



LESSON 8: WAITING . . . IS THE HARDEST PART

PSALM 27

BACKGROUND

What is the longest you have waited for something you really wanted? As we saw in Lesson 6 and will see again in this lesson, waiting is a common theme in the Psalms. However, when the Psalms speak of waiting, they do not mean the tedious waiting we often associate with waiting in lines or waiting in "waiting rooms". Rather, the Psalms speak of *waiting for God* to act on our behalf or answer our prayer. This is never the mind-numbing waiting that serves no purpose. Waiting for God is not the spiritual equivalent of "twiddling our thumbs". Waiting for God is an active process where we wait with "tip-toe expectancy", hoping and expecting God to act at any moment. It is "faith encouraging faith".

David knew from experience what it meant to wait for the Lord. He was anointed king at age sixteen, but didn't become king until he was thirty. As we learned in our previous lessons, not only did he wait to become king, but he spent his time of waiting running for his life from King Saul. During this time, David learned confident dependency on God. He learned first-hand that God could be trusted! **Psalm 27** is a *Song of Trust*. It was written after David became king and even in the midst of new battles, he is confident that he will see the goodness of the Lord.

Waiting for God is never easy. Sometimes God seems silent and distant. But we put our hope and trust in who God is and what he has promised to do. Lamentation 3:24-26 sums up the benefits of waiting for God:

*I say to myself,
"The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."
The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him,
to the one who seeks him;
it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.*

DISCUSSION STARTER

- What do you want more than anything else this year?

PREPARATION

1. Before you read **Psalm 27**, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you into all truth (John 16:13). We have been using the prayer, *Holy Spirit, think through me until your ideas become my ideas*, or King David's prayer, *Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your law*.
2. Read **Psalm 27** slowly and thoughtfully in at least *two translations*. As you read and reread, mark any words or phrases that are meaningful to you and put a question mark by anything that you don't understand.
3. If God had written this Psalm *just for you*, what words and phrases would he have underlined? Why?
4. What main attitude permeates this Psalm?

QUESTIONS

All the key statements of **Psalm 27** fit into one of three groups: 1) *statements of trust* where David declares with confidence who God **is** or what he will **do**; 2) *statements of intent* where David declares what he will do in response to God's actions; and 3) *statements of request* where David shows his dependency on God by asking God for what his heart needs.

5. Fill in the blanks in the chart below using the *NIV* translation.

****The questions found in 27:1 are *rhetorical questions*. These questions don't require an answer because the answer is obvious. By asking the question, the speaker makes his point. These questions can be turned into positive statements. *Whom shall I fear?* is the same as *I will not fear*.**

CONFIDENT TRUST	INTENT (I WILL . . .)	REQUESTS
v. 1 This Lord is my _____	v. 1 I will not _____	v. 4 I ask and seek to _____ in the _____ _____ all the days of my life
v. 1 The Lord is my _____	v. 1 I will not be _____	v. 4 I seek to _____ on the _____ of the Lord
v. 1 The Lord is the _____ of my life	v. 3 My _____ will not _____	v. 4 I ask to _____ him in his _____
v. 2 My enemies will _____ and _____	v. 3 I will be _____ even though a war break out	v. 7 _____ my voice when I _____, O LORD
v. 5 In the day of _____, God will keep me _____ in his _____	v. 6 At his tabernacle I will _____ with _____	v. 7 Be _____ to me and _____ me
v. 5 He will _____ me in the shelter of his tabernacle	v. 6 I will _____ and make _____ to the Lord	v. 9 Do not _____ your _____ from me
v. 5 He will set me _____ on a _____	v. 8 Your _____, Lord, I will _____	v. 9 Do not _____ your servant _____ in anger
v. 6 My head will be exalted above my _____	v. 14 (I will) _____ for the Lord (2x)	v. 9 Do not _____ or _____ me
v. 9 You are my _____	v. 14 (I will) be _____ and take _____	v. 11 _____ me your _____, O Lord
v. 10 The Lord will _____ me even if my parents forsake me		v. 11 _____ me in a _____ path
v. 13 I will see the _____ of the Lord in the _____ of the _____		v. 12 Do not _____ to the _____ of my _____

