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General idea: David passionately cries out to God, as we all ought to do! *OH, Lord please hear my prayer; oh how I am groaning and hurting.* Please listen to my pleas and plight; for You are my Hope, my One True God, You are my LORD! I will not listen to anyone else but You. I love You with all my heart, with all of my being; I need You to intervene here. You are my King and I trust You; not my own wisdom or status; thus, I come to You fully surrendered and opened. Please listen to me in the morning, as I talk and, with all excitement and hope, commune with You. I can't wait to see what You will do for me as I am weak and You are strong. Thus, I can bring my requests and situations to You! I know that God hates those who do evil and hurt His children. I know You also can't stand sin, thus, we need You. How can I receive your care and still beware that my pride in not in your way? God hates liars just as He hates murderers and deceivers; He hates it when they attack His children, and it grieves Him deeply when His children turn into people of immorality and wickedness like these others. These people cannot come to You; they hate You and their sin is filth before You. At the same time, our God is One of unfailing love and great mercy! He allows us to come to Him in prayer, to come before Him and be saved. He hears us and has compassion upon us.

Contexts and Background:

Like Psalm 3 and 4, this is a Psalm of lament from David who possibly wrote this when he was in great anguish at Saul's service, as the lies and gossip were so overwhelming that he was forced to flee for his life. He was young and away from his family. Yet, at the same time, he shows his faith and confidence in God. David has a passionate relationship with God and models to us how a mature and faithful Christian needs to be. This is called a *morning prayer* by Judaism, by Christian leaders, and by leaders of worship over the centuries. This Psalm was used in services in the Temple and *Synagogues* for the morning sacrifice, as well as by the early church, by churches today, and for the individual Christian to see how one can handle adversity, distress, and uncertainty (1 Sam: 18-20).

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

Verses 1-2: David just asks God to hear him; he is not worried about what may come or the threat of his former friends who are now his enemies. Rather, his focus remains on God and he commits to letting God show him a way to work through this situation. He gives his situation to God, and reduces his stress and qualms so he can persevere and even prosper. He knows God will hear him because he is innocent and he knows God will punish the guilty.

- *Give ear.* A petition in prayer to God, that God will pay attention and hear his (our) prayer. Here is an appeal for justice while experiencing injustice (Psalm 17:1; 55:1-2).
- *Sighing/groaning.* Meaning our whispers or silent complaining and muttering—what we say that is not heard by others but is heard by God. This is also a term used for meditation, to somberly come to God with reverence and endurance.
- *My King and my God.* Meaning an intimate relationship, as God who is all-powerful and all present is with and within us. God allows and even loves for us to have a close personal relationship with Him. This was not just for Bible personalities or David; He is here for us, too (1 Sam. 8:19-f)!

- *King*. Refers to the One in total charge. As David was king over Israel, God is King over the entire universe. David, the man who could be prideful and conceited, sees the necessity for God in his life. David recognizes that his kingship is of no comparison to God's and accepts God as His Sovereign. Many kings who came after David did not see this, as many people today do not.
- *Morning*. Referring to the dawn of a new day, where there is hope and renewal. To start one's day with prayer, just as the day begins, sets the tone for the rest of the day (Lam. 3:23).

The point is that true intimacy with God is found when we submit and surrender our pride, so that He becomes the LORD God in our life. God wants our hearts lined up to His.

Verses 3-4: Many people today think there is no evil, but the Bible, as well as real investigations into humanity, shows that there actually are both good and evil. But, the good news is that even in a world filled with evil, God is still in control; He is Sovereign, so we can trust Him. Consequently, when we go through bad times spurred on by evil people, God hates it even more than we do.

- *Expectation*. We do not know what the future holds for us, but God does. Thus, we can wait with hope to see what He will do.
- *Pleasure in evil/delight in wickedness*. Many ancient gods such as Ba'al and Moloch as well as many of the Greek gods in Jesus' time and the gods of Hinduism today get their jollies from our distress and take great pleasure in manipulating us into suffering. They love sin, apathy, and anarchy, whereas God truly hates sin and truly loves us and wants the best for us (Lev. 18:21; 1 Kings 18:25; Jer. 32:35; Rom. 3:13)
- *Wicked cannot dwell*. God is Holy and cannot be touched or contaminated by sin; thus, no one who is evil/sinful can come before God. To approach Him takes a substitution for punishment and atonement; sacrifice in the Old Testament and Christ's work for us (Mal. 3:5).

Verses 5-7: David seeks God's mercy and points out his innocence as well as his vulnerability and humility. And, he prays that his enemies' plans will be thwarted so they have no justification for their malevolent accusations. At the same time, he had to be wise and careful and not foolish—not trust God and then do something stupid or nothing at all. David knew Saul was seeking to kill him, so he calls to God, then plans his escape. (1 Sam. 8:20; 11:12; 12:12; 25:28; 2Sa 3:18; 7:9-11).

