

Psalm 37 – Week 2 – Trusting God in Troubled Times – Bible Study Helps

Title: Trusting God in Troubled Times

Sermon Summary: Drawing from Psalm 37, written by David in the latter years of his life, this sermon addresses the problem of the troubled heart and how believers can find peace amid the chaos of the world. The sermon distinguishes between faith and trust, noting that faith makes us believers while trust makes us followers -- faith is believing, trust is doing. The sermon walks through three sections of Psalm 37, covering the cure for the troubled heart, trusting God's plan, and resting in God's promises. Central to the message is the idea that God calls believers to stop fretting over evildoers and instead delight themselves in Him through His Word, prayer, fellowship, discipleship, and ministry. When believers commit their way to the Lord and rest in Him, God promises to provide, protect, and ultimately bring the righteous into an everlasting inheritance while the wicked are cut off.

Key Points:

- Faith makes us believers, but trust makes us followers -- faith is believing while trust is doing
- Fretting, defined as gnawing or wearing something raw, occupies the heart and pulls believers away from God and His purposes
- God's instruction to "fret not" is personal and directed at each individual believer
- Delighting in the Lord involves practical steps: reading and memorizing Scripture, listening to godly music, prayer, Bible study, fellowship, discipleship, and participating in church ministry
- Believers are called to do good even to enemies and those who cause harm, trusting God with the outcome
- Rest and waiting on the Lord do not mean inactivity but rather a ceasing of self-reliance and a confidence that God will act
- God's plan includes the certain destruction of the wicked and the preservation and provision of the righteous
- The wicked will ultimately destroy themselves -- God's people do not need to take matters into their own hands
- The meek, defined as those with great power under great control, will inherit the earth
- God's promises to the righteous include provision, preservation, peace, and an everlasting inheritance
- The heart is the center of the believer's life, and God is in the heart business

Scripture Reference:

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- Psalm 37 (primary text, read in three sections: verses 1-9, 10-17, and 18-40)
- Ephesians 6:11-13, which describes putting on the whole armor of God and standing firm
- Matthew 6:25-33, which addresses God's provision and the call to seek His kingdom first
- Luke 6:35, which calls believers to love enemies and do good without expecting anything in return
- Isaiah 40:6 and 40:31, contrasting the withering of flesh with the renewed strength of those who wait on the Lord
- John 14:27, in which Jesus promises a peace that surpasses what the world can offer
- Psalm 2:1-4, describing God laughing at the raging of earthly rulers who oppose Him
- 2 Chronicles 20, in which King Jehoshaphat and Judah face three armies and trust God for deliverance
- Jeremiah 29:11, affirming God's plans for peace and a hopeful future
- Proverbs 3:5-6, calling believers to trust God with the whole heart and acknowledge Him in all their ways
- Proverbs 24:19, echoing Psalm 37's instruction not to fret over evil men

Stories:

- A personal experience of losing a home, business, and income at a stage in life when things should have been thriving, and how Psalm 37 became a lifeline during that trial, with God impressing to trust and do good
- A personal moment of conversion during a nighttime walk as part of an Experiencing God course, in which he spoke honestly to Jesus about not knowing Him, and felt a quiet assurance in his heart that God had always been present and waiting
- A reference to a workplace situation before conversion in which a colleague received a promotion he felt he had earned, illustrating the temptation toward envy
- The ongoing challenge of raising a daughter who has gone a different direction than expected, using it as an example of the kind of relational trouble that occupies the heart
- The biblical account of King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20 is recounted, in which three armies advanced against Judah, the king prayed and gave glory to God, and God instructed the people to stand firm while He fought the battle -- the armies were defeated as the singers led worship, and the people collected more plunder than they could carry

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The sermon draws a distinction between faith and trust, suggesting that faith is believing while trust is doing -- in what areas of your life do you find it easiest to believe in God but hardest to actually trust Him with your actions?

The sermon describes 'fretting' as a gnawing that wears away at the heart and separates us from God -- what recurring worry or frustration in your life has occupied your heart in a way that has drawn you away from your relationship with Him?

