



ROADMAP FOR → LIFE

Scott Pauley

A resource from...

ENJOYING THE Journey

First Edition, First Printing

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Enjoying the Journey exists to evangelize the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ, encourage pastors and local churches, and equip believers to walk with God and serve Him each day. Through audio, video, and print resources we are seeking to preach the gospel, teach the Word of God, and reach this generation for Christ. www.ETJ.Bible

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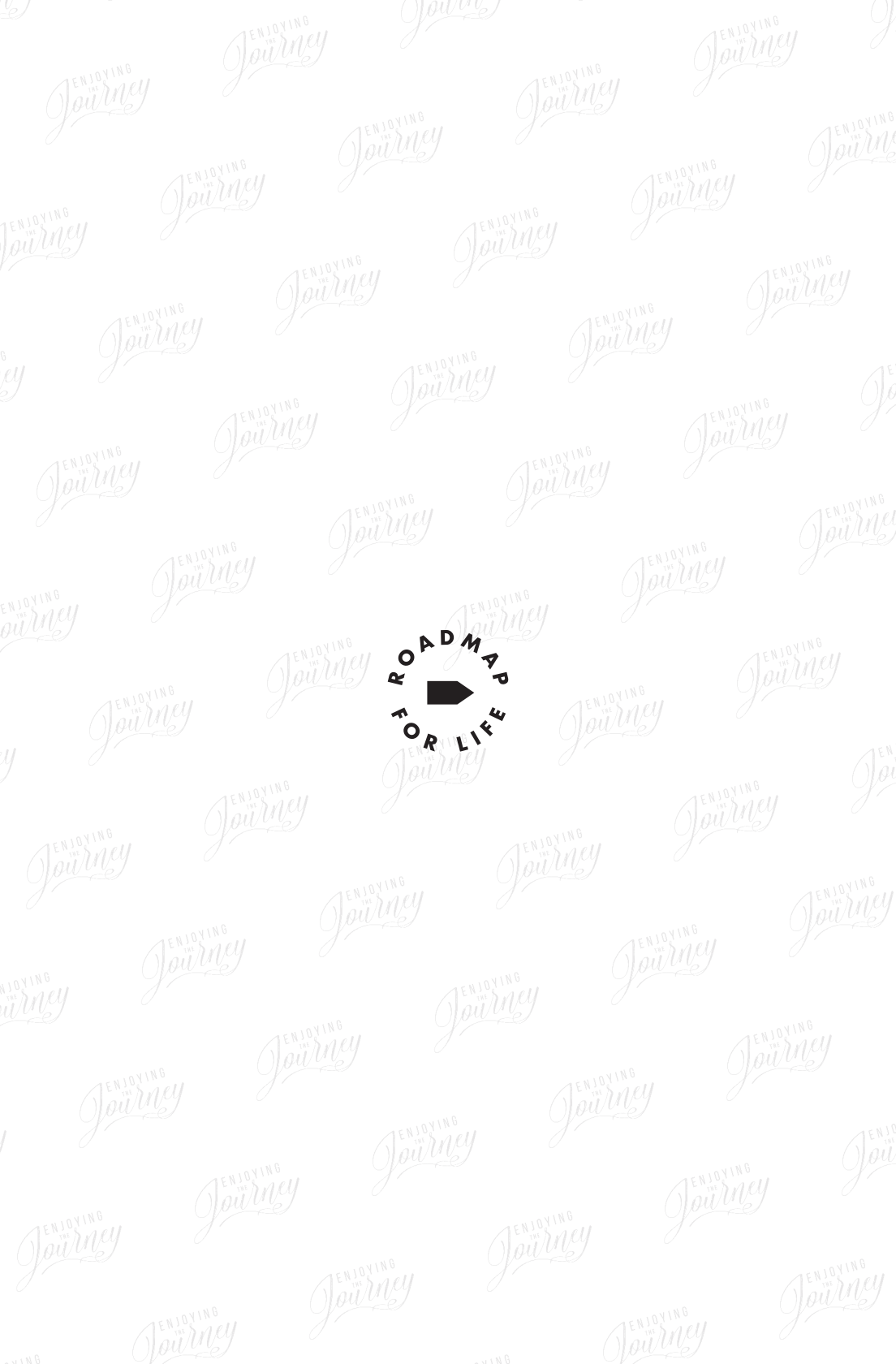
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**DEDICATED TO MY UNCLE,
JAMES PAULEY**



A spiritual father, faithful example and constant encourager.
Thank you for teaching me a love for great books and a passion for the Book.





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FOREWORD - DR. DAVID GIBBS

It is an honor for me to recommend, at the highest level that I can, for everyone to prayerfully read and study this excellent book on the Psalms by Scott Pauley. A book is never any better than the heart of the author who is crafting the words. Scott Pauley has fervently studied the Psalms. He has passionately taught the Psalms. He has diligently preached the Psalms, and most importantly, he has taken the Psalms and used them to mold the life he lives for the Savior.

As long as I have known him, Scott Pauley has resoundingly been a man of the utmost character who desires for believers, young and old, to know Christ in a fresh and anointed way. His preaching, his podcast and media outreach, and his books have been a true blessing to me, my family, and other loved ones over the years. This book will encourage you to live a life that is both more consecrated to our Savior and more delighted in Him.

This book by Scott Pauley can be used as a commentary for pastors on these amazing Scriptures as well as a guiding light for Christians who simply want to better understand the principles that God has laid out for us in His Word.

When He was on the cross, Jesus quoted the Psalms twice. In His most agonizing moment, He, the Living Word, revealed the best way to handle adversity. The Apostle Peter quotes the Psalms in Acts 2 as an encouraging reminder of God's unending grace and

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presence. We know from Psalm 119 that part of God's plan to help prevent sin in our lives is the memorization of Holy Scriptures. So many instructions and precepts from His Word are divulged in the Psalms.

God's Roadmap for Life, by my dear friend, Scott Pauley, reveals methods for any believer desiring to know God more, to study His Word in a new way. You will learn to follow Christ while learning from someone who exemplifies a true walk with God. This book is truly life-changing and will help you, from Scripture, to see what the Lord has commanded for our lives.

Dr. David Gibbs
Founder & President
Christian Law Association



PREFACE

Our God is a God of perfect light (John 1:5). The first recorded words of God are *“Let there be light”* (Genesis 1:3). Christ came to bring light into a sin darkened world (John 1:9). When a person comes to know the Lord Jesus as Savior they are called *“out of darkness into his marvelous light”* (2 Peter 2:9). In the midst of dark days it is wonderful to know that we can know and follow His light!

There are many symbols for Scripture found in the Bible. It is water, bread, a sword, meat, etc. But there is no illustration more vivid than the picture of God’s Word as light. It is light on the path of life.

In the longest of the Psalms, the great Psalm of the Scriptures, we read, *“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path”* (Psalm 119:105).

“A lamp unto my feet” reveals where I am. God’s Word speaks to our current condition and our pressing needs. It corrects and directs to keep us on God’s highway.

“A light unto my path” reveals where I am going. One step at a time it points the way to the future. The only way to truly walk with God is with His Word as your guidebook. It orders our steps, keeps us from snares, and leads us to the destination safely.

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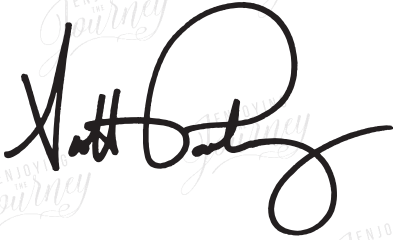
As you open the Bible, open your heart. Ask the Lord to use the light of Scripture to show you where you are and where He wants you to be. Claim this promise: *"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple"* (Psalm 119:130).

I believe God's Word is all-sufficient for all of life. It is our prayer that these brief meditations from each of the Psalms will provide light on the path.

It is our sincere prayer that you will continue to walk with God each day in the light of His wonderful Word. Meditate in Scripture. Pray your way through passages. Apply what God says. As you do, you will find more and more light on the path. *"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day"* (Proverbs 4:18).

There is one other thing that you can do - share the light you have with others! *"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life..."* (Philippians 2:15-16).

Your fellow traveler,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Bell". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large loop at the end.

PREFACE

There is no book like God's Book and it is my hope that the tool you now hold in your hands will simply help you to dig more deeply into Scripture for yourself. Before you read the devotional meditation for each Psalm, take the time to read that Psalm. Begin with God's Word.

HOW TO READ THE PSALMS

1. Read the psalm slowly. "Selah" is found 71 times and serves as a musical pause, a frequent reminder to stop and consider.
2. Read the psalm out loud. In this way all of your faculties work together to help you concentrate on what you are reading.
3. Read the psalm as an expression of your own soul. Seek an understanding of the writer's heart and then allow the inspired words to articulate the feeling of your own heart.
4. Read the psalm as a prayer or praise to God. Pray your way through the Psalms.
5. Read the psalm on your knees. Allow it to lead you to worship.
6. Read the psalm again. You did not get it all the first time.
7. Read the psalm as the psalmist wrote it – with a pen in hand! Record what God is teaching you.
8. Read the title to see if the author attached a particular purpose or background to the psalm. If it is a historical psalm take the time to go back and read the narrative passage for context.
9. Read each psalm looking for Jesus Christ. In our list of the Psalms we have placed an asterisk beside the psalms that are most commonly referred to as Messianic. Remember that Christ is on every page!
10. Read the psalms watching for repetition. This will help you to discover God's emphasis.

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

While we hope that this resource will be a helpful reference tool that you will return to again and again as you study the Psalms, it has been designed to be used as a daily devotional reading. Walk through the Psalms successively and concentrate on one psalm each day. Here are a few practical suggestions to get the most out of the following pages.

- Pray Psalm 119:18 each day before you begin: *“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”* Ask God for wisdom and trust that the Holy Spirit will do exactly what Jesus promised and guide you into the truth (John 16:13).
- Read the Psalm in its entirety **before** reading the book.
- Read with a pen in hand to note keywords and cross-references.
- Write personal reflections on each Psalm. A journal will help you to think through what you are reading and remember what you are learning. Wide margins have been provided next to the text of each chapter for you to write things God is teaching you from His Word.
- Turn each Psalm into a prayer for the day. Take a Bible verse, a Bible phrase, or a Bible word from each Psalm to meditate on and pray throughout the day.



5 BOOKS, 150 PSALMS, 1 GOAL

What is your go-to book of the Bible when you need encouragement, direction, or help? Where do you most often turn?

That is probably different for everyone, but I would say that the number one answer I hear most is the Psalms. A friend of mine used to say that we pillow our faith in the Psalms. There is a divine rest found, a comforting sense of God's presence, as we read the Psalms.

The Book of Psalms contains 150 distinct psalms. They are each unique, yet they are all the same. They are unique because they deal with the whole range of human emotions and experiences from the highest mountain to the lowest valley, from times of jubilation to moments of overwhelming discouragement. The diversity reminds us that at every stage, every season, and every struggle in life, you can bring your need to God: "*Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you*" (I Peter 5:7).

In the Psalms, you find both prayer and praise. The book's purpose is to bring every experience into the presence of God. The psalms are expressions of the heart for every experience in life. No matter who you are, where you are, or what you are dealing with today, by faith you can usher your emotions and experience into God's presence.

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OUR APPROACH TO THE PSALMS

The book of Psalms is God's devotional book for His chosen people. It serves as both the Hebrew Hymnbook for Israel and a personal prayer book for those who know the Lord. While there are many different ways to study the Psalms, they must always be approached with an attitude of worship. Use God's devotional book, and come with a desire to know and love Him more!

STUDY BY THEME

Many of the psalms can be grouped together based on common themes. Pay careful attention to the titles inscribed by the writers on many of the psalms. Though not all of the psalms have titles, the tone and topic of the psalmist's words are a key in connecting similar psalms. For example, the Maschil Psalms are instructive. A number of the psalms are historical in nature, and a few even have inscriptions that correspond with specific Old Testament events. Penitential Psalms record confession of sin. Most of the prayers are coupled with praise and an overarching attitude of gratitude.

My favorite psalms are the Messianic Psalms, because they speak to us of Christ—His coming, His prayers, His sufferings, and a myriad of detailed descriptions related to His ministry. These psalms are strongly prophetic of both the first and second coming of Messiah. In the same book you will discover Nature Psalms, which point us to the grandeur and glory of the Creator, and Imprecatory Psalms, sobering prayers against the enemies of God and righteousness. Psalms of thanksgiving scattered throughout find their grand finale at the end of the book in the Hallelujah Chorus of Psalms 146-150.

STUDY BY AUTHOR

We know David wrote the majority of Psalms (73), but he did not write them all. Some were written by Asaph (12), the sons of Korah (11), Solomon (2), Heman (1), and Ethan (1). The oldest

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of the Psalms was written by Moses (Psalm 90). God used many voices to communicate His Word. There are many channels, but one Source.

In about 50 of the psalms the authors remain anonymous. There is a particular beauty to the fact that we do not know who wrote all of them. It is certain that the Holy Spirit inspired each human penman (2 Peter 1:21), but we do not know the personality behind each psalm. In this way we are reminded that the Psalms are the expression of *every* man, *every* heart that truly cries out for God.

Our approach to the Psalms in this study will be to simply follow the order in which they are arranged in Scripture. It is believed that the current compilation and arrangement of Psalms was completed by the time of Ezra. It is helpful to follow the natural flow and divine progression of the Psalms as they have been preserved for us.

STUDY BY SEQUENCE

The Psalms are divided into five sections. The old Jewish rabbis called them “The Pentateuch of David.” They referred to them as the Genesis Psalms, the Exodus Psalms, the Leviticus Psalms, the Numbers Psalms, and the Deuteronomy Psalms. Each section corresponds with one of the first five books of the Bible. It is fascinating how God has arranged the key thoughts.

Hebrew poetry is unique because it is not built on a parallelism of sound, but a parallelism of ideas. This ancient poetical book is not given in poetic rhyme but it is written in strong contrasts and comparisons. On a practical note, this type of poetry translates into other languages beautifully without the loss of power or substance. On the spiritual side, it helps us to do the work of true Bible study, “*comparing spiritual things with spiritual*” (1 Corinthians 2:13). As we compare the Pentateuch and the Psalms you will discover amazing parallel tracks, moving us ever closer to the God of the Bible.

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Dr. William G. Moorehead, the beloved and revered President of Xenia Theological Seminary for many years, in his too-seldom seen work, *Outline Studies in the Books of the Old Testament*, has something on the arrangement of the Psalms that I think cannot be surpassed:

It is firmly believed that none other but the Spirit of God arranged these Psalms as we now have them; and that there is a profound meaning in their order. The whole book is a sort of mirror of God's ways with His people, and with the world. In the first book Israel is in the covenant relation with God, and therefore the covenant name, Jehovah, is prominent; in the second, the people have fallen from their first love, have gone into apostasy and unbelief, and God takes the pre-eminence, God, the Judge and the Governor; in the third, they are reviewed as returning to their allegiance, under the loving and faithful dealing of God, as He is revealed to them in the double name of God and Lord; while in the remaining books, Israel, according to all the prophets and Paul in the 11th of the Romans, is brought again and finally into full favor and fellowship, and all the earth rejoices in the fullness of redemption, and the great Hallelujah Chorus is sung. Like some majestic oratorio, some sublime symphony, is this book of Psalms, with the theme sometimes receding, then again advancing, now in the minor, then in the major, and anon in the chromatic scales, struggling through difficulties, triumphing over obstacles, steadily moving forward to the climax when all the voices and all the instruments, the parts and the chorus unite and combine in the final and overwhelming Hallelujah...The book of Psalms...is prophetic. The Spirit of God has ordered these His songs in the way He has, that the believer might here, as in so much else of Holy Scripture, have the assurance of the blessed outcome of God's ways with the world.

A ROADMAP FOR LIFE

The Psalms were written by men on the move, both geographically and circumstantially, as they walked through the changing landscape of life. In one of the few sequential sections in the Psalms, Psalms 120-134, the "Songs of Degrees" or "Ascents"

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were actually sung by the ancient pilgrims as they went up to the Temple to worship. For this reason we are calling this journey through the Book of Psalms, *God's Roadmap for Life*. We all need direction and help as we travel, and the Psalms provide guidance for every step and stop along the way.

The first verse of Psalm 1 begins, *"Blessed is the man..."* God begins with blessing! If you want the blessing of God upon your life, the Psalms show us the way to the blessing by guiding us into the blessed presence of God.

At the end of each section of the book of Psalms, there is a hymn of blessing. But on close examination you find that they are not prayers that God would bless us, but hymns of praise to bless Him. When was the last time you blessed the Lord - not asking Him for something, but simply praising Him for who He is?

- The first section is **Psalms 1-41**, the **Genesis Psalms**. The final verse is Psalm 41:13: *"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen."* That verse contains many superlatives, but it leads us to a place where we bless the Lord and give Him praise and glory because He is worthy.
- The second section is **Psalms 42-72**. These are the **Exodus Psalms**. It concludes in Psalm 72:18-20 with these words: *"Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name forever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended."*
- The third section is **Psalms 73-89**. These are the **Leviticus Psalms**. They rise to this climax in Psalm 89:52, *"Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen, and amen."*
- The fourth section is **Psalms 90-106**, which comprise the **Numbers Psalms**. At the end of the Numbers Psalms, Psalm

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106:48 says, “*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: And let all the people say, amen. Praise ye the Lord.*”

- Then we come to the great crescendo, the **Deuteronomy Psalms**, the fifth section - in **Psalms 107-150**. Consider the six verse pinnacle of praise in Psalm 150:

Praise ye the Lord, Praise God in his sanctuary: Praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: Praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: Praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: Praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: Praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.

The book of Psalms ends with an all-encompassing call for every man to praise the worthy God. The Psalms address all people and every situation! The closing admonition is not for Israel alone; it is for anyone who is breathing. Are you breathing? Take a moment right now to praise God.

Remember, the book of Psalms deals with every experience and emotion in life. You do not just pray your way through this journey. You must learn to praise your way through it as well. Lester Roloff once said, “Sometimes you can praise your way through things you can’t pray your way through.”

The Psalms begin with blessings for us, and closes with blessing to the Lord. Those who learn to bless the Lord live a blessed life. A happy man knows how to worship. The person who enjoys life the most is the person who has learned to give God praise and glory every day.

The first five books of the Bible (Genesis through Deuteronomy), were written from the perspective of **Jehovah to the congregation**.

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But the five books of the Psalms were written from the perspective of the **congregation to Jehovah**.

Would you take the Psalms in the days ahead and turn them back to the Lord? Personalize them and send them to Heaven as your own prayer and praise. Learn to bless the Lord forevermore. We pray God will use this study to provide a roadmap to God for countless believers.



THE PSALMS SPEAK

One of the most deeply spiritual and profoundly practical books in the whole Bible is the Psalms. The Bible is a living book. It is the Word of God that lives forever, and it is alive because God is alive. The Spirit of truth speaks to us through the Word of God. The Psalms speak.

II Timothy 3:16 | *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”*

Matthew 4:4 | *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”*

Proverbs 30:5 | *“Every word of God is pure:”*

We hear God’s voice through His words. It is my conviction that God intended that we take His words and verbalize them. They were written down so they could be heard in every generation.

The book of Psalms, the sacred songbook for the nation of Israel, was used in the temple worship. Christians of the New Testament times sang them, as evidenced by James 5:13. The Jews today still use them in the synagogues.

INTRODUCTION

The songs in this hymnbook are full of promises and principles, prayers and praises. You will find something in the Psalms that will minister to you right where you are.

“*Psalms*” is first mentioned in Scripture in I Chronicles 16. David, “*the sweet psalmist of Israel*” is the most well-known writer of the Psalms, and God used him to write more psalms than anyone else. It is fitting then that David is the first person to have the word “*psalms*” connected to him. This little word literally means “a poem, something to be sung to a stringed instrument.” The psalms are lyric poetry. So David was a divinely inspired poet.

King David’s heart is full as he brings the ark of God back to Jerusalem and reinstates Temple worship. The Bible says in I Chronicles 16:7-9, “*Then on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank the Lord into the hand of Asaph and his brethren. Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, Make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, Talk ye of all his wondrous works.*”

We know the Psalms as God’s written Word, but consider the ways in which they speak and are to be spoken...

THE PSALMS WILL HELP YOU TO SPEAK TO GOD.

Did you notice the Godward direction of David’s first recorded psalm? Certainly, the people heard it. Many people were there. But it was first directed to God Himself. The Psalms direct our attention to Heaven.

The book of Psalms will help you in both your prayer life and your praise life, by helping you talk openly and sincerely to God. Do you ever feel like you are going through the motions of prayer or your prayer life is in a rut? Vance Havner said, “A rut is just a grave with both ends knocked out.” It is death. Even religious routines can become ruts that keep us from moving forward with the Lord.

Use the Psalms as your prayer book and your praise book. Make it

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your own and pray your way verse by verse through it!

This is the divine intent for Scripture. God speaks to us, and we respond to Him. He talks to us through his Word. And when we meet Him in the Word, we begin to talk to God about what He is saying to us.

THE PSALMS WILL HELP YOU SPEAK TO YOURSELF.

Ephesians 5:18-19 | *“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”*

Do you ever talk to yourself? We all do it. The secret is to talk about what is true and good — and there is nothing better to talk about than the Lord! David understood this principle. At Ziklag, when the city was burned, his family was gone and the men talked about stoning him, he *“encouraged himself in the Lord his God”* (1 Samuel 30:6). The Psalms enable us to meditate on the Lord and communicate with Him.

If someone else has to pick you up all the time and you have to depend on others to keep you encouraged, you will live a very discouraged life. We all must learn to encourage ourselves in the Lord, and the Psalms provide a great place to begin.

Memorize great psalms. Take a verse from the Psalms for each day. Hide God’s Word in your heart. Only this will cause you to consistently remember the goodness of God, and keep you from sinning against Him (Psalm 119:11).

THE PSALMS WILL HELP YOU SPEAK TO OTHERS.

In Colossians 3:16 we are told, *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”*

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Yes, the Psalms speak: they speak to God, to us, and to others. Everyone is having a hard time with something, and everyone needs encouragement. When people are hurting, we often do not know what to say. Sometimes there is nothing that we can say to help. It has been said that when you do not know what to say, say nothing at all.

But if you are living in Scripture, you will always have some truth you can share. When you don't have the words, give them God's Word. Scripture turns attention away from us, to the only person who can truly help — our great God.

Paul explained God's purpose in giving us tribulation and giving us truth: *"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God"* (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Peter encouraged other suffering saints to see how God could use them: *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear"* (1 Peter 3:15). God never gives us truth to keep; He gives us truth to share.

As a boy my father told me that there are three "talks" Christians should have every day. First, we should talk to God in prayer. Second, we should let God talk to us through His Word. Third, we should talk about Him to others. It has been my experience that when we do the first two the third comes naturally.

Through the Psalms God *will* speak. Then we must use the Psalms to speak to Him, to speak to ourselves, and to speak to others.



PSALM 1: AN OPENING BLESSING

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; And in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, That bringeth forth his fruit in his season; His leaf also shall not

wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: But the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

Psalms 1 is only six verses long, but it reaches all the way to eternity.

There are famous psalms, such as Psalm 23, “*The LORD is my shepherd.*” And there are many favorite psalms. But the first Psalm is a foundational one - a beautiful entry point into the book and into the blessing of God. It begins with the word “blessed.” Isn’t that what we all want?

In our world many people are looking for a shortcut to a blessed life. People want the product, without the process. Only God’s way brings true blessing.

PSALM 1: AN OPENING BLESSING

The psalm begins with, “*Blessed is the man,*” but it ends with, “*For the LORD knoweth.*” Psalm 1 brings us not just to blessings, but to the BLESSER. It brings us to God. It is significant that the first of the Genesis Psalms begins exactly where the creation of man began. “*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them...*” (Genesis 1:27-28). It has always been God’s desire to bless His people.

Luther called the Psalms “the little Bible.” Jerome called it “the Bible within the Bible.” The message of the Psalms is the emphasis of the entire Word of God: the revelation of God. Psalm 1 is a good place for us to start our study because it is where God begins. Not only is it arranged first in the order of the Psalms, it also lays the foundation for all of the truth that follows.

President George Washington had Psalm 1 read at his first inauguration. He was a man who wanted divine blessing and who wanted everyone to know the Source of the blessing.

THE PSALM’S PLACE IN SCRIPTURE

Psalm 1 is a fitting preface to the Psalms. Some have assumed that it was written by David, but there is no designation of this in Scripture. Others have suggested that it was written by Ezra the scribe when he compiled the final book of Psalms. It does seem to fit historically into the 13th chapter of Nehemiah.

NEHEMIAH 13:1-3

“On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever; because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water,	but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing. Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude”
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PSALM 1: AN OPENING BLESSING

The people wanted the blessing of God, but needed the God of blessing. Only God can turn the curse to a blessing! God's people separated themselves to God and from the mixed multitude.

Psalm 1 begins with a separation: *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."* If you truly desire God's blessing, then you must be willing to take a step away from sin and toward God — away from something and toward the One who is the God of all blessing.

THE PSALM'S PERSPECTIVE OF THE LORD

Remember that Scripture is God's self-revelation. What does He reveal about Himself in Psalm 1?

- **He is the fountain of all blessings.** If you are rooted in God and His Word, you are firmly planted and able to draw on the divine resources needed to bring forth good fruit. We all grow stale, but God is perennially fresh. The Lord is all-sufficient and able to supply all that you need. Compare Psalm 1 with Jeremiah 17:7-8. Those who depend on the Lord will always find that He is enough.
- **He is the judge of all men.** As surely as He will bless the godly, He will deal with the ungodly. He is the judge of all the earth, and He will do right (Genesis 18:25).
- **He is the Lord of all knowledge.** I love the way the psalm ends with verse 6: *"For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: But the way of the ungodly shall perish."* God knows everything and God knows those who belong to Him (2 Timothy 2:19).

What does the Lord know? He knows everything. God knows you today, my friend, and he knows the deepest need in your life. And if you will let him, He will meet that need.

PSALM 1: AN OPENING BLESSING

THE PSALM'S PERSONAL APPLICATION

In each psalm we should consider how the psalm relates to the whole of Scripture, how it reveals God, and how it relates to us. An initial look at the first psalm suggests some simple, personal applications.

We must guard who influences us. It is so easy to walk in the counsel of the ungodly; so easy to stand in the way of sinners; so easy to sit in the seat of the scornful. In life, you have both influences and choices. Choose carefully who influences you. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Proverbs 13:20).

We must love and live in Scripture. Verse 2 says, *"But his delight is in the law of the LORD; And in his law doth he meditate day and night."*

Spend some time every day meditating on Scripture. Carry it with you through the day - think on it and talk about it. This will help you to stay rooted in the Lord and in truth.

Psalms 1 offers an opening blessing to those who will obey it. God has many more blessings for us along the journey and much to teach us as we walk through the Psalms. Let us begin by recommitting ourselves to obey the Lord. Take a moment to talk to God and dedicate yourself afresh to His Word. This is the way to blessing.



PSALM 2: WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

As we watch the news and see the world we are living in, it is easy to wonder “Who on earth is in charge of all this?” We see presidents, politicians, dictators, and the people who are supposed to be in charge failing to maintain control.

Do not fear. God is still on the throne. The Lord is where He has always been. He is ruling the good and overruling the evil. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Do not forget that Philippians 2:10-11 declares that someday *“every knee should bow...and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father.”*

One day, every president, every prime minister, every potentate, every dictator will bow the knee before the nail-pierced feet of Jesus. All will confess that He is Lord.

With this in mind, meditate on the words of Psalm 2.

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their

bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore

PSALM 2: WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, 'Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt

dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.'"

