



THE COMMUNITY

Trying to Find The Light Switch | GUIDANCE

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

Psalm 25

The title of the twenty fifth psalm tells us that it was written by David or for David's use. Beginning with verse 2, it is an acrostic poem: almost every verse begins with the consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

David was apparently going through difficult times here – guilt, enemies, uncertainty and problems.

Verses 1-3: What a beautiful response to troubles! David turns to God. Our dependence on God brings Him glory. David puts God's honor at stake: "I'm trusting you, so don't let me be ashamed."

Verses 4-5: David does not just ask for a solution to his immediate problems. He wants to walk in God's paths at all times.

When faced with a decision, we naturally isolate the situation. We tend to think, "What should I do now?" But the Scriptures teach us to see ourselves in an eternal story. The decision before us is just part of a bigger picture. Making right decisions is a question of training ourselves to think in God's ways day after day. (Hebrews 5:14; Romans 12:1-2) It's about becoming the people He wants us to be.

Students must develop the spiritual disciplines now, in the hothouse climate of the campus, or risk never making them part of their lives. Daily time alone in the Word and prayer, participation in a local congregation and biblical fellowship, speaking out about Christ – these are all part of training ourselves to live lives under the Lord's guidance. Students who have, should also begin fasting, spiritual study, giving, service, and other disciplines. These are never means of gaining God's favor, but simply ways of training ourselves to live as authentic Christians.

Verses 6-11: David has implored God to guide and rescue those who trust in the Lord. But here David recognizes that he has not always trusted in God and followed God's paths as he should have. So he does not look at God's intervention as something he deserves. He asks for God's help in spite of his sins. It's all grace.

To be teachable and open to guidance requires humility.

What's the Big Idea?

This study is designed to give students (especially seniors) some help with knowing God's will. The better we know Him and the more we walk with him, the better equipped we will be to discern his guidance.

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Humility is simply a realistic attitude about who we are. We are sinful. We need guidance and correction. Pride refuses to recognize this in practice.

When we consider our past, we may doubt that God can overcome our bad record and failures. Praise God, He can! He not only forgives and forgets, He heals and restores.

Verses 12-15: Inspired by the Holy Spirit, David confidently asserts that we will have God's guidance, if we love, reverence and trust Him. This is our hope and assurance. (James 1:5) Not only will He guide us, but He will also ensure our ultimate prosperity if we look to Him.

Verses 16-21: David comes back to the same themes and mentions his needs specifically.

Verse 22: In contrast to our tendency to individualistic thinking, the psalm places us in the context of a community seeking God's blessing and guidance. It's not just about me.

A final note on counseling students. We want and need more staff in Campus Crusade. We should pray for more people to join our staff full-time. We should challenge every student to prayerfully consider joining our staff. But we should also realize that most students will not join our staff and that it is not God's will for most of them to do so. It is our job, therefore, to prepare every student for the next few steps of a lifetime of discipleship.

This series of studies is one part of doing that, but it is only part of a broader approach. We do a great injustice to students who will not be joining our staff if we do not prepare them to live for Christ. By backing away from them when they make the decision to go into secular careers, we not only convey that they are inferior disciples, and wound them personally; we also communicate that we really do not expect them to serve God wherever He is leading them. We dismiss them from His service, as far as we are concerned.

We must be determined to help them succeed in whatever God is calling them to do in life. We must show this determination concretely by praying for them and with them, by teaching them God's view of the world, by helping them plan for spiritual success and by "sending" them into the world to bring Him glory through their lives, their work, their relationships and their ministry.

What's Our Response?

Make sure that students understand that seeking and obtaining the Lord's guidance is a way of life – not a technique to master. If our minds are not being transformed, we cannot expect to know His mind. Knowing God's will requires a regular walk with God, including growth in the spiritual disciplines. If this is not happening as a student in a campus movement, it is even less likely to happen after graduation.

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What Are the Questions?

Psalm 25

Launch

If you could have an envelope with a written explanation of God's will for the next five years, would you take it? Why do you suppose God doesn't just tell us what He wants us to do?

Explore

Read Psalm 25.

1. What does it mean to be "put to shame"? What guarantee does the Lord inspire the psalmist to understand?
2. What is the emotional attitude of the psalmist? What else can you pick up about the context of this psalm from the text?
3. In practice, how does God "teach us His paths" (vs. 4-5)?
4. What practical commitments can help us hear from Him in the normal ways that He teaches us?
5. We may be tempted to think that our past sins will keep us from ever fulfilling God's best. What does the text say to this? (vs. 6-11)
6. If receiving guidance requires humility (verse 9), then what does it mean to be humble?
7. Subconsciously, we may be waiting to see what God's will is before committing ourselves to doing it. What's behind that attitude, and what's wrong with it?
8. In verse 14, what is the condition of intimacy with the Lord? How does this relate to knowing His will?
9. How does this approach to ethics and decisionmaking in God's Word differ from what you see on the street or in, say, a class in modern ethics?
10. In what ways are the staff of this campus movement helping you discover and accomplish God's will, whatever He is calling you to do in your life?

Apply

11. In your experience, how does sin affect our ability to know and do God's will?
12. Which attitudes from this text would you particularly like to imitate in your own life?
13. The text does not discuss how to resolve a particular question, such as what career you should pursue or which person you should marry. How do you make specific decisions? What advice do you see from the rest of the Bible?
14. Have you ever told the Lord that you are willing to serve Him in vocational ministry (e.g., with Campus Crusade for Christ)? If so, what has He shown you in response?

NOTES:

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What Are the Answers?

1. In the Scriptures, shame is closely tied to dishonor, disgrace, humiliation, embarrassment, defeat, failure and frustration. Those who trust in God will not be put to shame.
2. David is going through difficulties, facing enemies and uncertainties.
3. God gives us a main outline of His will through the Word above all, and also through prayer, time with believers, experience and so forth.
4. Discuss what they are doing in the spiritual disciplines and discuss mutual accountability in these areas.
5. We know that sin has consequences and that God does not always intervene to negate all the natural results of violating His laws. But His grace is amazing! He does not give us what we deserve. He gives us what we don't deserve, to His glory.
- 6 Humility is the opposite of pride. It implies an honest view of our faults and position, teachability, and submission to legitimate spiritual authority.
7. If we are waiting to see what God's will is before committing ourselves to it, we may doubt that He is truly good or wise or loving. Or we may be demanding to run our own lives. Both attitudes are sin. And we cannot expect to know the specifics of God's will unless we are willing to obey.
8. We must "fear" God – trust and reverence and love Him – to be among those who are intimate with Him and who share in His covenant. It is only in intimacy with God that we can know the details of His heart and will for us.
9. Allow the group to discuss. The idea here is to make them aware of worldly pressures.
10. Allow the group to discuss.
11. Discuss. unconfessed sin usually starts a process of rationalization, as we try to make sense of our lives. We suppress the truth and mess up our ability to know things we should.
12. Allow the group to discuss.
13. Collect answers: godly counsel, reflecting on pros/cons in prayer, the personal desires of a spirit-filled person, the needs of others, the priorities of Scripture. emphasize again that God's particular will is never contrary to Scripture. for example, it is never God's will for a Christian to marry a non-believer or even to engage in a relationship that could lead to marriage with a non-believer.
14. Allow the group to discuss. Staff and student leaders should listen and consider the answers given here in order to improve our work of discipleship.

Memorize

Who, then, is the man that fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him.

Psalm 25:12



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