

02-01-06a Ecclesiastes

As we continue our worship this morning, let's turn for our scripture reading to Proverbs chapter 7. Proverbs chapter 7. The Proverbs were assembled and edited by Solomon. Many of them were authored by Solomon. This is the seventh chapter of that collection. We find ourselves in the seventh chapter of Kohelet, another book authored by Solomon. And in both that chapter 7 and this chapter 7, we find Principles of life pictured and exemplified in a Personification, the personification of a woman, and we'll talk more about that after we read this proverb together, but Proverbs over the seventh chapter of Proverbs in my And I've discovered in talking to some folks over the holidays I thought that all editions of the New King James had the same headings and Descriptions as you see at least in my mine is a Kirkbride Thomas Thompson chain reference Edition, but I found that there are other people at New King James and their little descriptions at the top are not the same. So in my edition here the chapter 7 is the little words in italics at the top which are editorial Headings or comments that are not a part of the Hebrew text. But my edition here says Solomon exhorts his son to wisdom and Beginning in verse 6. It is the seducing ways of an immoral woman well, the closing portion of Ecclesiastes chapter 7 also talks about A woman that causes a problem for the one who is seeking wisdom. My son, keep my words and treasure my commands within you; keep my commands and live and my law as the apple of your eye. Mind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart; say to wisdom.

You are my sister and call understanding your nearest kin that they may keep you from the immoral woman from the seductress who flatters with her words. For at the window of my house, I looked through my lattice and I saw among the simple I perceived among the youths a young man devoid of understanding. Passing along the street near her corner and he took the path to her house in the twilight in the evening in the black and dark night and there was a woman met him with the attire of a harlot and a crafty heart. She was loud and rebellious; her feet would not stay at home. At times she was outside at times in the open square lurking at every corner. So she caught him and kissed him with an impudent face. She said to him, I have peace offerings with me today. I have paid my vows. So I came out to meet you diligently to seek your face and I have found you. I have spread my bed with tapestry colored coverings of Egyptian linen. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until morning. Let us delight ourselves with love for my husband is not at home.

He has gone on a long journey. He has taken a bag of money with him and will come home on the appointed day. With her enticing speech she caused him to yield with her flattering lips. She seduced him. Immediately he went in after her as an ox goes to the slaughter or as a fool to the correction of the stocks. Till an arrow struck his liver as a bird hastens to the snare. He did not know it would cost his life. Now therefore listen to me, my children; pay attention to the words of my mouth. Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways.

Do not stray into her paths. For she has cast down many wounded and all who were slain by her.

were strong men Her house is the way to hell descending to the chambers of death Mm-hmm chapter 8 goes on to Personify wisdom as a different kind of woman who also calls in the street But chapter 7 is particularly fascinating. It has often been Applied pretty much in the literal sense that you want to be wary of immoral women and don't commit adultery and don't Go off and have an affair with a married woman and that sort of thing, but this is picturing Not just a snare and a trap for a young man who is Guileless and naive a young man devoid of understanding as it says in verse 7 this is a picture of a believer granted this is the Old Testament age, but the basic mechanics of spiritual life and growth were the same in the Old Testament as they were in the new a A believer lives his life In a fruitful way by knowing and heeding the Word of God. Here is someone who is devoid of understanding and As he passes along he is enticed away by something that allures him something that looks good Something that sounds good something that promises great pleasure something that Promises security in this if you have any doubts that this is a safe thing to do or An okay thing to do she says, you know, let me just give you some facts here Even though I'm married my husband is away and he took a lot of money with him Which means he can stay away a long time.

He told me when he's coming back. He's not coming back until the appointed time So it's safe. It's okay There will be no consequence of the husband returning unexpectedly and and giving you bad consequences So come on in look how attractive it is.

