



DO NOT FRET

PSALM 37

GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA

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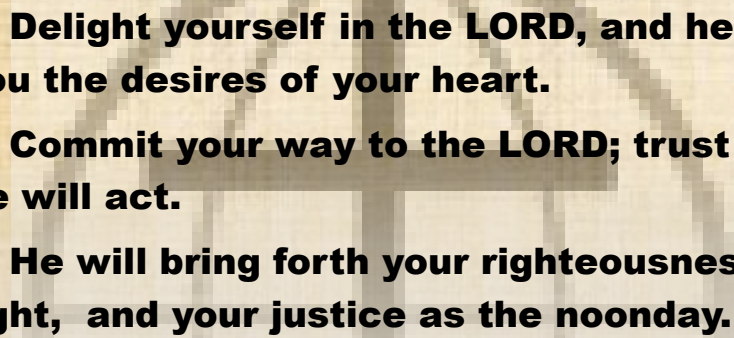
SCRIPTURE READING PSALM 37:1-10 (ESV)

“1 ¶ ‘OF DAVID.’ Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not 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; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

DO NOT FRET

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- 3 4 Delight yourself 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 bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.**

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7 ¶ 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!

8 Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

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5 9 For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.

10 In just a little while, the wicked will be no more; though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there.” (Ps 37:1-10 ESV)

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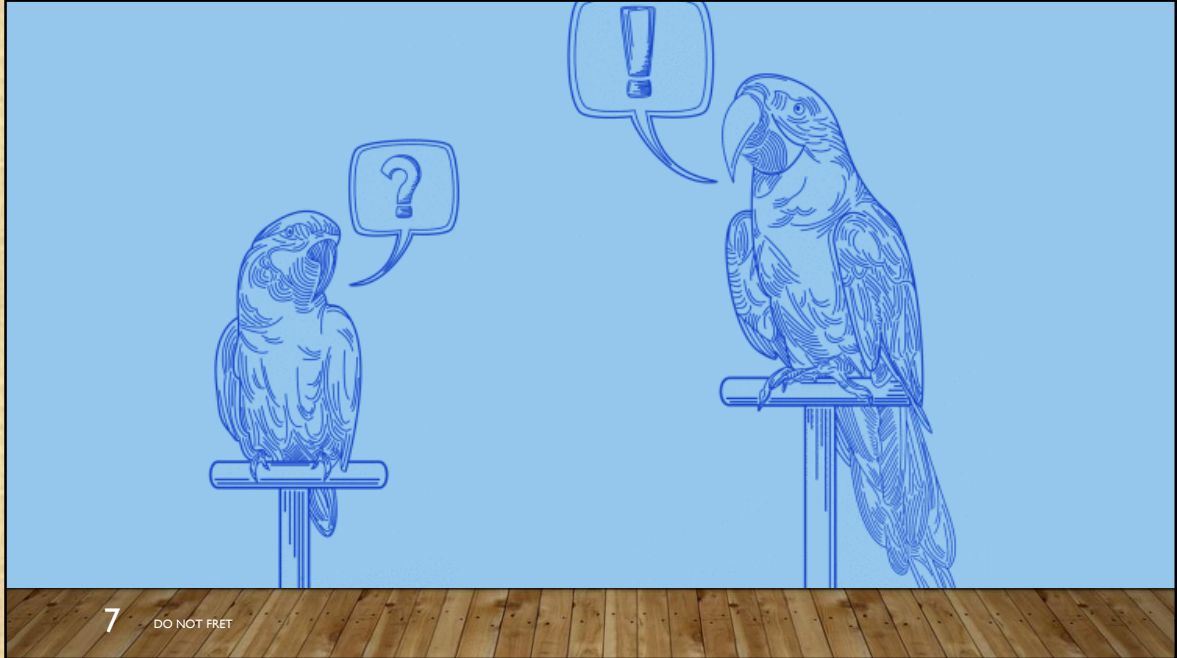
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**THESE ARE THE WORDS OF THE
EVER LIVING GOD**

**PLEASE HELP US BE STILL AND
KNOW YOU ARE GOD**

AMEN

Over time, words change meaning.



Because words can have different meanings, it can be confusing as we speak with one another.

There are many modern examples:

In our time, “pot” can mean a literal “pot” or “marijuana”.

Weed can mean an unwanted grass in the garden that needs to be pulled out or it can mean **marijuana**.

Silly: *Meanwhile, silly went in the opposite direction: in its earliest uses, it referred to things worthy or blessed; from there it came to refer to the weak and vulnerable, and more recently to those who are foolish.*

Myriad: *If you had a myriad of things 600 years ago, it meant that you specifically had 10,000 of them—not just a lot.*

Naughty: *Long ago, if you were naughty, you had naught or nothing. Then it came to mean evil or immoral, and now you are just badly behaved. (from*

<https://ideas.ted.com/20-words-that-once-meant-something-very-different/>)

Even sometimes as husband and wife, as we have discussions, we may understand the same word very differently. It will impact our reactions towards each other. That is why we are to listen to one another in love not jumping to conclusions.

