

LESSON 22

DO NOT ENVY EVILDOERS

Psalm 37

Of David.

- ¹Fret not yourself because of evildoers;
be not envious of wrongdoers!
- ²For they will soon fade like the grass
and wither like the green herb.
- ³Trust in the Lord, and do good;
dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.
- ⁴Delight yourself in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.
- ⁵Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him, and he will act.
- ⁶He will bring forth your righteousness as the light,
and your justice as the noonday.
- ⁷Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him;
fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way,
over the man who carries out evil devices!

WELCOME: *Fixing Our Focus*

Discuss with the group an instance of injustice which was recently featured in the news. Gather the thoughts and sentiments of each member regarding the matter. Do you have common reactions? Why do you think you reacted in the same manner?

WORSHIP: *Adoring Our God*

Suggested songs:

Worthy by Pat Barrett

Come Thou Fount, Come Thou King by Gateway Worship

WORD: *Understanding the Word*

Lesson Aim: Members will continue to place their trust in God and obey him even if injustice abounds.

Introduction

Have you ever felt frustrated with God because people who are evil live luxuriously, and they often do so at the expense of those who follow God? We know of politicians whose greed for power and corruption had been exposed by the media, and yet somehow they remain in power. They are not called to account for their crimes. The innocent poor and middle class of our country are being taken advantage of and they are powerless to do anything against evil men who have power over them. If God is sovereign and just, then why is he allowing these people to get away with the things they are doing?

What are we, as believers, to do in light of this reality? How can we keep our attitudes in tune with God despite the prevalent presence of injustice in our world?

Leader: Lead in reading Psalm 37:1-7 aloud together. Then read the paragraph on the “Key Verse.”

Key Verse: The summary of this psalm which is the truth we can cling onto can be found in verses 16-17, “Better is the little that the righteous has than the abundance of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the Lord upholds the righteous.”

Psalm 37:1-7. Theme: _____

1. This portion of the psalm begins and ends with an exhortation not to fret. Underline the reason stated in verses 1 and 7 why one would fret. What are the possible reasons why one would fret about this?

2. Instead of fretting, what should one do according to the psalmist? Encircle the verbs and place a box over the things God will do in return. How will these help address the things being worried about in the previous question (*vv. 3-7*)?

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 1-7.

Psalm 37:8-15. Theme: _____

Read verses 8-15 together. Underline all phrases which talk about the future of the wicked.

- ⁸Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!
Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.
- ⁹For the evildoers shall be cut off,
but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.
- ¹⁰In just a little while, the wicked will be no more;
though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there.
- ¹¹But the meek shall inherit the land
and delight themselves in abundant peace.
- ¹²The wicked plots against the righteous
and gnashes his teeth at him,
¹³but the Lord laughs at the wicked,
for he sees that his day is coming.
- ¹⁴The wicked draw the sword and bend their bows
to bring down the poor and needy,
to slay those whose way is upright;
¹⁵their sword shall enter their own heart,
and their bows shall be broken.

3. What did the psalmist say will happen to evildoers? How does the psalmist contrast them with those who wait on the Lord (*vv. 8-11*)?

4. Put inside a box phrases used by the psalmist to describe the wicked. How does the Lord react towards them and what will the Lord do to them (*vv. 12-15*)?

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 8-15.

Psalm 37:16-24. Theme: _____

Read verses 16-24 together. Encircle all phrases which talk about the future of the righteous.

- ¹⁶Better is the little that the righteous has
than the abundance of many wicked.
- ¹⁷For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,
but the Lord upholds the righteous.
- ¹⁸The Lord knows the days of the blameless,
and their heritage will remain forever;
- ¹⁹they are not put to shame in evil times;
in the days of famine they have abundance.
- ²⁰But the wicked will perish;
the enemies of the Lord are like the glory of the pastures;
they vanish—like smoke they vanish away.
- ²¹The wicked borrows but does not pay back,
but the righteous is generous and gives;
- ²²for those blessed by the Lord shall inherit the land,
but those cursed by him shall be cut off.
- ²³The steps of a man are established by the Lord,
when he delights in his way;
- ²⁴though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong,
for the Lord upholds his hand.

