

## The upside of down times

Ecclesiastes 7:1-15

- I. Hard times have more value than good times because they make us think seriously (7:1-7).
  - A. Funerals are better than parties (1-4).
    - 1. A good reputation at death has more value than nice things in life (1).
    - 2. Grief teaches us more than celebrations (2).
    - 3. Grief teaches the importance of character (3).
    - 4. Funerals produce wisdom; parties don't (4).
  - B. Correction is better than praise (5-7).
    - 1. Wise rebuke is better than foolish flattery (5-6; Proverbs 27:5-6).
    - 2. Money can turn the wise into fools (7).
  
- II. Hard times have value because they can produce patience and wisdom (7:8-12).
  - A. Trials grow our patience (8-9; James 1:2-4).
    - 1. Patience is the opposite of pride (8).
    - 2. Anger exposes our foolishness (9; Proverbs 14:29).
  - B. Trials grow our wisdom (10-12).
    - 1. Don't long for "good old days" when life was good but you didn't have wisdom (10).
    - 2. Wisdom produces long-term benefits (11-12).
  
- III. We must trust God's sovereign mix of good times and hard times (7:13-15).
  - A. God sovereignly controls all; we don't (13).
  - B. Enjoy good times; trust God at all times (14).
  - C. Trust God even when good people suffer but the wicked do not (15).