

Psalm 37 - Look Ahead and Look Up

1 **Do not fret** because of evildoers,
Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.
2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,
And wither as the green herb.
3 Trust in the Lord, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.
4 Delight yourself also in the Lord,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.
5 Commit your way to the Lord,
Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.
6 He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.
7 Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,
Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.
8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;
Do not fret—it only causes harm.
9 For evildoers shall be cut off;
But those who wait on the Lord,
They shall inherit the earth.
10 For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more;
Indeed, you will look carefully for his place,
But it shall be no more.
11 But the meek shall inherit the earth,
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.
Pray

Have you ever found yourself resonating with the question that the Prophet Jeremiah asked in Jeremiah 12:1 "Why do the wicked prosper?"

A) Maybe you didn't use those exact words -

B) but when you saw an ungodly person you work with getting the promotion

C) Maybe you said - **Lord that isn't fair - that person is a horrible person - they got the promotion - I got passed over again**

D) Have you ever pondered out loud, **Lord** what is going on?

1) It seems like ungodly people are getting away with murder/ **Sometimes literally**

We See it everywhere In Politics - Corrupt politicians getting their way

A) See it in Business - people you work with cutting corners - getting ahead

B) See it in Youth sports - parents who bribe and bend the system to get their kids more playing time- 1) even though they are not the better players

C) See it in college admission programs - Totally qualified - but rejected again

D) See Corruption all around us

1) Easy to say - **How about a little justice Lord!!**

On Wednesday after the conference ended Denise and I were heading up to Portland - flight on Thrus

A) Driving there on I-5 this guy in a blue truck - on my tail - hurry

B) So I got out of his way - then he was behind this Semi truck - riding his tail - lane next to me

C) I-5 /205 exchange - the semi-truck went straight and the guy in the blue truck - merged onto the 205

We were also merging -

A) Well as soon as the semi truck was out of the way - the guy in the blue truck - floors it

B) The merge is a big long turn - He lost control - velocity was pulling him toward the guard rail - 1) gravel - he is trying to course correct -

C) His truck was wobbling - I thought for sure - hit flip and roll right in front of us

Thankfully he didn't

A) But you would have thought a close call like that would have wised him up - slow down

B) It didn't he floored it - weaving 110mph
I called HP - report him -

C) As we drove - I was glad he didn't cause an accident - but I will be honest>

D) I was really hoping to see him pulled over on the side of the road - ticket

1) No such luck - Another reckless driver escapes again

Happens every day in so many arenas - the ungodly prosper - it seems like they get away with everything.

A) While those of us trying to live godly - honor God and do the right things - end up struggling.

B) You know that saying: Nice guys always finish last - well there are a lot of days where that sentiment really seems true.

C) If you have every felt that way: **Psalm 37 is for you.**

1) Look at it in two parts - today and next week

Psalm 37 reveals the character of the person who is trust God in the face of the apparent prosperity of the wicked.

A) This Psalm was written by David, in his old age after a lifetime of reflection

B) He is reflecting on the ways of the righteous and the ways wicked and of God's dealings with both.

C) We could sum up the advice that the first half of the Psalm gives us in this way:

We are to LOOK AHEAD and we are to LOOK UP

Notice in the first 11 verses we are given two negative directives in regards to the wickedness we see around us.

A) The first directive is not to **Fret - because of evil doers** -

B) that directive is repeated 3X for emphasis in V. 1,7,8

Don't Fret - "do not get heated," which is also how we might express it.

A) Or we might say, "Don't get all worked up." Or even "Be cool." - Chill / Turn and say Chill

B) Then we are also given this directive **v.8 to cease from anger** - Notice that word Cease -

1) stop being angry - about this:

C) Anger in and of itself is not a sin - Anger is an emotion

The Bible even talks about something called righteous ANGER -

A) there are certain things you have a right to be angry about - See injustice going on -

B) It is normal to get angry - but don't stay angry - it will ruin you

8 Cease from anger, and **forsake wrath;**
Do not fret—it only causes harm.

So here is the question- how do we do that - how to we curb those emotions - stay calm.

A) First we LOOK AHEAD - V.1 again

"Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong; **for** like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away."

B) I know that right now it seems like they are on top they are getting all the breaks -

1) they are the ones who are winning -

C) but they are going to SOON wither and SOON die off

This is where we have to remember God's time frame is different from our time frame.

A) David says SOON! - We want to say Lord it is not soon enough -

B) We say Lord come quickly

C) We say Lord You promised to comeback - reclaim this planet - set things right -

1) things are getting out of control -

D) **We say Lord this doesn't feel like SOON** - Lord this feels like forever -

1) Lord this injustice has been going on a long time

Reminded 1 day with the Lord is like a thousand years and a 1,000 yrs is like one day.