Misunderstanding can come up when we read the Bible. Psalm 37 and the word **“fret”** is such a word. The problem does not come up in the French language as the word used retains the original Hebrew meaning.

What do we understand when we hear the word “fret” with our modern minds? What is the meaning of the word in the biblical sense?

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FRET

verb: If you fret about something, you worry about it.

Synonyms: worry , anguish, brood, agonize, obsess, lose sleep, upset yourself, distress yourself (Collins English Dictionary)

charah (khaw-raw')

to glow or grow warm; figuratively (usually) to blaze up, of anger, zeal, jealousy; to burn or be kindled with anger (Hub Bible)

The following are some examples of how this word is used in the Bible. Understanding the meaning of this word will help us to appreciate Psalm 37 and God's instructions.

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Ge 4:5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry <02734>, and his countenance fell.

Ge 30:2 And Jacob's anger was aroused <02734> against Rachel, and he said, "*Am* I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

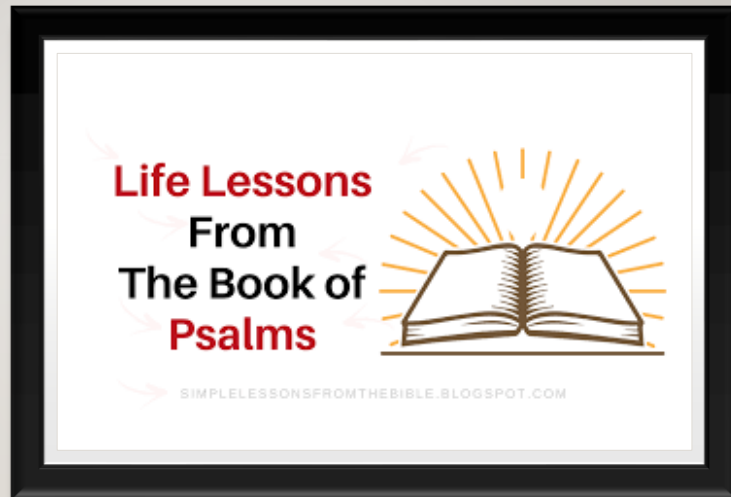
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10 Nu 11:1 Now *when* the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard *it*, and His anger was aroused <02734>. So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed *some* in the outskirts of the camp.

DO NOT FRET

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WHAT CAN WE LEARN?



There are certainly many injustices in this world. It often appears as if evil wrongdoers of all kinds prosper. Many seem to have more material wealth. They have the bigger houses.

In our world, we see many people get rich at the expense of others. So many are fretting. So many are angry at the injustices that exist.

We just need to see or read the daily news. We see protests and anger boiling over because of corruption, injustice, inequalities, discrimination and the list goes on.

It's easy to get angry and inflamed over the wrongdoing that we see around us. When we stop and think, we all have been or are personally affected by evildoers of some kind or another.

Sometimes we may wonder why they appear to be prospering while we are struggling. We may envy them because they seem to get all the breaks.

These situations may be a really upsetting for us. We may have people in our minds towards whom we are really angry.

God tells us clearly that these situations will not last forever. He tells us that such people will fade away like the grass.

As we think about this topic, it is vital that we realize that "**all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**" (Romans 3:23). Maybe we realize that we have been evildoers or are perceived to be evildoers by others. That is another question...

Getting back to the topic, how are we to react, as God's people, to flagrant injustices occurring in our society today. There were injustices and evildoers in David's day. They have existed in every age and will continue to exist until Christ returns.

12 WHAT TO DO INSTEAD OF FRETTING

“3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

4 Delight yourself 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.” (Ps 37:3-5 ESV)

In the new covenant, people who have the Holy Spirit living in them, who have the mind of Christ, are to react differently than unbelievers..

In the face of injustice, we are to do three things: (next slide)

DO NOT FRET

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Trust in the Lord and do good.

Delight ourselves in the Lord

Commit our way to the Lord, trust in him and he will act

These are all acts of faith. We are to **“be still before the Lord”** and wait patiently and trust God to carry us through difficult situations. (**“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” [Ps 46:10 ESV]**)

I have spoken with people who become so upset with the injustice of this world that their fretting consumes them. It takes much of their mental energy. They feel angry most of the time. They are filled with anger and usually feel that if they were in charge or if their ideas were to be considered and followed that this would be such a better place.

Right now in our political climate, there is a lot of fretting, anger and jealousy. There are divisions. People are often upset with the leaders not affiliated with their own party. They become very angry at the system and voice it vociferously. It is easy for them to go into a rant, a tirade, an angry outburst.

We live in a world where we failed to remember that God has given freedom of choice to Adam and Eve and to their descendants. God has given us the choice to go their own way and to decide for ourselves what is right and what is wrong or to live united to Jesus following this law – the law of Christ as the apostle called it when writing to

the Corinthians. Adam and Eve lived tragic lives as they suffered the consequences of their decision. Cain murdered his brother Abel. Troubled relationships, injustices of all kinds have existed in our world since that fatal decision was made by our first parents. It brought death to the whole world.

