

Everyday Prayers for Everyday Life

PSALM 73

A psalm of Asaph.

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| <p>1 Surely God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.</p> <p>2 But as for me, my feet had almost slipped;
I had nearly lost my foothold.</p> <p>3 For I envied the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.</p> <p>4 They have no struggles;
their bodies are healthy and strong.</p> <p>5 They are free from the burdens common to
man;
they are not plagued by human ills.</p> <p>6 Therefore pride is their necklace;
they clothe themselves with violence.</p> <p>7 From their callous hearts comes iniquity;
the evil conceits of their minds know no
limits.</p> <p>8 They scoff, and speak with malice;
in their arrogance they threaten oppression.</p> <p>9 Their mouths lay claim to heaven,
and their tongues take possession of the
earth.</p> <p>10 Therefore their people turn to them
and drink up waters in abundance.</p> <p>11 They say, "How can God know?
Does the Most High have knowledge?"</p> <p>12 This is what the wicked are like—
always carefree, they increase in wealth.</p> <p>13 Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure;
in vain have I washed my hands in
innocence.</p> <p>14 All day long I have been plagued;
I have been punished every morning.</p> | <p>15 If I had said, "I will speak thus,"
I would have betrayed your children.</p> <p>16 When I tried to understand all this,
it was oppressive to me</p> <p>17 till I entered the sanctuary of God;
then I understood their final destiny.</p> <p>18 Surely you place them on slippery ground;
you cast them down to ruin.</p> <p>19 How suddenly are they destroyed,
completely swept away by terrors!</p> <p>20 As a dream when one awakes,
so when you arise, O Lord,
you will despise them as fantasies.</p> <p>21 When my heart was grieved
and my spirit embittered,</p> <p>22 I was senseless and ignorant;
I was a brute beast before you.</p> <p>23 Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right hand.</p> <p>24 You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will take me into glory.</p> <p>25 Whom have I in heaven but you?
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.</p> <p>26 My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.</p> <p>27 Those who are far from you will perish;
you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.</p> <p>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.</p> |
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1. Read Psalm 73. Circle the verses that express faith in God and underline the verses that express doubt. Write down the words or phrases where the psalmist's attitude shifts from faith to doubt and doubt to faith. When have you felt like the psalmist?
2. Look at the words "almost" and "nearly" in verse 2. What do these words say to us about temptation and sin?

3. What is the sin described in verse 3?

4. What effect does the “prosperity of the wicked” (vs. 3) have on the psalmist? List his questions and doubts.

5. What types of people bring out your envious feelings? What causes you to envy them? How does envy lead to other sins? What is at the root of your envy?

6. How did the psalmist’s sin feel to him? (vss. 16, 21–22) Describe a time when you felt the same way.

7. How is verse 17 the pivotal center of the psalm? (Think about what takes place in the “sanctuary.”)

8. What does the psalmist realize in verses 21–26? Notice especially what he is confident in. (vss. 23–24)

9. What question does the psalmist ask God? (vs. 25) What similar question does Peter ask Jesus in John 6:66–68? Have these questions been answered in your life?

10. What is the inheritance of the pure in heart? (vs. 26 and Matthew 5:8) Who brings that inheritance to you right here and now? (John 14: 1–9) Explain.

11. In verses 27–28 what contrasts are drawn between the unfaithful and the godly? Is there any hope for the unfaithful? (2 Peter 3:8–10) In light of the cross of Christ, what should our attitude be toward those who do not have faith?