

# PSALMS - A TEACHER'S GUIDE

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## THE CENTRAL QUESTION:

### What does this book/story say to us about God?

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
  - b. Why did He record it for our study?
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1. How many different people do you think contributed to the Psalms? How long a time span do you think is covered by the Psalms? Do you consider them all inspired? Who wrote the most? Do you consider the hymns in our hymn books as being inspired? Why would the Psalms be different? Do you think there were uninspired "psalms" that may have been used in the temple services? Would it be safe to pick a verse from any portion of the Psalms and use it by itself apart from its context?

"The psalms were originally individual poems. With the passing of time these were collected to form smaller books. The Book of Psalms in its present form comprises five of these smaller books (see below). The earliest known individual psalm is that of Moses (Ps. 90); the latest is probably Psalm 137, which could not have been written before the sixth century B.C. Though most of the psalms were written and collected during the Davidic era, or shortly thereafter, the final compilation of Psalms was probably not complete until the latter half of the fifth century B.C., during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (450–425 B.C.)" (*Believer's Study Bible* - article on Psalms)

The book of Psalms, sometimes called the Psalter, includes the prayers and the hymns of some of the most important people in the Bible, from Moses to the Exiles in Captivity. The Psalms are grouped into five collections or books as follows:

Book 1	Psalms 1-41
Book 2	Psalms 42-72
Book 3	Psalms 73-89
Book 4	Psalms 90-106
Book 5	Psalms 107-150

"Book I shows an affinity for the divine name YAHWEH, while Book II prefers Elohim. The reason for this phenomenon is unknown. Each of the first four books concludes with a brief doxology, while Psalm 150 is a doxology within itself and constitutes an appropriate conclusion to the entire Psalter (some see Ps. 1 and 2 serving as an introduction and 146–150 serving as the conclusion). Jewish tradition explains the five-book arrangement as a conscious echo of the Pentateuch, but it is more probable that this is incidental rather than intentional. Indeed the division between Books IV and V (Ps. 106 and 107) seems arbitrary." (*Believer's Study Bible*)

There are Psalms of praise and worship; prayers for help, protection, and salvation; pleas for forgiveness; songs of thanksgiving for God's blessings; and prayers for the punishment of enemies. While we do not consider the little notes at the beginning of many chapters ascribing the Psalm to a particular author as being inspired, they are of very ancient origin and seem to have some validity. If they can be trusted we have psalms by David, Solomon, Asaph, Moses, the sons of Korah (who was swallowed up in Numbers 16:30),

Heman, Ethan and several psalms appear to have been written from Babylonian exile. David wrote the largest number of Psalms, perhaps 73 in all. Solomon apparently wrote many psalms (1005) that are not included in our book of Psalms. (See 1 Kings 4:32) Were these psalms not included because they were not inspired?

All of the Psalms must be read in light of the context in which they were written—like the rest of Scripture.

The word Psalms comes from "Psalms" - to sing or to praise - originally from psallein - "to pluck" that is, "Songs to be sung to the accompaniment of instruments". The corresponding Hebrew word *mizmor* occurs frequently in the psalms and means a vocal or instrumental song. The Hebrew Title: *Tehillim* means "Praises".

"The psalms of David pass through the whole range of experience, from the depths of conscious guilt and self-condemnation to the loftiest faith and the most exalted communing with God." (*Patriarchs and Prophets* 754)

"The psalms lead us through the valleys and peaks of human experience, but in the end they guide us to the praise of our loving Creator...The psalms were written in the language of the human spirit, the utterances of the soul. The psalms are not cool, reasoned prose, but deeply emotional works that use wrenching language, dramatic exaggeration, and figurative speech." (*Nelson Study Bible*)

"Although Hebrew poetry contains some rhythm, it primarily makes use of repetition and recapitulation. One line of a verse is followed by another that gives a variation of the same idea. Not only do the psalmists use this poetic technique, but the authors of proverbs use it as well (see the Introduction to Proverbs). The second line of a proverb usually reinforces the meaning of the first line (see Prov. 22:1). This reinforcement of the thought is not mere tautology, but the graceful artistry of a poet. The first line makes a statement that the second line sharpens or heightens.

