



THE GIFT EXCHANGE
“Trading Worry for Peace”

Introduction:

Psalm 37 is old King David’s heart-to-heart with his fellow anxiety-prone humans. — “Holiday Lessons from an Old Man”

Holiday Lesson #1. “Don’t be consumed by worry and jealousy.” (Psalm 37:1–2, 8–9)

- Psalm 37:1 – “Do not fret because of evildoers...”
- Psalm 37:7 – “Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.”
- Psalm 37:8–9 – “Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing. For evildoers will be cut off...”
(fret = Hebrew: *charah* = blaze up, react, flare up, explode)
“Learn not to overreact! Don’t let yourself get consumed in the flames of worry and jealousy. Don’t blow a fuse.”

Worry also opens the door to another equally destructive attitude—jealousy (cf. Psalm 37:1b)

- Psalm 37:1 – “Be not envious toward wrongdoers.” Why are we so filled with worry and jealousy over how the ungodly people seem to have it all together?
- Psalm 37:2 – “For they will wither (i.e., be cut to size) quickly...like the grass and fade (i.e., wilt and die) like the green herb.”
- Psalm 37:16–18 – “Better is the little of the righteous than the abundance of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked will be broken, but the Lord sustains the righteous. The Lord knows the days of the blameless, and their inheritance will be forever.” (cf. Luke 12:22–31)

Holiday Lesson #2. “Trust in the Lord and do the right thing, no matter where you are.” (Psalm 37:3)

- Psalm 37:3 – “Trust in the Lord...” trust = Hebrew: *batach* = put your confidence in someone or something.
- Psalm 37:3 – “...and do good...” (Psalm 37:3) Hebrew: *asah tov* — “Do what is best. In fact, do what is even better.”
cf. 1 Corinthians 10:31 “...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
- Psalm 37:3 – “...dwell in the land...” Trust in the Lord and do good, no matter where you are.”
- Psalm 37:3 – “...and cultivate faithfulness.” cultivate = Hebrew: *raah* = tend a flock, associate with other sheep
- Psalm 37:5 – “...and He [God] will do it.”
- Psalm 37:6 – “He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday.”
“The more we trust Him the smoother our lives will be.” (cf. Proverbs 3:5–6)

Holiday Lesson #3. “Delight yourself in the Lord with the assurance He will bless your life.” (Psalm 37:4)

- Psalm 37:4 – “Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart.”
delight = Hebrew: *anag* – to be soft, pliable, delicate. It pictures people who have not let life harden them.
“Lord, soften my hardened heart!”
- Psalm 37:4 – “He will give you the desires of your heart.” God will align my moldable heart with His giving heart.
My desires will line up with His desires. It means living with the confidence that my God will supply all my needs and with the assurance He will bless my life in accordance with His will.

Holiday Lesson #4. “Commit your way to the Lord and your path will be clear.” (Psalm 37:5–6)

- Psalm 37:5–6 – “Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He will do it. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday.” (cf. Proverbs 16:1–3) “commit” Hebrew: *galal* = to roll.

David’s counsel is that we must commit our way to the Lord—roll on God the whole course of our lives.

Solomon’s counsel is that we must commit our works to the Lord—roll on God the daily events that lead up to the whole course of our lives.

Holiday Lesson #5. “Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him with the confidence He will take care of your every need.” (Psalm 37:7–8)

- Psalms 37:7–8 – “Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. Cease from anger and forsake wrath. Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing.”
- Psalm 37:7 – “Rest in the Lord...” Hebrew: *damam* = to be silent, even speechless. To rest in the Lord means to stop doing things in our own power.
- Psalm 37:7 – “...and wait patiently for Him...” wait = Hebrew word: *kuwl* = to twist and turn, to whirl and spiral Whereas resting in the Lord gives the idea of quietly listening, waiting patiently for the Lord actually pictures a person on the move but nonetheless still resting.
- Psalm 37:7–8 – “Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. Cease from anger and forsake wrath. Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing.”

We need to rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him...especially when the ungodly people around us seem to be doing better than they should, when we are oppressed by their sinful actions, when we are tempted to explode with anger and wrath, and when our frustration in a situation stirs in us a heart of evil retaliation.

Holiday Lesson #6. “Wait for the Lord and be humble and you will delight in abundant prosperity.” (Psalm 37:9–11)

- Psalm 37:9–11 – “For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land. Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more. And you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there. But the humble will inherit the land and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.”

wait = Hebrew: *qavah* = gathering and putting things together in a collection.

e.g., looking at our collection of all we know about God. Wait = hope—a vital form of worship.

- Psalm 37:8 – “Cease from anger and forsake wrath...”
“cease” Hebrew: *raphah* — to refrain, to let it go.
“forsake” Hebrew: *azab* — means to relinquish (i.e., our rights) “Let go and let God.”

- Psalms 37:11 – “But the humble will inherit the land and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.”

Rather than trying to do life your own way, be humble enough to listen to wise counsel and you will experience abundant prosperity. “abundant prosperity” = Hebrew: *shalom* = lit. “an abundance of peace, wholeness”

When we wait for the Lord, we will delight in abundant prosperity and experience the abundant life and wholeness God promises this side of heaven.

- Psalm 37:3 – we will also have a “posterity” (cf. Psalm 37:37) posterity = Hebrew word: *akariyth* — speaks of a future land filled with God’s remnant. We will have a good ending no matter what the circumstances.

Concluding Challenge:

Worrying doesn’t take away tomorrow’s troubles. It takes away today’s peace.

Psalm 37 presents the path from anxiety to peace:

Do Not Fret. Be Not Envious. Trust in the Lord. Do Good. Dwell in the Land. Cultivate Faithfulness. Delight Yourself in the Lord. Commit Your Way to the Lord. Rest in the Lord. Wait Patiently for Him. Cease from Anger. Forsake Wrath. Delight in Abundant Prosperity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & ACTION ITEMS:

1. What are the things that bring you the most worry, anxiety, and stress during the holiday season?
2. Circle the following principles that you need to concentrate on the most during this holiday season:
Do Not Fret • Be Not Envious • Trust in the Lord • Do Good • Dwell in the Land • Cultivate Faithfulness
Delight Yourself in the Lord • Commit Your Way to the Lord • Rest in the Lord • Wait Patiently for Him
Cease from Anger • Forsake Wrath • Delight in Abundant Prosperity
3. What did you get most out of this message?