A) Time of Jesus it has been 2,000 yrs - The Lord says - two days.

B) Chill out - be patient

C) Peter proceeds to tell us why the Lord delays

⁹ The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. 2 Peter 3:9

He is being patient for you -

A) You here today or watching and you and not right with the Lord

B) He is waiting for you -repent 180 - turn from sin - turn to JESUS - last one - I don't know.

C) Opportunity to give your life to Jesus today let him rescue

D) SO We look ahead - we know how the story ends - we know what is coming

E) The Bible says things here on planet earth are going to get worse before Jesus comes back -

1) so Don't fret - Look ahead

Why our Prophecy updates are important

A) Moving to Wednesday nights September 21st -

AA) Purpose is not to create in us an attitude of escapism - Lord get us out of here

B) Not meant to produce in us a heart of vengeance - the wicked are going to get theirs

C) But activism - BURDEN US - for Lost people

D) There are some heavy things coming to people on planet earth - **we need to be actively sharing Jesus with people.**

1) He loves them died for them - wants to rescue them

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E) Look ahead and remember the BIG PICTURE

It is hard for most of us to take the long view, because we are consumed by the present.

A) But we need to do it if we are to grow in grace and begin to understand what God is doing in this world.

B) He is constantly trying to get the attention of lost people in this world -

C) So we are not to Fret - **Look ahead - we know how this story ends - Jesus Wins - Love Wins**

But David also says - as we are looking ahead we need to keep looking Up!

A) The most important thing we can do is to get our eyes off the wicked and even off ourselves and on the Lord.

B) In V.3-7 he is going to tell us exactly how to do that by giving us 4 positive directives

C) We have already pointed out the negative directives - don't fret and cease from Anger -

Now he is going to give us 4 positive directives when he says in V.3 to trust in the Lord

A) (v. 4), delight in the Lord (v. 5-6), commit yourself to the Lord (v. 7), and rest in the Lord

B) Break that down in the rest of our time today.

C) Notice something in V.11 - **11 But the meek shall inherit the earth,**

1) That sound familiar? - it should - Jesus used that same phrase in Matthew 5 -

2) His teaching on the beatitudes - Blessed at the meek - the meek shall inherit the earth

E) Meekness - we don't use that word - meekness = weakness - push over

1) Meekness is power under control - Tamed wild stallion

Now Jesus didn't explain what Meekness looks like. - Psalm 37 does

A) You could say that Psalm 37 is an exposition on what Meekness looks like and how a follower of God becomes a meek person.

B) How a follower of God handles adversity and deals with the injustice going on around them

C) We will see how that happens as we look at these 4 directives David gives us in v.3-11

D) As we break them down I want you to notice how one builds upon another

"Trust in the Lord" (v. 3).

A) Trust is faith. It is the proper starting point for all right relationships with God.

B) A fretful heart is not a trusting heart,

Faith cures fretting. Sight is cross-eyed, and views things only as they seem, hence her envy; faith has clearer optics to behold things as they really are, hence her peace. CHS

C)A fretful heart is not a trusting heart, - but a trusting heart becomes more and more void of fear -

1)fear gets replaced by peace and Joy

D) Trust = cling to and to depend upon

1)God I am completely dependent upon you.

Now it has been said that faith is only as strong as the object of your faith

A)Our faith is in the almighty God The Powerful one - the maker of heaven in earth

B)Our faith is in our Father who is a good good father - Thoughts outnumber the sand - Bucket

1)Thoughts of good not evil

2)A father who is so into you - he knows the # of hairs on your head

C)Our faith is in a God who is just and true! In Revelation - Heaven is singing - **Righteous and true are your ways oh Lord**

D)So in the midst of the chaos going on around us - we can stay calm - we trust in our God!

But notice - our trust is not passive trust. It is an active trust *Trust in the Lord*” “*And do good.*”

A)True faith is actively obedient.

B)Doing good is a great remedy for fretting.

1)We are actively partnering with God in his mission in the world -

C)This describes the person who is quietly trusting God and thus experiencing the life and power of God

1)That life of God is being expressed by doing good to others.

Ever notice that when you get invested in someone else's life - your problems seem small

A)God starts using you - Life takes on a whole new perspective

B)Conferences - I want to be refreshed - I need to be refreshed - hope someone ministers to me -

1)God use me - Divine appointments - Amazing - refreshing

C)True that sometimes the best blessings are found in our lives being instruments that God can work through.

