

Message #25

Ecclesiastes 7:19-22

I once read a quote by a former Nobel Prize winner that struck me as so interesting and so true—“Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody has thought.”

Every human being comes into this world the same way. We basically walk through life seeing and experiencing the same kind of things. But the difference between one who finds a meaningful life is one who thinks, acts and reacts differently.

The person who becomes wise and winds up living a meaningful and fulfilled life is one who sees life and thinks about life from God’s perspective.

HAVING A MEANINGFUL AND FULFILLED LIFE IS DETERMINED BY LIVING A WISE LIFE, AND LIVING A WISE LIFE IS DETERMINED BY THE WAY WE THINK ABOUT THINGS.

In life, for the most part, all people see and experience the same kinds of things. People are born, people die. We have times of weeping and times of laughing. We have times of prosperity and times of adversity, times of success and times of failure.

AREA OF THOUGHT #1 – One who will live a meaningful life will think about the value of wisdom. **7:19**

Most people do not place much value on wisdom and very few place much value on God’s wisdom. Simply listen to people and watch their decisions and we may quickly discover that the wisdom of God and choosing to do what God deems as wise doesn’t make much difference to most people.

Solomon knew the value of wisdom. He taught his son that there was “nothing” that compared to having God’s wisdom (Prov. 3:13-18). Time and time again he taught his own son to get the wisdom of God because it would do many wonderful things for him (Prov. 4:5-13).

In Solomon’s day, a ruler of a city was not just a political figurehead, he was one who ruled. He had power, he had authority and he had honor. Ten rulers of a city represent a complete and massive amount of strength and power. Solomon is saying one wise man with the wisdom of God has more strength, more power, more authority and honor than ten rulers of a city.

The man with wisdom rules himself and has God’s blessings on his life. He has a supernatural strength given to him by God and he has a reputation that doesn’t just matter in a city, but in eternity.

AREA OF THOUGHT #2 – One who will live a meaningful life will not think about sinless perfection. **7:20**

When one is thinking wisely, one will be quick to admit what the Word of God says time and time again, and that is no human is perfect! Every human being is a sinner and no man, in and of himself, is totally and completely righteous.

Certainly this principle is established time and time again in the Scripture:

- 1) I Kings 8:46 says – “When they sin against Thee (for there is no man who does not sin...)”
- 2) Psalm 14:3 says – “...There is no one who does good, not even one.”
- 3) Prov. 20:9 says – “Who can say, I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin?”
- 4) II Chron. 6:36 says – “...for there is no man who does not sin...”
- 5) Psalm 143:2 says – “And do not enter into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight no man living is righteous.”
- 6) Rom. 3:23 says – “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- 7) James 3:2 says – “For we all stumble in many ways...”
- 8) I John 1:9 says – “If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

No one is perfect and that is a Biblical fact. Now the wise man realizes there will be times in his own life when he will sin, when he will fail. Apparently understanding this is a critical key to living a meaningful life.

If one doesn't grasp this point, negative things can happen:

- 1) A person can become so depressed with himself or herself that life seems useless and worthless. If one does not realize this about himself, one may miss an exciting, meaningful life even though he is a sinner.
- 2) A person can become so used to his sin that it becomes excessive. One who doesn't admit there are times he sins is one who lives in his sin continually. He is not living the truth and any relationship we have with God must always be based on truth.

No one who tries to cover his sin will go anywhere in his relationship with God (Prov. 28:13).

A critical key to living a fulfilled life is knowing and admitting you aren't perfect. There is a tension of admitting sinfulness and striving for righteousness. When this tension is at the proper level, life is meaningful.

AREA OF THOUGHT #3 – One who will live a meaningful life will not think about negative words. **7:21-22**

Wise people do not take words too seriously or take to heart negative things that are said to them. It is more than just interesting who it is that will typically say negative things about you—“your servant” (**7:21**).

In Solomon's day, a servant lived with you, took care of you and worked for you. A servant saw his master in private times that were positive and private times that were negative. Since we have already seen that there is no human who is perfect, we know that a servant gets to see the imperfections of his boss. He sees his master in the high times and the low times.

Now Solomon had many people working for him. And he knew what it was like to have servants turn against him and start cursing him behind his back. In fact, Solomon had personally been involved in one of the most famous episodes of this in all the Bible.

Solomon's father, David, had a man rise up who cursed him. His name was Shimei (II Sam. 16:5-8). He was demeaning and degrading to David and many thought David should kill him (II Sam. 16:9). David so believed in the sovereignty of God that he decided to leave him to God (II Sam. 16:11-14). Eventually, the demeaning servant Shimei repented and David let him live (II Sam. 19:16-23). However, before David died, he told Solomon that this was not a servant to be trusted (I Kings 2:8-9). Solomon later tracked Shimei down and had him executed (I Kings 2:36-46), and the kingdom was solidly established.

1. When a servant curses us, we don't have to take it seriously, but God will take it seriously.
2. The servant who does demeaning and destructive things to his master will be tracked down by God and will receive to due penalty of his evil.
3. The servant who curses his master is not a servant to be trusted.

Now, Solomon gives one reason why a person should not be so unsettled by a servant who curses us, because we have done likewise many times (**7:22**).

Even the best people in management at one time or another in their own lives have said things about leadership they have no business saying. All of us have been guilty.

Who of us haven't criticized a president, a manager or a pastor? Truth is at one time or another we have all been guilty. This does not make the servant right in what he does, but it does enable the cursed manager to understand that it happens.

Practical Considerations

1. The wise life is the meaningful life.
2. The honest life before God is the meaningful life.
3. The controlled speech about others' life is the meaningful life.