

“THE SECRET OF THE LORD”

Psalm 25

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INTRODUCTION

This psalm is a little less usual in its structure than most due to the fact that it is alphabetic—an acrostic, each verse beginning with a letter of the alphabet with a few exceptions. Because of that, David, its author, also fluctuates between several subjects and reiterates several key terms over and over. But, four key themes seem to stand out: Enemies, Guidance, Guilt, and Trust.

David faced troubles, though this psalm gives us no clues as to what period of his life was in view. His enemies were cruel and relentless. He needed guidance from his faithful God; he needed to know the path he should take and needed Yahweh to manifest his character while on that path. But, he knew that he was not innocent, and that he ultimately did not deserve Yahweh’s help. He desperately needed forgiveness and grace. Therefore, he would trust the Lord throughout his life. His only hope was found in the Lord—he would continually look to Him. His whole life and well-being was bound up in the Lord. *Yahweh would keep him in His secret counsel and fellowship in their special covenant relationship.* All the answers to life’s problem were found in the Lord and in his walk with Him.

YOU MUST KNOW THAT GOD’S SWEET FELLOWSHIP IS WITH YOU AS YOU TRUST HIM AND WALK WITH HIM.

I. ENEMIES

David’s has many enemies (v. 19). They hate him passionately (v. 19).

His enemies are opposed to his beliefs and to his person.

If they triumph, both David and what David stands for be discredited : that *man must live by the help of God, not by his wits (vv. 2-3).*

A. Don’t let me be ashamed (v. 2, v. 3, v. 20).

B. I stand in my and God’s integrity and uprightness; that will preserve me (21).

(David’s enemies would mock the defense he finds in integrity and uprightness.)

C. My enemies are treacherous (v. 3). (cf. the “net” in v. 15 into which David’s feet have become caught.)

D. They oppose me without cause and in vanity.

I wouldn’t have a chance apart from the Lord.

Thus, the terms of this battle are determined by God and accepted by me as His servant—
not by my enemies. **I desperately need divine guidance!**

I not only have outward enemies and problems, I have a great inner enemy—sin and guilt.

II. GUILT

The references to David’s guilt in this psalm may be brief, but they are also earnest and recurrent .

A. Divine **Grace** is the solution to guilt—not merely time (v. 7)

1. Yahweh is “the God of my salvation (5b)—the One who saves me.

2. His “loyal love” and “grace” brings me into remembrance (7b; 6a). Such loyal love [and compassion] “have been from of old” because they are part of the divine character.
 3. His “goodness” is that which drives His forgiveness (7c).
 4. His “graciousness” is necessary—not due to any merit in the object of grace (16).
 5. His compassion arises from the recesses of “Yahweh’s inner being (6).
 6. He chooses to “not remember” “the sins of our youth” and our more deliberate “transgressions” of later years (v. 7).
 7. But He **does choose to remember His compassion and loyal love!** (v. 6). He thus thinks on His own people in order to bless them! (cf. 8:4) **HE REMEMBERS ME!**
 8. Such appeal to divine covenant love is **NOT GLIBNESS**—it is not merely “to avert punishment”
 9. Note that “goodness and loyal love” are not merely the *way Yahweh acts*; **these are essential qualities of His nature** (v. 8—He is “GOOD and UPRIGHT”).
 10. Therefore these are the kinds of qualities He aims to “reproduce . . . in us. We “keep His covenant and testimonies”—guarding carefully their relationship with the LORD, and obeying the commands Yahweh has testified to in that relationship (10).
God’s “loyal love” leads to the believer’s salvation.
 11. Thus, Yahweh’s “paths” are “loyal love and truth or faithfulness to such persons; this means **both** a) that He acts thus toward us and that b) we act such toward Him and toward others.
- B. Human Response from Me is necessary.
1. I must mourn my guilt—humbly ask for pardon (11) and forgiveness (18b) for my “iniquity” (11)—the twisted and perverse activity—and my “sins” (18).
 2. Notice that I must acknowledge the “greatness” of my iniquity; it is no trifle (11).
 3. But, I must not do so for my **sake**, but for Yahweh’s name sake—to live up to the character in which Yahweh has manifested himself (11).
 4. I must call on Yahweh to “turn to” me—I have become *estranged* (16); I have experienced loneliness and affliction (16b; 18a) and trouble (17a; 18a) and distresses (17b). Such are not merely external but also internal—“of my heart” (17a). These troubles are **enlarged** (17a).

The Lord is the only solution to life’s problems. How I need His guidance!

III. GUIDANCE

A. I need instruction in order to know the General Will of God.

- 1) To Know God’s “ways” and His “paths” (v. 4) and His “truth” (5); I need to be “taught” (v. 5, v. 8) and “instructed” (v. 8, v. 12—“in the way I should choose”).

