

Prosperity & Adversity

By Elder David Pyles

“Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.” – Eccl 7:13-15

Oftentimes when people have good fortune or receive good news, they think it wise to restrain their joy in view of the possibility that a future turn of events could serve to negate the good they have received. Indeed, such a cautious and reserved reaction might be considered very wise by many, but it makes no sense whatsoever to a sound thinker like Solomon. If good fortunes are to be dismissed because of the possibility of future loss, then what basis would there be to rejoice in any natural blessing? All of them will surely be lost eventually. *“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out,”* (1Tim 6:7).

So Solomon said the proper and wise reaction is to always be joyful when good is received. Be reconciled that today's gain will surely be tomorrow's loss, but remember that such is after the design of God: *“...in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.”* That is, the providence of God absolutely guarantees that no man will find enduring gain or joy in the material things of this life. Anyone seeking to resist this fact should: *“Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked?”*

Much of our sorrow in life derives from misplaced values and priorities. Material things are considered to be the cake and icing, and an eternal home in heaven is treated as a mere strawberry on the top of the cake. Real and enduring joy will commence once these roles are reversed. Our salvation in Christ is the cake and icing, and wealth, health, etc, are the strawberry. Those who keep this in perspective will rejoice in both the cake and the strawberry far more than those who do not.