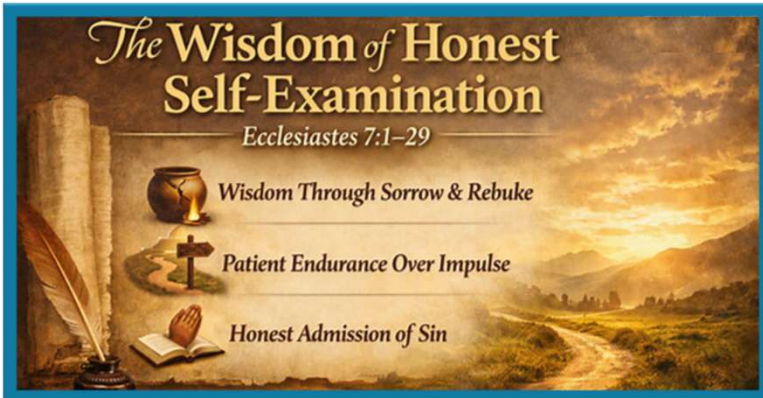




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Theme

True wisdom begins with honest self-examination - facing sorrow, correction, and our own shortcomings with humility opens the way to God's grace and enduring hope.

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The Wisdom of Honest Self-Examination

Ecclesiastes 7:1-29

Wisdom Through Sorrow & Rebuke

Patient Endurance Over Impulse

Honest Admission of Sin

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Wisdom Through Sorrow

- Truth sets us free to face reality honestly, even when painful & it leads to spiritual freedom.

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:32 KJV)

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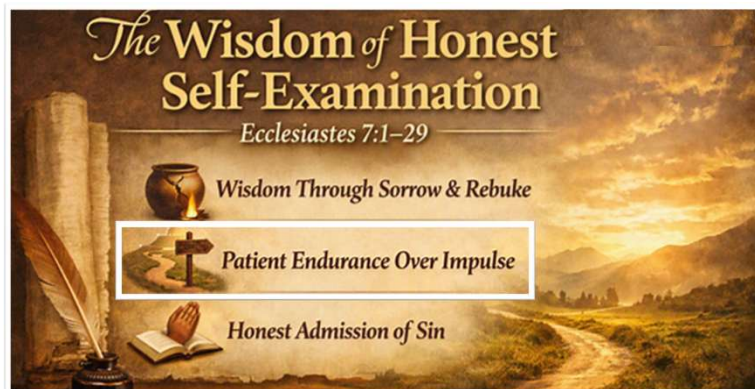
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Patient Endurance Over Impulse

- Suffering builds endurance which shapes character & produces hope.

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- Jesus modeled determination - He moved toward Jerusalem with steady purpose despite suffering.

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- Wisdom waits patiently like a farmer trusting the rains - We can trust God's timing.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. (James 5:7-8 KJV)

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- Endurance wins the crown - Finishing faithfully matters more than early speed.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. (2 Timothy 4:7-8 KJV)

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- Doing good requires perseverance - We reap spiritual fruit when we do not give up.

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- Where has endurance shaped your character over the years?
- What situations tempt you toward quick or bitter responses?
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Honest Admission of Sin

- All people fall short - No one is perfectly righteous; all need God's mercy.

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (Romans 3:23 KJV)

23

Honest Admission of Sin

- Confession brings cleansing - Denying sin blinds us, but honest confession restores us.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8–9 KJV)

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- Spiritual poverty is the doorway to heaven - Recognizing our need is the first step into God's kingdom.

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3 KJV)

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Honest Admission of Sin

- Humility leads to justification - The tax collector's honest prayer brought God's mercy.

