



“God > My Hopelessness”

Psalm 25

Small Group Plan

*“You, dear children, are from God
and have overcome them,
because the one who is in you
is greater than the one who is in the world.”*

— 1 John 4:4 —

When David wrote Psalm 25 he structured it as an acrostic poem using the Hebrew alphabet as the framework. And in his poem the pressure of his enemies, the desire for God’s guidance and the burden of guilt all take turns as the dominant theme. Each can be either a source of hopelessness or a reason to move forward to a fourth theme in the psalm — confidence in God.

The psalm presents life as a journey we cannot successfully make on our own. The word “ways” is used six times (vv. 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12) and “paths” once (v. 10), and we find David asking God for wisdom as he travels along life’s journey.

In the Psalm David blends his prayer for rescue from his opponents with his prayer for mercy and direction.

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- An acrostic is a memory device. It is often easier to remember thoughts that have structure or rhyme.
- Begin by reading the entire psalm aloud.
- Knowing that it was intentionally written in a memorable style, what thoughts, themes or ideas strike you as especially important?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

BECAUSE GOD IS GREATER

... He Protects Me ...

Psalm 25:1-3, 15-22

¹ In you, Lord my God, I put my trust. ² I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. ³ No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause ... ¹⁵ My eyes are ever on the Lord, for only he will release my feet from the snare. ¹⁶ Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. ¹⁷ Relieve the troubles of my heart and free me from my anguish. ¹⁸ Look on my affliction and my distress and take away all my sins. ¹⁹ See how numerous are my enemies and how fiercely they hate me! ²⁰ Guard my life and rescue me; do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you. ²¹ May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope, Lord, is in you. ²² Deliver Israel, O God, from all their troubles!

- Describe the feelings and emotions behind David's words, "lonely and afflicted" (v. 16), "anguish" (v. 17) and "distress" (v. 18).
- Do you think David feels overcome or protected? Explain.
- Why would one person feel overcome while another person would feel protected in the same circumstances?
- When David says he "trusts" God (vs. 1-2), what does he mean? How is trust acted out in a person's life? What does it look like?

BECAUSE GOD IS GREATER

... He Leads Me ...

Psalm 25:4-5, 8-10

⁴ Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. ⁵ Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long ... ⁸ Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. ⁹ He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. ¹⁰ All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful toward those who keep the demands of his covenant.

- Notice all the coaching/training/teaching language throughout these verses – "show" (v. 4), "teach" (vs. 4, 5, 9), "guide" (vs. 5, 9), "instruct" (v. 8).
- Describe the kind of attitude that says to God, "show me" ... "teach me" ... "guide me" (vs. 4-5).

- Also notice what is being taught — “your ways ... your paths ... your truth” (vs. 4-5), “his way” (vs. 8, 9), “the ways of the Lord” (v. 10) and “his covenant” (v. 10).
- When you think of “the ways of the Lord” what comes to mind?
- There is a condition in these verses. It is summed up in the phrase, “those who keep the demands of his covenant” (v. 10). How/why does our request for God’s leadership depend upon our willingness to follow that leadership?

BECAUSE GOD IS GREATER

... He Forgives Me ...

Psalm 25:6-7, 11

⁶ Remember Lord your great mercy and love, for they are from of old. ⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, Lord, are good ... ¹¹ For the sake of your name, Lord, forgive my iniquity, though it is great.

- Only two things are called “great” in this chapter, my “sin” (v. 11) and God’s “mercy” (v. 6). Why do some conclude that, of the two, their sin outweighs God’s mercy? Why is David confident that God’s mercy is “greater”?
- Why is David very careful to explain that God’s mercy and love “are from of old” (v. 6)? What does he mean and why is it so important?
- Notice that when David asks God for forgiveness he does not mention or appeal to his own worthiness. Instead, he builds his entire request upon God’s name:
 - “For the sake of your name” (NIV)
 - “Be true to your name” (CEV)
 - “For Your name’s sake” (NASV)
 - “For the honor of your name” (NLT)
 - “Keep up your reputation” (The Message)
- How would you describe God’s “reputation” to humanity throughout history?

BECAUSE GOD IS GREATER

... He Empowers Me ...

Psalm 25:12-14

¹² Who, then, are those who fear the Lord? He will instruct them in the ways they should choose. ¹³ They will spend their days in prosperity, and their descendants will inherit the land. ¹⁴ The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them.

- Twice David mentions the “*fear*” of God (vs. 12, 14). In both cases God “instructs” or “confides” in those who fear him. Why are reverent hearts more open to learning from God?
- Why is it an honor to be brought into God’s confidence (v. 14)?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- We have hope because God has given us a clear identity.
Use as many nouns, verbs and adjectives as possible to describe your identity, to define who you are, as a result of knowing God.
- We have hope because God has constructed a solid pathway.
Describe how your life purpose and your life direction have changed and grown since you have come to know God.
- We have hope because God has promised us a spiritual future.
None of us know what tomorrow will bring, but imagine that you were assured of another decade of life here. Using your faith how would you plan and organize that future?
- Close by thanking God for this life of hope.