

“Perspective and the Presence of God”

The Ministry of the Spirit

January 4, 2026

INTRO to 2026 ... *"The Ministry of the Spirit"*

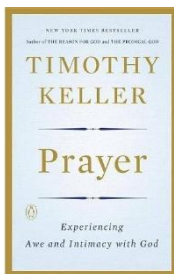
January's Month of Preparation

¹⁰ the LORD said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments ¹¹ and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. Ex 19:10-11

Sunday Messages ...the nearness of God ...“Spirit” and engaging “spiritual” things ...“Holy” - Holiness and the presence of God ...the Experiential Presence of God



Influential Meeting (Jan 10 @ 9am) – A Historic “Leadership” & “Body Ministry Meeting” ...OPEN INVITATION! ... to ALL who want to see a more Robust Ministry of the Spirit among us!



Small Groups – a setting for certain aspects of the Spirit's Ministry



The Prayer Course (Sundays at 9am ...Jan 11 - Feb 22) *"40 Days to Build a Prayer Life"*

Fasting & Prayer Gathering (end of January)

REMEMBER... *"If you keep doing what you're doing—you'll keep getting what you've got!"*

INTRO... “Perspective”

-- the "FEEL" of our lives and thus the "energy", the "enthusiasm", or "attitude" of our life is very much determined by our "PERSPECTIVE"

Ps 73 ... "The Battle for Perspective"

...What is "perspective"?

- Def. (Oxford Am. Dict.) = a particular attitude toward or way of regarding something;
- Def. ([Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com)) = a way of regarding situations, facts, etc, and judging their relative importance ...the proper or accurate point of view or the ability to see it

(Back Cover) "In this fallen world, life is not how we thought it would be. Jobs vanish, relationships crumble, health fails. How do we find the hope to persevere?" **Ken Boa**, "Rewriting Your Broken Story - The Power of an Eternal Perspective"

- Perspective has some ingredients ...some data, some events, some experiences, some history ...a large element of 'feeling' ...a significant amount of faith!

...Ps 73 is a very human story of a man who lost perspective—and how he got it back!

v. 1-2 ... "Truly God is (good)... BUT...

... "Asaph" ...He's got "SOUND DOCTRINE", but an "UNSOUND LIFE"!!

v. 2 ...THIS... is "Slippery Ground"

Losing One's Perspective

v. 3-5 ... [NOTE: The "Thought-Outline": "I was" (internal)-v. 3-5 ... "They are" (external)-v. 6-12]

...v. 3 ... "**For I was ENVIOUS**" ('zealously jealous'-ie, craving on fire!)

v. 4-5 ... "no pangs... health... not in trouble... not stricken" — v. 12 ... "ease" ... "wealth"

v. 6-12 ... is a hyper-fueled, perspective-lost, angry-rant against these "other people"!

v. 13-14 ...there is the unavoidable condition of "self-pity" that finds its way into these moments!

"Is the covenant God of Israel good? It doesn't appear so, for those who care nothing for God in their proud arrogance trample on others and do very well for themselves (2-12). The temptation is therefore to say, with our psalmist in verses 13, 14, that it is 'in vain' to be faithful to God with a pure heart; there is no profit in it, but rather suffering. ...we hear in our hearts the temptation he must have felt in his heart, that walking by faith with God is pointless (13,14)" **Christopher Ash**, "Teaching the Psalms"

?? - Is Asaph not "seeing" right or is he not "interpreting" right?

...He has lost "perspective" (def. - the way we 'regard' something)! ...Suddenly a short list of "natural things" is ALL That Matters! ...Lost Perspective has turned to Angry Unreasonableness!

...v. 21-22 "*When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart,²² I was brutish and ignorant; I was like a beast toward you.*"

- "embittered" (Heb. ḥāmêṣ) = to be pungent, sour, fermented; figuratively to be harsh, cruel, grieved
...Ever Been There? ...Ever walk with someone who's been there?
- I was "pricked in heart" (Heb. šānan) = to pierce intensively
- I was "brutish" (Heb. bā'ar) = to kindle (set on fire); to be brutish, senseless, stupid, like an animal

The "words" of this "Moment of Lost Perspective" = "uncertainty" (@ God) ... "envy" ("discontent," "comparison") ... "self-pity" ... "soured" ... "angry" ("unreasonable") ... "**DISTANT**"

...For some this blurring of perspective becomes the epicenter for "**DISTANCE**"! ...Distance from church, decline in Bible reading, decline in prayer, ultimately **DISTANCE** from GOD!

