

# "Seeking God in Difficult Seasons"

An exposition of Psalm 25



**A PSALM FOR ALL SEASONS  
DAVID IN THE SECRET PLACE**

Prepared for the Safe Haven Berean Fellowship, Ministry of the Word  
by Pastor David Braden

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# Seeking God in Difficult Seasons

## An Exposition of Psalm 25

### Other Suggested Titles:

“A Psalm for All Seasons”

“Discerning the Paths of God”

“David in the Secret Place”

“How the Godly Pray When the Going Gets Tough.”

- Lessons:**
1. The Ways of God are beyond our comprehension.
  2. Even though we know what we know, sometimes our thoughts are clouded or obscured by the enemy or the difficulties we encounter. “Never question in the dark what God has taught you in the light.” (Don McClure)
  3. Praying in a difficult situation
  4. What David has learned about God
  5. Heart attitudes of those receiving from God
  6. Benefits of the fear of the Lord
  7. I am not the only person encountering difficulties in my Immanuel life.

### Author:

1. Who wrote the psalm? The Hebrew text identifies David as the author.
2. What is the historical situation? Is there any historical information available which would give the situation he was in when writing the psalm? (Note: There is none in the Hebrew text.) \_\_\_\_\_

See background study below:

### Outline:

- I. 1-7 Petition – He trusts God to shield him from shame.  
His statement of faith  
He petitions God to teach him His paths and truths.  
He asks God to think on him according to God’s mercy and steadfast love and not according to his sins.
- II. 8-14 His confession - He recalls what he knows about God’s goodness and that He teaches what is right.  
He summarizes the benefits of the fear of the Lord
- III. 16-21 Petition – He asks God to deliver him out of his distresses. (which are internal)
- IV. 22 Prayer – He concludes by praying for Israel

## Background Study:

Dates: from "The Reese Chronological Bible"

1065 B.C. Saul is anointed and crowned king. I Sam. 11:15

1030 B.C. David is anointed by Samuel to be king. I Sam. 16:13

1030 B.C. David becomes Saul's personal musician I Sam. 16:23

1029 B.C. Sequence (from Reese)

David kills Goliath I Sam. 17:49-51

David writes Psalm **23, 5, 12, 11, 59** - I Sam. 18

David flees from Saul to Samuel at Ramah. They dwell in Naioth.

I Sam. 19:18 This verse says that David told Samuel all that Saul had done to him.



David writes Psalm **7, 25**: I Sam. 19

David flees to Achish, king of Gath I Sam. 21

Here, he escapes by pretending to be mad. I Sam. 21:15

David writes Psalm **34**

1028 B.C. David flees to the cave of Adullam I Sam. I Sam. 22:

Here, he begins to gather the men who will become his "mighty men of valor."

1025 B.C. David begins to reign II Sam. 5:4

This study of historical dates shows that there were 5 years from the time David was anointed king to the time when he actually began to reign . Note the tortuous (many twists and turns) path to his actual coronation.

Note: Several other authors were checked for a date of this psalm but all showed Psalm 25 as "undated."

The data from the Psalm suggests the period of time (between his anointing and his coronation) which Reese indicates for this psalm. (David is being pursued by Saul.)

However, the psalm could also easily apply to other periods of David's life.

## Context from the text:

enemies v.2

youthful sins v.7

guilt v.11

a net to trap v.15

lonely and afflicted, vv. 16-18

foes and hatred v.19

2. What kind of Psalm is it? praise, lament (response to an occasion and can be a petition), imprecatory, wisdom, psalm of ascent \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the emotion or feel of the psalm? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Are there extreme swings of emotion? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Are there any deep cries of anguish? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Any patterns or repetitions? \_\_\_\_\_
  - shame – 3 times – **954** “*bosh*” qmf qal, active imperfect –viewing a part of the whole, doesn’t take into account if an action has been completed to disgrace, to become pale, blush  
 “the confusion, embarrassment, or dismay when things do not turn out as expected.”

Note on Resource Document: **954** as shown above is the Strong’s Number for the original language word. This and abbreviations such as qmf, qal, etc. are taken from “The Complete Word Study Old Testament, Dr. S. Zodhiates.” This book provides keys in the back of the book which explain the abbreviations.

Note: Shame in Hebrew is not how we perceive it in our time and culture.