Here is the answer to the question: The Lord is in charge! He is the True King.

Our Lord is referred to as "begotten...Son." John 3:16 will reveal Christ as God's "only begotten Son." The word "Son" is capitalized because this is not just referring to David. This is the Son of God. **This prophetic psalm** reminds us that, in the end, the throne belongs to the Divine Son; the Lord Jesus Christ will rule and reign forever.

Most Bible teachers believe that Psalm 2 was written by David, just after Nathan brought word to him that the Lord would bless and prosper his kingdom. That historical record is found in I Chronicles 17. At the end of the account we find the prayer of David, in I Chronicles 17:26-27.

"And now, LORD, thou art God, and hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: Now therefore let it please thee to bless the house of

thy servant, that it may be before thee for ever: for thou blessest, O LORD, and it shall be blessed for ever."

Psalm 1 began with an opening blessing, and in Psalm 2 the blessing continues. In fact, Psalm 2 ends with, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." David acknowledged that if there is any blessing in life, it must come from God; if there is any good thing in this world, it must be the work of God and not man.

PSALM 2: WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

No one on earth — not even a king or some other powerful ruler — can stop what God is doing in this world. David understood when he wrote Psalm 2 that this was not about him. This was about the greater King, the only begotten Son that was to come. This was not just David's throne. This concerned an eternal kingdom.

This is a much needed, spiritual perspective on all the details of our lives. It is bigger than us. It is bigger than one country. It is bigger than one issue. God is fulfilling His purpose in this world, and He will be glorified in the end.

Psalm 2 is the first of what is referred to as a Messianic Psalm - It is about the Messiah, the coming Savior. It is worth noting that He is revealed here not as a king, but as THE King. This is the same prophecy that will be found in the book of Revelation. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

This psalm contains several vivid pictures of our King:

He is the **Anointed One** (Christ means anointed one or Messiah). He is the **Son**. He is also the **God who laughs**. Did you ever picture God as a God who laughs? Certainly, He is a God of justice and holiness, and He also has a sense of humor. He made man in His own image and was the Creator who gave human beings the capacity to laugh.

In this particular psalm, His laughter is the laughter of scorn. God laughs at those who think they can stand against Him. In Psalm 14:1 we learn that whoever says there is no God is a fool. This is why Psalm 2:4 says when people stand up against God, *"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision."* We live in a world today that laughs at God, at Christians, at the Bible, at holiness, and at the church. God is going to have the last laugh. He is the King.

He is **the One Who distributes the final inheritance**. As the One who rules and reigns, He will distribute the reward to those who

PSALM 2: WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

have been faithful.

Rulers hold positions of power and have people who must submit to their authority, yet even rulers are subject to a higher Authority: they must submit to God. They will either submit now or submit later. But everyone will submit at some point, and if you wait until later you will have waited too long. So what should be our response? We must submit to him now. Put your trust in him now. The bottom line of this psalm is summarized in the closing words: *"Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."*

Have you put your trust in the Lord? Is your faith in Christ and Him alone? Turn away from yourself and others and look to the Lord. If you have never believed on Him as your personal Savior, call on Him: "LORD Jesus, I want you to be my Savior. I want you to come into my life and rule and reign in my heart." Submit yourself to King Jesus now.

If you are a believer, meditate on Psalm 2 and remind yourself that this is not the end of the story. What you are watching on the news and seeing all around you — the political mess, the strife, and contention — is not the end. Soon our Lord Jesus is coming again.

Maybe your soul is in turmoil because the world is in turmoil. Rest in the righteous rule of the true King. He is now, He has always been, and forever will be on His throne. Someday you will see Him on that throne and He will rule and reign on this earth.

Who's in charge here? The Lord is. Sinners may rebel and Satan may sow chaos and confusion, but the future is in the hands of an all-wise, all-loving, all-powerful God. People have often asked, "What is this world coming to?" It is coming to Jesus. *"...every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father."*



PSALM 3: ON THE WINNING SIDE

“LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! Many are they that rise up against me. Many there	be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah”
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Has this been the expression of your heart? Psalm 3 begins on a battlefield — with what seems to be a note of defeat and despair. Yet, by the time it ends, the psalmist recognizes he is on the winning side.

Psalm 3 is amazing. We believe David wrote this psalm while running for his life from his own son, Absalom, who had turned against him and taken the kingdom from him. David was inundated with betrayal, disappointment, and trouble. All people, even God’s people, have difficulty with which to deal. In the oldest book of the Bible we read, “*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*”

Maybe you are dealing with an Absalom. Or maybe it is something else. Everybody has some struggle.

Psalm 3 parallels II Samuel 15:30, “*And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.*”

PSALM 3: ON THE WINNING SIDE

DEALING WITH DIFFICULTY

Geographically, they were going up, but emotionally they were descending into a valley. The tone of Psalm 3 is one of desperation. David, the man after God's own heart, the man of great blessing, also had his burdens. **This blessed man also faced his battles.** You are not alone. *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: **but God is faithful...**"* (1 Corinthians 10:13).

I am glad that Psalm 3 does not end with those first two verses. There is a *"Selah"* there, a call to pause and meditate on David's hurt and his heart for a moment. But do not stop there!

Read out loud verse 3: *"But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; My glory, and the lifter up of mine head."* He is your shield, and He will protect you. You may feel as though you have nothing to glory in today, but you can glory in Christ. He will lift your head.

Is your head hanging low today? Look up! You say, "I can't." But the Lord will lift your head up. The Bible says in Hebrews 12:12, *"Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees."* We all have times where we are moaning and groaning our way through life. Get your head up, friend. The Lord is the lifter of your head.

Psalm 3:4 | *"I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah."* He is the God who answers prayer. God hears you when no one else hears you or knows what you are facing. Sometimes the greatest battles are the ones fought in private, and the greatest burdens are the ones nobody knows about. When you wet your pillow with your tears in the middle of the night and wonder how you are going to live through this, God sees and hears you.

There is another *"Selah"* here. Time to pause and think. **Don't just think about how hard you have it; think about how good your God is.**

PSALM 3: ON THE WINNING SIDE

Suddenly there is a shift in the tone of the psalmist. *"I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me."* You can rest in Him. You can go to sleep because God is going to take the night watch. The Lord will keep you through the dark hours and you can trust Him.

Psalm 121:4 | *"Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."*

Psalm 127:2 | *"...for so he giveth his beloved sleep."*

Rest in the Lord as your sustainer. Paul would later write in Philippians 1:6, *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."* God always finishes what He starts.

The Lord gave David a promise that his throne would continue and his kingdom would be an eternal kingdom. It may not look like that will come to pass in the middle of the story. But know this: God has everything under control. You are still on the winning side and the battle is not the last chapter. The Lord is *"the author and finisher of our faith"* (Hebrews 12:2).

Psalm 3:6 | *"I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about."* I am sure David, like all people, was tempted to fear. But he made a choice. We must all exercise our will against our own emotions. Determine to live in faith and not in fear. *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"* (2 Timothy 1:7).

<p>"Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the</p>	<p>ungodly. Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah."</p>
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Don't concentrate on your difficulty; meditate on who God is and what God is going to do.

PSALM 3: ON THE WINNING SIDE

REMEMBERING YOUR REDEEMER

In Psalm 3, God is revealed as the Savior of His people. David already knew God, but he cried out for salvation. Bible salvation is not just past tense. If you were saved 30 years ago, that is wonderful. Praise God! You were saved from the penalty of sin. But that was not the end of your salvation; it was just the beginning.

His salvation is not just future tense. Some might say, “Well, I know when the Lord comes back someday, I am going to be saved from all this madness.” That is true. On that day God will save you from the very presence of sin and all of the curse that is connected to it.

But remember, God is a present-tense God. He is the I AM, not the I WAS or I WILL BE. He is “*a very present help in trouble*” according to Psalm 46:1. He is with you right where you are.

God’s salvation is always a present-tense salvation. The same God who saved you from the penalty of sin, and will save you from the presence of sin, wants to save you from the power of sin today. He wants to deliver you from the power of the wicked one and from this present evil world that we are in.

He is a present-tense Savior. You can call on him now. The word “*Hosanna*” literally means “*save now*.” I pray this word many times throughout the day when I need the Lord, “*Hosanna, Lord*.” Save now, Lord. Help me.

Psalm 3 does not just draw attention to the enemy. It points to our Captain. Stop looking at your circumstances or the enemy that is against you, and stop listening to everyone else around you. Begin to rehearse again who God is.

That is what David does again and again. He goes back to what he knows for sure and Who he knows for sure. In the words of Romans 8:31, “*If God be for us, who can be against us?*”

PSALM 3: ON THE WINNING SIDE

When Elisha's servant grew afraid as the horses and chariots surrounded the city, the prophet said in II Kings 6:16, "*Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.*"

Maybe you cannot see it today, but I want you to know you are on the winning side. One of my favorite hymns contains this verse:

I will never have a fear, for my LORD is ever near,
And in him so often I confide;
He's the keeper of my soul since I gave him full control,
And he placed me on the winning side.

Psalm 3 ends again with a blessing. "*Thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.*" In the middle of your battle, stop and think about God's blessing. He is the Victor and you are on the winning side.



PSALM 4: ENDING YOUR DAY WITH GOD

How do you like to end your day? The world's philosophy is, "The evenings are for me." But I want to suggest to you that the evenings belong to God. The entire day belongs to God. But the way you *end* every day is very important.

Read carefully David's prayer in Psalm 4:

"Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah. But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon

your bed, and be still. Selah. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety."

Psalm 4 has been referred to as an "evening psalm." David speaks of restlessness and heart-searching upon his bed, and then finally

PSALM 4: ENDING YOUR DAY WITH GOD

concludes, "All right, I will just leave it with God and go to sleep."

The fascinating thing about the placement of Psalm 4 is that it is strategically placed between two "morning psalms." Remember that Psalm 3:5 read, *"I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me."* Psalm 5:3 also speaks of the morning hours, *"My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."*

Follow the pattern of morning, evening, and morning. Each day given to God builds on the one before it and prepares for the one ahead. Here is the beautiful message contained in the method: God wants the beginning of the day. God wants the end of the day. God wants every day!

The morning and the evening are not the only times we are to give to God, but like bookends on each day, they remind us to begin and end with the Lord.

Every day is a gift from God and all day is a gift from God.

Psalm 4 was written by David while he was still on the run from Absalom. Many Bible teachers believe it can be placed between II Samuel 17 and 18.

The last verse of II Samuel 17 is very sad. David has been on the run, and he is hungry. The people with him are needy. Verse 29 says that some people brought *"honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness."*

They ended their day hungry, weary, and thirsty. Maybe as you begin to approach the evening hours, you think, "That's me. I am spent. I have given everything and I am totally, thoroughly exhausted. What can I do?"

One thing you can do is read Psalm 4 and apply it to your life. It

PSALM 4: ENDING YOUR DAY WITH GOD

is an evening psalm.

TURN TO THE LORD.

When David came to the end of himself, he turned to the God who has no end. The end of you is the beginning of God. When you are weary, He is not. When you are hungry and thirsty, He can refresh and fill you.

- **He is the God who always hears.** The psalm begins, “*Hear me when I call, O God.*” He has promised that when we call, He will answer (Jeremiah 33:3).
- **He is the God who helps.** “*Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress.*” Do you feel like the world is caving in on you — like the walls are closing in and you are in a tight spot? Some people call it “between a rock and a hard place.” God can help you right there. He can set you in a large place. It does not necessarily mean the circumstances are going to change, but he can give you liberty.
- **He is the God of true happiness.** Verse 7 says, “*Thou hast put gladness in my heart.*” The Lord provides His joy to be your strength (Nehemiah 8:10). He even gives a “*song in the night*” (Psalm 77:6). You do not have to end your day with a sigh; you can end with a song if you get your eyes back on the Lord.

GIVE YOUR EVENINGS TO GOD.

The evenings belong to the Lord, and the way you end your day is very important. In Genesis 1, when God created the world, He said, “*The evening and the morning were the first day.*” Why would He mention the evening before the morning? The Jewish day actually began at 6 p.m. and they viewed the evening hours not as the ending of one day, but rather as the beginning of another.

God designed the evening to prepare you for the next day.

PSALM 4: ENDING YOUR DAY WITH GOD

Whatever happened this day—whether failure, struggle, disappointment, or frustration—is behind you now. But you have a new day coming, and now is the time to prepare your heart for the prospect of a new day.

Evenings are a time to reflect on the faithfulness of our God. Psalm 4:4 gives practical help for the evening hours. First it says, “*Stand in awe.*” Worship God. Quiet your heart in the still moments of the evening and talk with God.

When the people departed Jesus found a quiet place to fellowship with His Father. He would go to Gethsemane or another place where He could be alone and pray. In the Old Testament, there was always an evening sacrifice, a time at the end of the day to commune and worship. Psalm 55:17 declares, “*Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.*” The evening hours are to be a time to worship God.

The next phrase in verse 4 says, “*sin not.*” Evening hours are dangerous hours. Did you know the devil loves the dark? He does his best work there. Night hours are often his playground. Our weariness after a long day can contribute to this susceptibility to temptation. Even the feeling that the dark provides anonymity, may allow the flesh to operate unchecked. Fears abound in the shadows. So what can we do? Think on God! Psalm 63:6 says, “*When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.*”

Then we are told to “*commune with your own heart upon your bed.*” This means to take time to rehearse the faithfulness of God. Meditate on a great Bible passage. Write in a journal. Talk to your family about God’s goodness and faithfulness and the blessings of that day. Psalm 92:1-2 echoes this counsel: “*It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High: To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.*”

PSALM 4: ENDING YOUR DAY WITH GOD

The final directive of verse 4 is to “*be still*.” The evening hours are a time to meditate, to think about good things. Put away hard thoughts and difficult things. Isaac went out in Genesis 24 to meditate in the field in the evening. That is a good pattern for us.

Dr. Frank Sells once said in my hearing that even our subconscious thoughts through the night can lead to fears. He made it a practice to speak to the Lord just before he went to sleep to commit his subconscious thoughts to the Lord.

Think about the blessings and the goodness of God you have enjoyed throughout the day, and then commit your mind and heart to God in the night. When you do so, you can say what the psalmist said in verse 8: “*I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.*”



PSALM 5: BEGINNING YOUR DAY WITH GOD

For many years, I would never have considered myself a morning person, but the older I get, the more I love the morning hours. Perhaps it is age or a little more maturity. I am learning that the morning hours are wonderful hours.

Psalms 5 is considered a “morning psalm.” While the previous psalm showed us how to end our day with God, this psalm shows us how to begin our day with Him. Both were written at about the same time when David was fleeing for his life from his son Absalom. It fits between II Samuel 17 and 18 when the king and his allies were weary, hungry, and thirsty.

After a few hours of sleep, they would have to face another long day on the run. It would be yet another day of stress, strain, and struggle. What will they do? Carefully read the words of Psalm 5, beginning with verses 1-3.

“Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation. Harken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will	I pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.”
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This is known as an imprecatory psalm — a psalm of prayer against

PSALM 5: BEGINNING YOUR DAY WITH GOD

the enemies. Remember, these are not only David's enemies; they are also God's. But I love the fact that in this prayer, David's eyes are not on his enemies but on the Lord.

The first order of business for the new day was to "look up." That is great advice for us. Look up! Don't concentrate on your enemy or your circumstances. Don't just look at your schedule for today. Don't look at the demands before you. Look up. When you look up, it changes your perspective on everything and everyone else. It certainly did that for David, and it is the reason he was able to come through this season of life in victory.

First, what do we learn about God in this psalm? He is the God who sees you and hears you. He knew exactly where David was. **He had His eye on him and His ear was open to his prayer.**

VERSES 4-6

"For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight:	thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man."
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He described a God who will always do right in the end. He is going to make things right. He will deal with those who are against Him and reward those who have been faithful to Him. David and Absalom are evidence that divine judgment always comes in God's time.

How can this reality affect where we live now? **The way you begin your day will affect the entire day.** Consider the implications of looking up to the Lord before you launch into the day.

DIRECTION

The direction of all true prayer is Godward. It is to have a personal conversation with the Creator God of the universe, and it truly enables us to "set our affection on things above." Look up!

PSALM 5: BEGINNING YOUR DAY WITH GOD

Mark the word “*morning*” used twice in verse 3. David purposed to make his voice heard in Heaven early. You may not always love getting out of bed in the morning, but you should love meeting God early. That is when you can get your eyes on the Lord and your ears in tune with His voice.

Oswald Chambers, the great devotional writer, once penned:

“Specific times and places and communion with God go together. It is by no haphazard chance, that in every age, men have risen early to pray. The first thing that marks a decline in spiritual life, is our relationship to the early morning...If you’ve ever prayed in the dawn, you’ll ask yourself why you were so foolish as not to do it always. It is difficult to get into communion with God amidst the business of the day. It is not simply that it is easier to get direction in the early morning; it is a profound revelation that that is the time when direction comes.”

Do not just get up. Get awake. Get yourself spiritually alert. Do whatever is needed to prepare yourself to receive the Word—whether it is a cup of coffee, a shower, breakfast, or exercise. Get moving. But, most of all, get your mind and heart in tune with God. Why? Because in the morning, God is charting a course for the entire day.

DEVOTION

The morning hours are not only a matter of direction, but an issue of devotion. David is not just looking up. He is looking up in prayer, pouring out his heart to God. The entire psalm is a recorded conversation with the Lord.

“*Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.*” David was thinking about the Lord, and then ushering those thoughts into the throne room of God in prayer. He talked to God about

PSALM 5: BEGINNING YOUR DAY WITH GOD

what was on his heart.

The best time to meet with God is in the morning before the distractions and burdens of the day begin to weigh you down. Do not wait until you are in the middle of the day, when you are dealing with so many things pulling on you, and people pressing on you. Early in the day seek to get your heart in tune with Heaven.

DECISION

Morning prayer and private worship is not only a matter of direction and devotion; it is ultimately a matter of decision. You will have to decide for yourself, and you will have to decide every day. To walk with God will take purpose and discipline. This is what distinguishes those who make the most of every day and those who miss their opportunity.

Verse 7: *“But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.”* David knew he could not answer for everyone else, fix every problem and straighten everyone else out. But he could go to God for what he needed.

Did you go into the throne room of Heaven this morning? Have you looked to the Lord and thought on Him? What did you talk over with God before you began to communicate with men?

Worship is a choice. True worship is never offered by accident; it is always on purpose.

The rest of this beautiful psalm shows the great distinction between those who worship God and those who do not. David describes the great division between the worshiper and the wicked:

- The person who looks up has joy. | The person who does not is miserable.
- The person who looks up has blessings. | The person who

PSALM 5: BEGINNING YOUR DAY WITH GOD

does not will be destroyed.

Amy Carmichael wrote, “*There is always something to be happy about if we look for it: Two men looked through prison bars, The one saw mud, the other stars*” What is the difference? One was looking down and one was looking up.

As you begin your day, stop looking at everybody else or your agenda for the day. Put your phone down and put away social media for a few moments. Open the Word of God and meditate on Scripture. Spend time with God and get your heart in tune with Him.

If you make the most of the morning, you will make the most of the whole day. Let this psalm be your prayer, and start your day by looking up.



PSALM 6: HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUR SIN EVERY DAY

D.L. Moody said, “If you want to stay right with God, keep short accounts of sin with God.”

Refuse to let sin mount up in your heart. On a regular basis, throughout every day, confess your sin to the Lord. Stay right with God.

We think of repentance as what happens when a person comes to know the Lord Jesus as personal Savior, repenting of sin and receiving Christ by faith. But that is not the end of repentance, it is the beginning of repentance.

The Christian life is a life of repentance. I have repented much more since I was saved than I did when I got saved. Why? Because the Lord keeps revealing things which need to be repented of – sins that need to be confessed and forsaken.

Psalms 6 is the first of what is referred to as the Penitential Psalms. They are scattered throughout the book of Psalms and they are heart-searching passages.

“O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O

PSALM 6: HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUR SIN EVERY DAY

LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long? Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake. For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave	who shall give thee thanks? I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies”
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If the psalm stopped there, it would be pretty depressing! Thankfully, the tone shifts.

VERSES 8-10

“Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping. The LORD hath heard my supplication;	the LORD will receive my prayer. Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly”
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What caused the change? The Lord, the God of mercy and forgiveness.

Think about the last time you repented, allowing the Lord to search your heart, bringing your personal sin to Him, and confessing it by name. You didn't make excuses for it and blame someone else. You just had a thorough time of confession of sin, and repentance toward God. How long has it been?

Let me remind you that David was the man after God's own heart. David was a deeply spiritual man, a man who understood worship, and yet he still needed repentance.

We do not know exactly when it was written, but it is believed that this psalm came near the end of David's life; perhaps somewhere around the time of I Chronicles 28-29 when he instructed his son Solomon and set much in motion. He was living with an eye on eternity and knew soon he would leave this world. Psalm 6 was the perspective of an aging man who could look back on his life

PSALM 6: HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUR SIN EVERY DAY

and say, “I know that I have failed the Lord in many ways and many times I have had to bring my sin to God. But every time I have, the Lord has graciously forgiven me.”

No matter how old you are, or how long you have been a Christian, you never get to the place where you do not need to repent of your sin, confess your own wickedness before God, and depend upon His mercy. We are all sinners. If David had to pray this prayer, how much more do we?

Take the very words of Psalm 6 and make them your own prayer. Cry out to God from your heart. This psalm does not just point to David’s life and experience – it points to so much truth about God.

GOD HATES SIN.

This psalm reminds us that God does not look lightly upon sin. God hates sin. In the opening verses, it seems as though David was under the chastening hand of God. His bones were weary, and his physical condition was being affected by his spiritual condition. God touched his body to touch his heart.

We have all been there. The Lord may touch things around you, and even people you love, to get your attention. What will it take to get our attention? The God of Psalm 6 is a God who will chasten His children because He does not want them to remain in their sins.

GOD DELIVERS FROM SIN.

At the end of the psalm, we see the Lord as the deliverer. He brings conviction, but also cleansing. Praise the Lord! He loves us and meets us where we are, but He does not leave us there. He brings us to where we need to be. He is the God of forgiveness, cleansing, and restoration.

This is why every day we must bring our own sins to the Lord.

PSALM 6: HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUR SIN EVERY DAY

David even stated that he could not sleep because his sin was keeping him up. There is a restlessness to the heart that is out of fellowship with God. Remember, there is no peace for the wicked (Isaiah 57:21). If this is true for the unregenerate man, consider how the Father deals with His own children (Hebrews 12:5-11). God will not allow His people to get comfortable in their sins.

From Psalm 3 to Psalm 6 we find an alternated emphasis on the morning and evening. God is telling us that He wants us to be in fellowship with Him all through the day and all through the night. He does not just want part of your life; He wants all of it.

Practically speaking, a very good time to take a spiritual inventory is at the end of each day, just before you go to bed. Let the Lord search your heart and show you from that day anything that did not please Him. The moment God brings that to your attention, confess it to Him. He will hear and answer your prayer as surely as He did for David.

This is one of the disciplines of the Christian life. Every day we should be in God's Word and in prayer. Every day we should worship and witness. There are many daily disciplines. But do not miss the discipline of daily confession and repentance.

We must do this as quickly as possible. Bring your sin to God, and God will bring you back into fellowship with Him. If you want to rest in peace at night, come clean with the Lord and He will make you clean.



PSALM 7: WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARE SLANDERED

There are few things harder to deal with than being slandered — when you know someone is saying something that is both unkind and untrue against you. It is even more frustrating when you feel powerless to do anything about it.

Satan is the great “*accuser of our brethren*” (Revelation 12:10). He loves to slander. When we slander another man’s character, we are doing the devil’s work. May God deliver us from ever being a mouthpiece for Satan! But while you can control what you say about others, you cannot control what others say about you.

If you are trying to do right, someone will speak against you. Slander is a reality of life in a fallen world. Psalm 7 was written by David when he was facing an onslaught of accusation.

He was a man after God’s own heart, which means we know he had a tender spirit. Can you imagine how deeply such an attack must have grieved him? Sensitive souls can get wounded, and I am certain that David was wounded emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

KEEPING A SONG

The title of Psalm 7 says, “A Shiggaion of David.” This Hebrew word

PSALM 7: WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARE SLANDERED

means variable songs, a variety of songs. Life is full of variables. Things change. “Shiggaion” carries the idea of psalms that are swerving or roaming back and forth. Some of them are songs of jubilation and celebration, and others seem to be written in the minor chord. Matthew Henry described them as “a **wandering** song (so some), the matter and composition of the several parts being different, but artificially put together [or] -a **charming** song (so others), very delightful.”

I don't know which song you are singing today but know that God is able to keep you singing, no matter what the tone happens to be.

DEALING WITH ATTACKS

The title of Psalm 7 provides further description of the context: “*which he sang unto the LORD, concerning the words of Cush, the Benjamite.*”

This is a historical reference to a Benjamite in II Samuel 16 who attacked David and made accusations about him to Saul. He said all kinds of vicious, awful, wicked things to him and cursed him. You might imagine that David, as king, would simply order that this man be killed. But that is not what he did. Instead of focusing on the source of cursing and slander, he got his eyes entirely on the Lord. What a tremendous lesson for us!

Study the opening words of Psalm 7, in verse 1: “*O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me.*” His desire was to go straight into the presence of God. We do not know the tone or theme of every psalm, but we know some. The tone of this particular psalm seems to be one of great discouragement. God's servant is struggling, and having a hard time.

The Bible says in II Samuel 16:14, “*And the king, and all the people that were with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there.*”

There is perhaps nothing more wearying than the slander of

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the enemy. No journey is as tiresome as dealing with lies, no responsibility as burdensome as dealing with unfair attacks. It grieves your inner man.

David felt discouragement deeply, and perhaps you do as well. The important thing is not what men say about you or to you, but what you know to be true about God. Read all 17 verses of David's heart cry and you will discover expressions of sincere faith. David put his trust in the Lord and so can you.

TRUSTING THE LORD

You cannot always trust men, but **you can always trust God**. He is trustworthy.

You cannot always trust what people say, but **you can always trust the Word of God**. It is true.

You cannot always trust that those who are near you are always going to be close to you, but **you can always trust that God will never leave you or forsake you**.

No matter what is happening in your life, you can trust the Lord to take care of you, and to work on the other end. You can trust Him.

The Apostle Paul knew something about slander, but in II Timothy 4:14 he said: "*Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works.*" In other words, "A man I should have been able to trust did me wrong. But instead of concentrating on that or trying to straighten it out myself, I am just going to trust God with it. I'll leave him in God's hands and believe God will do the right thing, and He will do it better than I could."

There are three simple things in Psalm 7 that David did when he was slandered. There is a divine order that we can apply in our own lives.

PSALM 7: WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARE SLANDERED

1. Search your own heart.

When you are being slandered, demeaned, or criticized, begin by examining your own life. See if there is any validity to the criticism. Is there something in you that needs to be addressed?

VERSES 3-5

“O LORD my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that	without cause is mine enemy:) Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.”
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He examined his relationship with God first, and then he looked at his relationship with others. We must do the same. Ask the Lord, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*” (Psalm 139:23-24). You cannot even think about what someone else has done wrong to you unless you are thoroughly right with God yourself.

David acknowledged in II Samuel 16:11 that his critic may have been used by God for a reason. “*And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him.*”

One of my favorite Bible teachers, Dr. Frank Sells, said in my hearing, “Thank God for everything the Lord uses to humble you.” Even if there is no sin to confess, the experience can be used for good by humbling you and helping you realize your need of divine help.