I've perfumed my bed. I've draped it with Egyptian linens that are soft to the touch and this is the promise of great personal pleasure well let's try to complete our our Interpretive loop here and move from observation of what the passage says to Interpretation and application this is not just a chapter to give teenage young men and Tell them to try to live a moral life It tells us that as believers as we wend our way through the streets of life There are going to be things that call to us and have appeal A Multi-faceted appeal it is going to appear attractive. It is going to sound attractive.

It is going to promise Gratification and pleasure and it is going to seem Innocuous it is going to seem as though there are no there's no downside. There's no bad to come as far as circumstances are concerned and Many are Going to go that way and are going to seem to be doing fine Well, what does that correspond to in the modern day? we have believers people God-fearing church attending Upright moral people and they're not going outside the bounds of their marriage necessarily. They're not off Going downtown into the red-light district and finding the immoral woman.

What are they doing? What is it that allures and attracts in our culture and in our society? that promises Gratification and fulfillment that seems to have no downside and no negative side effects Well, it's the comfortable life, isn't it? We live in an affluent society the economy takes its upturns and downturns, but we have all sorts of Ways in which we are assured that we will have security we are encouraged to place our faith and our confidence in Financial accommodations Put your savings in with us by our mutual fund get our CDs and our retirement accounts and This

is alluring it seems safe We're we've got the FDIC backing up and insuring all of this and it seems harmless enough What's the what's the harm? It seems and it may be prudent to make financial investments and to To make sound and investments the difficulty is if we do this without Wisdom if this is where we're placing our faith and our confidence and here's the measure if you want to know what where your heart is as you participate in the American culture and in the American economy ask yourself this question if I lost this You think about the people with Enron down there in South, Texas and elsewhere If this all went away tomorrow if I got a notification They called me on the phone or I got a letter in the mail tomorrow and it said I'm sorry, but you're 401k or you're Your mutual fund or your CD or your retirement account or your six-figure Bank roll your nest egg Has evaporated we're real. Sorry, but you know bad things happen that we couldn't foresee and and it's all gone How devastated would you be? We're allowed to be disappointed everybody has their Expectations and and so on but there are people who would go walk off the edge of a tall building There are people who would say, you know life is just not worth living. I worked for 15 or 20 years Accumulating these things and they're just gone.

I'm Devastated I that that was my whole future. I was banking on that That's the subtle Distinction if something allures you to the point where you place your faith in it, and it's misplaced faith It's faith that ought to be in God now. I'm not Saying and the Bible does not teach that we can just say tra-la-la so here today gone tomorrow It's natural to be disappointed.

It's natural to be You know disturbed and say oh my goodness. I'm gonna have to revamp all my plants In the same way that when we lose a loved one We invest ourselves in relationships just like we do in financial areas and to lose a loved one is a horrible thing, especially through unexpected death or Even expected death you can see something coming a long way off and yet when it hits it's it's still very Hard to manage grief is a natural thing and to lose a job to lose an Investment to lose a loved one any of these areas in which we we find something attractive. We find something alluring The measure is loss.

Are you so devastated by a loss that you Discover that you were leaning on that instead of on the Lord It is a fruitful Check of our faith. You know when Paul says examine yourself and see if you're in the faith This is one way consider Just put yourself in the position for a moment if I lost this person if I lost this thing if I lost this circumstance If I had to move if I had to do without this Whatever it may be Where would I be would it shake my confidence in the Lord there are people who have a wonderful Christian life But if they lost a child they would Decide at that point that there is no God and you read people all the time you read and hear people on on TV who? Renounce their faith and say there cannot be a God if this bad thing can happen This is a problem the Jews have with the Holocaust That's the problem that a lot of people have with if we had There are people who got all shaken up on their faith over September 11th How could God let this happen to quote-unquote innocent people? Well, that's one of the ways to measure but you notice in this chapter the first section the first five verses What is the priority? What is it that keeps us objective? So that we do not unwittingly become subjective and allow ourselves to be

allured in a way that is destructive My son keep my words treasure my commands Within you keep my commands and live keep my law as the apple of your eye The apple of your eye is the thing that is most precious, isn't it? That's the even that that phrase has come down to us even in the modern day now. Oh, she's the apple of my eye well What is the apple of your eye? It's the thing that is the center of your focus It's what your world revolves around it's your guiding Landmark When you're at sea in a ship or even in a boat, I remember when I participated in crew at the Naval Academy It is such an effort to row an eight-oar shell and Move the weight of the boat and the weight of the nine individuals therein in an effective manner and what you want to do You don't want to waste any effort making Back and forth motions you want to row in a straight line as possible So all of the oarsmen are facing to their rear of the boat.

