

Who Wins? God Wins!

What Do We Do

When Bad People Prosper while Good People Perish

Psalm 37

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Question: When bad people prosper while good people perish - who wins? Will evil win out over good? Are people who live for God losers? Will rebel sinners beat God's plan for man?

Well, God sees it all, every evil thought, word, deed, and He says: "No Way!" God will win against sin, in His own time.

Count on it.

So, what do people who love and live for God do - when bad people prosper while good people perish? God tells what to do. It's right here - in Psalm 37. Believe it.

It's true, isn't it. Bad people seem to prosper in their evil. Many today make millions, even billions of dollars, living, trafficking in what God calls sin - evil stuff. They build rich fortunes doing dishonest, immoral, illegal, godless things. They rebel against God, profane, use in vain His holy name. They ignore, neglect, deny, defy, ridicule, reject God's high, holy Word - and they do "*work iniquity*" - which literally means - they break God's holy Laws - God's righteous commandments, given for their good.

Think of His Commandments -

(1) "*Don't have other gods,* (2) *Don't make images (idols),* (3) *Don't take the LORD'S name in vain,* (4) *Do keep holy the Sabbath,* (5) *Do honor your Father and Mother,* (6) *Don't murder,* (7) *Don't do adultery,* (8) *Don't steal,* (9) *Don't lie,* (10) *Don't Covet.*" False-god, or godless people worldwide, especially the rich, break all of God's Laws. He calls it "*working iniquity.*" Then, in arrogant pride, men and women boast: "I did it my way."

Many prosper in their sins - but only in material, temporary things - and only briefly. God sees it all. And He says,

“Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatever a man sows, he will reap. He who sows to the flesh will reap corruption. But he who sows to the Spirit (of God) will reap life everlasting” (Galatians 6).

In stark contrast - good people - who love God, who seek to please and honor Him - often are poor in material things, are under persecution in many false-god countries - are perishing. It's true on most of this spiritually poverty-stricken planet.

It's easy to see. In the two-thirds-world countries, tens of millions of good, godly men, women, children live on little, with sparse foods, many are near starvation.

Mark it as global fact - among the truly poor - no one is fat. Many merely survive - in small, primitive huts, with meager meals on a pauper income. Why is that? Is it fair? Where is justice? Does God care? Well, yes He does. Absolutely, personally. He sees all, He will resolve it all - here or hereafter.

In this sad, mad, bad news world - most of God's people suffer hardship, poverty, pain. But mark this fact - again - indelibly in your heart and mind - “This world ain't the end, friend.”

God has the final Word. It's right here - in the Bible. God tells His people what to do - when bad people prosper while good people perish. It's His own high, holy, happy Word - from Heaven - Psalm 37.

Psalm 37

What Do We Do When Bad People Prosper
While Good People Perish?

God tells us - in Psalm 37

God's first Word in Psalm 37 is to all who love Him. It's this:
*"Fret not yourself because of evil-doers, nor be envious
of those who work iniquity (literally: break God's Laws)."*

Fret Not!

Now, come on, confess. You and I do "fret", don't we. We get frustrated, fed up, "bugged big-time" - because - many bad men or women prosper - often get very rich - while they ignore, deny, defy God's Word, will, way. We fret, fume, but God says,
"Fret not!"

God gave Psalm 37 - to help you and me see the way we ought to be - trusting God, seeking God's will and way every day - in this fast-passing lifespan He gives us - in this rebel world.

Envy Not!

Think about sports people. Some are Jesus-witnesses. But many are godless, immoral, self-loving, ego-centric - living for self. Yet, silly fanatics idolize and pay them millions of dollars (even Christians do it too), enabling them to ignore God - and prosper. God says, *"Don't envy those who break My Laws)."*

Show biz people too. Rebels - do murder (abortion), adultery (sex-sins), steal, lie, covet - do immoral evil - in their acting - and their personal lives. Yet, these "idols" prosper too, live in self-loving super-luxury, paid for by foolish followers called fans. Again, many Christians join this idolizing crowd. God says, *"Don't envy them."*

Add to these, greedy, power-hungry politicians, and business people - men and women - big and little - who make money at any cost, coveting wealth, amassing fortunes, buying unneeded things, hyper-lavish luxuries. God calls it all - idolatry. And these too are admired, applauded, awarded by millions.

Even many religions - and so-called preachers - make big bucks in falsely peddling pseudo-Scriptural “name-it, claim-it” lies, and self-centered lifestyle books. They too have gullible fans.

God sees all these - “*evil-doers and law-breakers.*” He says to all people on this guilty, godless globe who love Him -

“Don’t Fret! Don’t Envy!”

Do Gooders

While bad people prosper - multiplied millions of good men and women - work hard, risk their lives - law enforcement, firemen, military, doctors, nurses, laborers, homemakers - honorable business people, and many other worthy workers - including godly pastors - and missionaries - who possess far less material necessities than the godless “rich and famous.”

I saw it in India. Doctors, nurses, evangelists, Bible-workers. Godly people - who love and care for orphans, lepers, needy people in poverty. God’s people, who rescue and rehab sex-slaves, always serving others. Yet they too live in poverty conditions. But, they don’t fret. They love and live for Jesus.

And they live by these selfless, sacrificing Jesus-principles:

“Treasure not up treasure on earth - but treasure up treasure in Heaven - for where your treasure is, there your heart will be too” (Matthew 7).

