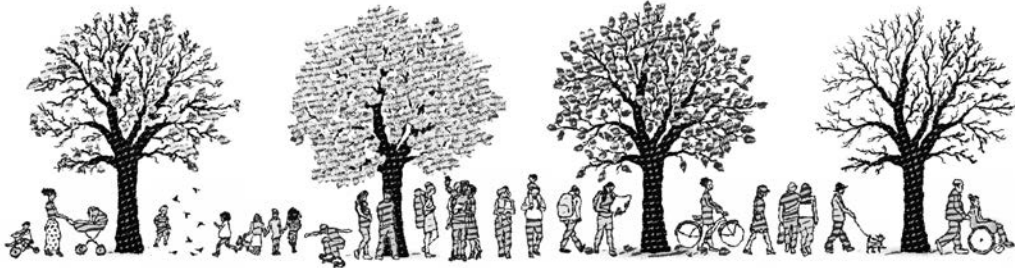


There Is a Right Time for Everything



SABBATH—MARCH 30

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 1:1; Ecclesiastes 3:2; Job 1:13–19; Galatians 1:15–17; Romans 15:7.

MEMORY VERSE: “There is a right time for everything, and everything on earth will happen at the right time” (Ecclesiastes 3:1, ERV).



“There is a right time for everything, and everything on earth will happen at the right time” (Ecclesiastes 3:1, ERV).

KING SOLOMON wrote some of the most beautiful poems ever written. He writes: “There is a right time for everything, and everything on earth will happen at the right time. There is a time to be born and a time to die. There is a time to plant and a time to pull plants. There is a time to kill and a time to heal. There is a time to destroy and a time to build. There is a time to cry and a time to laugh. There is a time to be sad and a time to dance with joy. There is a time to throw weapons down and a time to pick them up. There is a time to hug someone. And a time to stop holding so tightly. There is a time to look for something. And a time to consider [accept that] it [is] lost. There is a time to keep things and a time to throw things away. There is a time to tear cloth and a time to sew it. There is a time to be silent and a time to speak. There is a time to love and a time to hate. There is a time for war and a time for peace” (Ecclesiastes 3:1–8, ERV).

Solomon’s words show us that life is about change. Yes, we experience changes in life from the time we are born. Sometimes the changes are good; sometimes bad. Sometimes we can control what happens to us; sometimes we cannot. This week we will look at the different times of our lives and how they can change us and our families.

AT FIRST (Genesis 1:1)

The Bible starts with the time when God made the earth. That is why Genesis 1:1 starts with one word in Hebrew that can be written as “at first” (Genesis 1:1, ERV) or as “in the beginning” (Genesis 1:1, NLV). Genesis 1 tells us that the earth did not “have any shape. And it was empty” (Genesis 1:2, NIV). God worked for six days. He filled the earth with plants, animals, and the things they needed for life. On the 6th day, “God looked at everything he made. And he saw that everything was very good” (Genesis 1:31, ERV). So, Genesis shows us the beginning of our life on this earth.

So much happens in Genesis 1! Read the chapter and ask yourself this question: Did God make everything in the right place at the right time? Or did He let anything happen by itself or by accident? How does your answer show you who God is and what is in His heart?

Ellen G. White says that “God’s first law is making sure that everything in heaven is arranged in the right way.”—*Signs of the Times*, July 8, 1908, adapted. God wants everything on earth to be arranged in the right way too. Yes, sin messed up this earth in a big way. But look at the change of weather each year and the change of life. What do we see? We see proof of the way God first set up things on this earth.

What is God’s plan in Genesis 8:22 for us on this earth? How long will God’s plan continue?

Yes, sin changed this earth. But even so, do you see that the seasons change right on time? Summer and winter, day and night, and the different seasons are all part of life on this earth (read Genesis 1:14). God made it that way. Think about how beautiful the new heavens and earth will be! Isaiah 66:23 gives us a hint. True, the Bible gives us only a small peek now. But also there will be a right time for everything to happen on the new earth too.

Each week God asks us to keep His Sabbath holy. How has your keeping the Sabbath each week helped change your life and your family too?



Look at the change of weather and the change of life. What do we see? We see proof of the way God first set up things on this earth.

