



Making **SENSE**

of the **MESS**

**TIME AFTER TIME**

Ecclesiastes 3









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# Ecclesiastes 3

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 → From Time to Time

Ecclesiastes 3:9-15 → From Time to Eternity

Ecclesiastes 3:16-22 → From Dust to Dust

Matthew 11:28-30 → The Easy Yoke

# Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 → From Time to Time

3 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

2 a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

3 a time to kill, and a time to heal;  
a time to break down, and a time to build up;

4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

5 a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;  
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

6 a time to seek, and a time to lose;  
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

7 a time to tear, and a time to sew;  
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

8 a time to love, and a time to hate;  
a time for war, and a time for peace.

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# **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 → From Time to Time**

**This is an exercise in realism. This life is what it is. Time marches on. The poem here gives the full range human experiences, natural experiences, and implies the emotions, victories and challenges that accompany them.**



# **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 → From Time to Time**

**This is an exercise in perspective.**

**Without an honest admission of the whole, we can get lost in some pretty misguided conclusions that lead to frustration, bitterness, and confusion.**



# **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 → From Time to Time**

**Faith is not a formula, rather it is an exercise in trust. That's why we lift up a person (who is trustworthy) and not our circumstances (which are not) as the foundation of faith.**



# **Ecclesiastes 3:9-15 → From Time to Eternity**

<sup>9</sup> What gain has the worker from his toil? <sup>10</sup> I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. <sup>11</sup> He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. <sup>12</sup> I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; <sup>13</sup> also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.

<sup>14</sup> I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him. <sup>15</sup> That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already has been; and God seeks what has been driven away.



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# Ecclesiastes 3:9-15 → From Time to Eternity

“If we can accept life as it is, even the hard parts will be bearable. Yet there is a catch. We feel like aliens in the world of time and yearn to be part of eternity. We feel the need for ourselves and our work to be eternal and yet are grieved to be trapped in time. We also desire to understand our place in the universe against the backdrop of eternity. But we cannot find out what God has done from beginning to end. That is, we are not able to discern any plan or pattern to all of this. God’s purposes are outside our realm of control or investigation. We thus have a sense of alienation and bewilderment in time.”

- Duane A. Garrett





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# Ecclesiastes 3:9-15 → From Time to Eternity

We sense both a *frustration and a freedom*.

We sense a *frustration* that the times are not ours to control because we know there must be something more, something better in eternity.

And we sense a *freedom* for the very same reason: The times are not ours to control because there is something, someone, better in eternity.

And the Someone is God. *We are encouraged here to recognize reality while enjoying and stewarding the time because it is in God's hands.*



# **Ecclesiastes 3:16-22 → From Dust to Dust**

<sup>16</sup> Moreover, I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, even there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness. <sup>17</sup> I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work. <sup>18</sup> I said in my heart with regard to the children of man that God is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but beasts. <sup>19</sup> For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. <sup>20</sup> All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return. <sup>21</sup> Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth? <sup>22</sup> So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot. Who can bring him to see what will be after him?



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# Ecclesiastes 3:16-22 → From Dust to Dust

Solomon is driving home the point that humankind should steward the time well and enjoy the gifts that are before us. For in the midst of the time, and sometimes the wickedness that is all we can see, and all we can do.

Likewise, he is lamenting that injustice toward the poor makes it hard for them to enjoy the time and the gifts God affords.



**So what?**



<sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

- Jesus





# Matthew 11:28-30 → The Easy Yoke

## labor

kopiao/kopos = a cut

to lessen the strength; to fatigue

working until exhaustion, weariness or grief

## laden

phortizo

to overburden with ceremony or spiritual anxiety





29 Take my yoke upon you,  
and learn from me, for I  
am gentle and lowly in heart,  
and you will find rest for your  
souls. 30 For my yoke is easy,  
and my burden is light.”

Matthew 11:29-30



“A yoke is a work instrument. Thus when Jesus offers a yoke he offers what we might think tired workers need least. They need a mattress or a vacation, not a yoke....But Jesus realizes that the most restful gift he can give the tired is a new way to carry life, a fresh way to bear responsibilities...Realism sees that life is a succession of burdens; we cannot get away from them; thus instead of offering escape, Jesus offers equipment. Jesus means that obedience to [his yoke] will develop in us a “way” of carrying life that will give more rest than the way we have been living.”

