

I Have Been Young and Now I Am Old
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“I have been young and now I am old, Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, or His descendants begging bread.” Psalm 37:25 (NAS)

A study was done by Susan Charles, professor of psychological science at the University of California at Irvine -

Susan Charles said, “When we bring older and younger people into the lab and put them in an uncomfortable situation, older people are much more likely to say it is not as stressful. Young people are much more reactive.

Studies have shown that compared with younger adults, older adults are much more likely to credit positive emotional stimuli and discredit negative emotional stimuli. One study has shown that older adults are 50 percent more likely to use proactive coping techniques learned during long lives to prevent stressful situations from developing in the first place – and are better able to reach a compromise with life’s demands. These skills stem from three assets that older people have in greater abundance than younger people – life experiences, knowledge gained from those life experiences, and time perspective, meaning, the time for living is now.

Susan Charles goes on to say this, “I don’t think older adults realize the strengths they have and that in some ways they’re doing better than younger people.”

My! My! My! Can I get a witness -

Psalm 37:3-9

Psalm 37 reflects on whether the righteous or unrighteous will enjoy the Promised Land. David contrasts the righteous with the wicked. The Psalmist instructs the righteous not to envy the seeming outward success of the wicked, as what they have will be short-lived. The Psalm is about perseverance and ultimate justice. Ultimately, the righteous are victorious, as God will never leave them or forsake them (Hebrews 13:5).

Psalm 37 offers hope to the faithful saint.

Notice that David uses “I” three times in Palm 37:25 – “I have been young” – “now I am old” – “I have not seen the righteous forsaken” –

These statements are declared to be in a range of time from when David was young, until the time he is now old, they are statements of his personal experiences.

I too, can declare as David did, that at some time I was young, but now, I am old, and I have some experiences with The Lord that has allowed me to declare with clarity, “The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?” Psalm 27:1 (NKJV)

Somebody hold my mule while I shout right here!

2 – I Have Been Young ...

David draws from the span of his experiences in life to declare with clarity that God does not abandon His children, whether you are young or old!

Let's be honest with ourselves, there have been times when you felt that God had abandon you or that He was not listening to you, because He did not answer your prayers when you wanted Him to, or He did not come through as you had hoped. We all have "tasted" the sweet and the bitter of life, we have experienced both joy and sorrow. However, through everything we have experienced, whether good or bad, Our Heavenly Father has not forsaken us; for through it all, whether in the past, or the present, and even in the future, we still have hope.

In the past, we have learned to trust in Him; in the present, we are still yet, learning to trust in Him; and even in the future, we will trust in Him!

Somebody hold my mule while I shout again right here!

David had "tasted" the sweet and the bitter. He had experienced both joy and sorrow. It is because of the laws of God and His faithfulness, that David could declare, "I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread."

Let's not "kid or fool" ourselves, because every now and then, the righteous are brought to this sad degree of misery, whether it be cosmic (tornados, hurricanes, fires, wars, etc.), circumstantial (sins of society, etc.), conscientious (for righteousness sake), or corrective suffering; we must remember that the promise of Psalm 37 belongs to those whose trust is in The LORD.

Also, there are times when we must suffer for the furtherance of the Gospel.

John 9:1-3 – "As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents, but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him."

It was commonly supposed that when a person was sick or blind or had any other infirmity, that it was due to sin in the person's life. While sin may be a cause of suffering, it is not always the case. Jesus' disciples assumed, just as the rest of the people of that day assumed, that this man's blindness was due to sin, but that was not the case as Jesus points out.

The sovereignty and purpose of God allowed this man to be born blind so that Jesus could heal him and in so doing, reveal the works of God. God's healing power was demonstrated by restoring the sight of this blind man.

3 – I Have Been Young ...

All of us, whether young or old, will, experience difficulties. Jesus told us this when He spoke in John 16:33, “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

The reason that we can have victory over our tribulations is because Jesus has already defeated the whole evil rebellious system of the world, His victory is our victory.

The Psalmist reminds us in verse 3 of Psalm 37, that regardless of our age, we must **TRUST IN THE LORD** –

We must make the Lord –

OUR HOPE – to trust in, wait for, look for – Jesus is our hope (I Timothy 1:1) He is the reason we can expectantly look forward to eternal life in glory – the reason for our hope is also due to the fact, that we already have a “taste” of the future glory because of the love with which the Holy Spirit fills our hearts. Another way of saying this is, the gifts of love and the Spirit are downpayments of future glory for which we hope.

We must -

CONFIDE IN HIM – have confidence in – having a sense of certainty and assurance of one’s relationship with God, a sense of boldness that is dependent on a realization of one’s acceptance by God, and a conviction that one’s destiny is secure in God.