“Set your mind on things above, not on things on earth. And when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory” (Colossians 3).

Obviously this sick world's pay principles are wrong. God sees. He says - Judgment Day is coming - He will right all wrongs.

So What Shall We Do?

What do we do when we see - every day - godless people prosper while God-honoring people perish? What do we do?

Well, remember this - God wins - always! God has the last laugh, the last Word - absolutely! God's Word - the Bible - has the answers we can count on. God said it - that settles it.

Believe it. Rejoice and Rest in Him.

God answers our fretful questions in His Word - the One and Only high, holy, happy Book of God - the Bible. In Psalm 37 - again - are His "triple A" - All Absolute Answers. We'll look at just the first 7 verses - and see a dozen power points God gives to uplift our spirit, calm heart and mind, settle us on Him.

What about Psalm 37?

First - Psalm 37 is Personal

King David wrote Psalm 37 to be - **personal**. God used David to write it because David himself had lived thru all these great truths. In verse 25 - David said "*I have been young, and now am old.*" David had been around awhile, folks. He had seen it all - good and bad. David knew firsthand Psalm 37 facts. God spoke - David wrote - to help you and me too - personally.

Second - Psalm 37 is Alphabetical

David wrote Psalm 37 - **alphabetically**. The original text begins every other verse with a different consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Why? To make this Psalm easier to speak, sing, teach, learn. You see, when papa or mama Israeli

used this Psalm to teach little Moses or Miriam their “*Aleph, Beth, Gimmel, Daleths*” (Hebrew ABCDs), they were also teaching them the sacred Word of God (maybe a verse a week).

Child books do it today: “A for apple, B for boy, C for cat, D for dog”, but the focus is not at all on the true God of the Bible. But in the Bible believer children were taught - not about apples, boys, cats, dogs - but about God's more vital, valuable victory input for their personal, holy, happy living for Him.

Today there is a vast desert-dearth of Bible knowledge. America bans it from our schools. The result is a godless society grossly ignorant of what God calls right and wrong, good and evil, true and false, what God says will help us, and hurt us. We are a Bible ignorant nation.

Our schools are full of mindless, false information books, parroted by careless or chicken-hearted teachers who are ignorant of God's facts and power principles. See, hear the silly, stupid, sordid television and radio shows - pseudo-intellectuals, who talk big, think they are too big, too smart for God - exposing their deep, dark ignorance of God's high, holy truth - caring not at all - what God sees or says. One day they will care what God does - for they all will face Judge Jesus.

Sadly, it's often true of Christians too, who say they know Jesus - the Way, Truth, Life - Personified. Yet, they follow godless fads too, swallow shrink stuff, or the world's immature emotion-notions - but ignore, and are ignorant of God's high and holy Book - the Bible.

Shame on us. You and I, and our children, grandchildren - from infancy up - need to read the Bible - heed what God says, thinks, feels - in all things. He made Psalm 37 alphabetical - to call us all - to love it, learn it, live it, give it - to those we love.

Third - Psalm 37 theme is - Trust and Obey God

David's theme is: **trust and obey God**. Thirty-three times Psalm 37 shows us God's power-action - to tell us all - what **not** to do - and - what to **do** - in this unfair, unjust rebel world.

In Psalm 37 - God gives 22 commands - that He means for us to believe and obey. God sees all - every right, every wrong - and He says - in His own day and way He will right all wrongs.

We will study the first 7 verses in Psalm 37 - where God tells us a dozen things - **not** to do - and - **to do** - when we see bad people prosper - while good people perish.

Now - read with me - Psalm 37 - verse 1 - God says -

“Fret not yourself because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity (all who break God’s Laws).”

“Fret not . . . envy not.” Notice first - God begins with two negatives. Why does God use this negative language? Well, think about it. In the Bible's most famous document - eight out of His Ten Commandments - are negatives. God says: *“Thou shalt **not** . . . Thou shalt **not**!”*

Why is that? Is God negative by nature? No! God is positive. Absolutely power-positive. Then, why negative commands? Easy. We sinners do selfish, negative sinner-stuff. We do wrong things, evils, errors - stupid stuff - bad for us - bad for others. So, our loving, positive God must keep saying to us -

“No, No! Don't do that.”

Parents are told to be positive - not negative. That's good. God is positive with us when possible. But God says to mimic Him. So, we must also say **“No”** - as He says **“No.”**

You and I need to say “**No**” to our own personal temptations, our wrongs, our sins. We need to say “**No**” to negative things we do that weigh us down. Our positive God positively says -
“*Put aside (say **no** to) every weight, and every sin which so easily snares us - looking to Jesus*” (Hebrews 12:1).

And - we need to say “**No**” to our child's temptations to give in to sad weights and selfish sins. We owe them God’s truth. God calls us to teach our children - by example and instruction. Teach them to say “**No**” to selfish self-love - to say “**Yes**” to self-**less** love. Teach them to trust and obey Holy Spirit control.

Unspoiled little Willy or Winnie will honor parents in public - if in private they're taught that “**No**” means “**No**” - with **no** rebel backtalk. God says, teach them to be **unspoiled** by the **unspared** rod - “woodshed diplomacy.” A spoiled child has selfish attitudes and acts - negatives.

So - obey God’s “*Thou shalt **nots***” to you. Then teach your children - by example and Bible instruction - to obey God too. It is positively the “*right-in-God's-sight*” thing to do.

