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“And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times.” Psalm 12:6

Main Idea: What does one do when everything is upside down, when people who are faithless and hate God succeed and those who are faithful suffer? We do as David did; he cried out, *Oh Lord help and rescue us! Why are your children no longer practicing their faith or follow your decrees or even do what is right?* It seems there are none who are loyal to you, God, or to one another. Please, help us. All I see are people lying and telling each other what they want to hear while they have vanity and trickery in their hearts as they connive to hurt and steal. Lord, please quiet their pompous conceit and cut off their boasts and false flattery. They think there is no God and, thus no accountability, so they do as they please with a pumped-up arrogance. They think they will succeed by their lies, slick speech, and smug attitudes. Yet, God will intervene. He says He will arise as He hears the needy and downtrodden hurting, and the poor are oppressed, while the evildoers strut about. He says He will protect them from those who hurt His faithful. God's Words are flawless, His promises are pure, like the purest of all the most precious metals. He will keep His faithful and needy safe in Him, and protect them from the wicked and all that is sinful and vile in the depravity of fallen humanity. Lord, keep us safe from those who love and do what is wrong.

Contexts and Background:

A Psalm with a cry out to God as a petition for aid with a resounding answer from God. God gives a reassuring Word to David when he was in deep distress and has become a steadfast comfort to countless generations. This takes place, perhaps, in the time after David killed Goliath and went to live with King Saul. After being a faithful warrior and an accomplished harpist to soothe Saul's' demonic rages, David faces contempt from the other officers, his family, and court attendants. Thus, all David sees and feels is gossiping, deception, and backstabbing without anyone to defend him. David found the battles with words more deadly than that of swords. Then Saul plots to kill David and even throws spears at him; David must flee to the mountains. Then, as many times in his life, David finds his allies gone and is only faced with adversaries. He passionately seeks God's interdiction. Later on, in his old age, David saw the foundations of God's Kingdom failing, evil people succeeding and the godly becoming less and less. This Psalm is a lot about the misuse of language and integrity, as well as using words to abuse and manipulate without any regards to truth or consequences (1 Sam. 14-22; 2 Sam. 15-20).

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

Verses 1-4: The power of propaganda gains an audience who does not care for facts, logic, or truth. This audience is satisfied with empty words. We all make mistakes that are not deliberate, premeditated sins. However, as God knows we are fallible, we still have the responsibility to do our best to be wise stewards of our words. But, this Psalm warns those who deliberately sin with their mouth and lets us know we have a God Who will defend us!

- *Help, LORD.* David cries out to God, yet his words seemly go unheard. He feels frustrated.
- *No one is faithful / godly one is gone.* David feels that he is alone in God's Kingdom and that he is the last of the faithful. Many faithful feel that way (1 Kings 19:14; Mic. 7:1-7).

- *Everyone lies.* Meaning empty, without fact, a falsehood. To be insincere on purpose for ill gain. People who are without character are irresponsible and do not care what they say or their words are empty and meaningless and even lie and manipulate to get their way. This also means being dishonest, hypocritical, and careless of consequences. Thus, it is not possible to communicate effectively, trust, or have dealings with such people.
- *Flatter / empty talk.* To manipulate the person by making them feel good to get them to your position or view, even if it is wrong or hurtful. Like telling a lie to make yourself look good or a deceptive car salesman, conman, or political speech. In contrast, to communicate with care by facts to know what is right and to do what is right (Isa. 30:10; Dan. 11:32; John 5:44).
- *Harbor deception / double heart.* Meaning to be dishonest, even to seek out victims who can't or won't fight back. Like the snake in the garden and Eve's seduction of it and her response. Or a politician making false promises just to get elected or a measure passed, and, to an extreme, a dictator like a Hitler or an antichrist (Dan. 7:20-25; 2 Pet. 2:2; 2 Thess. 2:1-4; 1 John 2:18-22; 2 John 1:7; 4:2-3; Rev. 20:10).
- *Silence / cut off all flattering lips.* Misused words are weapons that hurt and destroy. God hates this. This was a Jewish term to shun or cut off from the community for sins against the community. Can also mean death.
- *Boastful tongue.* The tongue, to Jewish wisdom and Scripture, is a wild and evil force as well as an instrument for good. Our heart and spiritual formation will determine the impact and outcome of our words (Prov. 11:9; 12:18; 18:21; James 3:1-12).
- *Lips will defend us.* Malicious people always think they can talk themselves out of any situation. One day, they will not be able to, especially with God.
- *Who is lord over us?* Prideful people think there is no one above them; yet, God is! They will reject accountability to God and others and others will suffer; this is one of the reasons why God hates pride. For the Christian, Jesus Christ is our LORD and we are accountable to Him and to one another (1 Cor. 6:20).

Verses 5-8: The battle of words, where they are weapons of hurt that cause massive destruction. God hates it, and He will act upon it. Here, David receives an answer to his prayer. Either God addresses him, then and there, or he remembers a Word he received earlier in his life (Prov. 10:20; 25:11).