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (Luke 18:13-14 KJV)

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- Weakness invites God's power - Admitting our limitations opens us to God's grace.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9 KJV)

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- What helps you be honest with God about your weaknesses?
- Where are you tempted to compare yourself to others instead of examining your own heart?
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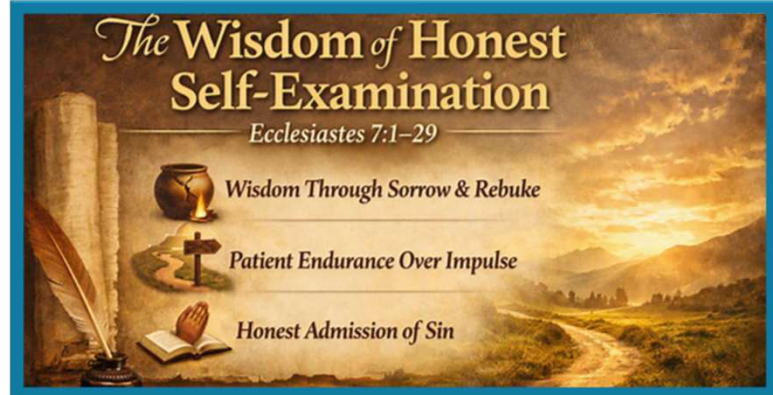
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Honest Self-Examination

- Slowing down enough to listen to your own heart
- Honest self-examination begins with stillness - Giving yourself space to notice what's happening inside you.
 - "Why did that comment bother me so much?"
 - "Why am I feeling lonely today?"
 - "What fear is underneath my frustration?"
- This is the gentle work of paying attention rather than pushing feelings aside.