2. Commit the situation to God.

The temptation when we are slandered is to speak up for ourselves

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or to speak against the person who have disparaged us. The spiritual response is to bring God into the conversation. Pray! That is what David did in Psalm 7:6. *“Arise, O LORD, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded.”* He was saying that he would trust the Lord to step in and take care of the situation.

The psalmist rehearsed again who God is: *“My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart”* (v. 10). Circumstances had not yet changed, but he went back to the One who never changes. Instead of talking to everyone else about your situation, talk to the one person who can do something about it! Beware that the slander of others is not answered by slander from you. Turn the burden to prayer and pour out your heart to God.

3. Meditate on Scripture.

Refuse to sit around sulking and thinking about your enemy. Choose to think about your great God. Do not just talk about evil; talk about the goodness of God.

Psalm 7 concludes with a high note of worship in verse 17: *“I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.”*

Begin to praise God for His goodness, faithfulness, and trustworthiness. Praise is often the highest expression of faith. Know this: God is going to take care of you and, in time, God will take care of the enemy.



PSALM 8: THE CREATOR AND THE CHRIST

“O LORD, our LORD, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that

thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O LORD our LORD, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!”

Psalms 8 has been called a “Nature Psalm” because it deals with God’s created world; the world He spoke into existence. It also deals with the man He fashioned with His own hands. This is a psalm about the Creator.

However, it is also a Messianic Psalm - it speaks of Jesus. There is a connection between the Creator and the Savior. The God who made man is the God who became a man without ceasing to be God (John 1:1-14, Philippians 2:7-11). He came to redeem fallen

PSALM 8: THE CREATOR AND THE CHRIST

humanity to Himself. Psalm 8 stirs us to think of both the Creator and the Christ.

We know Psalm 8 was penned by David, but we are not certain at what time it was written. Many believe it was authored near the end of David's life as he instructed Solomon (1 Chronicles 28).

It is apparent that David penned this while he was outdoors. The shepherd boy who became the warrior king spent a great deal of time outdoors in his lifetime; from his boyhood in an open field watching a flock of dirty sheep, to his time on the run hiding in caves. As a warrior on the battlefield, he would have spent many nights gazing up at the stars, thinking about the God who made them. Certainly, while riding all day under the hot sun, he also thought about the One who held the sun in place. He was overwhelmed by the greatness of God and that is expressed in this psalm of worship.

THE GOD OF POWER

Psalm 8 begins and ends with the same sentence: *"O LORD, our LORD, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"* Notice the exclamation point in both places. The psalmist is overjoyed, overcome with wonder and worship.

When was the last time you were excited about God? You can tell much about a man by what makes him glad, sad, or mad. David's heart is taken with the greatness of his God. What has captured your heart?

As you see the greatness of God, you begin to recognize your own smallness. That is why he wrote in verse 4, *"What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"* Next to an infinite God, what is finite man? We are nothing apart from Him. I am a peon, a speck of lint on the page of human history. Just a ball of dust and clay. But what a great God I serve!

PSALM 8: THE CREATOR AND THE CHRIST

THE GOD WE WORSHIP

Psalm 8 is a call to worship. True worship is more than attending a church worship service. **Worship is not a group sport; it is the individual heart attitude toward God.** You can be in a collective worship service and not be worshipping. You can be in a place all alone and worship because worship is when your heart stands in awe of who God is. All corporate worship should simply be the outgrowth of private worship. Worship begins in the heart that is in awe of God.

Two simple applications come from this view of the Creator and Christ:

1. **Humble yourself.**
2. **Honor God.**

A glimpse of the vast world around us is a reminder of how little we are. We are insignificant without our great God. Humble yourself today under his mighty hand and honor Him!

As God is lifted high, we are brought low. John the Baptist said it this way in John 3:30, *"He must increase, but I must decrease."* Spend time today intentionally honoring God, worshipping, and talking to Him about His goodness.

Consider the implications of this in your daily prayer life. Most of the time when we come to God in prayer, we come to ask for something. When was the last time you came to God and did not ask Him for anything? Think about the last time you came to the Lord and said, "Lord, I just want to praise You, I just want to thank You for who You are and what You have done, I just want to talk to You about Your name and tell You that I love You."

This psalm talks about God's creative work, His sustaining work, and His gracious work of coming to man. Rehearse those simple things as you commune with the Lord.

PSALM 8: THE CREATOR AND THE CHRIST

Psalm 19:1, another of the nature psalms says, “*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.*”

God has put his testimony all around us every day. That is why the Bible says that the whole world has some light because even in the created world, there is light (Romans 1:19-20). The beauty of God’s creation is a reminder to look up.

TALK TO GOD AND TALK TO OTHERS ABOUT GOD

Take a walk outside through an open field or through the woods, or sit quietly and watch the natural world around you. Look up into the sky and consider the God who keeps the sun in place. He does not let it get any closer to the earth; if He did, we would burn up. If it went a little farther away, we would freeze to death. Ponder the God who put the moon and the stars there to reflect His glory and His goodness in the world. Allow even nature to remind you who your God is. He is your Creator and He is your Christ.

Then talk to someone else about His greatness. Use His object lesson, the world around you, to testify to the goodness and kindness of your God. Say, “My Father put that there. My Savior keeps all of this in motion and working like it is supposed to.” The world around you can be a tool to begin a Christian witness, to point people to the God who created all things and then came to redeem fallen man.

Declare with David today: “*O LORD, our LORD, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!*”



PSALM 9: SOME GOOD NEWS IN A WORLD OF BAD NEWS

It is amazing that as you read Scripture written centuries ago, it is as if you are reading about the world around you. God's Word is always relevant because truth endures to all generations (Psalm 100:5). When you come to Psalm 9, you find a description of the world in which we live. If you are watching current events and are troubled by the wickedness and violence in our society, then Psalm 9 is for you.

Psalm 9:1-2 | *"I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works. I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High."*

You would think by the opening words of this psalm that David must have been enjoying a season of relaxation. In fact, he has just come from a battle. Psalm 9 was written after David's famous victory over Goliath in the Valley of Elah. These are the words of a man who had been in the battle and near death. At a very young age he already had come to know what it was like to face enemies.

Psalm 9:3 | *"When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence."* Remember how the Philistine army turned and fled after Goliath fell (1 Samuel 17:51-52). As we believe and obey God, He puts the enemy on the run!

PSALM 9: SOME GOOD NEWS IN A WORLD OF BAD NEWS

VERSES 3-5

“For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right. Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put	out their name for ever and ever. O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.”
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Though we may not see it all immediately, in the end, all the enemies of God and all the enemies of truth and right will be defeated. They will fall, and the One who has always been on the throne will still be on the throne—the Almighty God. This is good news in a bad world.

Read through Psalm 9 and imagine it from David's perspective after his victory over Goliath. Instead of reveling in what he has accomplished or rehearsing the wickedness of the enemy army, he concentrates his attention on God. Experiences pass, emotions fade, and enemies are removed, “*But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment*” (v. 7).

The Lord will last forever. There is no end to our God. He will endure. Governments ebb and flow. Leaders rise and fall. Seasons come and go. But God is the eternal God (Psalm 90:1-2). The everlasting God will endure forever.

Psalm 9:8 | “*And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.*”

The Lord will be the ultimate Judge. His judgments are always right. Someday He is going to deal with every Goliath and take care of every Philistine army.

Psalm 9:9 | “*The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.*”

The Lord will be a refuge for His people. He will not only take care of the enemies in the end, He will take care of us today. You

PSALM 9: SOME GOOD NEWS IN A WORLD OF BAD NEWS

do not have to wait for the battle to be over to experience victory. You can live in victory now.

The Lord is a hiding place, where we can hide in the midst of great calamity and find peace. In a mixed-up world and a messed-up society, you can find order and certainty in His presence. There is grace and help available in troubled times.

Psalm 9:10 | *“And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.”* Do you know His name? Do you have a personal relationship with Him? If so, you can call on Him at any moment and know that He is with you.

How should the truth of God affect our daily life?

STOP CONCENTRATING ON THE BAD NEWS.

Sometimes the 24-hour news cycle can fight against faith. If we are not careful we can allow our hearts to be inundated with bad news and overcome with evil. “News” can only enable you to see the world from man’s perspective. We must turn our attention to the Lord and remind ourselves of who He is.

The entire tone of the psalm changes in verse 11. *“Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.”*

God’s people should speak like God’s people. Talk about Christ and speak in faith. Those who have experienced the goodness of God and have hope for eternity must rehearse this good news to others.

When you are troubled and do not have answers, guard what you say to others and begin to commune with God.

START TALKING TO THE LORD.

Psalm 9:13-14 | *“Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my*

PSALM 9: SOME GOOD NEWS IN A WORLD OF BAD NEWS

trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death: That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.”

David began by considering the Lord and rehearsing the goodness of God. Then he began to express his troubles to God in prayer. God wants you to talk with Him about what is in your heart. “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (I Peter 5:7). Instead of posting on social media, go to the throne of the great God. The pity of others will not bring you through, but the power of God will!

If you are worried about the situation around you and wondering how this is all going to end, take heart in the fact that our God is still on the throne. Take comfort in verses 17-20.

“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.

Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight. Put them in fear, O LORD: that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah.”

If you need encouragement, ***remember that God is God and you are not.***

This is a psalm for the world in which we live. Every nation that turns away from God will be turned into hell. All who stand against God will fall. But those who run to Him, who rest in Him, who find their refuge in Him, will be preserved by Him - now and for eternity.

Don't get your news from the media. Get the true report from the God who never changes. Allow the truth of Psalm 9 to encourage your faith and the faith of those God will put in your path today. Soon all of this will end, but our God will endure forever.



PSALM 10: A PRAYER WHEN YOU ARE HURTING

The Psalms are typically thought of as joyful songs. But many of them are prayers, and some are the cry of a sorrowful soul. Psalm 10 is a perfect example of a hurting heart calling out in prayer to God.

Psalm 10:1 | *“Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?”*

Here is the number one question we ask when things go wrong: “Why?” In difficulty we all want to know, “Lord, why is this happening to me? Why do I have to go through this? Why are you allowing it? Why does it seem as though you are so far away and not helping me?”

Instead of using his “why” in this psalm to talk to others, the psalmist used it as an entry point to talk to God Himself. We must do the same. Bring your “why” into the presence of God and you will bring God into the conversation. When the psalmist turned his questions toward Heaven and laid out his emotion before God, he brought his situation and emotion into a divine perspective. By the end of the psalm, answers begin to arrive. The only answers you will ever find are in the presence of God.

PSALM 10: A PRAYER WHEN YOU ARE HURTING

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From a historical standpoint, this psalm fits in the time of the Babylonian captivity. Judah had been carried away to a strange country, a foreign land, and they were troubled. Many Bible teachers put Psalm 10 chronologically at the end of Daniel 7, which describes the visions Daniel saw of what God would do to the Gentile nations and the judgment that was coming. The final verse in that chapter, verse 28, gives insightful context:

“Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.”

In other words, “I thought about all this. I got troubled. I got worked up. My countenance fell. I kept the matter in my heart.”

Are we tempted to do that when we have struggles? Some of you have questions and hurts today, and you are so worked up on the inside, but you try to hide it from everybody else. You keep the matter in your heart; although you don't know it, your countenance has changed. Those bitter thoughts on the inside begin to show on the outside.

When that happens, do what Daniel did. He was a man of prayer, as was David. Though we do not know with certainty who penned Psalm 10, we know that he did the right thing in bringing his questions to the God of truth. He brought his trouble to the only One who could bring triumph out of the struggle.

THE STRUCTURE

After the introductory question in verse one, Psalm 10 can be divided into three parts.

We See the Wickedness All Around Us (Verse 2-6).

“The wicked in his pride doth taken in the devices that they have
persecute the poor: let them be imagined. For the wicked boasteth

PSALM 10: A PRAYER WHEN YOU ARE HURTING

of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. His ways are always

grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity."

That sounds like the world we live in today! Wicked men do terrible things and think they are getting by with it, living in ease. Where is God in the midst of all this? If you think you are the first person to ask that question, you are wrong.

We See the Wicked Are Against Us (Verses 7-15).

Wicked men, filled with cursing and vanity, are lurking in secret places, murdering innocents, working against the poor, and waiting like a lion to snare his prey in a net. Verse 11 reveals their belief that God will never see or know about their wickedness. In their pride they give no thought to God.

Notice the plea in verse 12: "*Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.*" Do you see the great contrast between the proud and the humble? Into which group do you fall? Remember, God brings the proud low but comes near the humble (James 4:6).

VERSES 13-15

"Wherefore doth the wicked condemn God? He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it. Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor

committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless. Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none."

PSALM 10: A PRAYER WHEN YOU ARE HURTING

We Remember that God Is for Us (Verses 16-18).

Here the psalmist moves from describing wicked men to communing with the holy God.

“The LORD is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land. LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause	thine ear to hear: To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.”
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In the middle of so much hate, he begins to rehearse the love of God. God defends the fatherless and cares for the afflicted — the most defenseless and helpless people in the world, those for whom no one else speaks. You do not have to convince God to care. He cares more than you care, and He loves more perfectly than you and I could love. The King sees, He knows, and He will make all wrongs right in the end.

TWO APPLICATIONS

Stay humble before God. As I read Psalm 10, God convicted me of my own pride. It is easy to spot pride in others while ignoring the pride in our own heart. Most men are hard on others and easy on themselves. Spiritual men are hard on the sin in their own heart and merciful to others.

Bring your hurts to Him. Never forget this when you are hurting or having a hard time. The psalmist not only prayed for his own needs but also for the needs of others, including the fatherless and the afflicted.

You may know someone who is struggling and want to commiserate with them, but you think, “I don’t understand why.” You may not know what to say to them, but one thing you can always do for hurting people is pray for them. Bring their needs to God and watch God come to them. Learn to intercede for the needs of hurting people all around you.

PSALM 10: A PRAYER WHEN YOU ARE HURTING

Psalm 10 is a prayer for the poor and the oppressed. Maybe that is you today; maybe it is someone you know and love. Either way, humble yourself before the Lord and bring it into His presence. He is the King. He does all things well and He loves perfectly. You can trust Him in the midst of your hurt.



PSALM 11: WHAT CAN WE DO?

When God asks a question, He is never looking for information! He already has all the answers. Questions probe and help us to identify our deepest needs. Questions lead us back to the God who has the answers.

In Psalm 11, you find one of these divine questions — and it is a fascinating one.

Verse 3 is often quoted: “*If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*” We all understand that foundations are important. Look at a house that has been built on a poor foundation. See the cracks spreading through the whole structure. It is more than just a little settling; there is a total shifting.

That is what we see in our world in families, churches and individual lives. **It seems the foundations of society, decency and family are being destroyed.** It is not just a minor crack; it is a slow, destructive crumble.

At first, Psalm 11:3 seems to imply that if all these foundations crumble, there is nothing left for us to do. But that is not the context of the question. It is meant to teach us that our foundations are never destroyed. As the very next verse states, “*The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD’s throne is in heaven.*”

PSALM 11: WHAT CAN WE DO?

BUILD ON THE RIGHT FOUNDATION.

If you are a person who is right with God, your foundation is not earthly; it is Heavenly. Your foundation is not man, but God. Your foundation is not changeable according to circumstances; your foundation is an unchanging God. Your foundation is in another place.

As the Apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 3:11, *“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”* According to II Timothy 2:19, *“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.”*

God’s temple, His throne, His foundation is not going anywhere!

If your foundation is in government, you are going to be disappointed. If your foundation is in the promises of man, even the best of men, at some point you are going to be very disillusioned. **But if you are building your life on the unchanging foundation of God and His promises, that will never crumble.** He never changes (Malachi 3:6).

Psalms 11 is believed to have been written when David was advised to flee for his life to the mountains. The story of Saul’s intention to kill David is found in I Samuel 19. Jonathan and other friends advised him to get as far away from Saul as possible and head for the hills.

Carefully read the words of the seven verses in this psalm:

“In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the	righteous do? The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD’s throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men. The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire
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PSALM 11: WHAT CAN WE DO?

and brimstone, and an horrible
tempest: this shall be the portion
of their cup. For the righteous | LORD loveth righteousness; his
countenance doth behold the
upright.”

Well-intentioned friends told David, “Take your life in your own hands so that you don’t fall into the enemy’s hands.” David’s response was, “No, my life is in much greater hands. My life is in God’s hands.”

His friends said, “Remove yourself from these circumstances; run to the mountain, hide in the caves.” David said, “Regardless of where I am geographically, spiritually I am hiding in the Lord.” **David had an accurate view of where his safety and his strength stemmed.**

David would eventually sit in a beautiful palace, but Saul was trying to kill him. But it was not a change of geography that he needed; it was to simply wait on God and live by faith.

That brings us back to the question posed in verse 3: “*If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*” The overwhelming theme of the psalm gives the answer: **If your foundation is in the Lord, it will never be destroyed.**

You will find when studying the book of Psalms that some are placed strategically next to each other to carry on the same theme. Psalm 11 and Psalm 12 are twin psalms with common themes. These two psalms, taken together, provide direction for what the righteous can do when it seems the foundations are being destroyed.

TRUST IN THE LORD.

Psalm 11:1 | “In the LORD put I my trust.” The greatest danger in life is not the enemy. It is the temptation to live by sight instead of by faith. The first principle of victory and peace is always faith. “*This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*” (1 John 5:4).

PSALM 11: WHAT CAN WE DO?

Trust that God has you in the right place. Everyone told David to escape where he was, but he believed that God put him there. He knows where you are - and He is there with you.

Spiritual attacks will come. Arrows will fly. Enemies will taunt you. Sometimes we simply want to run away. In another psalm David wrote, *"Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest"* (Psalm 55:6). These feelings rise up in all of us at times. But flying away does not mean you would be at rest. Your rest must be found in the Lord — and your faith in Him!

Escape is not the answer. With the Lord, the victory is not *after* the battle is over; the victory is in the battle. The peace does not come when the storm subsides; our peace comes in the midst of the storm (John 14:27). If you long to rest while everything is shaking and being destroyed around you, trust in the Lord and rest in Him.

Trust that God is in the right place. David lifted his eyes above the earthly throne to the heavenly throne, above the earthly king to the heavenly King. He recognized that some foundations are never going to be removed. God is right where He has always been. He is on the throne of the universe. He has His eye on you, your life in His hand, and His ear open to your prayer.

Revelation 21 describes the wall of New Jerusalem in eternity. The city has 12 foundations! There is a beautiful symbolism that reminds us that anything God builds is always on a solid foundation. It is not going anywhere.

Friend, if your life is being built on the Lord, things may shake and you may have real fears. While some things shake, there are *"things which cannot be shaken...which cannot be moved"* (Hebrews 12:27-28). Many people will give you counsel and advice on how to handle the chaos, but get your eyes back on the Lord and realize He had His eye on you all along. His foundation is never going to be destroyed.



PSALM 12: HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

In moments of desperation we may throw our hands up in the air and say, “I don’t know what to do.” Perhaps when we get to that point, all of Heaven applauds and God says, “Good. I have been waiting for you to get there all along.” The end of us is the beginning of Him.

We learned in our study of Psalm 11 that if you are building on the right foundation, it will never be destroyed. The Creator keeps the foundation of the earth strong (Psalm 104:5). Christ provides a foundation for life and eternity (Matthew 7:24-27). Yes, storms, attacks, and difficulties will come. In response to this, the question was posed in Psalm 11:3, “*What can the righteous do?*” The answers begin in Psalm 11 and continue in Psalm 12.

WE CAN TRUST IN THE LORD.

Psalm 11 begins with a statement of faith. Begin in faith. Anything that does not begin by faith will end in failure.

This is a repeated emphasis of God’s Word:

“*The just shall live by faith*” (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38).

“*For we walk by faith, not by sight*” (II Corinthians 5:7).

PSALM 12: HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Believe God, and obey Him. Faith must become works. *“What can the righteous do?”*

WE CAN KEEP OUR HEART IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

Psalms 11 concludes with these words in verse 7: *“For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.”* Our Lord is always right, and He smiles upon those who stay right with Him.

It is not hard to get right with God - you can be right with God in a moment by looking to Jesus in repentance and faith. But sometimes the difficult thing is to stay right with God. David's great enemy was not Saul or Goliath. It was his own lust and pride. Our great enemy is not everyone around us, the world pulling on us or even the devil against us. It is our own sin nature.

It is so easy, in an unrighteous world dealing with unrighteous people, to miss the unrighteousness that creeps into our own hearts. People say, *“Aren't you troubled about this wicked world?”* The wickedness I am most concerned about is the wickedness lurking within my own heart and mind.

Ask God to help you love what He loves, so you will hate what He hates. As God purifies your affections, work to keep your own heart thoroughly right with the Lord. Refuse to lay the foundations of your own life on what will be destroyed.

“What can the righteous do?”

WE CAN PRAY.

Psalms 12 begins with a desperate prayer: *“Help, LORD.”* When you do not know what to pray, simply ask the Lord to help you.

PSALM 12: HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

Take the time to read verses 1-5:

“Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue	that speaketh proud things: Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us? For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.”
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Are you troubled about the foundations shaking all around you? Are things crumbling that used to stand, and people swaying that used to be faithful? Are you troubled? Do not fuss about the darkness or talk to everyone else about it. Pray.

Do you see the contrast in these verses between what the wicked do with their lips and what we are to do? We must not do what everyone else does by simply talking to one another -- talk to God about it!

The psalmist prayed for the godly that they would not cease and the faithful that they would not fail. In verse 5, he prayed for the poor to be protected and for provision for the needy. Pray and let God take care of the rest.

“What can the righteous do?”

WE CAN MEDITATE ON TRUTH.

“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD,	thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.”
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It feels as though we are living in a world just like the one described in that last verse.

PSALM 12: HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

Fix your mind on that which can never be destroyed. The words of the wicked are lies. They are insincere and untrue. Man's words will only give you failing wisdom and rotting ideas. **God's words are true. They are pure words in an impure world. They are preserved words in a decaying world.**

Isaiah 26:3 | *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."*

Psalms 119:165 | *"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."*

Psalms 11 was written when David was running for his life from Saul. Psalm 12 is authored from a time later in David's life when the priests and people who aided David in Nob were slain by Saul. All the friends who helped him were put to death. Everyone he had trusted was gone, and everything familiar to him had disappeared.

Under those conditions, what can the righteous do?

- You can still **trust** because the foundation of **faith** stands sure.
- You can still **keep** because the foundation of **righteousness** stands sure.
- You can still **pray** because the foundation of **prayer** stands sure.
- You can still **meditate** because the foundation of **God's Word** stands sure.

There is an old hymn that Robert E. Lee claimed as his favorite. It has meant a great deal to me. I remember hearing the story of Dr. Charles Hodge, a great theologian of a bygone generation. As he read the words of this hymn to a group of seminary students, he was so overcome with emotion that he could not even speak the final words. The song was first made available in the 1700s by a London pastor but speaks to those in every generation who need stability...

PSALM 12: HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the LORD
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word
What more can He say than to you He hath said
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled

For every one of God's children, every follower of Christ, the foundations are never destroyed. The world may be rocking and reeling all around you, and many people may be falling, but you can trust; you can keep; you can pray; and you can meditate. Rest assured that the foundation in Heaven is as strong, stable, and secure as it has ever been - and it always will be!

By faith, rest in the God who is immutable, and you will find fresh peace and courage for your journey. Psalm 11 and 12 point us to the God who never changes. It points us to Christ. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8).



PSALM 13: TURNING A SIGH INTO A SONG

Do you ever find yourself in circumstances and wonder, “How long am I going to have to live through this? How long will I have to put up with this?”

You are not alone. When David penned Psalm 13, he had that exact question on his lips. Read the first two verses:

“How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my	soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?”
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In those few words, he asked no fewer than four times, “How long, LORD, how long?”

We do not know exactly where this particular psalm fits in David’s life, but it obviously was written during one of David’s many personal trials. History tells us that it was sung during the Babylonian captivity as well - a time when the Jewish people groaned under the burden of captivity.

Every song has a story and some of the most moving stories are the ones inspired by deeply personal trials. And aren’t those the most difficult things to deal with? Not the matters that touch the

PSALM 13: TURNING A SIGH INTO A SONG

whole nation, but the things that touch you, your family, those who you most deeply love. Those are the things that make you ask, “How long?”

The psalm progresses from how the writer *feels* to what he *knows*. In verse 1 he referred to the Lord forgetting, but did that really happen? No. The Lord never forgets. He knows right where you are. His face may have been hidden where David could not see it, but He could still see David.

These words were simply an expression of how David *felt*. They should also remind us that when we are in deep emotion, we must guard what we say to other people. My pastor used to say that **discouraged people always overstate their problems**. It is very easy for us to become overwhelmed and overcome with emotion. Often in these moments we say things we should not say.

Verse 2 refers to our daily **struggles**, daily **troubles**, and daily **trials**. In response, we must exercise daily **faith**. Spend time in daily **prayer**. Have some daily time in the **Word**. For every daily challenge, there is also a daily **resource** from Almighty God!

A noticeable shift occurs in verses 3-4: *“Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.”*

When you are wondering “how long” follow this pattern:

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

None of us want to be known as complainers, but we all have a tendency to complain to the people around us. They cannot do anything to change it. Complain to the only person who can do something about it, and that is God.

Turn your complaint into a prayer. If you have a complaint today, send it Heavenward. I promise you that if you come to God in

PSALM 13: TURNING A SIGH INTO A SONG

simple prayer, He will hear your cry.

Verse 5: “*But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.*” Not only should you pray, but you should also...

REHEARSE WHO GOD IS AND HOW YOU HAVE TRUSTED HIM.

Notice the past tense: “*I have trusted.*” It seems that he went back and rehearsed how good God had been to him — all along the journey, he found that God’s mercy was new every morning.

This is one of the definite benefits of keeping a personal journal. Sometimes when I get low, I pull out an old journal and begin to read. There were days I was struggling, having a hard time. Yet, as I turn the page, I find that God broke through and answered my prayer. If I trusted in His mercy then, I can trust Him with my present need.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

The second part of the verse is future tense, where he expects to rejoice in what God will do: “*my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.*” When you have trouble, it is easy to get stuck looking at your circumstances and at the past. That is when you wonder, “How long is this going to last?” But hope comes when you begin to look at the future.

The tone moves from a mood of complaining to, “*I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.*” After you pray and think about what God has done, you can begin to hope for the future. Do not wait for circumstances to change, for the night to break or the sun to shine again. You may not feel like it, but begin to praise the Lord. Acknowledge the goodness of God and your faith for the future will grow.

There are mornings when I wake up and don’t feel like singing, but those are the days I most need to sing. When I choose to

PSALM 13: TURNING A SIGH INTO A SONG

rejoice and give God glory and praise, the most amazing thing happens - God begins to turn my spirit and my heart toward Him.

Sing to the Lord. You may think you are not much of a singer, but that is all right. He is the one who gave you your singing voice, and He is not listening to how beautiful it is. He is listening to your heart.

Give Him praise and glory because He has been good to you. If you do, you will sing your way through the night hours, through the dark hours of life. Like David, you may begin with a sigh, but you can end with a song.

Choose a great hymn, some song about the Lord that does your heart good and warms your spirit, and sing to the Lord through this day. That may be exactly what the doctor, the Great Physician, ordered to get you through this season!

Whatever you are dealing with now, it will not last forever. The sun will shine again. **You will come out on the other side in victory, but the greatest victories come as you sing and give God praise, in the battle!**



PSALM 14: DEALING WITH THE ATHEIST

It was the Holy Spirit, and not the Bible writers themselves, who determined what is in the pages of Holy Scripture and what is left out. We believe in Holy Spirit-inspired selection. This means that where God spoke, He intended to say something. Likewise, where He is silent, we should not try to fill in the gaps.