Psalm 37 instructs us to 'delight thyself in the Lord' as a remedy for a troubled heart -- which of the practical disciplines mentioned, such as Bible study, prayer, discipleship, or fellowship, have you found most effective in shifting your focus from worldly troubles to God, and why?

The sermon points out that David, described as a man after God's own heart, still sinned gravely yet was not utterly cast down -- what does David's example of repentance and restoration reveal to you about the nature of God's commitment to those who genuinely seek Him?

The sermon contrasts the temporary nature of worldly power, likened to grass that withers, with the eternal nature of God's promises -- how does this perspective challenge the way you currently respond to injustice or the apparent success of those who do wrong?

The story of King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20 shows an army defeated not by military force but by worship and trust -- what does this account suggest about the relationship between praise and spiritual warfare in your own daily battles?

The sermon emphasizes that 'rest' in Psalm 37 means to stop striving and allow God to act, which mirrors the call to 'stand' in Ephesians 6 -- how do you personally distinguish between godly rest and passive inaction when facing a difficult situation?

The sermon describes meekness not as weakness but as great power under great control -- how does understanding meekness in this way change how you think about your role as a believer when confronting moral or societal evil?

Psalm 37 repeatedly returns to the promise that the righteous will inherit the land and be fed, echoed in Matthew 6 with the command to seek first the kingdom of God -- what practical steps could you take this week to reorder your priorities so that seeking God's kingdom comes before your material concerns?

The sermon closes with the observation that God delivers those who trust Him, moving them from troubles to triumph -- can you identify a past season of difficulty in your life where trusting God ultimately produced an outcome you could not have achieved through your own striving, and what did that experience teach you about His faithfulness?

Small Group Guide: Trusting God in Troubled Times

Based on Psalm 37

OVERVIEW

This guide is designed to help your group move from simply hearing the message to actively applying it. The sermon walked through Psalm 37, exploring how believers can find peace in troubled times by shifting their focus from the problems that consume them to the God who sustains them. Use the sections below to guide your conversation, challenge one another, and grow together in trust.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Faith and trust.** Faith is believing God can. Trust is acting upon that faith. The sermon drew a clear distinction: our faith makes us believers, but our trust makes us followers.
 - 2. Fretting is a heart problem.** To fret is to gnaw away at something, to rub it raw. When we allow worry, envy, and anger to occupy our hearts, we are pulled away from God and from the work He wants to do through us.
 - 3. There are things we do and things God does.** Psalm 37 lays out a clear pattern. We are called to trust, delight, commit, rest, and wait. In response, God feeds, guides, vindicates, and delivers. Our role is not to fix everything. Our role is obedience and faith.
 - 4. Delighting in the Lord is an active practice.** Delighting in God is not a feeling that arrives on its own. It is cultivated through reading the Word, prayer, fellowship, discipleship, worship, and participation in the life of the church.
 - 5. God's promises to the righteous are certain.** The wicked will not stand forever. The righteous will inherit God's promises. These are not suggestions or possibilities. They are the declared promises of God.
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening Question

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Use this to ease into conversation and help members feel comfortable sharing.

- What is one thing, big or small, that has been occupying your mind and heart lately? You do not have to go into detail. Just name the category, whether it is family, finances, health, relationships, or something happening in the world.
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Section A: The Cure for the Troubled Heart (Psalm 37:1-9)

1. The sermon described fretting as something that gnaws away at you and rubs you raw on the inside. Can you think of a time when you allowed something to fret you for far longer than it deserved? What did that do to your relationships, your energy, and your walk with God?
 2. A distinction was made between faith and trust, using the image of falling backward and trusting someone to catch you. In your own life, where is it easiest to trust God? Where is it hardest?
 3. The sermon offered a list of practical ways to delight yourself in the Lord, including reading the Word, prayer, worship music, Bible study, discipleship, and church ministry. Which of these is most alive in your life right now? Which one has gone quiet?
 4. Psalm 37:3 says to trust in the Lord and do good. Luke 6:35 calls us to do good even to our enemies. This is genuinely hard. Has there been a person in your life toward whom doing good felt nearly impossible? What helped you, or what made it harder?
 5. The sermon pointed out that the command to "fret not" appears more than once in this passage. Why do you think God repeats it? What does that repetition tell us about how well we tend to follow it the first time?
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Section B: Trusting God's Plan (Psalm 37:10-17)

