



[Ecclesiastes 8:2-3](#)

(2) I say, "Keep the king's commandment for the sake of your oath to God. (3) Do not be hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand for an evil thing, for he does whatever pleases him."

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This advice calls on us to refine our behavior to be delicate, reserved, and careful so we do not appear obstinate when a difference arises between civil authority and us. Solomon's counsel is that, if the king does not grant us what we desire, depart discreetly out of respect for his office.

On this verse *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary* observes, "A wise man will avoid everything in thought, temper, and action tending to sow the seeds of sedition." Another expanded on this thought by advising, "We must study, even while in his presence, to find the proper behavior for the occasion so as to not imperil either our safety or the general society's." *Study*, in this case, means "concentrate on" or "give attentive scrutiny to."

The thrust of this counsel is that a person must be careful not to let his wounded pride build to such a passionate defense that it carries over into haughty disdain for the authority's office. This can even expand to calling [God](#) into account for His "failure" to remove that person from his office. Such an attitude may sow the seeds of rebellion far and wide. It is a major flaw in carnal thinking that people often fail to consider the long-range effects of even a single sin, a clear example of this being Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Ecclesiastes and Christian Living \(Part Fifteen\): Deference](#)

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