



Part 8: If I Only Knew Then...

June 22 & 23, 2019

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Ecclesiastes 8

¹ Who is like the wise?

Who knows the explanation of things?
A person's wisdom brightens their face
and changes its hard appearance.

² Obey the king's command, I say,
because you took an oath before God. ³
Do not be in a hurry to leave the king's
presence. Do not stand up for a bad cause,
for he will do whatever he pleases. ⁴ Since
a king's word is supreme, who can say to
him, "What are you doing?"

⁵ Whoever obeys his command will come
to no harm,
and the wise heart will know the
proper time and procedure.

⁶ For there is a proper time and procedure
for every matter,
though a person may be weighed
down by misery.

⁷ Since no one knows the future,
who can tell someone else what is to
come?

⁸ As no one has power over the wind to
contain it,
so no one has power over the time of
their death.

As no one is discharged in time of war,
so wickedness will not release those
who practice it.

What I wish I had known at age 18:

Right King

Right authority

Right proximity

Right cause

Right ally/alignment

Right heart

Right timing

Right delivery

Right perspective

⁹ All this I saw, as I applied my mind to
everything done under the sun. There is
a time when a man lords it over others to
his own hurt. Then too, I saw the wicked
buried—those who used to come and go
from the holy place and receive praise in
the city where they did this. This too is
meaningless.

¹¹ When the sentence for a crime is
not quickly carried out, people's hearts
are filled with schemes to do wrong. ¹²
Although a wicked person who commits
a hundred crimes may live a long time, I
know that it will go better with those who
fear God, who are reverent before him. ¹³
Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it
will not go well with them, and their days
will not lengthen like a shadow.

¹⁴ There is something else meaningless
that occurs on earth: the righteous who
get what the wicked deserve, and the
wicked who get what the righteous
deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless.

**Right Question: Why do the wicked
seem to come out ahead of
the righteous?**

**Right Answer: There is a cost for
making the righteous choice.**

**Right Wisdom: Don't mistake
temporary success for eternal
reward**

¹⁵ So I commend the enjoyment of
life, because there is nothing better for a
person under the sun than to eat and drink
and be glad. Then joy will accompany
them in their toil all the days of the life
God has given them under the sun.

¹⁶ When I applied my mind to know
wisdom and to observe the labor that is
done on earth—people getting no sleep
day or night—¹⁷ then I saw all that God has
done. No one can comprehend what goes
on under the sun. Despite all their efforts
to search it out, no one can discover its
meaning. Even if the wise claim they know,
they cannot really comprehend it.

Right ending:

At the end of the right process, living
with tension of the right questions,
you should still gather some friends,
have a good meal, hydrate, and to
go sleep knowing that the King will
provide sweet rest.

Small Group Questions

- 1) What were you like at age 18?
- 2) What do you wish you would have known at 18 that you know now?
- 3) Read Ecclesiastes 8. What's your opinion of Solomon's wisdom? Where do you find hope in his words?
- 4) How do you reconcile the tension around righteous people having to pay a price for their convictions?
- 5) Have you ever experienced a "right ending"? What does godly rest look like to you?
- 6) How can we pray for you right now and throughout the week?