5. In the previous section, the wicked plots against the righteous. But in this section, what does God have in store for the righteous (*vv. 18-20, 22, 24*)?
6. What contrasts did the psalmist show between the wicked and the righteous? What are their state in the present and will be their state in the future (*vv. 16-17, 21-22*)?

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 16-24.

Psalm 37:25-36. Theme: _____

Read verses 25-36 together.

²⁵I have been young, and now am old,
yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken
or his children begging for bread.

²⁶He is ever lending generously,
and his children become a blessing.

²⁷Turn away from evil and do good;
so shall you dwell forever.

²⁸For the Lord loves justice;
he will not forsake his saints.

They are preserved forever,
but the children of the wicked shall be cut off.

²⁹The righteous shall inherit the land
and dwell upon it forever.

³⁰The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom,
and his tongue speaks justice.

³¹The law of his God is in his heart;
his steps do not slip.

³²The wicked watches for the righteous
and seeks to put him to death.

³³The Lord will not abandon him to his power
or let him be condemned when he is brought to trial.

³⁴Wait for the Lord and keep his way,
and he will exalt you to inherit the land;
you will look on when the wicked are cut off.

³⁵I have seen a wicked, ruthless man,
spreading himself like a green laurel tree.

³⁶But he passed away, and behold, he was no more;
though I sought him, he could not be found.

7. The psalmist gave two testimonies in this section (*vv. 25-26, 35-36*).
What can you learn about the testimonies given by the psalmist?

8. What can you learn from verses 32 and 33? Is this still happening today? If so, how?

9. Underline the commands given by the psalmist in this section, then encircle the promises accompanying the commands (*vv. 27, 34*).

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 25-36.

Psalm 37:37-40. Theme: _____

Read verses 37-40 together.

³⁷Mark the blameless and behold the upright,
for there is a future for the man of peace.

³⁸But transgressors shall be altogether destroyed;
the future of the wicked shall be cut off.

³⁹The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord;
he is their stronghold in the time of trouble.

⁴⁰The Lord helps them and delivers them;
he delivers them from the wicked and saves them,
because they take refuge in him.

10. How does the psalmist contrast the future of the righteous and the wicked (*vv. 37-38*)? What does this tell you about this generation's wicked people?

11. What does the psalmist declare about the Lord (*vv. 39-40*)?

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 37-40.

Questions for Adults

1. Based on what we have learned from this psalm, how are we to act with regards to the seeming injustice we are experiencing, where the wicked grow rich and powerful while the innocent are oppressed?
2. What attitude should we have towards the wicked, knowing that if they persist in their ways, God will one day cut them off?
3. Have you experienced being oppressed by powerful people? Were you able to experience God's deliverance from them? Share your experience with the group.
4. Individually and as a group, pray back this psalm to God. You could start by saying something like:

Father, there are wicked people who are in seats of power in the government. They are oppressing the poor and the innocent. I know that you are just and will one day bring judgment and vindicate the righteous.

5. Pray for our country (Prayer requests supplied by the Leader).

Questions for the Youth

1. There are many things that happen at this stage of our lives which we feel are unfair. We try to study hard for an exam and get fair or below par grades while cheaters often come up on top. There are those who promised us friendship, but swindled us at the end of the day. Maybe we see injustice in some parts of the world. These events—and many more—give us feelings of discomfort and anxiety. What are we called to do as young people when we see these unfair events?
2. What does it mean for us as young people to commit to the way of the Lord? How can we hold the same way of living, despite trying times?
3. The Lord assured King David that he always delivers. David himself mentions that, through his life, he has seen God's children triumphant in the end because God has preserved them. Have you experienced trouble, and God's subsequent deliverance? What are the troubles we can lift up to God today?
4. How can you pray for others who you think might be experiencing trouble?

Questions for Children

1. This psalm tells us not to fret or be afraid of evildoers. Who are these people in your life?

2. How can you place your trust in God with regards to these evildoers in your life? How will you treat them?
3. Were you able to experience God saving you from the people you mentioned in no. 1? Share this with the rest of the group and spend time in prayer thanking God.