**Ecclesiastes 7:11-14**

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*Wisdom can shade us from the difficulties of this world, starting with understanding that God is the true source of stability.*

Verse 11 states that both *wisdom* and *inheritance* are *good* (towb). They are an *advantage* to *those who see the sun*.

The Hebrew word translated *protection* in the phrase *for wisdom is protection*in verse 12 is “tsel,” which literally means “shadow” or “shade.” So both *wisdom* and *money* are a shade, a *protection* from the sun. There is a strange irony that those who *see the sun* need a *protection* from the sun and are at an *advantage* when they receive that *protection*.

We cannot look directly at the sun (an idea that harkens to [Exodus 33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+33&t=NASB95) when God tells Moses if he looks at His face Moses will die). The *protection* of *wisdom* and *money* helps protect us in adversity, even as it places a shadow over our vision.

*Money* is included as a *protection.*Monetary savings is a *protection* on many fronts. For example, it protects against a reversal such as sickness or job loss. Money can also work as a sort of *protection* against foolishness. It might allow us time to reflect and pursue understanding.

However, although *money* is a *protection*or shade, Solomon says *wisdom*is superior. *The advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the lives of its possessors.* You would think Solomon might say this about money. But money simply provides power to do more of whatever we have in our *heart*to do. If we have wisdom, we will do more good. Our lives will be *preserved*from foolish self-destruction. But if we live as *fools,*money will simply escalate the rate of our self-destruction.

*Wisdom* shields us from certain pitfalls and consequences in the moral/spiritual realm, just as *money* provides *protection* from certain physical hardships. But more importantly, the *advantage* of the *knowledge* of skillful living in day-to-day situations—*wisdom*—is that it *brings to life* its *possessor*. This is more than preservation from death; it is the positive production of a rich and full experience.

Solomon commends God’s wisdom. As Solomon made clear in earlier chapters, without God’s wisdom we as humans are locked up in our own finite understanding. Man can’t develop sufficient understanding through reason and experience to know what is right to do. But humans can and should live by the *wisdom* God has called us to. And trust that God will make things right in His own time. This section is an invitation to faith in God’s benevolence.

Solomon tells us to *consider the work of God.*The word translated *consider*is the same word translated *see*in the phrase *see the sun.*We can’t really avoid the sun. Perhaps Solomon is connecting that experience with the reality of God. For *the work of God*is like the sun in that it happens all around us. So we ought to pay attention, and *consider* all we see that is the *work of God*, and seek to understand what God’s work is telling us.

Solomon notes this reality with the rhetorical question “*Who is able to straighten what*God*has bent?*”The expected answer is “no one.” We cannot reach up and dim the sun; we can only seek *protection*from its rays. And if it takes God’s strength to bend something, we won’t have the strength to *straighten* it.

This points out the reality that there is much that we as humans cannot control. But we can control our attitude. The perspective we choose. We can’t *straighten what God has bent,*but we can choose to *be happy in the day of prosperity.*It might seem odd that we would need to be told to choose happiness when things are going well. But on reflection, when things are going well, it is typical human behavior to be unhappy because our circumstances aren’t even better. Solomon advises us to see things as they are, and when we are blessed, to be grateful and enjoy it. To choose to be *happy.*

What do we do when *prosperity*is replaced with *adversity?*Solomon tells us to choose a perspective that *God has made*circumstances of *adversity*just as much as He made circumstances of *prosperity.*It is not unusual for a single circumstance to be *adversity*for one person and *prosperity*to another. A hailstorm is *adversity*to a homeowner and *prosperity*for the roofing company. Rain brings *prosperity*to the farmer but *adversity*to the baseball team. The circumstance brings an opportunity to each.

The discussion ends with a curious phrase. We need to greet *prosperity*with happiness, but also choose a perspective that we can gain benefit during *adversity.*Why?*So that man will not discover anything that will be after him.*This phrase applies to the observation that God has made both prosperous as well as adverse circumstances. God has *made the one as well as the other.*

This appears to be saying that God gave us this full range of experiences, *prosperity*as well as *adversity,* for our benefit. That we might learn. *Discover.*That we might have a complete opportunity to *discover*all God has for us to gain in our life under the sun. In observing that *man will not discover anything that will be after him*, Solomon is pointing out the plain truth that we cannot know the future. Our future might hold *adversity* and it might hold *prosperity*. We do not need to worry which it is, because *God has made the one as well as the other*, and both are in God’s hands, who has our best interest at heart.

**Biblical Text:
11Wisdom along with an inheritance is good
And an advantage to those who see the sun.
12For wisdom is protection *just as* money is protection,
But the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the lives of its possessors.
13Consider the work of God,
For who is able to straighten what He has bent?
14In the day of prosperity be happy,
But in the day of adversity consider—
God has made the one as well as the other
So that man will not discover anything *that will be* after him**