

## THE STEPS OF A GOOD MAN

### PSALMS 37:23-25

*23The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way;*

*24 though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand.*

*25I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread. ESV*

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#### Introduction

The whole of the 37<sup>th</sup> Psalm points the reader to a simple truth; the wicked's prosperity is short-lived. I am sure that most of you can name several people whose lifestyle is opposite of Christianity, and yet it seems they get away with things and prosper more than you, even though you are trying to live your life according to the Bible's commandments.

*Psalms 73:1-3 I Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. 2But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. 3For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*

Look at these words with me: Psalm 37

*9For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.*

*10For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.*

*11But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight*

*16A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked. 17For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous.*

Look also with me at vv. 9, 11, 22, 29, and 34. Notice the common theme; "the righteous shall inherit the earth."

Let's dig for the nuggets of truth in this passage this morning.

*23The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way;*

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*23The steps of a man are established by the Lord* – The King James Version translates this verse as "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." They translate the Greek word *ghehber* as "good

man” but is used as “man” 64 times, “mighty” twice. The word means man or strong man, with an ability to fight. The NAS, NIV, ESV and others translate the word as “man”.

The verb for established means “to make firm, to establish.”

So this morning, we could translate this verse as; “*The steps of a mighty man are ‘set up and determined’ by Almighty God.*” Or “*The righteous walk is directed and confirmed by Yahweh.*”

#### Illustration

As each of our children grew from the cradle, becoming a toddler, Linda and I taught and guided them. I remember the most common word in their training was “NO!” All kidding aside, growing up is a life full of correct actions and incorrect actions. As each of our children tired of crawling on their hands and knees, they made a move that changed their lives forever. They took their first step. Linda or I would hold up our child while the other called to them. Each of them took that step, and then another. But they were not allowed to go anywhere they desired. We guided their footsteps and the places they could go and that never changed until they moved out of the house and began their own families.

- They could ride their bikes down the block, but no further.
- They could go to a sleep-over, but had to stay in the house...no getting out when everyone was sleeping.
- They could drive to school, but had to be home at a certain time and they were not to take the care off of the campus for lunch.
- They could go out on dates, as long as they fulfilled a long list of “do’s and don’ts.”
- As they honored our requests, they were given more freedom, but we always had one eye on them.

I would consider them good children. We guided their steps and they honored us by accepting our authority as parents.

The question of the hour is “What makes a man to become a righteous, strong or mighty man?”

First off, a “righteous man” is defined by God and not man. We might say that a man who does not get drunk or use drugs is a good man. We might also consider a dedicated husband that doesn’t chase women a good man. Money in the bank, degrees behind his name does not make him a good man in the eyes of the Lord.

The characteristics of a good man would include; love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:22-23) according to the Apostle Paul.

But I believe the key element of being a good man would be obedience unto the Lord.

*Proverbs 12:2 A good man obtaineth favour of the Lord: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.*

*Matthew 12:34-35 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.*

Therefore, in order to be a good or mighty man, then we are to follow God's precepts and commandments. We are to "*obtain favour*" by our actions and words that come out of our hearts.

This is the point where you will be in the "will of the Lord." This is the correct position of every believer...to be in the will of God. His will, obeyed by the believer will then be ordered by the Lord. Nothing is left to luck or fate. God will direct our steps in every area of our lives.

*When he delights in his way* – In order to really grasp this thought we should look at two other verses in this Psalm.

*4 Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

In this verse the reader is bidden to "*delight yourself in the Lord.*" The 23<sup>rd</sup> verse says that He "delights in us."

*34 Wait for the Lord and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land; you will look on when the wicked are cut off.*

In the 34<sup>th</sup> verse the reader is encouraged to "keep his way."

*24 though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand.*

Going back to the illustration of my children learning to walk, Linda and I were there with each step they took. We would catch them before they fell. We would hold them up when they were tired and pick them up when the strain was too much.

This is the very point that David is making. Just as parents help their tottering children, the believer is helped by the heavenly Father. He encourages us. He is there with every step we take. He is there to catch us when we fall. He is there to hold us when we are weak. He is there to pick us up when the strain is too much.

We know that even though we are a believer, disasters will come our way. Just like Job, we are a part of this world and are participants, loss of family and property. Just like when Joseph was falsely accused and put in prison, God was still there. God upholds the saints.

*25 I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, or his children begging for bread.*

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For the Jews, utter dereliction is the state of the person that is forsaken and must beg for bread.

Oh, we know that David suffered and was destitute for a time. But David was righteous before God. God was there, upholding David's hand, bringing him through those hard times.

#### Conclusion

There are three key points to remember from this passage:

1. God establishes the steps of a man who seeks after Him.
2. God delights in the life of a believer who seeks after Him.
3. God upholds the believer from stumbling of those who seek after Him.

*Bob Crowder*