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## What is the difference between the wicked and those that do right?

### **Psalm 36:1–12 (ESV)**

*To the choirmaster of David, The Servant of the Lord*

**<sup>1</sup>Transgression speaks to the wicked deep in his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes.**

**<sup>2</sup>For he flatters himself in his own eyes that his iniquity cannot be found out and hated.**

**<sup>3</sup>The words of his mouth are trouble and deceit; he has ceased to act wisely and do good.**

**<sup>4</sup>He plots trouble while on his bed; he sets himself in a way that is not good; he does not reject evil.**

**<sup>5</sup>Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.**

**<sup>6</sup>Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast you save, O Lord.**

**<sup>7</sup>How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.**

**<sup>8</sup>They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights.**

**<sup>9</sup>For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.**

**<sup>10</sup>Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who know you, and your righteousness to the upright of heart!**

**<sup>11</sup>Let not the foot of arrogance come upon me, nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.**

**<sup>12</sup>There the evildoers lie fallen; they are thrust down, unable to rise.**

Jesus and His words have given them insight and direction. It was encouraging to hear President Trump quote Jeremiah 1:5 and Psalm 139:18 and affirm that “every person is created in the image of Almighty Holy God.”

It was equally encouraging to witness Democrat Senator Chris Coons and Republican Senator James Lankford pray together over President Trump. Gary Haugen, the founder and CEO of International Justice Mission was the keynote speaker. [You can listen to his message by going to YouTube and searching for National Prayer Breakfast 2019. He comes on near the one hour mark.]

One of the main points presented in Gary’s address to the 5000 assembled from over 140 nations was “God is not mocked.” His message revealed that today 40 million people are in slavery. The internet is a great tool, but it also has allowed great opportunity for those who want to enslave. “Slavery looks different today,” Gary pointed out, “it looks different than the centuries before, for today slavery encompasses most nationalities.”

Throughout his speech, he gave firsthand testimony of the Lord sweeping evil dictators into the bin of history and seeing justice fall from heaven. In account after account of current history, he called each attendee to the reality that a time is coming when all will give account to God. He called each listener to pledge to end the evil of slavery pointing to the fact that, “in this generation we have the power to stop it.” At the end of his speech the obvious unasked question hung in the air – will we?

What drives a person to such evil? What keeps a person from doing what is right? Psalm 36 gives insight. The Lord wanted his people to know what characterizes those driven to evil and the contrast of those who seek to do right. This is evident by King David calling himself a “servant of the Lord” in the title. This title told the original reader that David was “speaking not for himself, nor as

### Introduction

At the 2019 National Prayer Breakfast, several great leaders from America and around the world shared how

**The answer to the problems of man will not come from within man. They will come from looking to God and relying on His counsel. Abraham Lincoln said it well, “My greatest concern is not that God is on our side, but rather that we are on His!”**

King but as a leader and instructor of his people whom he serves by serving the Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

### 1. **The Problem of Evil is Not Out There - It is Within**

“Transgression speaks to the wicked, deep in his heart.”

Have you ever had an evil thought come into your mind and wonder where did that come from? What makes the voice of evil rise up within us?

Scripture states that it is the result of being born in sin and living in a world that is cursed by sin. Romans 5:12 speaks of that act by one man to bring sin into this world. Romans 8:26 speaks of the curse of sin upon creation. Jesus stated, *“For from within, out of the heart of man come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness, All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”* **Mark 7:23, 24**

This Psalm presents evil not as just being a problem out there but a common problem within each person. However, the Lord gives insight into the characteristics of the wicked.

The characteristic found in vs. 4 is telling, *“he does not reject evil.”* That inner voice of evil is not cast down, but is welcomed and obeyed. Why? It is simply answered by the first characteristic. *“There is no fear of God before His eyes.”* When God is not seen and feared, the third characteristic follows naturally – self-aggrandizement and deceitfulness, vs.2. This habitual pattern compounds into the mindset described: *“he plots trouble while on his bed; and he sets himself in a way that is not good”* ...vs. 4.

### 2. **This Psalm calls for Analysis**

The reader of the Psalm is left with the idea of self-analysis. The phrase *“before His eyes”* at the end of verse one is telling. What is before my eyes? How do I view God? The Psalmist describes the main difference between the wicked and the righteous by how they view God. Here are two determining questions.

#### 1) **What do you see when you look at creation?**

The wicked sees God nowhere and the righteous sees God everywhere. Creation shouts the glory of God. In this Psalm, verses 5 and 6 express the person who sees God everywhere. He sees God as indescribable amazing caring beautiful God.

#### 2) **How do you respond to written revelation God has penned that describes Him?**

Open a Bible and read God’s revelation. Read Hebrews 12:25-29, John 1:1-5, 14, Romans 1:1-6, Philippians 2:3-10, 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, 1 Timothy 4:10, and John 3:16.

Who is God? Who is Jesus? Why should I fear Him?

A.W. Tozer stated, “When men no longer fear God, they transgress His laws without hesitation. The fear of consequences is no deterrent when the fear of God is gone.”

John Bevere points out, “Holy fear is the key to God’s sure foundation, unlocking the treasures of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge. Along with the love of God, it composes the very foundation of life! We will soon learn that we cannot truly love God until we fear Him, nor can we properly fear Him until we love Him.”<sup>2</sup>

#### 3. **Knowing God Personally – what a great life!**

C.S. Lewis, a former atheist who came to know God personally said, “Aim at earth and miss heaven. Aim at heaven and get earth thrown in for free.”

The Psalm closes with the experience of those that fear God and seek to know Him personally. Life is a walk with the source of Life, our Creator. It is a walk with understanding and delight. It is security in the refuge of God’s presence. It is living in the awareness of the unwavering unconditional love of God.

***The Lord desires for all to know Him! Do you?***

<sup>1</sup>H.C. Leupold, Exposition of Psalms, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, Reprint, 1969)292

<sup>2</sup> John Bevere, The Fear of the Lord: Discover the Key to Intimately Knowing God

## **About Capitol Commission**

Capitol Commission state ministers are pastors-missionaries who in session teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for legislators, lobbyists, and staff members. In North Carolina, the State Minister is Dr. Bert Jones. The Bible studies are hand-distributed to each legislative office, emailed, and made available throughout the Capitol community. Capitol Commission is a ministry of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message, and to help believers mature through verse-by-verse Bible teaching. In the Bible, we see God’s love for the world, especially those who have been placed in authority. This is the foundation for our ministry to you. The church is instructed to submit and to honor government leaders (Rom 13:1-7), and to pray for their eternal salvation (1 Tim 2:1-4). The desire of Capitol Commission is to witness God transform the hearts and lives of elected officials, lobbyists, and staff members. We apply this mandate to four primary areas of discipleship: (1) *evangelize* those who have not known saving faith in Jesus Christ; (2) *establish* those who desire to grow in their faith and knowledge of Scripture; (3) *equip* those called to spiritual leadership; and, (4) *encourage* churches to participate with us in ministry. Capitol Commission is a non-political and non-lobbying 501c3.