

Psalms 37:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

Analysis

The imperative 'fret not' (Hebrew 'charah,' to burn with anger) opens this wisdom psalm addressing a perennial challenge: the prosperity of the wicked. The command prohibits both anxious agitation and envious resentment toward evildoers. Envy is particularly dangerous because it validates the wicked's apparent success, suggesting their way is superior. This psalm's acrostic structure (alphabetic) suggests comprehensive wisdom—from A to Z, God's justice will prevail, so fretting is both unnecessary and faithless.

Historical Context

David wrote this in his old age (v. 25), reflecting on a lifetime of observing God's justice. Ancient Israel's agrarian economy made sudden wealth dramatic, creating temptation to envy those prospering through wickedness.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What evildoers' success tempts you to fret or envy, and why?
2. How does trusting God's timing change your perspective on apparent injustice?

Interlinear Text

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|------|----------------------------|---|------|--------------------------------|
| אֶל | תִּתְחַר | בְּמַרְעֵי יָם | אֶל | תִּזְקֶינָה |
| H408 | Fret | not thyself because of evildoers | H408 | neither be thou envious |
| | H2734 | H7489 | | H7065 |
| | בְּעֵשִׂי | עוֹלָה: | | |
| | against the workers | of iniquity | | |
| | H6213 | H5766 | | |

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 37:7 (Evil): Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Proverbs 23:17 (Sin): Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long.

Proverbs 24:19 (Evil): Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked;

Proverbs 3:31 (Parallel theme): Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

Proverbs 24:1 (Evil): Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.

Psalms 73:3 (Evil): For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Galatians 5:21 (Parallel theme): Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Proverbs 19:3 (Parallel theme): The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD.

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