

How to Battle the Unbelief of Envy

Psalm 37:1–11

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Psalm 37:1

Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers!

Proverbs 23:17

Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the LORD all the day.

> Envy is a mingling of a desire for something with the resentment that another is enjoying it and you are not.

> The New Testament speaks strongly about the sin of envy.

Galatians 5:21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

> What is the fruit of uncontested envy?

(1) Internal destruction (Prov. 14:30)

A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.

(2) External evil actions (Ps. 37:8)

Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

David gives us a strategic battle plan to combat the unbelief of envy.

1. Keep an eternal perspective (v. 2)

For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb.

We must take the long view. David contrasts the character and destiny of the righteous and the wicked (vv. 12-26).

Psalm 37:37

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

David in his old age says he has seen two kinds of people:

A. The righteous (vv. 25–26)

25 I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread. 26 He is ever lending generously, and his children become a blessing.

B. The wicked (vv. 35–37)

35 I have seen a wicked, ruthless man, spreading himself like a green laurel tree. 36 But he passed away, and behold, he was no more; though I sought him, he could not be found. 37 Mark the blameless and behold the upright, for there is a future for the man of peace.

2. Trust in the Lord (v. 3)

Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

A. Trust is absolute reliance on and confidence in the person and character of God.

Proverbs 3:5–6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

> Those who trust in the Lord are stable and fruitful.

Psalm 52:7–8 “See the man who would not make God his refuge, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and sought refuge in his own destruction!” 8 But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever.

> Prayer is an expression of trusting in God.

Phil. 4:6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

B. Trust is accompanied with action.

> Do good

Ps. 37:27 Turn away from evil and do good; so shall you dwell forever.

> Dwell in the land

> Befriend faithfulness

(1) Feed on the promises of God

Protection (vv. 17b, 28, 39-40), Presence (vv. 32-33), Provision (vv. 19, 22, 25-26, 29, 34)

Psalm 36:5 Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

(2) Be faithful to God

Psalm 37:30–31 30 The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. 31 The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip.

3. Delight yourself in the Lord (v. 4)

Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

We should also note that if your delight is wholly in God then your desires will not be for anything that would diminish his centrality in your soul. You won't want anything that has the potential of turning your heart to trust in anyone but him. If your "desires" are for the stuff of this world that would detract from your complete satisfaction in God, then you aren't truly delighting yourself in him. **Sam Storms**

4. Commit your way to the Lord (vv. 5-6)

Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

Proverbs 16:3

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.

5. Be still and wait patiently for the Lord (v. 7)

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!

> **Why wait patiently for the Lord?**

- Because it keeps us from taken matters into our own hands (v. 8) Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

- Because the meek shall inherit the land (vv. 9-11)

For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land. 10 In just a little while, the wicked will be no more; though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there. 11 But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace.

Matthew 5:5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

- Because the Lord loves justice (vv. 28-29)

For the LORD loves justice; he will not forsake his saints. They are preserved forever, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off. 29 The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell upon it forever.