ECC. 8:1-17 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

LIFE "UNDER THE THUMB" - (SERMON MP3)

Read E	cclesiastes 8:1. God's wisdom doesn't just fill our minds. It fundamentally changes us. It causes a man's to shine, and the of his face is changed.
•	What factors contribute to a dark or hard face? What does Solomon reveal as the softening agent to a hardened face?
•	The softening of a face occurs as a person is humbled under the favor of God. Compare Ex. 34:29-35 to 2 Cor. 3:7-18, 4:6. Also, read Is 60:1, Mat. 5:16, 17:3, Heb 1:3.
	wisdom makes us humble. Interact with the following statements that show how that is true. Why is humility foundational in each of the g situations?
•	Wisdom enables us to humbly submit to sinful authority.
•	Wisdom enables us to humbly trust in divine authority.
•	Wisdom enables us to humbly enjoy our God-given life.
	passage, Solomon describes the value of wisdom. Wisdom can sometimes be an ambiguous term for us. How do you define wisdom and do we get it? Use some of these verses to help: Prov. 1:7, 2:6, 9:10, Ecc. 2:14, Is. 11:12, 1 Cor. 1:24, 30, 2 Tim. 3:15, James 1:5.
•	A helpful definition of wisdom might be: "Wisdom is the God-given ability to see life with rare objectivity and to handle life with rare stability." - Chuck Swindoll
	esiastes 8:2, we are commanded to the King's command. His words were written in a time where king's had supreme authority over bjects. We live in a very different day. But, Solomon's words still apply to each one of us.
•	Who are the "kings" in your life?
•	Interact with the following statement. "Nothing tests our wisdom like the kings in our lives." Do you agree? What do you think that statement means?
•	What is a timeless truth that applies to your situation under authority? For example, "God wants me to"
•	Is it ever acceptable to disobey authority? Is there ever a time for insubordination? If so, when? Read Exodus 1:17, 20-21, 1 Kings 18:3-4, Acts 4:18-20, Acts 5:29 and develop a working definition guide for handling authority.

Solomon reminds us in verse 2, that all human authority issues are ultimately divine authority issues. Submission to God should govern all our submission to earthly authority.

	Read Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-25, Ephesians 6:5-8, Col. 3:22-25. How must these verses affect our degovernment?	ecisions at work, at home, to		
	he values of God's wisdom is that it reminds us of our limitations and weaknesses. You probably would be right job application, but it is extremely important in pursuing the humility that God requires to submit to those			
•	Read Ecclesiastes 8:7-8 and list the limitations that Solomon surfaces.			
•	Ultimately, who is responsible for the weaknesses in your life and the lives of others? We and not discourage us? What is God's purpose in our limitations?	hy should that thought encourage us		
•	Take a moment to prayerfully consider your God-given weaknesses and limitations. List a few of them below, then list the ways that you try to hide them. Be prepared to share your responses with the group.			
	siastes, Solomon repeatedly points to some of life's mysteries and frustrations to remind us of our ne ur sin and its limitations, there are things on this earth that will leave us scratching our heads and questionin			
•	If you could ask God to solve any mystery in life, what would it be? How has this particular mystery frustrated you in the past?			
•	What injustices does Solomon point out in Ecclesiastes 8:10-17? Does Solomon give an ultimate reason for these injustices? YES or NO Instead, what does He offer as a solution?			
•	Reflect on the following verses: Matt. 13:11, Eph. 1:9, 3:4-6, Col. 1:26-27. How can looking to the mysteries that God has already revealed enable us to fear before Him in the areas that He has not revealed?			
•	In what injustices or mysteries in your own life are you being tempted to subtly doubt God's goodness or H situations in your group, prepare to share truth about God that can encourage trust in those that are hurting			
	n reminds us that we are not the ultimate judge of right and wrong in our world. How does Psalm urage us both to hope in future justice and call others to bow under God's rule? Read Psalm 73 together up.	PRAYER REQUESTS		
Can you enjoy life? Solomon's placement of Ecc. 8:15 seems very odd at first glance. But, his point is this: If you have been humbled under God's wisdom, you know your place in this world. You can enjoy whatever life God chooses to give you.				
•	One preacher has said that a main reason we can't enjoy life is because "we take ourselves too seriously, and God too lightly." Do you agree or disagree? How do you take yourself too seriously in the areas that this study has brought up?			
•	In your life this week, how can taking God seriously and ourselves lightly be the path to the enjoyment that Solomon commends here?			
•	What is keeping you from joy today? Write down your biggest frustrations. (For example What is frustrating you right now? What drives you crazy? What are you losing sleep over? What is waking you up earlier than normal?) Look at your list. How does Ecclesiastes 8 address your frustrations? What truths will make a difference in your battle with anxiety? God gives us the only solution in Himself.			