



ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

Ecclesiastes
7:19-22

Pastor's Notes

V. 19 Government is not the solution to for life's problems. And bigger government won't make it better either. Solomon is not making a political case for a political party here, but rather, he is pointing out that wisdom with a private citizen in the private sphere is more effective than the strength of 10 politicians.

V. 20 Highlight this verse! It is a primary passage that makes the case for the biblical doctrine of 'original sin.' But why is this verse so important? The answer is a lesson of wisdom. Original sin shows us the following:

- A) We can't press our morality too far; we have original sin. We can never obtain perfection. If we think that we have, we are living a lie and denying original sin.
- B) Don't be surprised when people sin against you. Be surprised when they don't!
- C) Because of original sin in this world, you must learn to be wise as a serpent and harmless as doves.
- D) Understand how original sin is amplified by people in positions of authority. That is the painful reality.
- E) Know that wisdom will collide with original sin. Therefore, they may be consequences for doing the right thing.
- F) Because of original sin, beware of false prophets who put too much emphasis on the 'will of mankind.' We are sin-sick; not full of potential.
- G) You can't totally trust your neighbor. And get this, you can't trust yourself. Yes, you can't trust your emotions, feelings, and thoughts. They are tainted by original sin. So, who can you trust? Frankly, there is only one.: we fear, love, and trust in the Lord and the Lord's Word.

V. 21 Before you take an accusation to heart, you first must consider whether the accusation should even be heard in the first place. Keep in mind that we have two ditches here. On the one hand, we can turn a deaf ear to the rebuke of a wise man (See Ec-

clesiastes 7:5). In other words, we should 'want' to hear the rebuke of a wise person who loves us. On the other hand, too often we allow ourselves to hear the gossip and slander of busybodies. That is to say; sometimes we give too much attention to squeaky wheels! Have you ever heard the phrase, "Consider the source"? Well, we would do well to consider the source of the gossip and slander. Sometimes, we listen too much to the whining, complaining, and yadda-yadda-yadda noise of foul mouth blabber-mouth meddlers, which only empowers their sinful chatter. So, before you take to heart or defend yourselves against accusations, you should first consider if the accusations are founded in reality or sin. A good rule of thumb is that a wise person will attempt to convict you of sin—sin that is clearly defined on the basis of the 10 Commandments. The wise person also has the goal of seeing you brought to repentance, confession, absolution, and health. They want redemption for you 'from' a real wrong. However, an indicting gossipmonger will accuse you on the basis of hearsay, insinuations, guilt by association relationships, hasty generalizations, triangulation, and perceptions—sin that cannot be concretely substantiated on the basis of the 10 Commandments. The slanderer has the goal of seeing you shamed, punished, demoted, and controlled. They want vengeance for you 'for' a pseudo wrong.

V. 22 Here is Bollhagen on verse 22, "*Do you ever say bad things about another person? Of course you do! Think for a moment of a person you have gossiped about recently. Do you really hate that person so much? Do you wish him harm? Undoubtedly not! If anything, your gossip shows how that person means enough to you that you were at least thinking about him. Judging only by your words, you must wish that person were dead. In reality, you would probably risk your life for his safety. Now put the shoe on the other foot, and think of yourself as the target of someone else's gossip. What was true of you is also true of him. Remember that, and you won't get so distressed the next time people talk about you.*"

Life is tough; don't get worked up by chatter. Repent when you need to and receive forgiveness. Fear God and His Word, not the empty talk of man.