They're facing a stern So you're looking behind? Yourself you don't always think of that but you look at these eight oared shells or two oared shell or four oared shell Everybody's facing to the rear. How do they know where they're going? Well, there is a carson in the rear the ninth man who has no oar You try to find a small person now, they use a lot of a lot of times the coxswain on varsity cruise Navy now will be a woman because they tend to be lighter and smaller You have to pull each person has to pull 1/8th of the coxswain's weight along with their own weight and 1/8th of the weight of the shell well, the whole point is the coxswain is looking forward and to row a straight line, he's got the got the Lines attached to the rudder and You pick out a point on the horizon something that's fixed something It's on land and does not move you wouldn't want to pick a ship moving down the Severn River up the Chesapeake Bay or something Because when that moves you're going to be curving along to follow it like a guided missile you want something that's fixed and immovable to set as your landmark and that is what you keep as the focus of your vision and Hopefully the starboard and port oarsmen are pulling with equal force So that all it takes is a slight touch of the rudder to keep yourself pointed exactly toward the That fixed object and you row a straight line That straight line idea is what we find in the rightly dividing the word of truth laying a straight course You don't vary you don't veer from one side to the other Well to keep the law as the apple of your eye means that the most important thing We can do all of these things all it's natural to have personal relationships and deep love for individuals It is natural to try to be prudent with our finances and to make investments into and to lay aside something for the future the word Of God says look go to the ant thou sluggard the ant Lays up and stores up for the winter. That's those are valid and true principles But the focus as we do those things is the law of the Lord It is faith and obedience to God and that is the guiding Landmark as we do these things and even if something happens some catastrophe or a loss a bereavement of some sort We're still focused on That landmark it is the apple of our eye Well this young man wandering the streets if he knew where he was going he wouldn't be called into a side street He wouldn't be diverted into this house of temptation Would he if he had a clear fixed idea of where he was going a great story over in Judges? We looked at it back when we were studying in Genesis About the prophet that was sent and told to go somewhere and do a certain thing But he got called aside into another prophets house diverted him You remember that and what a terrible thing I believe that's in Judges 18 if my recollection serves we don't have time to look at that, but the Yeah, it's in

Chapter 18 and Chapter 19 where you have the concubine Of judges, but that's the problem that that Individual had sent on a mission lost sight of it Disobeyed just a tiny part of the instructions and all kinds of catastrophe resulted from it That's the idea here in chapter 7 This is the remedy the remedy is given even before the problem is presented my son Keep my words treasure my commands keep my commands and live this is life live to the fullest This is life in the sense of fruitfulness Doesn't mean if you disobey you're going to be instantly Your hearts going to stop you're gonna cease breathing and keel over there wouldn't be any human beings alive Live means live in the sense of prosperity abundance fullness meaning and purpose Bind the law on your fingers write those laws on the tablet of your heart of course the Jews and their you know literalistic fashion had the little Bags that they would tie to their head and to their fingers What a terrible thing to miss the symbolic value of this passage It's got to be our guiding principle it has to be that which Conditions and flavors we talked Friday night about priorities and values and principles All of those are imbued and shot through with the Word of God Priorities need to be biblical priorities principles should be biblical principles values should be biblical values Now you can't develop Wisdom in any of those areas without the Word of God, which is why we prioritize the study of it to such a great degree Say to wisdom you are my sister call understanding your nearest kin So that they may keep you from the immoral woman, how can you avoid what happens to this young man? these promises and principles and doctrines of the Word of God as a Intrinsic part of our thinking and It's amazing we have seen that how many different places in the Word of God have we seen this emphasized it almost Sometimes it almost seems redundant It seems like we're saying the same thing that we always say because every passage of the Word of God that we go to makes this point and undergirds this emphasis Where do you find that emphasis in the church today is the church emphasizing minute by minute hour by hour? application of the Word of God in the small things of life Most of the time what do we hear in them in the teaching in the church today? Well, you live a holy life mainly because you don't want to get hammered with discipline and you want to have a good witness you know you don't want to Be a bad influence on people you're supposed to be letting your light shine so that you can win the lost And the the guiding principle that is presented to many believers in in the broad spectrum of the church today is your your guiding light your landmark that you steer toward is Do whatever it takes to win the lost That's your guiding principle if you need to befriend the neighbor across the fence Will you do it because you need to win them? If you're going to be nice to someone if you're going to do unto others if you're going to have love and all that your Purpose in doing all of that is to win the lost Evangelism is your lodestone.