As we study through the psalms, many of them have a historical context that is known. Sometimes there is an indication of time or place in the title or an explicit reference to an event. But many of the psalms have no such context. Why is that significant?

If God declined to give us such information, there is a reason for it. Psalm 14 is one of those psalms, and in many ways it is a psalm for all people and all times.

EVERY NATION AND EVERY GENERATION

If you are not careful, you can look at a certain portion of Scripture and think that it was only intended for a certain family or group of people. But in Psalm 14, the Holy Spirit reveals the sinful heart of all humanity — Jew and Gentile, ancient and modern. **Regardless of religious leanings, every heart is desperately wicked.**

Verse 1 begins, “*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*”

PSALM 14: DEALING WITH THE ATHEIST

We often quote this verse when referring to the atheists of our day who refuse to believe that God exists in any form. But look at the context and you will see that it does not refer solely to atheists. This passage is talking about “practical atheists,” people who live as if there is no God at all. They are described in more detail in verse 1 through verse 6.

“They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD. There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous. Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD is his refuge.”

These verses clearly describe a group of people who are still alive today. There are many who deny the existence of God, and He has a word for them: *fools*. It is utterly foolish to deny the obvious truth. To be an atheist is to totally reject the life God has given to man.

But in Psalm 14, we learn that all sinners are in some way living their lives as though there is no God. To be ungodly means to give no regard to God. Some deny God with their lips, but all sinners deny God with their lives. Consider the words “*all*” and “*none*” used throughout the passage.

There is a New Testament passage which sounds very similar. Romans 3:10-12 says, “*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*” Verse 23 declares: “*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*”

PSALM 14: DEALING WITH THE ATHEIST

Whether a professing atheist or a practicing one, any man who lives his life without giving any regard to God is a foolish man. Psalm 14 reveals the reality of all past, present, and future generations that live apart from God.

THE ETERNAL GOD

If Scripture only pointed us to man, it would be fairly negative and depressing. But, ultimately it points us to God. Generations come and go, sinners live and die, but the eternal God continues.

He is the One who “*looked down from heaven*” in verse 2. When we turn away from Him, He still has His eye on us. When Peter turned away from the Lord in a fit of cursing, Jesus was watching him all along. The moment Peter turned and looked, he found that Jesus was already looking at him. The Lord sees our hearts and knows us.

He is identified in verse 5: “*for God is in the generation of the righteous.*” You can deny Him all you like, but God is very present. You can proclaim that there is no God, but that does not make Him go away. In this very verse, the people who previously denied God’s existence literally trembled before Him. You either fear God now or you fear Him later, but eventually all people will fear the Lord.

That is exactly what will happen to people in today’s world. They may deny Him now, but one day “*every knee should bow...every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (Philippians 2:10-11).

Verse 6 describes the Lord as the refuge for His people. When the darts are being hurled — from the atheists who mock and so-called intellectuals who want to debate — run to the Lord.

The psalm crescendos on this holy and happy note: “*Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall*

PSALM 14: DEALING WITH THE ATHEIST

be glad.” (Verse 7)

This may provide a key to the historical context. Most likely it was written to help the people who were being carried away into captivity. Things may look bad now, but here is hope in the end for God's people. The definite word “*shall*” is used to give confidence that God has a certain time and His people have a certain future.

As we were reminded in the previous psalm, we are not merely to look behind us or around us. We should always be looking ahead. For the believer, there is always hope. All of the criticism and skepticism of our age is not the end of the story for those who trust in Christ.

Do not be discouraged by the atheism around you. Your God is very real; He is with you and will be your refuge. **Do not let the heart of practical atheism slip into your own life.** Decide that you will not live a single day without considering God in every aspect of your life.

The fool says, “*No God.*” The wise person says, “*Yes, God!*” Atheists will continue to deny God, but we must continue to believe and obey Him. As you do, you will see Him work in your life as only He can.



PSALM 15: WHATEVER HAPPENED TO HOLINESS?

There was a day when God's people actually believed that they were to be a holy people. It was the Lord who said in Leviticus 19:2, *"Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy."* And lest you think that this principle only applied to ancient Israel, He repeated the command in the New Testament, *"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy"* (1 Peter 1:15-16).

Do you believe that our God is holy? If you believe the Bible, the answer is yes. The more personal question is: are you seeking today to live in the presence of that holy God?

Holy people are not holy because they mustered up some holiness of their own. According to Hebrews 12:10, it is because we are *"partakers of his holiness."* As we live in the presence of a holy God, He changes us into His own image. His holiness separates us from unholy things. Uncleanness is crowded out by the purity of God.

Psalms 15 addresses this doctrine of the holiness of God and its impact on our lives. David begins with a heart cry that is a question to the holy God, *"LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?"* The context here is in reference to the Tabernacle and the privilege of entering into the place of worship. **There is no geographic location that brings one closer to God,**

PSALM 15: WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO HOLINESS?

but we all ask ourselves from time to time how to better draw near to Him spiritually.

Consider the words of Psalm 91:1 - *“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”* Every child of God should desire to live in His presence.

THE PLACE

Notice in Psalm 15:1, the **place** to which the writer refers. Namely, it is the Tabernacle – God’s dwelling place. There is a reference also to *“thy holy hill.”* We find frequent references in Scripture to people ascending to meet God. They sought a high place to meet with the Lord, beginning with Moses (see Exodus 19). The idea is a place separate from the fray of everyday life, from the pull of the world around you. Jerusalem is a city built on seven hills, and its high elevation would cause people to quite literally make an ascent as they went up to meet with God. The Lord wants all of us to live on the high ground with Him, but far too many are content to travel the low road. The Christian life is to be an ever-ascending life until we are called up into the presence of God for eternity.

THE POSITION

The **position** is suggested by such words as *“abide”* and *“dwell.”* There is intimacy here; you do not live with someone you do not love or feel close to. But it is more than just intimacy—there is also consistency. This is more than just an occasional visit! God does not want you to spend ten minutes in His presence today. He wants you to spend the entire day with Him (1 Thessalonians 5:16-23). Live moment by moment in the holy presence of God.

THE PERMANENCE

There is also a **permanence** here, as pointed out in verse 5: *“He that doeth these things shall never be moved.”* When you are rooted in God’s presence, it keeps you from being moved by anything that comes against you. Many things will oppose you in life, from

PSALM 15: WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO HOLINESS?

bad news and difficult circumstances to the harsh words of critics and other things out of your control. None of those things will shake you loose when you are anchored in God; you have moored yourself in the One who never changes.

THE PERSON

Who is the person revealed in the heart of Psalm 15 who lives in God's presence? That question is asked in the first verse, and in verses 2-5. The description provides the answer. Test yourself as you read these verses, and ask, "Is this me?"

These verses are filled with action verbs, things for which we are responsible. Some are positive and some are negative, but all are necessary.

Psalm 15:2 | *"He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart."*

The walk reveals integrity, without any blemishes on the inside or outside. It does not mean you are without sin, but that sin is confessed and forsaken because of a desire to walk uprightly.

The work tests honesty, being ethically right. God sees your walk; everyone else sees your work. Are your business dealings and actions toward others upright before God?

The speech proves that the heart and the mouth are one. The upright person does not think one way and speak another. There is oneness in what he says, believes, and does. Unlike the person in Psalm 14 who says in his heart that there is no God, this person does not want to live with a lie. He speaks the truth.

Psalm 15:3 | *"He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour."*

There is no slander here, no tearing down of others. The desire is to help, not hurt. This person does not want to speak or listen to

PSALM 15: WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO HOLINESS?

gossip. There is no urge to avenge oneself after being wronged.

Psalm 15:4 | *“In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.”*

The first part of this verse reflects **someone who chooses friends carefully and with discernment**. He honors the right people and the right things. If you want God's honor, you need to honor the Lord and those who fear Him. You either are now or will soon be exactly who your friends are. As Proverbs 13:20 says, *“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”*

The last phrase describes **someone whose word is his bond**. When he speaks, you can trust what he says. Only the Lord Jesus Christ perfectly fulfills all of these. Only He was able to ascend into the Holy Place of Heaven on His own merit, but He has made a way for us to follow His steps. Only God is perfect, but those who live in His presence are not changeable because they are rooted in an unchanging God (James 1:5-8). They are not fickle and do not ride an emotional roller coaster, but are based in the One who is true and eternal.

Psalm 15:5 | *“He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.”*

Giving with no expectation of return. One who will not cheat for selfish gain. He cannot be bought and is not controlled by money or material things. He is controlled by the presence of God (1 Timothy 6:6-12).

Our society has it all backward. If you take this list and flip it around, you have the world in which we live today. Our society honors the vile and condemns those who fear the Lord. *“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for*

PSALM 15: WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO HOLINESS?

light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20).

While it is understandable that those who do not know God would live unholy lives, what ever happened to holiness among God’s people? There should be a difference in those who know the holy God and those who do not. Ask the Lord to help you be a partaker of God’s holiness. Then allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to you anything that does not honor the Lord.

Does some element of your life need to be removed? Is anything lacking that should be added? Make this your prayer: “Lord, be thorough with me.” May He help every one of us to abide in His tabernacle, dwell in His holy hill, and live in His presence today!



PSALM 16: IN THE NIGHT SEASONS

We have come now to what we call “the Golden Psalm.” Psalm 16 is a psalm of David but it is also about the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only 11 verses long but it is rich and wonderful.

The title above Psalm 16 reads, “Michtam.” That word means “instruction.” This psalm is intended to teach us. “Michtam” implies *“a composition so precious as to be worthy to be engraven on a durable tablet for preservation; or, as others render; a psalm precious as stamped gold”* (Easton’s Bible Dictionary). This is why Psalm 16 is often referred to as the “Golden Psalm.”

Look carefully at the heart of this psalm: *“I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons”* (verse 7).

Night often serves as the Lord’s great classroom. When things are quiet and we are still, the Lord speaks most clearly. Even as we lay on our bed, we can meditate on the Word and God can speak to us.

In a broader sense, there are night seasons in life. Not just the literal night, but the dark hours we all face. Our God is present in the night seasons. If you turn over to Psalm 18:9, you read of the Lord that the *“darkness was under his feet.”* Go back to Genesis 1,

PSALM 16: IN THE NIGHT SEASONS

when God spoke light into the darkness, and you will see that the Holy Spirit hovered over all. The God of light is greater than the darkness. You can rest because God works the night shift.

We do not know the exact setting of this particular psalm, but we know that all of God's people eventually have their night seasons. Israel had her dark seasons, but the Lord was a pillar of fire for His people. Abram and Jacob both had their night experiences with God, and that is exactly when He came near to the patriarchs to speak to them. The disciples experienced their fearful and stormy nights, yet those were the moments when Jesus came walking to them on the water. Paul and Silas sat in prison in the middle of the night, and as they praised and prayed, they saw God work in the jail house.

Likewise, David had his night seasons, and he referenced them throughout the Psalms. Psalm 16, the Golden Psalm, teaches us that God can make the dark times the golden times of our lives. What truths do we discover in the night seasons?

THE LORD IS NEAR.

Psalm 16:8 | *"I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."* He repeated this powerful expression in the last part of verse 11: *"at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."*

The right hand is a place of access and authority. Notice that He is at our right hand and we are at His. God is near to us and we are near enough to speak to Him.

The accuser wants to interrupt this fellowship. One example is in Zechariah 3:1, *"And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him."* In the next verse the Lord rebukes Satan and extends mercy to His servant. The devil loves to bring division but Jesus speaks for us! The Lord is near in your night seasons.

PSALM 16: IN THE NIGHT SEASONS

REST IS POSSIBLE.

Psalm 16:9 | *“Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.”* Daniel is a beautiful picture of this rest that comes through faith. There he is, sleeping in the middle of the lion’s den, on the darkest night of his life. How could he do that? He had inner rest. When God gives peace to your heart, you can rest.

God “giveth his beloved sleep” (Psalm 127:2). He gives rest to our flesh. The night is designed for rest. If that is true physically, would it not also be true in the great spiritual struggles of life? The nighttime hours are not the time to sit up and worry. It is not the time to try to figure it out and fix the problems yourself. That is the time to rest in the Lord.

I once heard the story of a boy who came home one night with his father after they had buried his mother. She had gone to be with the Lord. The two of them came back to an empty house, and in the middle of the night the boy came down the hall to ask, “Daddy, can I sleep with you?”

He climbed up and lay down on the side of the bed where his mother used to pillow her head. After a few moments, he said to his father, “It’s dark in here. There’s no night light.”

The father said, “That’s right. There is no night light in this room.”

A little while later the boy said, “Daddy, is your face toward me?”

“Yes.”

“That’s good enough for me,” he said as he closed his eyes and went to sleep. The very thought that his father was facing him was enough.

Friend, you may not be able to see Him, and there may seem to be no light right now, but I can tell you on the authority of the Word

PSALM 16: IN THE NIGHT SEASONS

of God that your Father's face is toward you today. Let that be good enough for you. Rest in the Lord.

MORNING WILL COME.

The nighttime never lasts forever; morning is coming. In the familiar words of Psalm 30:5, *"weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."*

Now look at verses 10-11 of this psalm. *"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."*

I mentioned that this psalm is about Christ. Think about the nighttime hours of His life — in Gethsemane, on Golgotha when God turned His back on His own Son. Think of those three nights in the grave. Yet, His soul was not left in Hell and He did not see corruption. He rose from the dead! Morning always comes. If it came for the Lord Jesus, it will come in your life as well. The final chapter of the Bible, Revelation 22, describes Heaven in verse 5: *"And there shall be no night."* Soon the night will end.

KEEP YOUR HEART RIGHT WITH GOD.

Remember what the psalmist wrote in verses 1-3:

"Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust. O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my LORD: my goodness	extendeth not to thee; But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight."
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What is he saying? "I must make very sure that my trust stays in the Lord and my heart stays right with Him." The Lord works in the nighttime hours, but the devil loves to work there, too, and he has an "inside man" – our own weak flesh. The flesh is always weak; it never gets better.

George Young, an obscure 19th-century preacher, was a very poor

PSALM 16: IN THE NIGHT SEASONS

man who worked in rural communities. He scrimped and saved to build a small house. He built it himself.

While he was away preaching in another village, some boys living near his home who did not like him set fire to his house and it burned to the ground. He came home devastated; everything he owned was gone.

For some time it seemed as though he lived in the darkness. Then one day his wife said that he came to the house humming a tune. He had written a song which has now become famous:

In shady, green pastures, so rich and so sweet
God leads His dear children along
Where the water's cool flow bathes the weary one's feet
God leads His dear children along
Some through the waters, some through the flood
Some through the fire, but all through the blood
Some through great sorrow, but God gives a song
In the night season and all the day long

I believe George Young had been living in the truth of Psalm 16, and I want to encourage you to do the same. Keep your song, keep your heart, keep your trust in the Lord.

He works the night shift. Rest in Him.



PSALM 17: STAYING RIGHT WITH GOD IN A WORLD GONE WRONG

Are you troubled by the injustice you see in our world? It often appears that the wicked are prospering and the righteous are held in contempt. Corruption is rampant.

Psalms 17 is all about justice. Yet the emphasis is not on how to straighten out every wrong, or how to deal with others. Instead, God's message to us is how to keep our own hearts right in a world of so much evil.

Walk through this powerful prayer and you will see the priority of a pure heart. Only those who stay close to God can have the right perspective on the world around them, and can be in a place where they can pray in the will of God.

Psalms 17:1 | *"Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips."*

The word "feigned" means "hypocritical" - to be fake. The psalmist wants to be real with the Lord. When you are troubled by a world of injustice, the first thing to do is always to begin by talking to God from a sincere heart. Do not hold anything back, and do not pretend. Just pour out your heart to Him.

Psalms 17:2 | *"Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let*

PSALM 17: STAYING RIGHT WITH GOD IN A WORLD GONE WRONG

thine eyes behold the things that are equal.”

Rehearse the fact that God is just. In the end, He will always do right. We may be living in an unbalanced world, but God’s scales are equal.

Psalm 17:3 | *“Thou hast proved **mine heart**; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that **my mouth** shall not transgress.”*

Keep sin out of your life. Sometimes, when troubled by the sins of others, it is easy to miss the wickedness in your own heart. As we studied in the previous psalm, God visits us in the dark hours. In those moments He tests us, examining our hearts.

Notice the specific reference to the psalmist’s mouth. Words are the greatest indicator of what is in the heart (Matthew 12:34). The easiest thing to do when surrounded by injustice is to complain and criticize, and it is so easy to say things you should not say. Ask God to help you guard your lips. *“Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips”* (Psalm 141:3).

Psalm 17:4 | *“Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.”*

Others may be going down the wrong path, but you do not have to do so. David was determined to stay on the right path. And after emphasizing his own words, here he noted that he would be listening to what God said. One sure way to stay right in a world gone wrong is to stay in the Word of God.

Sit down each day and spend time reading the Bible. Choose a book and begin. Read until God speaks to you and you will find direction and protection for the journey ahead.

Psalm 17:5 | *“Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.”*

PSALM 17: STAYING RIGHT WITH GOD IN A WORLD GONE WRONG

Observe the note of both faith and obedience. We must be willing to follow the Lord's path and we must trust that He will keep us from falling. David made a commitment to stay on the right path as best he could, but he knew that God would have to be the One to keep him there. This is the beautiful partnership of the believer and the Almighty God. Jude expressed it this way: *"Keep yourselves in the love of God...Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy"* (Jude 21, 24). Walk uprightly and know that the Lord will keep you from falling.

VERSES 6-7

"I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech. Shew thy marvellous	lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them."
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Instead of concentrating on how bad the world is, he continues to think on the goodness of God. Get your eyes off all the bad things around you, and focus on God's unfailing goodness.

VERSES 8-13

"Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings, From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about. They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly. They have now compassed	us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth; Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places. Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword."
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David committed himself to the Lord over and over, and we must do the same. Commitment is not simply a decision; it is a way of life. Every burden and every battle should serve to drive us again and again to our God.

PSALM 17: STAYING RIGHT WITH GOD IN A WORLD GONE WRONG

When the whole world is spinning out of control, make sure your own life is in God's control. Put yourself in the Lord's hands. When the devil seems to be having his way all around you, make sure you are as committed to Christ as you should be. Today would be a good day to dedicate yourself back to God. "Lord, I want to live under the shadow of Your wings. I want to stay in Your hands and be as close to You as possible."

The Lord is going to meet the needs of your life. Stay close to Him.

Psalms 17:14 | *"From men which are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes."*

Here is a reminder of eternity. The wicked live only for time, but God's people live for eternity. Their reward would be in this world; ours will be in the world to come.

People talk about living "your best life now." A child of God's best life is never now; it is always to come because God always saves the best for last. Your best will be when you are in His presence forever. The worst you will ever deal with and the best a lost person will ever know is in this life. Never forget this truth. **Keep your eyes on eternity.**

Psalms 17:15 | *"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."*

That phrase "as for me" is so important. You cannot answer for anyone else, but all men will answer to God for themselves (2 Corinthians 5:10). It is impossible to choose for others. The writer realized that, and he rooted his satisfaction not in the present, but in eternity; not in people, but in God; not in his circumstances, but in what he knew the Lord would do (2 Corinthians 4:18).

We have so much to look forward to as God's children. We will see the just God face to face someday. The Bible says in I John 3:2, "We

PSALM 17: STAYING RIGHT WITH GOD IN A WORLD GONE WRONG

shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

On the day you see the Lord, you will be made like Him. What a glorious day that will be. He will establish a world of perfect justice, where truth and right prevail and every evil is banished. Until that day, keep your heart right with God. Put your faith in Him. Fix your eyes on eternity.

In a world that has gone wrong, know that God will always do right in the end. Our job is simply to stay right with Him.



PSALM 18: WILL YOU?

Psalm 18 is full of great revelation about God and practical application for our lives. Take time to read it in its entirety. Pray and meditate on all 50 verses, and you will uncover rich nuggets of truth like the remarkable phrase in verse 35: *“thy gentleness hath made me great.”* In this amazing psalm you will see God more clearly and yourself more plainly. Permit me to concentrate on a single truth on which the entire psalm – and the blessed life – seems to build.

The Lord provides us with a very definite historical context, explained in the detailed title inscribed on the psalm:

“To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said,”

That is an unusually specific introduction. So we know this psalm was written when God had given David great deliverance from Saul and from his enemies. Perhaps David sang this throughout his lifetime and led others to sing it as he reviewed God’s goodness in his life. What a marvelous example for us to follow!

The Psalmist begins this way:

PSALM 18: WILL YOU?

“I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn	of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.”
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The opening three verses set the tone and theme for all that follows. Pay careful attention to the repetition of the phrase “*I will*.” Each is an expression of David’s response to God’s revelation. Because of who God is, we must choose to yield our will to Him. Every sincere believer must say for themselves: “*I will*.”

“Want” and “will” are two very different things. **Your wants are your desires, but your will is what you choose to do.** There are many people who want the Lord and the right things but are not willing to choose His way. David exercised his will. He said, “*I will*.”

This principle is witnessed at the marriage altar. The groom is asked, “Will you take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife?” and he answers, “*I will*.” But that exercise of will must be done not only on the wedding day but every day that follows.

UNDERSTAND YOUR WILL

Life is a matter of the will. Men and women were created with a conscience and allowed freedom of choice. With this choice comes great responsibility to God and accountability for the choices made. You cannot choose for someone else and no one else can choose for you.

Most people live governed by their emotions and not their will. **God gave you a will to lead your emotions, not to follow them.** Many mornings when I get out of bed, I don’t feel like doing anything, but I must choose to because I need to. There are times we may not feel like reading the Bible or praying, but we must exercise our will and choose to do it!

PSALM 18: WILL YOU?

The Lord is worthy of your will. David addresses the Lord specifically in each of these first three verses. The only way for your will to be used the right way is for it to be yielded to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Notice the descriptions of God by David: “*rock...fortress... deliverer...strength...buckler...high tower...worthy to be praised.*” A good way to motivate your will to do the right thing is to meditate on who your God is — He is wonderful and great! The goodness of God will lead you to repentance (Romans 2:4).

Meditating on the greatness of God will put everything else in life in proper perspective, and help place priorities in the right order. Our precious Savior, the Perfect Man, left us an example when He lived and died by this principle: “*Not my will, but thine, be done*” (Luke 22:42). The Lord is worthy of your will.

EXERCISE YOUR WILL

The will is like a muscle; if it is neglected it gets weaker and weaker. Conversely, as you exercise your will, it gets stronger. As you yield your will to God's will and choose to obey, eventually your emotions follow. But if you allow emotions to run your life, they will ruin your life. You cannot trust your emotions. When you least feel like doing right, you most need to! Begin with the three “I wills” of David...

1. I will love the Lord. David expressed that in the very first words of the psalm. Do you love the Lord? Love is a decision of the will, not a whim of emotion. It is an expression of faith, not feeling. It is a commitment.

The Bible says in Psalm 116:1, “*I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.*” Both psalms illustrate a connection between your prayer life and your love life. The more time you spend in His presence, and the more you see your prayers answered, the more love you will have for Him. A life of

PSALM 18: WILL YOU?

true devotion always begins with loving God.

2. I will trust the Lord. He is trustworthy. No matter what is happening to you right now, say to Him, “Lord, I trust that you love me so much to never choose the wrong thing for my life.” God is great and God is good - you can trust Him.

3. I will call upon the Lord. There is a beautiful progression in these verses. If you love someone, you will trust them. If you love and trust them you will want to communicate with them. Your prayer life is a good gauge of your love and indicator of your faith. Talk with the Lord and fellowship with Him.

Take time today to talk to God. Tell Him you love Him and trust Him. David said repeatedly, “*I will.*” The question is: *Will you?*



PSALM 19: THREE REVELATIONS

One of the most beautiful of all of the psalms is Psalm 19. Many people quote the first part in reference to nature and God's creation, but you need to read it in its entirety to understand God's message.

Psalm 19 opens: *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."* From there it goes on to describe the beauty of God's creation. Then at the end of the psalm it gets very personal. The psalmist speaks not only of nature around us but of the nature of our hearts. Verse 14 closes: *"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."*

We do not know when David wrote this particular psalm or its historical context, but we do know what it tells us about God:

God is so **mighty** that He holds the entire world in the palm of His hand. Yet, He is so **personal** that He deals with the most intimate issues of life.

God is so **great** that He sustains the whole universe (Colossians 1:16-17). Yet, He is so **merciful** that He comes to where we are and deals with our hearts - individually.

PSALM 19: THREE REVELATIONS

This is a psalm that brings both comfort and conviction. It is amazing how the Lord can encourage and chasten simultaneously. The Word of God really is “*sharper than any twoedged sword*” (Hebrews 4:12). It cuts both ways.

Psalm 19 is a psalm of God’s revelation. Follow the three distinct things God reveals to man:

GOD’S GENERAL REVELATION

This is what every person knows. It is the revelation of creation. Verses 1-6 declare:

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end	of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”
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This passage teaches that all people have some light. By that, every person has some revelation from the Creator. That is how you can go anywhere in the world, and speak to people in any context about this truth. You can point to the sky and say, “Someone put that there.” You can point to the earth and say, “Someone keeps this going.” This is the general revelation God gives to man in creation (Romans 1:20).

GOD’S SPECIAL REVELATION

God’s revelation of Himself as Creator is enough for man to know there is a God, but it takes God’s revelation of Himself in the Word for man to know God personally. This is why Christ came: He is the living Word (John 1:14). This is why the written Word was given: to make us “*wise unto salvation*” (2 Timothy 3:15).

PSALM 19: THREE REVELATIONS

Every sinner needs God's special revelation - the revelation of Scripture. Verse 7: *"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple."* The first emphasis was on the world around us - it shows people that there is a God. But this fact alone will not save the soul.

Every man must be converted. His heart must be changed. The only way that can happen is through what God reveals in His Word. The Bible says in I Peter 1:23, *"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."* The one thing that never changes is the Word of God.

"The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of

the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."

Notice that he transitions from the truth of Scripture to how we should use it in our lives. After affirming in verse 7 that it is *"perfect,"* he points out what it does: *"converting the soul."* The same is true for each of the succeeding attributes of the Word of God.

It is not enough to say that you have a Bible or even believe the Bible. What are you doing with it? Are you allowing the Word of God to do its work in your life today?

Are you hungry for God? Do you long to know Him better? If so, then you should have a hunger for the Scripture, because it is God's revelation of Himself.

"Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward" (verse 11). God's truth protects us for this world and for eternity. There is great benefit in obeying the Word.

PSALM 19: THREE REVELATIONS

GOD'S PERSONAL REVELATION

What is God's personal revelation? The revelation of our sin, which is revealed only in light of Who God is. As we look at the world and then at the Word, we see not only God but also ourselves.

The Bible is not simply a window into who God is; it is a mirror of who I am. It reveals my unholiness in the light of His holiness. It exposes my deep need in the light of His sufficiency.

Psalm 19:12 | *"Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults."*

The knowledge of God's Word is not just intellectual and academic; it is spiritual and personal. It creates a desire to be clean. You will want God to cleanse you of every private sin and secret weight.

Psalm 19:13 | *"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."*

Represented in the psalmist's heartfelt prayer there is a picture of the slide of sin. Secret sins become presumptuous sins, presumptuous sins become dominating sins, and dominating sins become the great transgression. If you do not want to be guilty of great sins, do not let presumptuous sins have dominion over you. If you want to avoid those sins, deal with your secret sins. Let God cleanse thoroughly the inner recesses of your heart.

The final verse should be the prayer of every one of us every day: *"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."* The Lord is powerful and personal. The Lord is able to save and sustain. He is the Creator of this world, the God who is revealed in His Word, and the One who alone can work in you to make you the person He wants you to be.

Psalm 19 opens God to us and it should open our hearts to Him.



