

June 23, 2020 Daily Devotional

Psalms 37 several times repeats the advice: “do not fret.” We are so used to hearing the phrase “do not fear” that this different formulation jumps out at me. To “fret” is to feel or express worry—and I am definitely one who frets about all kinds of things!

Jesus asked: “And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?” (Matthew 6:27) But how do we attend to those things that do give us reason to worry (everything from keeping kids safe to our health in a pandemic to the impact of climate change) while at the same time putting our trust in the God who makes sure even the birds are fed (Matthew 6:26)?

I wonder how you manage this balance between fretting and trust? One of the things that helps me is to look out at the broad expanse of a body of water and realize that the world is so much bigger than me and my worries. The vast water also reminds me, at the same time, that every single drop of water contributes something to the whole—and so my responsibility is to do what I can to contribute to the world, alongside so many others.

Psalms 37

1 Do not fret because of the wicked; do not be envious of wrongdoers,
2 for they will soon fade like the grass, and wither like the green herb.
3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; so you will live in the land, and enjoy security.

4 Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.
5 Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act.

6 He will make your vindication shine like the light, and the justice of your cause like the noonday.

7 Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him; do not fret over those who prosper in their way, over those who carry out evil devices.

8 Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath. Do not fret—it leads only to evil.

9 For the wicked shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.

10 Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look diligently for their place, they will not be there.

11 But the meek shall inherit the land, and delight themselves in abundant prosperity.

12 The wicked plot against the righteous, and gnash their teeth at them;

13but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he sees that their day is coming.
14The wicked draw the sword and bend their bows to bring down the poor and needy, to kill those who walk uprightly;
15their sword shall enter their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.
16Better is a little that the righteous person has than the abundance of many wicked.
17For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the Lord upholds the righteous.
18The Lord knows the days of the blameless, and their heritage will abide forever;
19they are not put to shame in evil times, in the days of famine they have abundance.
20But the wicked perish, and the enemies of the Lord are like the glory of the pastures; they vanish—like smoke they vanish away.
21The wicked borrow, and do not pay back, but the righteous are generous and keep giving;
22for those blessed by the Lord shall inherit the land, but those cursed by him shall be cut off.
23Our steps are made firm by the Lord, when he delights in our way;
24though we stumble, we shall not fall headlong, for the Lord holds us by the hand.
25I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.
26They are ever giving liberally and lending, and their children become a blessing.
27Depart from evil, and do good; so you shall abide forever.
28For the Lord loves justice; he will not forsake his faithful ones. The righteous shall be kept safe forever, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off.
29The righteous shall inherit the land, and live in it forever.
30The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom, and their tongues speak justice.
31The law of their God is in their hearts; their steps do not slip.
32The wicked watch for the righteous, and seek to kill them.
33The Lord will not abandon them to their power, or let them be condemned when they are brought to trial.
34Wait for the Lord, and keep to his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land; you will look on the destruction of the wicked.

35I have seen the wicked oppressing, and towering like a cedar of Lebanon.

36Again I passed by, and they were no more; though I sought them, they could not be found.

37Mark the blameless, and behold the upright, for there is posterity for the peaceable.

38But transgressors shall be altogether destroyed; the posterity of the wicked shall be cut off.

39The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; he is their refuge in the time of trouble.

40The Lord helps them and rescues them; he rescues them from the wicked, and saves them, because they take refuge in him.

