**Fret or Focus**

***Psalm 37:1-5***

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Introduction: Why do the wicked seem to prosper while the righteous suffer? Such is the age old question of Israel as well as for believers to this day. Why does God allow the wicked to succeed while the righteous suffer? This problem is addressed in detail in Psalm 73, where the psalmist Asaph opens: *“For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked”* (:3). In Psalm 37, David references *“the wicked”* 14 times. But David goes on in this Psalm to give encouragement to God’s people who question what seems to be happening to the wicked & the righteous. He begins with a command, *“Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity”* (:1). The word *“fret”* means “to burn, to get heated up, to become angry.” Wiersbe suggests David is saying, “Cool down & keep cool.” His argument in verse 2 is that the evildoers are temporary & will one day be dealt with & be gone (cf. also verses 9, 22, 28, 34, & 38). Fretting on the part of the believer is similar to worrying. Both corrupt one’s spirit, are contagious to the saints, & are confusing to the sinners. Following his negative command, David gives 3 positive commands. Instead of fretting (worrying) the believer is to *“Trust, Delight, & Commit.”* We have a choice to make, either to fret or to focus. Which will you choose?

I. Fret, or focus > Depend upon the Lord (:3) [emphasis upon our salvation]

A. The two-fold command:

1. *“Trust”* – “To Rely Upon Someone Totally” – “To rest upon with all of one’s weight.”

2. *“Do good”* – to be obedient; the opposite of fretting – “Faith cures fretting. True faith is

actively obedient. Doing good is a fine remedy for fretting. There is a joy in holy activity

which drives away the rust of discontent” (Spurgeon).

B. The two-fold promise:

1. *“Thou shalt dwell in the land”* – speaks of contentment (protection).

2. *“Verily thou shalt be fed”* – speaks of enablement (provision).

Summary: When we rely upon the Lord’s faithfulness: He supplies what we don’t have (Phil.

4:19); He sustains what we already have (4:13); & He satisfies us with what we don’t have

(4:10).

II. Fret, or focus > Delight in the Lord (:4) [emphasis upon our sanctification]

A. The exhortation: *“Delight thyself in the LORD.”*

1. The term used > *“Delight”*

a. It means “to be brought up in luxury; to be pampered” (Illustrate: Lazy-boy recliner or

Sleep-comfort bed).

b. It means find your “luxury” in God; in the abundance of blessings in Him.

2. The truths taught >

a. Ephesians 5:10 – love what He loves; hate what He hates (pray for discernment).

b. Psalm 119:57, *“Thou are my portion, O LORD…”* – He is enough by Himself.

Summary: “To enjoy the blessings & ignore the Blesser is to practice idolatry. This is not a

promise for people who want ‘things,’ but for those who want more of God in their lives”

(Wiersbe).

B. The expectation: *“He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”*

1. When we delight ourselves in the Lord, He changes our heart.

2. When we delight ourselves in the Lord, we want what He wants.

Summary: “If we truly delight in the Lord, then the chief desire of our heart will be to know Him

better so we can delight in Him even more, & the Lord will satisfy that desire!” (Wiersbe).

“A pleasant duty is here rewarded with another pleasure. Men who delight in God desire or ask

for nothing but what will please God; hence, it is safe to give them *carte blanche*. Their will is

subdued to God's will, & now they may have what they will” (Spurgeon).

III. Fret, or focus > Determine for the Lord (:5) [emphasis upon submission]

A. The command: *“Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him.”*

1. *“Commit”* means “to roll off on.” Kirkpatrick suggests, “Shake off & devolve upon Him all

the burden of anxiety for life’s course.” Compare I Peter 5:7.

2. “God doesn’t take our burdens so that we can become irresponsible, but so we can serve Him

better” (Wiersbe).

B. The consequence: *“And He shall bring it to pass.”*

1. What is the *“it”*? The previous promises of verse 3 & 4?

2. The following promises of verse 6-40?

Summary: “The error against which we are here warned is reliance on our own strength or

wisdom. The encouragement here given to renounce all self-confidence & to look to God alone,

is that He will graciously undertake our case, bear our burdens, & accomplish for us that which

we could never bring to pass” (Plumer).

Conclusion: Do you ever give way to fretting? Are you at times given to worry? We have all been there & done that. What is the answer? We need to focus! We focus when we depend upon the Lord, when we delight in the Lord, & when we determine for the Lord. Is He your dependence? Is He your delight? Is He your direction? If we are to enjoy the promises given here, we must first obey the commands. How about you tonight?