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Honest Self-Examination

- Naming reality instead of avoiding it.
- It means telling the truth about:
 - your limitations
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- Let Scripture shine a light on your motives.
- Seniors often say Scripture helps them see themselves more clearly:
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- Receiving correction without defensiveness.
- This is one of the clearest signs of spiritual maturity.
- Older adults often say:
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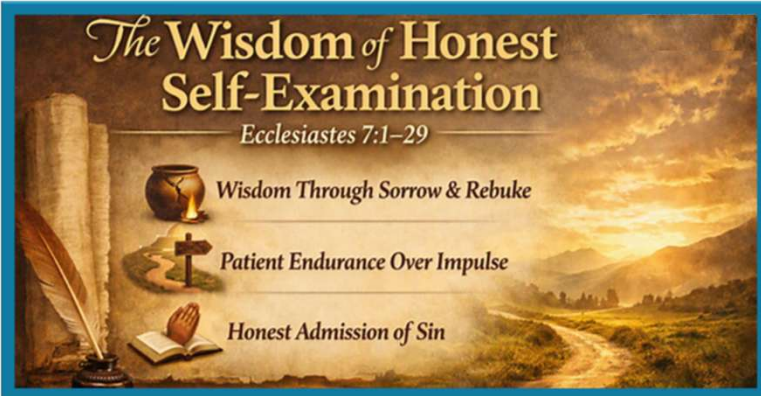
- Confessing weakness & asking for grace.
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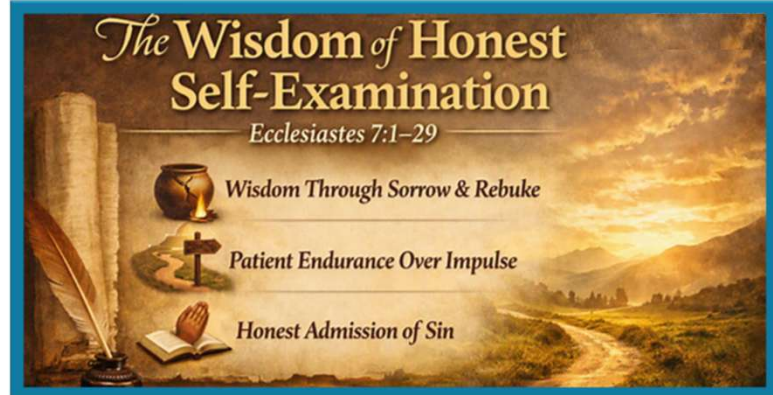
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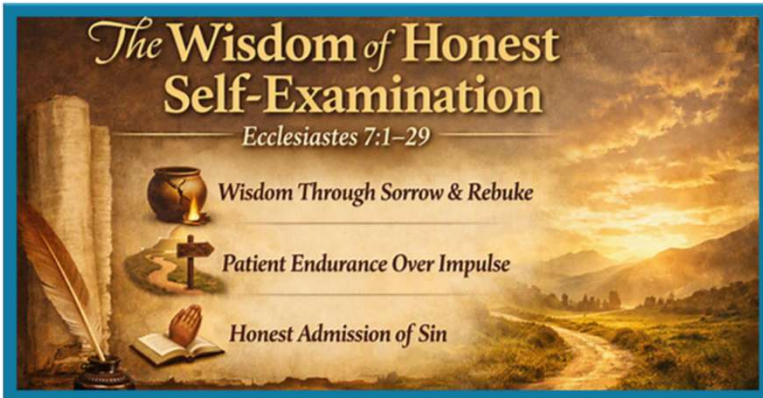
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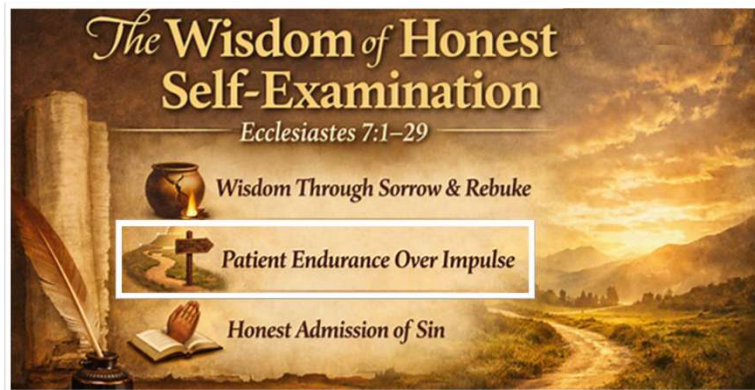
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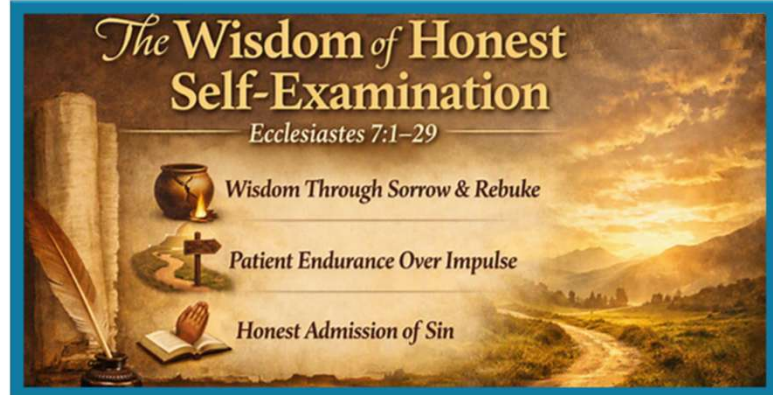
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- Slowing down enough to listen to your own heart
- Honest self-examination begins with stillness - Giving yourself space to notice what's happening inside you.
 - "Why did that comment bother me so much?"
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 - "What fear is underneath my frustration?"
- This is the gentle work of paying attention rather than pushing feelings aside.

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- Naming reality instead of avoiding it.
- It means telling the truth about:
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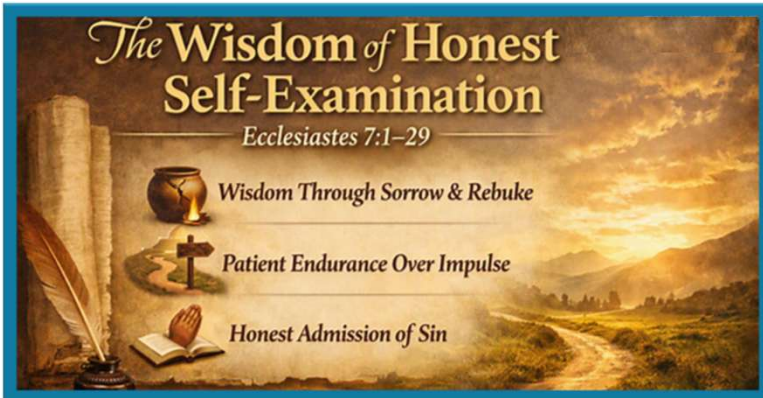
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True wisdom begins with honest self-examination - facing sorrow, correction, and our own shortcomings with humility opens the way to God's grace and enduring hope.

