

Week Three: *Evil Wins?*

Psalm 73

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Does it pay to be godly, or does it seem to you that the ungodly have greater success in life?
2. Read Psalm 73. How would David answer the question posed in #1 above?
3. Check out what David had to say in Psalm 37:1-2. Why do you suppose God allows nonbelievers to enjoy earthly success?
4. According to David's comments in Psalm 37:1 and 73:2-3 what difficulty did the success of nonbelievers cause for David? Is that still a problem for believers?
5. Do you have anyone in your family or among your friends or colleagues who believes you are foolish to believe in God and follow the narrow path? How does that make you feel?
6. David was pretty candid about his frustration in watching nonbelievers succeed while believers struggle. Do you share his frustration? Do you ever feel tempted to give up the faith as David was tempted?
7. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Share with God (as David did) your honest frustrations over what appears to be unfairness in life.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. Read 1 Timothy 6:6-7. Why do you suppose Paul didn't just say, "godliness is a means to great gain"? Why did he feel a need to single out contentment? Does godliness already include contentment?
9. Why is contentment so hard for people to achieve?
10. Are contentment and lack of ambition the same thing? What's the difference?
11. Can you be content while working hard to improve your status in life? Explain.
12. Is it a sin to want more, to work hard to achieve more, to set big goals? When does personal drive cross the line and become sinful?

13. Read 1 Timothy 6:9-11. What is the warning Paul issues? Is it only money that can lead a Christian astray, or could something else (power, fame, love of a person/place/thing) also become an unhealthy obsession? How do you know when you have gone too far?
14. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for contentment in your life.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. Read Psalm 73:1. Why do you think David begins with that statement when he spends most of the Psalm talking about the frustration he feels over the success of godless people?
16. Judging from David's observations in Psalm 73:3-9, is what you see on the surface the same as reality? Do the pleasures of this world always equate to happiness and a sense of well-being? Explain.
17. Read Solomon's observations in Ecclesiastes 1:1-11. What did he discover about getting everything his heart could desire?
18. Read Ecclesiastes 5:12. Explain what Solomon was trying to say.
19. Read Solomon's prayer in Proverbs 30:7-9. Do you feel the same way about possessions?
20. Studies show that most Americans feel they would be happy if they just earned 10 to 20% more than they have right now (no matter their current level of prosperity). Have you ever felt that way? Why do you suppose that is true no matter if a person earns \$25,000 or \$200,000?
21. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for 20% more income than you are currently making. (Just kidding!) Pray to be more aware of your current blessings in life, material and otherwise.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

22. Do you think God would have greater success converting the godless if they had less success in life? Or is it better for them to experience outward success but internal dissatisfaction with things and achievement?
23. Who do you know that is less well off than you, but appears to be content and even happy in life? What about them do you find so attractive?
24. Are you happier now than when you got your first job? Why or why not?

25. Read Psalm 73:17-20. What caused David to change his mind about being envious of the ungodly?
26. After considering the bigger picture, how did David describe his previous attitude of jealousy and envy? (See Psalm 73:21)
27. Read Luke 16:19-31. What lesson was Jesus trying to teach by telling this story?
28. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for a better perspective on what is most important in life.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

29. Read Psalm 73:21 again. What happens when we compare ourselves to others?
30. Read John 21:20-22. What did Jesus say to Peter when he wanted to know what was going to become of John? What lesson can we learn from that exchange?
31. According to Psalm 73:18-20 and 27, what will become of the godless? How do you feel about that?
32. Read Ezekiel 33:11, John 3:17-20 and Romans 10:21. What is God's attitude towards those headed towards eternal judgment? Is God eager to see them punished?
33. Is the judgment of the ungodly something God does to them, or is it something they (or their ancestors or family-of-origin) have chosen for themselves instead of believing in God? Should God force Himself on people?
34. If man had no say in the matter of his relationship with God, we would lack the very essence of being human - free will. If you had no choice but to believe, what would be the difference between you and a programmed computer?
35. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for the opportunity, the words and the actions to show someone far from God the kind of love and compassion He has towards all people.