A psalmist could modify this general pattern in a number of ways. First, the psalmist could use *synonymous parallelism* to make the two elements similar. For example:

But his delight is in the law of the LORD,

And on His law he meditates day and night. (1:2; compare 3:1 and 24:1)

Second, the psalmist could contrast the two elements. This type of parallelism, called *antithetical parallelism*, usually contains the word "but." For example:

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,

But the way of the ungodly shall perish. (1:6; compare 90:6)

Third, the psalmist could develop the theme of the first line in the second line. This is called *synthetic parallelism*. For example:

Blessed is the man

Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,

Nor stands in the path of sinners,

Nor sits in the seat of the scornful. (1:1; compare 19:7)

A fourth improvement on general parallelism is *climactic parallelism*. In this type of parallelism, the first member of a couplet is incomplete and the second member partially repeats the first member and then completes the thought. For example:

Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples,  
 Give to the LORD glory and strength. (96:7)

Finally, the psalmist could use *emblematic parallelism*. In this type, the first line contains a figure of speech and the following lines explain the figure by expansion or explanation. In the following example, the parallel lines of this verse explain the meaning of the expression “like a tree.”

He shall be like a tree  
 Planted by the rivers of water,  
 That brings forth its fruit in its season,  
 Whose leaf also shall not wither;  
 And whatever he does shall prosper. (1:3; compare 42:1)

With poetic parallelism, the Hebrew psalmist powerfully expresses his praise of the Lord. By reading the psalms aloud and emphasizing the parallel elements, one can gain some sense of the harmonious poetic language from which the translation is derived.” (*Nelson’s Study Bible*)

Fourteen psalms contain historical superscriptions that give some brief mention of the occasion on which the psalm was written (chs. 3, 7, 18, 30, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 142).

**Some of the major foci of the Psalms:**

Nature	8, 19, 29, 104
Historical and National	46, 68, 79, 105, 106, 114
Didactic	1, 15, 34, 71
Messianic	2; 8; 16; 22–24; 40; 41; 45; 68; 69; 72; 89; 96–99; 102; 110; 118; 132
Deity	(Psalms 45:6; 110:1)
Sonship	(Psalms 2:7)
Incarnation	(Psalms 40:6,7)
Priesthood	(Psalms 110:4)
Betrayal	(Psalms 41:9)
Rejection	(Psalms 118:22)
Resurrection	(Psalms 16:9,10)
Ascension	(Psalms 68:18)

(1) “*Typological-prophetic* psalms—e.g. Psalm 22, where the writer describes his own experience which is transcended by that of Jesus the Messiah; (2) *indirectly messianic*—e.g. Psalms 2; 45; 72; these were penned for a king of Israel or a royal occasion in general, but their ultimate and climactic fulfillment is realized in Christ; and (3) *typical messianic* psalms—these are less obvious: the psalmist in some sense is a type of Christ (34:20), but not all aspects of the psalm necessarily apply to the Messiah (see also 109:8; cf. Acts 1:20).” (*Believer’s Study Bible*)

Penitential (sorrow for sin) 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143

Lament (a plea for deliverance or defense addressed directly to God)	
individual	13, 17, 22, 25, 26, 28, 31, 35, 36, 38, 39, 42, 43, 51, 54–57, 59, 61, 63, 64, 69–71, 86, 88, 102, 109, 120, 130, 140–143
national	12, 44, 58, 60, 74, 77, 79, 80, 82, 83, 85, 90, 94, 106, 108, 123, 126, 137)
Imprecatory (vengeance on one’s enemies)	35, 52, 58, 59, 69, 79, 83, 109, 137, 140
Prayer, Praise, & Adoration	16, 55, 65, 86, 90, 95-100, 103, 104, 107, 142, 143, 145-150
Pilgrim (songs to be sung on the way to Jerusalem)	120-134
Acrostic or Alphabetic	9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145 (compare Lamentations)
Responsive reading:	136
True happiness	1, 32, 34, 65, 84
Suffering	13, 22, 69, 88, 143
Discouragement	3, 31, 39, 42, 43, 142
Trust	11, 23, 27, 63, 107
Confession	32, 51, 90, 102, 106
Anger	35, 58, 59, 129, 137
The King's Glory	2, 21, 45, 72, 110
Despair and Hope	10, 42, 55, 73, 74, 77
Security	91, 16, 18, 31, 112
God's Universal Reign	99, 93-98
Forgiveness	6, 38, 103, 123, 130
God's Sovereignty	8, 19, 37, 89, 139
Praise the Lord (Hallel)	145, 111-118, 146-150
Vengeance	18 (2 Samuel 22), 58, 68, 69
History	78, 105, 106, 136
Wedding Song	45, (Compare Song of Solomon)
Doubt (about God's care)	73 (contrast 23)
Sabbath	92-100
Eschatological	96-99
Yom Kippur	130
Passover	135