A RIGHT TIME FOR EVERYTHING (Ecclesiastes 3:2)

Scientists talk about something they name “body clocks.” Body clocks are a word picture for the working parts inside our bodies. These clocks help keep everything running on time. Our body clocks help us wake up and go to sleep on time. Body clocks show us that there are special times for everything to happen in life.

The Bible talks about the special times in life, or seasons, for things to happen. What seasons are they? Write your answers on the lines below after each verse. How are these seasons of our lives connected to our families?

Ecclesiastes 3:2 _____

Genesis 21:8; Judges 13:24 _____

Psalms 71:5; Proverbs 5:18 _____

Genesis 15:15; Judges 8:32 _____

Psalms 90:10 _____



Whatever time of life we are in, we all have something to give to the Lord and to other people too.

Between the time we are born and die, there are many seasons in our lives. Each person’s life experience is different. Some children live only a short time after they are born. Other babies grow up and live until they are very old. Children grow and develop in different ways. Some children start to walk before other children. Some children go to school to learn special skills for one type of job. But other children do not. Some people will have families. Other people may never marry or have children.

There are millions and millions of people on this earth. We are all alike in many ways (read Acts 17:26). Each one of us is special. So, we will be different in special ways from everyone else too.

The things that make us different are important. Why? Because each one of us has something to share with other people that they do not have. Our differences allow us to bless the lives of other people (read Proverbs 20:29). Whatever time of life we are in, we all have something to give to the Lord and to other people too.

What can you do to be a blessing to someone else?

WHEN SOMETHING UNEXPECTED HAPPENS (Job 1:13–19)

Read Job 1:13–19 and Job 2:7–9. What happened to Job in these verses? How is Job’s awful pain the same as what happens to everyone at some time in their lives?

The Greek thinker Heraclitus said that “the one thing that does not change in life is that there always will be change.” Everything in our lives can seem wonderful. Then something happens that we do not expect. Maybe we lose our jobs. Or a leg or arm. Or maybe we get sick and die early in life. Or maybe our house burns down. Or we have a car accident. Or fall down while we walk our dog.

It is true that not all changes are bad. Maybe we get a new job that helps us earn more money. Or maybe you meet the person you will marry. These are examples of good changes that many people will be happy about.

Anyway, everything can change in one second. We see this in Job’s story.

Of course, Job did not expect the bad things that happened to him. The Bible says Job was a “good, honest man. He respected God and refused to do evil” (Job 1:1, ERV). We know that Job had a wife. He was very rich. Job had seven sons and three daughters (Job 1:2, 3). By the middle of his story, we learn Job lost six big things: his land, his workers, his kids, his health, his wife’s support, and his friends’ support too. Job’s whole life changed. His family life was broken apart.

It is true that the awful things that happened to Job do not happen to everyone. But each of us will experience something unexpected in life the same as Job. Life can be going fine. Then with no warning, everything completely changes. Our lives—and our family’s lives—may never be the same again.

Sadly, the bad things that happen in life are nothing new. Look what happened to Abel. Do you think Abel expected his own brother Cain to kill him? Or what about Joseph? Do you think Joseph expected his brothers to sell him as a slave in Egypt? In both stories, family members did awful things and caused their families a lot of pain. The Bible is filled with examples of people whose lives and families were changed in big ways by things they did not expect.

How has your faith helped you during the bad times that came with no warning in your life?



Life can be going fine. Then with no warning, everything completely changes.

BIG CHANGES (Galatians 1:15–17)

Humans like to do the same things again and again. The older we get, the harder it is to change our behavior.

It may be hard for us to change. But what we cannot do for ourselves, God can do for us. He wants to change our hearts. That is what the plan of God saving us is about. He wants to make us new people!

What big change happened to Saul of Tarsus? How did that change happen? Read Acts 8:1, 3; Acts 9:1–22; and Galatians 1:15–17 for the answer.



We can tell other people about the things Jesus does for us.

“Saul gave himself fully to the Holy Spirit. Then Saul saw the mistakes he made in life. He understood that God’s law asks us to fully obey Him in everything. Saul used to be full of pride. Why? Because he thought he was a very good Pharisee. [A Pharisee was a Jewish religious leader in New Testament times. Pharisees felt that they kept the law very strictly.] As a Pharisee, Saul thought his own good behavior was good enough to save him. But now Saul bowed in prayer. Saul now had the simple heart of a child. He confessed his sins to God. Jesus died for Saul on the cross. So, Saul begged God for mercy. More than anything, Saul wanted to connect with the Father and the Son. . . .

