

Authority: A Guardrail for Meaning in Life

Ecclesiastes 8

1. Be wise enough to respect authorities. (vv. 1-5)
 - a. 1 Peter 2:13-14 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, 14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.
 - b. Romans 13:1-5 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. 4 For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.
 - c. Proverbs 24:21 Fear the LORD and the king, my son, and do not join with rebellious officials,
 - d. Acts 5:29 Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings!
 - e. 1 Peter 3:13-14 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened."

2. Let the limitations of earthly wisdom give you a greater wisdom. (vv. 6-8)
 - a. Isaiah 48:3 I foretold the former things long ago; they came out of My mouth and I proclaimed them. Suddenly I acted, and they came to pass.
 - b. Isaiah 46:10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.'
 - c. Job 14:5 You have decided the length of our lives. You know how many months we will live, and we are not given a minute longer.

3. Respect God's authority even when his justice tarries. (vv. 9-14)
 - a. 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.
 - b. Psalm 10
 - c. Psalm 73:1-20
 - d. Psalm 37:1-4 Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong; 2 for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away. 3 Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. 4 Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

4. Enjoy what you can since you can't understand it all. (vv. 15-17)
 - a. Psalm 131:1-2 LORD, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. 2 Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for its mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me.

LOOKING AT LIFE BEYOND THE SUN:

- God is in control and knows the future.

- Jesus frees us from the uncertainty of death.
 - Isaiah 25:8 he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.

- We will all stand in judgment so we should live with that in mind now.
 - Hebrews 9:27 Just as man is appointed to die once, and after that to face judgment
 - 2 Corinthians 5:8-10 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.