In this case, it actually provides a context or background for what will be said.

The most significant idea about shame in the Biblical text is not “to be embarrassed.”

The biblical idea is that of having placed your trust in something that, in the end, proves unworthy of your trust and ends with an undesirable result.

This is a key thought because this is a primary motivator for the psalmist.

At this point, we should ask the question: “Why would David ever think that God would abandon him or get to the end of his life and see that God was not trustworthy?”

Two answers: 1. He is surrounded by enemies.

2. He is aware of the sins of his youth. See vv. 11 and 18

However, David knows that God will not let him down. He affirms his trust in v.3 and also in v.5 where he says he waits for God all the day.

He also knows that, if he is to remain firm to the end, he must be taught God’s ways and must live a life of integrity and uprightness. v.21

- similar words - teach me, make me to know, lead me
  - way, ways, paths
- repeated words – remember vv. 6-7, 3 times

### **Additional Information:**

- 22 verses – acrostic (but not a perfect acrostic)
- Why would the Psalmist utilize an acrostic? \_\_\_\_\_  
Where would you encounter the use of an acrostic? \_\_\_\_\_

The ESV Bible calls this: “An Alphabet of Petition and Praise”

vv. 4-5 are key for David’s confidence.

He realizes he must know God’s truths to walk in His paths.

And God’s truths teach him about God’s character. This then enables him to walk in confidence that he will not be shamed.

### **Summary:**

David is between a rock and a hard place.

He was anointed by Samuel to be king in 1030 B.C.

But scarcely a year later, after becoming Saul’s personal musician, killing Goliath and achieving significant successes and accolades as a warrior, he is actually being chased by Saul who intends to kill him.

I Sam. 19 says that he flees (from Saul) and goes to Samuel at Naioth where he tells him all that Saul has done to him.

This is most likely not what David expected after being anointed to be king.

He doesn’t understand his difficulties and looks for assurances from Samuel.

What had he ever done to Saul to deserve such treatment?

A quick review of Psalm 25 shows the dilemma he is in, the things that are troubling him.

- v.2 He is in danger of being “shamed.”  
He is in danger of enemies
- v.7 He pleads with God not to remember the sins of his youth. The pressures surrounding him have led him to examine his youth to determine if there is a sin that has opened the door for this predicament. (Have I done something to cause this?)
- v.11 He asks God to pardon his “great guilt.”
- v.15 There is a net set to trap him.
- v.16-18 Now he goes deeper into his heart issues:  
He is lonely and afflicted. The troubles of his heart are enlarged.  
He is in distresses. He mentions affliction and trouble.  
I think these are the inner stresses that accompany the outward troubles he has named.

v.19 He talks about many foes and the violent hatred they have towards him.

David is perplexed by the ways of God. I was anointed to be king. Why are these things happening? What did I do wrong? Is God punishing me? (He reviews his past sins.)

So, what does David do when he is in trouble?

I. How an Immanuel (God with us) person prays in times of trouble

1. David affirms/declares his faith and trust in God. 1, 2
2. He lifts up his desire to God. (What does he want from God?) 2.b,c
3. He asks God to teach him. (and this can be “Why are you doing what you’re doing?”) 4, 5
4. He waits on God. 5  
Waiting here in the Hebrew has the sense of hope, patience, enduring, trust (You can find this expansion in Zodiates Word Study Old Testament.) It is not simply waiting for the clock to move.  
There is an inner activity of anticipation, of trusting and confident expectation.
5. He remembers God’s mercies. 6
6. He petitions God to think on him. (remember, reflect, recollect) 6-7
7. He is jealous for God’s honor. 7
8. He asks forgiveness. 11
9. He affirms God’s character. 8-14
10. He recalls the benefits of the fear of the Lord. (a very important quality to possess) 12-14
11. He asks for God’s help in his distress. 16-20
12. He continues to wait. 21

What has he learned about God that will help him in his trials?

What David knows about God: (Section II vv. 8-14)

God is:

1. faithful 3
2. truth 4/5
3. Savior 5
3. merciful and loving 6
4. good and upright 8
5. loving and faithful in all His ways 10



6. He is forgiving 11
7. Those who fear Him will have His friendship 14
8. He makes His covenant known to those who fear Him 14
9. He is gracious 16
10. He is powerful (able to rescue) 15, 20

These can become powerful points of prayer for us when we are in a difficult situation.

