

Psalm 25:

Toby DeHay / General Adult

Humility / Psalm 25

Prayer of a Humble Heart

Psalm 25

In His Presence (comment)

Psalm 25 as an alphabetic acrostic poem. Each poetic line begins with the succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

While this Psalm doesn't exactly follow this to a tee, the basic structure of the tool is there none the less.

[SEE PNG of the acrostic here on screen]

As you grow as a disciple, or as you disciple others, let me encourage you to look for these things. Read the footnotes in your Bible. If you have the printed ESV, you'll likely see a notation at the bottom saying, "this psalm is an acrostic poem."

The alphabet tool was likely used as a memory or learning tool, just like our alphabet song.

Commercials are like this.

One of my favorite spoofs of this idea comes from the TV show, The Office. Andy has a jiggle stuck in his head and can't finish it. It's driving him nuts and everyone knows what the end of the jiggle is, but Jim won't let them tell him.

Andy says something like, "I remember part of the jiggle, but I can't remember the product. Break me off a piece of that bom, bom, bom."

- "Break me off a piece of that apple sauce."
- "Break me off a piece of that Chrysler Car."
- "Break me off a piece of that football cream."
- "Break me off a piece of that lumber tar."
- Snicker's Bar; Grey Poupon; Claude Van Damm; Hair for Men; Poison Gas; Nutra Sweet;
- "Break me off a piece of that Fancy Feast. It's cat food. Nailed it!"

These are funny, but tools like this work.

David's not selling a product. And he's certainly not trying to peddle a view point or even earn God's favor.

The acrostic tool is fun, but it's not the main point - **the main point of this psalm focuses on the character of God.**

- His Mercy
- His lovingkindness

- His goodness

He's crying out to God as a humble servant who desperately wants to learn His ways.

I want to look at Psalm 25 through the light of the HUMBLE HEART as seen in verse 9.

Psalm 25:9 ESV

⁹ He leads the humble in what is right,

and teaches the humble his way.

Let's use verse nine to set up our big idea:

[BIG IDEA]

The humble heart receives everything it needs.

If you ask, "what does the humble heart need from Ps 25?" Here's what I'd like you to see today:

When we have a HUMBLE HEART, we...

1. Receive God's Guidance
2. Experience God's Grace
3. Rest in God's Protection

And it's my prayer that what you'll see today from His Word is that verse 10 rings true:

Psalm 25:10 ESV

¹⁰ All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

If you are taking notes, and I highly encourage this, make sure you get the Big Idea (The humble heart receives everything it needs), and the three truths that back it up.

But most importantly, as you are listening to the words of scripture and however the Lord is using me today, **please listen to the voice of the Spirit. What is He telling you today?**

Receive God's Guidance

Psalm 25:1-5

Notice how the psalmist goes about doing this.

Comes to Him in prayer (1)

He has a baseline of trust (2)

He wants to learn (4)

Let me start with this: There are two truths at play.

Truth One: The believer has a new heart given by the Holy Spirit. The Bible uses language like, “born again.”

We are a new creation in Him.

As a new creation, our natural inclination is toward Him.

Believer, we are changed. We are in Christ.

Truth Two: We live in a broken world, have broken habits, and are incredibly forgetful.

So, not only is David, a man after God’s own heart, he is broken and constantly in need of the Lord.

What David the psalmist is doing, is modeling the correct response the believer should have who is seeking a humble heart to learn that His ways are steadfast love and faithfulness.

Watch what he does to receive His guidance:

Come to Him in Prayer (1)

You can see the capitalized LORD here in verse 1.

This is the proper name of God. He’s not being proper for proper’s

sake. He's crying out to the one and only God.

If you get a chance to read Spurgeon's Expository and Devotional Commentary on this Psalm, please do.

In it he says:

True prayer may be described as the soul rising from earth to have fellowship with heaven.

Here in verse 1, David says, "I lift up my soul."

Notice how many times "I," "me," or "my" is used in Psalm 25. This Psalm is incredibly personal and what we see is a devoted son crying out to his loving Father in prayer.

The word "lift" carries implications of action and of trust. Remember what David is lifting. His soul!

His very desires. His cares. His needs. All his burdens. And as we read, David is lifting up his desire to learn-to know His ways and His paths.
A humble heart to receive what he needs.

Bridgeway, where does your heart go when it seeks understanding?

Prayer is one of the ways we hear from Him and the way we speak to Him directly.

Here, David shows us what bold, humble prayer looks like.

When Receiving God's Guidance, David also teaches us to have a baseline of trust.

Have a baseline of Trust (2)

We all know what this looks like.

Our friends and trusted family members can get away with almost anything because there is a baseline of trust.

Think about your own experience.

- Your friends can tell you the most ridiculous thing you've ever heard, but they probably didn't mean it that way.
- They were most likely having a bad day.
- They were speaking in hyperbole.

