

Synonym for fret - worry, be anxious, feel uneasy, be distressed, be upset, upset oneself, concern oneself, feel unhappy. agonize, anguish, sorrow, sigh, pine, brood, mope. fuss, make a fuss, complain, grumble, whine, eat one's heart out.

**Psalm 37:1-40 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! <sup>2</sup> For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb. <sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. <sup>4</sup> Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. <sup>5</sup> Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. <sup>6</sup> He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. <sup>7</sup> Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! <sup>8</sup> Refrain from anger and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. <sup>9</sup> For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land. <sup>10</sup> In just a little while, the wicked will be no more; though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there. <sup>11</sup> But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace. <sup>12</sup> The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes his teeth at him, <sup>13</sup> but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he sees that his day is coming. <sup>14</sup> The wicked draw the sword and bend their bows to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those whose way is upright; <sup>15</sup> their sword shall enter their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. <sup>16</sup> Better is the little that the righteous has than the abundance of many wicked. <sup>17</sup> For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the LORD upholds the righteous. <sup>18</sup> The LORD knows the days of the blameless, and their heritage will remain forever; <sup>19</sup> they are not put to shame in evil times; in the days of famine they have abundance. <sup>20</sup> But the wicked will perish; the enemies of the LORD are like the glory of the pastures; they vanish—like smoke they vanish away. <sup>21</sup> The wicked borrows but does not pay back, but the righteous is generous and gives; <sup>22</sup> for those blessed by the LORD shall inherit the land, but those cursed by him shall be cut off. <sup>23</sup> The steps of a man are established by the LORD, when he delights in his way; <sup>24</sup> though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the LORD upholds his hand. <sup>25</sup> I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread. <sup>26</sup> He is ever lending generously, and his children become a blessing. <sup>27</sup> Turn away from evil and do good; so shall you dwell forever. <sup>28</sup> For the LORD loves justice; he will not forsake his saints. They are preserved forever, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off. <sup>29</sup> The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell upon it forever. <sup>30</sup> The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. <sup>31</sup> The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip. <sup>32</sup> The wicked watches for the righteous and seeks to put him to death. <sup>33</sup> The LORD will not abandon him to his power or let him be condemned when he is brought to trial. <sup>34</sup> Wait for the LORD and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land; you will look on when the wicked are cut off. <sup>35</sup> I have seen a wicked, ruthless man, spreading himself like a green laurel tree. <sup>36</sup> But he passed away, and behold, he was no more; though I sought him, he could not be found. <sup>37</sup> Mark the blameless and behold the upright, for there is a future for the man of peace. <sup>38</sup> But transgressors shall be altogether destroyed; the future of the wicked shall be cut off. <sup>39</sup> The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; he is their stronghold in the time of trouble. <sup>40</sup> The LORD helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him.

We have had several tough weeks this summer. Across our nation there have been terrible happenings including mass murders from coast to coast. Sometimes I think the news could not get worse and then it does. In my spirit I felt another line has been crossed because of what took place in Highland Park. An act so evil in nature it sends out shock waves and yes, we all feel them.

I have read of a person's experience when they experience an explosion and live through it. They feel the force of the explosion and their vehicle overturns, or they are blown away several feet. When they come to, they cannot hear. Deafness sinks in for a time and one person I know only has hearing in one ear since the explosion. The explosion can stir up the ground and more and when you open your eyes, you wonder if you will ever be able to see again.

Please hear this. God's word speaks to us according to our ability to hear and according to our need. It is like a bomb went off last Monday and the fall out is still with us. A wave of evil has covered our land making it hard to hear and see.

When evil seems to be conquering and when it looks like wickedness is winning the day, Psalm 37 has much to say.

Verses 1 and 2. <sup>1</sup>Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers!  
<sup>2</sup>For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb.

For all of us, hearing what took place on the fourth is devastating. It is too much to take in. Our bodies may even go into a sort of shock. Did I really hear that? No, that can't be right. This is not South Chicago. My mind shuts down because of too many thoughts all at once. I don't have enough gigabytes in my brain to comprehend the pain of those shootings. It is hard to think, speak, and to know what to do. It feels like a nightmare only you are awake, and it is real. I wish I had never heard of what happened.

God's word is truth. God's word soothes the hurting soul. God's word speaks to us even when our ears are numb due to the happenings of the day. In Psalm 37 I picture Jesus taking

you by the hand and speaking quietly, gently, and with great love and compassion. There is a look of kindness in the Lord's eyes because He felt the suffering of it all on the cross and He knows exactly what you need to hear. He bore the sin and grief and carried your sorrows on the cross. He knows exactly what you are feeling for He bore the sorrows of the world. The sorrows of this world can do us in and the Lord says, **1. Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!**

If you and I could literally look into the eyes of Jesus, we would see how entirely trustworthy He is. Jesus is light and truth. Jesus does all things right and good. Jesus loves you with an everlasting love. Jesus has no darkness in him, no deceptions, no hypocrisy, no lies. He is perfect in every way. Jesus says fret not when you see these things happen. Take heart. In this world you will have tribulation but know that I have overcome this world. **2. Jesus has everything that we need to overcome the evil of our time.** Fret not. Don't get all frustrated for the evil will pass away and be no more. In the meantime, cling to, trust in, and rely on Jesus for everything. For the evil and wrong doers will soon fade like the grass or a green herb and spring flowers.