That's your compass. That's your guiding Direction everything in your life should revolve around Figuring out a way to share the gospel with others and sharing the gospel is a wonderful thing and love and all these others is a wonderful thing, but we've The principle of beauty is symmetry and when you look at models, I was thinking about this last night. I Glanced up and saw the sound was off on the TV, but had been left on for some reason.

I glanced up and I saw this Gorgeous face this magazine cover model face, and I don't have any

idea it might have even been the Spanish Channel maybe that's why the sound was down there was this terrific looking face and but they were showing flashbacks of Of home movies and things and I noticed that in the it must have been the story of how this Singer had come to prominence or something, but they were showing early things You know shaky home videos and things and I noticed in the home videos that you know She had really thick eyebrows But then in this modern interview eyebrows were I saw a guy talking about how you do this you know you take a pencil and go from the point of the nose to the corner of the eye and And that line tells you where your eyebrows should end and then you go from the point of your nose through the center of your pupil and that tells you the highest point of the I mean you can find out all these principles of symmetry and beauty and I Noticed that that somebody had obviously done this had all the shading and everything done a beautiful face well you know people that are in entertainment get surgeries and things to reduce their nose and and Change their lips and do all these different things because everything the better the closer you can get to that ideal proportion everything is great well Let's consider evangelism. It's an important thing Speaking the truth in love to believers and unbelievers is a wonderful thing. Let's pretend like that is the nose on the body of Christ a Well proportioned nose is a wonderful thing and you notice if somebody does not have a nose It's in proportion to the rest of their face.

I am one of those individuals and I know about this I my nose is larger than the rest of my face for God's own purpose. He just didn't want me to be a magazine cover But you I mean Jimmy Durante was famous for his nose Bob Hope was famous for his nose Barbara Streisand is notorious for her nose why out of proportion to the rest of the face? well, if you just blow up someone's nose and make it enormous they had a Retrospective of the Lucy show 50th anniversary or something and had Desi jr. And Lucy Arnaz on there and they were showing these Remember Lucy one time is trying to disguise herself because William Holden is there and she doesn't want him to recognize that She's the one that got pie all over him at the restaurant and so on so she gets a some makeup It makes a fake nose and it's a great big nose And she's got these glasses and and this big nose and then William Holden offers her a cigarette So she puts it in her mouth and lights it and the flame goes up and then the nose catches on fire Because it's yeah, it's way out of proportion sticking way out there. And of course that sort of gives the whole thing away Well things have to be in proportion.

Do you get the idea here? It isn't that a nose is a bad thing that we shouldn't have but you if you blow it out of proportion it throws everything Off it destroys the symmetry well We have many areas of life. We have personal relationships. We have financial responsibilities and financial investments.