What about when someone you don't know does the same thing? We might think the opposite.

- They are insensitive.
- They are unkind or abusive.
- They are probably reprobate, because who can do or say those things and still love Jesus?

You see what a baseline of trust immediately does?

Now look at that same baseline with a God who immensely loves you and you know it. He's not your friend whom you trust 99% and His true nature is definitely not the opposite.

He's 100% trustworthy. David's words echo a vast amount of faith and implicitly trust in a faithful God.

Listen to Spurgeon on verse 2:

We must see to it that our faith is sound and strong, for otherwise prayer cannot prevail with God.

Why can't it prevail? Because the baseline of trust simply isn't there.

The baseline is trust - faith in God.

Notice how David changes his language and instead of using God's proper name, he says, "O my God."

He isn't using the flippant, irreverent phrase that we hear today, he's crying out and calling Yahweh, "my God!"

Rather than using a proper name, he's drawing even nearer to Him saying "my God."

Is He your God? Can you come to the throne with confidence that your heavenly Father not only loves you, but receives you with gladness?

This baseline of trust allows David the ability to receive His guidance.

In fact, we see the psalmist doubling down in verse 3.

Psalm 25:3 ESV

³ Indeed, **none who wait for you shall be put to shame;**

they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

The NET Bible version says,

Psalm 25:3 NET

³ Certainly none who rely on you will be humiliated.

Those who deal in treachery will be thwarted and humiliated.

We can trust Him. In Him, we don't see humiliation.

In verse 4, we see David wants to learn.

Have a Desire to Learn

We Receive God's Guidance by desiring to learn from Him.

Psalm 25:4 ESV

⁴ Make me to know your ways, O LORD;

teach me your paths.

Notice how this is free from self-interest.

Further in his commentary, Spurgeon says **the psalmist is asking to be led onward and further be instructed by the alphabet of truth.**

I love his wording here!

Not only is Spurgeon speaking to the alphabetic and acrostic style, but Spurgeon is speaking to the child-like faith which David is coming to His Father!

I like that the ESV and other translations use the word "make" in

verse 4.

Psalm 25:4 ESV

⁴ Make me to know your ways, O LORD;

teach me your paths.

In Hebrew, it's an imperative verb. It implies intention, appeal, or even urging.

In discipleship, it's the disciple who not only says, "yes, I want to learn, but where and when do we start?"

It's the disciple who eagerly listens, practices, and has excellent questions.

David says,

Psalm 25:4–5 ESV

⁴ Make me to know your ways, O LORD;

teach me your paths.

⁵ Lead me in your truth and teach me,

for you are the God of my salvation;

for you I wait all the day long.

When was the last time we really waited for something?

Spurgeon says, “we cheerfully wait when we are certain that we shall not wait in vain.”

We Receive God’s Guidance and we...

Experience God’s Grace

Psalms 25:6-15

Remember, God is Steadfast (6,7,10)

He is steadfast in His mercy.

Psalms 25:6 ESV

⁶ **Remember your mercy, O LORD**, and your steadfast love,

for they have been from of old.

The word for mercy here can be translated “compassion.”

Here, mercy is a feeling word. Feelings of love. A loving sensation. When I have compassion on someone, I don’t just agree with their feeling, I feel with them.

As we experience His grace, we remember that He is steadfast in His love toward us.

David brings up the past. **“Remember your mercy from old.”** We often associate bringing up the past as a bad thing.

David does the opposite. Instead of complaining, he uses it as an example of God caring for His people.

“God, remember how you’ve been steadfast in your mercy from the days of old?”

We experience His grace as we receive forgiveness because God is steadfast...

Sin is great, but the humble receive forgiveness (7, 8, 11)

David acknowledges his sin.

Psalm 25:7 ESV

⁷ **Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;**

according to your steadfast love remember me,

for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!

Psalm 25:8 ESV

⁸ Good and upright is the LORD;

therefore **he instructs sinners in the way.**

Psalm 25:11 ESV

¹¹ For your name's sake, O LORD,

pardon my guilt, for it is great.

David isn't glossing over his sin, brokenness, or iniquities.

He's exhibiting humility with the recognition that his sin is indeed great.

If you haven't read or listened to her story, let me encourage you to learn about Rosaria Butterfield. She is an amazing example of someone who doesn't minimize her own sin and past.

She quickly points to the patient faith of others, and ultimately, the Lord Jesus who pulled her out of a lesbian lifestyle.

As a new creation, her sole desire to glorify Jesus, love others, and make Him known.

As Julia Johnston wrote in 1910, "Grace, grace, God's grace. Grace that is greater than all our sin."

David also shows us that we experience God's grace because He...

Keeps His Promises

Notice how verses 12 and 14 sandwich how the Lord keeps His promises using the word "fear."

Psalm 25:12-14 ESV

¹² Who is the man who fears the LORD?

Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.

