

## BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, July 24, 2005

Passage: Ecclesiastes 7

Memory Passage: Psalm 119:71    **TODAY:** *From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?*

### DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Ecclesiastes 7:13-14.** What difficult situation does Solomon bring up in these verses?
- (b) What advice does Solomon have for us in the days of “prosperity?” What are some reasons that we should do this?
- (c) In days of adversity, what should we remember? How does such an attitude help us in difficult times?
- (d) What does he mean when he reminds us, “who can make straight what He has made crooked?” Read Matthew 6:25-27.
- (e) Does God have control over even those “crooked” things in our lives (Isaiah 14:27; 43:13; 46:10-11; Romans 8:28-29)? Why?
- (f) *Family:* Read Ecclesiastes 7:13-14 and Romans 8:18-28. Talk about why God allows difficulties in our lives. Does God promise that all things will be good in the lives of believers? Pray together about some things that you can rejoice in and some struggles that you need trust into God’s hands.

### DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Ecclesiastes 7:1-10.** What phrase is repeated in these verses? What point is he emphasizing about the *value* of adversity?
- (b) **Consider Ecclesiastes 7:1-4.** What type of adversity is Solomon referring to here? Make a list of the things that are “better than” in these verses?
- (c) What is the first thing that Solomon tells us is better? What do these verses tell us about a good name: Proverbs 22:1 and 10:7? How could the day of one’s death be better in terms of having a good name? What is the connection with the ointment (also Ecclesiastes 10:1)?
- (d) What can we learn in a house of mourning that we cannot learn in a house of laughter (Hebrews 9:27)?
- (e) Why is sorrow better than laughter (Psalm 119:67, 71)? What does it do to the heart (James 4:8-10)? What does adversity teach us (Psalm 90:10)?
- (f) *Family:* Read Ecclesiastes 7:1-4 and Proverbs 22:1. Talk about the importance of having a good name. Why is having a good name so important? How can we lose our good name? Why does Solomon say that the house of mourning is better than the house of feasting? Pray together that each will value having a good name over even great wealth.

### DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Ecclesiastes 7:5-7.** What is considered better in these verses? What do people normally feel about being rebuked? Why (Proverbs 9:8)? What do Proverbs 27:6; 17:10; and 15:31-32 tell us about listening to criticism?
- (b) What comparison is made with the burning of thorns? Read Revelation 3:19. What does Jesus tell us about His rebuke?
- (c) **Read Ecclesiastes 7:8-12.** What is the value of a patient spirit (Proverbs 14:29; 15:18; 16:22)?
- (d) How is the end of a matter better than its beginning (Romans 5:1-5; James 1:12)?

(e) During those times of waiting, what two things are we prone to do (vv. 9-10)? How does the attitude, “the end of the matter is better than the beginning,” help us to avoid these two pitfalls?

(f) *Family*: Read Ecclesiastes 7:5-12. Talk about how we handle criticism and why listening to criticism is so important for growing in maturity. What is the value of patience in our lives? Why should believers, of all people, have a patient spirit? Discuss how God develops patience in our lives. When will God make all things right? Share things that each are struggling with. Pray for one another that God might have His perfect work in each.

#### **DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

#### **READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Ecclesiastes 7:15-18.** What is the question of injustice that Solomon raises in verse 15? Does this cause you frustration too?

(b) Read Psalm 73:1-14. What caused Asaph to feel that all his spiritual commitments were in vain? What caused him to change his mind (Psalm 73:15-20)?

(c) What advice does Solomon give in Ecclesiastes 7:16-18? What is he warning against? What is he encouraging us to do?

(d) What kind of lifestyle was Jesus condemning in Matthew 23:23-28? How is this similar to what Solomon is talking about?

(e) Read Ecclesiastes 7:18 again. What is his conclusion? Is he suggesting that we not live godly and wise lives? How important is it to be balanced in the Christian life?

(f) *Family*: Read Ecclesiastes 7:15-18 and Matthew 23:23-28. Talk about the difference between outward and inward righteousness. What does God desire? How does verse 18 help us to keep all things in perspective? Can a person really be living a life that honors God if his “holiness” takes away the joy of the life God has given us? What has been the message of Ecclesiastes? Pray that each will take their commitment to Christ seriously but that they will also do so joyfully.

#### **DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

#### **READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Ecclesiastes 7:19-29.** What does wisdom give to us in the tough times (verse 19)?

(b) What does it remind us when we see evil and difficulties around us – consider each separately ... verse 20; 21-24; 25-29?

(c) What should we do when others criticize us (21-24)? What should we never forget when someone rebukes us (verse 23)?

(d) What is Solomon warning us about in verses 25-29? Is he criticizing all women in general or a particular type of temptation that men are all susceptible to (Proverbs 2:18-19; 5:3-5; 7:21-27; 23:28)? What does he conclude about all mankind in verse 29?

(e) Read Ecclesiastes 7:13-14 again. What should we consider when we face tough times?

(f) *Family*: Read Ecclesiastes 7:19-29. Talk about why it is harder to avoid temptations in tough times. Pray for someone you know that is facing some difficulties.

#### **DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

#### **READ THE PASSAGE**

*Think back through what you have learned each day this week.* Talk about some difficult time that you have been through. How did your faith help in those times? What temptations do you face when things get difficult? Read through Ecclesiastes 7 and Solomon’s wisdom concerning how to handle adversity when it comes. Pray that some who are facing adversity might rest in God’s wise providence.