As we saw in previous sermons, Jesus reversed the consequences of the decision of the first Adam when he became the last Adam and he died on the cross for all of us, was resurrected for all of us and ascended to the right hand of God is our high priest.

Although redeemed, humanity in general not knowing it's redemption in Christ is still going the way of the first Adam. Therefore, we should not be surprised that we have the problems that we have.

14 TWO DIFFERENT WAYS OF ACTING



- **“1 ¶ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1Ti 2:1-4 ESV)**

Instead of hating, instead of nurturing a destructive anger, God wants us to be praying for people at the various levels of responsibilities and authority in society. God desires that we live peaceable lives. He desires all people to come to repentance.

How can we live peaceable lives if inside we are filled with anger, if we burn or are kindled with anger?

Still living in our fallen human nature, it is very easy to fall into that trap.

Anger is a normal emotion. God tells us that we become angry, we are not to sin. **“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,” (Eph 4:26 ESV)**

The following are common source of anger.

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PEOPLE

- People asking rude questions or being nosy
- People joking about important subjects
- Rude or messy neighbors or roommates
- People that don't pay back money they owe
- Loud people in a theater or place that should be quiet

PLACES

- Places that bring up bad memories
- Places where you feel trapped
- Waiting in long lines
- Waiting a long time for an appointment
- Traffic
- Crowded public transportation
- Crowded stores
- Bad working conditions

SITUATIONS

- Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired (HALT)
- Being wrongly accused
- Getting lost or being given wrong directions
- Being placed on hold on the phone
- Cleaning up other people's mess
- Rumors or gossip
- Being stolen from
- Slow customer service

From From: <https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/apps/aims/documents/CommonAngerTriggers.pdf>

On top of these irritants, we may have memories from our past which are stored in us. We may have been emotionally, psychologically, spiritually and/or physically wounded by someone close to us or not. We may harbour resentment, bitterness that we may hold on to.

God tells us the following.

HOW TO REACT AND HOW NOT TO REACT!

- **“Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.” (Ps 37:8 ESV)**



<http://dementiatalk.net/eight-apps-to-guide-you-about-dementia-and-anger/>

We need to remember as we read these verses that God promises are not physical such as land, good health, etc... but the gift of eternal life in Jesus.

We are also to remember that we were given the Holy Spirit who produces his fruit, the fruit of God whose qualities are love, patience, longsuffering, etc. and self-control.

Again, anger is a normal human emotions. Jesus was angry when he throw the money changers out of the temple.

In the OT we read about God’s anger towards sin.

Moses was very angry when he saw the idol the Israelites had made when he came down from mount Sinai. He was so angry that he broke the tablets of the 10 commandments when he saw the idol they had made. **“18 But he said, “It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing that I hear.” 19 And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses’ anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.” (Ex 32:18-19 ESV)**

I think we all get the point by now that we are to seek Jesus and receive the gift of peace that he alone can give by the Holy Spirit. (John 14:27). This peace is the gift of the whole God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit one God in three distinct person loving and inhering and abiding in one another. The Greek word is perichoresis.

We are not to be surprised that we have challenges in the world ridden with sin. God will not fix every difficult situation in our life but he will give us the strength to endure. In his time, he will turn these situations to good. (Rom 8:28).

Suffering in this world is to be expected. **“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” (Rom 8:18 ESV)**

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“39 The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; he is their stronghold in the time of trouble.

40 The LORD helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him.” (Ps 37:39-40 ESV)

These are very encouraging words, aren't they?

In his book, “the Problem of Pain”, C. S. Lewis wrote the following, “suffering brings home to us the distressing fact of our mortality, too easily ignored. It reminds us of our frailty and hints of the coming of death. ‘It removes the veil; it plants the flag of truth within the fortress of a rebel soul.’ In short, it creates a climate in which our thoughts are gently directed toward God, whom we might otherwise ignore. ‘God shouts to us in our pains; it is his megaphone to arouse a deaf world.’ ,,,, All must die, and any worldview that cannot cope with death is fatally deficient. Suffering gently prods our consciousness and forces us to contemplate the unpalatable but real fact of our future death and how our outlook on life declares to this sobering thought. It can sow the seeds of doubt about existing outlooks and lay the foundation for a very new way of thinking, living, and hoping. (Intellectuals Don't Need God and Other Modern Myths by Alister E. McGrath page 104.

Our walk in this world can be compared to that of the soldier. When a soldier goes to war, he does what he needs to do with the hope of seeing his family and his loved ones in a climate of peace.

Our walk in this world has its challenges. However, we are not to live in anger in this fallen world. God has called us to be salt and light in this world by God's presence through the Holy Spirit.

We know that whatever we see around us is temporary. There are much better days to come when Christ returns like a thief someday and restores all things as they ought to be.

In the meantime, let us take the words of God seriously. **'Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself, it tends only to evil.'** [vs. 8]

Let us pray