We must -

CONFORM TO HIS IMAGE – indicating an inner change of nature, working into the outward life

The Psalmist not only reminds us to **TRUST IN THE LORD**, he also reminds us to **DO GOOD** –

Do not worry about what others say and do not do anything for the approval of others. You have to be satisfied with the life you are living, not them. And if you improve yourself first – everything around you will improve too. How can you be good to yourself? Being good to yourself means taking care of yourself. In taking care of yourself you are not only doing good for yourself but you are also making it possible to do good toward others.

How does a Christian do good?

Matthew 25:31-40

Jesus said, “..., inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”

**When we TRUST IN THE LORD and DO GOOD – we will DWELL IN THE LAND and CULTIVATE FAITHFULNESS. In other words, we will be well provided for, we will be taken care of!
4 – I Have Been Young ...**

The Psalmist continues in verse 4 of Psalm 37 and he tells us to –

DELIGHT YOURSELF IN THE LORD – taking our eyes off of what we want and desire what God desires for us -

We must make God our heart's delight – depend on Him – be well pleased that He is Our God –

God has chosen to reveal Himself through His Son and through the Scriptures, we can delight in the fact that Our God is in covenant with us.

Delight in the excellencies of The Lord Our God – God created us with the longing to admire all the wonders of Who He is and His excellent greatness. Looking to a person to fill this God-given desire will never bring true delight or satisfaction.

When you delight in the excellencies of God you will come to understand that everything about Him is the answer to your longings.

When we DELIGHT OURSELVES IN THE LORD, He will give us the desires of our heart because our hearts are “in tune” with His heart and it does not matter what age we are, young or old.

The Psalmist continues in this Psalm and admonishes us in verse 5 of Psalm 37 to –

COMMIT YOUR WAY TO THE LORD – the Hebrew root word translated “commit” literally means “to roll.” In Hebrew, this is used figuratively to describe handing over, seeking, or consigning something. We as believers in the Lord Jesus should “roll” our burdens onto the Lord and we trust Him to take care of situations we cannot handle. Peter seems to cite this concept in the New Testament,

I Peter 5:7 - “casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (NKJV)

If we trust the Lord to handle our burdens for us, we will not be anxious about wicked people (Psalm 37:1).

At times, our greatest foes are alarming circumstances that we have no control over. They threaten our peace and even our faith, but the apostle Peter told us God cares for us, therefore, we should cast all our cares on Him. The apostle Paul offered the same prescription for personal peace. He wrote in Philippians 4:6-7 to be anxious about nothing, but to make our requests known to God in prayer. As a result, the peace of God will guard our hearts and mind through Christ Jesus.

When we COMMIT OUR WAY TO THE LORD, and TRUST ALSO IN HIM, He will do what He promised to do, He will do it! We must “roll it” off ourselves, leave it to Him, and trust His wise and good providence to order and dispose of all our concerns as He pleases.

We can trust Him to do what is right and what is best!

5 – I Have Been Young ...

It is a natural thing to defend ourselves when accused or condemned, but David reminds us that God is the One Who will bring forth our righteousness – verse 6 of Psalm 37 –

If we as Christians, trust in the Lord, delight in Him, and give Him our burdens, He will “bring forth” our “righteousness as the light.” The believer’s vindication will be as clear to everyone as the brightest time of day, even if that victory must wait until judgment day, it is still guaranteed.

This is why, in the next verse, in my humble and accurate opinion, I believe the Psalmist declares to the readers to REST IN THE LORD –

You are working on trusting God and doing good, abiding in Him, meditating, and applying His Word, finding delight in His commands, entrusting you whole self, life, and worries to Him ... and now He tells you to rest in Him. This is probably the most difficult thing to do, to rest in the Lord.

The word for “rest” in this scripture (Psalm 37:7) means to stop, be still, and be silent. God is telling us that in order to succeed, we must turn down both the speed and volume of our lives.

When the world around us gets loud, God speaks in that still, small voice. He tells us to rest in Him, stop, be still, and be silent.

The psalmist also says in this verse (Psalm 37:7) not only to rest in the Lord but to also WAIT PATIENTLY FOR HIM.

The word used here for “wait patiently”, gives us a richer understanding of what is being asked of us. It can imply many things, but in this case, we should think of it as being firm and strong, enduring and prospering. In other words, where do you go to when you need answers or solutions when life throws something new at you?

You and I should place whatever it is, in God’s hands, listen for His voice, and then get into position and prepare ourselves for whatever comes next. Wait also means to pause for further instructions.

Our Gracious, Loving, All-Knowing, Heavenly Father sometimes allows us to be – or sometimes actively places us, in positions where we have fewer choices or no other options but to wait patiently and endure.