**Different authors:**

“No other book of the Bible has as many different authors as does Psalms. Seventy-three psalms are attributed to David in the superscriptions (cf. 72:20). Psalm 2 is ascribed to David in Acts 4:25; Psalm 95 is attributed to him in Hebrews 4:7. A comparison of Psalm 105:1–15 with 1 Chronicles 16:8–22 and Psalm 96 with 1 Chronicles 16:23–33 indicates Davidic authorship of these two psalms also. The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, 275–150 B.C.) adds David’s name to an additional fifteen psalms not so designated in the Hebrew text. David was truly the “sweet psalmist of Israel” (2 Sam. 23:1).” (*Believer’s Study Bible*)

“The tradition that associates David with singing and psalm composition is so strong that there is little doubt that David wrote the psalms that bear his name (1 Sam. 16:14–23; 2 Sam. 1:17–27; 2 Sam. 22; 2 Sam. 23:1; 1 Chr. 6:31; 15:16; 16:7; Ps. 18; Amos 6:5).” (*New Geneva Study Bible*)

King David	3-32, 33?, 34-41, 51-65, 68-70, 86, 103, 108-110, 122, 124, 131, 133, 138-145 (But how do you explain Psalms 72:20?)
(By David but not labeled in Hebrew Bibles)	2, 95, 96, 105, and 15 others mentioned in LXX
King Solomon	72, 127
The Sons of Korah	42-49, 84, 85, 87, 88 (This is the Korah who was swallowed up)
Asaph	50, 73-83
Heman the Ezrahite (Grandson of Samuel: 1 Chronicles 6:33; 15:17; 16:41,42)	88
Ethan the Ezrahite (1 Kings 4:31)	89
Moses	90
Exile	137
An afflicted man	102

Women, such as Deborah (see Judg. 5) and Hannah (see 1 Sam. 2), wrote psalms as well but we don't know of any psalms that made it into the book of Psalms that were written by women.

[Some have suggested that some of the "orphan psalms" may have been authored by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Ezra, or Haggai]

#### **Literary and musical devices:**

Musical terms	Selah, Maskil, Sheminith (6), Shiggaion (7), gittith (8, 81, 84), alamoath (46), mahalath (53), miktam (16, 56-60); Tephillah (17, 89, 90, 102, 142)
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“The meaning of “**selah**,” which occurs 71 times in 39 psalms (also in Hab 3:3, 9, 13) remains unexplained. The Greek, where it occurs 92 times, translates it as *diapsalma*, which means an instrumental interlude (see Kraus 1988: 27–29).” (*Anchor Bible Dictionary*)

“Some interpret it as meaning “silence” or “pause;” others, “end,” “a louder strain,” “piano,” etc. The LXX. render the word by *diapsalma* i.e., “a division.” (*Easton’s Bible Dictionary*)

“A **maskil (maschil)** is a word for a Hebrew term used in the titles of 13 psalms (Psalm 32, 42, 44, 45, 52, 53, 54, 55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142; Maskil, NIV, NRSV). Maschil may have been a term referring to a psalm sung at an annual festival, and accompanied by a special kind of music.” (*Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*)

“Since the Hebrew term comes from the root *śakal*, “to have insight,” “to have comprehension,” some have conjectured that Maskil indicates poems of a contemplative or

didactic nature. Others suggest that Maskil may indicate a type of musical performance.” (SDA Bible Dictionary)

“The expression, “according to The **Sheminith**” (Psalms 6, 12) means literally, “according to/on the eighth,” possibly referring either to the eighth musical pattern or to an eight-string instrument.” (Anchor Bible Dictionary)

For Jeduthun (A Levite chief singer in the Temple) 39, 62, 77 (1 Chronicles 25:1-6; 16:37-42)

Tune names: A Dove on Distant Oaks (56), Do Not Destroy [Isaiah 65:8] (57-59, 75), The Lily [ies] of the Covenant (60, 80), Lilies (69), The Suffering of Affliction (88)

As we have seen the Psalms are organized much like our Hymnal. There are Psalms for almost every occasion. Some Psalms were written to or for certain musicians. Many of the Psalms were a type of prayer that was subsequently set to music.