"The U.S. is undergoing its fastest religious shift in modern history, marked by a rapid increase in the religiously unaffiliated and numerous church closures nationwide. ...Nearly three in 10 American adults today identify as religiously unaffiliated — a 33% jump since 2013, according to the nonpartisan Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI). ...About four in ten Americans ages 18 to 29 identify as religiously unaffiliated (38%), an increase from 32% in 2013, PRRI said. ...Around 57% of Americans today seldom or never attend religious services, a jump from 40% in 2000, per a recent Gallup survey. ... An unprecedented 15,000 churches are expected to shut their doors this year, ...Leading experts say that - before the pandemic - a church should expect to lose about 15% of its members year over year — **Russel Contreras**, "The Great Unchurched of America", Dec 26, 2025 - Axios

Gaining One's Perspective

v. 16-17

...v. 16 ...figuring out your lost perspective is a "wearisome task"! (Be aware)

...v. 17 ...UNTIL! Until what? ...careful, we'll need the end of the Psalm to understand what he is actually encountering here!

v. 18-19 ...NOTE: The Dawn of Clarity and Returned Perspective! ...Reasonableness!

v. 23-28 ...The Antidote to "DISTANCE" ... "NEARNESS"—"the nearness of God is my good" (v.28)

"Nearness" = an experiential, soul engaging exchange with the presence of God

"Prayer – Experiencing Awe & Intimacy with God" by Tim Keller

"Prayer is conversation with God. However, conversations can remain mere exchanges of information that do not lead to true personal encounter and relationship. We do not want just to know 'about' God, but to 'know' God, to seek his face and presence. ...We must not pit theological truth against existential encounter. Rather, we must experience the truth."
Timothy Keller, "Prayer", p. 66

Eph 3:14-19 ⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

"These Ephesian readers, however, were all Christian believers, and Paul teaches elsewhere that if you don't have the Spirit and Christ resident in your life, you are not a Christian at all. In Ephesians 2, Paul goes on at length about how all his readers have been united with Christ and united with others who have Christ in them. In Ephesians 1, he teaches that by being united with Christ, they already have the fullness of God in them (Eph 1:22-23). All this leads us to ask: Isn't Christ already living in Christians? Don't they already know his great sacrificial love? ...Why is he asking God to give Christians things they must surely already have? ...There can be only one answer. At one level, Christians have these things. At another level, they haven't experienced them. It is one thing to know the love of Christ and to say, 'I know he did all that.' It is another thing to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ." Timothy Keller, "Prayer", p. 166

- The "Sanctuary" of God = the "dwelling place" of God's Presence—the place where the "omnipresent" God is uniquely manifest! ...Ex. 25:8 "And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst."
- There is something distinct and unique in our lives about GOD--&--His "NEARNESS" (v. 25 & 28)
 - The "animating", "image-manifesting", "ministry-empowering" presence of God is The Ministry of the Spirit!

Why Start 2026 (The Ministry of the Spirit) in Psalm 73? ...because:

- Ours is a Noisy, Comparative, Envy Encouraging, Soul-Souring environment!

- ***Ours is a Day of DISTANCE!*** ...None of us are exempt from the “Centrifugal Force of American Lifestyle”!
- ***Ours is a Day in Need of “Renewal & Revival”***

Asaph Has a Moment of "Renewal/Revival"! ...a moment/encounter that powerfully changes his perspective!

"Revivals and renewals are a necessary part of the life of the church. Because of the default mode of the human heart, revival is a pattern repeatedly used by the Holy Spirit to reconnect Christian communities with the power of the gospel. ...Revivals can last several years or only a few weeks. They can be widespread, affecting a whole town or region or country, or more narrow in scope, such as within one congregation. But they are always seasons in which the ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit are greatly intensified. We cannot start such gospel movements, but we can prepare for and steward them well. And far from being mere oddities of the past, revivals are relevant and necessary in every culture and age. ...Lovelace explains that renewal is needed because Christians so easily fall away from a full understanding of the gospel into cheap grace, legalism, and moralism, or what I've often described as religion. His perceptive claim that "only a fraction of the present body of professing Christians are solidly appropriating the justifying work of Christ in their lives" remains a perpetual concern for Christian communities (p. 101)." (Tim Keller, from the Foreword to "Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal" by Richard Lovelace)

...There Must be More Than This