

CROOKED THINGS & THE WORK OF GOD DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

ECCLESIASTES 7:1-14

- 1 **What is an event in your life that unexpectedly turned out to be a blessing in disguise?** How did your perspective about this event change over time?
- 2 **Ecclesiastes 7:1-14 contrasts human perspective with God's wisdom.** Fools ignore, deny, or numb difficulties in life, or they try to control, manipulate, and change them. Those who are wise accept difficulties from the hand of God as opportunities for growth and maturity. Use the summaries below along with the descriptions of folly in the verses to apply God's word to your life. What examples from your life illustrate these contrasts? How have you seen yourself in the wisdom of folly that Solomon describes?

THE WAY OF WISDOM - "BETTER"

THE WAY OF FOLLY

Difficult choices can produce character. v1


Mourning can reveal our true end. v2,4


Sorrow can prepare us for joy. v3


Rebuke can show us what we can't see. v5-6

Patience can produce endurance. v7-10

- 3 **"Consider the work of God: who can make straight what he has made crooked?"** (Ecc. 7:13) What does it mean to see our difficult or unexpected life paths as "made crooked by God"? What stands out to you about the crooked paths of life from passages like John 9:1-7, 2 Corinthians 12:8-9, Phil. 1:21-23?

 *How are you tempted to control, straighten out, deny or ignore what God has made crooked?*

 *Discuss together how Christ's journey to the cross is an example of a "crooked path" with a divine purpose. Reflect on how Isaiah 53:2-6 and Luke 24:25-27 prophesy and explain Christ's suffering and its purpose.*

 *How can we cultivate a humble trust in God, especially in the midst of our challenging or "crooked" stories? Discuss how trusting God in difficult times differs from trusting Him in good times.*

4 **Solomon says that we can learn more at a funeral than at a party.** What are some of the usual perspectives on life and death that this paradox challenges?

🌀 *What value is found in considering death, mourning, and sorrow? (Ps. 90:12, 2 Cor. 4:17-18, James 4:14, 1 Pet. 1:24-25)*

♥ *If you died today, what phrase would sum up your life thus far? What do you want written on your tombstone or spoken about you at your eulogy?*

♥ *What has dominated your time lately? Will any of that matter 1,000 years from now? How does God want you to focus more time and energy on the things of eternity?*

5 **Though it may be painful, the faithful rebuke of a friend is good for us.** Read Prov. 13:20, 17:10, 20:30, 27:6, Ps 141:5. Over the last month, when have you seen the “wounds of a friend” as faithful or beneficial?

🌀 *Is it easier for you to be rebuked or to rebuke? _____ Why do you think that is? What does your answer show you about yourself?*

♥ *How does God want you to grow in your response to a friend's rebuke and in your response to a friend's sin?*

6 **Solomon describes wisdom as an inheritance, a protective shield and a source of life.** What can we learn from each aspect of that imagery?

📖 *Where does wisdom come from? What is the connection between the wisdom that we need and Jesus Himself? Read Rom. 11:33, Eph. 1:8-9, 3:8-9, Col. 2:2-3, 1 Cor. 1:20-31, Jam. 1:5.*

♥ *Where do you most need wisdom right now?*

🗣️ *Does wisdom from God guarantee that we will have all the answers? YES or NO Why is that an important aspect to remember?*

♥ *How can we receive this wisdom that we desperately need? What does it look like to cultivate a heart of wisdom?*