PSALM 20: THERE IS POWER IN HIS NAME

Wouldn't it be wonderful if life was always peaceable? In our world today there is such a cry for peace, yet we live in a world filled with war and turmoil. Prophetically, we know that real peace will not come until the Prince of Peace rules and reigns upon earth. But in the midst of strife and contention, you can have peace — not after the battle, but during the fiercest struggles.

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Psalms 20 and Psalm 21 are unique because they are “war psalms.” They were written in the midst of a war zone. These psalms describe the conflicts David was experiencing while leading the nation of Israel. We do not know exactly who they were fighting; it could have been the Philistines, the Amorites, the Assyrians or another enemy. They had plenty!

As a follower of Jesus Christ, you will have enemies as well. If you go along with the devil, he will not give you any trouble at all. But if you try to follow Christ with all your heart, rest assured, the world, the flesh and the devil will all rear their ugly heads to oppose you.

Psalms 20 offers specific encouragement for those who are in the battle:

PSALM 20: THERE IS POWER IN HIS NAME

“The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion; Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice; Selah. Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel. We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the LORD fulfil

all thy petitions. Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God. They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright. Save, LORD: let the king hear us when we call.”

The king is speaking, writing out of the overflow of his own heart and the conflict both within and without. Sometimes the greatest battles are not the ones fought externally, but the ones on the inside—the private, personal battles about which no one knows.

David brought the conflict of his own soul to the Lord and cried out for salvation, help, and strength. Rejoice in this: the same God David prayed to is the One to whom you can pray!

THE PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

Psalms 20 points both to the past and to the future. Historically, it points to David. Prophetically it points us to Christ, the true King. He is the God of Jacob, the Strong God of weak people. He is the One who can be trusted, the One who saves. He brings down the wicked and raises the upright.

I must remind you that He is on His throne today, and someday soon He will rule and reign on this earth. I am looking for that day and for that kingdom; what a glorious day it is going to be! *“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”* (Matthew 6:10).

But as we see David and look for the coming King, is there any

PSALM 20: THERE IS POWER IN HIS NAME

help for us today? We live between history and prophecy, but the eternal God is near and is at work in us.

THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

There is a beautiful spiritual secret found three times in Psalm 20. It is always good to take note of the divine repetitions in Scripture because when God repeats something it is because He does not want us to forget it. Mark them in your Bible:

Psalm 20:1 | *"The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; **the name of the God** of Jacob defend thee."*

Psalm 20:5 | *"We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in **the name of our God** we will set up our banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions."*

Psalm 20:7 | *"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember **the name of the LORD our God.**"*

The strength and help we need is always connected to **the name of the Lord** our God.

THE NAMES OF GOD

In Scripture the names of God are important because His name reveals His nature. It shows us much about His perfect character and unchanging attributes.

The name LORD is Jehovah, the covenant God who always keeps His promises and fulfills what He foretells. The Lord has put His name on the line and will be true to His Word. The Bible says in Philippians 1:6, *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."*

He will never set everything in motion and then just let it go. He has everything under control, and He holds you in the palm of His hand.

PSALM 20: THERE IS POWER IN HIS NAME

He is the God of Jacob, the patriarch from whom the 12 tribes descended. Jacob was the old name for Israel, and that name was associated with scheming. He was the one who met with God and then walked the rest of his days with a limp. The reference to this name was a reminder that God is the God of weak ones. When we come to the end of ourselves and throw our hands up, “Lord, I can’t do it. Help me.” We hear Him say, “I am here. I will help you.”

THE BANNER OF GOD

The reference to banners (verse 5) is emblematic of ancient armies which marched under distinctive royal banners. One of the names for God is Jehovah-Nissi, the God of banners. We march under His name! He is the God who is with us and enabling us in the midst of our conflict.

We are in a spiritual war. Battles rage all around us. You may feel weak, but your Captain is very strong. His resources and armor will accomplish His will. The Lord has never been weak, not even for a single day. Whatever you are dealing with today, His “*saving strength*” will be enough (verse 6).

Psalm 20:7 | *“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.”*

In your battle and in your weakness, speak His name. There is no name like that name. Acts 4:12 tells us of that power, “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*” His name is exalted above every name, and one day every knee will bow to it (Philippians 2:9-11).

The Jehovah of Psalm 20 is the Jesus of our New Testament. Speak His name in prayer. Speak His name to encourage your own soul. Speak His name to others. When you are at your weakest and in the middle of your greatest battle, when you are wondering how it will all turn out, go back to His mighty name.

PSALM 20: THERE IS POWER IN HIS NAME

The Apostle Peter knew the riches and resources of His name:
“Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the
name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6). In
the name of Jesus Christ, find your strength in Almighty God and
keep moving forward by faith.



PSALM 21: HOW TO FIND STRENGTH IN THE BATTLE

Psalm 21 begins where Psalm 20 concluded - the king marching into battle under the banner of the name of his God. This psalm shows us the king on the other side of the battle. Yes, you are going through!

The same God who leads you into battle will lead you through it into victory. He may bring you into a fight, but on the other side you will be stronger. The Holy Spirit led the Lord Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, but He came out in the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 4).

Psalm 21 opens with a note of victory in verses 1-2. *“The king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! Thou hast given him his heart’s desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.”*

God answered his prayer.

We should all pause for a moment and acknowledge how very good God has been to us; He has answered our prayers. Perhaps every problem is not yet gone and every enemy is not yet vanquished, but the Lord has never failed, forsaken, or forgotten us — and He will not start today.

PSALM 21: HOW TO FIND STRENGTH IN THE BATTLE

Psalm 21 is divided into two parts:

- Psalm 21:1-7 — David praises God and rejoices in the victory he experienced.
- Psalm 21:8-12 — God deals with the enemy.

I love the divine order here. David turned his attention to the Lord first. He was not fixed on the enemies who were coming against him or the circumstances in which he found himself. It was the Lord before all. Once that was established, he could trust that God would always take care of his enemies.

PRESENT JOY AND PAST VICTORIES

The first part of verse 1 is similar to Nehemiah 8:10 - *“the joy of the LORD is your strength.”* When you feel faint and weary, you need a fresh understanding of the goodness of God. If you can learn to rejoice in the Lord and His mercy and faithfulness, it will put fresh courage in you to keep moving forward. God will enable you to keep fighting the good fight of faith.

Observe that verse 1 ends with an exclamation point. Are you still excited about knowing Jesus? Is there still excitement in knowing that God is for you? Do you still get stirred by the fact that Jesus is not only the Author but also the Finisher of your faith? Take heart that the Lord who is working in your life today will continue to work.

Psalm 21:3 | *“For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.”*

Think about the way God “preventest” us. He actually hedges us in with His goodness. In my own walk with God, I have been reminded of His goodness to me. The first lie the devil told mankind was that God is not good, or that He withholds good things from us (Genesis 3:4-5). He continues to tell that same lie, and people continue to believe it.

PSALM 21: HOW TO FIND STRENGTH IN THE BATTLE

Perhaps you are wondering today about the goodness of God. My friend, He is always good. It is His very nature. Think of all the things He has kept from you and all that He has given you because of His goodness.

Psalm 21:4 | *“He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.”*

Take a breath. Isn't it nice that you can do that? Now take another one. Every breath is the gift of God. He is the One who gave you life, but He also sustains your life. There are people who did not live to see this day, but you did. The very breath in your body is a reminder that God is good to us. *“Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD”* (Psalm 150:6).

Psalm 21:5 | *“His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.”*

The greatest blessings are not physical or material, but spiritual. The greatest life is eternal life which is found only in our God. If you do not have His life, you can. It is offered to all of us. *“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent”* (John 17:3). If you have eternal life, go back and rejoice in it again and again. Do not lose the joy of His salvation!

Jesus said in John 10:10, *“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”* His life is not just eternal life; it is abundant life. The life that Christ offers gives us the promise of eternity with Him, but it also gives us His presence now.

Psalm 21:6-7 | *“For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance. For the king trusteth in the LORD, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved.”*

We read in Psalm 20 that some will trust in other things, or

PSALM 21: HOW TO FIND STRENGTH IN THE BATTLE

resources. David said that he would just trust in God. His life was a life of faith from start to finish. This is the life God blesses.

If you trusted God in your darkest days, you can keep trusting Him today. He helped you in previous battles and brought you through great valleys, and He will continue. The Lord will take care of you.

PRESENT VICTORY AND CONTINUED PRAISE

Read verses 8-12 and hear David describe in more detail how God took care of him and dealt with his enemies. You may have an enemy right now that seems pretty big to you. Get your eyes on the greatness of God and your enemy will get smaller.

Goliath was small in David's sight because God was big. When Saul chased him through the mountainside, he seemed small because God was big. Every army he faced seemed small because God was big. It can be the same for you.

Psalm 21:13 | *"Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power."*

In the end, it is all to the glory of God. Psalm 21 begins and ends in strength. We see it in the first verse and the last verse. God's strength will give you all that you need, and it will give God all of the glory. Whether you are going into a battle, in the middle of one or coming out of one, know that you can trust your Captain. Rejoice in the goodness of God and you will find strength to carry on.



PSALM 22: LOOK AT THE CROSS

Psalms 22-24 are a unique collection of Psalms, marking a beautiful progression through the sufferings of Christ to the glory that follows. Follow the journey of Jesus through this trilogy of psalms. Psalm 22 leads us to **the mountain called Calvary**. Psalm 23 takes us into **the valley of the shadow of death**. But Psalm 24 ascends to new heights as it lifts us to **Mount Zion**. What a beautiful expression of Christian experience! After the mountain there will always be a valley, but beyond that valley there will be another mountain.

In these passages we move from the Cross to the Resurrection, from the battle to the ultimate victory. Specifically, they give us a beautiful picture of the Lord as our Shepherd.

- **Psalm 22 portrays the Good Shepherd.** The Bible says in John 10:11, *"The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."* That is what He does in Psalm 22. The Good Shepherd is offering Himself as the sacrifice for **sin's penalty**.
- **Psalm 23 describes the Great Shepherd.** He faithfully leads us *"in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."* As we follow our Great Shepherd, He releases us from **sin's power**.
- **Psalm 24 exalts Him as the Chief Shepherd.** He is the King coming in glory. The Chief Shepherd will soon appear to

PSALM 22: LOOK AT THE CROSS

deliver us from **sin's presence**.

What a wonderful Savior we have! What a wonderful Shepherd!

LOOK AT CHRIST

With this foundation, let us turn our attention to Psalm 22. One thousand years before Jesus cried from the cross, His cries were recorded prophetically in this passage. How is that possible? It is because our God is not bound up in time; He fills up all of eternity. He is the first and the last (Isaiah 44:6; Revelation 22:13).

We do not know at what point in David's lifetime these verses were written. That is significant because it is not primarily about David, it is about Christ.

Psalm 22:1 | *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?"*

Immediately the reader is transported to Golgotha. Do you hear Jesus crying from the cross? It is midnight in the middle of the day as God the Father turns His back on His own Son, and that cry pierces those shadows.

On this side of Calvary, we know the answer to the question posed in this verse. Christ became sin for us. According to II Corinthians 5:21, *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*

- He was forsaken so you would never be forsaken.
- He took your death so you could take His life.
- He took your darkness so you could take His light.
- He took your sin so you could take His salvation.
- He took your Hell so you could take His Heaven.

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" No believer will

PSALM 22: LOOK AT THE CROSS

ever have to utter those words! In Hebrews 13:5 Christ states, *“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”* Christ was forsaken by the Father for our sin so we could be reconciled to God. Through Christ, we can never be separated from God again.

Psalm 22 brings us to Jesus. Look at Christ!

LOOK AT CALVARY

There are descriptions of Christ's suffering scattered throughout this lengthy psalm. Verses 7-8: *“All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.”*

That is exactly what the mob and the religious rulers cried at the foot of the cross. They mocked Him and jeered at Him.

Psalm 22:9-10 | *“But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.”*

This is a beautiful reminder of the virgin birth of Christ, coming into the world according to the Father's divine purpose.

Do you want to know what was on His mind on the cross? Remember, Mary was present at the crucifixion and Jesus took a moment to direct John to care for her. I believe that when He saw her that day, He was thinking about how this was the very reason for which He was born.

Mary stood at the cross, watching Him die. There are no recorded words from His mother and no moment when she tried to convince Him to come down from the cross. She understood His purpose and endured the suffering (Luke 2:34-35). In fact, Mary understood that Jesus was not just her Son; He was her Savior (Luke 1:46-55).

PSALM 22: LOOK AT THE CROSS

We must not talk about the baby and neglect the suffering Savior. Psalm 22 connects Bethlehem and Calvary, the manger and the cross. This is why He came, to be a ransom for our sin — “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Psalm 22:12-13 | *“Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.”*

Listen to all of the sounds around the cross. The angry mob mocking Jesus at Calvary were like wild animals, driven by sinful impulse and set on destruction.

There is an interesting reference to “strong bulls of Bashan.” Bashan was a fertile area where large cattle were raised to be fierce and strong. In other words, the strength of man, the strength of sin, and the strength of Hell came against Christ and surrounded Him at the cross.

Pause for a moment and thank Jesus for what He did at the cross. He was our substitute; He took our place.

Psalm 22:14 | *“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.”*

We know that while not one bone of His was broken, every one of His bones were out of joint from hanging on that cross. This truth is reiterated in Verse 17: *“I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.”* When they thrust the spear into His side, blood and water came out, a medical sign of a ruptured heart. Jesus died of a broken heart.

Psalm 22:15 | *“My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.”* He who made all of the water in the world would cry: *“I thirst.”* He suffered in every way so that He could give us living water.

PSALM 22: LOOK AT THE CROSS

Psalm 22:16 | *“For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.”* Christ was pierced when they nailed Him to the cross. Someday all men will see the wounds of His suffering (Revelation 1:7).

Psalm 22:18 | *“They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”* This was fulfilled when the Roman soldiers gambled over His coat at the foot of the cross.

But Psalm 22 does not end at Calvary. Look at verses 22-23:

“I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.”

There is a definite change in tone and theme here. Why? Because the cross was not the end. **When Jesus said, “It is finished,” the transaction was complete, but He was just beginning.**

Read Psalm 22 on your knees. Find a quiet place and read it aloud. Think of what Jesus did for you! If you have never received Christ as your Savior, call on Him now. If you do know Him, thank Him today for being your Savior.



PSALM 23: THE SHEPHERD IN THE SHADOWS

Ask anyone about their favorite psalm, and the most frequent reply is “Psalm 23.” It is arguably the most famous of all the psalms.

Psalm 23 is often quoted when people are ill and nearing the end of life. It is frequently used during funeral services. But this psalm that people connect to death, is actually a psalm of life! Even more, it is a psalm for every stage of life.

David, the shepherd-king of Israel, wrote the beautiful words of this brief song. We might imagine that he sang them while sitting in the fields as a young man, keeping watch over his father Jesse’s sheep. It is possible that they were penned as he sat on the throne as ruler of the southern kingdom, waiting on God’s perfect fulfillment of the promise. Perhaps they were recorded near the end of his life when he was looking back at all of those years. We do not know exactly when the Shepherd Psalm was written, but one thing we do know: **David is not the Shepherd; Christ is!**

The Lord Jesus, who would come through David’s line, is the One spoken of in Psalm 23. It is not the pastor who is the chief shepherd, or the king shepherding a nation. It is the Lord Himself.

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He

PSALM 23: THE SHEPHERD IN THE SHADOWS

restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake" (verses 1-3).

If you stop there, you might think, "How wonderful. All is well!" Then you come to verse 4. *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."*

We are taken from stillness to shadows, from the mountaintops and green pastures to a deep, dark valley. But our God watches over us in the night as well as in the light, in the valley as well as on the mountain. He leads us to rest and peace in verse 2, and in paths of righteousness and peace in verse 3. But sometimes He will also lead us through rough places, as in verse 4.

The Lord is the Shepherd in the shadows. According to I John 1:5, *"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."* But the God of perfect light is present in our dark times.

1. THE SHADOW

All people understand the picture of a shadow, and all people face the reality of them in their human experience. Even great men like David had dark days when it seemed as though shadows fell upon them. But do not miss the most obvious truth about shadows: they are not real! There is no substance to them.

Afraid of a shadow? There is nothing to fear when the Lord is near.

The only way to have a shadow is by light. Its very presence is evidence that light exists. In dark days when shadows cross your path, you must choose to look away from the darkness to the light. Shadows always pass eventually.

The shadow is not the end. The Lord, the Shepherd, will last forever.

PSALM 23: THE SHEPHERD IN THE SHADOWS

There are three beautiful words in verse 4 that merit further examination. The word “*though*” is a word of **possibility**. It means that something could happen. Dark days come into the brightest lives, but you cannot live in worry and dread about what lies ahead. Corrie Ten Boom correctly observed, “Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow. It empties today of its strength.”

The word “*through*” is a word of **certainty**. You will not stay in the valley and in the shadows forever. God will bring you out on the other side. In the words of an ancient Persian saying, “This too shall pass.”

But the greatest word in the verse is “*thou*.” This is a word of **deity**. God will never change. He is present and He is powerful. The Lord is with you and you are with Him. The shadow will not last, but He will.

2. THE SHEPHERD

What does the Shepherd do for us?

Psalm 23:5-6 | *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.*”

- **He frees you.** Verse 4 states, “*I will fear no evil.*” He takes that fear away.
- **He feeds you.** In verse 5 a table is spread for you even in the presence of your enemies. As surely as the children of Israel received manna in the wilderness, He continues to meet the needs of His people.
- **He fills you.** The fulness of God is so great that the psalmist could testify: “*my cup runneth over.*” When He fills you He also flows through you into the lives of others.
- **He follows you.** We know that the Shepherd leads His sheep;

PSALM 23: THE SHEPHERD IN THE SHADOWS

He goes before us. But verse 6 reveals what some have called His sheepdogs. We are followed by “goodness and mercy.”

- **He fulfills you.** The song ends with this declaration of faith for the future: “I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.” He is with you now, and you will be in His house with Him for all eternity!

A pastor named E.J. Rollings, a former police officer who ministered years ago in Detroit, went through a period of real darkness. The shadows fell and his faith was shaken. A fellow pastor wrote him a letter that contained this encouraging statement: “Standing somewhere in the shadows, you will find Jesus.”

Rollings took those words and wrote a beautiful hymn:

Standing somewhere in the shadows you'll find Jesus,

He's the Friend who always cares and understands.

Standing somewhere in the shadows you will find Him,

And you'll know Him by the nail prints in His hands.

The Lord Jesus went “*through the valley of the shadow of death*” for you. He tasted death for every man. He is with you right where you are. He is not only the Christ of the cross but also the Christ of the empty tomb. Because of that, you will come through in victory (1 Corinthians 15:54-58).

3. THE SHEEP

David had been a shepherd by trade, but he identified himself spiritually as a sheep. He was a follower of the Lord, just like we are.

Sheep are skittish creatures, easily frightened. Yet there is a certain confident tone in this psalm, because it is not about us but about the Lord.

PSALM 23: THE SHEPHERD IN THE SHADOWS

Even the dark and difficult things addressed in verse 4, begin with the positive word “Yea.” We look at circumstances and they will say, “No.” But then we look at the Lord, and He will say, “Yes.” Our assurance is in Him.

The Bible says in II Corinthians 1:20, *“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”*

In 1862, a man named Joseph Gilmore was speaking from Psalm 23 and was arrested by the words “*shadow of death*” in verse 4. It was during the dark days of the War Between the States. While having lunch at a deacon’s house one Sunday, he jotted down some words on paper and gave it to his wife. She sent it off to musician William Bradbury, who published it.

Gilmore never knew what had become of those words until one day many years later. At a low point in his life, he attended a church meeting and opened a hymnbook to find the very words which he had written:

He leadeth me, O blessed thought
O words with heavenly comfort fraught
Whate’er I do, where’er I be
Still ‘tis God’s hand that leadeth me
He leadeth me, He leadeth me
By His own hand He leadeth me
His faithful follower I would be
For by His hand He leadeth me

Friend, the Lord is not just leading you when things are good. He is also leading in the shadows. Standing somewhere in the shadows, you will find Jesus.



PSALM 24: THE BLESSING

Would you like the blessing of God on your life — on your family, your work, your church, your community? All of us do. But we are living in a world where **everyone wants the product, but few want the process. Even fewer are willing to pay the price.**

Psalm 24 revolves around the blessing. In the heart of the passage we find the divine emphasis of God's blessing:

“The earth is the LORD’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the

generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.”

PSALM 24: THE BLESSING

This psalm is not about the blessing as much as the God who blesses. Sometimes we get so consumed with the blessings that we forget the Blessor! Psalm 24 is about knowing the One who brings every good thing into our lives.

Psalm 24 divides into three main parts:

- Verses 1-2 look at eternity **past**. We see Christ as the Creator.
- Verses 3-6 describe the **present** — right where we are at this moment. We see Christ as our High Priest.
- Verses 7-10 give us a glimpse of eternity future. We see Christ as the King of Glory.

Historically, we are ascending to the tabernacle with David, and prophetically we are ascending to the holy place with the Son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ. Consider the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:8. *“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”* This is the way to God’s blessing.

A REVELATION OF WHO GIVES THE BLESSING

The emphasis of the passage is not a what but a who. The blessing is not something; it is Someone. In a very real way, only the Lord Jesus Christ is worthy of ascending into the Holy Place. Yet He makes a way that we can go with Him into God’s presence.

The greatest blessing in life is to simply be in the presence of God. Listen to the great question in verse 3: *“Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?”* The great aim is nearness to God, knowing there is nothing between you and Him.

Are you walking constantly and consciously in the presence of our holy God? Every joy, every good thing, every blessing flows out of His presence. Do not seek something from the Lord - seek the Lord.

PSALM 24: THE BLESSING

We are not told in Scripture to seek revival. We are told to seek the Lord. When we do, He brings revival. He wants you to have more than a revival meeting or a momentary experience; He wants to give you a revived heart, to live each day in His presence.

AN INSTRUCTION OF HOW TO SEEK THE BLESSING

If you want to live in the presence of God and have the blessing of being near Him, how is that possible? It is illustrated in verse 4: *“He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”*

Notice that the list moves from the outside in. He starts with the hands, which are external, and then progresses to the heart, which represents the most intimate, secret things in your life. God knows even the innermost part of us!

The Jewish people at the time this psalm was written would have lifted up their hands in worship. We are told in I Timothy 2:8 to *“pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”* God wants your hands right and your heart right. The last part of the verse extends that to the soul and the lips as well. He wants every part of you to be as clean as it can be.

To do this, you need to confess your sin before Him and make sure everything in you is clean and out of God’s way. It is a beautiful parallel to James 4:8, which says, *“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”*

A QUESTION OF WHO WANTS THE BLESSING

Do you hunger and thirst for more of what God has for you? Jesus said in Matthew 5:6, *“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”*

The word *“ascend”* in verse 3 of the psalm is a very beautiful word.

PSALM 24: THE BLESSING

The Christian life has been designed to be an ever-ascending life, as pictured by people going up to Jerusalem and up the temple stairs into the presence of God.

The Bible says in Proverbs 4:18, *“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”* Even in the low moments God is lifting us nearer to Him. In the dark times the Lord is showing us more light. We all have “down” days, but through it all He is bringing us higher and closer to His heart.

Someone once said that the way to have revival is to draw a circle, step into it, and ask God to make everyone in that circle right with Him. I like that. Don’t ask the Lord to straighten everyone else out; ask Him to get you clean.

Matthew Henry once said, “When God is about to pour out unusual blessings, He first sets His people a-praying.” I believe that is true. Verse 6 says, *“This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.”* I wonder if we could be that generation.

Why is Jacob’s name mentioned there? That was Israel’s first name. It meant “supplanter, trickster, deceiver.” Jacob was the cripple, the weak one. Aren’t you glad God is the God of the weak ones? Lean on Him.

If you are weak today and feel as though you can only limp into the presence of God, that’s all right. Declare your utter dependence on Him and say, “Lord, I want you more than anything. I want the blessing of living in your presence today.”

Psalms 24 is more than historical or prophetic; it is personal. If you want the blessing, you can receive it by living in the presence of God. Do not forget the Blessor!



PSALM 25: FIVE LESSONS FOR BEING A GOOD STUDENT

For many years it was my joy and privilege to stand each day in a classroom and teach students. As a teacher, you are always looking for students who are open to receive and ready to respond.

As a Christian, I must realize every day that I am not the teacher — I am the student. It does not matter how much experience you have, how old you are, or how much you think you know, you are still a student in the Lord's school. He is the Teacher, and we are just students in the divine classroom.

What kind of student would the Lord say you are? How teachable are you? Are you wide open to God, or do you feel like you have graduated from His school? We do not complete our training until we graduate into His presence.

THE GREATEST TEACHER

Psalms 25 is the psalm of the teacher and the student. Its 22 verses, written from David's perspective, span the 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. If you examine Psalm 25 in Hebrew, each verse begins with a different letter to form an ancient acrostic. This practical method encouraged the memorization of and meditation on Scripture.

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But there is a rich spiritual truth here for us as well. Psalm 25 is a Penitential Psalm, a psalm of repentance. The A-Z method conveys the idea of completeness — to deal thoroughly with sin and to be thoroughly right with God. That is the tone and the theme of this psalm.

We also discover a repeated emphasis throughout the psalm on our need for instruction. Confession always precedes instruction. This divine order is seen in David's personal psalms of confession (Psalm 32:1-8; Psalm 51:1-13). God can only teach us and we can only teach others when we have a heart that is right with Him. When our hearts are clean and the way is clear, it is amazing how much God will show you!

Psalm 25:4 | *"Shew me thy ways, O LORD; **teach** me thy paths."*

Psalm 25:5 | *"**Lead** me in thy truth, and **teach** me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day."*

Psalm 25:8 | *"Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he **teach** sinners in the way."*

Psalm 25:9 | *"The meek will he **guide** in judgment: and the meek will he **teach** his way."*

Psalm 25:12 | *"What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he **teach** in the way that he shall choose."*

Each of these verses depicts the Lord teaching and man learning. He has so much to teach us. The older I get, the more I realize how much I do not know! As you mature in the faith, you begin to realize how far short we fall of all God's greatness, goodness, and knowledge.

The Bible says in Jeremiah 33:3, *"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."* Have you ever considered how much you do not know? Then ponder how much God does know!

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The Lord offers His gracious invitation, “I want you to cry out to Me and ask Me because I have so much I want to share with you and teach you.” What attentive and diligent students we should desire to be of the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, and spiritual truth. Are you open to instruction and willing to obey?

A GOOD STUDENT

Psalm 25 is deeply practical. Each verse reveals something about the type of believers God instructs. He wants to teach everyone, but any teacher will tell you that students learn at different rates and in various ways. Frankly, some students do not want to learn. Our Teacher identifies the characteristics of the best students.

God teaches those who ask Him for direction. Verse 4: *“Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.”* Listen to the fervent tone of the psalmist. God teaches those who ask. As you approach the Lord say, “Speak to me.” As Psalm 119:18 says, *“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”*

The use of “ways” and “paths” is important. There are actual steps we are instructed to take. The goal is not simply knowledge, to fill your head with facts, but advancement. Truth rightly received will affect how you live your life.

Are you willing for the Lord to show you how to behave, how to respond to a difficult person, how to spend your money? He will show you the next step if you are willing to take it. And He always leads in the right direction.

God teaches those who are willing to wait on Him. Verse 5: *“Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.”* Teachers have to exercise patience, and so do students. You will not understand everything immediately; wisdom comes a little at a time, line upon line, precept upon precept. We want all of our questions answered immediately, but God says that He will teach us as we wait on

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Him throughout the day.

