

Signs of Real Wisdom (Part 1)

Ecclesiastes 7:13-14

Consider the work of God: who can make straight what he has made crooked?

In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him. (Ecclesiastes 7:13-14)

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“When the Preacher talks about something ‘crooked,’ he is not referring to something that is morally out of line, he is talking about some trouble or difficulty in life we wish we could change but cannot alter. This happens to all of us.

We struggle with the physical limitations of our bodies. We suffer the breakdown of personal or family relationships. We have something that we wish we did not have or do not have something that we wish we did. Sooner or later there is something in life that we wish to God had a different shape to it. . . .

The Preacher is telling us that whether things seem crooked or straight, we need to see our situation in terms of the sovereignty of God.”

– Phillip Ryken

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. . . so that man may not find out anything that will be after him. (v.14b)

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God says: *I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please* (Is. 46:10).

Jesus: *Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows (Mt.10:29-31).*

God **controls** everything, even the death of a lowly sparrow.

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God **knows** everything, even the number of hairs on our head.

B. How can we be at peace with God's sovereignty?

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He numbers our days here on earth:

All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be (Ps.139:16).

God determines the outcome of our plans:
Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." (James 4:13-15).

“My religious belief teaches me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed the time for my death. I do not concern myself about that, but to be always ready, no matter when it may overtake me. That is the way all men should live, and then all would be equally brave.”

– Stonewall Jackson

“God in His love always wills what is best for us. In His wisdom He always knows what is best, and in His sovereignty He has the power to bring it about.”

– Jerry Bridges

“You must not only believe that God is in control of every event in his universe and specifically every event in your own life, but that God, in exercising that control, does so from his infinite love for you.”

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And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Rom.8:28)

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. (2 Tim.4:6-8)

The sovereignty of God is the one impregnable rock to which the suffering human heart can cling. The circumstances surrounding our lives are no accident: they may be the work of evil, but that evil is held firmly within the mighty hand of our sovereign God. . . .

All evil is subject to Him, and evil cannot touch His children unless He permits it. God is the Lord of human history and of the personal history of every member of His redeemed family.”

*- Margaret Clarkson in *Grace Grows Best in Winter**

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