D)This is born out in the Promise found in V.3 *Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.*

E)Now in the NKJV this sounds like 2 more directives - **Dwell and feed -**

1)but in the original language it is stated more as a result to trusting and doing good -

F)Then you will dwell in the land - be at home in the land feeding on - or enjoying the faithfulness of God

NLT gets it right when it says *Then you will live safely in the land and prosper.*

G)Put it simply - *Trusting in God and doing good - serving the Lord - leads to experiencing the fulness of God in your life*

Which leads to the next directive in V.4 “*Delight yourself also in the Lord*”

A)Delight means to find pleasure in the Lord

B)To Make Jesus the joy and rejoicing of your heart.

C)Delight yourself this includes a deliberate redirection of one's emotions

“We cannot delight thus without effort. We must withdraw our eager desires from the things of earth, fastening and fixing them on Him.” (Meyer)

This involves what you choose to focus on. - **Philippians 4:8**

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

A)I am really good at focusing on the things around me that are not good.

B)I am really good and so are some of you at focusing on that is wrong

C)I am really good at seeing what God isn't doing in my life or ministry. - That comes natural to me

I have to be very intentional about my thought life - to focus on the good -

A)focus on what is lovely to see what God is doing in my life - the life of others

B)TO See God's heart in the situation

C)To Delight yourself - be intentional in your thoughts

You know the reason many Christians do not delight in God?

A)It is that they do not know him very well, and the reason they do not know him well is that they do not spend time with him.

B)The more time we spend with him - focusing on his attributes - the more we come to know him -
1)the more we come to know him - the more we trust him

C)The more we come to trust him the more that we find ourselves delighting in him
1)Our God is Awesome

Notice the Promise attached to V.4 And he will give you the desires of your heart

A)That doesn't mean - God is like the genie in the bottle who as long as you are delighting in him he gives you whatever you want -

B)It means As you trust him and delight in him -

1)something happens to you and in you - affects your desires

C)The desires of your heart are being molded into God's desires

When I was a young man - I wanted to be a Professional Baseball player -

A)That was my dream - - I wanted to be famous - Cover of SI - Wheaties box - Sure give thanks to God

B)Senior year of High School - things began to change - Not me being famous -
1)but Lord I want to make you famous

C)Scout team- Not good enough -

1)Prayed Lord let me get a college scholarship - have a decent college career and be a coach

Well I got the scholarship - Freshman year college

A)Different kind of coach - Coach for me - lead people in relationship with me -

B)Coach for other pastors and leaders

1)I am so fulfilled - Pastoring this church - opportunities like last week pour into other leaders

C)There was a time - Big church - now - Big people in this church - Blessed reach

It is an awesome thing when God begins to mold and shape your desires after his desires

A)That is when you begin to realize what it means for you to be God's workmanship

B)Step into The good works that he has created you to walk in - Your purpose in his Kingdom

C)Word for some of you here today: Trust him - Delight in him - stop resisting him -

D)stop trying to mold God into your plan and let him mold you into his plan.

That leads us to the next directive: V.5 "Commit your way to the Lord"

A)Note David is not being redundant here -

B)In our English language the word commit could be taken as another way to say trust

1)But that is not what this word means

C)The word commit actually means "to roll one's way onto God,"

1)One Commentator I read said to "dislodge the burden from your shoulders and lay it on God."

D)Lord I am so tired of caring this - would you take it ? God says gladly

This is what the apostle Peter was thinking about in 1 Peter 5:7—"Cast all your cares or anxiety on him because he cares for you."

A)Dislodge the burden today

B)He is not burdened by your burden. - Isn't that great!

C)I can get burdened by someone else's burden -

When I am caring my own burden and I see someone else who is burdened -

A) Sometimes I want to run from them rather than reach out to them -

B)I can't handle any more burdens right now

C)That is not God - he is never burdened by your burden and your burden is nothing for him

1)Rob give that to me

Sometimes my grandson Josiah will be struggling to open something or carry something he is only 4

A)Josiah - you want my help? No - I can do it - ok

B)Watch him struggle - Smile - waiting -

1)the nice thing about Josiah is I usually don't have to ack twice -

C)After maybe 5 minutes of him struggling - He says popi can you help me - **Sure absolutely**

D)God is smiling at some of you today - as you are struggling with your burden -

1)He has been watching

E)He is just waiting patiently - will you give that to him

1)He has asked you 5-6 times - No I've got this

Will you let it go today - commit that thing to the Lord - lay your burdens down /

A)Cast your cares upon him - knowing - believing - that he cares for you.

