

STEPS TO SPIRITUAL VICTORY DURING DIFFICULT TIMES**PSALM 37:1-9**

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. *Psalm 37:1-2*

I. Do Not Fret Because of Evil Men (vss. 1&2)

- Though it's natural to respond to unfairness, unkindness and injustice, fretting is extreme irritation and worry that wears away about our emotional well-being and faith in God. It's worry and distress that are toxic! It gains you nothing but misery and keeps you from seeing God's blessings and plan for your life.
- Evil people may get their way and gain power and prestige, but to be jealous (envious) causes you to focus on them and away from God. It also can cause us to forget that "the now" is not the totality of life. All will be judged by God and receive what they deserve.
- Does this mean we shouldn't care? No! We should care enough to do what we can to right any wrong without becoming obsessed and counting on God to do the rest.

Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. *Psalm 37:3*

II. Trust in the Lord and Do Good (vs. 3)

- _____ ***in the Lord*** – Trust (having faith) in the Lord that He is in control and has a plan. When God allows evil people to prosper, He has His reasons. Remember that all will be accountable to God's judgment in the end. This life is simply test time for eternity.
- ***Trusting in God allows us "to dwell in the _____"*** – When we trust in God, we don't experience a miserable, unstable and fragile existence. We "dwell in the land" – live a life that thrives and has purpose with no worries. We can "enjoy safe pasture" – experience the joy of God's protection and blessings according to His will. Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God (the Father). Trust also in me." (John 14:1)

Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. *Psalm 37:4*

III. Delight Yourself in the Lord (vs. 4)

- ***Delight yourself in the _____*** – Experience great joy and pleasure in God's character, blessings, promises and presence. This happens when our focus is on God rather than our problems or injustices. The more we get to know God, the greater our delight.
- ***When we delight in the Lord, we will be given our heart's _____*** – Because our delighting ourselves in the Lord means we have gotten to know God better, our heart's desires will change to conform to God's will for our lives. His will and desires become our will and desires. Jesus said, "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given you." (John 15:7) – The desires of your heart!

Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. *Psalm 37:5-6*

IV. Commit Your Way to the Lord (vss. 5&6)

- _____ ***your way to the Lord*** – Entrust everything – our lives, families, jobs, possessions, goals and priorities – to His guidance and control. It means to trust Him, believing He knows what is best for us and that He can take care of us better than we can take care of ourselves.

- **Your righteousness and just cause will _____** – When we commit our way to Him – live for Him – our lives and purposes will stand out. It will be apparent and obvious to others. You will be a positive example and inspiration.

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. *Psalm 37:7*

V. Be Still/Rest Before the Lord and Wait Patiently (vs. 7)

- **Be still and _____ before the Lord** – Slow down from frantic self-centered activity and ease your chaos of negative emotions regarding the wicked and difficult times. Rest in the Lord. He has this. He’s in control. Be still and rest in the Lord is to experience His peace, rest, assurance, and be confident in Him.
- **Wait _____ for Him** – In a world of instant answers, solutions and self-help, we need to wait on God and His will, ways and timing. This doesn’t mean we won’t actively be a part of the solution, but it will be done in God’s guidance and power.

Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret – it leads only to evil. *Psalm 37:8*

VI. Refrain From Anger and Turn From Wrath (vs. 8)

- **Stop the _____** – Anger is a natural emotion and can be good if it is God-motivated and directed toward sin and injustice. Righteous anger can motivate us to right wrongs. However, if our anger is unrighteous (caused by self-centeredness) or long-lasting, it becomes harmful. It robs us of our joy and well-being and can cause us to overreact negatively to others and life situations. Long-term, it turns into wrath – extreme anger that controls us and is difficult to control or extinguish. It will lead us to do evil.

For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land. *Psalm 37:9*

- **Instead, wait and _____ in the Lord** (vs. 9) – We can’t always see the true situation or God’s purposes clearly. His ways are revealed over time. Hindsight is always 20/20. When we wait on the Lord and trust in Him, He will be in control. Let go and let God! Difficult times and evil people will pass away and our temporary suffering will cease. Wait upon the Lord, and hope in Him!

With evil people and in difficult times:

Do not fret!

Trust in the Lord and do good;

Delight yourselves in the Lord;

Commit your way to the Lord;

Be still and rest before the Lord;

Refrain from anger and wrath.

Instead,

Wait and hope in the Lord!

Answers: II. Trust; land. III. Lord; desires. IV. Commit; shine. V. Rest; patiently. VI. Anger; hope.