...** But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

*May your faces be filled with the shining countenance of one who has been redeemed!*

**Onto verse 2 I say, “Keep the king’s commandment for the sake of your oath to God.**

Beginning with Nimrod (*Gen 10:8-9*) continuing over the centuries through Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, the Caesars, all the way to the evil dictators of today; millions of good people have been oppressed in one way or another by bad and evil rulers.

The Jews often suffered at the hands of foreign oppressors, and in 1 Kings 4:7–28; 12:1, we see how Solomon himself had been guilty of putting his own people under a heavy yoke of bondage.

Remember the rulers of Solomon’s day held the power of life and death in their hands and often abused that power. **They were not elected by the people nor**

**were they answerable to them.** Some leaders ruled as benevolent dictators, but for the most part rulers in the ancient East were tyrannical oppressors who permitted nothing to stand in the way of fulfilling their desires.

Helmuth von Moltke was drafted to work in counterintelligence for Nazi Germany; yet his Christian faith made him a resolute opponent of Adolf Hitler. Although he believed it would be wrong for him to use violent force against the Nazis, von Moltke used his high position to rescue many prisoners from certain death. Not surprisingly, eventually he was accused of treason, put on trial, and sentenced to death.

In his final letter home to his beloved wife Freya, Helmuth described the dramatic moment at his trial when the judge launched into a tirade against his faith in Christ. “Only in one respect does the National Socialism resemble Christianity,” he shouted: “we demand the whole man.” Then the judge asked the accused to declare his ultimate loyalty: “From whom do you take your orders, from the other world or from Adolf Hitler? Where lie your loyalty and your faith?”

Von Moltke knew exactly where his loyalty lay. He had put all his hope and trust in Jesus Christ. Therefore, he stood before his earthly judge as a Christian and nothing else. His faith had enabled him to act wisely in government service, and now it enabled him to act wisely when he faced his final hour. As a believer in Christ, von Moltke understood the difference between the proper exercise of authority and the abuse of power. He also knew the wise course of action when he was under someone else’s control and in danger for his very life.

**2 I say, “Keep the king’s commandment for the sake of your oath to God.**



**Romans 13 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.**

We do this primarily not to honor the **king** or government authority (though this is part of our obligation). Primarily, we honor government authority **for the sake of our oath to God**. In a New Covenant context, we do it as part of our obedience to God.

I work hard to honor my heavenly boss... My King Jesus! As I honor my earthly boss I honor my heavenly boss. Because my heavenly boss commanded me to.

I love my wife as Christ loved the Church because God commanded me too, and I love my God by loving my wife.

Wives respect their husbands because God commanded them to. As they respect their husbands they are loving God because He commanded them to.

Children obey their parents because they love God... God commanded them to... as they obey they are showing obedience to God

All obey governing authority because God commanded it... as you honor authority you are honoring God... As you dishonor authority you are dishonoring God.

Missler makes this recapping point. “The general principle here is submission to the governing authorities –Jesus told his disciples to **“render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s”** (Luke 20:25). Paul every person to “be subject to the governing authorities” – what William Tyndale famously called “the powers that be” (Romans 13:1). Martin Luther called this the duty of “political obedience.” Every Christian is called to be a law abiding citizen and to respond to any godly request the government makes for help. This includes everything from paying our taxes to answering the president’s call to volunteer.

**Again. . . Our submission to authority on earth is one important part of our submission to Christ in Heaven.**

One commentator adds, “People often wonder whether this obedience has any limits. Must I always submit to the governing authorities, or are there times when it is my duty as a Christian to disobey? The simple answer is the one that Peter gave when the ruler of Jerusalem told him to stop preaching the gospel: **“We must obey God rather than men”** (Acts 5:29). When it comes to a conflict between God and man, we must obey the higher authority.”



**3 Do not be hasty to go from his presence. In this cultural context, a hasty departure from the throne room was really a sign of disrespect, a way of turning one's back on authority.**

Continuing verse 3... **Do not take your stand for an evil thing, for he does whatever pleases him."**

Instead the Preacher tells us to fight evil with godliness. A good example is the stand that Daniel's friends took against King Nebuchadnezzar when he commanded all of his subjects to worship him. **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego** peacefully refused to worship anyone except God alone (see Daniel 3). Remember the example of Helmuth von Moltke –Although he resisted Hitler at every turn, von Moltke refused to resort to violence, for fear that this would make him little better than a Nazi.

**4 Where the word of a king is, there is power; And who may say to him, "What are you doing?" The King was above the law so to speak... Nobody could safely question the ruler's decisions because "the king can do no wrong." There was no law that could find the king guilty.**

**5 He who keeps his command will experience nothing harmful; Obedience has God's blessings. Submitting to the rule of law will keep us safe from harm. And a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment, 6 Because for every matter there is a time and judgment, Though the misery of man increases greatly. In other words, the wise person knows the right thing to do and the right time to do it.**

Again some great examples of wisdom shown by God's followers.

