



Community Group Discussion Guide

The Psalms: Psalm 27 – November 22, 2020

I love the Psalms because they meet us where we're at in life. We see our own struggles, challenges, even doubts and fears, not so much as indications of character flaws but as normal real-life adversity. King David faced such dilemmas and didn't always breeze through them easily. Sometimes, he shook his fist at God and questioned His reliability. But David always came back to seeing God for who He really was and is.

A mentor of mine once said that many people believe in a "historical" Jesus, but do not live as if He is a "contemporary" Jesus – living and actively engaged in our lives. Psalm 27 encourages us to seek the face of God, looking for His literal presence in our current situations, believing He will be found. And, even if we can't see Him in the moment, our hindsight will be 20:20. (Couldn't resist).

Psalm 27 (ESV)

- 1 The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?
- 2 When evildoers assail me
to eat up my flesh,
my adversaries and foes,
it is they who stumble and fall.
- 3 Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war arise against me,
yet I will be confident.
- 4 One thing have I asked of the LORD,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD
and to inquire in his temple.
- 5 For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his
tent;
he will lift me high upon a rock.
- 6 And now my head shall be lifted up
above my enemies all around me,
and I will offer in his tent
sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.
- 7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud;
be gracious to me and answer me!
- 8 You have said, "Seek my face."
My heart says to you,
"Your face, LORD, do I seek."
- 9 Hide not your face from me.
Turn not your servant away in anger,
O you who have been my help.
Cast me not off; forsake me not,
O God of my salvation!
- 10 For my father and my mother have
forsaken me,
but the LORD will take me in.
- 11 Teach me your way, O LORD,
and lead me on a level path
because of my enemies.
- 12 Give me not up to the will of my
adversaries;
for false witnesses have risen against me,
and they breathe out violence.
- 13 I believe that I shall look upon the goodness
of the LORD
in the land of the living!
- 14 Wait for the LORD;
be strong, and let your heart take
courage;
wait for the LORD!

Personal Reflections:

Think of a time when YOUR enemies have surrounded you; your own family may have hurt or abandoned you; your friends or associates may have turned on you; you were facing a health crisis; you were struggling financially, etc. We're all "seasoned" enough to have been through such times. I can remember such times that happened before I was a believer; times as a "young" believer; and, times later on. Today, I'm reminded of the long-suffering of our medical and front-line workers enduring the demands of the COVID pandemic. Whatever crisis or struggle you recall from your past, just keep it in mind as we talk about this passage.

Make notes here for your own reflection if you wish: _____

Thoughts and Questions for Discussion:

I want to approach our study of this Psalm through the lens of the intimate relationship King David had with the Lord. This week, I talked with someone about the difference between a nominal Christian and a born-again Christ follower. The difference that mattered was a faith walk versus religiosity. Though we are called to walk in the light of the Christ who went to the Cross to save us from our sin, our behavioral "scorecard" will not be what gets us into Heaven. It will be a question of our having come to know Jesus and to have abided in Him by faith, which then produced good works when we walked in the Spirit. When we didn't, the Father saw us through the blood of Jesus and continued to love us.

The relationship King David had with the Lord was interactive. Both God and David spoke at times to the other, and both responded to what the other said or did. That's what a relationship is – a two-way dynamic that can be based on love and humility and gratitude, or driven by fear, control, and/or avoidance. God's part is always what it should be. David's and ours, not so much. But the Word, as here in Psalm 27, helps us stay in the relationship well, through its truth and encouragement. Let's take a look at it through this relational lens, and particularly looking for these aspects of the passage:

- What does it reveal about WHO GOD IS?
 - What does it say about OUR (King David's) SITUATION, CONDITION, and/or NEEDS?
 - What does it say GOD WILL DO?
 - What does it teach us about HOW WE SHOULD RESPOND?
1. What does it reveal about WHO GOD IS? (verse 1)
 - If we BELIEVE this about God as David did, how will we be impacted internally?
 2. What does it say about OUR (King David's) SITUATION, CONDITION, and/or NEEDS? (verses 2,3,10,12)
 - What would be the natural "internal" consequences of such dilemmas apart from God?

3. What does it say GOD WILL DO? (verses 2, 5,6,9,10)
 - What would those actions on God's part leave my heart feeling?

4. What does it teach us about HOW WE SHOULD RESPOND? (verses 3,4,6,7,8,11,12,13,14)
 - How might such encounters with God in the midst of our troubles lead us to pursue and commune with Him more as we go through life on planet earth?

Looking now at the entirety of this Psalm, note the picture of intimacy with God that it depicts and the results of that intimate relationship we, too, can experience regularly.

David says, "I will

- i. David says, "I will ..." – seek, dwell, gaze upon, inquire (verse 4)

- ii. God will – hide me in, conceal me under, lift me (verse 5)

- iii. Then David will – be lifted up, offer, sing (verse 6)

To have my head lifted up here means that I literally will be out of the reach of my enemies. This reminds of Jesus saying, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (Matt. 10:28). As Christians, we are out of the full reach of the enemy.

- iv. What does it mean to dwell in the house of the LORD in our lives?

- v. What does it mean to gaze at the beauty of the LORD in our lives?

PRAYER