



LESSON 18: SHOW ME YOUR WAYS . . .

PSALM 25

BACKGROUND

Psalm 25 is an acrostic poem. Each of the verses begin with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This is why, as you read this psalm, each verse seems to contain a complete thought reading like a proverb or wise saying.

Psalm 25 is mostly made up of 1) requests to God for *protection, guidance and forgiveness* and 2) *statements of confidence and faith* concerning God and his ways. It is a mix between a Psalm of Lament and a Psalm of Trust.

DISCUSSION STARTER

- When lost, do you: (a) Ask for help? (b) Consult a map? (c) Find you own way?
- Were you a rebel as a child? Teenager? Adult? Senior? What did you do?

PREPARATION

1. Before you read **Psalm 25**, ask the **Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you into all truth** (John 16:13). We have been using the prayer, *Holy Spirit, think through me until your ideas become my ideas*, or King David's prayer, *Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your law*.
2. Read **Psalm 25** slowly and thoughtfully in at least two translations. As you read and reread, fill in the chart below by jotting down specific requests David makes of God as well as his statements of confidence and trust he makes about God and his ways.

Specific Requests	Statements of Confidence and Trust

QUESTIONS

3. Towards the end of **Psalm 25**, David describes his inner condition as he writes this psalm. From **25:16-18**, write the words that describe what he is feeling.

In these same verses, what does David ask God to do about these things he is feeling?

4. What are the two major causes of David's distress? **25:2, 19; 7, 11, 18**
5. What are David's specific requests concerning his enemies? **25:2, 19-20**

ENEMIES - Anything that would defeat us, bring us down, keep us from our purpose or prevent us from walking with God. Enemies can be people, powers, forces or even attitudes. They are anything that would harm or oppose us, especially in our relationship to God.

- ♥ Who or what are some of your enemies that you regularly find yourself "warring" with?
 - ♥ How can enemies put us to shame, disgrace us and triumph over us?
6. How does David expect God to help him against his enemies? **25:3, 15, 20**

How do you see these same things helping you against your enemies?

- ♥ Besides God, what else does David hope will protect him from his enemies in **25:21**? Would these things help protect you from your enemies? Why or why not?
7. How does David view his sin in this psalm? **25:7, 11, 18**
 8. On what basis does David ask God to forgive his sins? **25:6, 7, 11**

Why is this important?

9. No one likes to have to contend with their sin. However, what encouragement do you find in **25:8**? How do you see God doing this?

10. What requests does David make in **25:4-5** that shows his complete dependence on God as he deals with the problem of his enemies and his sin?

GUIDANCE – God has purposes and plans for his people, as individuals and communities. Believers should seek God's direction and counsel in discerning these plans and purposes in their lives. True godliness is not outward conformity to God's laws or ways, but the *spiritual application of God's ways* to one's life *by God himself*.

11. Read the following scriptures and summarize from each what you learn about God's guidance for your life.

Exodus 33:13-14 -

Psalms 119:105, 133 -

Proverbs 3:5-6 -

James 1:5-7 -

John 10:3-4 -

John 16:13 -

♥ With what is God's guidance more concerned: Ethics or geography? Character or direction? Morals or prosperity? Explain your answers.

♥ According to Psalm **25:9, 12**, what kind of person does God teach and guide? Why, do you think, is this so? How does David illustrate in this psalm that he is this kind of person?

12. From the following verses, write down what David did to position himself to receive God's protection, guidance and forgiveness.

25:1 -

25:2 -

25:5, 21 -

25:15 -

25:20 -

13. Picture yourself doing what David did in **25:1**. Describe what you see.

- ♥ What, do you think, would be the benefits of "lifting up your soul" to God?
 - ♥ What does **Psalm 24:3-4** add to your understanding of *lifting up your soul*?
14. *Hope* is the anticipation of a future outcome. In the Bible hope means the *confident expectation* of a future outcome. What do you think it means to *put our hope in God*? **25:5, 21**
- ♥ If someone says "my hope is in you," how should they act?
 - ♥ What promise is given in **25:3** to the one who puts their hope in God? Why is this true?
15. David was able to put his hope in God because he knew God's character. Write a brief character description of God from how David describes him in **25:5-8, 10**.
- ♥ Does David's *description* of God match your *experience* of God? Why or why not?
 - ♥ Why are these character traits of God so important when we ask for protection, forgiveness and guidance?
 - ♥ What about God's character gives you the most hope when you face a tough time?
 - ♥ How has God proven his reliability to you?
16. What specific blessings and promises are given in **25:12-14** to the one who fears (reveres and worships) God?
- ♥ Which of these benefits have you personally experienced?
 - ♥ Is there anything you can do so that you can experience them more?
17. Read **25:14** in all four translations. What is the ultimate blessing given to the one who is humble and allows themselves to be taught by God?

What are the benefits of this kind of relationship with God and how do you think this relationship would function? (You may want to consider **John 15:12-15** in your answer.)

- ♥ Why might a person *not* want this kind of relationship with God?

RESPONSE:

Make a personal application of **Psalm 25** to your life by answering one or more of the following questions:

- ❖ David asked God for protection, guidance and forgiveness. Which of these are you most in need of today? Do you feel you will receive it? Why or why not?
- ❖ Are you more concerned about your sin against God or about getting relief from the pressures and problems in your life? (**25:18**) Which one do you think is more important? Why?
- ❖ Do you think you are the type of person the God guides and teaches? (**25:9,12**) Why or why not? Would other people describe you as having a teachable or stubborn spirit?
- ❖ In light of how you are doing spiritually in your life today, which verse in **Psalm 25** is the most important at this time? Why?
- ❖ What does **Psalm 25** teach you about prayer? Why would this be a good psalm to use in your "daily devotions"?