



TITLE: God's Way > Our Way = Wisdom

ICE BREAKER: What's something that you've done recently your way, and then realized from the outcome God's way was better?

BIG IDEA: The way of Wisdom is living life God's way not your way!

MAIN SCRIPTURE: **Ecclesiastes 8:1-17**

Who is like the wise? Who knows the explanation of things? A person's wisdom brightens their face and changes its hard appearance. Obey the King 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. 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[b] hurt. 10 Then too, I saw the wicked buried—those who used to come and go from the holy place and receive praise[c] 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. 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.

Opening Thoughts: Chapter 8 shifts from Idea of the foolishness of seeking Wisdom under the Sun as a solution to life, and guides us to seeking the Godly Wisdom of salvation. This chapter largely mirrors the sayings from the book of Proverbs, and focuses us on submission as a solution for our rebelliousness and desire to control life. Solomon, though this experiment of seeing things “under the sun,” misses God for the majority of his time as king over Jerusalem: God is noticeably absent from the Ecclesiastes for the first six chapters! The Bible tells us that, for a time, Solomon pursued everything but god, and made some really dumb decisions. Yet notice how despite Solomon’s rebellion, God used that foolishness to teach us an important lesson. If Solomon had never turned to “see the sun,” instead of living under it we would have been left with an ending of meaninglessness. Instead God LOVES US so much that He pursued Solomon and reminded him of the value of wisdom, which could only be attained through Him. That wasn’t just for Solomon, that’s a lesson for all of us!

Main Points:

Looking to the Son, not under the Sun v.1

Jesus is King v.2-4

Handling Authority v. 5-6

Focus on what you can change v.7-8

Death deals with Hypocrisy v. 9-10

Don't take Grace for Granted v.11-13

The Elephant in the Room v. 14-15

The Beauty of the Mystery v.16-17

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Refer to Chapter 6 in the book Living Life Backwards

CHALLENGE: How will you reject being rebellious and accept Godly biblical submission? How do we need to accept our limitations (weaknesses), and start trusting God? Are there areas in your life where you have or currently are abusing the authority God has given you? Will you repent from it now or on the day of judgment? How will you stop questioning God, and engage your father in conversation?

CLOSING PRAYER:

God we repent for unsubmitted rebelliousness. Show us how to let go of trying to control, manipulate, and force outcomes. When trying situations come, help

us not to panic relying on the things of man, and rather to submit to your presence and will for our lives. Help us to have faith and not doubt you, to trust that your ways are higher and your understanding is always best. Build in your church integrity; empowering us to be people that do what is right, not what we feel like doing or want to do. Bring the Wicked to repentance, even when the wicked one is us. Help us to have a strong remembrance of your Grace, and build a desire in us to extend it to others. May we have a spiritual demeanor of thankfulness and gratitude, and may we give you Glory, Honor, and Praise all the days of our lives.