B)Get this - God doesn't take our burdens so that we can become **lazy and irresponsible,**

1)but so **we can serve Him better.**

C)Fireman with a backpack of waits - dead dummies

1)He can't do what he was meant to do

D)God says - I want to take your burden so you can be who I want you to be

1)and do what I want you to do -

E)My Yoke is easy - well fitting - my burden is light

1)Glorious - this is living

Notice the progression:

A)Trusting in the Lord - His power his love his willingness his ability

B)That leads to delighting in the Lord - Who he is how he works - his love for us

C)That leads to committing our ways - just rolling them on to him - His arms - his hands

Then that leads to the next thing:

7 Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;

A)Be silent - stop complaining - stop talking -

B)Rest - I have got this

C)Wait patiently for God to do his thing -

1)resist the temptation to take matters into your own hands

This is a great picture of meekness - I have power - I could take care of this -

A)I have taken care of things like this before -

B)But meekness is power under control -

1)I am going to rest in the Lord - let him deal with this - wait on him - his timing

We see a great example of this in the life of Moses

A)We are told in Numbers 12 that Moses was the meekest man to walk on the earth -

B) he was a picture of a man resting in God - A great leader who moved in Power -

C)He Went to Pharaoh the most Powerful man on the planet at the time - God says let my people go!

D)So Moses was a great man who learned how to let God lead him - let God be his defense

There is a scene that takes place in Numbers 12 that illustrates his meekness

A)After Moses first wife died he married a new wife a Cushite woman.

B)Cush was the ancient name for modern day Ethiopia

1)Which means - Moses 2nd wife was a black woman.

C) We read there in Numbers 12 that Moses sister Miriam and his Brother Aaron didn't like that he married this woman

D) They started questioning Moses authority -

E) Miriam launched a rebellion - **she said is Moses the only one God can speak through?**

1) He has also spoken through us

Now Moses had the power and authority to rally the people and squelch that rebellion on his own -

A) But in Meekness he deferred to the Lord - you deal with her

B) God did - Struck Miriam with Leprosy - deadly...

C) Then you see the meekness and grace of Moses afterwards

1) instead of saying something like that will show you not to mess with me

D) He prays for Miriam and God healed her -

1) Meekness of Moses was on display

Willingness in the face of injustice to just trust the Lord

A) Delight in the Lord -

B) Roll the problem onto the Lord and then rest in God's ability to deal with it

C) That is so freeing - fills your heart with peace and Joy - God this world is your problem

D) But it also releases you to do good! - I can't deal with that - I don't know the answer to that - but I am going to do what I can do!

Just going to keep looking up - Comes back to looking ahead

Series of contrasting statements - Righteous and wicked

9 For evildoers shall be cut off; **But** those who wait on the Lord, They shall inherit the earth.

10 For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, **But** it shall be no more. 11 But the meek shall inherit the earth,

And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

What does it mean the meek - (the person trusting in God) will inherit the earth?

A) Future inheritance for sure - When he returns and sets up his Kingdom **We are Co-heirs with Christ Jesus**

B) We are given places in his Kingdom - Definitely a future promise

C) But there is also a present reality that we can experience

When we realize that this world doesn't belong to us - it belongs to God.

A) We are not trying to possess things that are not ours to possess anyway

B) That is what ungodly are trying to do - possess something that doesn't belong to them -
1) never satisfied - never have enough

C) But we who are trusting in God - delighting in the Lord - realize that all of this belongs to God -
1) we are just happy to belong to him too

D) And any earthly blessing that God gives us - is just icing on the Cake - We've got God -

Continues in his contrast - Looking ahead - what is in store for the righteous vs the ungodly - wicked

12 The wicked plots against the just, And gnashes at him with his teeth.

13 The Lord laughs at him, For He sees that his day is coming. Laughs here is like scoff's -

If I strolled into the toddler class today and two of the boys - we are going to get you Pastor Rob - Chuckle - oh Yea really
That is so cute - he laughs - because he knows their end

14 The wicked have drawn the sword And have bent their bow, To cast down the poor and needy, To slay those who are of upright conduct.

15 Their sword shall enter their own heart,

And their bows shall be broken.

16 A little that a righteous man has
Is better than the riches of many wicked. {Satisfied
in God

17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,
But the Lord upholds the righteous.

18 The Lord knows the days of the upright,
And their inheritance **shall be forever.**

19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time,
And in the days of famine **they shall be satisfied.**

20 But the wicked shall perish;
And the enemies of the Lord,
Like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish.
Into smoke they shall vanish away.