What is the meaning of “way” and “path” here?

- Mostly here the emphasis seems to be on “the way in which God is leading man,” based upon the way in which God Himself walks.
 - VV. 8, 12 seem more likely to stress the way man should go based on the required duty as laid down by God’s commandments.
- 2) Note that such a request is not in “self-interest” for special personal guidance.

- 3) The foundation is thus laid for making right decisions by having one's "faculties trained . . . to distinguish good from evil" (Heb. 5:14).
 - 4) I also need to know "His covenant" (v. 14—knowing God's ways involves a relationship and mutual responsibilities).
- B. I need Patient Persistence in learning God's ways, being alert to see "the first signal of his hand" (5, 15).
- 1) I must wait "all the day."
 - 2) My eyes are "continually toward the LORD"
- C. I need Penitence —I am not an "apt or deserving pupil" but rather am a sinner (v. 8—one whom God "instructs in the way").
- D. I need Obedience , for Yahweh will not waste guidance on those with no intention to obey—I must be willing to obey once shown the path, as is seen by humility and meekness—9b—the word means more than "afflicted." Such "humble" ones He leads in "justice".
- E. I Need Reverence in order to obtain such guidance (12, 14—"fears Yahweh").
- 1) Yahweh "instructs" such a one "in the way he should choose" (12)
 - 2) Yahweh gives such a one His "secret counsel" or "intimacy" (v. 14)—such "simple piety" is rewarded with **His friendship!** The Hebrew word refers both to:
 - "Council"—the circle of one's close associates.
 - "Counsel"—the matters that are discussed with them. See Pr. 3:32 for a similar use of this word; Yahweh's "private counsel is with the upright."
 - Note how Job remembers the days when "the counsel" or "friendship" of God was over his tent (29:4—same word).
 - See Jer. 23:18, 22—those who stand in His "council".
 - Yahweh reveals His secret "counsel to His servants the prophets" (Am. 3:7).
 - Cf. Gen. 18:17—"Shall I hide from Abraham...?"
 - 3) Such a one comes to "know His covenant"—what his *privileges* and *responsibilities* are.
 - 4) God's own **character** drives His guidance of believers: He is "good and upright" (v. 8). Thus He guides His people in the right way.
- F. I Receive Blessing as the result (13)
- 1) My "soul abides in good"—i.e. "at ease" or in "prosperity."
 - 2) My descendants ("seed") will be blessed [here inherit the "land" or "earth"; cf. God's promises to the patriarchs in Gen. and during the wilderness wanderings; e.g. Ex. 20:12; Dt. 4:1.]
 - 3) Intimate association with the Lord—see above.
 - 4) Covenant relationship with the Lord—see above.
 - 5) Not ashamed; enemies will be ashamed (v. 3).

Kidner notes that this "whole approach to divine guidance is **personal** and **mature**, unlike the basically pagan search for irrational pointers and omens (cf. Is. 47:13)" (p. 116).

Therefore, since I desperately need His guidance, I must trust him totally.

IV. TRUST

- A. The Word itself occurs only in v. 1: "In Thee I trust"; I also "lift up" my soul to God.

- B. The Attitude is seen in what I say about God:
- 1) God of my salvation (v. 5)
 - 2) He is good and upright; he instructs, leads, teaches; He shows loyal love and faithfulness (8-10).
- C. My Action of trusting is especially seen in the use of the word “wait” (vv. 3, 5, 21; and v. 15 indirectly—my “eyes are continually toward” the LORD).
- 1) The word itself originally seems to mean “twist, stretch,” then “tension”, “enduring ,” “waiting.” Thus, as Kidner notes, the “trust is *eager, waiting in hope rather than resignation*” (p. 117).
 - 2) One who waits “accepts His time and therefore His wisdom” (K. 117)
 - 3) The difference is seen in Saul’s refusal to wait (I Sam. 13:8-14) and in David’s patient waiting for God’s time and direction (I Sam. 26:10-11); In Israel’s refusal to wait on the Lord whereas Isaiah did so wait on God (Is. 30:15-18).
 - 4) Note that David’s hope was not yet fulfilled by the end of this psalm, unlike some of his other psalms—**his waiting continued!**
 - 5) How relevant this truth can be to us “who are not granted the radiant assurance that breaks out in passages such as 6:8ff; 20:6ff; etc.” (K. 117)
 - 6) Is. 30:18 speaks of blessing upon those who so wait on Him.
 - 7) Is. 64:4 tells us that God acts on behalf of those who wait for Him.

CONCLUSION

You have problems—enemies both without and within. You need divine guidance and direction in life. You want to have that special secret fellowship with the Lord that sustains throughout each day and all during your life. Then:

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