¹³ His soul shall abide in well-being,
and his offspring shall inherit the land.

¹⁴ **The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,**
and he makes known to them his covenant.

In the OT, the idea of fear is often expressed in response to God's holiness. (Ex. 3:5-6: you are on holy ground - Moses was afraid to look at God's face.)

Here, we see the response of obedience at play.

Listen to Deut. 5:29

Deuteronomy 5:29 ESV

²⁹ Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!

God instructs (12) those who fear the Lord. His humility gives understanding.

Verse 13 says “His soul shall abide in well-being and his offspring shall inherit the land.”

Healthy fear doesn’t drive the humble heart away, instead, it provides a foundation to build a proper understanding of our relationship to God.

Let’s recap real quick. So far Psalm 25 is teaching us to have a humble heart. By having a humble heart:

- We Receive His Guidance
- We Experience His Grace

and we...

Rest in God’s Protection

Psalm 25:16-22

In Distress, God is Our Refuge

Psalm 25:16–17 **ESV**

¹⁶ Turn to me and be gracious to me,

for I am lonely and afflicted.

¹⁷ The troubles of my heart are enlarged;

bring me out of my distresses.

David doesn't tell us exactly what's going on, but that's okay. Verse 16 says, "I'm lonely and afflicted."

We can relate to this. Most of us know what it's like to feel ostracized or deserted by a friend or someone we love.

David or God isn't promising a formula to keep that from happening. It simply happens.

What he's contrasting is the loneliness vs. the friendship that comes from God.

Some of you might be fortunate enough to have a friend you can call and they'll listen to whatever comes out of your mouth with little or no judgment.

I know a guy in KY who uses a "15-minute rule" with his family and friends.

They'll call him and say, "I need 15-minutes."

They then get an uninterrupted 15-minutes to say whatever they want, however they want.

He won't interrupt, ask questions, or provide help when they are done. You just get 15-minutes to vent.

Imagine that, except with:

- someone who completely understands.

- someone who wants you to tell Him the good, bad, and ugly.
- someone who knows the “troubles of your heart are enlarged” and all your sin.

Bridgeway, you know there will be distress. We can rest in His protection.

In Sin, He Provides Forgiveness

Psalm 25:18 **ESV**

¹⁸ Consider my affliction and my trouble,

and forgive all my sins.

This is the third time David has asked God to take away his sin (7, 11, 18).

David is under external attack, but knows he isn't guiltless.

Think about this for a minute. When we are under attack, feel slighted, are lonely, who do we blame?

Everyone else!

Part of Resting in God's Protection is recognizing the common denominator with our conflict: ourselves!

- What hidden sin needs to be brought to the surface?

- Where are we wrong in the conflict with our co-worker?
- What attitude needs to die in our own heart as we work out that issue with that family member?

Notice what David does. He acknowledges the problem and asks for forgiveness.

A teachable, humble heart that is ready to learn from the Lord not only comes to the Lord for forgiveness, but receives it and strives to walk in a spirit of repentance.

Church, can you imagine how much better the outcome of a conflict with someone would be if we simply said,

“hey, I think this portion of the issue is on me.”

Even if we did this within our own hearts and aren't able to share it with the other party.

And finally, we Rest in God's Protection because...

In Battle, He is Our Defender

Psalm 25:19–20 **ESV**

¹⁹ Consider how many are my foes,

and with what violent hatred they hate me.

²⁰ Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me!

Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.

While David says, “consider how many are my foes and with what violent hatred they hate me,” he has already said in verse 15 that his “eyes are ever toward the Lord.”

Who guards David? How is delivering him? The Lord!

When we are living a gospel-centered life, there will be attack.

Most of you know I like to watch MLB.

In the last week or so, the SF Giants had their annual pride night. Several of the pitchers decided to inscribe Gen. 9:12-16 on the front of their pride themed hats.

We can speak to LGBTQ issues, pride night or no, First Amendment rights, or the MLB’s inconsistencies in enforcing inscriptions and such. But this isn’t the time for me to do that.

I bring up this example because it’s a real life situation that people are placed in and now have to navigate.

This is the world in which we live.

We go right to our conclusion and share it with the world on social media.

When cultural battles come (and it seems like daily/weekly), what if we first trusted Him as our defender rather than defending ourselves?

What if prayer was first and social media was 10th?

As I thought about these players and prayed about the principles found in Ps 25, here are some of the thoughts I had:

- I hope the other teammates didn't beat them up like the media.
- I prayed for the hearts of the players. Sometimes you do a small thing and you don't think about the ramifications of it. Other times, you know exactly what's going to happen and your heart is callous.
- I prayed that they were neither and had wise counsel before and after.
- I prayed that the Lord would use this for His glory.

Bridgeway, when we are resting in His protection, He provides comfort for the trouble that will no doubt come.

Concluding Prayer:

- ***Finish out and conclude:***