When you look into the eyes of Jesus you see that which is good. God's goodness far outweighs the badness of our time. If all we do is look at the explosion our ears go deaf, our eyes go blind, and we fall into a pit. Jesus' ways, Trust in the Lord and do good. Keep on living and keep doing good by remaining faithful to Jesus. Quoting the Living Paraphrase Bible, **Psalm 37:3 (TLB)** <sup>3</sup> Trust in the Lord instead. Be kind and good to others; then you will live safely here in the land and prosper, feeding in safety.

This must be said. No one that morning deserved to be shot. They were all innocent victims of a person with a deranged mind. He was as mental as they come in every way. None of us are guaranteed a tomorrow or even a today. Life can end so quickly and without warning.

I know what I am talking about. I am very sober about this. **3. Everyone needs to be ready to meet with the Lord face to face.** Our days are numbered, and God knows the number of our days. Have you given your life to the Lord Jesus Christ? Jesus says, and everyone who believes in me will never die. One time I knew I was going to die when I got caught in a piece of farm machinery; this is how farmers die; one does not survive. I knew I had less than a second to live and the joy I felt knowing I was going to see Jesus; I have never again felt such joy. I closed my eyes because I did not want to see my leg pulled off. The machine let go of me, I opened my eyes and was almost disappointed to still be alive. We have absolutely nothing to fear in death at all. Faith gives to us the victory. **4. Faith in Christ is the victory.**

<sup>8</sup> Refrain from anger and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. <sup>9</sup> For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land. <sup>10</sup> In just a little while, the wicked will be no more; though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there.

Psalm 37 is full of God's wisdom in how to deal and cope and live with what took place last Monday. I strongly recommend we all read and reread it. The message could not be clearer and timelier. God's word has exactly what we need.

Over and over the Psalmist says, fret not, fret not, fret not. Do not let these acts of evil cause you to get so frustrated, for your own frustration can lead you to react in a sinful manner. Friends, we live in a day where fretting and frustration are at an all-time high. People are fed up on all sides of the political, moral, and social circumstances we find ourselves in. In a poll posted on June 29, 2022, eighty-five percent of U.S. adults say the country is on the wrong track. It is like we are living in a pressure cooker that is about to blow. Psalm 37 is God's remedy for living in such extreme times. One author puts it, "wise living in a crooked generation" (William A. VanGemeren, The Expositor's Bible Commentary vol. 5, pg. 297).

Things could be worse. At the time of Noah, everyone on the earth had turned to evil and wickedness. Only Noah and his family were living God's way. It grieved God that he had created

the human race and God wiped them out, God did away with the evil of that time, saving Noah and his family in the ark. After the flood God promised never again to wipe out the human race.

**5. When Jesus comes again evil will be no more.**

The Psalmist is telling us the wicked do not have free reign. They will fade away. Their own wickedness leads to their destruction. We can turn our own frustration of such wickedness into something good by continually giving to God His rightful place in our lives. Our frustration can lead to greater holiness as we turn all things over to God Almighty, Creator and Maker of heaven and earth. "Vengeance is mine saith the Lord. I will repay saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19). God tell us not to be overcome with evil but overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).

**6. Rather than destroying ourselves with negative emotions, the godly must keep things**

**in perspective, an eternal perspective** (VanGemeren pg. 298). Intense anger, resentment, fretting, destroys faith in the goodness of God and God's justice and affect one's attitude toward everything.

How then shall we live? Repeating verse 3. **Psalm 37:3 (TLB)** <sup>3</sup> Trust in the Lord instead. Be kind and good to others; then you will live safely here in the land and prosper, feeding in safety. **7. Instead of giving into self-pity and hatred the wise person develops a trust in the Lord.** Trusting is putting all of your faith in Christ. It is submitting to God's will with the hope of God's resolution (ibid.298). We do not take matters into our own hands but leave them in the hands of God whose justice will prevail, if not in this life, in the life to come. **8. The wicked will get their just desserts.** It is not good to fall into the hands of God when God is angry. God's judgments are always perfect in every way.

Moving onto verses 4-6. Turning it all over to God we find great joy, the joy of the Lord. We do not sink into unhealthy emotions and attitudes, but we sink completely into God who gives us hope. Better days are a coming. Enjoying the Presence of the Lord brings great relief, solace to one's soul in these calamitous times. I know this is not easy but God will always make

a way for you for Jesus is the way. There is no other way. Jesus is the only way. The hell of our time never has the final say; God does. One day every knee will bow down to God. Every person will answer to God for what he or she has done. No one is getting away with anything. It is all being recorded for the final day of judgment. In the meantime we can enjoy every day in this land, living by faith knowing that God will prevail in God's perfect timing. We have the assurance of God's blessing, a sense of contentment that only comes from God through trusting completely in God. The Lord grants you the desires of your heart. Instead of sinking into the bottomless pit of frustration, God raises you up with an enjoyment, and you are able to overcome the evil of the day through Christ and keep doing good under the umbrella of God's blessing.

Trusting God is not ignoring the evil and thinking positive thoughts. **9. Trusting God is active obedience, full surrender, full commitment to cast one's feelings of anger, resentment, and sadness onto the Lord who bore it all on the cross.**

<sup>7</sup> Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him. **Psalm 37:7 (NLT2)** “<sup>7</sup> Be still in the presence of the LORD and wait patiently for him to act.” To be still before God is to completely rest in the Lord. It is to be quiet before God even sitting in silence before the Holy One. We enter the Throne of God and find God's grace and mercy in time of great need. Patience is the ability to endure unpleasant people and circumstances for a higher cause. Patience is giving time for God to act before we react. “Be quiet and watch the salvation of the Lord” so says Moses.