



TITLE: The Importance of Difficult Things

ICE BREAKER: What's a difficult situation in life that taught you something valuable?

BIG IDEA: "Wisdom" is knowing that the Difficult Times in life have a lot to teach us!

**MAIN SCRIPTURE:** Ecclesiastes 7:1-14

- 7** A good name is better than fine perfume,  
and the day of death better than the day of birth.
- 2** It is better to go to a house of mourning  
than to go to a house of feasting,  
for death is the destiny of everyone;  
the living should take this to heart.
- 3** Frustration is better than laughter,  
because a sad face is good for the heart.
- 4** The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,  
but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure.
- 5** It is better to heed the rebuke of a wise person  
than to listen to the song of fools.
- 6** Like the crackling of thorns under the pot,  
so is the laughter of fools.  
This too is meaningless.
- 7** Extortion turns a wise person into a fool,  
and a bribe corrupts the heart.
- 8** The end of a matter is better than its beginning,  
and patience is better than pride.
- 9** Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit,  
for anger resides in the lap of fools.
- 10** Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?"  
For it is not wise to ask such questions.

<sup>11</sup> Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing  
and benefits those who see the sun.

<sup>12</sup> Wisdom is a shelter  
as money is a shelter,  
but the advantage of knowledge is this:  
Wisdom preserves those who have it.

<sup>13</sup> Consider what God has done:

Who can straighten  
what he has made crooked?

<sup>14</sup> When times are good, be happy;  
but when times are bad, consider this:

God has made the one  
as well as the other.

Therefore, no one can discover  
anything about their future.

Opening Thoughts: Life often seems to be filled with difficult things – difficult people, difficult situations, problems that seem to be over our head, and so much more. It's often in those time that we feel distant from God, confused by his will, or even find ourselves fighting against our faith. Yet through these verses The Preacher (Solomon) wants us to think differently about difficult things. He helps us by using parables, to understand that they're more valuable than we think!

Main Points:

DEATH IS THE END OF DYING v.1-2

SORROW > LAUGHTER v.3

A HOUSE OF FANTASIES v.4

A FLASH IN THE PAN v.5-6

NOT EVERYTHING GIVEN IS A GIFT v.7

IT'S NOT HOW YOU START IT'S HOW YOU FINISH v.8

A LONG FUZE v.9

ROMANTICIZING THE PAST v. 10

YOU CAN SAVE MONEY, BUT MONEY CAN'T SAVE YOU v. 11-12

BOTH... AND... v. 13-14

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

CHALLENGE: How will you use your time, talents, and treasures to add eternal value instead of experiencing momentary pleasure? How will you receive the life giving truth of biblical correction, and avoid the deadly lie of flattery? What do you need to let go of that was, and how will you begin to accept what is? Take some time to write down a list of what; The Difficult and The Pleasant times in life have taught you

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord may we live in the “both... and...” Father help us to remember that you delight in us, and may we have faith that no difficulty or suffering is wasted in light of eternity. Help us not to romanticize and fantasize over the pleasures of this world that are gone in the moment. May we store up our treasures in heaven; through Generosity, Charity, and Mercy. Let us not give into flattery or believe ourselves better than others. Allow correction to open our eyes to your truth, and guide us down the path of wisdom. Teach us Lord to die to ourselves, that we might be made alive in you.