- Frederick Dale Bruner





# 4 Practices

***Slow Down & Simplify***

Psalm 46

***Resist Entitlement Creep***

Romans 8

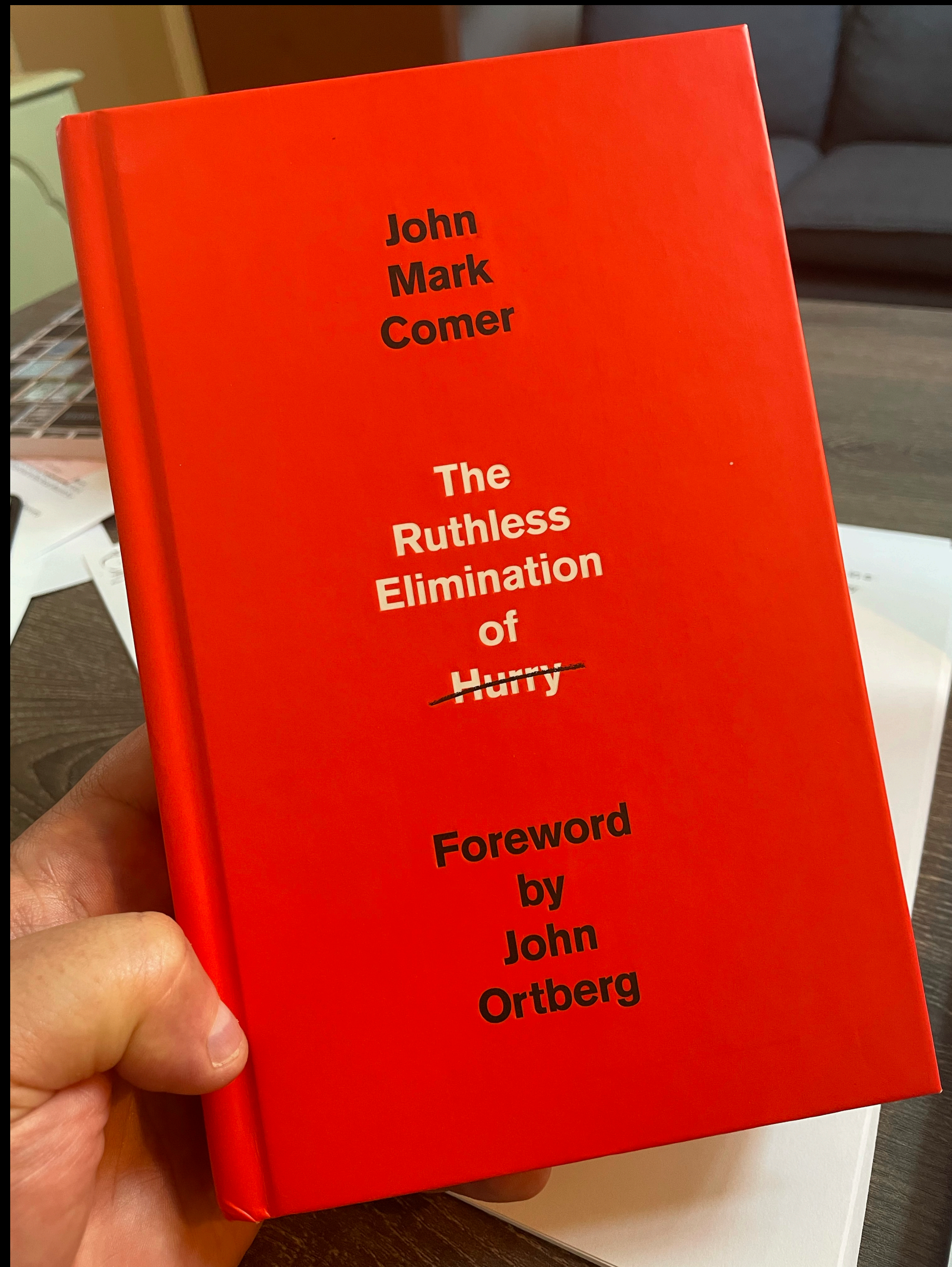
***Check out RESET***

John 10:10, James 5:13-16

***Study Jesus***

Philippians 2:1-11, Matthew 11:28-30





-John Mark Comer

