

Ps. 37:1-6 (LD 7, Q/A 21) “You Just Have to Have Faith”

For the Children: How do you react when you see someone doing something bad? If they seem to be having fun, you might be tempted to join them in their sin. Or, you might get angry, especially if they seem to get away with it. Maybe you even wonder if God is paying attention! But the Lord assures us that those who remain in their wickedness will one day be judged by Him. He also assures us that He will bless us richly in the Lord Jesus. We have to accept that by faith: to believe the truth of it, take it to heart, trust it, take pleasure in it and act on it. **Questions:** What are the 3 main elements of faith according to Q/A 21? Should we expect that God’s children never doubt God’s Word at all? Is it enough to agree that God’s Word is true?

Introduction:

First Point: Don’t Fret

- 1) A Bad Response to the Wicked: We are commanded not to fret – to kindle anger in ourselves – over the prosperity of the wicked. Nor are we to envy their “freedom” or “success.” See also v. 8 and Prov. 24:19. Such reactions lead to hatred, and often to questioning God’s providence.
- 2) The Wicked Wither: The other reason for avoiding sinful reactions to the wicked is that the Lord will judge them. They will die, their earthly wealth will desert them, and they will face eternal punishment. See Jam. 1:10, 1 Pet. 1:24. In contrast, God’s people will inherit the earth (Mt. 5:5). Of course, to rely on this counsel from the Scripture, we need faith.

Second Point: Have Faith

- 1) Trust: Faith involves a trust-element. The word used in vss. 3 and 5b means a feeling of security, based on our confidence in the Lord and the certain hope that He gives us. See Heb. 6:19. Note how the 3 elements of faith in Q21 work together in this: we receive assurances from the Lord. we trust this *knowledge*, so that we are *assured*, and we *commit* ourselves to actions based on that.
- 2) Faithfulness: Faithfulness is another expression of true faith. We are given knowledge about what it means to relate rightly to the Lord and what He requires of us. We become convicted of these truths and commit to acting on them. We cultivate such faithfulness by feeding on the Lord’s Word, His faithfulness to His promises and His definition of what is good, as we dwell in His Kingdom.
- 3) Delight: True faith involves loving the Lord wholeheartedly. That love creates a delight in the Lord (v. 4), His Word, His Son. His attributes and works and ways. If we do not delight in serving Him, we will be left with an empty legalism at best.
- 4) Commitment: “Conviction” in Q21 means a firmly and personally held opinion – as opposed to mere assent to an abstract idea. Another way of expressing this is by the term, “personal commitment.” In v. 5a, “Commit your way to the Lord” literally means “Roll your way upon Him” – commit your works and your burdens to Him, relying on His strength and grace rather than your own! This also assumes Biblical knowledge and assurance – otherwise we would remain uncommitted.

Third Point: In What the Lord Will Do

- 1) The Certainty of His Action: The assurance we have comes from the assurances the Lord gives. The Lord gives us His assurances that “He will do it” (v. 5b) – deal with the wicked and bless His people. This gives us a certain hope on which to act.
- 2) Vindication at the End: He also promises that He will “bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgement as the noonday” (v. 6). This is a promise of our vindication at the final judgement, our gracious justification by faith in Christ. Things may seem dark and unjust at present, but that will be dispelled as daybreak dispels the darkness of night.
- 3) He Will Give You What You Want: The other assurance here is that those who desire what is good, who bring such requests in Christ’s Name, will be granted what they desire (v. 4b, with Jn. 11:22, 14:13, 15:16; 1 Jn. 3:22, 5:15). Knowing such truths helps us respond rightly to the wicked.

Conclusion: