

### **When the Wicked Prosper**

Alone, Abandoned, and Assaulted...Focus on Your Character!

#### **Introduction: Priming the pump for tonight's discussion.**

- This week we summarized Psalms 10-16 with a greater teaching emphasis on Psalms 10 and 15. Of the Psalms that we took quickly this week, there is a common theme...what to do when the wicked seem to prosper...and when the righteous seem to suffer. Was there anything that stood out to you that you would be led to share with the group? Any new ideas or insights from God's Word?

#### **Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.**

- In Psalm 10, David asked the Lord why He seemed to be so far away...because the wicked were getting ahead while the righteous seemed to struggle. Those who were prideful, boastful, who oppressed the poor, with foul mouths and hearts full of iniquity, who act as if there is no God at all seemed to be getting ahead while David was trying to do right and seemed to fall behind. Let's frame our discussion two ways. First, how does Satan's influence in the world impact the prosperity of the wicked? Second, how does having an eternal kingdom perspective help a righteous person to handle this reality?
- David's response to seeing the wicked prosper was to trust God and to pray. It is important to keep an eternal kingdom perspective when we're looking at the world around us. Temporary things can seem bigger and more significant than they are if we're forgetful of God's kingdom plans. Two questions: First, how does keeping our perspective right help us to pray and to trust in the sovereign hand of God? Second, knowing the gospel and the patience of God, what are some good gospel reasons that God is patient with the unrighteous?
- Psalm 15 reminds us that our walk with God is connected to our personal holiness. We aren't saved by good works, but by grace alone. However, our fellowship with God is impacted greatly by our walk of faith. In the New Testament, we're instructed to render out our salvation with fear and trembling. This is the same principle that David writes about in Psalm 15. A follower of God should be rendering out...like a painter painting on a canvas...what it looks like to be a follower of God. In your own life, how has your fellowship with God been affected by the ebbs and flows of your character along your Christian journey.

#### **Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:**

*Psalm 10-16*

- Psalm 37:1-7
- Ephesians 2:3-5
- Matthew 5:45
- Romans 5:8

**Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?**

- Try to think of the prospering of the wicked in terms of God's patience for sinners. God is patient, desiring that none should perish, but that all should come to saving knowledge in Jesus Christ. Perhaps God would have you to reframe the problem of wicked prosperity in light of the gospel, and in light of God's kingdom plans.
- We've learned that if we work on our character, then God will handle our reputations. This week we've learned that character is far more important than just a reputation alone. Character has an impact on our Christian fellowship. With this in mind, is there anything in your own character that needs to be addressed in light of the teaching this week? Why not take time to do business with God.