He does not just hold class during your scheduled devotional time. His class convenes all day long. The Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples as they walked along the Sea of Galilee and often held class in the most unusual places. Those who follow Him and walk with Him will find that He continues to teach in the most ordinary and mundane times of life. This is why you should learn to wait patiently on Him all day, every day.

God teaches sinners. Verse 8: *“Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.”* We all certainly qualify in this category! But this is important: He teaches those who acknowledge their sinful condition. You do not strut into the presence of the holy God. You come humbly and admit that you are needy and sinful. When you do that, God opens the door to full fellowship.

Do you remember the story that Jesus told about the Pharisee and the publican? The Pharisee touted how he was not like the others, and went home the same way he came. The publican cried out for mercy, and he was justified.

Psalms 51:6 says, *“Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.”* I believe there is a divine order there. To gain wisdom, you must speak the truth. When you speak truth and agree with God, He graciously grants wisdom that you do not have.

God teaches the meek. Verse 9: *“The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.”* The meek are teachable and humble. They understand that they do not have all the answers. Come to God saying, “Lord, I am ignorant and you are all wise. Show me Your wisdom.”

Moses is identified in Scripture as the meekest man on earth. This is the man that God chose to lead His people! Wise people do not

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always have something to say, nor do they always know what to do. They simply know that God knows and their responsibility is to seek Him. The all-wise God is not looking for planners - He is looking for followers.

God teaches those who fear Him. Verse 12: *“What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.”* Every good teacher-student relationship requires respect. But there has never been a teacher like the Lord, and our hearts should be filled with reverence and awe that we can talk to Him and that He would speak to us. When we fear God we fear choosing our own way, because we know that His way is always best.

Early in Israel's history God raised up Samuel to teach His people truth. The secret to Samuel's long and effective ministry to others is found in the foundational stage of his life. The prayer of his heart was, *“Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth.”* He was not first Samuel the prophet; he was Samuel the student. Purpose in your heart to be the right kind of student. Make sure there is nothing between you and the Teacher, and then say, “Shew me. Lead me. Teach me.” You can be sure He will answer that prayer.



PSALM 26: INTEGRITY

Integrity.

It is a word used sparingly in the Word, and a character trait exhibited even more rarely in our world. Most often when you find “integrity” in the Scriptures, it is connected to the divine nature. Psalm 26 utilizes this powerful word at the beginning and the end.

Psalm 26:1 | “Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine *integrity*: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide.”

Psalm 26:11-12 | “But as for me, I will walk in mine *integrity*: redeem me, and be merciful unto me. My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.”

INTEGRITY IS ALWAYS CONNECTED FIRST TO GOD, THEN THE INDIVIDUAL.

Verse 1 begins with a request from the trusting psalmist for God to judge him. Integrity is not something you work up on your own. Any integrity we possess is there because of our God who never changes. Likewise, in verse 12, it is God who keeps you faithfully where you should be

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God's integrity must be made personal in us. David used the personal pronouns "*I*" and "*mine*" in verse 1. He could not answer for anyone else, but he would make decisions regarding his own life. This is reflected again in the opening phrase of verse 11, "*But as for me.*" This is the only person you can decide for.

We tend to get upset about a lack of integrity in the world, but what about us? We must answer for ourselves. The beginning and ending of Psalm 26 provide bookends of integrity, and everything between helps us to examine its place in our lives.

THE ELEMENTS OF INTEGRITY

In verse 1, we learn that **integrity is built on the foundation of faith**. David noted his trust in God, who is our anchor that keeps us from drifting and changing. He is the only one who can build the right kind of foundation in your life so it does not move.

Psalm 26:2 | "*Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.*" **Integrity will always be tested.** Sometimes that is by others, and at times it will be God who gives the test. If you do not pass that test, there will be a lesson to be learned and then another test.

Psalm 26:3 | "*For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.*" **Integrity requires living in the Word.** Only it can show you the right thing to do and keep you moving in the right direction. Integrity is a daily decision.

Our relationships are addressed in verses 4-5. "*I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.*" **Integrity will require hard choices.** You will have to walk away from some people and say no to certain associations, because those people and their influence may compromise your integrity.

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VERSES 6-8

“I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD: That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and	tell of all thy wondrous works. LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.”
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The motivation of integrity is to live in unhindered fellowship with God. **Integrity is connected to worship.** David wanted to stay right and clean before God so he could come into His presence at any moment and commune with Him. That is a glorious way to live, with a clear conscience — not worrying about someone finding you out, not looking over your shoulder. That is the essence of a life of integrity. In Acts 24:16, Paul called it “a conscience void to offence toward God, and toward men.”

Psalm 26:9-10 | *“Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men: In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.”*

Integrity means choosing right over greed. You are not looking for what you can get. Instead, you have made up your mind that you are going to do the right thing even if it costs you. It may be that you pay the price instead of getting paid, but you will be a person of integrity — at home, in your business dealings, with your children, with your friends, even in the way you treat your enemies. David knew that God would one day deal with those whose hands are bloody, and he did not want to be included in that number.

THE ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE OF INTEGRITY

People of integrity are living for eternity. They are not just looking at what they can gain today or what is in their perceived best interest in the short term. They take the long look.

Go to the end of your story and work your way back. Begin at the Judgment Seat of Christ. What do you want on that day? A friend

PSALM 26: INTEGRITY

of mine said years ago, “The best friend you can have on earth is the one who wants you to have a good day when you stand before Jesus Christ.” I love that.

We have seen the declaration in verse 11, “*I will walk in mine integrity.*” It is a matter of will, not of emotion or circumstances. You cannot blame others. You must choose it; no one will choose it for you. **No one can take your integrity; you have to give it up.**

At the end of verse 11, David acknowledged that he could not be a man of integrity apart from God’s mercy and continuing grace. It is not all about you. It is about depending upon the Lord, the God of integrity.

The final verse of the psalm says, “*My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.*” We all want a life of stability, not off balance, but firmly planted. **The steadiest place you can stand is on the Word of God.**

A life of integrity should result in praise, not to you, but to God. It should draw people to the Christ that lives in you.

Builders speak of the integrity of a structure because without it buildings crack and eventually collapse. What is true of a building is true of life! Investors consider financial integrity, but it is even more important to have spiritual integrity. When this is right, it will guard every other aspect of your life.

In today’s culture, real integrity may be considered infrequently and sadly practiced even less. But God has much to say about it, and He wants it in the lives of His people. May we all say today by the grace of God, “*I will walk in mine integrity.*”



PSALM 27: ONE THING

If you knew God would answer one prayer today, what would you pray?

In Psalm 27, David declared what his one thing would be. It is in verse 4: ***“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.”***

David wanted one thing, and he got it. **He desired to worship God** all the days of his life and to end his days in fellowship with the Lord.

When we hear David's name, our minds see a 17-year-old young man standing in the valley of Elah. God used him mightily to defeat Goliath. But we must remember that David's story was more than that moment. Psalm 27 is the reflections of an aging David, living in the presence of God and working through his own failures and sins. He learned to find fellowship with God again. God answered his prayer.

THE DESIRES OF OUR HEART

You can learn a lot about a person by knowing the desires of his or her heart. God gave Solomon an opportunity to choose anything he wanted. He chose wisdom; he received wisdom. Because of

PSALM 27: ONE THING

that choice, God gave him many other things he could have asked for, but refused.

Be careful about what you desire — what you wish for and what you ask for. I ask you again: What would your “one thing” be?

We do not know exactly when Psalm 27 was written, but one can surmise from certain keys given throughout it:

Psalm 27:1-2 | *“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.”* It appears that David was writing as an enemy came against him.

Psalm 27:3 | *“Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.”* Clearly he was not sitting in his palace surrounded by comfort and luxury. He may have been in a cave with his very life at risk, on the run from the enemy.

Psalm 27:10 | *“When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.”* Those who loved him best were nowhere to be found now. These are the words of a man who was under duress and in distress. He was struggling.

Psalm 27:13 | *“I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.”*

What does this say to us? **In the hardest times of life, the one thing you need is the presence of God.**

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

What we pray for is not always our greatest need. Sometimes we just want relief, an escape, an emergency exit from our circumstances. But David did not ask for that in Psalm 27.

True peace is not found in the absence of trouble; it is discovered

PSALM 27: ONE THING

in the presence of God. The greatest blessing is not the enemy departing or loved ones returning. It is not material provision bestowed upon you, but God's presence with you.

As the hymnwriter so famously penned:

There is a place of quiet rest,
Near to the heart of God;
A place where sin cannot molest,
Near to the heart of God.

You can find joy and peace in God's presence no matter what is going on around you.

It has been said, "Sometimes God calms the storm, and sometimes He calms me." It is obvious in Psalm 27 that God did not choose to calm everything that was happening around David. Instead, He gave peace to David's heart. That is the greatest kind of peace — not calm after the storm but calm in the midst of the storm.

All through Scripture, we find this expression – "one thing. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 10:42 of Mary (the sister of Martha and Lazarus) who sat faithfully at his feet: *"one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part."* The good thing was just one thing—to be with Jesus.

The man who was healed by Christ said in John 9:25, *"Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."*

The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 3:13-14, *"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."*

What if we brought all of life down to one thing? What is your one thing?

PSALM 27: ONE THING

WORSHIP

David's one thing is a revelation of what we all need – worship.

Look carefully at the words of verse 4 and you can see that need more clearly: *“That I may dwell in the house of the LORD ...”* In other words, live in the presence of God. It is what He desires for every one of us. His presence is not only found in a church building; it can be anywhere, because the Lord said in Hebrews 13:5, *“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”*

God is not bound by geography. In David's time, God in the Temple was also God in the cave. He was God in the palace and God in the wilderness. He is God wherever you are now and He wants you to live in His presence.

Consider the familiar ending of Psalm 23 - *“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever”* (Psalm 23:6). We will dwell in God's presence someday, but we can abide there today.

BEAUTY

Also in verse 4: *“To behold the beauty of the LORD ...”* This gets even more personal. David is talking about not merely being near the Lord but being close enough to behold His beauty — His goodness and His glory.

There is nothing more beautiful than God. Everything that is truly beautiful in this natural world is simply a reflection of its Creator. The Lord is *“altogether lovely”* (Song of Solomon 5:16).

I fear that too often we grow enamored by earthly beauty because we fail to glimpse Heavenly beauty. We become captivated by the fleeting pleasures of this world because we have not come into His presence, and entered into the lasting pleasure of His fellowship.

Yes, you can see God's beauty in His creation, but it is best viewed through the lens of His Word. God reveals Himself in Scripture.

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If you want to live in His presence and behold His beauty, get into the Word today. The Bible is God's revelation of Himself and He will meet you there.

COMMUNION

Verse 4 ends with these words: “*and to enquire in his temple.*” When you enter into His presence and behold His beauty, the natural response is to talk to Him in prayer. You long to experience deep communion with God. You do not rush into the presence of the high, holy God; and, once you are there, you will not want to rush out.

Enemies may come against you, but you can talk to the Lord. Those closest to you may forsake or fail you, but you can talk to the Lord. David's testimony helps us bring the complications with which we are confronted down to “one thing” – our relationship with God. This simplicity alone can cut through the complexities of life.

So we end as we began. If you could have one thing, what would it be? A bigger house, a nicer car, a larger bank account, a better retirement?

All of those things are temporal. But you can have a life of worship, of beauty, of communion. Make His presence your “one thing.”



PSALM 28: A SONG IN THE NIGHT

Most of the psalms we read and the hymns we sing came from seasons of great struggle. Someone went through the valley, and it was there that God gave that person a song. Psalm 28 is one such psalm. Spurgeon called it “God’s song in the night.” While we do not know the exact timing of the psalm, it was clearly during a time of great pressure in David’s life.

Psalm 28:1 | *“Unto thee will I cry, O LORD my rock; be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.”*

Notice the difference between the rock and the pit. In which of those are you living today?

David did not want to go into the pit. He knew that to avoid that, he must run to the rock and hide there. The only hope and the only strength can be found in the rock that is higher than you.

He continues:

VERSES 2-9

“Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy	oracle. Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to
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PSALM 28: A SONG IN THE NIGHT

their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts. Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.

Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up. Blessed be the LORD, because he hath heard

the voice of my supplications. The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him. The LORD is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed. Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.”

What a shift in David's tone as the psalm progresses! The first verse begins with a sigh and the last verse ends with a song. The psalm moves from a groan to glory. How does that happen? David shifted his gaze from his trouble to his Savior.

- Verses 1-2 – David poured out the petition of his heart, laying out before the Lord where he was. It was the groan of his soul. **He looked within.**
- Verses 3-5 – David prayed against the enemies around him. He went from looking within to **looking around.**
- Verse 6 – David's prayer changes. It started with, “*Blessed be the LORD.*” Instead of looking within or around, **he looked up.**

One temptation in prayer is to be too introspective and self-centered. Or we simply talk to God about others and what they are not doing right or have done against us. But the victory comes when your prayer becomes praise. Lester Roloff said, “Sometimes you can praise your way through things you cannot pray your way through.”

There must come a moment when you stop groaning and recognize the glory of God. You start blessing Him. As you do that, while

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neither your circumstance nor your enemy has changed, **your perspective changes**. You fix your eyes totally on the Lord.

Verses 6-9 exude great joy. There is jubilation and celebration. It almost sounds like a different man, but this is what God does. In the midst of our greatest struggles, He gives us our sweetest song.

The old songwriters used to say that it was the thorn in the breast of the nightingale that made it sing. What an interesting expression. Sometimes God takes the hard things in life — the sharp and uncomfortable situations — and makes them the very seasons that bring you to worship.

The turning point is found in verse 6. *“Blessed be the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.”*

Could you just stop right now and bless the Lord because He heard your prayer? Maybe you **have not seen** the answer, but rest assured, **He has heard** your prayer.

Verse 7 continues, *“The LORD is my strength and my shield.”* Here is both inner strength and outer protection. God will give you what you need on the inside while also protecting you on the outside.

The rest of the verse states, *“My heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.”* You will find joy and rediscover your song when you begin to exercise faith in God. If you can trust Him for Heaven, you can trust Him for here.

How is it that we can believe the Lord to keep us out of Hell but we cannot believe Him to help us with what is happening today? Faith is not an event; it is a way of life. It is not a decision; it is a way of life. Four times in Scripture we are told, *“The just shall live by faith.”* The Christian life is a life of faith from start to finish. If you need help, exercise faith in God.

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Verse 8 begins, “*The LORD is their strength.*” The Psalmist has been discussing his own problems. But God turned his prayer inside out and changed introspection to intercession. God will turn you from talking only about your problems to bearing the needs and burdens of others. Remember, God turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends (Job 42:10). As you begin to bear the burdens of others, you will find God sustaining you. He works on both ends at the same time.

As David prays for those around him he acknowledges that God “*is the saving strength of his anointed.*” In verse 7 the LORD is “*my strength*” and in verse 8 He is “*their strength.*” Our God is El-Elyon – the Strongest Strong One – and He is strong enough for all of us.

The valley you are going through, the burden you are under, is not just for you but also for someone else. Paul articulates this in II Corinthians 1:4, “*that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*”

It is no comfort just to say to someone, “I have been through that.” You are only identifying with them. The comfort comes in saying, “I have been through something, and God met me there. I was in a great struggle, but God was my great strength and He will also be yours.”

Maybe that is the message God is bringing out of your mess today — the truth He is trying not only to give to you, but send through you to someone else.

Psalm 28:9 | “*Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.*” David ended Psalm 28 with a prayer for others. He began with a plea not to go down into the pit, but he finished with a petition to lift others.

I think there is a great secret in this. The way to stay on the rock and remain upright is to keep your eyes on the Lord, and your

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heart on the needs of others.

There is a note of Christ's intercession for us in Psalm 28. He is praying for you. Would you join Him in that prayer meeting and begin to pray for others? In the middle of the night you can pray and you can sing. Paul and Silas "*prayed and sang praises*" and God demonstrated His mighty power (Acts 16:25-26). God will give you a song in the night to strengthen your own soul and those around you.



PSALM 29: LEARNING TO WORSHIP

There are few experiences on earth like sitting through a great thunderstorm. It is awe-inspiring to hear the peal of thunder and see the flash of lightning. Powerful storms are natural reminders of the greatness and glory of God.

A number of the psalms connect us to the God of creation. Read Psalm 8 while looking at the moonlight or Psalm 19 when sitting under a blazing sun, and you will begin to see more than nature.

As you read Psalm 29 you can hear the sound of thunder in the background.

Psalm 29:3 | *“The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth.”*

Psalm 29:4 | *“The voice of the LORD is powerful.”*

Psalm 29:5 | *“The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars.”*

Psalm 29:7 | *“The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.”*

Psalm 29:8 | *“The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness.”*

Psalm 29:9 | *“The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve.”*

It is more than thunder you are hearing! It is the voice of God –

PSALM 29: LEARNING TO WORSHIP

His majesty, power, and strength. Notice how this amazing psalm begins...

“Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty	of holiness. The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters.”
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All of these repeated references to the voice of the Lord are symbolized, if you will, as an object lesson — something we can all understand and relate to — in the form of thunder. It is powerful; it speaks and has an effect. God is saying, “I want to speak to you, and I want you to respond to Me.”

I believe that the key expression in this psalm is found in verse 2: “*Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*” We know that the book of Psalms was God’s worship manual for the nation of Israel. It teaches us that worship is in all of life because worship brings every emotion, every experience, and every relationship into the presence of God.

Worship is not corporate first. It is individual; it is personal. It does not begin in some public place. It begins in private, in the inner recesses of your heart.

Worship has to be learned, and we all have to learn it for ourselves. What can we learn about worship from Psalm 29?

1. Worship is our reverence for God.

Notice in the first two verses, the repeated references to how we should “give” to God. So many people today have turned worship into a way of getting something from God. True worship is giving, not getting.

You will always get more than you give because you will receive

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from the overflow of His presence. But we come to worship, first of all, to give ourselves to Him. The three “give” references in these two verses are not about what God gives, but what we give.

We do not give to God because He needs or lacks anything, but because He is worthy of all. We are simply ascribing to God what is already His and recognizing that He is the God of all glory and all strength.

His name is wonderful. Would you give Him praise today for who He is? That is true worship.

2. Worship is our repentance toward God.

The end of verse 2 speaks of “*the beauty of holiness.*” That is His holiness, not ours. “*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*” (Revelation 4:8). If there is any holiness in our lives it is because we have been made “*partakers of his holiness*” (Hebrews 12:10).

We are to come into God’s holy presence and allow Him to make us holy. David is making reference to the sanctuary, which in his day was in the Tabernacle. Today, that sanctuary is the spirit of every believer — not in a building, but in the heart where Christ dwells. Allow Him to get all of the junk and dirt and filth out of the holy place of your heart.

True worship does not just make you feel better. True worship helps you get right with God and walk uprightly before Him.

3. Worship is our response to God.

We have already read the repeated references to His voice in this psalm. He speaks all around us in creation. There is a call to worship every day when the sun comes up. Spurgeon referred to sunrise as “the church bell of the universe.” All of nature shouts that God is worthy of worship.

PSALM 29: LEARNING TO WORSHIP

But He not only speaks through the beauty of creation, He speaks through the storms. I can imagine David as a boy, sitting in the field as he tended his father's sheep, when the storm came. He probably looked for a place to hide when the thunder and lightning came, but he was also in awe of it. God spoke through the storm. As an older man, in the storms of life, he was reminded of the power of God.

Maybe you are in a storm. God is speaking through that storm. The wind may be strong, the rain may be heavy, the thunder may be deafening, and the lightning may be fearful, but He is *"a very present help in trouble"* (Psalm 46:1).

Ultimately, we know that the Lord speaks through His Word. Seven times in this psalm we see mention of *"the voice of the LORD."* What is that voice? It is the Word of the living God — not just in creation, but also in His revelation. Psalm 19, which we have already studied, makes this same progression from creation to revelation. We need God to speak to us. His Word will open to you in a fresh and personal way in the storms of life.

People have all kinds of ideas about how to get into a spirit and attitude of worship, but the best way to do it is to read your Bible. As you read the Word of God and it speaks to you, it will lead you to worship. Nothing makes me want to pray and to praise Him like reading and meditating on the Scriptures. When He speaks to us, we want to commune with Him.

4. Worship is our resource from God.

God gave us worship so that in His presence we would find everything we need. Worship is the Lord's way of reminding us of His sufficiency. We imagine that if we work harder we will find what we need, but the greatest provision comes as we worship.

Take note of how this psalm ends in verse 11. *"The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace."*

PSALM 29: LEARNING TO WORSHIP

The chapter opens with us giving Him glory, and it closes with Him giving us strength. God has designed it so that what brings Him the greatest glory also brings us the greatest good.

If you will simply learn to worship, God will teach you all that you need for life. Your walk will be better, your work will be better, and your witness will be better. It will enrich every relationship and enhance every responsibility.

Whether there is a storm or sunshine in your life right now, spend some time today with God. Talk to Him and begin to worship “*in the beauty of holiness*,” and you will learn that every good thing grows and flows out of His presence.



PSALM 30: HOW TO DEDICATE YOUR HOME TO GOD

If you have ever been to the dedication of a government facility, corporate office, or community building, you know that they are typically accompanied by a great deal of ceremony. It is a big deal, a time to celebrate.

In Psalm 30, we come to the dedication of a house — but not just any house. It is the king's house; David's private residence.

David desired so much to build a house for the Lord, but God would not allow him to do so. Instead, David gathered the materials, and the job itself was left for his son Solomon to oversee many years later. Instead, God said to David, "I am going to build your house." He was referring to more than the mere physical structure, but to his extended family and the future of Israel as a nation.

In Psalm 30, David had completed the construction of his own home. Over this psalm there is an inscription that reads, "*A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house of David.*"

This is a deeply personal psalm for the man after God's own heart, and we must personalize the truth to our hearts and homes. Have you consecrated yourself to the Lord? Is your family dedicated to God?

PSALM 30: HOW TO DEDICATE YOUR HOME TO GOD

It is easy to think that when we walk into a church gathering, we are on holy ground. All ground is holy ground for the Christian. We assemble in a meeting place to be with God's people and exhort one another, but not to find His presence. You can be in the presence of God in your own home, and we all should live conscious of God's nearness every day. No one is a greater Christian than the one they are in the privacy of their own home.

As you examine Psalm 30 you will see three natural divisions and three steps David took which we must follow.

1. He pondered his past.

VERSES 1-7

“I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me. O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give	thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.”
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Memory is a wonderful gift from God, and it is a good way to keep your heart stirred and sensitive to the Lord. David meditates on what he has experienced of the goodness, faithfulness, and holiness of God. Now sitting in the palace, he recalled times when he could have ended up in the pit. He was well aware of where he would have been or should have been, except for the grace of God.

Ponder the goodness of God in your life, and talk about it with your family. When you sit together around the dinner table (there is a novel idea in itself), do not just talk about sports, politics, school and work. Reflect on the blessings of the Lord. Rehearse

PSALM 30: HOW TO DEDICATE YOUR HOME TO GOD

with your children how God has met the needs of your family. There are gifts they have never considered and answers to prayer of which they are not aware. It is good for the next generation to hear how God has brought us to where we are. These spiritual conversations are God-glorifying and faith-increasing.

If you truly desire to sanctify your home, take time to “remember his holiness” (v. 4). Think not only of what He has done for us, but who He is! This life we enjoy is not about us; it is all about Him.

2. He prayed.

Psalm 30:8-10 | *“I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication. What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth? Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper.”*

Do you have a praying family? Many years ago someone coined the phrase “family altar.” It simply meant a time set aside for families to read the Bible, pray, and worship. That practice has mostly fallen by the wayside. It is common today to hear of family movie night or any of a dozen other events. But when was the last time your family paused and prayed together?

Pondering past blessings happens as we talk to one another, but prayer is talking to God. You never really know the hearts of each family member until you hear them pray. It is the most intimate conversation there is. A person will bare his or her soul in prayer.

Let me challenge you to pray with your family and for your family. When Jesus cleansed the Temple, He called it “a house of prayer.” God has always wanted prayer in His house. We do not have to go to the Temple to meet with God today; we are the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 3:16-17), and can commune with Him wherever we are. Is your heart a place of prayer? Is your house a house of prayer?

PSALM 30: HOW TO DEDICATE YOUR HOME TO GOD

3. He praised God.

Psalm 30:11-12 | *“Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.”*

There are significant turning points in this psalm. It was God who turned David from the pit to the palace, from death to life, from anger to favor, from weeping to joy, and finally from mourning to dancing. The king's palace was a place of rejoicing and worship.

Make your house a house of praise. God inhabits the praises of His people, and nothing brings you more consciously into His presence than praise. Psalm 100:4 proclaims, *“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.”*

To experience the joy of the Lord in your home, stop grumbling and start being grateful. Stop fussing and fighting, and begin rehearsing the goodness of God. True praise is a choice, not a feeling. Exercise your will and declare the closing words of the psalm, *“I will give thanks unto thee for ever.”*

If you will follow the pattern of David, you too will be able to dedicate your house and your family to the Lord. There is only one David and one Davidic line. God will keep His distinct promises to Israel, but He will help you to build a home for His glory.



PSALM 31: THREE PEOPLE IN TROUBLE

Psalm 31 is 24 verses long and one of the most rich, profound psalms you will ever study. There is no way we can cover it in this brief space, but I hope you will take the time to read and meditate on each word. I promise you will be rewarded for it by all that God has to say in this psalm.

Psalm 31 was written by David, perhaps while on the run but definitely while being attacked. Some have surmised that he wrote it when Absalom rebelled and many people were criticizing his leadership.

We do not know the tune to which all of these psalms were sung, but we know the tone. Some are celebratory, while others are reflective. The tone of Psalm 31 is mournful. We hear it in the opening verses.

VERSES 1-5

“In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. For thou art my rock and my	fortress; therefore for thy name’s sake lead me, and guide me. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength. Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth”
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PSALM 31: THREE PEOPLE IN TROUBLE

The entire psalm reflects two realities. David goes back and forth between resting in the Lord and rehearsing those who are against him. We all tend to fluctuate from one extreme to another.

You will recall that in Psalm 30, David had just dedicated his own house to God. Now he prays that God would be *“an house of defence to save me.”* Verse 20 reveals his hope for true safety and security: *“Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.”*

What was he saying? No physical or material thing can protect you from critics, circumstances, or spiritual attack. You must hide in God. Make your home in the Lord and you can be at home anywhere, even when enemies come against you.

You will find three people in Psalm 31:

1. David

These verses reflect the cry of a sensitive soul, a man after God's own heart. A tender heart feels deeply — both the mountains and the valleys, the positive and the negative. David grieved and groaned in this passage.

Psalm 31:11-12 | *“I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.”*

When you get to where David was, feeling as though you are broken and everyone has forsaken you, do exactly what David did. Bring it to God.

The psalms teach us to usher every experience and emotion of life into His presence. This is the only place where we can find clarity and simplicity. It is one thing to have a complaint and tell everyone else about it; it is another to turn that complaint into

PSALM 31: THREE PEOPLE IN TROUBLE

prayer. Talk to Someone who can do something about it.

2. Christ

Christ is woven throughout the whole of Scripture, but this is specifically one of the Messianic psalms.

The phrase *“Into thine hand I commit my spirit”* in verse 5 is the cry of Christ from the cross (Luke 23:46). What a beautiful illustration for every broken heart! When you feel like everything is out of hand, put yourself in God’s hand. The moment when everything is spinning out of control is the very moment to put your circumstances and emotions in the nail-pierced hands of Jesus Christ. Do exactly what the Lord Jesus did as He committed Himself to His loving Father.

