

# Understanding the Times

Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter: Birth – 20 years old – growing up; learning; exploring

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2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter: 21-40 years old – finding your place; your mate; having children; maturing

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter: 41-60 years old – established;  
focused; empty nest;  
grandchildren; aging parents

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4<sup>th</sup> Quarter: 61 – 80 years old – closing out  
career; launching second career;  
adjusting to slower-paced  
lifestyle; health issues; realizing  
your mortality

Overtime: 81 years old and up – winding down; struggling to stay active; increasing loneliness; decreasing independence; health problems; facing death

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II. We do not control our times; God does (3:1, 11a).

III. We will always have unanswered questions about what God is doing and why He is doing it (3:9-11).

“It is part of living well to accept two things: first, we are enclosed within time’s bounds, and, second, God is not. What we do comes and goes, but “whatever God does endures forever” (3: 14).

“We are each building the project of ‘me,’  
constructing the edifice of our lives, but as we do  
so, we are neither architect nor site manager.

“We are each writing the story of our lives, but  
we are not the main author.”

- David Gibson

*As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.  
(Gen.50:20)*

*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Rom.8:28)*

IV. We can experience joy and contentment during our times by trusting God's sovereign plan (3:12-15).