2. What would happen to the Psalms if our Bibles were organized in a strictly chronological order? (See Psalms 90; 51; 137. Who is credited with writing these Psalms?)

See #1. The Psalms would be scattered from Exodus to Ezekiel. Psalms 90 is believed to be from Moses. Psalms 137 was apparently written by the exiles in Babylonian captivity. Not all the Psalms were written in David’s day.

3. Do you think some of the Psalms were actually more like prayers? If a psalmist is angry, discouraged or depressed and cries out to God, should we consider his cry, including the words of despair or discouragement as “inspired?” In what sense? Is it all right to express feelings of depression? What about Jesus’ cry at the cross (Matthew 27:46) or in Gethsemane?

Many of the Psalms read like prayers even though they could also have been sung. Often extremes of emotion lead to cries of prayer or even poetry (song). An honest cry to God is a prayer—maybe the best kind. Certainly Jesus’ cries on the cross were not “sins” on His part.

4. The Psalms were a form of Hebrew poetry. We sometimes speak of “poetic license.” When David spoke of soaking his bed with his tears (Psalms 6:6) don’t you think this was a little exaggerated? Is it okay for someone to use hyperbole under inspiration?

“Every night tears drench my bed;” (Psalms 6:6, *NLT*)

“Day and night, I have only tears for food,” (Psalms 42:3, *NLT*)

“You have collected all my tears in your bottle.

You have recorded each one in your book.” (Psalms 56:8, *NLT*)

“You have fed us with sorrow

and made us drink tears by the bucketful.” (Psalms 80:5, *NLT*)

“Rivers of tears gush from my eyes

because people disobey your law.” (Psalms 119:136, *NLT*)

Poets are notorious for use of “poetic license”. This is not wrong, but it needs to be understood for what it is. David apparently felt like this at the time. It helps us to recognize that in our day, those who are moved by powerful emotions—even depression—can cry out to God in honest prayer about how they feel at the time and God will understand.

5. Is everything that we sing in our hymns today theologically accurate? What do we mean when we sing “God said it, I believe it, and that settles it for me?” If prayer is “conversation with God as with a friend” how could we “sing while passing through the air, farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer?” Is it that we never plan to speak to God again? Do we feel comfortable singing about one of God’s children as “such a worm as I?” Should healthy heterosexual men feel comfortable singing “I come to the garden alone, He walks with me, and talks with me and tells me I am His own?” (Or is God also female?)

Ellen White says that “Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend.” *Steps to Christ* 93 (1892) So if many of our hymns are to be regarded as prayers then we must sing them as expressions of the original songwriters. Under some circumstances they may represent our feelings at the time we are singing, but often they will not. That doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t join in the singing.

6. What should we do with passages in the Psalms which appear to be contrary to our Christian understanding of God? For example:

Psalms 2:11,12 “Serve the Lord with fear...lest he be angry...for his wrath is quickly kindled.” (RSV)

Psalms 77:10 “It is my grief that the right hand of the Most High has changed!” (RSV)

Would it ever be proper to describe the wrath of God as “quickly kindled?” We have many verses that say God is “slow to anger.” (Compare Exodus 34:6,7; Numbers 14:18; Psalms 103:8; 145:8; Proverbs 15:18; 16:32; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nahum 1:3; Nehemiah 9:17) What should we do with such conflicts? Should we collect all the verses and “stack them up” or “compare” them somehow? Or count them? Should we look for evidence in the stories to see if God is actually quick to get angry? Or should we just admit that this is a Biblical contradiction? After reading the second Psalm for worship, what would you pray about? How do you suppose Jesus spoke the words, “You are of your father, the devil?” John 8:44 (RSV) What do we do with passages which appear to be shocking, or harsh, or authoritarian? Would it be all right for a mother to cry out as her child is dying? Was David still loyal and totally committed despite all these cries?