The rest of verse 5 states, *“Thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.”* The very God who has kept you to this point will continue to do so. In a beautiful parallel to Psalm 31, Jesus taught that when we come to Him, we are placed in His hand and He is in the Father’s hand. He said in John 10:29, *“My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”*

David continues this picture in verse 15: *“My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.”* The seasons of life are in God’s hands...all of them. Commit yourself anew to a loving Heavenly Father and the knowledge that nothing in your life is ever out of His control. You are in His hands.

3. Yourself

The Word of God is a mirror that enables us to see ourselves in the light of God’s truth (James 1:23-25). What can you do when you come to your wit’s end, hearing slander on every side? When everyone is against you and nothing seems to be working out correctly, do exactly what Psalm 31 says to do:

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Psalm 31:14 | *“But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God.”* Go back to what you know for sure. Declare your faith in God afresh. He has never failed you, forgotten you or forsaken you – and He will not begin today.

Psalm 31:16 | *“Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies’ sake.”* Pray specifically not just for a change in circumstances, but that you will know the presence of God. If you live in His presence, you can get through anything.

Psalm 31:19 | *“Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!”* Find fresh joy in rehearsing the goodness of God. The world cannot give you true joy, and circumstances cannot take it away. This will give you renewed strength to press on.

Psalm 31:23 | *“O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.”* Simply love the LORD! You may not love your circumstances or what people are doing to you, but love Jesus and He will give you the grace to get through.

God graciously showed His ability to David and perfectly showed His sufficiency in Christ. He will be enough for you. There is no better way to close this study than with the exact words that end this psalm. *“Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD”* (v. 24).



PSALM 32: THE REST OF THE STORY

The famous radio commentator Paul Harvey was one of the greatest storytellers of all time. He would always build to a dramatic pause and then say, “Now for the rest of the story.”

In this study, I want to tell you the rest of the story from the life of David. You know the story of David’s terrible sin with Bathsheba – adultery and the murder of her husband, Uriah. God’s preacher, Nathan, came to him in 2 Samuel 12:7, and declared, “*Thou art the man.*” We will read David’s broken hearted prayer of repentance in Psalm 51.

Psalm 32 actually fits after Psalm 51. It is truly the rest of the story. David’s story did not end with **failure** or even **forgiveness**; with God, there is always a **future**.

The very first word of Psalm 32 is “*Blessed.*” David’s story does not end with brokenness, but with blessing — and not just a blessing, a double blessing! “*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile*” (v. 1-2).

When you come to David’s confession in Psalm 51 you find double brokenness. Verse 17 of that chapter states, “*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God,*

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thou wilt not despise.” But here, there is a double blessing. Double brokenness leads to double blessing.

When you are thoroughly broken, that is not the end; it is the beginning. Sin brings you to a dead end; God leads you to an open door. With Him, there is always more on the other side.

Did you know that a great majority of David’s psalms were written after he committed adultery? There was life and labor for the Lord beyond his sin. Yes, there were undeniable and unavoidable consequences, but there were many blessings.

Psalms is a blessing book. Psalm 1 began with the words, *“Blessed is the man.”* The first psalm tells you how to have the blessing, while Psalm 32 tells you how to regain it when you have lost it.

Our God is the eternal God. He is in your past, present, and future at the same time, and He is always the same. Hebrews 13:8 says, *“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”*

When you read Psalm 32, you see yesterday, today, and tomorrow. There is a look at the past, the present, and the future. Here are three things you can do to discover all that God has for you in the rest of your story:

1. Praise God for what He has done.

VERSES 3-5

“When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged	my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.”
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The first thing David did was praise God for all He had done. God humbled him and brought him to the end of himself. Why? To draw David back to Himself. God loves us where we are, but He

PSALM 32: THE REST OF THE STORY

does not leave us there. He meets us where we are to bring us to where He wants us to be.

David could even praise God for what He had done with his sin. It was both forgiven and covered! 1 John 1:9 reiterates this truth of both forgiveness and cleansing. When you cover your own sin with deceit and guile, He has to expose it. But when you expose it, He covers it – He removes it (Psalm 103:12). God's grace and mercy, through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, can blot out the darkest sin stains.

David used the same three words that he used in Psalm 51 to describe his failure: *transgression*, *sin*, and *iniquity*. The threefold nature of his disobedience is reflected in these terms. He crossed God's line, fell short of God's glory, and walked crookedly before the Lord. Here there is a threefold answer: David was forgiven, his sin was covered, and God did not impute it to him.

2. Pray about what God is doing in your life now.

VERSES 6-7

"For this shall every one that is
godly pray unto thee in a time
when thou mayest be found: surely
in the floods of great waters they
shall not come nigh unto him.

Thou art my hiding place; thou
shalt preserve me from trouble;
thou shalt compass me about with
songs of deliverance. Selah."

Take a moment and pray about what God is doing in you today. Don't get stuck in your past. Romans 8:1 reminds us, "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*"

There may be consequences to deal with and fallout from what you have done, but once you are forgiven and cleansed, there is nothing between you and the Lord. Acknowledge that God is near and draw nigh to Him. As James 4:8 begins: "*Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.*"

PSALM 32: THE REST OF THE STORY

3. Prepare for what God will do.

We already know from verse 7 that He will preserve and protect us. But verse 8 reveals more: *"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."*

Notice carefully that it is no longer David talking to God or about God; now it is God talking to David. This is the promise of God! He will preserve us, protect us, and prod us in the way that we should go.

VERSES 9-10

"Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near	unto thee. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about."
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If we will not be stubborn and rebellious, He will guide us and guard us. This is yet another reminder of His desire to protect us.

And He will provide for us. Verse 11: *"Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart."* He will give us fresh joy and divine resources for the journey ahead. For the true follower of Christ, the best is always yet to come.

One man, as he was dying, requested that Psalm 32 be inscribed on the wall next to his bed so he could meditate on it in the closing moments of his life. It is a good psalm on which to meditate every day of your life until the day you meet God.

Three times in this passage the word "Selah" is employed. This is a psalm for meditation. Stop and think on this.

The first "Selah," at the end of verse 4, makes you think of your sin. The second one, after verse 5, reminds you of your Savior. The last one, in verse 7, brings a song to mind.

PSALM 32: THE REST OF THE STORY

Don't stop with your sin. Don't settle for just being forgiven. There is a song and hope for tomorrow. This is the rest of the story, and God is the divine Author of it.

Psalms 32 is the first of 12 psalms known as "Maschil Psalms." Maschil is a Hebrew word that means "instruction." These words are not just for David or the person who has committed adultery. Indeed, there is a lesson here for us all. Go to the Lord's school today and ask Him to teach you. You will learn that God has much more for you, and that you can trust Him — yesterday, today, and tomorrow.



PSALM 33: REASON TO REJOICE

Are you rejoicing today? You may not feel like rejoicing, but rejoicing is not primarily a **feeling**; it is a **choice**. Scripture commands us to rejoice. “*Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.*” (Philippians 4:4). Rejoicing is a matter of the will. Will we obey?

Psalm 33:1 | “*Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.*” God gives a definite, personal, emphatic command. But there is not only a duty to this command, but a beauty. There is nothing more attractive than a rejoicing Christian. You cannot put on anything more beautiful than a joyful spirit. The Gospel of Jesus Christ provides a joy that cannot be duplicated by the world.

Yet this psalm not only commands us to rejoice; it gives us a reason to rejoice. Walk through the passage and make a “rejoicing list.”

Rejoice because you are right with God.

Verse 1 begins with the righteous heart. If you know your sins are forgiven and Christ is your Savior, you have reason to rejoice no matter what else is going on in your life.

When the disciples returned to Jesus with excitement because the

PSALM 33: REASON TO REJOICE

devils were subject to them and the sick were being healed, Jesus told them, *“Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven”* (Luke 10:20).

The only reason any of us are righteous is because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We are rejoicing in the Person and work of Christ, not our own worthiness.

Rejoice because His Word and works are always right.

Psalm 33:2-4 | *“Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise. For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth.”*

Everything God says and does is right, and you can rejoice in that. We will all do things that are not right, and it may be that others may not do right by you. But when everything else seems wrong, God is right. Rejoice in who God is and what God does.

Rejoice because God is good.

Psalm 33:5 | *“He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.”*

Our entire planet is filled with the goodness of the Lord. Look around you. As James 1:17 states, *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”* He never changes, and He is always good.

Rejoice because God sustains all He creates.

VERSES 6-9

“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.	He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all
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PSALM 33: REASON TO REJOICE

the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.”

The same God who set it all in motion holds it all in His hand. What is true of the earth generally is true of you personally. Philippians 1:6 says, *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”*

Hebrews 12:2 proclaims that the Lord is *“the author and finisher of our faith.”* God always finishes what He starts. He is still working on you and will complete the work He began.

Rejoice because the wicked will fail.

Psalm 33:10 | *“The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.”*

Perhaps you have watched the news and are overwhelmed by the strife and contention across this nation and around the world. Maybe you have heard the blasphemy of those around us who do not even believe in God. Keep in mind that God will bring all of that to nothing. He will make all of those things pass away.

Rejoice because God’s truth is eternal.

Psalm 33:11 | *“The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.”* Not only is His Word settled forever in Heaven, but also for every generation in this life. If you want to know what God is thinking, read His Word. If you want to think like He thinks, keep reading!

Rejoice because God has more for His people.

Psalm 33:12 | *“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.”*

PSALM 33: REASON TO REJOICE

Pray today for the peace of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel. Pray that your own nation will be a blessing to God's chosen people. We love to quote this verse in the context of our own countries, but in reality this is about the nation of Israel. And God is going to fulfill everything He has promised in the end.

Rejoice because God's eye is upon you.

Psalm 33:13 | *"The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men."* While God looks across the entire world, He sees you and is intimately concerned with your daily needs. He knows your name (Isaiah 45:4) and your frame (Psalm 103:14). Every hair on your head is numbered (Matthew 10:30) and He cares about the smallest detail of your life.

Rejoice because God will keep you alive.

VERSES 14-19

"From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works. There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain

thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine."

The Giver of life is the Sustainer of life. Those who walk in faith and obedience are safe in God's protection until He is finished with them.

Rejoice because God is your help, your shield, and your hope to the very end.

Psalm 33:20-22 | *"Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name. Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us,*

PSALM 33: REASON TO REJOICE

according as we hope in thee.”

Psalms 33 begins and ends with rejoicing in the Lord. Begin and end each day with the joy of the Lord. It is my prayer that every day, through Scripture and in personal experience, you will find reason to rejoice.



PSALM 34: ALL AND NONE

Are you waiting for your life to improve? Are there situations and difficulties weighing you down? Perhaps you think, “Something has to change.”

We have all faced those seasons and entertained those thoughts. David was living through one of those periods as he penned Psalm 34. He was running from place to place and from person to person, just trying to survive. He lived with constant uncertainty.

At the time Psalm 34 was written, David was fleeing from King Saul. He visited with Ahimelech the priest, looking for answers. Eventually, he took the sword of Goliath and a few provisions, and was driven away from those with which he was familiar. David could not find a place to rest. (You can read the full account in 1 Samuel 21.)

Have you ever wished your life could settle down, but it never does? In our minds, a man in David's situation ought to be in despair. His voice should be filled with despondency. Yet, that is not how Psalm 34:1 reads. God's man, on the run, cries out:

“I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.”

PSALM 34: ALL AND NONE

That does not sound like a man living in dreadful circumstances. But David had fixed his eyes on the God who is greater than every circumstance.

The Bible says in I John 4:4, “*Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*” David lived out that principle. He truly believed that God was greater, so he chose to praise the Lord continually.

We know the words, “*Pray without ceasing*” (I Thessalonians 5:17). Have you considered that one part of prayer is praise and that we should also praise without ceasing? These two things are inextricably linked. In fact, the very next verse says, “*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). If you **pray** as you should, you will **praise** as you should. Both of these activities usher you into the presence of God.

Praise God at all times.

When you cannot escape your circumstances, you can enter His presence. If praise is a command, then praise is a choice. David *chose* to do it all the time. It is easy to praise when things are going well. But what about times of uncertainty, when the exclamation point turns into a question mark? At all times, we must praise God. Someone once said, “All means all, and that’s all all means.”

If you are wondering how to bless the Lord at all times, the rest of Psalm 34 will provide some help. Mark the word “*all*” in each of the following verses.

Psalm 34:4 | “*I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.*”

Psalm 34:6 | “*This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.*”

Psalm 34:17 | “*The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and*

PSALM 34: ALL AND NONE

delivereth them out of all their troubles.”

Psalm 34:19 | *“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.”*

Our God is a God of absolutes, certainty, and confidence. He is the God of all. Regardless of your situation, He will be enough. You can praise Him at all times by recognizing that He is always present and all-sufficient.

God delivers from all fears (v. 4).

In verses 4-5, we learn that God delivers us from all fears. I love what the Bible says in II Timothy 1:7. *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”*

The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 4:6-7, *“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”* Observe the repeated emphasis on “all.”

The Apostle Peter expressed the same truth this way: *“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you”* (1 Peter 5:7). Are you living in fear? Take your eyes off the challenges surrounding you. Instead, look to the Lord. Claim His promise in Psalm 34:4 that He will deliver you from all of your fears.

God delivers us from all our troubles (v. 6, 17).

This truth is borne out in verse 6. Notice the singular pronoun “his” in that verse. It is personal. Just as David referred solely to himself, apply this promise to your life.

In contrast, verse 17 uses the plural pronouns “them” and “their.” Not only will God deliver the individual, but also His people collectively. Consider the words of verse 7, *“The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”*

PSALM 34: ALL AND NONE

If you fear God, the greater fear will remove all lesser fears. He is able to deliver you from paralyzing fear and difficult trouble.

The Hebrew word “trouble” in this psalm refers to “a tight place.” It is terrifying to be trapped between a rock and hard place. Rest assured; God is with you and will bring you out.

We can follow the same pattern as David in Psalm 34: we cry to the LORD; the LORD hears us; and the LORD delivers us. It is that simple.

God delivers us from all our afflictions (v. 19).

The word “afflictions” in verse 19 means “evil.” Jesus directed us in Matthew 6:13 to pray for God to “*deliver us from evil.*” It refers to deliverance from the devil. The Lord is greater than your enemy and has already conquered him. As a result, He makes us “*more than conquerors through him*” (Romans 8:37).

God never intended for you to live a defeated life. He wants you to live in victory, joy, and power — to be an overcomer. God is over all! That is how David could say, “*I will bless the LORD at all times.*”

The psalm ends victoriously in verse 22. “*The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*”

After multiple mentions of “all” He closes with the word “none.” Most of the time you see this word in the Bible, it is negative. This time it is positive. None of God’s children will be lost. The Lord Jesus expressed this in His high priestly prayer in John 17:12, “*Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.*” Our Savior will not lose a single true follower.

The phrase “*be desolate*” means “*perish.*” I don’t know how all of my circumstances are going to turn out, but I do know that in the end, I am not going to perish. Even if I die, I will go straight into the presence of God forever. Recently I heard a man proclaim,

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“Don’t threaten me with Heaven.” Truly, for the Christian, “*to die is gain*” (Philippians 1:21).

Whatever trouble you are dealing with today is simply a reminder that you need the Lord always. Determine to praise God in the midst of your difficulty and watch for Him to bring you through the trial. See the Lord in all of the twists and turns on life’s journey and “*Bless the LORD at all times.*”



PSALM 35: THE MESSAGE OF UNBROKEN BONES

One of the most endearing features of Psalms is that many psalms lead naturally into the next one. It reads like an ongoing drama, a story unfolding before us. After observing the frequent use of the word “*all*” as an emphasis in Psalm 34, the one that follows continues that theme. Psalm 35 is a prayer that God will break through in the midst of David’s distress.

Psalm 35:7 | *“For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul.”*

There are practical applications for us all in this verse: when people persecute and criticize you, live a life that demonstrates their actions are without cause. Seek to keep a testimony that is blameless and above reproach. David was on the run for his life, but not because of his sin.

Psalm 35:8-9 | *“Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall. And **my soul shall be joyful** in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation.”*

Isn’t that last verse wonderful? David was in harm’s way, but he was still joyful.

PSALM 35: THE MESSAGE OF UNBROKEN BONES

Once, I had the opportunity to spend time with a man who has been faithful in the Lord's work for decades; his life and countenance still exuded genuine joy. "I have had a lot of trouble and difficulty to deal with," he told me. "I learned that as long as I grumbled and complained about it, I remained in a terrible frame of mind. But when trouble came, I realized that the best thing I could do was start praising God. Inevitably, when I did that, God brought me through the circumstances." It is possible to keep a joyful heart in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Consider Christ in Psalm 35

Once again we come to that word "all" seen so many times in the previous psalm. Verse 10: *"All my bones shall say, LORD, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?"* What is the significance of his bones? They are not only the bones of David, but also of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalm 34 and Psalm 35 are both Messianic psalms. In Psalm 34:20 David recorded a prophetic statement: *"He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken."* Messiah would be afflicted, and ultimately crucified. But they would not break His bones, because God said they would not be "broken."

This is a reminder that the Lord has everything in His hand. In His providence and mercy, He puts boundaries on evil. God is in control.

The Bible records the fulfillment of this prophecy in John 19:32-36:

"Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already,	they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record
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PSALM 35: THE MESSAGE OF UNBROKEN BONES

is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.”

Our Lord Jesus—riddled with every wound conceivable on Calvary—did not have a single broken bone because God said so in the Old Testament. Those bones speak to us. What do the unbroken bones say?

They say, **“God is true.”**

They ask, **“Who is like the LORD?”**

They proclaim, **“Our God delivers the poor and needy.”**

They remind us, **“God fulfills every promise.”**

To prove that “all” really means all, God the Father points to Jesus Christ. It is as if He said, “As surely as I took care of My own Son, I will take care of you.”

Consider David in Psalm 35

In the previous psalm, David was forced to run from Gath, a place he thought was his refuge. A man named Doeg the Edomite saw him there and brought great trouble and persecution to him. He was the spy who told Saul where David was going. David was still on the run in Psalm 35.

But it is wonderful to see that, in this historical context, David was able to continue declaring that God took care of him. Even David’s bones cried out that there is no one like the Lord. That was proven true in David’s experience, and in Christ’s time on this earth. The powerful protection of God will be seen in your life also.

Consider Your Life in Psalm 35

Bring this truth to where you live. Many years ago, at the end of a very trying day, God brought this psalm to my heart. I was dealing

PSALM 35: THE MESSAGE OF UNBROKEN BONES

with one problem after another, and He brought me to Psalms 34-35. His Word reminded me that God always takes care of His children, no matter how perplexing the circumstances may be.

None of us will face the anguish Jesus endured on the way to the cross. Likely, you are not in the dire situation David was in. But whatever you are facing, God is the God of all. He kept David's life safe, and He kept His own Son's bones from being broken. He will keep you right where you are.

Do what David did in Psalm 35:9. Decide that you are going to *"be joyful in the LORD"* and *"rejoice in his salvation."* It may be that you cannot truly rejoice in your circumstances, but you can rejoice in the Lord in the midst of those circumstances, because our God is the God of unbroken bones.



PSALM 36: SOME GOOD NEWS IN A BAD WORLD

In our world, it is easy to become consumed with the news cycle. It runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and it seems like we are inundated constantly by evil reports.

I remember years ago when I was watching the news one night, and one of our children who was very young at the time said, “Oh, great. More bad news.” I thought that comment was both comical and sad because bad news is almost all we hear.

We cannot completely distance ourselves from all forms of media, but you should never become focused more on bad news than on the good news of our God. Our world is longing for good news, and those who know God have it to share!

In Psalm 36, David gives us the right perspective on living in an evil world, surrounded by wicked people, yet keeping our eyes on God. We do not know exactly when he wrote these powerful words, but the inscription at the beginning of the chapter is insightful: *“To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord.”*

Here is David’s greatest title: not giant killer, king of the chosen nation, or sweet psalmist of Israel, but *“the servant of the Lord.”* Nothing greater can be said about a person than that he or she

PSALM 36: SOME GOOD NEWS IN A BAD WORLD

serves the Lord. The greatest need in our day is for people to simply keep serving God.

David described the world he saw around him.

VERSES 1-4

“The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful. The words of his mouth	are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good. He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil.”
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That sounds very much like the world we are living in. Some things do not change, and one of those things is sin. It is always awful, and it only gets worse.

Several verses in Psalm 36 are quoted in the first chapter of Romans. It is a description of a wicked world apart from God.

Verse 1: Addresses the **heart**. There is no fear of God. That is the root issue.

Verse 2: Focuses on the **eyes**. The wicked look at things through the lens of their pride.

Verse 3: Describes the **mouth**. Their words are crooked and deceitful.

Verse 4: References the **bed**. The Psalmist describes the private places of the wicked. Their sins are devised in the secret chambers.

Throughout many psalms, David addressed what he would do upon his bed, and it was primarily about worship and prayer. You can tell a great deal about someone by what he or she thinks about in the quiet moments – when left alone.

David fixed his eyes on God.

PSALM 36: SOME GOOD NEWS IN A BAD WORLD

After a painfully accurate picture of this wicked world, Psalm 36 shifts direction in verse 5: *“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.”*

David purposefully took his eyes off men and turned them toward God. We all must do this. The Bible says in Hebrews 12:2, *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ...”* That phrase means to consciously take your eyes off one thing and fix them on something else. We must look beyond the world to the Lord.

Take your eyes off the news and fix them on Scripture. Take your eyes off the grumbling and complaining around you, and focus on prayer and praise. Take your eyes off men and fix them on Christ.

David rehearsed the faithfulness of God.

In verse 5, David began rehearsing the character of God by illustrating how His faithfulness extends far beyond what can be seen with our eyes. He continues...

Psalm 36:6 | *“Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.”* Mountains do not move. They are pictures of the unchanging righteousness of God. You can go to the bottom of the ocean and not reach the depths of God’s wisdom.

Psalm 36:7 | *“How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.”* The exclamation point reveals David’s excitement about the Lord’s love. Are you still thrilled about God’s love and kindness to you?

Psalm 36:8 | *“They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.”*

Notice the plural *“pleasures”* placed after this list of God’s holy attributes. There is pleasure in sin but only for a season. In

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contrast, Psalm 16:11 says, *“In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”*

God’s pleasure never ends. Sin gives all of its pleasure at the beginning. After that, the tremendous cost brings hurt and destruction. God always saves the best for last. One day we are going to His house, and there we will *“drink of the river of thy pleasures.”* Read Revelation 21-22 and you will find a description of the beautiful river of life flowing from the throne of God. There is joy now and for eternity for those who know the Lord.

Psalm 36:9 | *“For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.”* How appropriate to end with light and to see its connection to life. 1 John 1:5 proclaims, *“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”*

The first four verses of Psalm 36 portray an image of utter darkness, but the remaining verses show the opposite. God is never tainted by the darkness of this world. You do not have to be consumed with the darkness around you, if you will keep your eyes on the light of the Lord.

Verses 10-12 conclude the psalm with a prayer. God’s Word should always lead us to prayer.

“O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart. Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the	hand of the wicked remove me. There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.”
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David accomplished two things in this prayer:

1. He committed others to God — the evil workers, the enemy, the devil.
2. He committed himself to God. He purposed to maintain an upright heart and declared his dependence on the Lord. David

PSALM 36: SOME GOOD NEWS IN A BAD WORLD

trusted God to continue demonstrating His loving-kindness.

Rest in the fact that God will not be dismayed by the darkness - He is the Light! You may be discouraged, but God is not discouraged. He knows exactly what He is doing and will do. Get your eyes off this world and back on the Lord. You will find joy and encouragement in Him!



PSALM 37: FRET NOT

Fear brings paralysis to the human heart.

When fear consumes you, you stop thinking clearly. Your emotions spin out of control. It becomes difficult to live with any normalcy or joy when fear is possessing your thoughts and controlling your life.

Psalms 37 is a psalm for anxious hearts. I do not know when David wrote it. It could have been at any one of several points on his journey. But I have a good idea that it was a time when he was afraid of those who were threatening him and anxious about what was going on around him.

There will always be people and circumstances around us that can cause us to fret. This powerful passage helps us to redirect our attention from our surroundings to our Savior.

VERSES 1-8

“Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD,	and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust
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PSALM 37: FRET NOT

also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because

of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.”

Psalms 37 spans 40 verses, but the first eight verses are a good summary of the whole for two reasons:

1. God tells us what NOT TO do.

The words “*fret not*” are mentioned in verses 1, 7 and 8. This psalm says, “Stop living filled with anxious worry and care.”

God may allow undesirable circumstances in your life, but He never puts anxious care into your heart. You bring it upon yourself, take it from another person, or perhaps listen to the whispers of the devil. God is never the origin of anxious care. The opposite is true. 1 Peter 5:7 instructs us to cast “*all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*”

2. God tells us what TO do.

The Lord does not just say no. He provides instruction to us. Here are the positives, the keys to driving out fear.

Trust and obey (verse 3).

The combination of faith and obedience always goes together. We believe the Lord and we obey Him. We trust that God is in control, and then we yield to His control.

Determine that you will believe and obey God. You cannot change everything around you or straighten out everyone else, but you can trust the Lord and obey Him.

The result is a promise that “*so shalt thou dwell in the land, and*

PSALM 37: FRET NOT

verily thou shalt be fed.” You can claim the promise if you apply the principle. Trust that God will meet your needs and care for you.

Delight in Him (verse 4).

Do not set your joy on people, material things, or circumstances. You are not to be elated when they are good or dismayed when they are bad. Find your joy in the Lord.

Did you know that the Christian life is supposed to be a delightful life? It does not mean the circumstances or the people you deal with are always delightful. But when you delight in the Lord, *“he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”* That is not receiving everything you want; instead, **the LORD puts His desires in you.** You will begin to desire from God what God desires for you (Philippians 2:13).

This thought is repeated in verse 23: *“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.”* I like what Spurgeon said: “Our lives are graciously ordained by God; we are not doomed by fate.”

Your life is in the hand of a good God. As we delight in the Lord, He orders our steps. Once He has done that, we delight in Him again. Learn that God’s way is best, and rejoice in what He has appointed for us. Delight in Him!

Commit your way to the Lord (verse 5).

This commitment is more than a single prayer; it is a way of life. It means saying constantly, “Lord, I am yours.”

The word “commit” actually means “to roll away.” It conveys the picture of someone rolling a heavy burden onto something or someone else. It is similar to the thought in Psalm 55:22: *“Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.”* We must roll every part of life onto the great Burden Bearer.

PSALM 37: FRET NOT

Hudson Taylor demonstrated this after hearing the dreadful news about China Inland Mission workers being held hostage. Unmoved, he began to whistle the tune of *Jesus, I am Resting, Resting*. When questioned how he could whistle during such terrible times, Taylor responded, “Would you have me anxious and troubled? That would not help them, and would certainly incapacitate me for my work. I have just to roll the burden on the Lord.”

Recommit yourself to God. Say to Him, “Lord, I am in Your hands, and I know Your way is perfect.”

Rest in Him (verse 7).

“*Rest*” in this context, means to be silent. We love to talk – to find out what other people think, or, better yet, to tell them what we think! Yet, we must be still before the Lord and wait on Him. “*Be still and know that I am God.*”

In time, God’s plan will come to pass. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 3:11, “*He hath made every thing beautiful in his time.*” He always does.

Avoid anger (verse 8).

There is a connection between fear and anger. When you grow fearful, there is a tendency to take out your frustration on everyone else.

You are going to live today in fear or by faith. Choose faith. God can be trusted. He is faithful in every area of life — our families, our finances, our future, our fears — everything.

Fret not.



PSALM 38: REMEMBER THIS

Memory is a beautiful gift that God gave all of us to exercise — and yet, every blessing can become a curse if it is not yielded to the Lord. Unfortunately, we have a tendency to forget what we should remember and remember what we should forget.