- *Arrogant*. Referring to people who are conceited and elevate themselves over others. God loathes them and those who are pretentious and flamboyant, pretending to be godly. They extend their self-image and self-determination over and against anyone or anything and then carry this further by scheming for another's downfall. Here, in context, it refers to gossip and slander, which involves a bad person trying to look good by saying the good person is bad (Isa 2:17; Ezek. 28:2, 5; Jer. 13:9-10; Hos. 13:6; Psalm 31:23; Rom. 1:30).
- *Hate all who do wrong*. There is a contrast among those who hate God, those who are godly people, and those who love God yet still have sin. At the same time, God has a perfect standard, so we are called to be responsible and to account for our actions, Yet, He gives us mercy and grace. But beware; He passionately hates sin and loves justice!
- *Lies; bloodthirsty*. Here, people are twisting and perverting the situation to suit their own agendas, as evil people often do. You do not have to be bloodthirsty to be evil. Manipulating a person or situation in bad character and rotten fruit is evil just the same (Gal. 5:17-21).

- *Great mercy/steadfast love.* If it were not for God's love and mercy, we could never pray, let alone be saved. We have no right to be heard; yet, He hears us anyway. We have all sinned and are fallen; yet, there is a difference between those who follow God and struggle and those who are evil. The difference is that there are those who receive His Grace and those who reject Him.
- *Come into your house.* An expression to come and worship God, asking for permission to enter His Holy Sanctuary and presence with all of our reverence and awe. Psalm 15 is an entrance liturgy—how one comes before God. We come into God's house not by our efforts or deeds of righteousness, because we cannot do enough to make it. Rather, we come with His righteousness imputed on us, by His grace (1 Sam. 1:7; Psalm 15).
- *Holy temple.* For David, this referred to the Tent Meeting—the Tabernacle built under Moses' time. Here, one approached God and His Divine Presence and prayed for mercy.

God wants us to rely on Him; still we must use His precepts for direction, and then act upon it!

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

This is a Psalm of practicing His presence when one is in distress. Faith and trust and a commitment to obey are marks of a person who loves and honors God. God indeed hears our prayers and cares; the only catch is for us to be righteous. This is something He gives to the Christian! Even when life is falling apart, one whose trust is in the Lord need not fear what others may do or not do. When God seems distant and our hurts are overwhelming, we must still have faith and confidence, because our situation will change. Nothing is permanent; He does hear our prayers. It is we whose perceptions, fears, and hurts block Him out. But, a will that does not seek Him will hurt us, others around us, and even God Himself. We have to realize that God indeed cares and loves us, a fact not dependent upon our feelings or situation. If we really love Christ and we are His by faith, there is no reason to fear. But, we must be careful our hurt and anger do not take us over so we forget His care and commit sin. There is never an excuse to sin; there is always a reason to trust Him (2 Chron. 20; Psalm 16:11; 62:5; Isaiah 6:6-7; 43:18; Luke 10:42; John 12:32; Cor. 3:18)!

We are usually so entwined in what we are dealing with we rarely look up to the One who Guides and Helps. We often miss the main thing in life and in ministry because of our preoccupations and distractions. God wants us in Him—to simply trust and obey no matter what situation we are in. Do not allow past pains or present trend-setting get in the way of what is really important. These things are not to be your identity. Christ is to be that; He is your All in All—so live your life as if it is so, because it is! Our God is the One to whom we can come! He is always here with us, whether we see Him or not. If we are in dire suffering and in all the noise of our pain and plight all we can see is the darkness of no hope, God is still there. He is waiting on us more than we are waiting upon Him.

Christian Life Principle: The more vulnerable and intimate we are in our relationship with Christ the more impact He has upon you! Listen to our Lord through His Word and Holy Spirit, allow His leading and protection and blessing into your life (James 4:1-8).

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. Who or what gave you the most comfort when you were a kid? How about now?
2. Why is it so important to start one's day with prayer? How does this set the tone for the rest of the day?
3. Have you considered that Gossip is a form of slander and therefore a form of evil and sin? Why do many Christians gossip today? How do they rationalize it? What does God think about it? What can be done?
4. Why do some people want to lie about, manipulate, disgrace, and even destroy those who love and honor God?
5. How did David model for us how a mature and faithful Christian needs to be? How do you rate people who are mature? What are the characteristics of maturity of faith?
6. How do you feel that you can bring your requests and situations to Christ? Why does God hate those who do evil and hurt His children? How do you feel about that?
7. If God also hates liars just as He hates murderers and deceivers, why do we then lie? How do we? What can we do to stop it and still be socially acceptable?
8. How is Christ your Hope? What do you need to do to have more of a sense that He is truly your One True God, your LORD? What will this do for your life and relationships?
9. In times of upset and uncertainty, do you seek God's guidance or rely on your education or experience or friends or...?
10. God hates it when people attack His children to the point of grief. How does this strengthen your perseverance? How does God feel when we as His children turn into these people of immorality and wickedness? What are you going to do about it?
11. How have you been so entwined in what you were dealing with that you did not look up to the One who Guides and Helps? What can you do to make sure you do not miss the main thing in life and in ministry because of your preoccupations and distractions?
12. What can a Church do to stop the gossip and slander from happening? What happens when church leadership ignores it?