

Ecclesiastes 7

Purpose: To better understand the difficult to understand “Better Thans” in Ecclesiastes 7, and to take an introspective look at the ebb and flow of our lives to see the “End” of the challenges faced in life and the subsequent results.

¹A good **name** *is* better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one’s birth. ²*It is better* to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that *is* the end of all men; and the living will lay *it* to his heart. ³Sorrow *is better* than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made **better**. ⁴The heart of the wise *is* in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools *is* in the house of mirth. ⁵*It is better* to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools. ⁶For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so *is* the laughter of the fool: this also *is* vanity.

⁷Surely oppression makes a wise man mad; and a gift destroys the heart. ⁸**Better** *is* the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: *and* the patient in spirit *is better* than the proud in spirit. ⁹Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger rests in the bosom of fools. ¹⁰Say not thou, What is *the cause* that the former days were **better** than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.

¹¹Wisdom *is* good with an inheritance: and *by it there is* profit to them that see the sun. ¹²For wisdom *is* a defense, *and* money *is* a defense: but the excellence of knowledge *is, that* wisdom giveth life to them that have it. ¹³Consider the work of God: for who can make *that* straight, which he hath made crooked? ¹⁴**In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.** ¹⁵All *things* have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just *man* that perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked *man* that prolongs *his life* in his wickedness. ¹⁶Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why should thou destroy thyself? ¹⁷Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why should thou die before thy time? ¹⁸*It is* good that thou should take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not your hand: for he that fears God shall come forth of them all. ¹⁹Wisdom strengthens the wise more than ten mighty *men* which are in the city. ²⁰For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sins not. ²¹Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee: ²²For oftentimes also your own heart knows that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.

²³All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it *was* far from me. ²⁴That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out? ²⁵I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason *of things*, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness *and* madness: ²⁶And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart *is* snares and nets, *and* her hands *as* bands: whoso pleases God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her. ²⁷Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, *counting* one by one, to find out the account: ²⁸Which yet my soul seeks, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found. ²⁹Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

The “Better Thans” of Ecclesiastes 7:1-10

1. Eccl 7:1 A good name is better than precious ointment

H8034 - shêm – (*shame*) -A primitive word (perhaps rather from [H7760](#) through the idea of definite and conspicuous *position*; compare [H8064](#)); an *appellation*, as a mark or memorial of individuality; by implication *honor, authority, character*:— + base, [in-] **fame** [-ous], name (-d), **renown, report**.

Another way to say memorial is **“legacy”**.

What is your **“legacy”** that you will leave behind?

What will people say about you at your funeral?

____ **He was a** _____ **(Blank)**

What would you like your “Eulogy” to say about you?

1 Sam 16:6-7 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD’S anointed *is* before him. ⁷But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD sees* not as man sees; **for man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.**

Are you focused on your appearance or on your character and integrity and the countenance that shows your inner spirit is right with God? What have you done lately that would prove to yourself and others that you were more concerned with being like David who was called: “a man after God’s own heart” and not one concerned with image? Name 3 things you could do:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2. Eccl 7:1b the day of death than the day of one's birth.

Paul reflects on his quest in life and indecision of whether life or death is better for him:

Philippians 1:20-27 According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death.

²¹For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. ²²**But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor:** yet what I shall choose I know not. ²³For I am in a strait betwixt two, **having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:** ²⁴Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you. ²⁵And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; ²⁶That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

²⁷Only let your conversation be as it becomes the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

What evidence is there in your life that you have been more focused on the eternal and spiritual blessing than on those right in front of you in the flesh?

3. Eccl 7:2 *It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting.*

1 Thes 4:13-18 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, **that ye sorrow not**, even as others which have no hope. ¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. ¹⁵For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

¹⁸**Wherefore comfort one another with these words.**

4. Eccl 7:3 *Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.*

Psalms 90:9-17 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale *that is told*. ¹⁰ The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. ¹¹ Who knows the power of Your anger? Even according to thy fear, *so is* thy wrath. ¹² So teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom. ¹³ Return, O LORD, how long? And let it repent thee concerning thy servants. ¹⁴ O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

- ¹⁵ Make us glad according to the days *wherein* thou hast afflicted us, *and* the years *wherein* we have seen evil.
- ¹⁶ Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.
- ¹⁷ And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

What sorrow have you seen in your life, and how has it worked out for good?

5. Eccl 7:5 It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.

2 Tim 3:15-17 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, **for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:** ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

2 Tim 4:1-4 I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; ²Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. ³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ⁴And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

G2008 epitimaō From [G1909](#) and [G5091](#); to *tax upon*, that is, *censure* or *admonish*; by implication *forbid*:—(straitly) charge, **rebuke**.

G1651 elegchō Of uncertain affinity; to *confute*, *admonish*:—convict, convince, tell a fault, rebuke, **reprove**.

G3870 parakaleō From [G3844](#) and [G2564](#); to *call near*, that is, *invite*, *invoke* (by *imploration*, *hortation* or *consolation*):—beseech, call for, (be of good) comfort, desire, (give) **exhort** (-ation), intreat, pray.

G1882 epanorthōsis From a compound of [G1909](#) and [G461](#); a *straightening up again*, that is, (figuratively) *rectification* (*reformation*):—**correction**.

G3809 paideia From [G3811](#); *tutorage*, that is, *education* or *training*; by implication disciplinary *correction*:—chastening, chastisement, **instruction**, nurture.

6. Eccl 7: Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof:

2 Tim 4:7 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷I have **fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith**: ⁸Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Phil 3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Forgive and **forget** the past, and look to the future! **No excuses, no regrets, no bitterness.**

7. Eccl 7: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

H750 'ârêk From [H748](#); *long*:—long [-suffering, -winged], **patient**, slow [to anger].

Rom 2:7 To them who by **patient** continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: ⁸But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, ⁹Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; ¹⁰But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

Phil 3:4 Though I might also have **confidence** in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

1 Tim 3:3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but **patient**, not a brawler, not covetous; ⁴One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; ⁵(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) ⁶Not a novice, lest being lifted up with **pride** he fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

James 5:8 Be ye also **patient**; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. ⁹Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. ¹⁰Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. ¹¹Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Job suffered but endured. He was patient through the pain and affliction. What about you? Can you look back over your life and see where you were afflicted and where you rejoiced, i.e. the positive and negative events in your life?