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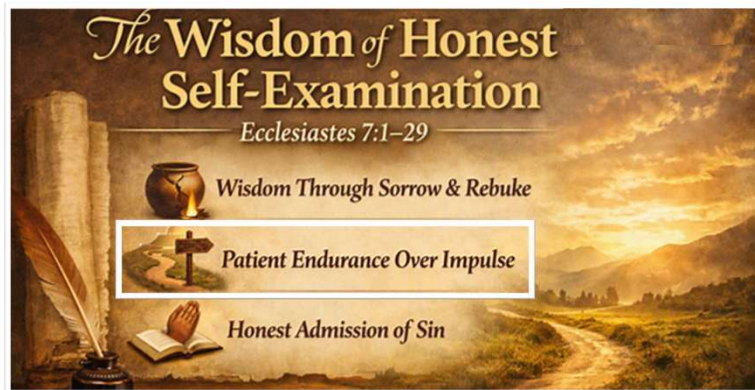
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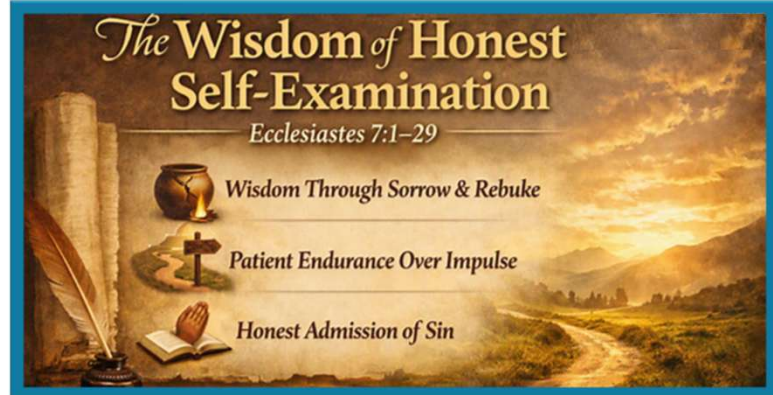
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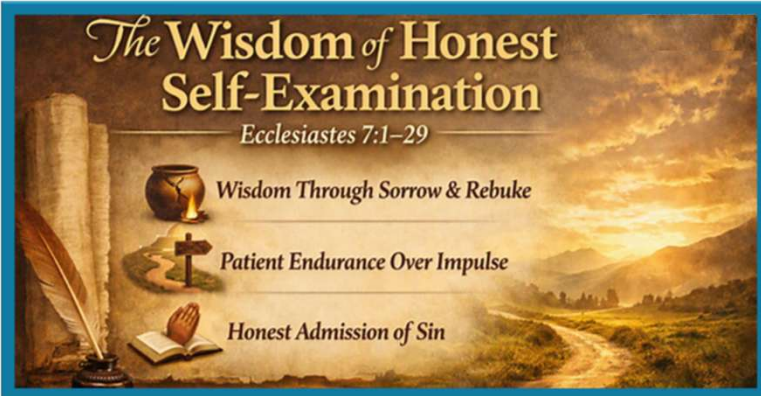
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9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9 KJV)

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Discussion Questions

- What helps you be honest with God about your weaknesses?
- Where are you tempted to compare yourself to others instead of examining your own heart?
- How has God met you with grace in moments of weakness?

