

# Wisdom Psalms

(Psalms 1, 37, 112, and 127)

## Psalm 112: The Advantages of Having Faith in God

### 1. INTRODUCING THE PSALM

- + The Psalm writer is anonymous. It is written in an acrostic format, [each half verse](#) starting with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
- + The Psalm was probably authored by the same person as Psalm 111, and is a counterpart and follow-up of Psalm 111. These two could be subtitled:
  - Psalm 111: Praise God for His Righteous Acts
  - Psalm 112: Praise God for His Blessings Given to Faithful People
- + The Psalm addresses a practical problem in the life of believers, that of continuity: Will I be able to maintain my faith if I am really hard pressed? I have been able to resist previous temptations that have come my way, but what about *this* time? Will I buckle? The Psalm answers: “No, you will be able to “win through” even this dire threat. In fact, God’s faithfulness will extend beyond your life on earth. You’ll be remembered by others even beyond the grave, and people will thank God for you.” See v. 6b, “A righteous man will be remembered forever.”
- + In regard to the attribute of generosity, St. Paul quotes v. 9 in 2 Corinthians 9:9 “He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor, his righteousness endures forever.” Also by implication: v. 5: “God will come to him who is generous and lends freely,.....”

### 2. THE PSALM IN DETAIL

- + “Praise the Lord.” (not part of the acrostic) = Hallelu-Yah. Psalm 111 to 118 are called the “Hallelujah Psalms.” In worship it is appropriate at times to break out of our usual state of inhibition, to *shout* our praise to God, as we do in our response to God’s benediction: In response to “Go in peace and serve the Lord,” we shout, “THANKS BE TO GOD.” See Isaiah 12:6, “*Shout aloud* and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”
- + Vs. 1: “Blessed is the man. . .” = Congratulations, Kudos, Attaboy. The man who fears God is considered fortunate. The clinical word for fear is phobia, of which there are 75 compound words in the English language. Fear of God = a glad awareness of the awe-filled mystery of God’s holy love. Mark Buchanan quotes the beginning words of Henry Miller’s novel *Tropic of Capricorn*, which was banned in the U.S. for its obscenity. Miller starts by saying that he never feared God, and if he saw God he would spit in his face. Miller died in the early 70s. Buchanan wrote: “He got to see God. This one thing is sure: He never spat in God’s face. He had only two choices, if at that point he had a choice: be consumed by God’s fire, or be cleansed by it” (*The Holy Wild*, p.156)

To “find great delight in God’s commands.” The righteous person sees through The apparent crustiness of God’s “thou shalt nots” to the joy of hearing God’s true word, the ultimate happiness of hearing God express Himself to our benefit.

- + Vs 2: Receiving the fruits of God's righteousness, the man declared righteous by God's grace shares those blessings with his children, and is in turn blessed through them. "His children will be mighty in the land" = his kids will be persons of influence and good reputation.
  - + Vs. 3: "wealth and riches are in his house." He will receive the tools he needs in order to provide for his family and also help others. Eph. 4:28, "he must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need."
  - + Clouds (v.4: "darkness"), however, do appear in his life also. In the Bible darkness is a metaphor for calamitous times. But he is not caught up short, because "Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man.
  - + Vs. 5: "Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely" is picked up again in v. 9, "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor." When Paul quotes this verse in 2 Cor. 9, it is preceded by the famous phrase "God loves a cheerful giver." Next verse: "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all you need, you abound in everygood work." There is an adage that goes: "The first half of our life is spent in gathering money, the second half in finding appropriate ways to give it away.
  - + Vss 6-8: God's promise that the person declared righteous by Christ will not be shaken. To be shaken = to have one's stability and security threatened. "He will have no fear of bad news", "because he knows that his enemies have only limited capacity to hurt him. Jesus laid out this reality in Matthew 10:29
- The righteous person is not shaken also because he knows the ultimate outcome of The wicked man's life in comparison to his own. "In the end he will look in triumph on his foes" (v. 8b),
- + After reiterating the blessings of righteousness given to the one who scatters his gifts to the poor, and promising ultimate recognition in v. 9 ("his horn will be lifted up" . . . the "horn" being a symbol of strength and pride), the psalmist returns to the outcome that awaits the wicked man.
  - + Vs. 10: "The wicked will see (the righteous being blessed) and be vexed, he will gnash his teeth and waste away; the longing of the wicked will come to nothing." Gnashing teeth is a vivid picture of powerless rage, a combination of envy and anger. In that frustrated state the wicked man will melt away into oblivion. He will be forgotten (who talks about Josef Stalin anymore?) in contrast to the righteous person who will be remembered forever: Psalm 34:15-16.

### **LIVING THE PSALMS**

- 1. Look beyond short-sighted threats and inconveniences, to God's long-term promises of love, protection, joy, and hope.**
- 2. God's righteous acts are the wellspring of blessings for us and our families. Those acts of deliverance are our source of security in adverse times.**
- 3. The best way to offset fear of financial setbacks is to be generous to the poor and have integrity in our work.**
- 4. Praising God is appropriate expression of faith in God, and also lifts up the Body of Christ with strength.**