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“Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths.” Psalm 25:4

Main Idea: God, you are my all in all, my salvation and confidence! You are my only Hope Who keeps me safe; therefore, I need not have fears. Even when evil people and their evil deeds come against me, I can stand strong in You. So, they will be the ones who fail. Even when all I know comes unglued and collapses, I will not be afraid, because I have You Lord. Lord, I have but one request, to be with You! Allow me to live in You! To dwell in Your House so you are my strength behind Your Walls. So, you will defeat those who come against me. I will sing my gratitude and praise to You loudly. Lord, please listen to me when I pray! Have mercy on me. I honestly seek you, and do so eagerly. Yet, there are times I do not see or feel you in my distress. It is like you are hiding from me. I am your servant, I love you Lord, and I know you are there and help me, even when I do not see you. Please do not give up on me or become angry with me, even when I deserve it. Please do not discard or leave me; rather, continue to keep me safe in you. Teach me your ways and what I need to do. Do not allow evil people and their lies and threats or my enemies to win out. I know Your kindness and I will trust you no matter what! I call all of your people to Trust the Lord!

Contexts and Background:

This “composite” Psalm shares its background with Psalms 15, 24, 26 and 28, as God’s House is sacred and a Holy Sanctuary. How do we come into His presence? By being dependent upon our Lord with gratitude. This Psalm has a “double expression,” of various themes and styles. One of jubilant victory and confidence, and of agony of loss, as war often is. This was, perhaps, composed either when David brought the Ark back from its captivity by the Philistines or during the news of the death of his son, Absalom. During the return of the Ark, David was so overjoyed to have the symbol of God’s presence back in Jerusalem, he danced with joy and drew out his wife, Michal’s, contempt. David expressed his deep gratitude and wonders how does a vile person like Michal fit in as a worshipper. The same goes during a crisis, how does one go to God with reverence and still stress their hurt and disappointment. David was satisfied because he had a relationship with God and his kingship was intact, after his son tried to have him killed during a coup d’état so he could overthrow and become king a bit earlier. The answer is to be a learner of God, to fully trust Him and give Him our unquestioning loyalty. This has traditionally been a Psalm sung at victories.

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

Verses 1-6: A person of genuine faith will have the response is to trust, revere, serve, place first and foremost and worship God as LORD of all. No matter what with a steadfast singleness of purpose. Then, have our life’s priority lined up to God’s purpose, and living life as it relates to faith and honor to God with confidence. The contrast is God hates wickedness in any form, so do not do it; do not spread it—period! If you do, you are wicked—pure and simple (1 Sam., chaps 18-20)!

- *Light.* This means God’s Divine Holiness and the Light of God’s people. Light also brings life and the ability to see so we have clarity. God gives us light for understanding His Word and nature. This is also a symbol for truth, vitality, goodness, and order. Darkness causes one to stumble and symbolizes fear and evil, as these happenings are clandestine which brings chaos and evil because there is not clarity of reason or thought (Lev. 11:44; Nah. 1:8; Psalm 4:6; 18:28; 36:9; 43:3; 97:11; Isa. 5:20; John 1:4-9; 8:12; 1 John 1:5).
- *My deliverer / Salvation.* Salvation now is in and from Christ, not in any belief or religious system. God’s nature and will are to save what is lost: us. Thus, our Salvation is personal, but we worship and serve Him as a collective (Psalm 18:1-3; 47, 25:5).
- *Whom shall I fear?* This statement of faith is set in the context that portrays David’s enemies like a pack of vicious wild animals out to devour him, yet his confidence in God is not moved (Gen. 20:11; Deut. 6:4-5; Psalm 27:1; Prov. 1:7; Eccl. 12:13; Matt. 6:19-24, 33; John 10:22-42).

