

Pursuing God

In Step with the Psalms

Lesson 19: Psalm 5

In the Morning

Stay on the Path ~

A daily appointment with God is not an option for anyone desiring to grow close in their walk with Him. There is no time when He is not available—morning, noon, and night He is always on call. But to the Christian who makes Him first priority in the morning there comes the absolute assurance of God's presence throughout the day. The high priest of the Old Testament laid the burnt offering on the altar at the first light of day, revealing a picture of total dedication and obedience to God. The New Testament passage of Romans 12:1–2 depicts the equivalent for the believer: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Does God hear your voice of praise and petition every morning? If you want to have a good day no matter what your circumstances, start by giving yourself to the Lord as that living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is your reasonable act of service to Him. Beginning your day at the altar will prompt His peace, increase your ability to trust Him by faith at every turn, and result in overflowing joy for you and perhaps even those around you.

Did you know ~

Psalm 5 is a prayer of David offered up at a time when he was exposed to danger from his enemies. It is considered an *individual lament* psalm, meaning that it reveals a cry of help to God out of distress. Often a lament psalm will be prefaced by a short summary of its direction followed by a full description of the difficulty. Accompanying the plea is an expression of confident trust in God's ability to answer as well as heartfelt praise that He will answer. Some versions of praise are in the form of a vow that would be shared in the midst of the congregation when God did answer the prayer.

Psalm 5

A Prayer of Guidance
To the Chief Musician. With Flutes.
A Psalm of David.

1 Give ear to my words, O Lord,
Consider my meditation.

2 Give heed to the voice of my cry,
My King and my God,
For to You I will pray.

3 My voice You shall hear in the
morning, O Lord;
In the morning I will direct it to You,
And I will look up.

4 For You are not a God who takes
pleasure in wickedness,
Nor shall evil dwell with You.

5 The boastful shall not stand in Your sight;
You hate all workers of iniquity.

6 You shall destroy those who speak
falsehood;
The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty
and deceitful man.

7 But as for me, I will come into Your
house in the multitude of your mercy;
In fear of You I will worship toward
Your holy temple.

8 Lead me, O Lord, in Your
righteousness because of
my enemies;
Make Your way straight before
my face.

9 For there is no faithfulness in
their mouth;

Their inward part is destruction;
Their throat is an open tomb;
They flatter with their tongue.

10 Pronounce them guilty, O God!
Let them fall by their own counsels;
Cast them out in the multitude of
their transgressions,
For they have rebelled against You.

11 But let all those rejoice who put
their trust in You;
Let them ever shout for joy, because
You defend them;
Let those also who love your name
Be joyful in You.
12 For You, O Lord, will bless
the righteous;
With favor You will surround him
as with a shield.

(Scripture from the New King James Bible, ©1980 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission.)

Open your Bible and lesson each day by beginning with a word of prayer.

Read Psalm 5.

Listen to the psalm ~ First impressions

What is the *tone* of Psalm 5? What stands out to you from your initial reading?

Put a psalm in your heart ~ (Memory verse) Psalm 5:11

(Write out the verse in the spaces below. Practice it each time you open your lesson.)

But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You.

Learn the lessons of the psalm ~

Selah (Think about):

How do you respond when someone hurts you or when persistent pain is present in your life? When there was no immediate answer for David, he rose to face a new day by first acknowledging God.

I. God uses the one who calls upon Him. vv. 1–3

David begins by sighing, crying and seeking God in earnest expectation that He will answer.

1. Use David's own words to describe his plea to God in verses 1–3.
 - a. v. 1
 - b. v. 2
 - c. v. 3
2. What does David's careful use of his words reveal to you about his heart? What does it tell you about his recognition of God's authority?

The word "direct" in verse 3 means *to set in order* your prayer. It is used in Genesis 22:9 to speak of Abraham *putting in order* the wood upon the altar where he would place his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God. It refers to taking deliberate thought about approaching God—understanding who He is. It is also the same Hebrew word used in Ecclesiastes 5:1–2, which states: *Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear. . . Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few.*

II. Prevailing prayer expects an answer. vv. 4–8

The man or woman God uses has a right heart with Him and a reverence for Him. David realized God's holiness and shared His view of sin.

1. What does David say about God's character? v. 4
2. Because God is holy, who will not stand in His presence? v.5
 - a. Who does God "hate"? (This simply means that God will reject those who reject Him.)
 - b. With great boldness, who does David declare God will deal with and why? v. 6

Pause & ponder ~

Our holy God will ultimately judge all sinners. According to Proverbs 6:16–19, what are the seven things God hates? Personal: Do you see any of these present in *your* life?

Conversely, sinners will be welcomed and find acceptance with God if they turn from their sinful ways and turn to Him.

3. On what basis does David approach God's presence? v. 7
 - a. What is David's desire that also inspires his worship? v. 8
 - b. Remember, David's prayer in this psalm is one of seeking God's guidance and knowing His will. Look again at the pattern of his prayer; how do you see him formulating a prayer that will ensure God's answer?

III. Guidance for the day . . . vv. 8–12

In view of David's clear and present danger from his enemies, his prayer turns to a more urgent plea for God to judge those who oppose him.

1. How does David describe them in verse 9?

His reference to "their throat" as an "open tomb" speaks of their speech as an attempt to flatter but the intent was evil; and for this, David calls on God to hold them guilty.

2. Who, ultimately, was their rebellion against? v. 10

The psalm ends on a positive note of rejoicing; blessing God for His faithfulness.

3. David has every reason to praise God, encouraging others to do likewise. What does he inspire God's people to do? v. 11
 - a. Why should God's children continue to rejoice through their trials? v. 12 What does this mean to you personally?

Touchpoint~

Notice David's prayer request is to be *led*, not delivered. God doesn't always deliver us *out* of our circumstances; sometimes He delivers us *in* them! God always has a straight way through our difficulties. Look up the following references and note what it says about God's path and your steps along the way.

- a. Proverbs 16:9

- b. Psalm 37:23

- c. Psalm 40:1–2

- d. 1 Peter 2:21–23

Live the psalm ~

The psalm ends (v.12) with the Lord's name manifesting His *favor* as protection around His people in the form of a shield. Think about the possible implications and blessings that are yours as a result. How can you apply God's favor and protection to your life in the coming week?

Pray the psalm ~

If you're unsure about the path ahead, take a moment to consider David's words in verse 8. Use them to formulate your prayer today: *Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; make Your way straight before my face.*

*O You who hear prayer,
To You all flesh will come.*

Psalm 65:2

