



BETTER

Managing the Tension

#npbetter

Week 8

8 of 12

July 26, 2020

Bottom Line: The wise person knows that God will ultimately settle all accounts.

Icebreaker: What “account” (checking, a specific credit card, expense account, utility, etc.) in your life would you most hate to lose access to? Why?

Key Verse: *I know that those who fear God will be better off.* Ecclesiastes 8:12b

Last week Solomon began to share wisdom from above the sun, which is seeing life from God’s perspective, giving us objectivity and a sense of stability in a fragile and fallen world. A desire for justice is in our DNA, and we want things to be right. But we are broken people living among broken people, even our leaders, and none of us always responds with pure motives and right deeds. It puts us in a place where we are called to manage the tension in our lives. How should a follower of Jesus live in this world? Solomon gave us wise counsel on navigating under earthly authority while living under God’s authority. He knew that God works through authority, and several thousand years later, Jesus reaffirmed that.

Solomon taught us to **respect authority**. Honor God in all you do. Don’t try to avoid doing your duty. Remember who has the power. Operate in complete godliness. **Understand that timing is important**. Look for the God-given time and process. Getting ahead of God is not safe or wise. Submitting to authority is a good thing. **Trust God**. Solomon was the most powerful king and had more authority than we can imagine. But he said there are certain things that are out of everyone’s control, including the king. So, what do you do? You trust God who rules it all and can do anything He wants to do. Knowing that God is in control doesn’t solve everything, but knowing God will bring all things that are wrong into account can bring peace and patience. **Guard your heart**. Solomon said the way to keep our heads and hearts straight is to guard our hearts—it’s the beginning of wisdom. This is the difference between a godly life and an ungodly life; a wise life and a foolish life. Solomon says that justice may be delayed, but it won’t be denied. This all leads to a serious life, a focused life, a committed life—and then even a happy life! When we know God is in control, we can work with Him for justice and serve others, but we can also **have fun**. Jesus is fun and makes life happy. Heaven is going to be fun—we are going to love it! Until Jesus settles all the accounts, we are invited to enjoy life, not endure it! It doesn’t require us to deny reality but to trust God fully and not become so driven that we can’t enjoy life until it is different.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

How do you respond to the thought that the God image in our DNA that desires justice is the source, though managed wrongly, of much of the anger in our world today? Explain.

Followers of Christ are called to have personal restraint and respect for authority. Reflect and discuss.

What does it mean to you in your situation to “remember who has the power and engage wisely”?

Choose your battles carefully. Not every hill is worth dying on.

If you are a person who is always in search of some cause or conflict, that is not godly. Not every issue, critical or urgent, is equally important. Make sure you are not just looking for a fight. Ask, “Is this something God would have me engage in?” Think it over and apply it today.

LOOK IT OVER <<<

Impatience, not waiting on God’s timing, can make things immeasurably worse, even if you are on the side of right. Follow the appropriate process. How does this apply at home? work? church? our community and nation?

It’s much easier to destroy something than to build something. How should this reality impact our criticisms?

We rarely feel passionate about injustice unless it hits our life or someone we love or something we believe in. How might a deep relationship of trust in God change this? How could it help us in our current climate?

The only antidote for foolishness and relaxing enough to have fun is truly fearing God. How does that work? Do you believe it? We are in a season when we truly must manage the tension of living in an unprecedented time. Are you having fun yet? 😊 If so, share. If not, what can you do about it?

NEXT STEPS

1. Look at the things you are determined must change. Evaluate your motive and mission and means. Make sure you are not manipulating or being ungodly.
2. Slow down and choose your battles carefully and prayerfully.
3. Refuse to be driven. Trust God. Relax. Intentionally build fun and enjoyment into your life.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: The wise person knows that God will ultimately settle all accounts.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: Proverbs 19:2

Tuesday: Matthew 7:5

Wednesday: Philippians 1:15-18

Thursday: Habakkuk 2:3; Galatians 6:9

Friday: Proverbs 17:22; John 10:10

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)