One - Don't Fret!

v 1

"Fret not yourself because of evildoers!"

Watch this: God says "**No**" - twice - in Psalm 37's first verse. He often starts with the negative - because we are negative - we do negative stuff - like sin. So He says, "No, no, don't do that."

Now, exactly what is "*fretting?*" God says "*Fret not*" three times in the first seven verses of Psalm 37. "Fret" means to fume, flame, burn, in anger, fear, frustration, resentment.

You and I know the feeling, don't we. We see bad, unjust laws we cannot change, unfair actions we cannot control, unequal battles we cannot win. And we "fret."

We fret over legalized baby-murder called abortion. We fret over our nation's laws, that permit and pay for the baby-killing God calls "*shedding innocent blood.*" We're powerless - to slow or stop it. But God says, "*Fret not because of evil-doers.*"

We fret over the evil abuse of little children. Pedophile perverts commit vile, vicious sex-acts against helpless little ones, and yet are set free by godless laws, courts, judges. God sees it all.

The long list of daily evils goes on, grows on. Evil-doers are not stopped - they continue on and on. Yet, God still tells us, "*Fret not yourselves because of evil-doers.*"

People with a heart for God and for what He calls good, feel deep, burning anger, righteous indignation over sinful acts, and over being unable to stop such vile evils. That is "*fretting.*"

In Psalm 37 God says to all who are His own - whatever evils others do - "*you fret not.*" And - He will tell us why. He will tell us what we are to do instead - when bad people prosper while good people perish

Two - Don't Envy!

v 1

*“Nor be envious against the workers of iniquity.”
(People who break God's Laws)*

God says we are not to envy people who prosper, even while they ignore, deny, defy, break His high, holy, happy Laws - His Commands - given to bless and benefit all people on planet earth who will trust, love, obey Him.

God says, Don't envy or covet other people - either their situation or their stuff. Don't fantasize. Don't wish for other folk's fame and fortune - even those who prosper in ways that are not *“right-in-God's-sight.”*

Immoral sports figures, ungodly “show biz” folk, ego-centric business millionaires, billionaires, and proud, power-hungry politicians - all these and many more - are envied, bowed to, groveled before - called heroes - by millions of silly fanatics - called “fans” - most of whom don't care at all what evils their “heroes” do to gain their wealth, or how they use it.

These rebel breakers of God's Laws buy luxury mansions, fine cars, expensive clothes, eat the best foods, spend millions buying unneeded things. Recently several billionaires bought yachts costing \$100 million to \$400 million each - while multiplied millions of poor people starve worldwide.

These rich and famous rebels against God frustrate some, are envied by others. But hear the Word of the Lord to His own -

*“Don't fret over evil-doers!
Don't envy those who break My laws!”*

So - you and I can ask Him - why not fret? They're all wrong. Why not envy? Well, His reason is really easy to see, isn't it.

First - God said it - *“Don't fret! Don't envy!”* That settles it!

We hear today's parents say to children, "Don't do that, **okay?**" Like they need the kid's okay to obey. But God simply says, "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother.*" That should settle it.

God says, your child is to obey you (if you're right in His sight) - simply because **you** say so. And - in the same way - when God says to you and me - "*Don't*" - He means for us to obey Him too - just because He said so. He never asks our "okay."

Second - God says "*Fret not . . . Envy not*" - because both actions are bad for us. People pay billions buying trillions of pills and potions - paying silly, self-important psycho-analysts. Why? Because they can't handle their inner fretting or envy.

Sadly, even Christians - with easy access to God's Word, open entre' to His full inner peace - fret and envy too. My brother, sister - don't disobey God. Such fretting and envy is - SIN. Psalm 37 is God's simple, sure command - "*Don't fret! Don't envy! Do trust God!*"

Misspent Money

Think about this. If all Christians who pay shrinks or buy pills to calm their fears, would simply obey Psalm 37's first dozen commands - think of the good we could do. And if all misspent "fret-funds" - or "envy-dollars" spent on rich and famous "wannabe stuff" - were given to preach God's Good News to this sick, sordid, sad, mad, bad news planet, pointing people to our loving, saving, forgiving Savior-Lord Jesus - then - we'd be obeying God's Gospel call - and have His deep heart peace too.

Christians who ignore the Bible are duped and distracted by Satan, deceived into fretting and envying, disobeying God - disabling our Jesus-witness. And, when we disobey God He withholds His Holy Spirit power-supply in preaching His Gospel. And He says it's sin.

Third - God says "**Fret not . . . Envy not**" - because - in His own day and way - He will judge all sin - fully, finally, forever - all who break His Laws - all who ignore Savior Jesus.

Judgment Day will come - at death - or when Jesus returns. Count on it. He will come back as - Judge Jesus. Believe it. He will judge sin. So God says to all who trust and love Him -

"Fret not because of evil-doers . . . Envy not those who work iniquity - break My laws . . . for they will soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb" (v 2).

Jesus has a wonderful glory-plan for all people - in any century, country, culture, color, class, creed - all people who come in simple trust (faith, belief) - to Him. He promised them His eternal life in Heaven, with all its beauty, bounty, blessings for all endless eternity ahead. He promised to all who love Him His loving grace-gifts.

Who Wins? Jesus Wins!