6. The sermon referenced 2 Chronicles 20, where King Jehoshaphat faced three armies and responded first with prayer and then with worship. The armies destroyed themselves. What does that story reveal about what it looks like to let the battle belong to the Lord? Is there a situation in your life right now where you need to hand the battle over?
 7. Psalm 37:13 says the Lord laughs at the wicked because He sees their day is coming. The sermon connected this to Psalm 2 and the rulers of this age who believe they are in control. How does remembering God's sovereignty over world events help you resist the anxiety that comes from watching the news or following current events?
 8. Verse 16 says a little that a righteous person has is better than the riches of many wicked. In a culture that constantly measures success by wealth, status, and influence, how do you personally guard against envy of those who seem to prosper through dishonest or ungodly means?
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Section C: Trusting God's Promises (Psalm 37:18-40)

9. David's fall with Bathsheba should alarm us about ourselves and the potential to sin, but the passage ultimately shows God does not utterly cast down the one who belongs to Him. Have you ever experienced a season of failure or sin where you feared God was done with you? How did God meet you in that?
 10. Psalm 37:25 records David saying that in all his years he had never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. This is a promise rooted in a lifetime of observation. What has your own life taught you, so far, about God's faithfulness to those who trust Him?
 11. The sermon closed with this summary: we move from troubles to triumph. What would it look like practically for you to begin living from that conclusion rather than toward it?
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PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Choose one or more of the following to work on before your group meets again.

- 1. Identify your fret.** Write down the one thing that is most consistently gnawing at your heart. Then, next to it, write down one specific action from Psalm 37 that you will take this week in response to it. Bring it back to the group next time.
 - 2. Build a delight habit.** Pick one way to delight yourself in the Lord that has been missing from your routine. Commit to doing it every day for one week. It might be ten minutes in the Word each morning, listening to worship music during your commute, or memorizing a single verse. Keep it simple and keep it consistent.
 - 3. Do good to someone difficult.** Think of one person in your life toward whom doing good feels unnatural. Identify one specific, concrete act of kindness you can do for that person this week. Do not wait until you feel like it. Trust God with the result.
 - 4. Memorize a verse from Psalm 37.** The sermon highlighted several key verses. Choose one that speaks directly to your current struggle and commit it to memory. Suggested options include Psalm 37:3, Psalm 37:4, Psalm 37:5, or Psalm 37:40. Write it somewhere you will see it daily.
 - 5. Have a conversation about discipleship.** The sermon emphasized the value of being discipled and discipling others. If you are not currently in a discipleship relationship, take one step this week toward starting one. That might mean asking your pastor, reaching out to a mature believer you respect, or simply praying and asking God to show you who that person should be.
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CLOSING PRAYER GUIDE

Close your time together in prayer. Consider dividing the prayer into three parts, allowing different members to lead each section.

- **Give thanks** for the specific ways God has already proven faithful in the lives of those in the room.
- **Bring your fretting to Him** by name. Lay down the things that have been gnawing at your hearts.
- **Ask for trust** not just belief, but the kind of active, step-taking trust that follows through on what God says.

A FINAL WORD

The sermon reminded us that the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord, and that He is their strength in the time of trouble. That is not a comfort reserved for people with stronger faith or longer track records. It is a promise given to all who trust Him. Come back to it often. Come back to it together.

5-Day Bible Reading and Devotional Guide

Trusting God in Troubled Times — Based on Psalm 37

Day 1: The Cure for the Troubled Heart

Reading: Psalm 37:1-9

Devotional: The word "fret" means to gnaw, to wear raw, to consume from within. David knew this feeling. He had been hunted, betrayed, and misunderstood, yet he wrote with hard-won certainty: stop gnawing on what you cannot control. God does not dismiss your worry; He redirects it. Every command in these verses is personal. He says fret not thyself, delight thyself, commit thy way. He is speaking to you directly. The cure for a troubled heart is not willpower or distraction. It is a deliberate turning toward God through His Word, through prayer, and through the company of fellow believers. Trust is not passive agreement. Trust is action.

