

Ecclesiastes 8:5-8

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/eccl/eccl-8/ecclesiastes-85-8/>

Submission to authority helps guide us to a place of obedience. Accepting our limitations is the gateway to trusting God.

Solomon now proclaims that anyone who *keeps a royal command experiences no trouble*. This seems to echo the admonition in verse 2 to “keep the command of the king.” It also echoes the point that violating commands of the lawmaker can create a lot of trouble on your own head. Because “the word of the king is authoritative, ”and the king can “do whatever he pleases” (Eccl 8:3-4).

Solomon adds a new thought; a *wise heart keeps a royal command* by knowing *the proper time and procedure*. Part of obedience is to know how and when to act. Knowing the proper time and the proper action is evidence a person has a *wise heart*. Solomon told us in chapter 3 that there is an appointed time for everything. This applies to keeping the laws of the king as well as pursuing pleasure—and all experiences of life in between. It is important to know both what to do as well as when to do it.

There is also a proper time and procedure for every delight. This application of a *wise heart* understanding the proper *time for everything* also applies to the pursuit of pleasure. Perhaps Solomon is bracketing the experiences of life. On one end of the spectrum is obeying the law and the other is pursuing *every delight*. There is a time and way that is appropriate for each. This would indicate it takes a *wise heart* to discern time and manner in all aspects of life. There is no exception to this principle. Even when *a man’s trouble is heavy upon him* it does not excuse him from pursuing an escape from the stresses of life in a proper manner.

Solomon then picks up a new thought. Humans do not know the future. *No one knows what will happen* in the future. The future will be, but we do not know what it will be. And that applies to everyone. We don’t know the future and there is no one *who can tell us when it will happen*.

This means we cannot control the future. It is futile, vanity, to live as though we can control things we actually cannot control. Just as we cannot control the future, we cannot control *wind*. *No man has authority to restrain the wind*

with the wind. We cannot use wind to restrain wind; therefore we cannot control the wind with the wind. The wind will go where it goes without regard to our preferences. Likewise, we can't control the days of our lives. We have no authority over the day of death. God is in control; we are not. Recognizing this is seeing things as they actually are.

There are also aspects of life we can't opt out of. We can't opt out of *death*. There are also circumstances we can't opt out of. Soldiers who are engaged in *war* have to see it through until the end. They cannot get a *discharge in the time of war*. The *discharge* takes place after the war is over. Similarly, we have little control over our lives, and cannot understand the purpose of it all, until our lives are over.

We might be tempted to pursue *evil* in order to attempt to achieve our desires. To gain control over outcomes. To escape from a circumstance we don't like. But *evil will not deliver those who practice it. Evil* does not give us control of outcomes. *Evil* brings us destruction.

There is also an application of the principles with *God as the king*. Obedience to God allows us to escape the *trouble* disobedience brings upon us. We are not in control, but God is. So trusting God creates a foundation from which to have understanding in life. Obedience to God is the key to developing a *wise heart*.

A *wise heart* founded in trusting God will lead us to *know the proper time and procedure*. We will know when to wait for the Lord ([Isaiah 40:31](#)) and when to strive ([1 Tim 4:10](#)). Recognizing that God is in control allows us to live in reality. Which will lead us to wisdom.

Biblical Text:

⁵He who keeps a royal command experiences no trouble, for a wise heart knows the proper time and procedure.⁶For there is a proper time and procedure for every delight, though a man's trouble is heavy upon him.⁷If no one knows what will happen, who can tell him when it will happen? ⁸No man has authority to restrain the wind with the wind, or authority over the day of death; and there is no discharge in the time of war, and evil will not deliver those who practice it.