



JOURNEY THROUGH PSALMS PSALM 4

“Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah. But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.”



It can be hard to keep trusting God when events in life turn against us. We can be tempted to look elsewhere for help and hope. Psalm 4 warns us against putting our confidence in “delusions” and “false gods” (v.2).

It is difficult to find a precise event in David’s life that matches this psalm. However, this gives the psalm a more general character, making it easier for us to apply it to our own circumstances.

If this psalm was written during his reign, we can see why King David was distressed. His anguish stems from how his people have turned to idols (v.2). Later in the psalm, David tells us that the people were longing for prosperity (v.6); it is possible that this is what led them to foolishly turn to the false pagan gods of fertility. As their divinely appointed leader, David is concerned for their spiritual welfare. The king is honored when the people obey God, but is shamed by their sin (v.2). When King David prays, God listens (v.3); as His anointed king, David rebukes the people for their sinful ways and warns them to repent.

Not all, however, are disobedient. In Psalm 1 we met the righteous who trust in God. Now David pleads with the people to take a long, hard look at themselves (v.4) and follow the godly example of the righteous (v.5).

If only the people searched their hearts, saw the depth of their sin, and turned back to God, then He would graciously grant them the good things they longed for (vv.4-6). The people echo the famous blessing of Aaron, “*the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee*” (Numbers 6:25). God will delight to fill their hearts and lives with joy and abundance, if they “*offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord*” (Psalm 4:5).

Tough times test our faith. Christians can be tempted to compromise their loyalty to God by turning to false substitutes for God-directed worship. Others may put their hope in false gods like money (see Matthew 6:24). This is idolatry. The right response is to “*offer the sacrifices of righteousness*” (Psalm 4:5), which is a consecrated life of obedience (Romans 12:1-2). As the lives of David and many of God’s people testify, in times of trouble this is the true path to joy and peace.

Think Through -

There are times in life to “*commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still*” (Psalm 4:4). What is the purpose and benefit of this self-reflection? Twice now we’ve heard David speak of a good night’s sleep (3:5,4:8). According to these psalms, what is the recipe for peaceful sleep?

FIVE STEPS IN LEADING YOUR FAMILY IN DEVOTIONS AND PRAYER TIME

- 1st - Take a few minutes to discuss the Scripture
Insight discussion/Application discussion
- 2nd - Ask your family for personal praises
Works of God! Blessings from above
- 3rd - Take personal prayer requests
 - Needs
 - Concerns
 - Desires
- 4th - Personal quiet time of confession and forgiveness
 - Things I have said
 - Things others have said
 - Things I have thought
 - Things I have done
 - Things others have done to me
- 5th - Pray
 - Start by thanking the Lord
 - Needs
 - Protection
 - Provision