

**Living In Reality
(Which Is Better?)
Ecclesiastes 7:1-12**

I. **THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH** (1-2, 4) —

A. **The Facing of Fear**

1. **The Loss of a Loved One**

- a. They are **not God**.
- b. Don't take them **for granted**.

2. **Our Own Mortality**—*Someday that will be me in the casket.*

B. **The Perspective on Life**—that only death can provide

1. **Your Good Name** (1a)—cultivated over a lifetime of relationships and behavior

2. **Your Limited Time** (5:18; Ps 90:12)—life is short, live intentionally

3. **Your Final Destiny** ()—*the grave (under the sun)*

C. **The Benefit of Mourning** (2 Cor 7:8-9)

1. **Grieving loss is an appropriate response to reality** (Jn 11:35; Lk 19:41)
—no longer in Eden and not yet in Heaven

2. **Sharing someone else's grief is a comfort to them** (Isa 53; Rom 12:15)—
part of life in community

3. **The path to joy is through grief, not around it.** (Mat 5:4; Rev 21:4).
Jesus is the comfort of God.

II. **THE FORMING OF CHARACTER** (3-7)—

A. **The Benefit of Sorrow** (3-4)— God is shaping our character.

B. **The Benefit of Rebuke** (5-6; Ps 145:5; Pro 12:1; 13:20; 15:5)

1. **The Song of Fools**

- a. **Entertainment**—distraction from what is necessary, important.
- b. **Flattery**—*singing your praises*, causing you to **overlook** your faults and **think too highly** of yourself

2. **The Laughter of Fools**

- a. **Denial**—*making light of serious things*
- b. **Inappropriate Humor**—*crude, base, degenerate, or cruel*
- c. **Scoffing**—*unbelief, mocking what is important or sacred,*

3. **A Rebuke from the Wise** ()—it improves you

C. **The Danger of Corruption** (7)

1. **Extortion**/oppression) (Isa 57:11; Pro 29:25; Lk 12:4-5)—*coercion by fear*
 - a. **Blackmail**
 - b. **Threat of Harm**
2. **Bribery** ()—*seduction of greed*

III. **THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD** (8-10; Rom 8:28)—

- A. **The End or the Beginning** (8a; 1 Cor 4:5)
- B. **Patience or Pride** (8b-9)
- C. **Nostalgia for the Old Days** (10)

IV. **THE ADVANTAGE OF WISDOM** (11-12)—

A. **Wisdom guards and maintains the quality of life**

1. **Money is a resource.**
2. **Wisdom knows what to do with it.**

B. **Wisdom orders your priorities in this life** (in light of death) because it **orients** you to something **beyond** this life *under the sun*.

1. **It considers death.**
2. **It values character.**
3. **It manages time.**

We will never find this joy until we understand the true condition of the world under the sun, the certain reality of death, the true desperation of our hearts.
(Pro 10:28; Ps 4:7; Neh 8:10; Lk 2:10; Jn 15:11; Gal 5:22; 1 Pet 1:8; Rom 14:17)

LISTEN TO “Joy” (Whitney Houston, *The Preacher’s Wife*)

<https://youtu.be/s4xeigg2jiQ>