So, David makes an initial petition of God. vv. 1-7

- I look to you for help.
- Don't let me be put to shame.
- Don't let my enemies triumph over me.
- Teach me your ways

He then affirms the things he knows about God. vv. 8-14

However, his difficulties continue and the description of his troubles in vv. 15-21 now reflect the inner troubles he is having. God allowed the trials to continue to do a deeper work in David's heart.

Finally, in v.22, he recalls that he is not the only person having difficulties and he requests God's deliverance for them by praying for Israel.

### **Some Additional things we learn from Ps 25:**

#### I. Heart Attitude:

Another very important issue addressed in the psalm is the quality and attitude of heart necessary in order to receive the blessings of answered prayer.

We find these in verses 9-15:

- Humility – v.9
- Obedience – v.10
- Fear, reverence, awe, honor – vv.12, 14
- Expectation (My eyes are ever on the Lord.) – v.15

#### II. Benefits of the Fear of the Lord: 12-14

1. God will instruct him in the way he should choose.
2. His soul shall abide in well-being.
3. His offspring will inherit the land.
4. He will have the Lord's friendship.
5. The Lord will make known to them His covenant.

III. Keys to answered prayer:

1. see "Heart Attitude" above
2. Where you place your trust 1-2
3. Affirming God's goodness and character 8
4. Waiting 3, 5, 21
5. Appealing to God's faithful past actions 6
6. Being jealous for God's glory 7c
7. Taking refuge in God's name 11
8. The petitioner addresses their own problems. 7, 17-19

IV. David's actions in prayer:

1. He lifts up his desire to God. 1
2. He affirms his trust in God 2, 5b
3. He petitions God to teach him. 4, 5
4. He waits. 3, 5, 21
5. He is jealous for God's honor. 2, 7, 11
6. He asks forgiveness. 11
7. He affirms God's character. 8
8. He remembers God's mercy. 6
9. He recalls the benefits of the fear of the Lord. 12
10. He asks for God's help in his distress. 16-19
11. He continues to wait. 21

**Additional insights:**

1. David's posture in waiting: from Zodhiatus definition of wait (*qawah*) expectant, await, look for, patiently, hope, to be confident, trust, to be enduring  
  
Waiting is not simply waiting for time to pass. V.15 tells us that David's eyes were always (ever) on the Lord.
2. remember 2142B *zakhar*– Zodhiates definition - remember, reflect upon, recollect

From Zhodiaties: "The Complete Word Study Old Testament"

qmf: qal imperfect v.7      **95**, 2, 43, 92

The qal verbal stem is the basic verbal stem in the Hebrew language. It represents approximately 2/3 of the verbs in the Old Testament. It represents action (fientive) or state of being.

Definition: fientive - Designating a durative and dynamic action performed by the subject

active voice, simple, imperfect action, views a part of the whole within the event, with no regard for whether the action has been completed or not

viewed as the opposite of "perfect" action

qmv qal imperative vv.6, 7 94, 2, 42, 92

a verbal form which expresses, in the active voice, a command that is given.

Though used primarily for commands, it can also be used to grant permission or make a request.

In rare occasions, the imperative is used in making promises.

The primary differences between the imperative and the imperfect is that it demands immediate action. It is only used for positive commands.

In this case, the interpreter will need to make a decision as to which definition of the imperative should be used.

Considering that the person praying is addressing God, then it seems inappropriate for the imperative to be considered a command directed towards God. Therefore, it is a request with the sense of immediacy attached to it.

We can ask God to think about us with the hope and expectation of an immediate answer.

3. v.17-19 express the internal effect his external problems are having

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

### Verse-by-verse: Key thoughts/focus

This section is designed for verse-by-verse instruction.

#### A. Verses 1-7 His initial petition

v.1 The Lord – 3068B Jehovah, *Hashem* in Hebrew text  
the existing One

The proper name of the one, true God.

“I lift up my soul” – Hebrew idiom for “direct my desire”

Direct my soul (inner being)

David confirms that the Lord is the One to whom he will direct his prayer.

