

# “PEACE, BE STILL”

## Psalm 4

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### INTRODUCTION

There are several indications in this psalm that it is a companion psalm of Psalm 3 and that it was likely penned at about the same time and under the same circumstances:

- Psalm 3:5 with 4:8—Psalm 3 a morning psalm; psalm 4 an evening psalm.
- The frequent use of “Selah” in both psalms.
- The expression “my glory” in 3:3 and 4:2.
- Psalm 3 focuses on David’s powerful enemies; Psalm 4 on powerful so-called friends who are not helping him, and many who are likely aiding his enemies.
- “I cry and He answers” in both 3:4 and 4:1.
- “Many there be that say” in 3:2 and 4:6.

David speaks softly with the people in this psalm—he evidently has hope for many of them that they will come to their senses and turn back to the Lord and to him. At any rate, David’s hope is not in people—it is in the Lord who has made him His special treasure and partaker of His covenant and gives David gladness through the “light of His countenance” regardless of external circumstances. It is Yahweh alone who gives David safety and security. Therefore, David is able to **lie down and sleep peacefully**, just like a baby. God has heard him in the past and will hear him in the present.

**You must experience God’s calm and peace in your life.**

#### I. THE BELIEVER’S WELL-FOUNDED PRAYER (1)

If our analysis is correct, David is still being pursued by Absalom and has been forsaken by most of his friends. He has little in the way of sustenance, and is on the run. However, he is not worried.

##### A. God has answered his prayers in the past (1)

When David was in a “tight place” (“Distress”) God has “given him space” (“enlarged me.”)

##### B. God will answer him in the present when he calls

1. He is the God of “my righteousness”—who maintains David’s “right” and gives him “justice”; the reason for this is that God is **just and acts on the basis of His character**.
2. He is the God who responds in His **grace**; our favor from him at best is undeserved; He shows mercy.

3. Because He “hears” prayer He therefore “answers” David.

Truly, the believer is able to pray **well-founded** prayers. But, he is also able to deal with weak and inconsistent friends who sometimes act like enemies.

## II. THE BELIEVER’S WEAK FRIENDS (2-7)

### A. The Fickle (2-3)

He calls these individuals “sons of men”, but he uses the word (ish) which when used in comparison to “adam” means “man in his strength.” He likely thinks of many of his former leaders who have been duped into following Absalom.

1. They turn David’s rightful “honor” (“Glory”) into shame or reproach (2)
2. They “love” (shows their character defect) what is “worthless” or empty—“vain words.” They are listening to what they ought not
3. They “seek after lies” (again, an indication of poor character). They follow the lying ways of Absalom as vividly portrayed in II S. 15. David knows that the accusations against him are patently false.

4. They miss one very important point: the Lord is on David’s side—that puts them on the **wrong side** (3)

a. The Lord “sets apart” “the godly man.”

- “Godly” refers to one who is in a covenant relationship with Yahweh—the God of the covenant. The implication here is that He is the object of God’s faithful covenant care, but also that he reciprocates in that relationship and is therefore “godly.”
- “Sets apart” is the same verb used repeatedly in the OT for God’s unique place for Israel, His people. God therefore treats David as special and unique.
- He sets such a person apart “**for Himself**”. A privileged relationship.

b. Therefore, the Lord “hears” when David calls to Him. These men may have access to the current political powers but they do not have access to the power of God!

### B. The Hot-Heads (4-5)

The people to whom David refers could be those who have misplaced anger toward David and sided with Absalom, or they could be those friends of David who want to “pay back” those who have rebelled and put David out of power. At any rate, David counsels such people to focus on establishing a right relationship with God rather than seeking to display their anger and vengeance.

1. “Tremble,” “be in awe,” or “be angry” but do not sin. They must evaluate their anger and restrain it, lest they be guilty of unrighteous anger.

2. "Meditate" in your heart"
    - They must speak quietly inwardly and evaluate their anger lest they be found guilty before God.
    - They can do this meditation upon their beds—settling issues before going to sleep—and then "sleep on it" lest they do or say something foolish or wicked.
    - Then they can rightly "be still.
  3. "Offer right sacrifices" (5)
    - These would be sacrifices from right heart motives—and not like the hypocritical sacrifices carried out by Absalom at the beginning of his rebellion against David.
    - They would also be the kind of sacrifices commanded in Scripture.
    - They would also be sacrifices for their own sin in order to "get right" with the Lord.
  4. "Trust in the Lord" (5)
    - Once they have a right relationship with the Lord they will not be pursuing David's ruin or destruction.
    - If they trust God, they will not need to take personal vengeance against their or David's enemies. They can give the Lord the "chance" to settle matters.
- C. The Doleful (6-7): "Who will show us any good?"

These words could be spoken by David's enemies against David and his followers, or they could be spoken by David's followers in despair. But, David has a good answer.

1. Help from Without—from the Lord (6b).
  - Num. 6:24-26 gives us the words spoken by the Jewish High Priest to the people of Israel: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."
  - In harmony with this blessing, David asks: "Lord (Yahweh), lift up the light of your countenance upon us."
2. Help from within (7a): "Thou hast put gladness in my heart."
  - Such gladness wells up steadily from within despite all of David's troubles.
  - Such inner gladness and contentment is superior to having all of the external luxuries (grain and new wine) that these people desired, or that David's enemies now possess in abundance (7b)
  - External comforts cannot bring true inner peace!

### III. THE BELIEVER'S WELL-FOUNDED PEACE (8)

#### A. The Lord is the Only real source of David's Safety and security (8b)

- Emphatic **YOU** and emphatic **ALONE**
- Although numerous places in Scripture the Lord gives us the idea that He makes His people dwell "alone" in the sense of security, here the text in the placement of "alone", its accent, and its context seems to demand the connection to "Yahweh alone."
- Security is not found in a *spouse*, in a *parent*, in a *friend*, in a *pastor*, a *political leader*, or in any human being; security is found in **the Lord alone**.

#### B. David (and the believer) **lies down and sleeps**—right away!

**Like Peter** in prison in Acts 12. **Like Jesus** in the boat tossed in the sea.

### CONCLUSION

Listen carefully to the Lord here in His word—**the believer ought not to have to rely upon a pill for calmness and the ability to sleep. The believer must find his peace and security in the Lord.**

Because we have "well-founded prayer", we therefore have "well-founded peace", despite what our fickle, hot-headed, and doleful friends may say or do!