1. Joseph didn't impulsively reveal to his brothers who he was, because he wanted to be sure their hearts were right with their father and their God. Once he heard them confess their sins, Joseph knew it was the right time to identify himself. His handling of this delicate matter was a masterpiece of wisdom (see Gen 43–45).

2. Nehemiah was burdened to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, but he was not sure the king would release him for the task (Neh 1–2). He waited and watched and prayed, knowing that God would one day open the way for him. When the opportune hour came, Nehemiah was ready and the king granted him his request. Nehemiah knew how to discern "time and procedure."

3. A prisoner of war in a Gentile land, Daniel refused to eat the unclean food set before him, but he didn't make a big scene about it. Instead, he exercised gentleness and wisdom by suggesting that the guards permit the Jews to experiment with a different diet. The plan worked and Daniel and his friends not only kept themselves ceremonially clean, but they were promoted in the king's court (see Dan 1).

4. The apostles exercised spiritual discernment when they were arrested and persecuted (Acts 4–5). They showed respect toward those in authority even though the religious leaders were prejudiced and acted illegally. The apostles were even willing to suffer for their faith and the Lord honored them.

**7 For he does not know what will happen; So who can tell him when it will occur? Ryken illuminates... “If the Preacher is still thinking about kings and governments, he is saying that there is a time to obey the king and a time to leave his presence, or even to start a righteous rebellion. We can apply the same principle to other situations that involve authority. There is a time to submit and a time to stand against oppression.”** The problem is that it is hard to know what time it is, which often makes it hard to know the wise thing to do.

Now the biggest uncertainty, the time of death! **Join me in verse 8** No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, And no one has power in the day of death.

The Scripture says, “It is appointed for man to die once.” (Hebrews 9:27) No reincarnation... your not gonna come back as a bug if you didn't get it right the first time and you were not a noble prince in your past life... **you didn't have a past life.** The one you have is the only one on this earth you will ever have.., **“It is appointed for man to die once.” but that appointment is on God's agenda, not ours** Solomon also told us in Ecclesiastes 3:2 there is “a time to die,” again, that time is not on our timetable.

**Psalm 139:16** Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.

*There is no release from that war, And wickedness will not deliver those who are given to it.*

**One thing is sure:** a day is coming when wickedness will be judged, and even kings will not escape. Nobody can control the wind or prevent the day of his death and nobody can get discharged from the army when a war is on. Likewise, nobody

can stop the **inevitable** working of God's law, Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. Gal 6:7.



Of all the things that a government commands people to do, this is the most demanding, namely, to defend their country. It is also the duty that brings the most danger, and with that danger, the most uncertainty about the future. **A soldier in wartime deals with the real possibility of death at any moment.** He of all people knows that he does not have knowledge of the future or power over the day of death. Nevertheless, a soldier must do what he is commanded to do. Incidentally, this is one of the **many reasons** why it is important for us to pray for military personnel, especially in time of war: they are dealing with the great matters of life and death every day.

Verse 9 reiterates Solomon's attitude toward political authority: "on the one hand he counsels obedience and submission to it on the grounds of prudence, while on the other he does not hide the fact that he regards it as brutal and tyrannical."

**9 All this I have seen, and applied my heart to every work that is done under the sun: *There is* a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt. We have the options of disobeying, running away, defying orders, and even fighting back. But before we act, we must first exercise wisdom and seek to discern the right "time and procedure."** It's not easy to be a consistent Christian in this complicated evil world, but we can ask for the wisdom of God and receive it by faith (James 1:5; 3:17–18).

True for all of us... we don't know what the future holds... But we **KNOW** the **ONE** who holds the future!

We **do not** control our own destiny or determine the days of our lives. We certainly don't know how to interpret everything that happens in our lives. **What, then, is the wise way for us to live?**

## **Full Surrender to the one who knows ALL**

Scripture calls us to live in subjection to earthly kings how much more should we to our eternal King...

Spurgeon has another great one, "This also makes us reflect on our obedience to God as the Great King. "If he be a King, then it is a solemn



hazard to your soul if you come short of the least of his commandments. Remember that one treason makes a traitor; one leak sinks a ship; one fly spoils the whole box of ointment. He that bought us with his blood deserves to be obeyed in all things with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength."

Your future will be secure, despite all the troubles and uncertainties of life.

In the last days of his life on earth, Helmuth von Moltke experienced the comfort of knowing Christ. Although he was innocent of all charges, once he was convicted by the Nazis, von Moltke knew that he was a dead man. Any day could be his last. Nevertheless, in his last letter home he was filled with joy and confidence in the goodness of God. Von Moltke was suffering the evil described in Ecclesiastes 8:9, in which one man has the power to hurt another. Yet at the same time he had the wisdom that comes from knowing Christ. Thus he was able to tell his beloved wife Freya that **"the agony or parting, the terror of death, and the fear of hell" had no power over him.** Instead, he was overwhelmed with faith, hope and charity. "I know that I am living only in His grace," von Moltke said.

If we are wise, we too will cling to Jesus Christ, living only in his grace, and in this way we will be ready for death and everything else that happens in life.