

A Faithful, Steadfast Life Extolled

Psalms 112

Group ¹	C	V	Description
Prosperity of the One Who Fears the LORD	112	1-6	The attributes of the “man who fears the Lord”
		7-9	He is steadfast and without fear
		10	The wicked will be vexed and they will be no more

This is not a long psalm compared to others, a mere ten stanzas. But in it are treasures worthy of the effort to seek them.

The first section contains the various attributes of those who fear the Lord. To begin with the word fear doesn't refer to the emotional response to impending danger, real or imagined. Instead, it refers to a reverential awe. This comes from an understanding of just how real God is and how He desires mankind to follow His commandments, which, in this case, the person who fears the Lord greatly delights in (v1).

Awe inspired fear will lead to faithful practice of keeping God's commandments not out of dread but in worship. This will result in generations being blessed (v2).

Verse three promotes the idea that wealth and prosperity go hand in hand with righteousness, to which there is some truth to this because one who follows after the commands of God will not waste his fortunes on unrighteous living. However, there is ample evidence in the world that one can be a righteous person and still be of humble means or estate. Barnes², in his notes on the verse, points us to 1 Timothy 4:8 in order to enlighten us a little.

1 Timothy 4:7-8 NLT Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. **8** "Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come."

Paul of course is noting how much different a life trained for godliness is of greater benefit than one that is merely trained to be physically strong. Christ even talked about how wealth and riches in this life doesn't guarantee happiness and can be lost just as quickly as they were gained. It all depends on where our treasure is being stored.

Matthew 6:19-21 NASB "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. **20** "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; **21** for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Verse four of the psalm uses the imagery of Light and Darkness to show the contrast of the righteous man to those who aren't. Wherever a righteous man goes, he sheds light in darkness as a result of his manner of living. The latter part of the verse describes him as gracious, compassionate, and righteous, qualities that seem to be often lacking in the world today. This makes the God-fearing person stand out, as if a light were emanating from him into the dark world around him.

The righteous person is gracious to those in need and as a result, he will be looked upon with favor in the end. Jesus uses the parable of the separation of the sheep and the goats to illustrate this point (Matthew 25:31-46). In it He describes those who are faithful as showing compassion to other, especially those who others would rather have nothing to do with.

Matthew 25:34-40 NASB "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who

1 (NASB) "Group" column from the headings in the NASB text.

2 (Barnes Psalms 112:3)

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are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' 37 'Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You *something* to drink? 38 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 'The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me.'

He was illustrating that it is not enough to SAY Jesus is Lord, it has to lead to action. So too the God-fearing person of the psalm who is gracious and shows a willingness to help those in need.

This will result in his life being unshaken in this life. This thought is begun in verse six and is continued in verse seven, eight, and nine. The qualities described in the verses are as follows.

- He won't be afraid of evil tidings, but will steadfastly trust in the Lord
- He won't live in fear of his enemies and will see victory in the end.
- He will be generous to those in need and will be exalted and remembered for generations to come.

Verse ten closes the psalm with the contrast of the wicked being vexed as the God-fearing persons life. Vexed is a word that is rarely used word today and the NLT³ uses the word infuriated instead. The wicked are described as gnashing their teeth or grinding their teeth in anger and as a result will “slink away, their hopes thwarted” (Psalms 112:10 NLT).

Following God's laws and living righteously will result in spiritual wealth, and perhaps some physical wealth, which will result in generations being influenced to live godly lives as well, a legacy worth pursuing.

Key Words: Old Testament, Wisdom, Psalms, Righteousness, Generosity, Legacy



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3 (NLT)