- v.2 Elohim - 430B most common word translated God in the OT.  
Creator, strong/strength  
His course - He will put his trust in God.
- v.3 wait - 6960B *qawah*  
expect, await, look for patiently, hope, to be confident, trust, to be enduring  
not – simply waiting for time to pass  
shame 954B used 3 times – not to be embarrassed but to put your hope in something that later turns out to be untrustworthy  
wantonly treacherous – deal treacherously without cause  
David trusts God to shield him from shame.
- v.4 ways - paths  
make me to know - show – lead – teach: He wants instruction from God.
- v.5 wait – all the day (see v.3 above for more on “wait”)
- v.6 He recalls God’s past dealings and is confident that God will respond to him in a similar way.  
As of old – “from times past”
- v.7 remember – qmf, qmv see previous discussion on pp. 7-8

**B. Verse 8-14 David r8**

recalls what he has learned about God

- v.8 *yashar* - 3477B upright, straight, even, upright, level, just, righteous
- v.9 humble 2 Xs – an important personal quality to have in those who want something from God  
see “Heart Attitude” above
- v.10 Keeping God’s covenant and testimonies keeps us on the path of His steadfast love and faithfulness.
- v.11 He asks forgiveness for his great guilt.  
The pressure of his adversaries has caused David to reflect on his past and now he acknowledges his sin.

“For your Name’s sake” – He confesses his guilt so that God’s name will not be disgraced.

Note: Verses 12-14 provide a short summary of the benefits of having the fear of the Lord.

v.12 A key to receiving instruction from the Lord is to fear Him.

Fearing Him includes awe, reverence, honor, respect, terror.

This verse repeats what David is asking of God in this psalm...”show me your ways.”

v.13 Two more blessings of the fear of the Lord: well-being and his descendants will inherit the land.

v.14 The fear of the Lord produces friendship with Him.

“a friend of God” – idea of intimacy

Those who fear him will experience His covenant relationship.

C. Verses 15-21 David renews his petition but now focuses on his inner turmoil.

v.15 He continues to look towards God.

As he does, he is confident that God will get him through these difficulties.

v.16 His inner struggles surface.

God has allowed the times of travail to continue in order to do a deeper work within his heart.

v.17 “the struggles of his heart”

The trials are doing the work within him for which God has designed them.

v.18 He again expresses his repentance.

I suspect that the continuation of the difficulties has caused him to recall sins that he hadn’t yet remembered.

v.19 Note the increase of hostility towards him through words such as violent (cruel) hatred and hate (also enmity.)

v.20 Note the preserving effect of integrity and uprightness.

v.21 His trials have caused him to note that he is not the only one suffering through trials, temptations and difficulties.

Other Immanuel people will also have struggles and he prays for them by praying for Israel.

His personal struggles stir his devotion to Israel. (He is thinking like a king.) He has a shepherd’s heart.

## ABOUT PASTOR DAVID

I grew up in Illinois; my wife, Brenda, in Oregon. It was a path of many twists and turns to get the two of us connected in California! We entered into our marriage covenant in 1986 after she had agreed to my proposal for a life of adventure. Brenda claims that she scarcely comprehended the adventure that our life would be simply by saying those two little words (I do).



We had both been Christians for a number of years and determined to make God the center of our marriage. In order to make a good beginning, we structured our wedding vows around the instructions of Scripture. We are convinced that this is the reason for our successful, growing relationship.

I received my BS in Civil Engineering in 1966 from the University of Missouri. Having taken ROTC in college, I next served as an officer in the U.S. Army, stationed in Germany.

After returning home to the states, I attended Golden Gate Seminary in California and received a Master of Divinity in 1972.

I worked for three Engineering companies before settling in with GE Nuclear Energy in San Jose, California. I finished my engineering career with 25 years of service at GE.

I was ordained a minister of the gospel in 1991.

Brenda is blessed with musical gifts and has played numerous instruments, e.g. bassoon, flute, guitar, piano, bass. She taught piano to children for 14 years until our move to Wilmington, NC. I also had some musical inclinations, growing up in a musical family in which everyone played at least one instrument. Brenda also has a heart for and is involved in a local "Special Touch" ministry, a ministry to people with disabilities.

Several years ago, we began attending Calvary Chapel San Jose, CA where Don McClure was pastoring. The emphasis on God's Word and the presence of God's Spirit in the worship kept us coming back until we felt confident that this was to be our church home.

