



## [Ecclesiastes 7:13-14](#)

(13) Consider what God has done:  
Who can straighten  
what he has made crooked? (14) When times are good, be happy;  
but when times are bad, consider:  
God has made the one  
as well as the other.  
Therefore, a man cannot discover  
anything about his future.  
*New International Version*

These verses build on the preceding ones on [wisdom](#) being a defense. Yet as good a shelter as God's wisdom is, it cannot shield us from every possible event we might consider a calamity. Everybody faces such situations. Wisdom will aid us to resign ourselves to the circumstances of those times. "Resignation" is too often understood to have the sense of throwing up our hands and giving up, thus quitting under fire. It indeed can have that connotation, but not always, and such is not the implication here. The wisdom in this case is that we are to submit to the fact that there are times that nothing can be done to avoid certain situations.

This verse marks the third time such counsel is dealt with, and this is just the seventh chapter. It is important because we are dealing with the Sovereign of this entire creation. There are things He is doing that He absolutely will not change for us. Similar instruction appears in chapter 3.

Therefore, we have to discern those times, resign ourselves to them, and gracefully and humbly accept them, allowing Him to work out His purpose without constant complaining from us. [Job 12:13-16](#) makes this point clearly:

With Him are wisdom and strength, He has counsel and understanding. If He breaks a thing down, it cannot be rebuilt; if He imprisons a man, there can be

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no release. If He withholds the waters, they dry up; if He sends them out, they overwhelm the earth. With Him are strength and prudence. The deceived and the deceiver are His.

If one tries to fight [God](#), there is no possibility of winning. To do so is stupid beyond the bounds of reason, but mankind constantly attempts it. This concerns us on a daily basis because we live in this world too. What is going on in [the world](#) is not pleasant to experience or even to contemplate, so our becoming angry, depressed, and weary with the entire matter is a likely possibility. Nevertheless, the situation will not go away because God has willed it for the present.

Wisdom, in this case, is to be resigned to it. We must think this reality through and accept what is impossible for us to change. All too often, though, we allow it to depress us and dominate our lives to such an extent that we do virtually nothing positive about the things we *can* change. That is when [Satan](#) wins because, having put ourselves into a weakened attitude, we more readily cave to his devices.

Verse 14 contains further wisdom to defend against those difficult times when it seems that nothing can be changed. Solomon essentially counsels us to learn to “roll with the punches.” We must make careful efforts to make the best of the situation, understanding that God has seemingly withdrawn Himself for our good. God is [love](#); He is neither forgetful nor a harsh taskmaster. We have a hard time seeing that the level of difficulty we are experiencing is good for our growth. He is not doing it to smother us but to benefit us in the end.

The last phrase of verse 14 tells us that God, from His sovereign height, has determined to keep man somewhat off-balance for His purposes. God has commanded that we must live by [faith](#). So trying to figure out the precise reasons for a situation is not only often impossible, but also a huge waste of time and energy. This counsel may not satisfy some people because of its simplicity, but it is right: Trust Him!

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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**[Ecclesiastes and Christian Living \(Part Nine\): Wisdom as a Defense](#)**

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