

FOUR THINGS YOU SHOULD NOT DO WHEN LIFE IS CHOATIC

ECCLESIASTES 3

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DON'T BLAME GOD FOR YOUR SITUATION (VV. 1-3)

1. Walk carefully before God; watch your step (v. 1)
2. Talk cautiously to Him (vv. 2-3)
3. Be careful how you accuse God, gripe, accuse and complain (v. 4)

DON'T BRIBE GOD (VV. 6-7)

1. Calculating your prayers - If YOU do this, then I will...
2. Care about your relationship with God more than the outcome you are seeking (v. 9, 14)
3. Consider God's omnipotence, omnipresent and omniscience (v. 11) god is God and you are not. He is all powerful, always present and all knowing!
4. Don't be surprised at the government's response to circumstances. God is in control and His eternal plan will be accomplished regardless of what governments do (v. 8-10)

DON'T BE BITTER

1. Bitterness is a result of unaddressed anger! Check your heart often and confess your anger before God and let it go into God's hands (v. 11)
2. Bitterness is poisoning your relationship with God and others. You are the one who is suffering.
3. Don't bother holding on to your bitterness; it's a waste of time. Holding on to bitterness assumes that at some point you will get what you want whether God has ordained it or not. Can you really manipulate God that way? (v. 14-15)

DON'T BELIEVE THE LIE ABOUT RICHES (V. 13)

1. Work hard and enjoy the fruits of your work but do not let it consume you nor take you away from God and His purpose for your life which is to bring Him glory.
2. God recognizes we need to enjoy our life, relax, have fun and even laugh (v. 4)

Analyzing each of these "times" would most likely miss the Teacher's point. These are figures of speech that prevent two opposite extremes and include the entire spectrum between them. For instance, there is a time to be born and a time to die (v.2), but the emphasis is on the lifetime in between. There is a time for everything because God has written the music. An essential part of seeking God's plan for us is understanding this Kingdom principle: God has set a plan in place for you, learn what it is and follow it.

In the concluding verses of chapter three, the Teacher gives us a practical alternative to the desperate search for ultimate meaning of life. We are to responsibly enjoy life as God's good gift to us. The Teacher wanted people to enjoy life more and to spend less time and energy trying to make sense of it all. Verse 14 sets parameters around our enjoyment of life. Everything we do must be done with the recognition that God is in charge. Our actions should demonstrate our respect for Him. This will prevent our enjoyment of life becoming selfish hedonism.