Psalms 2:11,12 is a challenge even for translators. There are several verses in this chapter that do not sound like the normal picture of God that we have. (See Psalms 2:4,5,9) Does God ever speak very sternly to His children? What about Sinai? Look at Romans 9:20. We sometimes must discipline our children and they fear us at the time. We hope that doesn’t change the fact that we are normal loving, and kind parents! When people are acting immaturely and not taking God seriously He sometimes finds it necessary to speak using very strong language. The greatest example of this is probably the three angel’s messages (See Revelation 14:6-12). God is willing even to appear harsh and fearsome if that is what it takes to get our attention so we may quietly listen to what He wants to say to us.

7. Should we just read the Psalms that we like and which express uplifting thoughts—like Psalms 19 and 23—and try to ignore the others?

While the many beautiful psalms should be read, memorized and appreciated, they are not the total picture God intends for us to learn from this ancient “hymnal”. We often can learn more about God from the “difficult” passages than from the easy ones. Psalms gives us an insight into the intimate thoughts of some of the most important people in the Bible. This is an essential background for understanding the history of these people.

David was a great military leader. Thus we should not find it hard to understand that he would compose psalms both of praise to God for helping him win battles against his enemies and of pleading for help when things are not going so well on the battlefield. We would expect that of a military leader. This shows us that David and his contemporaries were “real people” like us.

8. What should we do with “inspired prayers” that seem to call down God’s wrath and vengeance on all of Israel’s enemies? For example:

Psalms 18:34-50      “He trains my hands for war,...I pursued my enemies and overtook them; and did not turn back till they were consumed...I thrust them through...they fell under my feet. For thou didst gird me with strength for the battle...those who hated me I destroyed. They cried for help, but there was none to save, They cried to the Lord, but he did not answer them. I beat them fine as dust before the wind; I cast them out like the mire of the streets.” (RSV) [See 2 Samuel 22:35-51]

Psalms 58:6-9:

- <sup>6</sup>      Break the teeth of these fierce lions, O God.  
<sup>7</sup>      May they disappear like water draining away;  
         may they be crushed like weeds on a path.  
<sup>8</sup>      May they be like snails that dissolve into slime;  
         may they be like a baby born dead that never sees the light.  
<sup>9</sup>      Before they know it, they are cut down like weeds;  
         in his fierce anger God will blow them away  
         while they are still living.  
<sup>10</sup>     The righteous will be glad when they see sinners punished;  
         they will wade through the blood of the wicked.  
<sup>11</sup>     People will say, “The righteous are indeed rewarded;  
         there is indeed a God who judges the world.” (GNB)

Psalms 68:21-23      “But God will shatter the heads of His enemies...” (RSV)

Psalms 69:22-28      “Add to them punishment upon punishment,...Let them be blotted out of the book of the living.” (RSV)

Psalms 137:8,9      “Happy is the man who...takes your babies and smashes them against a rock.” (GNB) Compare Hosea 13:16; Amos 1:13; Nahum 3:10.

Does Psalms 69:22-28 sound like the prayer of an evangelist? (Compare Exodus 32:32; Romans 12:14-21) What do you think of such language? Is such language OK if you are under the direction of God? In David's first great battle, (1 Samuel 17) was David praying for the stone to go straight to the giant's forehead? How do you think he prayed before and after this experience? Is it easier to see after reading these Psalms and looking in on David's thoughts, why God never wanted them to fight in the first place (Exodus 23:27,28)?

When David fought battles he had to go out and kill people one-on-one, face-to-face and very personally. You can't do that while praying for God to protect and deal kindly with your enemies!! After killing Goliath, David cut off his head and carried it around for the rest of the day! (1 Samuel 17:51,54,57) What would this do to you?

And in those days the battle didn't end on the battlefield. They had to go into the villages and cities and break down the doors of the houses and search for the women, the elderly, and the children, probably hiding somewhere in each house and kill them also. After doing that all day long, could you go to church and sing praises to God? What would you say? Would it lead you to speak in kind and gentle tones. What if you were suffering from several wounds yourself from the day's battle? Would you be able to kill babies and pregnant women? (Psalms 137:8,9; Hosea 13:16; Amos 1:13; Nahum 3:10) That was part of what they did. These psalms reflect what was actually going on at the time.

