



A missionary and his wife were on their way home from the mission field on a large ship. Also on this same ship was well known dignitary going home as well. When the ship docked, the missionary couple watched as the dignitary was greeted with much music and a large group of people. After the commotion of the dignitary, the missionary couple walked down the plank, totally unnoticed. The husband said to the wife, "It is not fair that this man gets all the recognition and he has not done anything for the Lord." The wife said to her husband, "But dear we are not home yet."

Psalm 73:21-26 - "21 When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, 22 I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you. 23 Yet 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. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever (NIV)."

Why do we sometimes have bitterness within? BITTERNESS IS CAUSED BY...

COMPARING ONESELF TO THOSE WHO ARE BETTER

Psalm 73:3-12 For 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. 6 Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence

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7 From 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. 10 Therefore their people turn to them and drink Page 1 of 5 up waters in abundance. 11 They say, "How would God know? Does the Most High know anything?" 12 This is what the wicked are like—always free of care, they go on amassing wealth." (NIV)

These verses pertain that a person would struggle with bitterness when he OVERREACTS to the PROSPERITY, PLEASURES and PRIVILEGES of OTHERS. In addition, Christians often LIMITS blessing to FINANCIAL and PHYSICAL aspects. Comparing oneself to others will just make a person miserable. There will always be someone who is better than you are in certain aspect of life. Compare yourself to those who are BETTER than you are and you'll become BITTER. Stop comparing yourself to others. Learn to be satisfied with what God has given you. God created you to be UNIQUE because He never wanted you to be like others.

PERCEIVING WHAT WE DO AS USELESS

Psalm 73:13-14 - "13 Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. 14 All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments." (NIV) As Christians, we often try our best to live a holy life. We try not to hurt others with words and actions. We try to do the great commission of sharing Jesus to others. We try our best to live just like how Christ lived on earth.

But... there are times that we think it is useless to live a holy life. We define living a holy life as VAIN because we are thinking that God should only bless those who are obedient. God did not require us to live a holy life just for the blessing. He required us to live a holy life so that we can see Him and be with Him. Psalm 24:3-4 - "3 Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? 4 The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god.

We see living a holy life in vain because we immediately connect holy living to great health and wealth. I won't be surprised if God will bless you financially for living a holy life. But... don't automatically connect holy life to financial affluence.

Also, don't connect financial affluence to obedience to God. This is why Asaph said in Psalm 73:3, "For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the WICKED (NIV)." Obviously, the wicked, the sinful people can become rich. So don't even equate financial holiness to having faith or being holy. aim to live a holy life not for financial blessing but for meeting God face to face and being with Him eternally. Nothing on earth can compare to being with God eternally. God gave you the greatest gift of all SALVATION. And living a holy life and obeying God's commands are the best gifts that you can give to Him.

FORGETTING THE PUNISHMENT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THE WICKED

Psalm 73:16-19 - "16 When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply 17 till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. 18 Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. 19 How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!" (NIV)

We're so focused on our life at present that we forget that there's life after death. People love to build their life here on earth forgetting that life here is just short term. More or less, life here on earth will only allow you maximum of 120 years. I don't even know if you would want to live 120 years old when your friends and family are already home with the Lord. Life here is short but life after death will be eternal (whether it be in heaven or hell). Life is not just about the PRESENT but also about the FUTURE. Life is not just about life on earth but life in heaven or hell afterwards.

We cannot prove that God does not exist simply because our prayers were not answered or because evil exists. God is not a genie that we can manipulate Him to do ALL that we want Him to do. God gave people freedom to choose and some people chose to do evil. We can be BITTER or we can be BETTER. If we choose to be bitter, we will only see the ugly parts of our life. But if we choose to be better, we will see the great parts of our life.



- 1.) Are you dissatisfied in certain areas in your life, why?
- 2.) Do you find fulfillment and satisfaction in who you are and what you do, if not share?
- 3.) What certain things in life that money can't buy are you most thankful for

Pray for each other in your group.