

EXTINGUISHING OUR ANGER AND ENVY

HOW TO LIVE RIGHT IN A WORLD OF EVIL AND WRONG



In Psalm 37 we are given specific instructions from the LORD as to how we can extinguish our anger and envy as we live among the evildoers and wrongdoers in this world. When we obey his clear instructions, he grows us up in our ability to trust him and to live in his peace as he shepherds us through all the unfairness and the many perplexities of life.

- a. “Fret not” is the first step toward trusting the LORD.
 - (Psalm 37:1 ESV) Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers!
- b. Do not smolder in anger because of those who do evil.
- c. Do not envy those who do wrong.
- d. Believe God concerning the fate of evildoers and wrongdoers.
 - (Psalm 37:2 ESV) For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb.

● **EXCURSUS:** Examining the underlying reasons as to why we might smolder in anger because of evildoers or why we might envy wrongdoers.

I. Underlying reasons for our anger ...

- a. Evildoers harm people and shatter lives yet they often are successful and profitable.
- b. Evildoers impede our plans and adversely affect our lives—think ... politics, unfair employer, abusive spouse, spiteful co-worker, etc.
- c. Evildoers speak evil and defy God yet are popular and gain respect in leadership positions.
 - (Psalm 73:8–10 NIV) They scoff, and speak with malice; with arrogance they threaten oppression. 9 Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth.

10 Therefore their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance.

II. Underlying reasons for our envy ...

- a. Wrongdoers break the rules and yet seem to prosper and live better than we do.
 - (Psalm 73:3–5 NLT) For I envied the proud when I saw them prosper despite their wickedness. 4 They seem to live such painless lives; their bodies are so healthy and strong. 5 They don’t have troubles like other people; they’re not plagued with problems like everyone else.
- b. Wrongdoers live at ease and are rich while we often struggle with trouble.
 - (Psalm 73:12 ESV) Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches.

III. The underlying reasons for our underlying reasons ...

- a. Anger and envy reveal a lack of trust in the sovereignty of the LORD.
- b. This lack of trust exposes a lack of belief as to what the LORD himself says concerning his sovereign rule over heaven and earth.

IV. So here is what the LORD says about his sovereignty ...

- a. God can do all things and will fulfill his purpose.
 - (Job 42:2 NIV) I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
- b. God’s way is perfect, and he is a shield to all those who take refuge in him and his perfect way.
 - (Psalm 18:30 ESV) This God—his way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.
- c. God does all that he pleases.
 - (Psalm 115:3 ESV) Our God is in the

heavens; **he does all that he pleases.**

- d. It is only the purpose of the LORD that will stand.
- (Proverbs 19:21 ESV) Many are the plans in the mind of a man, **but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.**
- e. No plan of humans no matter how wise or insightful can succeed against the LORD.
- (Proverbs 21:30 NIV) There is no wisdom, no insight, **no plan that can succeed against the LORD.**
 - (Ecclesiastes 7:13 ESV) Consider the work of God: **who can make straight what he has made crooked?**
- f. Nothing happens—good or bad—apart from the sovereign command of the Lord.
- (Lamentations 3:37–38 ESV) **Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it?** 38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?
- g. God is God and he will accomplish all his purpose.
- (Isaiah 46:9–10 ESV) Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, **“My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.”**
- h. God will accomplish his will in heaven and on earth.
- (Daniel 4:35a ESV) All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and **he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.**

V. **So let's ask ourselves this question: Which part of my life past, present or future might escape God's notice and sovereign care? WHAT MIGHT FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS?**

- (Romans 8:27–28 ESV) And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, **because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.**

END EXCURSUS

In Psalm 37 the LORD also gives us some very powerful, **general** instructions for life in a world dominated by evildoers and wrongdoers. When we believe God and obey him in these things, he fills us with his Spirit and we abound in his loving, powerful care as our Great Shepherd.

a. **Trust in the LORD.**

- (Psalm 37:3 ESV) **Trust in the LORD**, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

Trust in the LORD, do good, live out our lot in life and feed on faithfulness.

b. **Delight in the LORD.**

- (Psalm 37:4 ESV) **Delight yourself in the LORD**, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

When we delight ourselves in the LORD, he gives us himself—the true desire of our hearts.

c. **Commit our way to the LORD.**

- (Psalm 37:5–6 ESV) **Commit your way to the LORD**; trust in him, and he will act. 6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

Trust in the LORD by committing our way and trust him to act as God. He will vindicate our trust in him in the right path in which he leads us.

- (Psalm 23:3 ESV) He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

d. **Be still before the LORD.**

- (Psalm 37:7 ESV) **Be 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!
- (Psalm 46:10 ESV) **Be still, and know that I am God.** I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

Be quiet and know that God is God. Wait patiently for him and trust God to be God.

e. **Refrain from anger.**

- (Psalm 37:8 ESV) **Refrain from anger**, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; **it tends only to evil.**

- (Ephesians 5:15–18 ESV) Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.