9. Have you ever thanked God for helping you to do something and later realized that that was not what God wanted you to do at all? Does God "wince" at some of the methods we use in "evangelism?" When He blesses us anyway, doesn't He look even more gracious?

We tend to be so self-centered that we have a hard time letting God lead us. We want to be like the Israelites and "do it our way!" This was why they felt that they needed to conquer the land by their own swords, and why they later wanted a king. God wishes that we would have a broader, more open understanding of His will and be more patient in following His plans for our lives. If a few more people would do this, the cause of God might be far ahead of where it is at this point in the earth's history.

God does not expect us to use methods that are inappropriate for reaching the people that we are trying to talk to. For this reason, we may have to do and say things that are far from God's ideal. Jesus was forced under the circumstances to tell the Jewish leaders, "You are of your Father, the Devil" (John 8:44). This was certainly not the way He wanted to talk to them!

10. Didn't David have a clear understanding of the place and purpose of sacrifices and offerings? (Psalms 40:6-8; 51:16-19) What God really wants is a willingness to listen—an open ear.

Many of the later prophets reflect this very significant understanding of what God really wants. (See Isaiah 1:10-21; Amos 5:21-24; Psalms 51:1-19; Micah 6:1-8; Hosea 6:4-6; Jeremiah 3:15,16; 7:21-26; 29:13; 31:31-34; Hebrews 9:16- 10:4; **Leviticus Teacher's Guide #3-5; Micah Teacher's Guide #9; Isaiah Teacher's Guide #3**) This is a clear indication that at least some of the people understood that God didn't just want more blood!

Why did the Jews have such a hard time understanding this? Does it seem to be in conflict with the message of Leviticus?

11. Why would the Bible say “Wake up Lord!” (Psalms 44:23; Compare 1 Kings 18:27–Elijah and the priests of Baal)? How does this fit with Psalms 121:3,4?

When the “gods” didn’t seem to do what their followers wanted, it was quite customary for the people to cry out to “awaken” their “gods”. Even our omnipotent and omniscient God sometimes doesn’t seem to respond to our prayers and requests as quickly as we would like. Under these circumstances, especially if you think your cause is completely just, it is very human to cry out for relief from whatever is troubling you. In such a situation it is not surprising to hear people praying for God to “wake up”. But we must understand this in the light of other passages that make it very clear that God knows everything (See Psalms 139) and never sleeps. (See Psalms 121)

12. Which of the Psalms would you say reveals, more than any other, that David was a man after God’s own heart? (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22) Psalm 23? Psalm 51? If you had just done what David did to Bathsheba and Uriah how would you pray? David went to God in confidence that he could be forgiven. Think of the picture David had of God. Had David gone too far? Do you think it was David’s attitude that made him a man after God’s own heart? How could David say, “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned?” (Psalms 51:4) After such an experience shouldn’t the most serious consideration be our attitude toward God? Often when we do wrong we think of what it will do to our reputation or what our fellow men will think of us. How often do we consider what effect our actions as Christians will have on God’s reputation?

See the handout on **David: A Man After God’s Own Heart?** In Psalms 51 David is recognizing one of the deepest spiritual truths. The real danger of sin is that it separates us from God.

13. The Holy Spirit through the Psalms helps us to see ourselves as we really are. If I hate Mr. Smith, I am not telling the truth if I kneel at night and say, “Dear Lord, how I love Mr. Smith. Do bless Mr. Smith.” Could we be honest with God when we pray, “Lord, I hate Brother Smith?” Could we then ask for healing and cleansing? (Psalms 51:10; Psalms 19:14; Psalms 139:23,24)

One of the most important works of the Holy Spirit may be to help us to speak the truth in prayer so healing can take place. From the Psalms we should learn that honesty in our conversations with God is the only reasonable approach. He already knows everything about us anyway, so why should we try to pretend otherwise? There is no reason for us to “inform” God about our situation or our problems! We should discuss them openly with Him alone. This is the first step in accomplishing change. Especially if there is some psychological aspect to the issues that we are facing, only real honesty is going to lead to healing. The book of Psalms should serve as a primer for our prayers and our songs so we can “tell it like it is”.

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