

Psalm 37 (A Psalm of David)

Don't take vengeance – let God do it

¹ Let's face it, evil people do bad, hurtful, and destructive things. Yes, it's a fact, but don't get angry about it. If you are angry, don't let your anger fester or it will get out of control. In addition, don't envy evil people nor be jealous of the pleasures they enjoy or the possessions they acquire. Keep in mind that these people are violent and unjust - just plain bad people. ² Yes, they ought to be punished, but don't get upset about it or want to take vengeance upon them yourself. Don't worry about them, because it won't be long before they will experience a premature death and be gone forever.

³ The LORD Himself said, "Vengeance is mine. I will repay." Therefore,

1) Trust the LORD, and allow Him to punish the wicked as He has promised. Instead of getting angry, practice doing good, beneficial, and productive things to and for everyone around you. Then settle down and establish your residence through steadfastness, fidelity, and consistent godly living.

⁴ 2) Allow the LORD to become your greatest source of joy and pleasure. When you do, He will gladly grant the desires of your heart because your desires will be transformed into those that are consistent with His will for your life.

⁵ 3) Transfer control of your life completely over to the LORD and trust Him to lead you as He sees fit. When you do, He will accomplish the very best things in and through you. ⁶ As you follow His leading, He will cause your good, just, and right deeds to come to light for all to see as a testimony to His name, and your ability to govern your life through good decision-making will shine as brightly as the noonday sun. ⁷ Be still, stop telling God how to run things, and

4) Wait patiently for Him to punish the wicked. There is no need to sit around wringing your hands in anguish over the bad things they do. Don't let the way evil people carry out their wicked schemes or the way they seem to prosper in their sin get you all hot and bothered.

⁸ Listen carefully, are you angry about these things? If you are, give up your anger and set it aside forever. Abandon any plans you have of punishing these people yourself, especially when you are so angry you could kill them. Getting yourself worked into a frenzy only leads to a sinful response on your part, and then you will be as guilty as they. ⁹ You don't need to worry about punishing wicked men, because everyone who practices evil deeds will eventually be cut down and die a premature death. On the other hand, those who wait patiently for the LORD to extract vengeance will live a prosperous, full life, and die at a ripe old age. ¹⁰ Believe me, it really won't be long before those wicked people are dead and gone. When that happens you can do a careful search and look for them everywhere, but those evil men will have completely vanished from the scene. ¹¹ In contrast, the humble man will live a long life and be thrilled repeatedly with the way the LORD fills his life with peace, security, and the provisions he needs.

Let the wicked do what they want – God will stop them in His own time

¹² Wicked men plan all sorts of bad things to do to people who live in a lawful, just, and fair manner. Yet I have seen those same wicked men become frustrated when their plans don't work out like they had hoped. Soon their frustration turns to anger, and their anger festers until it can be clearly seen on their faces as they grit their teeth in defiance. ¹³ They do everything they can to accomplish their evil desires. The whole time the LORD is sitting back laughing at their blindness and stupidity. You see, He knows their demise is coming. In fact, in His eyes it has already taken place. ¹⁴ The wicked have prepared their arsenal of weapons, removed the safeties, and taken aim. They intend to 1) shoot down those who are already afflicted with troubles and heartaches or are in dire need of help from people who care, and 2) murder those who do what is right in the sight of the LORD. ¹⁵ But what these wicked people don't understand is that the weapons they shoot at innocent victims will end up bringing about their own death. In the end, the LORD will render their weapons useless anyway.

The wicked will be broken while the righteous prosper

¹⁶ The meager possessions of good people are much better than the vast amounts of wealth that groups of wicked men banding together obtain by illegal or illicit means. ¹⁷ Why is it better? Because the wicked man will be broken in the same violent, heartless, and devastating way that he hurts his victims. While the LORD is in the process of breaking the wicked, He is actively supporting, sustaining, and upholding the man who lives in a lawful, just, and fair manner.

¹⁸ You see, the LORD is intimately acquainted with the lifespan, thoughts, and actions of everyone who lives such a pure and clean life that no one can rightfully accuse them of wrongdoing. As a result, the LORD will give them an unending inheritance. ¹⁹ Truly good people like them will not be disappointed or ashamed of their LORD or of their own behavior when they experience troubles, pain, injury, calamity, or distress. Even during a famine these good people will have more than what they need so that there will be some to share with others.

²⁰ On the other hand, those who are guilty of rebelling against God and defiantly breaking man's laws will be totally destroyed, and the enemies of the LORD will wither and die like the luscious grass of the most beautiful pasture when the scorching sun beats down and the rains fail. In fact, they will vanish into thin air just like smoke from a chimney.