Who wins - in the war against sin? Jesus wins! Count on it! Jesus has a warning Word for all who refuse to come to Him. See it with me - in Psalm 37 - God's judgment from Heaven -

Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more; you will look carefully for his place, but it will be no more.

The LORD laughs at him, for He sees his (judgment) day is coming. The wicked will perish, and the LORD'S enemies.

I have seen the wicked in great power, yet he passed away, and behold, he is no more. The future of the wicked is to be cut off (see Psalm 37 - verses 10,13,20,35,36).

There will be no reward for the evil; the candle of the wicked will be put out (Proverbs 24:19,20).

God Never Frets

God never frets over evildoers or iniquity-workers who break His high, holy Laws. Whether they are rich and famous, or poor and unknown - God is not impressed by the rebel bravado of those who ignore, deny, defy His holy. See Psalm 37 -

“Evil-doers will be cut off, a little while and the wicked will be no more. The LORD laughs at him, for He sees his (judgment) day coming. The wicked will perish, the LORD’S enemies, as the splendor of meadows, will vanish into smoke.”

Who Loses?

Psalm 2 tells God’s thoughts, what He says, what He will do. Psalm 2 says, God laughs, mocks, ridicules all puny rebels on the planet - who ignore, deny, defy Him! Read it - heed it -

Why do the nation rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of earth set themselves, rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, against His anointed (Messiah).

He who sits in the Heavens laughs, the LORD scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His wrath, terrify them in His fury, saying, “I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.” Messiah Jesus is God’s “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

Whatever their wealth or fame or power, all who work iniquity - all who break God’s Laws - all who ignore God’s high, holy Word and will and way - are losers. Sooner or later - they all face Judge Jesus Himself - at death - or when He returns. They all bow to Him - confess Him as Lord of all - forever too late. They will all Go to Hell. He said it (Revelation 20:10-15).

People forget - Jesus closed His great “Sermon on the Mount” with this strong, sober statement - listen to Him -

Everyone who does not these sayings of Mine will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew and beat on that house - and it fell. And great was its fall (Matthew 7:26,27).

Here, in Psalm 37, God gives us His caring commands. They all center on Him, on His Word, will, way - so we can know Him, know Him better, trust Him, love Him, live each day His way - because - *it's the right in His sight thing to do.*

God said it! That settles it! Believe it! Obey Him!

In Psalm 37, verses 1 and 2 - God is saying to all who love Him:

“See all the evil-doers and iniquity workers,

who break My Laws -

don't fret over them - **don't** envy them!”

All over this sin-plagued planet - in every century, country, culture, color, class, creed - God sees every bad person who prospers while good people perish. And He says - all who prosper in doing evil - *“very soon - will be cut off - forever.”*

In their evil and lawless deeds all who ignore, deny, defy Jesus Christ - show that they feel they are “smarter, bigger than God.” They choose to “Go to Hell!” Yes they do. And they will. But for all who love Jesus, eternity ahead is all good and glory!

The great 19th century London preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who for 38 years preached to 10,000 people every week - spoke of the trials of England's first Queen Elizabeth:

“Locked in prison, she envied the milkmaid. But if she had known the glorious 44-year reign she would have afterward, she'd not have envied. Who envies the fat prize-winning steer, led away to slaughter? Ungodly rich men are but beasts, fat for the slaughter.”

So, my brother, sister who loves Jesus - obey God gladly. **“Don't Fret”** over evil-doers, **“Don't Envy”** iniquity-workers. In their rebel lifestyle, they act smarter, stronger than God, think they don't need Jesus Christ. Big, Big Mistake! When they face Judge Jesus - they'll learn - forever too late - that Jesus Christ really is Lord of all.

To Do!

Now - in Psalm 37 - we come to God's positive commands. First - in verses 1 and 2 - God told us what - **Not to Do**. Then, here in verses 3 to 7- God tells us what - **To Do**. Yes He does.

Actually - in all of Psalm 37 - God gives to all who love Him - 16 power-positive commands - 5 negative commands. In this study, we'll look at just 3 negative and 9 positive commands.

God began Psalm 37 with negatives: “*Don't fret, Don't envy.*” Now He speaks in power-positives His courage-commands. There are seven in a row - to all who to all who love Jesus. Before we look at each one, let me outline them for you.

Do Trust in the LORD

Do His Good Will

Do Dwell in Him

Do Feed on His Faithfulness

Do Delight Yourself in the LORD

Do Commit Your Way to the LORD

Do Trust in Him

Do Rest in the LORD

Do Wait Patiently for Him

Command Three - Do Trust!

v 3

“Trust in the LORD”

In the Bible the words *“trust, believe, faith”* all mean the same. The most vital choice we ever make in this brief, one-time lifespan on earth - is to put personal *“faith, trust, belief”* in the One and Only true Jehovah God - Jesus Christ Himself.

Faith in Jesus is His simple call to all - to receive His free gift of salvation from sin, death, Hell, His forgiveness, new birth as God's child, His eternal life in Heaven.

All the good, great, gracious work needed for our salvation - dying for our sins (so we need not die in Hell forever), taking on Himself the righteous judgment we all deserve - all have coming - was done in full - by Jesus Christ on the Cross. And the Divine validity of His work - as the One and Only God-Man who died to save us lost sinners from Hell - was forever proven - by His real, bodily resurrection from the dead.

