

# What Did You Expect?

## Week 2: Expect Delayed Rewards

**Weekly Summary:** Read the Proverbs and you might expect good things to happen to good people and bad things to happen to bad people. But the Psalms remind us that sometimes the opposite occurs. That's when we need to know what to expect. An ancient poet named Asaph almost lost his faith in God until he expected God to judge with justice. That put his heart at ease and made God worthy of praise.

\_\_\_\_\_ things happen to \_\_\_\_\_ people.

- ❖ Psalm 73:1 & 3-12 - Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart... 4 They (the wicked) 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. 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 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.

◆ Problem - Why do the **wicked** prosper?

- ❖ Psalm 73:2-3 - But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. 3 For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Psalm 73:13-16 - 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. 15 If I had spoken out like that, I would have betrayed your children. 16 When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply...

- ❖ Psalm 73:17 - Till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.

Psalm 73:18-20 - Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. 19 How 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.

Psalm 73:27 - Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.

◆ The Answer - God's got **this**.

❖ Psalm 73:21-26 - 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.

◆ The Solution - **I** got **God**.

❖ Psalm 73:1 & 28 - Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.....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.

### **Points to Ponder**

1. Have you ever struggled with God because of the injustice you see in the world? Why is it that Christians expect it to be different?
2. When what our minds expect don't line up with what we should expect (based on the Word), we might find ourself like Asaph on the brink of a terrible fall (Psalm 73:2). How do each of the following roots - Gather, Group, and Grow - play a vital role in preventing us from getting to that point? Give a specific blessing of each root in keeping us on solid spiritual ground.
3. Reread Psalm 73:23-26. Why is God himself the greatest of all blessings a believer has? How does this truth help us have the right expectations when our earthly circumstances change? Pick one fact about God from verse 23 that you appreciated most based on your current circumstances, and share why you picked it with your group.

### **Homework For Next Week: Revelation 7:9-17**

*"Biblically, waiting is not just something we have to do until we get what we want. Waiting is part of the process of becoming what God wants us to be."*

*~ John Ortberg*