



Community Group Discussion Guide

Psalm 35 – June 20, 2021

I. Starter Question:

- Has there been a time in your life that you felt helpless, and someone came to your aid?

II. Discussion of Scripture:

Psalm 35 is a prayer by David to the Lord for deliverance from enemies that outnumber and are stronger than him.

Question: Who were likely the enemies that David was praying for the Lord to deliver him from?

Question: What do we know about power? How do most people behave around power?

Psalm 35

Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me **(us)**;
fight against those who fight against me!

²Take hold of shield and buckler
and rise for my help!

³Draw the spear and javelin^[a]
against my **(our)** pursuers!

Say to my soul,
“I am your salvation!”

⁴Let them be put to shame and dishonor
who seek after my life!

Let them be turned back and disappointed
who devise evil against me!

⁵Let them be like chaff before the wind,
with the angel of the LORD driving them away!

⁶Let their way be dark and slippery,
with the angel of the LORD pursuing them!

⁷For without cause they hid their net for me;
without cause they dug a pit for my life.^[b]

⁸Let destruction come upon him when he does not know it!

And let the net that he hid ensnare him;

let him fall into it—
to his destruction!

⁹Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD,
exulting in his salvation.

¹⁰ All my bones shall say,
“O LORD, who is like you,
delivering the poor
from him who is too strong for him,
the poor and needy from him who robs him?”

Question: What thoughts come to mind after reading these first 8 verses? How would you describe the “temperament” of the author? Does David’s requests seem harsh to you?

Question: What do you believe is the cause of the deep, emotional tone of David’s appeal here? What is driving him to request that God not only protect him from his enemies, but to also crush them in such a humiliating and personal fashion?

Question: David asks God to deliver poetic justice in verse 8...“...*And let the net that he hid ensnare him; let him fall into it – to his destruction!*” Do you find anything ironic about this appeal?

All of us experience conflicts in our lives whether they are external or of our own doing. In all of these instances it’s helpful for us to remember what Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:12 – *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”*

Many times, just like in David’s case, these enemies are stronger than us and they may outnumber us! But when we find ourselves seemingly overpowered by forces bent on our destruction, we would do well to remember what scripture tells us in 1 John 4:4... *“He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world”*. And in John 16:33 we are reminded that He (Jesus) has already *“overcome the world”*.

Luke 6:27-31 (ESV) ²⁷ “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. ³⁰ Give to everyone who ^{begs} from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. ³¹ And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

Question: Contrast the message given to us in Luke chapter 6 above, with the striking prayer David prays in Psalms chapter 35. How can we reconcile the two? Can they be reconciled?

Moving on to verse 11 now, David reveals additional insight as to the cause of his deeply distressed state of mind...

- 11 Malicious^[c] witnesses rise up;
they ask me of things that I do not know.
- 12 They repay me evil for good;
my soul is bereft.^[d]
- 13 But I, when they were sick—
I wore sackcloth;
I afflicted myself with fasting;
I prayed with head bowed^[e] on my chest.
- 14 I went about as though I grieved for my friend or my brother;
as one who laments his mother,
I bowed down in mourning.
- 15 But at my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered;
they gathered together against me;
wretches whom I did not know
tore at me without ceasing;
- 16 like profane mockers at a feast,^[f]
they gnash at me with their teeth.
- 17 How long, O Lord, will you look on?
Rescue me from their destruction,
my precious life from the lions!
- 18 I will thank you in the great congregation;
in the mighty throng I will praise you.
- 19 Let not those rejoice over me
who are wrongfully my foes,
and let not those wink the eye
who hate me without cause.
- 20 For they do not speak peace,
but against those who are quiet in the land
they devise words of deceit.
- 21 They open wide their mouths against me;
they say, "Aha, Aha!
Our eyes have seen it!"
- 22 You have seen, O Lord; be not silent!
O Lord, be not far from me!
- 23 Awake and rouse yourself for my vindication,
for my cause, my God and my Lord!
- 24 Vindicate me, O Lord, my God,

according to your righteousness,
and let them not rejoice over me!
²⁵ Let them not say in their hearts,
"Aha, our heart's desire!"
Let them not say, "We have swallowed him up."
²⁶ Let them be put to shame and disappointed altogether
who rejoice at my calamity!
Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor
who magnify themselves against me!
²⁷ Let those who delight in my righteousness
shout for joy and be glad
and say evermore,
"Great is the Lord,
who delights in the welfare of his servant!"
²⁸ Then my tongue shall tell of your righteousness
and of your praise all the day long.

Question: Have you ever experienced persecution from a loved one or someone that you had shown kindness to, or even prayed for? What were the emotions you felt?

III. Final Thought:

Here is a devotional from Charles Spurgeon that gives insight into why we as believers experience conflict and how we should respond.

"We live unto the Lord." Romans 14:8

If God had willed it, each of us might have entered heaven at the moment of conversion. It was not absolutely necessary for our preparation for immortality that we should tarry here. It is possible for a man to be taken to heaven, and to be found meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, though he has but just believed in Jesus.

It is true that our sanctification is a long and continued process, and we shall not be perfected till we lay aside our bodies and enter within the veil; but nevertheless, had the Lord so willed it, he might have changed us from imperfection to perfection, and have taken us to heaven at once.

Why then are we here? Would God keep his children out of paradise a single moment longer than was necessary? Why is the army of the living God still on the battlefield when one charge might give them the victory? Why are his children still wandering hither and thither through a maze, when a solitary word from his lips would bring them into the centre of their hopes in heaven?

The answer is--they are here that they may "live unto the Lord," and may bring others to know his love. We remain on earth as sowers to scatter good seed; as ploughmen to break up the fallow ground; as heralds publishing salvation.

We are here as the "salt of the earth," to be a blessing to the world. We are here to glorify Christ in our daily life. We are here as workers for him, and as "workers together with him." Let us see that our life answereth its end. Let us live earnest, useful, holy lives, to "the praise of the glory of his grace."