Brenda became involved with the Praise team playing flute and singing. She also led the worship for two Women's Bible studies. I became involved in the teaching ministry working principally with the mature adults class (ages around 50-95, they called themselves the "Sonshiners") and also a young married couples class.

Even though we felt like we were settling into the San Jose Fellowship, in early 2004 we were presented with a company relocation, and we began to feel that God was leading us to a significant change, relocating from the West Coast to the East Coast. Little did we know what was in store for us in Wilmington, NC.

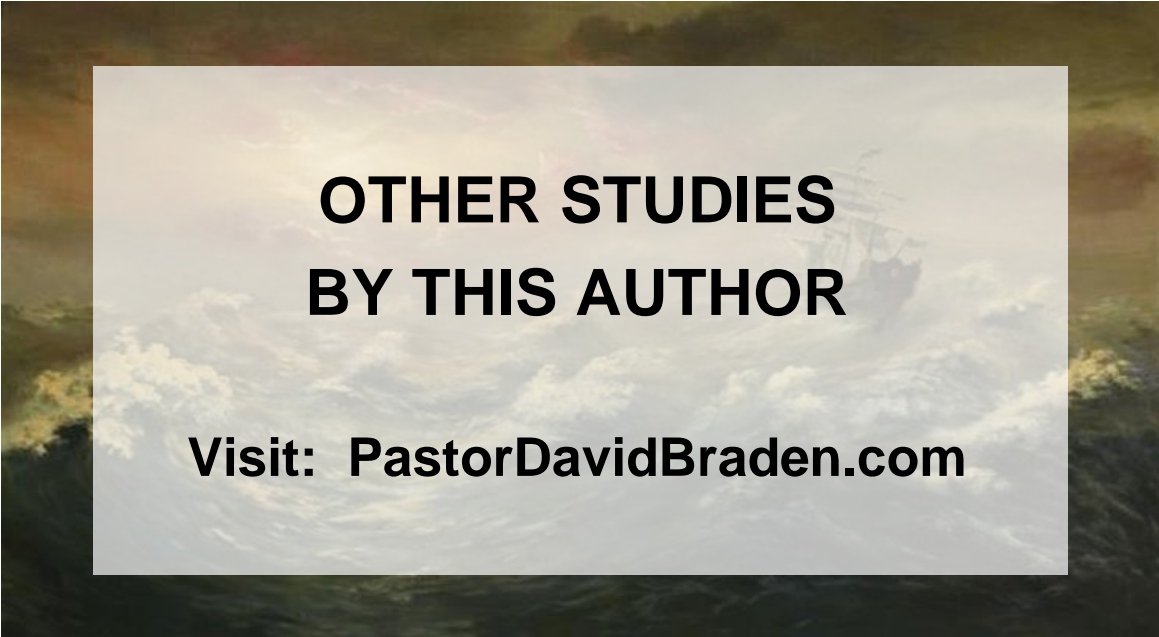
We often felt like Abraham who was told to leave his homeland but was given no information regarding what he would encounter when he arrived at his destination.

The next very shocking surprise was my early retirement, something we had not even considered when planning the move to the east coast. Nevertheless, God made it very clear that my engineering career of 37 years was soon to be ended. The retirement occurred almost 5 years in advance of my plan. But God had a bigger (and better) plan. One of my reoccurring supplications to God has been that I would rather be expending the main energy of my life teaching the Word of God than pouring it into the management of engineering projects and writing technical engineering reports. Now, God was giving me the desire of my heart.

I eventually came on staff with a local church and served for 7½ years as an associate pastor teaching Bible studies and ministering principally in the Equipping the Saints ministry. Brenda was involved in several ministries... Praise Team, Special Touch, hospitality/helps, Home Fellowships, to mention a few.

After a 1-year sabbatical in 2014, God has led us to begin a new fellowship which is called Safe Haven Berean Fellowship. Our focus is principally on the Word of God, with both Bible book studies and doctrinal teachings in progress at this time. Principal focuses are on the assurance of salvation, knowing what God in Christ has done for us, learning to live in a way that honors and glorifies God, and a continual focus upon our End Times preparations for our coming King.

Looking back now over the years that led us to this place in life, we are amazed at the Sovereignty of God and how he has orchestrated the events that have brought us to this place in this time. His loving and merciful hand has been seen time and again as he has opened doors and brought us quickly to where He wants us to be. He is, without question, an awesome God.



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