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## Monday

Eccl. 7:1 ...And the day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth.

Wow! That'll get your attention. "The day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth?" The teacher is not speaking of the joy, the potential, or the intrinsic value of a particular day — not really. He is speaking of the day as a catalyst for gaining genuine wisdom. Celebrations do little to spark deep thought. The grieving man cannot get away from serious thoughts. So in the end the bitter times of life, the difficult days of living, the troubled moments of relationship, the struggling times of hardship, these are the times when men and women grow deep and strong. These are the times when faith is built, values are proven, and God is near.

## Tuesday

Eccl. 7:5 It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man  
Than for one to listen to the song of fools.

The graveyard is not the only place of wisdom; the wise man or woman finds great insight in the correction that comes from others, even the 'hard to hear' rebuke of a friend. The fool puffs up in pride. The fool turns a deaf ear. The fool will not listen to things he/she does not like to hear. Excuses, arguments, deflected blame are handy tools of the fool. The wise will listen for the kernel of truth that is found even in an angry rebuke, and listen intently to the loving correction of a friend. The wise relish God's correcting message in the sermon, the devotion, or the Sunday School lesson and take action. To them it is salvation, gain, and beauty.

## Wednesday

Col. 4:5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom..., making the most of the opportunity.

Wisdom, as the bible describes wisdom, is not simply knowledge or insight, even of the highest order. Wisdom is *practical knowledge applied*. It really doesn't matter what you know (or what knowledge you have access to), if you do not apply that knowledge with concrete action. The scripture does not merely instruct you to get knowledge or acquire insight, but to conduct yourself with wisdom, to take advantage of the opportunities insight affords. The greater fool is the man or woman who has the knowledge and fails to take action, who has the insight to act well and yet acts foolishly. The wise man or woman gains insight *and acts wisely*.

## Thursday

Eccl. 7:4 The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning,  
While the mind of fools is in the house of pleasure.

Every important decision should be made in a graveyard. If you can't physically take a walk among the graves, at least do so in your imagination. Consider the outcome of your decision from the perspective of the grave looking back toward life. Ask yourself about the legacy you will leave, the impact you will have. Is that which seems so urgent, demanding, or essential something that you will hold as valuable in a graveyard? What legacy will you leave, what impact will your decision make upon the rest of your life, the life of those who know you, and the kingdom of God. Wise answers to all kinds of decisions are found in graveyards.

## Friday

Eccl. 7:2 It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, because that is the end of every man--the living takes it to heart.

Children need to attend a funeral. Too many children, young adults too, have been sheltered from death by well-intentioned, but misguided parents so that there is no understanding of life's end. Death is far removed from the thoughts of this generation; therefore there is no thought of eternal things, of judgment, heaven and hell. Time passes, hearts grow hard and cold, sin prevails, and minds grow closed. Children are lost when parents protect their children from the thought of death leaving them unprepared for the one absolutely constant in life — its end.