- *Stronghold* / strength of my life. An image of a safe place to flee to, an image of great comfort and our gratitude to be faithful of who God is and what He can do (Psalm 18:2; Isa. 33:16).
- *Wicked*. God's opposition and adversaries. The enemy of God is also the Christian's enemy. Our enemies will seek to destroy us in any way available. That means physical, mental and social harm. This is a character description of the heart of people who are worldly, self-seeking, and evil. They hate to be convicted as they hate the truth and will do all they can to disrupt goodness and order even to the point of being self-destructive. They can even rationalize that terror and wickedness are good and beneficial in forwarding their agenda, and will claim they are the ones in the right and that good people are really the ones who are evil. One's sinful action will cause natural consequences and then God's judgment (Psalm 5:9-10).
- *Stumble*. A contrast to *Light* and their own darkness causes them to fall.
- *My heart will not fear*. This is a stand-your-ground conviction of faith, a singleness of purpose and focus. When we have our focus on God and not circumstances, we will not fret or fear.
- *Confident*. The certainty of God's call and the boldness to carry it out no matter what. This is anticipating victory, like a devotion; even when in trouble. This is an act of trust, faith and dependence on God and the assurance He is at work, and I am in His hands. As a soldier, David had confidence that God protected him as he fought and thus did so valiantly. This enables us to rely on the Lord for all things in our life. We can push forward in the direction that we are called because He is leading, and He is sovereign. As we look to Him with trust, and not to others or ourselves, we have the God of the universe in us. Nothing is greater than that (2 Kings 18: 19-19-13; Job. 13:15; Psalm 16; 22; 63; 73; 91; 121; 131; Proverbs 3:25-27; 14:26-27; Isa. 36:4-37:20; I Cor. 2:1-8; Philippians 4:13; Heb. 4: 14-16)!
- *Ask from the LORD*. Meaning to place God first and foremost in one's life and to do this by seeking, as in to inquire of His plan and ways for our life. This is to experience, express, and extend our faith (Matt. 6:33).
- *Dwell in the house of the LORD*. Divine residence or God's palace, (Psalm 5:7; 45:15; Heb. 16).
- *Beauty / delight of the LORD*. To realize God's power, perfection, and glory at work and how it all comes together. Also, to ponder on the graciousness of God (Psalm 16:11; 23:6; 63:2-5).
- *Day of trouble*. The assurance that God is tangible and to anticipate that God will work in our life, even when we do not see it. Thus, this fuels our trust in Him.
- *Dwelling*. Referring to a "sanctuary," and "devoted protection," here to where God lives from a human perspective of an intimate omni-powerful being. This is also a term of comfort that we rest in God's care (Psalm 18:1-3; 26:6-8).
- *Head will be exalted*. As in out of harm and trouble.
- *Shouts of joy*. This is a proclamation of victory, because God is the One who saves.
- *Music / melody to the LORD*. An expression of loyalty and assurance that God is at work.

Verses 7-10: A series prayers for deliverance in the form of concentrated expressions of anxiety; while in the face of intense adversity. While, David seeks confidence, as if to purge out fears so only confidence remains.

- *Seek his face!* Meaning to pursue an intimate relationship and fellowship with God. And we can only seek Him if He reveals Himself to us. This is in the Person and Word of Christ. This is the essence of worship, to behold God and inquire of Him. He is not our entertainment or puppet. He is LORD!
- *My helper*. An expression of one's dependence upon God as LORD.

- *Forsake / reject me.* A proverbial expression as a feeling of chastisement, not a fact, as God will not leave his people destitute of His presence. David pleads mercy and covers all of his basses (Psalm 94:14).
- *God my Savior.* Seeking God for deliverance of one's situation. God promises us He will come to our rescue, but it will not always be when and what we hoped for (1 Sam. 23:28; 24 :14; 25:29; 26:18).

Verses 11-14: The true believer does not seek comfort; rather, seeks God. Is one who declares to learn and grow through all of lives ups and downs. And that God wills, if He chooses, if the situation warrants it, He, will come to our rescue. But nonetheless, our faith remains.

