



THE LIMITATIONS OF WISDOM | ECCLESIASTES 8:1-17

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Ecclesiastes chapter eight reminds us of the limitations of wisdom, and urges us to replace sinful cravings for God-like power and knowledge with fear and joy.

Our weakness and mortality is a theme that receives increasing attention through the closing chapters of Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 8 is framed by a question (v. 1) and the answer to that question (v. 17).

While we are called to pursue divine _____, we must also appreciate its limitations. For instance, it does not make us like God in terms of knowledge or power.

1. The Question: Who is wise? (8:1), and The Answer: No one is like God (8:17).
2. Wisdom can help us deal with capricious governing authorities, but we still do not have the power to change their hearts (8:2-8).
3. Wisdom can help us discern between good and evil, but we still do not have the power to stop people from celebrating evil (8:10-11).

4. We do not have the power to prolong our lives, but we should trust and **fear** the One who we KNOW as the giver of life and breath (8:12-13).

5. Again, Wisdom helps us to discern injustice and oppression, but we must be convinced that such things, under the sun, are only for a season. They are *hebel* (8:14).

6. We do not have the power or perfect knowledge to end oppression and injustice, but we should find **joy** resting in the power of the One who does (8:15).

7. There is none like God, perfect in knowledge and power (8:16-17).

Questions to Consider

1. Thinking back over previous studies in Ecclesiastes, what are some of the reasons that we should pursue wisdom from God?
2. How do sinful cravings for more knowledge and more power (control) slip into your life?
3. We cannot change the hearts of governing authorities, but what can we do when they are unjust and capricious?
4. A key phrase in this passage is "...yet I know..." in v. 12. Why?
5. How can we find joy even when injustice or oppression are taking place around us?
6. Read the prayer in Colossians 1:9-14. We are not omniscient or omnipotent, but God still urges us to seek wisdom and power from Him, through Christ. Make that a focus of your praying this week.