We have Ambitions we have goals and hopes and dreams in different areas. We have hobbies. We have enthusiasms We have devotions in life to things that are a part of this world and it's natural and it's normal But if any one of these allures us Relations with the opposite sex are a wonderful thing in context Inside the structure and in the limits that God has set What is the

problem with this young man in Proverbs chapter 7 at the window of my house? I looked through the lattice I saw among the simple I perceived among the youth a young man devoid of understanding passing along the street near her corner He is going to get enticed in God made us attracted to the opposite sex didn't he he gave us that we're built that way We're biologically and psychologically built to be attracted to members of the opposite gender if it gets out of proportion if it gets blown out of proportion if it's taken out of context if it Transcends or transgresses the boundaries that God has set it can become a great source of evil misery judgment distraction One can be caused to be completely fruitless and it's used as an example throughout the Bible God compares Israel to an unfaithful wife and to an immoral woman who goes and and displays herself and makes herself available to every passerby on the high hills and it's a picture of idolatry of Focusing on other things also Paul says idolatry is covetousness And undo and Excessive occupation was something other than the things of God.

That's what we have to watch out for. That's what the seductress is all of these descriptions The attire of a harlot. What is the attire of a harlot? It's seductive It's low-cut in the ancient world.

The the big allure was the ankles and the feet women had their clothing the draping of their robes and so forth always went clear to the ground and You weren't supposed to see the feet and the ankles in our society. It's you know, you get Other things that are they're thought to be the most seductive You know cleavage and and something being you know short skirts and that sort of thing But in the ancient world a short skirt was one that where your ankles showed you think about the burqas and things that they've been Talking about over in the and you get kind of the idea. Well here Her seductive Stuff is to is her is her ankles The attire of a harlot and a crafty heart.

She knows how to sort of Allure with with her appearance and so on. She's loud and rebellious This should have been a clue if the young man Remembered that the godly woman is not loud and is not rebellious before he ever gets to the Description of the Egyptian sheets and the perfume and everything else he could have stopped and said, you know what? This is not the kind of woman. I should be associating with she's loud and rebellious That's right up at the at the front.

He could have seen her attire. He could have watched her behavior and if he had any Wisdom if he had to focus on the things of God if he was focused on that Landmark on the horizon that kept his path straight. He would have walked right on by he was said, you know Let me just pass by on the other side of the street here and stay away from this mess But there was a compromise there was an ignorance and a bypassing of paying any attention to those things So what happens her feet are not at home.

He should have asked himself the question. Why is this woman not at home? Why is she not managing the servants and taking care of the household and waiting for her husband to return? She's not where she's supposed to be at times. She's outside at times.

She's in the open square lurking in every corner Lurking this is not the right kind of behavior. What's the application in the modern day? What should a church be doing? What should believers be doing? What should we be alerted by in? the modern day If someone is doing things are not supposed to do if they're where they shouldn't be Believers should not patronize Entertainments that are ungodly that lead your mind down bad paths I Don't think there is anything Commendable in a lot of what is offered There's a huge amount of stuff on the internet that people ought to stay completely away from you have to be careful You cannot even you can be trying to do something legitimate and stuff will be thrown at you on the internet You can go to a portal site like Yahoo or AOL or CompuServe or you know? The little gateway thing that they put as your default home page and on that You know they have news summaries, and here's the weather for your zip code, and here's what's hot new today and in those summaries I've had I've sent emails to CompuServe back when I had an account with them Saying I don't like what you're putting what you're forcing me to look at every time I sign on Because you're putting stuff about gay pride week, and you're putting you know See the hottest sexiest bikinis for the summer and and they said neither right up in my face. I didn't ask for that That's not what I'm paying my 9.95 a month for Back when I was paying that We have to have Standards we have to say I'm not not only am I not going to click on that link I don't even want to see that link if I'm constantly getting something thrown in my face if there's a channel on television that is Constantly putting programs up that use bad language that glorify Immoral lifestyles that try to present homosexuality as acceptable and humorous that do Defame and constantly present in a bad light the military the police the clergy the church Jesus Christ then We need to we need to take a stand in our personal life I'm not saying you have to you know become an activist and write letters and Promote boycotts, but personally what are our eyes focused on it's a good thing to just shut the TV off a lot of times We don't have to spend a lot of time on the web if you've got a purpose go there If not shut it off and all of us can be convicted and can find improvement in that area But that's what Solomon is talking about here this woman that comes with the attire of a harlot There's a lot to seduce.