The giving person gains while the greedy person loses out completely

²¹ Since the wicked man thinks only of himself, he borrows things without intending to return them to their rightful owner, but the righteous man is generous and kind. This good man not only has a deep sympathy for those who are hurting and need help, but he also has a strong desire to come to their aid¹. When he recognizes someone in need, the righteous man cares enough to share some of his own food or possessions. ²² As a result of his giving and caring spirit, the LORD will bless him, and his home will be secure for years and years to come. The LORD does not think so highly of the wicked man though. In fact, those who are selfish and greedy are cursed of the LORD, will die prematurely, and will be completely destroyed.

Trust God – He won't let you down

²³ Each step taken by the man who lives a pure and godly life is planned, orchestrated, and made secure by the LORD Himself, and He finds great pleasure in the way this good man lives. ²⁴ When he experiences troubles and trials that cause him to temporarily stumble or fall, it will not be such a devastating fall that he cannot recover. No, his LORD is the mighty One who holds his hand and helps him back up again. ²⁵ I know this is true because although I am now an old man, I can remember back to when I was a child. From then until now I have not seen a righteous man deserted by the LORD or his children having to beg for something to eat. ²⁶ The LORD helps the righteous man because throughout the day this good man is looking for someone who needs help. When he finds such a person he lends to the LORD by showing kindness and mercy and by sharing some of what he possesses. As a result of his caring and giving spirit, his children and grandchildren will grow up to be a blessing to others and to the LORD as they follow his caring and giving example.

²⁷ Since you know the good that comes to the righteous and the hurt that comes to the wicked, abandon every word or deed that might bring hurt, misery, or troubles upon others. Don't just abandon these things, but determine that you will never do them again. Then, after you have decided to abandon them, start doing good deeds and saying good things. Once you establish this practice, your dwelling place will be secure indefinitely. ²⁸ The LORD is thrilled to see a man doing what is good, fair, and just to his neighbor, and He will never desert such a man when he has a need. In fact, the LORD will guard, protect, and keep him and will make him secure for the rest of his life. Unfortunately, the children of the wicked will most likely grow up to be like their parents. If they do, the LORD will allow the consequences of their sin to destroy them in the same way their parents' sins either have or will destroy them. ²⁹ The wicked will finally come crashing down someday, and when they do, the righteous man will be there to take possession of the land and dwell securely in it.

³⁰ When the righteous man speaks, he uses good discernment based upon sound knowledge and good understanding to say things that are lawful, just and fair. ³¹ He speaks these kinds of things because he spends so much time in the Scriptures that they permeate his whole being, guiding his mind and mouth. Therefore, he will not do or say anything that will result in hurt, devastation, or punishment for himself or others. ³² The wicked secretly spy upon the righteous man looking for an opportunity to sneak in when he isn't looking and murder him, ³³ but the LORD will only let them go so far. You see, they may capture the righteous man and hold him for a while, but the LORD won't leave him in the wicked man's grasp. No, the LORD will rescue him. Then too, the LORD will not let him be found guilty of evil by a crooked judge in a court of law. ³⁴ Since the LORD does this for His own children, don't take things into your own hands. Rather, wait expectantly for the LORD to save you. Keep living like Christ, and in time He will elevate you to a place of honor and cause you to possess the land. Then when the wicked are cut down and experience a premature death, you will still be around to see their demise.

³⁵ I have seen a ruthless, violent, wicked man prosper like a magnificent tree in rich soil, ³⁶ but it wasn't long before he died and vanished from the scene altogether. I looked everywhere for him, but there was not a trace of him to be found. ³⁷ Therefore, don't look with envy upon the wicked man or upon the things he possesses, but watch carefully and seek to imitate the man who lives such a pure and clean life that no one can rightfully

accuse him of wrongdoing. Do the same with regard to the man who does what is right in the sight of the LORD. Following the example of these good men is the right thing to do because they are men of peace and will have something really valuable to show for their lives in the end.³⁸ On the contrary, the one who rebels against God and civil authority will experience a premature death and be completely destroyed. When all is said and done the wicked man will learn that the happy, prosperous end he had hoped to find will have completely eluded him.³⁹ The righteous are not so, because their deliverance comes from the LORD, and He is their source of strength when troubles, distresses, or hard times come their way.⁴⁰ During those times the LORD is there to assist them and bring them into a secure place. He saves them from the grasp of the wicked and then delivers them because they take refuge in the name of Jesus Christ, the Messiah². He is their hope of deliverance, and He is the only hope worth claiming.

¹ Definition of "compassion" www.dictionary.com/browse/compassion

² In John 14:6, Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me." Therefore, the name "Jesus Christ, the Messiah" has been used."

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