Reflection: What specific worry is gnawing at your heart today? Write it down, then write beside it one truth about God that speaks directly to that fear.

Practical Application: Identify one habit this week that feeds your anxiety, whether news consumption, rumination, or unhealthy conversation, and replace it with a deliberate act of delighting in God, such as reading a psalm, listening to worship music, or memorizing a verse.

Day 2: Delight as a Discipline

Reading: Matthew 6:25-34; Psalm 34:8

Devotional: Delight is not a feeling you wait for. It is a discipline you practice until the feeling follows. The sermon drew a helpful distinction between happiness, joy, and delight. Happiness is momentary. Joy anticipates what is coming. Delight is the permanent, settled satisfaction found only in God Himself. When Jesus spoke the words recorded in Matthew 6, He was not dismissing practical need. He was reordering the heart's priorities. Seek first the kingdom, and the necessities follow. This is the same promise David recorded in Psalm 37: dwell in the land and you shall be fed. God is not indifferent to your needs. He simply asks to be sought before they are met.

Reflection: In what areas of life do you tend to seek satisfaction from the world before seeking God? What would it look like to reverse that order today?

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Practical Application: Set aside fifteen minutes today with no agenda other than being in God's presence. Read slowly, pray honestly, and resist the urge to fill the silence. Let delight begin as a decision before it becomes a feeling.

Day 3: Standing Still While God Works

Reading: 2 Chronicles 20:1-22; Ephesians 6:11-14

Devotional: King Jehoshaphat faced three armies and had no military strategy that could match them. His response was to gather the people, pray, and worship. God's response was to set the enemy armies against one another until they destroyed themselves. This is the pattern Psalm 37 describes. You trust, you delight, you commit your way, and then you stand. The armor of God described in Ephesians 6 is not offensive equipment for charging the enemy. It is protective equipment for holding your ground while God fights on your behalf. Having done all, stand. The battle belongs to the Lord. Your assignment is faithfulness, not victory. He handles victory.

Reflection: Is there a situation in your life where you have been striving to fix something that God may be asking you to simply stand still and trust Him with?

Practical Application: Write out the words "The battle is not mine, but God's," drawn from 2 Chronicles 20:15, and place them somewhere visible in your home or workspace as a daily reminder to release control and rest in His authority.

Day 4: When the Wicked Seem to Prosper

Reading: Psalm 2:1-6; Psalm 37:10-17; Romans 12:17-21

Devotional: One of the most honest struggles in the Christian life is watching those who reject God appear to thrive. David saw it too. He watched enemies advance, schemes succeed, and injustice go unchecked. Yet Psalm 37 returns again and again to a single certainty: they shall not be. The wicked are described as grass, as smoke, as a bow that breaks in the hand that drew it. Their apparent strength is temporary. God is not unaware of what is happening. Psalm 2 reminds us that He who sits in the heavens sees it all and is not threatened by it. Your call is not to envy, retaliate, or despair. Your call is to continue doing good.

Reflection: Is there someone in your life whose apparent success at the expense of others has caused bitterness or envy in your heart? Bring that honestly before God today.

Practical Application: Read Romans 12:17-21, which describes returning good for evil and leaving vengeance to God. Choose one specific, practical act of kindness this week directed toward someone who has wronged you or caused you frustration.

Day 5: From Troubles to Triumph — God's Unbreakable Promises

Reading: Psalm 37:23-40; John 14:27; Isaiah 40:28-31

Devotional: The final verses of Psalm 37 are a testimony from an old man who has seen much. He has watched the righteous fall and be lifted. He has watched the wicked rise and collapse. He has lived long enough to know that God's promises are not poetry. They are history waiting to happen. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down. This is not a promise of a life without falling. It is a promise that the hand of God is beneath you when you do. The psalm ends where it must: salvation belongs to the Lord. He is your strength in trouble. He will deliver you because you trust in Him.

Reflection: Looking back over your own life, where have you seen God uphold you in a season of falling? How does that history strengthen your trust in Him for what you are facing now?

Practical Application: Write a brief personal testimony, even just a paragraph, of one time God proved faithful in a difficult season. Share it with one person this week. Testimony is not only a gift to others. It is a discipline that anchors your own faith.