

## When the Upright Get Uptight (part 1)

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Psalm 37:1-7

There has never been a time when people are living longer, but enjoying it. We are living in a very fretful age.

God says, "***Fret not thyself.***" If there is a message that we need to hear today, it is—"*Fret not thyself.*"

The Hebrew word for "*fret*" means "to blaze" or "to get hot." It conveys the idea of a person who is frustrated, fearful, or even angry because of his situation. In modern language we would say they get "uptight."

The best Christians sometimes fret. Those who teach a Christian who is living for God won't ever fret isn't living in the real world!

➡ What CAUSES us to fret—Three things that may trigger fretting:

### I. **The seeming INEQUITIES / INJUSTICES of life** (vs. 1, 7).

- It doesn't seem fair that a godless man makes his plans and prospers, but a Christian who lives for God often suffers all kinds of problems. We are tempted to fret or envy the wicked's prosperity.
- A. **Life ain't fair**—Some Christians have the false idea that since they are saved, God owes them preferential treatment. So when we get hit with a truck load of problems and adversity, we fret.
- B. **A paradox of life**—Why do the righteous suffer and the ungodly seem to go through life unscathed?

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Richard Wurmbrand (author of "*Tortured For Christ*") was a Rumanian pastor who was imprisoned and tortured for 14 years in a communist concentration camp. He wrote a book titled, "*Sermons From Solitary Confinement.*" When Wurmbrand was in solitary confinement for three years in a small cell 30 feet underground he had no congregation to preach to. So, he preached to the only audience he had—God! His "sermons" to God were basically him telling God how he "felt" about the injustices that had come upon him. He wrote in the introduction:

"These sermons are not to be judged for their dogmatic [doctrinal] content. I did not live on dogma then. Nobody can. The

soul feeds on Christ, not on teachings about Him. From the dogmatic point of view, David and Job were wrong to argue with God... John the Baptist was wrong when in prison to question the fact that Jesus was the Messiah. Dogmatists could even find fault with Jesus Himself. He ought not to have trembled in Gethsemane. But life, even religious life, is not concerned with dogmas. It pursues its own course, and that course seems foolish to reason."

Here is an excerpt from Wurmbrand's sermon to God titled:

***God's Unjust Laws:***

"GOD

For years I have been preaching to men. I had almost forgotten that there is an invisible audience in church, too; that the angels are listening as we expound Your Word.

Now that I am alone with You, and with Your invisible servants, I can begin a new series of sermons.

In church I had to be careful not to hurt the feelings or prejudices of my listeners. With You I can be absolutely frank... In front of people I *had* to praise You. Here I am free to question You, and to reproach You, as David and Job and others have done.

I will tell You openly everything that is in my heart.

You have said: 'It is not good that man should be alone.' And yet You are keeping me in solitary confinement. You created Eve to be with Adam. Yet You have taken away from me my wife. You are doing to me the very thing that You Yourself have acknowledged to be wrong. How will You justify Yourself when we meet? You will ask me why I have done things condemned by Your Word. It is surely far worse for God not to fulfil His own word than for a man not to obey God's commandments. The judgment will be reciprocal...

...I have been intrigued by Your Word in Ezekiel, '*Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.*' I have never heard a preacher explain this verse. The commentators also avoid it. Now I am beginning to understand something of this mystery..."

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- C. I'm not too concerned about why bad things happen to good people. What bugs me is when good things happen to bad people. That is David concern— Why do the wicked prosper while the godly suffer all kinds of bad things.

## II. **The supposed INACTIVITY of God.**

- Notice God's PROMISES to judge the wicked (vs. 2, 9, 10).
  - The problem is, God doesn't seem to be doing anything about it.
- A. The prophet HABAKKUK had the same problem (see Hab. 1).
- B. Sometimes Christians say, "The Lord has really started to work in our church." What they mean by that is—God has finally started behaving like we want Him to behave. But the truth is, God is always at work. It only looks as though He is not doing anything, and that causes us to be frustrated and fret.
- ➡ How long have you prayed over a particular situation and it doesn't seem God is doing anything?

## III. **Our erring IGNORANCE of God's ways.**

- What I think is God's indifference is really my ignorance of God's ways. **This ignorance takes two forms.**
- A. **God works on a different time schedule** than I work on.
- ➡ **With God timing is more important than time.**
- B. **God has a different value system** than we do.
- What is valuable to us may not be valuable to God.
- ➡ The truth is: God is more interested in developing my character than making me comfortable.

**SUMMATION:** These are three basic things that cause us to fret: (1) The injustices of life, (2) the idea God doesn't seem to be doing anything about it, and (3) the fact I'm so ignorant of what God is up to.

Tonight I'll show you what David says is the **solution** to fretting.