I remember some time ago when I was contemplating making some decisions about ministry and I went to a friend of mine, Dr. Rod Cooper, and asked for his advice. We shared and prayed together and I will never forget what he said to me during our conversation. He said, “There is only one thing worse than waiting on God, and that is wishing that you had.” My! My! My!

Being patient while waiting on God does not mean we just do nothing. Waiting, is not simply a passive exercise but rather an active exercise, confidently expecting good results, with the strength

of character to persevere, endure, as long as it takes. And you cannot have the patience to wait on God without trusting in God and resting in Him. My! My! My!

6 – I Have Been Young ...

The Psalmist closes Psalm 37:7 by telling the readers to “DO NOT FRET because of him who prospers in his way. Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.”

DO NOT FRET is the theme of Psalm 37. If you are like me, there are times when I get a little bit frustrated with what I see wicked people doing and it seems that they are getting away with it. The Psalmist is reminding us that when these kinds of thoughts plague your mind, we need to be patient and trust that to the Lord because He knows how to handle the wicked.

REMEMBER THIS –

God is always in control –

He knows what we desire –

He wants amazing things for us –

He will act in His time –

He will always do what is right and what is best –

He promises that if we WAIT ON HIM and TRUST IN HIS PLANS for us, He will strengthen our hearts so that we will not grow weary

Psalm 27:14 – “Wait on the LORD, Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!”

Prayer plays a big role in our lives – ask God for patience, for clarity, for comfort and peace. Ask Him to show you how He sees things and what His will is.

As we draw close to “wrapping up” this study of Psalm 37:3-9, we will now discuss verse 8 of Psalm 37 which warns us about the destructive path of anger.

I remember what the late Dr. A. Louis Patterson, Jr. would say to us about anger. He would say that anger is one letter away from danger, add the letter “d” to anger and you will have danger.

The Psalmist is clear in that he is telling the readers that they should stop and turn from anger. Failure to do so can lead to it consuming you and causing great harm. Anger indicates that something needs to change, and the problem is we think we know what needs to be done. Anger, like pain, is an emotion that is not inherently wrong. It informs us of what hurts and helps us avoid it.

Proverbs 14:12 – “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”

7 – I Have Been Young ...

When we feel anger bubbling up, there is a way that seems right for us to deal with that anger but that way of dealing will lead to death.

Friends cut each other out, children distance themselves from their parents, couples divorce, churches split, and wars are fought. Why? We act out of anger. When we feel not justified in our frustrations, we are at the greatest risk. This is when we have the hardest time getting over anger and the tremendous potential to give in to it. If we do not learn to deal with anger, we will have a hard time dealing with anything else as a follower of Jesus Christ.

So, how should a follower of Jesus Christ deal with anger? Glad you asked –

Anger is not an easy subject matter to address, but let us share a few practical principles from a Biblical perspective to practice –

RESTRAIN IT– Proverbs 29:11 – “A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back.”

Proverbs 15:1 – “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

These scriptures do not mean that the wise bury their anger or do not deal with it but it means that they control their anger and how they express it. When you restrain your anger, you keep it within limits. The Spirit-filled Christian submits to the power of the Holy Spirit and allows the power of the Holy Spirit to guard, direct, and guide his/her life.

RE-EVALUATE IT – James 1:19-20 – “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”

God’s way of dealing with anger is to be slow to anger. There are some things that you need to let roll off of your shoulders and not internalize or act on. When you re-evaluate a person’s words or actions, you often find that there is no need to get angry as that person really did not intend to hurt you or was merely acting out of their own biases, which is not a reflection of you.

RELEASE IT – Colossians 3:8 – “But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.”

When you deal with anger God’s way, you feel it, vent it in a safe way (possibly complaining to an innocent third party), where no one is harmed, and then release it. You get rid of it from your body, heart, and mind.

Put ... aside – A Greek word used for taking off clothes; as one who removes his dirty clothes at the end of the day, believers must discard the filthy garments of their old, sinful lives, and put off the remaining sinful deeds and be continually renewed into the Christlikeness to which they are called.

Submitting and surrendering, to the power of the Holy Spirit will enable Christians to overcome the anger that may come up every now and then in their lives.

8 – I Have Been Young ...

The Psalmist reminds us in verse 9 of Psalm 37, that we have another reason for our delight in and rest upon the LORD – we can TRUST HIS PROMISE that HE WILL TAKE CARE OF HIS OWN, not only in this world, but in the world to come.

- 1. I have been young –**
- 2. Now I am old –**
- 3. I have not seen the righteous forsaken –**

Whether young or old, we can declare with clarity, “The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?” Psalm 27:1 (NKJV)

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