



# GOD REWARDS

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*I pray to you, O Lord, my rock. Do not turn a deaf ear to me. For if you are silent, I might as well give up and die. Listen to my prayer for mercy as I cry out to you for help, as I lift my hands toward your holy sanctuary. Do not drag me away with the wicked—with those who do evil—those who speak friendly words to their neighbours while planning evil in their hearts. Give them the punishment they so richly deserve! Measure it out in proportion to their wickedness. Pay them back for all their evil deeds! Give them a taste of what they have done to others. They care nothing for what the Lord has done or for what his hands have made. So he will tear them down, and they will never be rebuilt! Praise the Lord! For he has heard my cry for mercy. The Lord is my strength and shield. I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving. The Lord gives his people strength. He is a safe fortress for his anointed king. Save your people! Bless Israel, your special possession. Lead them like a shepherd, and carry them in your arms forever. (Psalm 28:1-9 NLT)*

## Context of the Psalms

The Book of Psalms is one of the most loved and best-known parts of the Bible. Individual psalms are popular with people who are not regular Bible readers and also with those who wish to praise God, whom they know and love. They have a universal appeal, translating easily into today's culture, despite being from so long ago. Most of Psalms can be used directly and there is a timeless quality that make them easy to apply to the Christian life.

The Psalms have been highly valued throughout the history of the church. Martin Luther said 'In the Psalm we look into the heart of every saint'.

This has resulted in the Psalms being known as the most human part of the Old Testament. The Psalms cover every human emotion. They include what we might term the 'negative' emotions of anger, frustration, jealousy, despair, fear and envy. The Psalmist expresses exactly how he thinks and feels, including cursing men and complaining about God.

They also reflect the more 'positive' emotions of joy, excitement, hope and peace. So it is clear to see that many of the psalms were inspired by personal experiences, which make them to relatable to us.

## What are verses 3–5 about?

In verses 3–5, David is concerned and distressed. Despite all that God has shown, in nature and by miracles and in word, there are some who still choose to reject Him, commit evil deeds and refuse to see the truth. David prays that the Lord will repay them for their evil; he knows those who turn away from God will suffer eternal loss.

Even in our distress, God reminds us of who he is:

- Isaiah 40:12-19 – God has no equal
- Isaiah 40:22-26 – God illustrates His power
- Isaiah 40:27-29 – God reveals His mercy
- Isaiah 40:31 – God renews our strength

Psalms 28 is similar to a category of psalms called the imprecatory psalms. In these psalms, the psalmist ask God to visit their enemies with judgement. This is not always pleasant. There is no forgiveness for the enemy and certainly no recognition that what is being said might be too extreme (Ps. 137). It is understandable that some people should ask whether Christians use these psalms at all.

How can Psalm 28 can help us to deal with distress?

- **First:** We must remember that the Jews only had the OT, therefore they didn't have Jesus as their example or any of the books about Him to relate to.
- **Second:** The Psalms are good models of honesty in prayer. If we feel a certain way, then we should take it to God in prayer.
- **Third:** The enemies of Israel were also God's enemies and our enemies are God's enemies. For Christians today, our enemies are not flesh and blood, but against the principalities and powers of the darkness of this world (Ephesians 6:12).
- **Fourth:** In every case the psalmists refuse to take revenge themselves, but leave it to God. (Rom. 12:19)
- **Fifth:** We can also find imprecatory prayers in the New Testament, so if we do it in the right spirit, we have no problem using these psalms as a guide when praying to God (Revelation 6:10).

**5 P's to take away from Psalm 28****1. PATIENCE**

We have to learn to wait on the Lord. It's in his timing not our own. Sometimes we can put ourselves in more trouble and make situations worse because we simply can't wait.

*But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)*

**2. PERSEVERANCE**

*Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honoured by every nation. I will be honoured throughout the world. (Psalm 46:10)*

*I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:12-13)*

**3. PASSION**

*He said, "I came naked from my mother's womb, and I will be naked when I leave. The LORD gave me what I had, and the LORD has taken it away. Praise the name of the LORD!" (Job 1:21)*

*Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love?—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)*

**4. PERSPECTIVE**

*"The Lord says to my lord, 'sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet'". (The most quoted verse in the New Testament) (Psalm 110:1)*

**5. PROCLAIM**

*He will repay his enemies for their evil deeds. His fury will fall on his foes. He will pay them back even to the ends of the earth. (Isaiah 59:18)*

If God is for us, who can ever be against us? (Rom. 8:31)

**Conclusion**

It is clear from the New Testament's use of the Psalms that it is legitimate and desirable for Christians to use them and to model our prayer life on. While there is great value in studying the Psalms, we derive the greatest benefit from them as we use them in our lives. We discover their true power when we read them, sing them and apply them to our lives. The Psalms are a great tool to lead us into a passionate praise that glorifies God.