“God heard Saul’s prayers. God’s mercy and forgiveness changed the thoughts and deepest feelings in Saul’s heart. Saul’s best thoughts and feelings connected with God’s plan for his life. Then Saul felt more love for Jesus and the cross than he felt for anything else in his life.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles [leaders and teachers]*, pages 119, 120, adapted.

Maybe our own stories about giving our lives to Jesus are not so exciting as Saul’s. But we can tell other people the things Jesus did for us. We also can share with them what Jesus does now to change us. We can tell everyone that Jesus makes our lives better. Yes, Jesus’ work in our lives can take a long time. Sometimes it is easy to believe we cannot change. When that happens, we can find hope from two Bible verses: Philippians 1:6 and Romans 8:1.

Read Philippians 1:6 and Romans 8:1. What two wonderful promises do we find in these verses?

FRIENDSHIPS AND FAMILY (Romans 15:7)

The Bible is a book about friendships and families. God made us to be friends with other people. Very few of us live alone. For one thing, each of us is here because of our parents. Even after we are born, we need someone to take care of us until we are old enough to take care of ourselves. Even when we are able to take care of ourselves, who really wants to live all alone? Most of us need and want the friendship of other people. Pets can be wonderful. But in the end, the deepest friendships we make are with other people, not animals. No wonder the family is so important for our lives.

Our friendships with other people can change our lives. This change works both ways. Our friendships can change our lives and our friends for the better or make them worse. So, it is very important, at all times, to do our best to be a good example to everyone.

Read the Bible verses below. What do these verses tell us about how we should behave with other people?

Romans 15:7 _____

Ephesians 4:2, 32 _____

1 Thessalonians 3:12 _____

James 5:16 _____

In many ways, the rule is simple. We should be nice and kind to other people. Then we can help change their lives in a good way. Jesus changed people’s lives in a good way too. Jesus made their lives better. It is wonderful to do the same thing for other people that Jesus did. Again, we must remember something important. We can make people’s lives better or worse, even in small ways. How do we do that? By the way we talk to them and how we make them feel. The people closest to us are our families. They are the ones whose lives we can touch the most. So, we need to be careful to always show our families love.

Look at what Jesus says in Luke 11:34 and Mark 4:24, 25. What does Jesus tell us to do?



We should be nice and kind to other people. Then we can help change their lives in a good way.



“Love will come stay in your house. Love will be the same as a guest who never leaves.”—Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, page 18, adapted.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Think about the changes that happened in the lives of Jesus’ followers as they spent time with Him. Jesus’ followers did not have much education. They were simple people. They knew only their Jewish ways of life and Jewish teachings. But now the Teacher from Galilee asked His followers to change their lives. Jesus asked them to think about their lives in new ways. Change did not come easy for them. They felt jealous (Matthew 20:20–24). Sometimes, they did not show much faith (Mark 9:28, 29). They also left Jesus all alone when He needed them the most (Matthew 26:56). They turned away from Him (Matthew 26:69–74). At the same time, good things happened too. Jesus’ followers learned from their mistakes. They grew spiritually stronger from being with Jesus. People knew that Peter had been with Jesus (Matthew 26:73). Even the Jewish religious leaders were surprised when they heard the things Peter and John had to say. “The Jewish leaders understood that Peter and John had no special training or education” (Acts 4:13, ERV). But the leaders “knew they [Peter and John] had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13, NLV).

Just think what will happen when our family members see we have “been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13, NLV)! Then we will help change their lives in a powerful way.

What do these words from Ellen G. White tell us about how we should behave in our homes? “Your home may be plain and not fancy. But it can always be a place where everyone says loving words and does kind acts for each other. Then love will come stay in your house. Love will be the same as a guest who never leaves.”—*The Adventist Home*, page 18, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What important rule does Ecclesiastes 3:1–8 teach you? How can you follow this rule in your own life?
- ② In class talk about some of your experiences that changed your life. What lessons did you learn from them? What did you learn from the lessons that you did not know before? How did these experiences change your family’s lives?
- ③ How has Jesus made a difference in your life? What did you stop doing when you gave your life to Jesus? What are you doing now that is different than before? What do these things tell you about Jesus’ power to change human hearts?