True Faith in Jesus is Live-Action Trust

Again, Spurgeon said it simply - **“Faith cures fretting.”** *“Faith in the LORD”*, of course. He is the Center of Psalm 37. Thirty-three times, by name or pronoun we see *“The LORD”* - *Jehovah-Jesus, Messiah-Savior-King*. Faith's focus is on Him.

“Do Trust - in the LORD.” He is always in absolute-power command and control. See the New Testament - Romans 8:28 -

“And we know that God works all things together for good to those who love God.”

How do we *“know”* God is doing all that good? He says so. My brother, sister in Jesus - whatever evil others do - even if it prosper them - you and I are called to trust, love, live for Jesus. He gives us His courage command - *“Trust in the LORD.”*

Command Four - Do Good!

v 3

“And do good.”

Not only are we called to *“Trust in the LORD”* - but also to - ***“Do good.”*** Whose “good”? We are called to *“Do God’s good will.”* Much of what man calls good - God calls evil. And what man calls evil - God calls good. It’s true, isn’t it.

Psalm 37:27: *“Depart from evil, do good, dwell in it forever!”* God calls all people to do what is good and right in His sight. Doing good means - *“Doing God's good will.”* Nothing less.

When Jesus was born the glory-angels’ promise was not - *“Peace on earth, good will to men.”* There was no peace. The angels really said - *“Glory to God in the highest (Heaven), and on earth, peace to men doing God's good will” (Luke 2:14).* Rebel men and nations have no *“peace on earth”*, for they ignore, deny, defy God’s good will - personally - and all across this sin-plagued planet.

God is good. Absolute good. And He gives His *“Good News of great joy to all people - the Savior - Christ the Lord”* Jesus preached His *“Good News to the poor.”* His Jesus- witnesses preach His all-powerful Gospel - *“Good News to save sinners” (Luke 2:10,11; 4:18,19; Romans 1:16).*

And, my Christian friend, know this: *“Doing God’s good will”* is a remedy for fretting. When we fret over others, envy others, we become too self-absorbed to *“do God's good will.”* So God says - *“Trust in the LORD - Do good - His good will.”*

Command Five - Do Dwell!

v 3

“Dwell in the land”

This power-positive courage-command is so very important. Listen carefully, prayerfully. To the Israeli people this Word from God meant - *“Do **dwell**, remain, stay - do live”* in the promised land God gave. Dwell in the place He put His name.

To Christians it means - *Do dwell, remain, stay - do live daily* in God’s presence, close, constant companionship.

John the Apostle makes this vital power-point in his little letter - *I John*. He calls us to *“fellowship”* with God the Father, and God the Son, in God the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for “fellowship” is *koinonia* - It means to “have in common.” We get from it the word “coin” - “common currency.” The New Testament was written in *koine*’ Greek - common man’s Greek - so all could read it. “Fellowship” means to own together - hold in “common” as companions.

And all thru the brief Book of I John - the Apostle John used another vital Greek word - to fix in our minds exactly what fellowship with Jesus Christ means. That word is - *meno* - translated by English words, *“dwell, abide, continue, remain.”*

John used this little word 22 times in his brief letter. He was telling Christians: *“Abide in Him - Jesus.”*

So, *“fellowship with God”* means to *“dwell, remain, stay”* in His presence, as His close, constant companions, with His own power and promises, every day, every way.

And, of course, John simply mimics Jesus - who said to all who love Him, *“Abide in Me.”* In John's Gospel - chapter 15 - Jesus used this word *“meno”* 12 times - saying to all His own - *“dwell, abide, remain, stay in Me.”* Here are 6 - listen to Him -

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the Vine, neither can you unless you abide in Me. I Am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing. If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:4-7).

Psalm 37 told Israel to *“Dwell in the land.”* Why? Their identity with God was in that land. He called it the land *“Where I will put My name.”* All God’s blessings to them were in that land - Israel belonged there. God's Temple, His Ark of Covenant-Promise, His Mercy Throne, all were *“in the land.”*

And - so it is with Christians too. All we are, have, do is - **not** in a land - not anywhere on this planet - but is *“in Christ.”*

Jesus is our identity - we belong to Him.

Jesus is our intention - we behave like, for Him.

Jesus is our inheritance - we are blessed in Him.

Jesus Himself is the Center and Circumference of all our being - and dwelling. He is all our Cause and Calling. And if you know Jesus, I know this about you - it is your deep down desire to live a fruitful life - with and like and for Him. So - these simple little words are to you and me too - *“Dwell in the land. “Abide in Him”* - and are vital to our personal living for Jesus.

In Psalm 37 we’ve seen five of God's power-positive orders - to lift us into His day-to-day victory-living - to be His Winners.

“Don’t fret! Don’t envy! Do trust in the LORD! Do His good will! Do dwell (abide, remain) in Him, in His close, constant companionship - to live daily in His full, fruitful, family of God - fellowship.”

Command Six - Do Feed on His Faithfulness!

v 3

“Feed on His faithfulness”

How often do you think seriously about *God's faithfulness* - to you and yours? All that you and I are, have, do that is good - we owe to Him. Every heartbeat, life-breath, muscle-movement, good-mind-thought - is God's loving grace-gift to us - and - if He withholds them, they don't happen.

Think of the Prophet Jeremiah. Jerusalem, his city, was captured, set for destruction, his people, starved, slain, slaves. Jeremiah wept bitterly, no comfort. Why? Jeremiah wrote it:

“Jerusalem has gravely sinned (Lamentations 1:8) . . . my eyes fail with tears, my heart is troubled . . . I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath.”

