

# Ecclesiastes 8:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing;  
for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him.

## Analysis

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**Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him.** This verse counsels political wisdom in navigating royal courts. The Hebrew *bahal* (בָּהֵל, be hasty) warns against impulsive departure from the king's presence—whether literal (leaving court abruptly) or metaphorical (withdrawing service or loyalty rashly). Hasty reactions often worsen situations wisdom could resolve.

The parallel warning 'stand not in an evil thing' (*ta'amod bedavar ra*, תַּעֲמֹד בְּדִבָּר רָע) counsels against persisting in wrong courses. When you realize you've erred—made a foolish request, taken a wrong position, or offended the king—don't stubbornly defend the mistake. Admit it and correct course. The rationale follows: **he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him**—royal authority is absolute and resisting it proves futile. This doesn't endorse tyranny but acknowledges political reality: monarchs possess power subjects lack. Wisdom navigates power dynamics with neither cowardice nor foolhardiness. This anticipates New Testament wisdom: be shrewd as serpents, innocent as doves (Matthew 10:16).

## Historical Context

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Ancient royal courts operated with strict protocol—appearing before kings required careful etiquette (Esther 4:11). Hasty departures could be interpreted as disrespect or treason. Solomon's court included those who wisely navigated royal favor (1 Kings 4:1-6) and those who lost it through folly (1 Kings 2:13-25). The

phrase 'he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him' reflects ancient Near Eastern absolute monarchy where royal will was law. However, Israel's covenant theology limited royal authority—even kings answered to divine law (Deuteronomy 17:18-20). The tension between submitting to human authority and maintaining moral integrity remains relevant: Christians must respect authority while refusing to participate in evil (Acts 5:29).

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. When facing authority you disagree with, how do you discern between hasty, impulsive resistance and principled, necessary opposition?
2. How can you practice the wisdom of 'not standing in an evil thing' by quickly acknowledging and correcting errors rather than defending them?

## Interlinear Text

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אֵל	תְּבִיָּה ל	מִפְּנֵי	תֵּלַךְ	אֵל	תַּעֲמֹד	בְּדָבָר	כִּי ע
H408	<b>Be not hasty</b>	<b>of his sight</b>	H1980	H408	<b>stand</b>	<b>thing</b>	<b>not in an evil</b>
	H926	H6440			H5975	H1697	H7451
כִּי	כָּל	אֲשֶׁר	יִחַפֵּי	יַעֲשֶׂה:			
H3588	H3605	H834	<b>whatsoever pleaseth</b>	<b>for he doeth</b>			
			H2654	H6213			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ecclesiastes 10:4** (Parallel theme): If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.

**Proverbs 14:29** (Parallel theme): He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

**Daniel 4:35** (Parallel theme): And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

**Daniel 5:19** (Parallel theme): And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.

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