There's a lot to attract in entertainment in on the web I talk about that because I'm a computer guy. I see that every day She caught him and kissed him with an impudent face. She said I have peace offerings today.

I have paid my vows What does that mean? Why is that included in this? Description with an impudent face. She says I have peace offerings with me today. I have paid my vows Peace offerings and the payment of vows are associated with worship in Israel, right? You go down to the temple and offer a peace offering you down to the temple and you pay your vows now women Were not allowed in the inner court to do these things.

They were in the court of the women. They were in the outer court they would You know this this is not the woman's function Is it she doesn't go in and lay her hand on the head of the animal or offer these offerings? What is this? well, she says this with an impudent face and What's she

talking about women did have responsibilities for purification and cleansing and what she's saying is I'm I'm available for sexual intercourse. I'm clean.

So she's saying She's saying ignore all of the other parts of the law about Getting in bed with a married woman or anything else. Just remember the part about ritual uncleanness and defilement. I'm clean I've paid my vows and I've offered my peace offerings I'm purified so you won't be made I'm not a defiled woman I'm looking at this one narrow criteria that I've paid my vows and I've offered my peace offerings And I've got the peace offerings with me.

I took some of it and I've got others. So she's got a token superficial Righteousness that she's offering she's giving him something to rationalize with well, it's not completely evil I mean I have paid my vows. I have offered my peace offerings.

I've got them right here with me And I'll be running down there. And as soon as we're done, you know, there are people who actually justify Sin and bad behavior by saying well, you know, I'll confess it as soon as I'm done. I Was reading a whole discourse on this a bunch of people getting on the web and saying, you know God wouldn't put first John 1 9 there if he didn't mean for us to use it.

So, you know, I'll just Confess I'll commit this sin and then I'll just confess it and everything will be fine And you know that way I kind of get the best of both worlds That's like saying I've got my peace offerings with me I've paid my vows I every time I do this why I go right down and clean myself up afterward So don't worry about it and there are people in the church who? justify and rationalize Things in the same way believers in our generation all of these attractive things. Well While we've still got time, let's turn Now back to Ecclesiastes. I could just continue on in Proverbs 7 forever but there is a great connection here to our passage in Ecclesiastes and You'll recall that in chapter 7 we had reached the Middle of the chapter there in verse 15 where Solomon says Actually back in Verse 11 and 12.

He said wisdom is good with permanent possession. It is profitable To the ones seeing the Sun and we revised our translation of verse 12 It's not so much talking about defense. The word is not defense or shield or fortress or any of those words.

It is Shadow or shade you're taught you're talking about the ones who are seeing the Sun you can look at the Sun You can look at the things that are illuminated by the Sun. That's the obvious. That's what everybody sees That's what lays on the surface That's the shallow life if you will The ones living the shallow life are the simpletons the ones who wander in the street and are Diverted away and seduced away by the first attractive thing they see Wisdom is in shadow wisdom is in the shade verse 12 says the silver that that you can hold in your hand that has Intrinsic value is in the shadow.

It's in the shade and Prophet you trone that which you take with you after the Sun sets is knowing that wisdom gives life To her owner. It's the same thing Solomon said over in Proverbs chapter 7

wisdom is life to those who have it Wisdom gives life to her by all to her Lord and it's a feminine It's there's a hint of that same personification of wisdom here Look at the work of God in verse 13 who is able to straighten what he has made crooked there are things that are never going to change in this life until the Lord comes back and institutes his kingdom There weren't crooked things in the initial creation. God looked at it and saw that it was Tove.

