

Food for Thought

For the week of August 31, 2014

(Questions and Scriptures for further personal study)

1. Many may be surprised that anger is actually an attribute of God, given to us for our benefit to help us protect others, ourselves, and bring about justice. Of course it can be distorted, as we so often see, causing undue damage in a variety of settings and relationships. How do the following verses help us evaluate if our anger is expressed in a way that pleases God (Ephesians 4:26)?

James 1:19-20

Romans 12:17-19

1 Peter 5:7-8

2. This weekend we heard that being discouraged or angry doesn't necessarily mean we're not being patient. In fact, all too often we think we have to just be positive to show we're remaining faithful. Psalm 77 shows how we can be real about what's going on and what we think in the midst of a tough situation and still remain faithful and patient. After reading Psalm 77, jot down a few of your own thoughts and/or emotions about a tough season in your life or a test you've encountered. Also try to include anything you can think of that God has done for you.

3. One of the keys to keeping our effectiveness and patience is keeping our reputation and character intact. Psalm 112 reads like a grocery list of the actions and character qualities of a righteous man or woman with the kind of character God calls us to have. As you read through this Psalm, use your own words to make a list of all the actions, character qualities, and blessings you can identify. Are there any you want to further develop and make sure you don't forget?

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1. Many may be surprised that anger is actually an attribute of God, given to us for our benefit to help us protect others, ourselves, and bring about justice. Of course it can be distorted, as we so often see, causing undue damage in a variety of settings and relationships. How do the following verses help us evaluate if our anger is expressed in a way that pleases God (Ephesians 4:26)?

Ephesians 4:26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, [NIV]

James 1:19-20

Listening and Doing

19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. [NIV]

Romans 12:17-19

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. [NIV]

1 Peter 5:7-8

7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. [NIV]

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Psalm 77

For the director of music. For Jeduthun. Of Asaph. A psalm.

1 I cried out to God for help;

I cried out to God to hear me.

2 When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;

at night I stretched out untiring hands,
and I would not be comforted.

3 I remembered you, God, and I groaned;

I meditated, and my spirit grew faint.

4 You kept my eyes from closing;

I was too troubled to speak.

5 I thought about the former days,
the years of long ago;

6 I remembered my songs in the night.

My heart meditated and my spirit asked:
7 "Will the Lord reject forever?
Will he never show his favor again?
8 Has his unfailing love vanished forever?
Has his promise failed for all time?
9 Has God forgotten to be merciful?
Has he in anger withheld his compassion?"
10 Then I thought, "To this I will appeal:
the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand.
11 I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.
12 I will consider all your works
and meditate on all your mighty deeds."
13 Your ways, God, are holy.
What god is as great as our God?
14 You are the God who performs miracles;
you display your power among the peoples.
15 With your mighty arm you redeemed your people,
the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.
16 The waters saw you, God,
the waters saw you and writhed;
the very depths were convulsed.
17 The clouds poured down water,
the heavens resounded with thunder;
your arrows flashed back and forth.
18 Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind,
your lightning lit up the world;
the earth trembled and quaked.
19 Your path led through the sea,
your way through the mighty waters,
though your footprints were not seen.
20 You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron [NIV]

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Psalm 112

1 Praise the Lord.

Blessed are those who fear the Lord,
who find great delight in his commands.

2 Their children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

3 Wealth and riches are in their houses,

and their righteousness endures forever.

- 4 Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,
for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous.
- 5 Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely,
who conduct their affairs with justice.
- 6 Surely the righteous will never be shaken;
they will be remembered forever.
- 7 They will have no fear of bad news;
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord.
- 8 Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.
- 9 They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor,
their righteousness endures forever;
their horn will be lifted high in honor.
- 10 The wicked will see and be vexed,
they will gnash their teeth and waste away;
the longings of the wicked will come to nothing. [NIV]