

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN

The wise man has eyes in his head, while the fool walks in the darkness; but I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both.

Ecclesiastes 2: 14

I'VE NOTICED THAT THE SAME kinds of things happen to both wise and foolish people. Both end up making mistakes. Nevertheless, wisdom is better than foolishness. You may be familiar with the expression “If you want to play chess, don’t hide your eyes in your pocket.” That means you not only have to know the game well, but you also have to be an observant and careful player. The author of Ecclesiastes says here, “The wise man has eyes in his head.” In other words, wise people aren’t merely clever managers, but they’re also alert, conscientious, and watchful. They see how things ought to be done even though they can never assure the outcome. Foolish people, on the other hand, don’t use the eyes in their heads, because they let themselves be swept up by boldness and audacity. In the end, the affairs of both appear to be determined by coincidence and luck. In reality, God directs everything. Neither wisdom nor boldness determines how things will turn out.

Both wise and foolish plans sometimes fail and sometimes succeed. But God doesn’t want us to base our rules for living on whether or not something is successful. That’s because what God has created is in his hands, not ours. He allows us to use these things, but he accomplishes what he wants through us. It’s pointless to add anything to what God wants or to try to determine how God should do things. In this way, God teaches us not to rely on our own wisdom and insight, but to deal with matters as they come along. If they don’t turn out well, then we should simply commit them to God.

Martin Luther, “Faith Alone”

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