It was good There was no Perversion But now there is and God Made crooked a lot of things in this life as a result of the fall and there is a purpose in it. God has Introduced friction into the machine. God has put difficulties and challenges into this life you go to verse 14 in the day of Prosperity or in the day of benefit.

This is the feminine form of Tove Tova in the day of Tova be for Tove be in Tove Be in the good in the day of good being good in the day of calamity This is these are the things that God has made crooked look also at this Corresponding to this God works. It's the verb a saw to make or manufacture to to do a work God works in a manner such that man will not find or obtain Anything after it will not lay hold of anything after it. What on earth does that mean? We've been wrestling this with this now for a couple of weeks this section beginning at verse 14 seems strange Solomon seems to be saying well in the day of benefit live it up and when things are bad just remember God is working in such a way that you're not going to have anything after it's all over.

That seems very strange What is the point here? Well, it's going to be illustrated in the following verses There are times when we're on the right road and we enjoy blessings. We enjoy prosperity We're not encountering the difficulties. We're not encountering problems.

We're not being challenged there are other times when we are periods of prosperity periods of challenge in the day of Challenge in the day of calamity ra'ad evil Look at this remember this Corresponding to this God is at work. That is the fundamental point to remember God is at work and What is the point? It's in down at the end of verse 18 fearing God comes forth from it all Everything between verse 14 and verse 18 is a description of How you move from challenge to the fear of the Lord? God is at work showing us that if you invest yourself in this life, you're going to have an empty hand You're going to miss what's in the shadow. You're going to miss what's in the shade.

You're going to miss the wisdom You're going to be the young man wandering the streets and being seduced by the attractive woman He says I've seen everything in the days of my Havel in the days of my vapor. I've seen the righteous perishing in his righteousness. He made a point of righteousness.

I Saw another man who was a transgressor and just persisted and lasted long in his transgression He says don't become excessively righteous. Now. This seems like an odd thing to say.

How can you be too righteous? If you make righteousness your goal as an end in itself Ask yourself this question do I ever wake up in the morning say, you know today I'm going to be excessively righteous I'm not just gonna be righteous. I'm gonna be over and above right? I'm gonna be so righteous I'm gonna be the definition of they're gonna put my picture in the dictionary next to righteous That's not our purpose in life. Is it? Righteousness is a declaration by God.

We don't make ourselves Righteous we live the life of faith and God declares us righteous Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness This is a righteousness that we imbue ourselves with you see this all over Christianity today I'm going to be righteous for a reason. I'm going to do it to Impress this person make them want to be a believer and join my church or whatever Why make yourself desolate you're going to end up empty-handed It's an imbalance in the same way that you can Throw caution to the winds and be so grace oriented. Well, I'll just clean up afterward.

I've got my peace offering in my hand I'm not going to worry about transgressions Why die in what is not your time? He says you've got to take hold of this truth and not let your hand rest from it fearing God is the goal righteousness is not the goal. The fear of the Lord is the goal. Let God declare the righteousness well We're going to pause here and take our break when we come back we're going to move forward well forward in chapter 7 of Ecclesiastes and we're going to see that this idea of Laying hold of that which counts Is a hard thing to maintain a focus on we know that from our experience Solomon knows it from his experience And he's going to describe that in the remainder of chapter 7 and at the end of the chapter He's going to personify it in the very same way.

He did in Proverbs chapter 7 He's going to picture it in terms of the woman whose heart is a snare and a trap It's easy for him. He's a man. He's had a lot of experience in that we know he had many wives and concubines and it is a very people tend to illustrate out of their own experience and Solomon does the same thing, but there's a great challenge and a great truth that we can store in our souls and benefit from In the latter half of this chapter, which is the proper place of wisdom Finding the balance so that we our nose is not too large and it's not too small.

It's just right So that's where we'll resume when we return