Israelis were ignoring God - basically they told Him to “back off, get lost.” Big Mistake! He backed off - and they lost His blessings - His giving, guiding, guarding, governing. God sent, meant the *“affliction of the rod of His wrath”* to call Israel's “losers” back to Himself, back to His blessings.

He does the same now - stops His blessings because of our sins. But when we get right with Him, we say what Jeremiah said -

*“Thru the LORD's mercies we are not consumed . . . His compassions fail not. They are new every morning - **great is Your faithfulness.** The LORD is my portion, so, I hope in Him. The LORD is good to those who wait on Him, who seek Him.*

Tho' He causes grief, yet He will show compassion, in the multitude of His mercies. He does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men. Let us search and examine our ways, turn back to the LORD, lift our hearts and hands to God in Heaven” (Lamentations 3:22-41).

Do you hear it? A persecuted, hurting Jeremiah, saying to God:
“Great is Your faithfulness!”

Paul said it to all the Christians in corrupt Corinth (and he'd say it to this corrupt planet too), "**God is faithful**, by whom you were called to the fellowship (companionship) of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (I Corinthians 1:9).

Again, God warns us against pride and temptation. He says, in times of temptation we often are - **unfaithful**. But God is faithful. His faithfulness is **unfailing** (I Corinthians 10:12,13) -

*"No temptation has taken you but such as is common to man. But **God is faithful**, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."*

God is faithful! **Don't** follow, feed, fill your mind with husks of fools, frauds, failures. *Feed on His faithfulness*. Search the Psalms - see God's faithfulness. Search all the Bible - see *His faithfulness* - again and again.

As a young pastor at the Church of the Open Door in Los Angeles, my staff and I visited our 4200 members - often in hospitals. An elder pastor, brother Ed Waldeck, showed me a wonderful verse to use in visiting folk. Here it is -

"I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right, and in faithfulness You have afflicted me. I pray, let Your merciful kindness be my comfort, by Your Word to Your servant. Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live, for in Your law I delight" (Psalm 119:75-77).

Look at one more of these beautiful Psalms - 92 - listen -

"It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to Your name, O most High, to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, Your faithfulness every night. For You have made me glad thru Your work; I will triumph in the works of Your hands. O Lord, how great are Your works! (vs 1-4).

I see it in preaching His Word. God's thoughts are deep, His works great, His hand triumphs. Day by day "*God is faithful!*"

And, my sister, my brother, God is faithful to you too, isn't He. Whatever happens, every day, every way "*God is faithful!*" So - let's **do** what God says - and - when bad people prosper while good people perish - "*Keep feeding on His faithfulness.*"

One more thought here. Dr. Franz Delitzsch, German Bible scholar, translated this phrase - "*Cultivate faithfulness*" - and, of course, it fits too. In I Corinthians 4:2 - God says it -

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. It is required in stewards, that one be found faithful (I Corinthians 4:1,2).

You see the connection. When we "*feed on His faithfulness*" - then we are able also to "*cultivate faithfulness*" to Him - to keep on going, growing - in the Lord by His Word.

We must ask ourselves - This year - was I more faithful to God than last year - in living, giving His Good News?

Then we need to dedicate to Him - next year to even more - "*feed on His faithfulness*" - to enjoy His loving grace-gifts - the life, health, measure of wealth He gives us - as we "*feed on His faithfulness*" - then too - we will "*cultivate faithfulness*" in loving, living for Him - our Messiah-Savior-Lord Jesus. Question: Will you? Will I?

Command Seven - Do Delight in the LORD

v 4

"Delight yourself - in the LORD"

Read this whole verse with me - it's God's command-promise:

"Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart."

Now, don't miss this - King David says it to you and me too -

"You yourself, delight in the LORD Himself."

This is so extremely important. You see, we tend to delight in what He **does** for us - not in the Lord Himself - in who He is, His wonders, His glories, delight in His names, His character traits, His attributes, thoughts, feelings, His Word!

Now, make no mistake. It is right to delight in all that His does - right to praise and thank Him for His good and perfect gifts - giving us all good things richly to enjoy.

But - David say - **Do delight** - in the **LORD Himself** - as we delight in wife or husband, son or daughter, good friends - not for what they **do** for us - or what they **have**, or **give** us. But a husband should delight in his wife - **herself** - a wife delight in her husband - himself. Even if that person does nothing, has nothing to give us, we delight in **them** - personally.

Today's sad, silly shrink advice is - "love and delight in self." God never says that. Never! God says - mimic Jesus - who *"emptied Himself, humbled self, denied self, gave up Himself"* - for us all. And in doing so - He delighted the heart of His Father in Heaven. Listen to God the Father speak with God the Spirit of God the Savior-Son - Jesus -

"You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."
"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased. You hear Him" (Luke 3:22; Matthew 17:5).

God never ever says, “delight in self”, but in His Savior-Son -
“*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.*
You hear Him.”

Millions today are self-focused, they do not delight in the Lord Himself - but in “self.” God says our highest joy is to be in the LORD God - Jehovah-Jesus Himself. Think about it. Do you delight in the Lord Himself, or only His gifts? Listen to David:

“As the deer pants for the water brook, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Bless the LORD, O my soul, all that is within me, bless His holy name.

