



When I reflect upon the year, I naturally reflect upon my life as well. What miracles or amazing acts of God did I see in 2011? Did we accomplish our goals? What was the highlight of 2011; the greatest challenge? Are we becoming the person we want to be? To help us evaluate our lives and make a plan for 2012, we're going to examine Psalm 37:1–11 this morning.

**Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong; for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away (verses 1–2).**

"Do not fret" means, "don't get worked up;" "don't get heated;" "be cool." This instruction is given three times in the first 11 verses of Psalm 37: here in verse 1 and verses 7 and 8.

**Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil.**

Evil, like getting worked up, angry, venting to a friend, co-worker or family member. Or envious, harboring the desire for the lifestyle of people, accruing credit card debt because you choose not to live within your financial means.

Then in verse 5, one more component to fretting and envy is added—anxiety.

**Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.**

Commit means "to dislodge the burden from your shoulders and lay it on God." When we take burdens onto our shoulders, the load tires us out. The longer we carry them, the more tired we become, naturally. And if we don't have a method of off-loading them, the burden grows larger and larger over time, until eventually we cannot move. We are crushed under the weight. In desperation we start looking for a way to relieve the pressure.

Did you have any anxiety in 2011? Did you have any fretting? What about envy? Were you envious of anyone this past year? Fretting, envy and anxiety are the result or consequence of pre-occupying our minds with anything of this world. Follow me on this:

Focus on someone else's success this past year and what do you feel?

Focus on the ups and downs of the economy and what do you feel?

Focus on the best dresses, best bodies, best . . . and what do you feel?

Focus on global terrorism, corporate corruption, your retirement funds and what do you feel?

We fret, envy and get anxious, naturally. That's because fretting, envy and anxiety are the result of or consequence of pre-occupying our minds with anything of this world. The Lord offers a remedy to this condition of our hearts in this Psalm.

### **Trust in the Lord**

**Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture (v. 3).**

We're surrounded by our own understanding: Intellect, job, philosophy and logic, scientific explanations of the universe, good looks and beautiful bodies. Everyone leans (trusts) on something. When it's taken away, we must find something new to lean upon. "*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding*" (Proverbs 3:5).

When we trust we "dwell in the land" (stay in His provision); we "enjoy safe pasture" (experience the transcendent joy that can rise way above the trouble in our lives).

### **Delight in the Lord**

**Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart (v. 4).**

Delight means "excited attention." Practical steps to develop a delight-full heart are:

» Make lists of the great acts God has done in 2011. "*Great are the works of the LORD; they are pondered by all who delight in them*" (Psalm 111:2).

» Get exposed to God's Word in 2012. "*Praise the LORD. Blessed are those who fear the LORD, who find great delight in his commands*" (Psalm 112:1).

This can be done by coming to church, participating in a Bible Study or Community Group, reading the Word on your own. The key part is choosing to have an expectant attitude. Remember, delight means "excited attention."

There are many people who have been attending church their entire lives who are not being transformed by the Holy Spirit. Make a list of what the Lord has taught you from His Word in 2011.

This verse says that when we delight in the Lord, He gives us the desires of our heart. The desire of our heart, when we delight like this, is the Lord. We want to experience more of His powerful presence in our daily lives. We want His glory to increase in our daily existence. We want what He wants.

### **Commit your ways to the Lord**

**Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this (v. 5).**

Commit means “to dislodge the burden from your shoulders and lay it on God,” “To role one’s way onto God.” The most obvious way this happens is through prayer. A practice I find particularly helpful is releasing and receiving hands. *“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you”* (1 Peter 5:7).

### **Be still before the Lord**

**Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes (v. 7).**

Like enjoying safe pasture, this person is patiently waiting for the Lord to speak, to work, to heal, to right a wrong. Things like unstable nations acquiring nuclear power can make us anxious. Courts legalizing things that are against God’s word can get us worked up.

By being still, we put into practice the surrender we’ve already committed to. It’s as if we say to the Lord, “OK, I’ve surrendered

my life to you. That means I fully trust you with everything. So, I will quiet my soul before you. I will be still. I will fully trust you in the mess that surrounds me.”

### **Refrain from anger**

**Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil (v. 8).**

Ironically, our response of anger makes us as evil as the one we’re angry at. Remember, do not fret; don’t get heated.

When we engage ourselves in these five attitudes and actions, we will experience a freedom from anxiety; a release from the pressure; a renewed passion for the Lord and life; a life purpose that is eternally directed.

The long-range perspective helps us embrace this attitude.

**For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land. A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found. But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy peace and prosperity (verses 9–11).**

*This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.*