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Practical Application

- Invite trusted feedback from a friend.
- Write honest reflection about recent foolishness or impatience.
- Think about possible wise responses to past impulsive moments.
- Practice delayed response before reacting to difficult situations.
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29

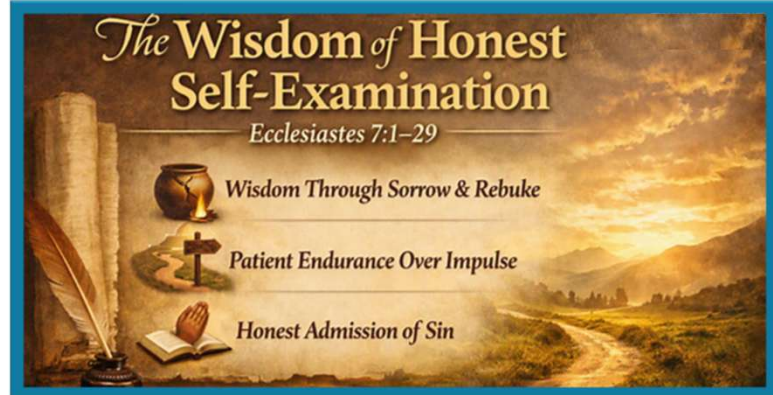
The Wisdom of Honest Self-Examination

Ecclesiastes 7:1–29

Wisdom Through Sorrow & Rebuke

Patient Endurance Over Impulse

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30

Honest Self-Examination

- Slowing down enough to listen to your own heart
- Honest self-examination begins with stillness - Giving yourself space to notice what's happening inside you.
 - "Why did that comment bother me so much?"
 - "Why am I feeling lonely today?"
 - "What fear is underneath my frustration?"
- This is the gentle work of paying attention rather than pushing feelings aside.

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- Naming reality instead of avoiding it.
- It means telling the truth about:
 - your limitations
 - your regrets
 - your patterns
 - your reactions
 - your temptations
- Not with shame, but with clarity.
- This is where wisdom begins: naming what is true..

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- Let Scripture shine a light on your motives.
- Seniors often say Scripture helps them see themselves more clearly:
 - “Am I being patient?”
 - “Am I trusting God’s timing?”
 - “Am I comparing myself to others?”
 - “Am I holding onto bitterness?”
- God’s Word becomes a mirror not to condemn, but to guide.

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Honest Self-Examination

- Receiving correction without defensiveness.
- This is one of the clearest signs of spiritual maturity.
- Older adults often say:
 - “I don’t get offended as easily anymore.”
 - “I know people mean well.”
 - “I’d rather grow than pretend.”
- Honest self-examination welcomes loving rebuke because it leads to freedom.

34

Honest Self-Examination

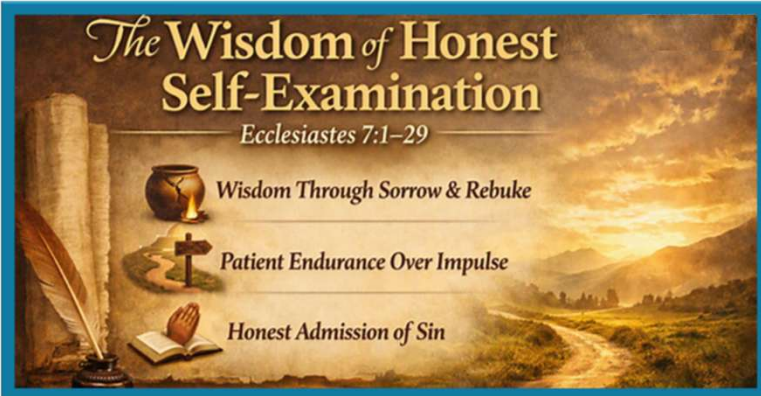
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- Confession is not beating yourself up - It’s opening the door for God’s healing.

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Honest Self-Examination

- Remembering that God is gentle with the aging
- Seniors often say:
 - “I don’t have anything to prove anymore.”
 - “I’m more aware of my faults, but also more aware of God’s mercy.”
 - “Weakness doesn’t scare me - It reminds me to lean on Him.”
- Honest self-examination becomes a pathway to peace, not pressure.

36



Ecclesiastes 7 KJV

7 A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth. 2 It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. 3 Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. 4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. 5 It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools. 6 For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity.

1

2

Ecclesiastes 7 KJV

7 Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart. 8 Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. 9 Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. 10 Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this. 11 Wisdom is good with an inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that see the sun. 12 For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

Ecclesiastes 7 KJV

13 Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked? 14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him. 15 All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness. 16 Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself? 17 Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?

