

God is Good but . . . The Dynamics of Envy and Trust



NOTES

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Psalm 73 A psalm of Asaph (BOOK III Psalms 73–89)

¹**Surely** God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.

²**But** as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. ³For I **envied** the **arrogant** when I saw the prosperity of the *wicked*. ⁴**They** have *no struggles*; **their** bodies are *healthy and strong*. ⁵**They** are *free from* common human *burdens*; **they** are *not plagued* by human ills. ⁶Therefore *pride* is **their** necklace; **they** clothe themselves with *violence*. ⁷From **their** *callous* hearts comes *iniquity*; **their** *evil imaginations* have no limits. ⁸**They** *scoff*, and speak with *malice*; with *arrogance* they threaten *oppression*. ⁹**Their** mouths lay claim to heaven, and **their** tongues take possession of the earth. ¹⁰Therefore **their** people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance. ¹¹**They** say, "How would God know? Does the Most High know anything?" ¹²This is what the wicked are like— always free of care, **they** go on amassing wealth.

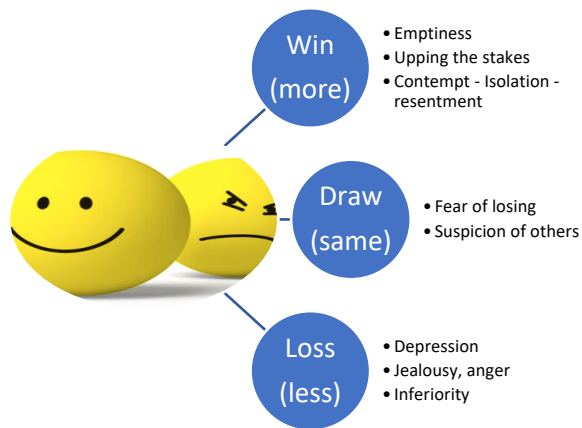
¹³**Surely in vain** I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. ¹⁴All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments. ¹⁵If I had spoken out like that, I would have betrayed **Your** children. ¹⁶When I tried to understand all this, it **troubled me deeply** ¹⁷**till** I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood **their** final destiny. ¹⁸Surely **You** place them on slippery ground; **You** cast them down to ruin. ¹⁹How suddenly are **they** destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! ²⁰**They** are like a dream when one awakes; when **You** arise, Lord, **You** will despise them as fantasies. ²¹*When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered,* ²²*I was senseless and ignorant;* I was a brute beast before **You**. ²³Yet I am always with **You**; **You** hold me by my right hand. ²⁴**You** guide me with **Your** counsel, and afterward **You** will take me into glory. ²⁵**Whom** have I in heaven but **You**? And earth has **nothing I desire besides You**. ²⁶My flesh and my heart may fail, **but** *God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever*. ²⁷Those who are far from **You** will perish; **You** destroy all who are unfaithful to **You**. ²⁸**But** as for me, it is *good to be near God*. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all **Your** deeds.

Background to Psalm 73: Asaph & Place of Psalm 73 (see Ps 1)

Affirmation of view of God: The way it is . . . God is good and . . . surely goodness and mercy shall follow me (Ps 23:6) vs 1

But then . . . a doubter's confession of envy vs 2, 3

- As for me . . . slipping with envy of what I saw: a theology to reality clash
- The comparison game:



- Feel embittered, raw deal, dissatisfaction, grieved, cheated, covetous Twisted and painful experiences of morality, economics, wellbeing, and justice turned upside down vs 4-14
- Questioning alignment of experiences with promises ("surely in vain")

Experiences of betrayal and depression vs 15, 16

Dramatic turning point through perspective of **worship** vs 17

The big picture: The wicked revisited vs 18-20

Trading short-term and **empty envy for** the long-term **presence of God** vs 21-26

Re-Affirmation: As for me . . . vs 27, 28