



Wisdom is its Own Reward

Ecclesiastes 7:15-29

Listen! Ever put a dollar in a vending machine and not get your Dr. Pepper out?

- **The ongoing futility:** Life in this world is not predictable, fair, and linear.

In a futile world: We cannot use religion and self-effort as an insurance policy. (15-18)

In a futile world: We can benefit from wisdom but we cannot avoid all sin. (19-22)

In a futile world: We cannot fully discover wisdom and be exempt from all temptations. (23-26)

In a futile world: We cannot always find explanations but we can always turn to God. (27-29)

Remember: There are plenty of times when we put a dollar in and don't get a Dr. Pepper out.

Bottom Line: We cannot always find explanations but we can always turn to God.

Application: The unpredictability of life “clips the wings of self-sufficiency.” (Derek Kidner)
More important than knocking ourselves out to figure it all out is to cast ourselves on God.

Question: In what ways do you need to stop figuring it out and start trusting God in the enigma?

“Walking Papers”

Practical helps for walking the Christian walk each day this week.

The point: You cannot always find explanations but you can always turn to God.

- **Today:** Ask God to show you any ways in which you are seeking a “middle of the road morality” (vv 15-18) and trying to use religion as a safety net—but not living a sold-out life of discipleship to God.
- **Monday:** Ask God to show you any ways that you have sinned and have not circled back and confessed and made it right (vv 19-22)
- **Tuesday:** Ask God how you are doing in the use of your tongue about others.
- **Wednesday:** Are you tempted by, or have you given in to, any sexual temptation? If so, will you stop, confess, get help, and start rebuilding trust? (vv 23-26)
- **Thursday:** Do you have people who have let you down and whom you have not forgiven? (vv 27-29)
- **Friday:** What are the bitter, frustrating, non-linear things that you are trying to figure out?
- **Saturday:** In what ways do you need to stop figuring it out and start trusting God in the enigma?

“Companionship Papers”

Dialogue questions for helping each other in the Christian walk this week.

GETTING STARTED:

- Describe a time when you “put a dollar in and did not get your Dr. Pepper out”—a time when life was not predictable, fair, and linear on the negative side.
- Describe a time when you “did not put a dollar in and did get a Dr. Pepper out”—a time when life was not predictable, fair, and linear on the positive side.

LOOK AT THE TEXT:

- Verses 15-18: What does Solomon mean by his “lifetime of futility” (v 15) and how does that set the tone and context for this section?
- Verses 19-22: How is it that wisdom strengthens a wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city? What are the upsides of wisdom? What does Solomon say elsewhere in Ecclesiastes are the downsides of wisdom.
- Verses 23-26: Why is wisdom and knowledge so difficult to discover? Why is a predatory woman (or man) “more bitter than death?”
- Verses 27-29: Why did Solomon, in his interpersonal relationships, find so few people to be trustworthy? How do we stop “seeking our own devices?”

LIVE DIFFERENTLY:

- In what ways do you need to stop figuring it all out and trust God in the enigma? Are you demanding something to become “linear and predictable” rather than trust God for His help in that area?