“Oh, give thanks to the LORD, call on His name. Sing to Him, sing praises to Him, talk of all His wondrous works. Glory in His holy name. Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD. Seek the LORD and His strength. Seek His face forevermore” (Psalms 42; 90; 103; 105).

What was David doing? “*Delighting in the LORD Himself.*” And - if we do this too wonderful things happen - great truth dawns on us. We cease fears, forget to fret. We need no pills or analyst to trade panic for peace. We believe His peace-promise,
“You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, for in YaH the Lord is everlasting strength” (Isaiah 26:3,4).

So, beloved, “*Do it - Delight yourself in the LORD Himself.*”

Now, the next line in Psalm 37, vers 4, is priceless - it shows us the loving, caring, grace-giving heart of God -

"And He will give you the desires of your heart."

Now, get this, it's lovely. David is saying to you and me too -
“You yourself - do delight in the LORD Himself - because - He Himself does delight in you yourself.”

God is for you, friend. His promise to you - is this - if you do truly delight in Him - He will give you your heart's desires. But, don't be misled here. This is God's "blank check" to people who love Him - **only** when we delight and desire what God desires and delights in. John Bunyan said it this way: "When desires of God and desires of the righteous agree - then they are of one mind in their desires."

The brief Bible account of a man called Jabez fits here. Read it
Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that You would bless me indeed and enlarge my border, and that Your hand might be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that it may not pain me!" And God granted him what he requested.

Clearly, in this prayer, God saw that Jabez delighted in God Himself, desired to please and honor Him in all things. So God gave Jabez the desires of his heart.

King Solomon began like that too. Read it in II Chronicles 1 -
That night God did appear to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask what I shall give you."

And Solomon said to God, "You have shown great mercy to David my father, and made me reign in his place. Now, O LORD God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this Your people, who are so great?"

And God said to Solomon, "Because this was in your heart, and you asked not riches, wealth, or honor, nor the life of your enemies, nor asked long life; but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people, over whom I made you king: Wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches, wealth, honor, such as none of the kings have had who have been before you, nor shall there any after you have the like (vs 7-12).

Again, God looks at our heart - sees what we delight in - really. If our true delight is in Him - His desire becomes our desire. And He can give us our heart's desire - every time. It is His absolute-power promise. Believe it.

Do you wonder why some folks' prayers are answered so clearly, directly? Their secret is - they are **one** with the Lord - in full accord with Him. Paul said it: "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*" What delights the LORD - they delight in too. They live and pray to delight Him. His desire is their desire too. And so, He is able to say "Yes" to their heart's desires - because - their first, highest, best heart's desire is - they themselves delight in the LORD Himself.

The opposite is also true - of a selfish heart. Jeremiah said it -

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds (Je 17:9,10).

Many people live for self - not to please and honor God, then wonder why He won't give their heart's desires. He answers:

You have not because you ask not. You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it on your own desires (James 4:3).

Command Eight - Do Commit to the LORD

v 5

“Commit your way to the LORD”

It's how we come to delight and desire in full accord with God. We choose to **commit** - our lifespan, lifestyle, life-substance - to Jesus as our own personal *King of kings and LORD of lords*.

You can be your own king, do your thing, have your fling - have your day, and say “I did it my way.” God lets you choose. But you will lose His best blessings. So - how do we - **commit our way** to the Lord? One writer says - committing to the Lord is to - “roll the whole burden of your way upon the Lord.” Our **way** - simply means the life-time **pathway** we follow. Listen to Psalm 37 again -

*“The **steps** of a good man are ordered of the LORD, and He delights in his **way**. Though he fall, he will not be utterly cast down. Wait on the LORD, and keep **His way**, and He will exalt you to inherit the land. When the wicked are cut off - you will see it” (Psalm 37:23,24,34).*

Jesus made this power-point - to choose His way -

*“Enter the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad the **way** that leads to destruction, and many go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult the **way** that leads to life, and few there are who find it” (Matthew 7:13,14).*

Later He added this further absolute Word -

“I Am the Way, the Truth, the Life - no one comes to the Father (in Heaven) but by Me” (John 14:6).

It's why Jesus said so often to so many - *“Follow Me!”*
He is the only real right Way, Truth, Life to, about, of Heaven - walk with, like, for Him on earth.

Question: Do you choose to follow Jesus, to **“commit your way”** to Jesus? Now is the time. He's calling you too.

Now - God - thru King David's pen - has given us **eight** power-commands - in Psalm 37:1-5 - what do we do when bad people prosper while good people perish? So far - God has said - **1-** Don't fret, **2-** Don't envy, **3-** Do trust in the LORD, **4-** Do His good will, **5-** Do dwell in His presence, **6-** Do feed on His faithfulness, **7-** Do delight in the LORD, **8-** Do commit your way to the LORD. Now - we look at number

Command Nine - "Do trust in Him - Again"

v 5

"Trust also in Him"

"Trust in the LORD" - again. Why does David repeat this command we saw in verse 3? Well, that's easy, isn't it. Because we forget to *trust in the LORD*, don't we. Yes we do.

Remember - fear and faith can never live together. If we fear - we do not trust the Lord. How often do you and I fear, fret, worry, panic? How often? Why do we fear and fret - when God said - *"Don't"*? We fear and fret - because in the anxious moment - we don't trust the Lord to do what's right - or we don't believe He cares, or that He is ready, willing, able. So, we have all sorts of soul-stress.

