

Equipped to get a right perspective

Do you know what it's like to have a wrong perspective? I remember some time ago seeing a picture in which a man standing in the corner of a room looked gigantic because his head almost touched the ceiling. Conversely, a man standing in the opposite corner looked so tiny, as the ceiling was high above his head. But this was just an illusion caused by a wrong perspective. Both men were actually of average height. It was the room that was distorted with a sloping ceiling and floor.

Quite often life is like that, isn't it? We so easily get a wrong perspective on what's going on around us. Some things, like the difficulties we face, seem bigger than they actually are. Other things, like the goodness and power of God, seem smaller than they actually are. Long ago a man called Asaph got things badly out of perspective for a time. He was honest enough to write down his experiences in Psalm 73 so that we might learn from them and know what to do when we get things out of perspective. Where did the ceiling and floor of Asaph's experience begin to slope away from him?

He overestimated the benefits of a selfish, godless life. Asaph got it into his head that people who lived only for their own selfish pleasure were never ill and enjoyed a long life of ease and wealth.¹ In fact, so distorted was his perspective, that he actually envied them.²

He underestimated the benefits of a godly life. So messed up was his thinking, that he concluded there was no point serving God because that just brought him grief. He described it this way: *"All I get is trouble all day long: every morning brings me pain"*.³ This might seem a shocking statement, but have you ever wondered if it's really all worth it? Wondered if there really is a purpose or if you're just fooling yourself?

Getting a right perspective begins with getting alone with God. Asaph was all chewed up inside, thinking it was better to live without God than to live for him, and he was frightened to tell anyone his feelings. *"Then..."* - what a great word that is - *"then one day I went into your sanctuary, O God"*.⁴ It's when we get alone with God and get the bible open that we begin to get things back into a right perspective. Are you fretting just now, perhaps even envious of someone who cuts corners and yet seems to get rewarded for it? Perhaps they were promoted ahead of you. Or you resent the fact that they have a beautiful home and flashy car even though you know they're cheating on their tax returns. You think it's just not fair. They're so rude and arrogant and yet they get ahead. It really galls you. Get alone with God and let it all out. Then open the bible and get God's perspective.

God's perspective is the eternal perspective. Asaph came to realise that when this short life is over, right up ahead for these selfish godless people is an eternity of unhappiness. So the benefits of that kind of lifestyle are not so great after all... He also came to realise that what was up ahead for him was glory with God holding his hand all the way there.⁵ How foolish he had become. He felt ashamed and embarrassed; he had been as dumb as an animal.⁶

We can have a right perspective on this life by keeping God's perspective. How do we do this? Spend time alone with Him, tell Him exactly how you feel, open the Bible and ask God to correct any wrong perspective you might have. Then feel the ceiling and floor of your life straightening again!

¹ Psalm 73:4-12

² verse 3

³ verse 14

⁴ verse 17

⁵ verses 18-26

⁶ verse 22