



[Ecclesiastes 3:1-10](#)

(1) To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: (2) A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; (3) A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; (4) A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; (5) A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; (6) A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; (7) A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; (8) A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. (9) What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth? (10) I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.

King James Version

Because [God](#) is sovereign over time all the time, He will be overseeing and working to make the most and best of every situation for us. Time is important to us, but with God, it is not an overriding issue. There is time because He is involved and wants the most and best for us.

In listing the merisms (pairs of contrasting words used to express totality or completeness) in verses 2-8, Solomon is not saying everybody has to go through each of the fourteen pairs, though that would do us no harm. They do, however, give us an overview of major events of virtually every life. Once they are listed, verse 9 asks, "What is to be gained by experiencing these events?" The question is rhetorical at this point. Answers are to be gathered from what Solomon teaches within the larger context of the book.

By way of contrast, understanding verse 10 is quite important to our well-being. Solomon assures us that God is deeply involved in these issues and events of life. In fact, he writes that they are God-given, implying that God has assigned them as disciplines for our development as His children. The dominant fact here is not whether

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God personally put us in them, since we may have gotten ourselves into them through our choices. The important factor is that we are indeed in them, and God is involved in them with us because at the very least He allowed us to fall into them.

We must not allow ourselves to forget that He is our Creator ([II Corinthians 5:17](#)); we are not creating ourselves. Thus, we can be encouraged that He has most assuredly not abandoned us ([Hebrews 13:5](#)). Are we accepting and [patiently](#) rising to meet these challenges, or are we resisting them in despair and frustration?

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Ecclesiastes and Christian Living \(Part Three\): Time](#)

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