



Daily Verse and Comment

Ecclesiastes 7:13-14

(13) Consider the work of God;
For who can make straight what He has made crooked?
(14) In the day of prosperity be joyful,
But in the day of adversity consider:
Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other,
So that man can find out nothing *that will come* after him.

New King James Version

These verses are akin to a bridge: They provide a conclusion to the teaching that precedes them, and at the same time, they lay a foundation to understand the teaching that follows. In both cases, they essentially say, “Whatever you choose to do, for the best understanding do not leave a correct understanding of [God](#) out of the picture.”

The Living Bible translates them in a picturesque way, adding considerably to our understanding of the paradox's lesson by bringing God clearly into the picture before we even see the inconsistency:

See the way God does things and fall into line. Don't fight the facts of nature. Enjoy prosperity whenever you can, and when hard times strike, realize that God gives one as well as the other so that everyone will realize that nothing is certain in this life.

This paraphrase clearly reflects on the subject of Ecclesiastes 3—“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven”—then proceeds to show God's involvement in all that is happening. [Ecclesiastes 7:13-14](#) is saying that God *is* involved, therefore we should accept the circumstance we find ourselves in, exercise [faith](#), and learn to roll with the

punches life deals us! The “punches” include paradoxical situations, such as what is described in [Ecclesiastes 7:15](#) with a just man perishing and a wicked man prospering.

Thus, when faced with a situation that on the surface seems unfair, the first element in reaching a proper conclusion is to avoid negatively judging God. God is aware; He is involved. He loves us; He is not cruel. He is always fair in His dealings. This sets us on the path to a righteous solution.

This approach is reinforced by Solomon's description of the situation as “what He has made crooked” (verse 13). This verifies God's involvement. Certainly, the paradox is a crooked situation. We consider things “straight” when events are clear and going well. “Crooked” happens when things are going contrary to our expectations.

God's governance of His creation contains absolutely no complacency. He creates circumstances for our benefit both to test us and to strengthen our faith. We need to exercise our faith, and He needs to know where we stand. We must understand that, as the apostle Paul states in [I Corinthians 13:12](#), we sometimes “see in a mirror dimly.” So the question facing us is, “Do we trust that He is faithfully carrying out His creative actions even when we fail to see the entire picture?”

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[**Ecclesiastes and Christian Living \(Part Eleven\): Paradox, Continued**](#)

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[Ecclesiastes and Christian Living Paradox](#)
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[Paradoxical Situation](#)
[We See in a Mirror Dimly](#)

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