

## *It is Good to be Near God*

### *Psalm 73*

*"Here is the final observation I hope you will remember. It concerns the progression of the dominant pronouns in the psalm. In the first section, as far as verse 12, the emphasized pronoun is **they**, referring to the wicked. The psalmist has his eyes fixed on them. In the second section, verses 13-17, the dominant pronoun is **I**. Having seen the prosperity of the wicked, the psalmist looks at himself and falls into unjustified comparisons. In the third section, verses 18-22, the dominant pronoun is **you**. Here the psalmist has stopped comparing himself to other people and is thinking about God. Then, in the final section of the psalm, verses 23-28, **You** and **I** are combined. Here Asaph says, "you [meaning God] have set your hand upon me" and I for my part want nothing on earth but you."*

*You and I need to learn that lesson in the deepest possible way, for if we learn it, all life will be transformed and we will find ourselves always content in God. Remember that heaven and earth will pass away (Matt. 24:35) but that those who know God and do his will abide forever." Boice*

- I. We have been given two choices in this life, follow Jesus Christ or follow man. It is an either-or proposition that not only determines our eternal destiny, but also the state of our emotional, spiritual and physical wellbeing while here on earth. The world and its godless system may offer temporary joy and prosperity, but the carefree uncertain footing it gives is based on the cravings of sinful man, the lust of the eyes and the boasting of what he or she has and does (1 Jn. 2:15-17). To covet anything that the world has to offer is sin against God and his goodness toward us.

Ps. 73:1-12

1 Chron. 6:31-32,9

1 Chron. 16:1,5,37

*"It is a pitiful thing that an heir of heaven should have to confess 'I was envious,' but worse still that he should have to put it, 'I was envious at the foolish.'" (Spurgeon)*

- II. As followers of Christ, we must understand that the cost of discipleship is worth it in a world that seemingly offers so much more than the discipline of being crucified with Christ and dying to self. *"Cheap grace," Bonhoeffer wrote, "is the grace we bestow on ourselves...grace without discipleship...Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must know...It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life."*

Ps. 73:13-15

**Matthew 16:24** *Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.*

*Commitment to Christ means taking up your cross daily, giving up your hopes, dreams, possessions, even your very life if need be for the cause of Christ. Only if you willingly take up your cross may you be called His disciple (Luke 14:27). The reward is worth the price. Jesus followed His call of death to self ("Take up your cross and follow Me") with the gift of life in Christ: "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it" (Matthew 16:25-26). [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org)*

- III. God puts the hope of eternity in our hearts. It is meant to help us keep perspective in a fallen godless world that is going to hell apart from Christ. An eternal perspective of life with Christ understands that God will always be with us, he will always hold us by our right hand to walk us through the uncertainty of living in this fallen world, and he will always guide us with his counsel. He is our strength and the only true refuge we have.

Prov. 73:16-28

Ps. 62:5-8

**Psalm 62:1-2** *My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.*

*Worship...put[s] God at the center of our vision... It is vitally important because it is only when God is at the center of our vision that we see things as they really are." Clements*