

**Message #35****Ecclesiastes 10:4-7**

There is something that will eventually happen to every one of us and it really doesn't matter who we are. We may be a Republican or Democrat, male or female, white or black, believer or unbeliever, Jew or Gentile. Sooner or later we will wind up working for or being under some unreliable, unstable manager, employer or ruler.

There is no sense trying to escape this reality because it will happen. Along the path of life, every one of us will have our chance to work for someone or be under someone who is very foolish. These rulers are fickle and irrational and sooner or later we will find ourselves subordinate to one of them.

The real question is this—can we find meaning and fulfillment in life when this happens? Is it possible for us to find purpose when under such a situation? The answer is “yes”! We must always remember God is sovereign over all leadership (Rom. 13:1).

By proper response and proper attitudes, we are able to have a meaningful life even when faced with this kind of thing.

**MEANING AND FULFILLMENT IN LIFE CAN STILL EXIST EVEN WHEN WE FIND OURSELVES SUBJECT TO FOOLISH LEADERS BY REACTING WISELY AND BY MAINTAINING A WISE PERSPECTIVE OF WHAT OFT TIMES HAPPENS IN SOCIETY.**

**Matter #1** - The word “ruler” of **verse 4** is different than the word “ruler” of **verse 5**.

The word “ruler” in **verse 4** is one that seems to emphasize one's dominion or reign. The picture is of one sitting in a ruling position, being able to give orders, sentences and rules (Gesenius, p. 517).

The word “ruler” in **verse 5** is one that seems to emphasize one's sovereignty. The picture is one of sitting as a powerful master having total power and rule. This word stresses the sovereign power the ruler has (*Ibid.*, pp. 827-828).

Combined, these two words portray being subordinate to a very powerful ruler who has total sovereign power to pronounce judgments on his subordinates.

**Matter #2** - The word “offenses” of **verse 4** is different than the word “error” of **verse 5**.

The word “offenses” in **verse 4** is the word for sins, which means to miss the mark, thus becoming liable to a penalty (Gesenius, p. 271).

The word “error” in **verse 5** is a word that means to wander astray and to err due to ignorance or lack of proper consideration (*Ibid.*, p. 804).

Now in **verse 4** it is not certain who commits the “sins”—the ruler or the subordinate. It is possible grammatically to interpret it either way. It is possible that when the ruler’s temper flares, it is that which can cause him to commit many sins.

It is also possible that the subordinate did not hit the mark of what he was supposed to do and that is what caused the ruler’s temper to flare.

In **verse 5**, the ignorant wandering is solely the fault of the ruler. In this case it is clear that the ruler is the one who is wandering in ignorance off the path of right.

**WISDOM MESSAGE #1** – The wise person will not abandon or quit his responsibilities, even if the ruler’s temper rises against him. **10:4**

This is a wisdom principle that is emphasized several times in Scripture—wise people are not prone to quit or abandon ship, they hang in there, they stick to it, they rebound, they stay faithful and try to do their best even if their ruler has become angry with them.

The word “abandon” is one that refers to leaving or deserting a responsibility. The word picture is one of setting down or laying down a responsibility so one can rest or be quiet from a difficult or hostile situation (*Ibid.*, p. 539).

Now the picture here is that one is subordinate to a man who has lost his temper. The ruler is angry at the subordinate. It is possible the subordinate has blown it many times; the word “offenses” is plural. In anger, the ruler’s temper is flared against the subordinate. The natural tendency for the subordinate is to just quit, abandon his responsibilities and walk away and return to the peace and serenity of his own home. That is certainly one option, but it is not the wise option!

**WISDOM MESSAGE #2** – The wise person realizes that promotion is not always determined by merit or worth. **10:5-7**

There is an “evil” that Solomon saw—sometimes the person who should be promoted isn’t, and the person who shouldn’t be promoted is!

**Observation #1** - When a ruler promotes a fool, it is a foolish evil. **10:5**

Just because it is permitted by God does not mean it is applauded by God. When a ruler lacks proper consideration and promotes a fool to some exalted level, God views the act as evil.

**Observation #2** - Foolish people are promoted to many exalted positions in many places. **10:6**

This is a great evil, but it is also a reality.

**Observation #3** - People who should be promoted to exalted positions often aren't. **10:6-7**

The picture of a slave riding on horses versus a prince walking on land is a picture of injustice which sometimes occurs under the leadership of a foolish leader.

Sometimes people who deserve to be promoted, who have earned the promotion and who have a right to it, lose it to someone who should not have it.

This principle is certainly true when it comes to the things of God and the people of God. God's people who are right with God are the richest people on earth. There is no higher position and there really is no richer position to be in than to be classified as a child of God. However, for the most part, on this earth it is not the child of God who is exalted. Oft times it is the most godless and ruthless person there is who gets promoted. One who is a slave to his own appetites often climbs higher and higher while the godly, quiet, disciplined person seems to be misplaced and mistreated.

What is our responsibility to leadership?

- 1) We have the responsibility to pray for all leadership. I Tim. 2:2-3
- 2) We have the responsibility to submit to all leadership. Rom. 13:1; Heb. 13:17

Meaning will not be found in looking at promotions, it will be found in our relationship with God!