3

4

Ecclesiastes 7 KJV

18 It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all. 19 Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city. 20 For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. 21 Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee: 22 For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others. 23 All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me. 24 That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?

5

Ecclesiastes 7 KJV

25 I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness: 26 And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her. 27 Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one by one, to find out the account: 28 Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found. 29 Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

6

Theme

True wisdom begins with honest self-examination - facing sorrow, correction, and our own shortcomings with humility opens the way to God's grace and enduring hope.

7

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8

Wisdom Through Sorrow

- Truth sets us free to face reality honestly, even when painful & it leads to spiritual freedom.

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:32 KJV)

9

Wisdom Through Sorrow

- God's discipline is loving - Correction may hurt at first but produces righteousness.

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. (Hebrews 12:11 KJV)

10

Wisdom Through Sorrow

- Godly sorrow leads to repentance - Grief that turns us toward God brings life, not destruction.

10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. (2 Corinthians 7:10 KJV)

11

Wisdom Through Sorrow

- Trials produce maturity - Difficulties strengthen faith & build steadfastness.

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. (James 1:2-4 KJV)

12

Wisdom Through Sorrow

- Loving rebuke is valuable - Faithful correction from wise friends is better than flattery.

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24–25 KJV)

13

Discussion Questions

- When has someone's honest rebuke helped you grow spiritually?
- What does your typical response to correction reveal about your trust in God?
- How do you tell the difference between sorrow that leads to repentance & sorrow that leads to despair?

14

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Patient Endurance Over Impulse

- Suffering builds endurance which shapes character & produces hope.

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (Romans 5:3–5 KJV)

16

Patient Endurance Over Impulse

- Jesus modeled determination - He moved toward Jerusalem with steady purpose despite suffering.

51 And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, (Luke 9:51 KJV)

17

Patient Endurance Over Impulse

- Wisdom waits patiently like a farmer trusting the rains - We can trust God's timing.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. (James 5:7-8 KJV)

18

Patient Endurance Over Impulse

- Endurance wins the crown - Finishing faithfully matters more than early speed.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. (2 Timothy 4:7-8 KJV)

19

Patient Endurance Over Impulse

- Doing good requires perseverance - We reap spiritual fruit when we do not give up.

9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (Galatians 6:9 KJV)

20

Discussion Questions

- Where has endurance shaped your character over the years?
- What situations tempt you toward quick or bitter responses?
- How have you seen God work slowly but faithfully in your life?

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Honest Admission of Sin

- All people fall short - No one is perfectly righteous; all need God's mercy.

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (Romans 3:23 KJV)

23

Honest Admission of Sin

- Confession brings cleansing - Denying sin blinds us, but honest confession restores us.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8–9 KJV)

24

Honest Admission of Sin

- Spiritual poverty is the doorway to heaven - Recognizing our need is the first step into God's kingdom.

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3 KJV)

25

Honest Admission of Sin

- Humility leads to justification - The tax collector's honest prayer brought God's mercy.

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (Luke 18:13-14 KJV)

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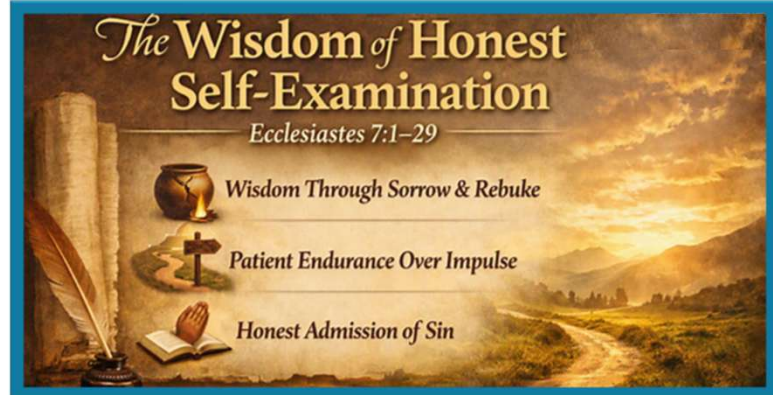
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