- *Teach me.* Being teachable and a learner, and being willing for self-examination and input from mature people in God. God wants to show you His Word and Ways. It is first being a learner, absorbing and applying what God has for us, then replicating that in others. We can't just learn; we need to follow through. Our selfishness, superficiality, prejudice, and pride will get in the way! (Ex. 33:13; Psalm 25:4-9; 86:11; Proverbs 9:8-9; Matthew 7:28; 11:28-29; 28: 19-20; John 7:16; 14:26; Mark 4:2; Luke 5: 1-11; Acts 16:1-4, 18:5, 19:22, 20:4; 1 Thess. 3:2-6 2 Tim. 2:2; 2 John 1:9)!
- *Your way.* Be committed to God's way, by faith and reason, not get distracted by worldly advice and what looks more appealing or easier.
- *Lead me.* Being vigilant to God's call and precepts. Knowing only God can help us and take us away from harm. The preparation for faith by God's lead and command. An appeal to God to hear us and have mercy and set us on the right path. His plan is best, not the worlds or our own. God's will is that we know Him, trust Him, place Him first and grow in Him and follow His precepts. We can have confidence in God. Even though it seems our prayers are not being heard or responded to, the Lord has set apart the godly for His purpose and plan, and He will answer us in His time (Psalm 5:8; 25:4-5; Isa. 45:13; Jer. 23:6; John 14:26; 15:26; 2 Peter 1:21; Eph. 4:18; Rev. 1:19).
- *Straight / level path.* That all obstacles have been removed, making progress efficiently, also a moral term to do what is right and good.
- *Foes / enemies.* Evil people who dare to challenge God's divine order and have little to no regard for truth and righteousness (Psalm 5:82; 7:11). (Psalm)
- *Goodness of the LORD.* A statement of confidence in God, that He is in control, even when we do not see it. This also refers that our vindication is God's role and we are to trust Him (Deut. 31:7; Jos. 1:6-19).
- Wait for the LORD. TRUST IN THE LORD! This means to trust in God's perfect timing, and to never give up!
- *Take heart / heart take courage.* Meaning an exhortation to have courage, and not despair, when we wait upon God (Jos. 1:6; Isa. 40:32).

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

Remaining confident in the face of tries or uncertainty is a difficult challenge, even for the faithful. Here David with his passionate, intimate relationship with God, cries out in anguish, yet, makes the dramatic profession of faith, "I will not yield to fear or temptations, *I will remain faithful*, even when all come against me and do not understand what is going on". He even asks for the instructions and waits upon the Lord. One thing that helped David and can be a prime tool for us is the knowledge that our Lord is real and has us in His hands with a purpose, plan and is aiming us, like an arrow in a skilled archer's bow. Yet, as arrows, we are at war. A battle is raging all around us with players and antagonists that hate God and His people. So, instead of giving up, we can relax our fears and gain a confidence by entrusting ourselves to Christ's Lordship with a perseverance of faith and trust, that we build from our love and gratitude for what Christ has done for me. Therefore, I will face whatever challenge comes my way. Life does not make sense, but your faith will if we give it to Christ.

To get to this place, we must also be listening to His instructions that we gain from His Word and continue asking, "What do I need to learn from this, what do you want me to do?" Then, we can grow and go beyond our fears, our trials and simply remain trusting and confident (Job 13:15; John 17:3).

Christian Life Principle: What God wants is for us to do and move our faith--to go beyond the mindset of "I have my salvation and thus, I need to do nothing more." We cannot buy more favor or work for our salvation, but we can be more committed, engaging, and faithful. Exercise your faith with confidence and take advantage of your opportunities to grow and promote Christ's Message.

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions, see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. What causes you to be afraid? How has this changed as you grow more mature in the Lord?
2. God's House is a sacred and a Holy Sanctuary; so, how do we come into His presence? How does being dependent upon our Lord with gratitude play?
3. How do you seek confidence? What does this Psalm say about that?
4. What did David do, when evil people and their evil deeds come against him?
5. How does one go to God with reverence and still stress their hurt and disappointment?
6. What does this Psalm say about getting God's attention from our prayers?
7. How have you gone to our Lord and asked, "teach me your ways and what I need to do?"
8. Why do some people, even Christians, never seem to be teachable?
9. What causes someone to be a teachable person? Why is that important?
10. How can you stand strong in Christ in the midst of adversity?
11. What can you do better to live life as it relates to faith and honor to God with confidence?
12. How can you be a learner of God, to fully trust Him and give Him our unquestioning loyalty?