

# PSALM 4 READING GUIDE | January 27 – February 2

---

*[4:1] Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!  
You have given me relief when I was in distress.  
Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!*

*[2] O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame?  
How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? Selah*

*[3] But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself;  
the LORD hears when I call to him.*

*[4] Be angry, and do not sin;  
ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Selah*

*[5] Offer right sacrifices,  
and put your trust in the LORD.*

*[6] There are many who say, "Who will show us some good?  
Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!"*

*[7] You have put more joy in my heart  
than they have when their grain and wine abound.*

*[8] In peace I will both lie down and sleep;  
  
for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.*

## DAY ONE

Read through the Psalm once writing down what you find interesting, what you find helpful, and what you don't fully understand.

Read through the notes on Psalm 4 in the *ESV Study Bible*. Write at least one paragraph highlighting what you learned from the study notes.

Reread Psalm 4, personalizing the Psalm as your own prayer. Write out that prayer.

## DAY TWO

Read through Psalm 4 again, thinking through the way verse one helps set the context for the Psalm.

In the *ESV Study Bible* notes we read, "This psalm expresses quiet trust amid troubling circumstances." The Psalm appears to be written in the evening, a time when you are often tempted to dwell on past wrongs done to you or be overwhelmed by your current circumstance. In the face of those temptations, David encourages you to "put your trust in the Lord" (Ps. 4:3).

In the first verse, David shows us how he builds that trust in his own life. He gives us categories to use in building that trust in our own lives.

- "Answer me when I call..." He cries out with an impassioned plea, knowing that God is truly his only hope. He affirms this in the last line of the Psalm, "You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety."

Write down some of the reasons you believe God is your only hope in any circumstance. Reread those reasons, writing down the emotions you feel as you read through the reasons you believe God is your only hope.

- "You have given me relief when I was in distress." He remembers the ways God has proven himself faithful in the past.

Write down some of the ways God has proven himself faithful to you in the past.

- "Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!" He humbly comes before God, recognizing God's response is an act of grace, not something he can demand from God.

Write down some of the reasons you think that God hearing your prayer would be gracious.



- He directs his prayer to “God of my righteousness.” Addressing God in this way recognizes two things: One, “God of... righteousness,” means God is committed to making things right; He’s forever on the side of justice. Two, “God of my Righteousness” (emphasis mine) means God is committed to making things right for David and each and every one of his children. That includes you.

Think through the ways you address God in prayer. (It could be “Lord,” “Father,” “God of my righteousness,” or something else.) When the ways you address God in prayer are not just formal phrases used without much thought, they can help build the faith you need to pray with confidence in the midst of trouble.

Write down some of the ways you are encouraged by starting your prayer by addressing God as the “God of my righteousness.”

Horatio Spafford expressed this faith in his famous hymn, “It is Well with My Soul.” As you read through the first two verses below, think about the ways Jesus—in his life, death, and resurrection—gives you assurance to express the quiet trust in God that Psalm 4 encourages. If helpful, add what you think about to what you’ve already written.

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

Review what you’ve written and then write out a prayer to God, praising him for who he is and what he’s done and expressing your trust in him. If you are in the midst of troubling circumstances, write out your prayer with those circumstances in mind, following the pattern you see in Psalm 4.

## DAY THREE

Read Psalm 4 again.

In verse three, David writes: “Know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself.” Read the notes in the ESV Study Bible on verse three again to help you understand what David means in verse three.

God chose to set his affection on you, not because of who you are or what you might do, but instead because He loves you. Write down ways that truth can give you confidence in the face of difficulty.

Read through Psalm 4 again, noting the places where David talks about anger, joy, and peace. Consider the questions below related to anger, joy, and peace as you begin to think through ways this Psalm can apply to you and your situation.

In verses four and five, David talks about anger.

- What does he say about anger?
- What doesn’t he say about anger?
- What does he encourage you to do when something happens that makes you angry? How does verse one encourage you to do that?

In verses six and seven, David talks about joy. He compares joy that comes from external circumstances and the joy that comes from an internal reality.

- Which prayer in verse six aims at joy that comes from external circumstances? Which prayer aims at joy that comes from an internal reality?
- Which part of verse seven describes a joy that follows external circumstances? Which part of verse seven describes a joy that flows from an internal reality?
- Which kind of joy does David say is greater?
- How does David point to God and not humans as the source of that kind of joy?
- What kind of prayer does David encourage you to pray if you want that kind of joy?

In verse eight, David talks about peace. He doesn't give any indication his circumstance has changed. Therefore, the peace he describes comes regardless of his circumstance.

- How does he describe that peace?
- What do you find helpful about his description?
- How does he say God provides him with that peace?
- How does verse eight show that the peace follows faith in God?
- How does this whole Psalm encourage that kind of faith?

Review what you've written and learned about God, your emotions, and your current situation. In light of what you've written and learned, write out a prayer to God, asking him to work in your current situation. Your prayer may ask him to do things like:

- Give you a greater confidence in him that flows from a deeper understanding of his love for you.
- Increase your faith and trust in him.
- Help you be angry but not sin.
- Give you joy and peace that isn't dependent on your circumstances.

## DAY FOUR

Read Psalm 4 again, noting the ways David uses his experience and interaction with God to encourage others.

Write down some of the specific ways this Psalm has helped you "put your trust in the Lord" (Ps. 4:5).

Is there someone that you can share your experience with that you can also encourage to put their trust in the Lord? If so, pray for them, asking God to help them trust in him. In addition, ask God to give you the courage and opportunity to speak with them.

Is there someone you are angry with because of the way they've wronged you? If so, read the notes on verse four in the ESV Study Bible, and consider if you are sinning in the way you are responding to that person. Pray, asking God to forgive you if you are in sin, and asking God help you forgive that person if you are struggling to do so.

Before you go to bed tonight, pray, expressing your trust in God and asking God to help you trust him with past wrongs and present perils. Then read verse eight as a prayer over and over again until you fall asleep.

## DAY FIVE

Read through Psalm 4 twice.

Write out at least two paragraphs reflecting on what you've learned about God, yourself, and others from Psalm 4. Write out at least one thing you hope to apply to your life from Psalm 4.

Spend at least 15 minutes sharing what you wrote with a trusted friend or family member. If they read Psalm 4 this week, ask them to do the same. End your time in prayer, thanking God for what he taught you this week.



“Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.”

© 2013 Elliot Grudem.