But - by the Holy Spirit David said - *"Trust also in Him - and He will bring to pass!"* What has you troubled, afraid? Tell it to Jesus. He said - to you too - *"Come to Me . . . I'll rest you!"* That's His loving, caring call to you and me - so - let's **Do it!**

Now, my brother, sister - God could leave it there - He said all we needed to hear, read, know. But in His grace He says more. Look at Psalm 37 - verse 6 -

"And He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noon day."

This is more of God's absolute answer why bad people prosper while good people perish. You see, bad peoples' prosperity on this planet - is brief at best. They too can get cancer, or heart disease. The bottom line is - they too die. And when they die - they're cut off from God forever.

But not those who trust in the Lord. They may suffer all their lives, no prosperity on earth, living in a poor, meager lifestyle. But when God takes them Home to Heaven - their rich treasures, glories, joys are all there - forever and ever.

Our Lord Jesus told the true story of a rich man and a beggar. On earth one was rich - he had it all. But the poor man had nothing. He begged, was weak, and sick. Then both men died.

Death levels all people - rich and poor, man and woman, young and old, black, brown, yellow, red, white. Death gets us all. Jesus reported on both of these men. He said,

“The beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom (Paradise - where believing Abraham was).”

The rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades - he was in torments” (Luke 16:19-31).

You get the picture, don't you. It's a true story. Jesus never called it a “parable” at all. It is grim, hopeless fact for all who reject Messiah-Savior Jesus. It is glorious, happy fact for all who receive Him in this lifespan on earth.

All unfair, unjust acts against you - Judge Jesus sees, and will judge. Yes He will. He will vindicate you.

Command Ten - Do Rest in the LORD

v 7

“Rest in the Lord”

Christians use to sing a song that said it well. We need it again.

 "What a friend we have in Jesus,
 all our sins and griefs to bear,
What a privilege to carry everything to Him in prayer.
 O what peace we often forfeit,
 O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer."

One of the most soul-resting calls anywhere in the Bible is from the Savior-Lord Jesus Himself - in Matthew 11:28-29 -

"Come to Me all who labor and are heavy-laden,

*I will **rest** you.*

Take My yoke on you and learn from Me,

for I am meek and lowly in heart,

*and you will find soul-**rest**.*

For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

You see it, don't you. When we come to Jesus with our hard "self" labors and our heavy "sin" loads He receives us, forgives us, cleanses us from all sin, and He rests us.

When we yoke to Jesus - He leads, He lifts our heavy load - makes the pulling easy, the burden light.

When we learn from Jesus - He teaches us to rest all things - our labors, heavy loads of sin, worry, pain - rest all upon Him.

Jesus never says to see a shrink for silly psycho self-stuff. He calls us to no potions, no pills, no analysts bills. He simply calls us to Himself: *"Come to Me . . . all."*

When we do choose to trust and obey and come to Jesus - He will give us His real soul-rest. When we don't - He won't.

Command Eleven - Do Wait

v 7

“wait patiently for Him”

We're in days of - instant everything. All things must go fast. But not God. He's in no hurry. His timing is out of the infinity of forever - always perfect timing. So, what are a few thousand, million, billion, trillion millennia to Him? As nothing.

Rebel bad people may prosper in their evil-doing, breaking His high, holy, happy Laws - for a God-given lifespan of 60, 70, 80, 90, 100 years or more. So what! God is not impressed. He gave them every heartbeat and life-breath - in every second, minute, day of those years. He gave plenty of time to come to His Savior-Son Jesus.

To God's people who struggle, and suffer need - and to us all - this Psalm says - *“Wait patiently for Him.”* Look again - v 34 -

“Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and He will exalt you to inherit the land, and when the wicked are cut off, you will see it.” Again, see Psalm 27:14:

“Wait on the LORD, be of good courage, and He will strengthen your heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord.” Isaiah 40 -

*Have you not known, not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints, nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, the young men shall utterly fall. But those who **wait on the LORD** shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”*

God's power-courage-command to you and me - is right here -

“Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.”

Command Twelve - Don't Fret

v 7

fret not!

King David says it three times in **8** verses -

"Fret not. Fret not. Fret not."

Why, David? Well, because **we fret**, don't we. You and I fret. We fume, fuss, resent bad people prospering. So God says,

*"Fret **not** because of evil doers, Fret not because of him who prospers in **his** (own) **way**, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.*

Many so-called Christians today feel they must take matters into their own hands - to solve all evils - stop all lawless deeds. Some even turn to violent acts - shooting abortion doctors, bombing abortion clinics, etc.

Well, it is right to speak out in power against such vile evils. But Jesus never said our calling and cause is to kill evil doers. Judge Jesus Himself will right all wrongs - without our help - in His own way and day. He said it long ago - it's still true - *Vengeance is Mine, says the LORD, I will repay.*" Count on it.

So, what does God say to do - when bad people prosper while good people perish? He says it loud and clear for all to hear -

*"Cease from anger, forsake wrath - fret **not** - it only causes harm. For evildoers will be cut off. But those who **wait on the Lord** . . . will inherit the earth" (Psalm 37:8).*

Who Wins? God Wins!

And so do all who look to Him - love Him - live for Him!

It's what we do - all who know Jesus -

"when bad people prosper while good people perish."