Psalm 38 is known as a psalm of remembrance. In fact, the inscription at the beginning reads, “*A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.*” As we read it, we find David remembering his pain, grief, and the guilt that sin had brought into his life. We don’t know exactly when he wrote it, but it was obviously a period of tremendous emotional turmoil.

VERSES 1-12

“O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they

are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart. Lord, all my desire is

PSALM 38: REMEMBER THIS

before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee. My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my

kinsmen stand afar off. They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.”

Not exactly words of encouragement, are they? You cannot read this without thinking that these are the words of a broken man. Sin always brings brokenness.

We have seen in other psalms how David described his enemies. However, in Psalm 38 his greatest enemy was his own sin. Even his friends seem distant when he is distant from God.

The worst thing that happens when you sin against God is that you make Him your enemy, because you have positioned yourself in opposition to Him. When God has to deal with you and you are fighting against Him, that is a terrible position to be in; **you will not win that battle.**

Psalm 38 is known as one of the penitential psalms of David. It is not only a psalm of remembrance; it is a psalm of repentance. When we repent of sin and are restored, we must never forget how awful sin is and how good God has been to sinners. If we forget those things, the tendency is to go right back to that sin.

Only remembrance will keep you close to God and away from sin. Repentance is not an event; it is a way of life. We must remember how truly sinful we are and how utterly merciful God is to us.

VERSES 13-22

“But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs. For

in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God. For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify

PSALM 38: REMEMBER THIS

themselves against me. For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin. But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are

multiplied. They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is. Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.”

Notice the change in tone that begins in verse 15, and how differently the psalm ends when compared to the beginning. It is a heart-level conversation throughout, beginning and ending with “O LORD.” The first time it is the groan of sin and the final time it is the groan of faith — casting oneself upon the Lord who is merciful. As Paul wrote in Romans 5:20, “*But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*”

Are you consumed today with your past? According to Romans 8:1, “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*” Is the “*accuser of our brethren*” (Revelation 12:10) throwing past failures in your face? Are you stuck on some memory from yesterday?

Charles Spurgeon said: “Great thoughts of your sin alone will drive you to despair. Great thoughts of Jesus will pilot you into the haven of peace.”

If you would like your ship to pull into the haven of peace today, then stop thinking of your sin alone. We must never forget our sinfulness and that we are sinners who are prone to wander, but we must also never forget how merciful and gracious our God is. If you stop with your sin, you will live in despair. Consider three simple thoughts from Psalm 38 based on a few key words.

Sin is heavy (verse 4). It is a burden you were never meant to bear. Bring your sin to the Lord Jesus, remembering that He carried it in His own body on the cross. Look to the Lord and drop that heavy burden at the cross of Christ.

PSALM 38: REMEMBER THIS

People are hurtful (verse 12). Sometimes people hurt you intentionally, and at other times it is unintentional. These wrongs may be used by the devil to drive a wedge between you and others. Remember that others are sinners too and that sin brings disruption in relationships. God is greater than all.

The Lord is our hope (verse 15). God hears us when we pray. He hears your confession and the cry of your heart, but He does not stop there. He answers prayer!

David called himself “a deaf man” and “a dumb man” in verse 13. But in subsequent verses he acknowledged that God heard him. At times we may close our ears to God, or the noise of life becomes so loud that we cannot hear clearly. But when you cannot hear God, and all you hear is the memory of your old sin or the accusations of others around you, there is a God who hears you.

Cry out to Him today. Trust in Him. You will find in the Lord all you need — hope for today and for your future. If you remember anything, remember God. He alone is our hope.



PSALM 39: HOW TO HAVE QUIET TIME

We live in a world that is so noisy, and so accustomed to noise, we are losing our silence. We are losing our ability to be still and quiet. Perhaps we fear what may flood our minds in the silence or what God will say to us?

The opening of Psalm 39 reveals a tremendous truth. *"I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred."*

The Psalmist realized that the best thing he could do was put his hand over his mouth and say nothing. I remember my pastor saying years ago, "Discouraged people usually overstate their problems." That is very true. We become consumed with something and we just want to speak constantly and be heard. At times we excuse our comments by saying, "I am just going to vent for a moment." Be careful, you may say something you will regret or that will hurt someone else.

There are times to remain silent.

The wisest man who ever lived, aside from the Lord Jesus, was Solomon. He wrote in Ecclesiastes 3:7 that there is *"a time to keep*

PSALM 39: HOW TO HAVE QUIET TIME

silence, and a time to speak.” There is a time for both, but notice which one he listed first. The greatest words stem from times of silence. Perhaps our speech would be more fruitful and productive if we first took time to think, pray, and meditate. What comes out of our mouths must give life, not death.

That is in essence the principle of Psalm 39. I find it almost amusing that the inscription for the psalm reads, *“To the chief Musician, even to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.”* We do not know when David wrote it, but Jeduthun was a man who, throughout the book of Psalms, was connected to public worship.

Think about it. This psalm is about public worship. Yet the idea expressed is to remain quiet. The congregation is reminded that there is a time to be still and quiet. Stop and consider what God is saying. There are two things we must do to be silent.

Think.

Psalm 39:3 | *“My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue.”* Notice the divine order here. First he mused, then he spoke. He used his brain, then his tongue. He had quiet time, then spoke about what he learned during quiet time. The word “muse” is not one we use very much anymore. It means to think deeply and intentionally about a matter. Perhaps we are much more familiar with the word “amuse” – to stop thinking, to be thoughtless.

In Luke 24:32, we read about the men traveling to Emmaus who met with Jesus on the road. *“And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”* This is similar to David’s comment in Psalm 39:3 that his *“heart was hot within”* him. Thinking about serious matters helps us know what to say and when to say it.

We must learn to be still and quiet before the Lord. That is why

PSALM 39: HOW TO HAVE QUIET TIME

the Bible says in Psalm 141:3, “*Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.*” In other words, “*LORD, guard what comes out of my mouth, and help me learn to take the time to think about what I am going to say.*”

What should we muse on? Verse 4 tells us: “*LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.*” Maybe we like the noise because we do not want to consider our end. It is good to muse on the frailty and brevity of life. That is not morbid; it is a dose of reality that clarifies our perspective. God will become big in your thinking as you begin to realize how truly small and insignificant you are.

Psalm 39:5 | “*Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.*” Selah is a pause, a signal to think about what was just spoken. The distance from your thumb to your little finger is about the same as the span of life. Age is nothing compared to the eternal God. Time is fleeting compared to eternity.

Psalm 39:6 | “*Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.*” We all put on a good show. But think about all your wealth and possessions; it is all so temporary.

Psalm 39:7 | “*And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.*” All of the musing on the reality of life comes to a head. Thinking about the brevity of our days, the surety of death, the frailty of the body, and the temporary nature of material things — it all drives you to the eternal One.

VERSES 8-11

“Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because	thou didst it. Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for
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PSALM 39: HOW TO HAVE QUIET TIME

iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. Selah.”

We must pause again to consider sin and its deadly effects. There is so much frivolity and levity in a world that is laughing its way to Hell. Sometimes believers are guilty of laughing at things they should be weeping over. It is time to get serious. Sin has real consequences for both us and the next generation.

A fantastic word picture is displayed in verse 11. Have you ever seen a moth catch fire and be consumed? It is gone in an instant. That is what happens to a life that is marred by sin. It is consumed. Quiet times allow us to think deeply about spiritual things and begin to see our lives from God's perspective.

Pray.

Psalm 39:12-13 | *“Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.”*

As the Psalmist finished thinking and began to speak, the first One he talked to was the Lord. The best thing you can do with your tongue is talk to God about what is on your heart.

The New Testament book of James, which contains the classic passages about the tongue, is filled with prayer. It begins with a prayer for wisdom, and concludes with the prayer life of Elijah. Notice James 5:16, which contains these words: *“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”*

The greatest conversation you can ever have is with the Lord Himself. Find a quiet place today to do just that. Think about Scripture by meditating on Psalm 39. After musing on the eternal truth of the Word of God, talk to Him in prayer.

PSALM 39: HOW TO HAVE QUIET TIME

After you come out of that quiet place and time, you will have much more to say. And when you speak, God will use you to help someone else.



PSALM 40: AFTER THE PREACHING IS DONE

There is nothing like the preaching of the Word of God. I love to preach and to listen to preaching. It stirs the heart and brings God's truth to life.

David, who is known as a psalmist, was also quite a preacher. Consider his own words in Psalm 40:9-10.

“I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I	have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.”
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That is quite a challenge for every person who teaches and preaches the Bible. Do not hold back God's truth. People need the whole counsel of God; give them His Word.

The phrase “*great congregation*” is a reference to the people of Israel. It is not because they were great in number, although they were, but because of the greatness of their need. That is true of any congregation; the divine emphasis is spiritual rather than numerical.

As soon as David makes this statement, there is a shift in the psalm.

PSALM 40: AFTER THE PREACHING IS DONE

The first 10 verses are an ascension. Verses 1-6 speak about what God has done. Verses 7-10 detail what the Lord allows us to do. It seems as if the Heavenly Father carried us to the mountaintop. But verses 11-17 picture a battle of desperation. After the time on the mountaintop, it is a descent into the valley of daily life.

This is a vivid picture of the way we live. It is after the preaching is done that the great needs come. It is after the crowd has dispersed and the meeting is a memory that the test arises. It is after the preacher's voice is silent that the truth has to be applied. It is after the emotion has subsided that the will has to be exercised.

WHAT WILL YOU DO AFTER THE PREACHING IS DONE?

There are many ways to look at this deeply practical psalm. You can examine it like a *magnifying glass*, peering into David's life to see many of his own experiences – the dangers and the difficulties.

You can also approach it as a *window*, through which we gain a fresh glimpse of Christ. Verses 6-9 contain a definite Messianic reference that connects to Hebrews 10 and Christ's obedience to the will of the Father.

But consider Psalm 40 as a *mirror*. When we look into God's Word, it reveals the need in our own lives. It shows us after the preaching is over and the emotion has subsided, that is when you have to live the Christian life. To do that, you have to apply what you have learned.

Verses 11-17 outline what we need to do after the preaching is done.

We must depend on God to preserve us.

Psalm 40:11 | “Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.”

PSALM 40: AFTER THE PREACHING IS DONE

Personally, I have discovered that often the greatest battles follow the greatest victories. You experience blessing, and then, all of a sudden, you are fighting for your life. That is why we must depend constantly on the mercy of God. Go back to His loving-kindness and His truth; they never change.

We must win personal victories.

VERSES 12-13

“For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs	of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me. Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.”
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When the congregation is gone, that is when you find yourself alone with God, yourself, and your sin. After spiritual encounters with God, you often have to go back and face the reality that you still deal with your own wicked flesh. The fiercest battle is the battle with your own sinful heart.

Sin tends to put its tentacles around you and beat you down. That is what these verses describe, and that is when you have to find your victory in Christ alone. Every victory in life is won by living in the presence of a holy God. When the congregation is gone and the preacher's voice is no more, you can still enjoy the presence of God and experience victories for yourself.

This is the essence of a godly life. It is not for public consumption. It is private and personal.

We must spend time in prayer.

VERSES 13-16

“Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me. Let them be ashamed and	confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to
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PSALM 40: AFTER THE PREACHING IS DONE

shame that wish me evil. Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha. Let all those that seek thee rejoice

and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified.”

Preaching is for a set time, but prayer is to be done without ceasing. This is how you continue in victory. You may get right with God in a moment, but the only way to stay right with God is to live a life of prayer. It is a life lived in the spirit of prayer, “Lord, help me.”

Do you know when Jesus prayed most often? If you study the Gospels, you will see that He did most of it *after* His preaching. It is after the seed is planted that the devil wants to steal it away. After the truth has been sown, the battle for truth begins.

After the preaching is done, spend time in prayer. Pray for yourself and those around you. Pray that the Lord’s people will be kept, and pray ultimately for the glory of God as expressed at the close of verse 16.

We need to rest in God’s promises. Here is how Psalm 40 ends, in verse 17. *“But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.”* Meditate on this truth. Quote this verse to yourself in challenging seasons.

“But I am poor and needy; yet...” Pause. Aren’t you glad for God’s “yet”? The Creator of the universe thinks about you. It is wonderful that we can think of Him, but it is awe-inspiring to know that He thinks about us.

The Bible says in Psalm 139:17-18, *“How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.”*

After the preaching is done, the living begins. This is where we move from being mere hearers of the Word to becoming doers of

PSALM 40: AFTER THE PREACHING IS DONE

the Word.

Take Psalm 40, and what you are gleaned from all of the psalms, and ask the Lord today to help you apply it — to live constantly in the presence of God, and to rest on Him. God is thinking about you today. He will help you, He will deliver you, and He will be right on time.



PSALM 41: IN TIME OF TROUBLE

Psalm 41 is the final psalm in the Genesis Psalms. It was written by King David, but we do not know the full background. Yet, we know he recorded it as a testimony of God's faithfulness in his life.

Everyone has problems. Every person you meet is going through difficulty or has gone through difficulty. The Bible says in Job 14:1, *"Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble."* David, as king of Israel, had no shortage of trouble. None of us can escape trouble in this world; we live in troubled times.

With that in mind, consider verse 1 of Psalm 41: *"Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble."*

Think about that last phrase. People go through specific troubles or have seasons of hardship. Perhaps you or a loved one are walking through a season of turmoil and heartache.

The psalm begins with the word *"blessed."* Psalm 1 begins the same way. From beginning to end, the Creator God is the God of blessing. His blessing is greater than your burden. His healing power is stronger than your brokenness. You can have the blessing of God even *"in times of trouble."*

This is a **certain** promise and a **conditional** promise. God

PSALM 41: IN TIME OF TROUBLE

demonstrates His delivering power for those who consider the poor. While this obviously extends to meeting material needs, the writer's word "poor" means "weak ones." Remember Jesus' first beatitude, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew 5:3). The heart of Christ is to minister to those struggling physically, emotionally or spiritually.

If we help others in their time of trouble, He will deliver us in ours. This is a repetition of the law of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7-8). As we minister to the needs of other people, God will minister to us. How does He do that? David explains God's deliverance throughout this psalm. It is rich and wonderful.

Psalm 41:2 | *"The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies."*

To receive the promise of verse 2, you must obey the principle of verse 1: minister to others. As you find those who are in trouble and share the goodness and grace of God with them, you will find strength for your own soul and situation.

Psalm 41:3 | *"The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."*

This is a picture of someone on a sickbed or deathbed. But the Lord provides strength. No one has a bedside manner like He does. I thank God for good doctors and medical personnel, but Christ is the Great Physician. Our Lord goes where no one else can go, does what no one else can do, and loves like no one else can love. What a wonderful Savior we have!

Psalm 41:4 | *"I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee."*

This is a change in perspective. In the previous verse, David was referring to someone else, but here he makes it personal. He is saying to hurting people, "I have been there. I was hurting. I

PSALM 41: IN TIME OF TROUBLE

called on God, and He met me there.” We comfort others with the same comfort that we have received (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). You encourage others from the overflow of what God has done in your life.

David identified the greatest healing, the healing of the soul. Man’s greatest need is always spiritual.

VERSES 5-9

“Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish? And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it. All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they	devise my hurt. An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more. Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.”
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These words come from a discouraged heart. His enemies were standing against him. People came to see him in his sick room, then stood in the corner whispering about him. His own friend turned against him. Seemingly, the entire world was trying to tear him down. But if the world turns against you, remember that God is for you! *“If God be for us, who can be against us?... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”* (Romans 8:31, 35)

VERSES 10-12

“But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them. By this I know that thou favourest me, because	mine enemy doth not triumph over me. And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.”
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God interrupts. David knew that no matter what happened, the Lord would sustain and keep him. If every single person leaves you and forsakes you, the Lord will not (Hebrews 13:5). The

PSALM 41: IN TIME OF TROUBLE

presence of God is all that you need in times of trouble.

The first book of Psalms ends this with a note of praise and victory: *“Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen”* (Psalm 41:13).

This psalm begins with God blessing us and ends with us blessing Him. God blesses us, but we ought to bless Him for His goodness to us.

It was a dark time in World War II. The Allies were advancing slowly through Italy. Supplies were being rationed. Folks were having a hard time. After reading sad news reports one morning in 1943, a pastor’s wife in Pennsylvania, named Ruth Caye Jones, sat down and began to write. She penned some thoughts on a notepad that she kept in her apron pocket. Eventually, those words took the form of a beautiful hymn:

In times like these you need a Savior,
In times like these you need an anchor;
Be very sure, be very sure,
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!
In times like these you need the Bible,
In times like these, O be not idle;
Be very sure, be very sure,
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

In these troubled times, are you anchored in Jesus? Are you anchored in the Word of God? Only the Lord and His Word will help you in times of trouble. Anchor your life in the presence of God.

The Genesis Psalms remind us that God is both Creator and Sustainer. He truly is *“the author and finisher of our faith”* (Hebrews 12:2). As you read and obey the divine roadmap for life, you will discover that God never brings you to a dead end; He always brings you to a new beginning. Walk with the Lord and follow His lead.

PSALM 41: IN TIME OF TROUBLE

“Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.”

A READY REFERENCE

of the PSALMS

The psalms are full of promises, principles, prayers, and praises. There is a psalm for every emotion and experience; they cover the realm of human life. They are written by David, the Sons of Korah, Asaph, Solomon, Ethan, Heman, and Moses. 51 are anonymous. God has made it so that they are the expression of every man—every heart that truly cries out for God.

PSALM 1-41

The Genesis Psalms

God's Counsel to Men

- 1 An opening blessing
- 2 A psalm when you are dealing with wicked people*
- 3 A prayer when your heart is troubled
- 4 A psalm for evening hours
- 5 A prayer for morning hours
- 6 A prayer for healing
- 7 A psalm when you are persecuted
- 8 A nature Psalm—praise for the Creator*
- 9 A psalm for the world in which we live
- 10 A prayer for the poor and oppressed
- 11 A psalm when you are in a spiritual battle
- 12 A prayer when godly men seem to disappear and evil men increase
- 13 A prayer when it seems God is not answering your prayer

- 14 A prayer for deliverance from foolish, corrupt people
- 15 A psalm of holiness
- 16 A prayer for preservation*
- 17 A prayer for justice
- 18 A psalm for times of victory
- 19 A psalm for those who desire to know and fellowship with God
- 20 A psalm for answered prayer
- 21 A psalm for those in authority
- 22 A prayer for the afflicted*
- 23 A psalm for all of life*
- 24 A psalm of Christ's victory*
- 25 A prayer for direction and deliverance
- 26 A psalm about integrity
- 27 A psalm of the presence of God
- 28 A prayer for divine intervention
- 29 A praise for the voice of the Lord
- 30 A praise and prayer for God's help
- 31 A psalm of trust in the midst of trouble

A READY REFERENCE of the PSALMS

- 32 A prayer and song of a restored heart
- 33 A praise for the God of heaven and earth
- 34 A praise for deliverance from trouble
- 35 A prayer when mistreated and maligned
- 36 A psalm of worship in the face of wickedness
- 37 A song of faith
- 38 A prayer for healing, help, and hope
- 39 A psalm when weak and frail
- 40 A praise for the God who hears us and thinks of us*
- 41 A prayer for mercy*

PSALM 42-72

The Exodus Psalms

God's Redeemed People

- 42 A psalm of thirst for God
- 43 A prayer of hope
- 44 A prayer for victory
- 45 A song of worship for the King*
- 46 A song about God's presence
- 47 A psalm about the King on His throne
- 48 A psalm about the attributes of our great God
- 49 A psalm about wealth in light of eternity
- 50 A psalm of the true Judge
- 51 A prayer of confession
- 52 A psalm of God's strength over man's strength
- 53 A psalm about the folly of the wicked

- 54 A prayer when oppressed
- 55 A prayer when you have been betrayed
- 56 A prayer when you are afraid
- 57 A psalm for the storm
- 58 A prayer for God's judgment on the wicked
- 59 A prayer for strength and defense
- 60 A plea for healing, help, and victory
- 61 A psalm of shelter when overwhelmed
- 62 A psalm of trust in God only
- 63 A psalm when seeking the Lord
- 64 A prayer when fearful
- 65 A praise for God's goodness on the earth
- 66 A song of joyful testimony to bless God
- 67 A prayer for blessing on the people of God
- 68 A psalm on the presence and strength of God*
- 69 A psalm when in deep waters*
- 70 A prayer for deliverance and help
- 71 A psalm for every day and every stage of life
- 72 A prayer for leaders*

PSALM 73-89

The Leviticus Psalms

In the Sanctuary with God

- 73 A psalm when you envy the wicked

A READY REFERENCE *of the* PSALMS

- 74 A prayer of desperation for God to work
- 75 A song of thanks for leaders
- 76 A song of God's judgment
- 77 A psalm of remembrance when overwhelmed in the night
- 78 A psalm to remember the faithfulness of God
- 79 A prayer of the desperate
- 80 A prayer for God to turn us and shine forth
- 81 A song that becomes a lament
- 82 A psalm about true justice
- 83 A prayer against the enemy and for the glory of God
- 84 A psalm about God's presence and strength
- 85 A prayer for revival
- 86 A prayer when weak and troubled
- 87 A song about the New Jerusalem, the coming center of Christ's reign
- 88 A prayer when lonely and low
- 89 A song and a prayer about God's unfailing faithfulness*

PSALM 90-106

The Numbers Psalms

The Rebellion of Man

- 90 A prayer to the Lord about life
- 91 A psalm for the fearful
- 92 A song to celebrate God's work
- 93 A psalm about the Lord on His throne

- 94 A prayer for defense of the righteous and justice on the wicked
- 95 A psalm for worship
- 96 A psalm to give God glory
- 97 A psalm about the holiness of God
- 98 A song of victory
- 99 A psalm for approaching God
- 100 A psalm to praise the Lord for who He is
- 101 A psalm of consecration
- 102 A prayer for the day of trouble*
- 103 A psalm to bless the Lord
- 104 A psalm about God's power over the whole earth
- 105 A psalm for God's strength and joy
- 106 A psalm to remember man's rebellion and God's mercy

PSALM 107-150

The Deuteronomy Psalms

The Holy Word of God

- 107 A psalm to praise God for His goodness and wonderful works
- 108 A song of praise and a prayer for victory
- 109 A prayer against the Lord's enemies
- 110 A psalm about Christ as our King and Priest*
- 111 A praise for the Lord's great works
- 112 A song about the blessings of the righteous

- 113 An all day song: A psalm of praise for our God
- 114 A psalm to remember God's power in the Exodus
- 115 A praise to God for all of His blessings
- 116 A psalm of praise for answered prayer
- 117 A praise for the Lord's mercy and truth
- 118 A psalm of thanks for God's goodness and mercy*
- 119 A prayer for every circumstance: the sufficiency of God's Word
- 120 A prayer for deliverance
- 121 A psalm of divine help
- 122 A prayer for Jerusalem
- 123 A prayer for God's mercy
- 124 A praise that the Lord is on our side
- 125 A prayer for protection
- 126 A praise for past victories and a prayer for present ones
- 127 A psalm of truths for the family
- 128 A psalm of blessings for the family
- 129 A prayer against the Lord's enemies
- 130 A prayer when you are waiting on God
- 131 A psalm to humble yourself before God
- 132 A prayer for God to fulfill His promises

- 133 A psalm of unity among brethren
- 134 A nighttime psalm to bless the Lord
- 135 A psalm to praise the only true and living God
- 136 A psalm of God's enduring mercy
- 137 A prayer of brokenness and remembrance
- 138 A prayer to God in the midst of trouble
- 139 A psalm about God's presence in every place and every circumstance
- 140 A prayer for protection in the battles of life
- 141 A prayer to be kept right in a world that has gone wrong
- 142 A prayer when overwhelmed
- 143 A prayer for direction
- 144 A psalm about God's providence, protection, and provision
- 145 A praise for the wonderful name of the Lord

"The Hallelujah Chorus"

The last five psalms all begin and end with "Praise ye the Lord."

- 146 A psalm of trust
- 147 A psalm to rehearse the greatness of God
- 148 A psalm of personal praise
- 149 A psalm of corporate praise
- 150 A psalm of enduring praise

***Identified as Messianic Psalms, pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ**

Following God's Word & Finding Christ's Joy.

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LIFE IS A SHORT TRIP TO SOMEWHERE FOREVER! HOW WILL YOU MAKE THE TRIP?

We live in a mobile society and it seems that everyone is in a hurry to get where they are going! Life itself is a journey and all of us are headed somewhere forever. An all-wise God has designed it so that those who follow His way can enjoy Heaven someday and also enjoy the journey today. The Bible, God's Word to man, is the roadmap for time and eternity.

BEGIN BY DETERMINING YOUR DESTINATION.

Every journey begins by settling where you are going. Without direction, we all just wander aimlessly through life, searching for meaning and purpose. Thousands of years ago a prophet named Isaiah wrote, "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*"¹ Some things never change!

*"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."*² On our own we all go away from God. This is why Jesus Christ came: to take our sin and give us His salvation. Only He can return us to the path we were created to walk and bring us to God. Jesus said, "*I am the way,*

¹ Isaiah 53:6

² Romans 3:23

GOSPEL

the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”³

Jesus Christ died for our sins, rose from the dead to offer us eternal life, and stands ready now to forgive our sins. But each of us must choose for ourselves if we will follow our way or His. When Jesus was on earth He said, *“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”⁴*

There are only two destinations: eternity in Heaven with God or separated from God forever in Hell. All roads cannot lead to the same place. Our way leads us from God; Christ’s way leads us to God. If you continue on the path you are on now, where will you spend eternity? You must determine your destination.

DISCOVER THE COMPANIONSHIP OF CHRIST.

The journey is always better with a companion, someone with whom we share both the joys and trials of the trip. This is why Jesus Christ came to this earth. He traveled this same road for thirty-three years. The Son of God is not a person far away who, *“cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”⁵* He knows where you are and what you are facing!

Even more, He wants to make the journey with you right now. This personal relationship begins at the moment that you place your faith in Him and call on Him to be your Savior. *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”⁶*

When a person comes to know Christ, two things are made sure: they will live with Christ forever in Heaven, and Christ comes to

³ John 14:6

⁴ Matthew 7:13-14

⁵ Hebrews 4:15

⁶ Romans 10:9

GOSPEL

live in their heart now! In one of the most famous psalms, Psalm 23, David explains it this way, *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."*⁷

To follow Christ is to have Him make the journey with you, never alone! In some of His last words to the first disciples He said, *"...I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*⁸ There will be difficulties along the way, but He will guard us and guide us at every step.

KNOW WHAT TO DO AT IMPORTANT INTERSECTIONS.

Intersections are turning points. At each of them there is a decision to be made. Life is full of decisions, but the most important ones are the ones that affect eternity. Today you are standing at one of those crossroads. You will either choose to follow Christ or to continue on your own way. Remember that a wrong turn doesn't lead to the right place! The right turn is to repent and believe on Christ.⁹

There are two paths and we all must decide which one we will take. Jesus said, *"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."*¹⁰ Will you believe on Christ today?

Call on Him now! *"Dear God, be merciful to me a sinner. I know that you died for me and believe that you rose from the dead. Please forgive my sin and come into my life. I trust you now as my personal Savior. Thank you for giving me the free gift of eternal life. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

⁷ Psalm 23:6

⁸ Matthew 28:20

⁹ Acts 20:21

¹⁰ John 3:18

GOSPEL

This is the beginning of your journey with Jesus. He promises those who belong to Him, “*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*”¹¹ We would love to hear from you and help you as you begin to walk with Christ.

Visit us at **enjoyingthejourney.org** to take the next step.

¹¹ Hebrews 13:5

Want To Know More?

