

**Introduction:** Since the Psalms are “the anatomy of the soul,” it is important for us to study them on a regular basis. How fitting it is to have a focused concentration on them as we begin the New Year. We turn first to Psalm 27, where we learn that God speaks to us through His Word in order for us to enter into the most intense heart communion with Him. May we treasure our access to His throne of grace.

**Monday: Psalm 27:1-5 and Matthew 6:19-21.** It is a rule of thumb that those who covet this world's possessions have the most to lose when “moth, rust and thieves” (Mt. 6:19) destroy what they have so diligently amassed. How much better to have the simple focus of Psalm 27:4: *One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life...* . Do you see the security of such a desire? Yes, David has enemies. He is in danger from war (verse 3); from broken relationships (verse 10) and under attack from slander (verse 12). But he knows that his one priceless possession, communion with God, can never be taken away. For in the time of trouble the LORD *will* “Hide him in His pavilion and in the secret place of His tabernacle.” What safety in God's secret hiding place!

Meditate and Pray: Sing about God's overshadowing protection with these words taken from Psalm 27 in the Psalter hymnal (Sung to the tune for # 18 in our Red Hymnal):

*Jehovah is my Light,  
And my Salvation near;  
Who shall my soul affright,  
Or cause my heart to fear?  
While God my strength, my life sustains,  
Secure from fear my soul remains.*

*When evildoers came  
To make my life their prey,  
They stumbled in their shame  
And fell in sore dismay;  
Though hosts make war on every side,  
Still fearless I in God confide.*

*My one request has been,  
And still this prayer I raise,  
That I may dwell within  
God's house through all my days,  
Jehovah's beauty to admire,  
And in His temple to inquire.*

*When troubles round me swell,  
When fears and dangers throng,  
Securely I will dwell  
In His pavilion strong;  
Within the covert of His tent  
He hides me till the storm is spent*

**Tuesday: Psalm 27:6-9 and 2 Corinthians 4:6.** The chief blessing of the Christian life is the outshining of the favor of God, often described as “God's face shining upon us.” David covets this “light” - calling it his salvation in Ps. 27:1. He seeks it in the face of God in Ps. 27:8 and pleads that God would never withdraw it in Ps. 27:9. In 2 Cor. 4:6, Paul sees this light as shining in the “face” of Jesus in the Gospel. And where does that light penetrate? “Well,” Paul says, “God has shone that light in our hearts.” What a sanctuary of light and love our hearts become through the Gospel!

Meditate and Pray: *Lord, thank you that you address all of our innermost needs through your light in our hearts. Thank you that one of the highest blessings of our lives is to know that you have promised in Ezekiel 36:26 that you will give us “a new heart,, out of which shines the light of God. O heart-changing God, renew our hearts' flame. Amen.*

**Wednesday: Psalm 27:1-6 and Mark 9:1-8.** Peter made the mistake of thinking that he could control the glory of Jesus. When he suggested that the transfigured Jesus should withdraw His light into a tent along with Moses and Elijah, he was giving these Old Testament heroes tabernacles of honor on a par with His Savior. Like many in our day, he was tempted to see in Christ “just another prophet.” Peter's desire to “box up” the glory of Jesus is the resort of all human religion facing the reality of His fiery presence: “Put God in a tent at a safe distance; keep God at bay” – This is the philosophy which Peter expresses, “not knowing (for fear) what to say,” Mk. 9:6. But for Jesus to agree to Peter's request would have been to slide back into the days when God was kept at a distance on Mt. Sinai and when God's servants like Moses or Jesus were so disrespected by sinful Israel. Israel of old wanted nothing to do with God in any “up close” way – see Exodus 34:29-33. But Jesus would not withdraw into a tent! He alone is God's Son. Let us listen to and adore Him alone!

Meditate and Pray: Thank God for His gracious dealing with us, sending His Son “veiled in human flesh,” so that we do not perish from direct contact with the fiery light of God's holiness. We can say with David in Ps. 27:5 that God will “hide us in the secret place of His tabernacle,” because that “tabernacle” has now become the human, resurrected body of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Hallelujah!

**Thursday: Psalm 27:7-14.** How often our hearts accuse us, reminding us of our failures, sins and disqualification for Divine blessing. David must have felt the same, for in Psalm 27:9 he pleads with God not to reject him. The language of the verse is quite urgent and could read: “Put not away in wrath thy servant ... forsake me not, and leave me not, oh God of my salvation!” Indeed, David not only utters these agonizing words once, but evidently must live with the fear and perplexity which they express, for he ends the Psalm pleading with his own soul to “wait for the Lord” in verse 14! Not an easy life! How hard it was for David to wait for God's help to rescue him from his foes. (verse 12).

Meditate and Pray: Thank God that, when our hearts fail us, He is stronger than our hearts. After all, it is God He who seeks, finds and calls us, as David says Psalm 27:8: “You have said, “Seek my face.” All our hearts need do is “echo” back to Him: “Your face, LORD, do I seek.”

**Friday/Saturday/Sunday: read Psalm 27:7-14 and Ephesians 5:8-14.** The self-accusatory words of David in Psalm 27:9 are unavoidable in the healthy, light-filled Christian life. Whenever the LORD reveals Himself as our “light and salvation”(Psalm 27:1); whenever we are given by faith the privilege of seeing His holy glory shining upon us in His temple (Psalm 27:4); whenever He causes His face to shine upon us, (Psalm 27:8) – the result of such close encounters with the exposing Light of God is a sense of our dark sinfulness.

This exposing function of Divine Light is at the heart of Paul's definition in Ephesians 5:13-14, where he describes the Light of God as that which “makes things visible,” concluding in verse 13 that “Everything exposed by God's Light becomes visible.” It follows, therefore, that since we are called by Jesus to be “the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14-16), our stance towards deeds of darkness must be that of having nothing to do with them - except in so far as we can expose them to the Light of God, as Ephesians 5:11 tells us to do.

Meditate and Pray: Do we now understand more clearly why the world reacts so angrily to the Light of Gospel? Where there is no Holy Spirit to help someone accept the rebuke which the Light of God levels against their sin, the only response can be one of anger or denial when the Light of God convicts. No wonder, just before speaking of our being “the light of the world,” Jesus speaks about the unavoidable persecution which will fall on the church when it shines for Jesus (Matthew 5:11-12). The world truly hates the light and shows that it lacks the grace of repentance by angrily rejecting the Light which David treasures as His salvation in Psalm 27! In contrast to this angry world, sing about the blessing of God’s light in your life with hymn # 411:

*Shine Thou upon us, Lord, true Light of men, today,  
And through the written Word Thy very self display,  
That so from hearts which burn with gazing on Thy face  
Thy little ones may learn the wonders of Thy grace.*

*Breathe Thou upon us, Lord, Thy Spirit’s living flame,  
That so with one accord our lips may tell Thy Name.  
Give Thou the hearing ear, fix Thou the wandering thought,  
That those we teach may hear the great things Thou hast wrought.*

*Speak Thou for us, O Lord, in all we say of Thee;  
According to Thy Word let all our teaching be,  
That so Thy lambs may know their own true Shepherd’s voice,  
Where’er He leads them go, and in His love rejoice.*

*Live Thou within us, Lord, Thy mind and will be ours;  
Be Thou beloved, adored, and served with all our powers,  
That so our lives may teach Thy children what Thou art,  
And plead, by more than speech, for Thee with every heart.*