6. Consider all the *statements trust*. Which one do you desire to say today with great confidence? Why?

7. Consider all the *statements of intent*. Which one do you need to hear yourself declare today? Why?

8. Consider the *requests* that David makes of God. Which one would you put at the top of your list today? Why?

9. What three personal descriptions does David have for God in **27:1**?

10. David uses the word picture of God as *light*. What do you think David meant when he said, "The Lord is my light"? Think about the characteristics of light and why light is so important and useful.

11. What do you learn about *God as light* in each of the following verses?

Psalm 43:3 -

Psalm 119:130 -

John 8:12 and 12:46 -

John 3:19,20 -

1 John 1:5 -

- ♥ In what area of your life do you need God to be light right now?
- ♥ Is God as light always welcome in your life? When might he not be?
- ♥ Light is often seen as a symbol of God's presence and influence and darkness is seen as a symbol of God's absence. Why is this a good metaphor? Which is stronger, darkness or light?

12. Read **27:1** in the *Amplified* version. What is the purpose of a *refuge* and *stronghold*?

What images come to mind when you think of a *refuge* and a *stronghold*.

13. Read **27:5** in all four of the Bible versions. What three things does God do for us to demonstrate that he is our *stronghold*?

How does God do these things? What would this look like in everyday life?

- ♥ What situation has driven you to God to find shelter and refuge? What words describe your sense of his presence at these times?
- ♥ Why do you think David could say his statements in **27:1-33** with such confidence? What would it take for you to say the same things with confidence?

14. What did David want more than anything else? **27:4**

- ♥ Why do you think this "one thing" was so important to David?
- ♥ If you could ask "one thing" of the Lord and have it granted, what would it be?

15. What is the connection between **27:4** and **27:8**?

16. Read **27:4,8** in the *Amplified* version. In your own words, write a definition of what it means to seek God's face.

17. What do you learn about seeking God in each of the following verses?

Psalm 14:2 -

Proverbs 8:17 -

Jeremiah 29:13 -

Isaiah 55:6-7 -

Hebrews 11:6 -

♥ Why does God require that we seek him? Is he playing "hide and seek"? What is his purpose?

18. How many things can you find in **27:4-13** that describe what happens when God is "**found**". (Look for things in David's statements of trust as well as his requests to God.)

♥ What will you do (or have you done) to seek God's face? What do you expect to happen?

♥ *Where* did David want to seek and meet God? **27:4** Where is the temple today? **1 Corinthians 6:19,20** Where, then, do we meet God today?

19. When does David expect God to answer his prayers? **27:13**

What does David say he will do in the meantime? **27:14**

Waiting on God means that we ask God for what we need and desire, but we leave the *how* and the *when* up to him (**how** he will answer and **when** he will answer). Waiting is believing that God really *is* good all the time (even while we wait) and that his timing is perfect. While we wait, God transforms us, getting us ready to receive his answer. Waiting strengthens our character by teaching us patience and dependency.

20. Read **27:14** in the *Amplified* version. What are some things we can do while we wait for God?

♥ What specific actions can you take to show your faith while you wait for God to answer your prayers?

♥ About what concern do you need to continue praying, confident that God will answer in his own time and in his own way?

RESPONSE:

Answer one of the following "Heart Questions" on the back of this page.

♥ What have you learned about God's character in this lesson? What difference will it make in your relationship to him?

♥ Jesus said that if we put seeking God and his kingdom first, he will take care of our other needs (Matthew 6:31-33). Is seeking God first for you? Second or third? What distracts you from putting "first things first"? How will you deal with the competition?

♥ In your love life with God, where does he stand: a) Closer than your closest human relationship? b) More like a distant relative you've only heard about? c) Somewhere in between? Why? What will it take for you to get better acquainted? More seeking? More waiting? Both? Explain.