- *I will now arise.* This is a Jewish battle cry and an expression of a call to action that means to urgently engage, to "GET UP NOW!" Grammatically, it is an imperative, meaning quick and decisive action. It is OK to ask God to help you--He wants that. Just make sure your call is just and right, and not out of petty retribution or for selfish gain (Ex. 12:31, Num. 10:35; Duet. 2:13; Judg. 7:9; Psalm 3:7; 10:11-15; 68:1; Isa. 33:10).
- *Silver purified in a crucible / clay furnace.* A "crucible" is a clay furnace for smelting metals, depicted in Egyptian wall paintings. Silver ore comes from the ground and is very dirty; it is filled with impurities and looks like a regular rock. Thus, purification is needed to make it workable and presentable. The crucible is used for the refining of precious metals at high temperatures to separate impurities so as to produce a finer and more valuable material resulting in higher quality; think of shinier silver or 10-carat gold made into 24-carat gold. The application is used as a term in the NT, that we are purified and refined when we go through the effects and substances of life.

They have a purpose; nothing happens to us without a reason that is meant to teach and grow us (Job 23:10; Psalm 12:6; Prov. 17:3; Isa. 43:2; Jer. 11:4; 1 Cor. 4:3-5; Col. 2:11-15; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 4:13; 5:1).

- *Gold refined seven times / purifications.* *Seven* is a term referring to God's fullness and perfection, also the completeness of an endeavor. Silver has a lot of slag, extra materials, within the ore, so it takes more meltings, called smelting, to make it presentable and usable. Just like how God deals with us on the path to spiritual maturity (Duet. 4:20).
- *LORD, will keep / promise / safe / protect.* Meaning God will keep us in Him, referring "to guard". The Hebrew word for rescue is the same as "to deliver" which is the same word for Jesus, *Yeshua*, thus the title, "*Jesus Saves*" (Psalm 14:5; 24:6; Prov. 30:11-14).
- *Freely strut / vileness.* Meaning to flaunt oneself in reprehensible means in public. Shameful excess, a glutton, and a person who is worthless by being only self-focused, in contrast to a precious child of God who trusts in Him (Duet. 21:20 Prov. 23:20).
- *Honored.* In context, here refers to people who glamorize sin and pride and who are wicked and do not care. They hate character and truth and people who are honorable.

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

The struggles most faithful Christians seem to face is wondering if God is there. This is not a denial of His existence; rather, it is a wonder if He knows me and cares for me. This comes about when we go through life's pains and tough times. We may see Him, bless the unfaithful and even the wicked do well, but when we seek Him as our Lord, surrender all, life becomes upset and suffering comes about. Then, when we cry out to Him, there is silence. We have no idea what He is up to and what He will do. This is also what David sees and experiences. Yet, what we glean from the Psalms, is that God does not tell us the what; He simply reveals through His Word and Spirit, His presence, and the hope that we can hold on.

There are no quick paths in God's Kingdom; rather, it is a journey of trust and a hope that is fulfilled by Christ. Thus, we must be patient and trust in His Work, even when it is unclear or even unseen. Our part is our faithfulness no matter what. Our call is to keep moving on in life and the determination to have a working faith. This means stamina of faith in the face of self-doubts and seemingly impenetrable obstacles. This means to persist in an idea, purpose, or task that glorifies God no matter what problems may bring. With faith and encouragement from others, we have staying power, as in "you can do it, too!" When we are in suffering, God may seem far away and no one seems to care about our plight or our concerns; but, always bear in mind, and hear that God is still there, He is caring! He will support you and care for you! We are to be focused on the goal ahead and be able to carry the task and ourselves through both the tough times and the joyous ones (James 5:7-12).

Christian Life Principle: When there is deception all around us, we can trust God and know His Bible is Truth; then, we can cling to His Words in any storm or tribulation. Our faith can see what is ahead when our eyes and thinking cannot. It comes down to our hope that must be rooted in our conviction in Christ, Who gives us our assurance to press ahead.

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. Do you fully understand the power of your words?
2. How and why do evil people succeed when the good people do nothing to stop it?
3. What does this Psalm tell us about being dishonest, hypocritical and careless?
4. What are some answers to prayer have you received or heard about? How does this strengthen your spiritual journey with Christ?
5. How have you seen misused words become weapons that hurt and destroy? Why does God hate this?
6. How has God used His “smelting,” to make you a presentable and usable on the path to spiritual maturity?
7. Why do you think that David found the battles with words of gossip and deception more deadly than that of swords?
8. How are your words an indication of how you are dealing with life, your spiritual growth, character, and maturity? Consider, how and why people swear.
9. What can you do to not be frustrated when you cry out to God, and your words seemly go unheard?
10. How and why do our words reflect our true character? How can you communicate more effectively?
11. How can you make sure you are better at modeling Christ to others with your words as well as the inflection of your words?
12. Craft a prayer to save when you have a bad day. Think about asking our Lord to keep you safe from those who love and do what is wrong.