



## The Psalms of Lament

### PART 3: Psalm 27

#### When Waiting Is Hard Work

#### Part 3 – Psalm 27

- Shuffle the Deck
- Deal the Cards
- What Are You Holding?
- Group Option
- Play Your Hand



#### Part 3 – Psalm 27 Shuffle the Deck



1) Answer the following questions for this photograph:

Who? What? When? Where? Why?

2) Find a picture of “a place of **adventure**”. List the reasons you chose it and the emotions it inspires in you. (Do the same for “a place of **tranquility**”, “a place of **abundance**”, “a place of **instability**”)



## Deal the Cards

1. Pray for wisdom and insight. Then read [Psalm 27](#) in the [NET Bible](#) version:

*By David*

*27:1 The Lord delivers and vindicates me!*

*I fear no one!*

*The Lord protects my life!*

*I am afraid of no one!\_*

*27:2 When evil men attack me to devour my flesh,\_*

*when my adversaries and enemies attack me,\_*

*they stumble and fall.*

*27:3 Even when an army is deployed against me,*

*I do not fear.*

*Even when war is imminent,\_*

*I remain confident.*

*27:4 I have asked the Lord for one thing—*

*this is what I desire!*

*I want to live in the Lord's house all the days of my life,*

*so I can gaze at the splendor of the Lord*

*and contemplate in his temple.*

*27:5 He will surely give me shelter in the day of danger;\_*

*he will hide me in his home;*

*he will place me on an inaccessible rocky summit.\_*

*27:6 Now I will triumph*

*over my enemies who surround me!\_*

*I will offer sacrifices in his dwelling place and shout for joy!*

*I will sing praises to the Lord!*

*27:7 Hear me, O Lord, when I cry out!*

*Have mercy on me and answer me!*

*27:8 My heart tells me to pray to you,*



*and I do pray to you, O Lord.*

*27:9 Do not reject me!*

*Do not push your servant away in anger!*

*You are my deliverer!*

*Do not forsake or abandon me,*

*O God who vindicates me!*

*27:10 Even if my father and mother abandoned me,\_*

*the Lord would take me in.*

*27:11 Teach me how you want me to live;\_*

*lead me along a level path\_ because of those who wait to ambush me!\_*

*27:12 Do not turn me over to my enemies,*

*for false witnesses who want to destroy me testify against me.\_*

*27:13 Where would I be if I did not believe I would*

*experience*

*the Lord's favor in the land of the living?\_*

*27:14 Rely on the Lord!*

*Be strong and confident!\_*

*Rely on the Lord!*

2. A large group of Americans was asked, "What do you most fear?" Here are some of their answers:

Biological warfare

Getting on a plane

Chemical warfare

A truck bomb

Living in the US if you're from the Middle East

Starting WW III

Working in the Sears Tower or the Space Needle

Being separated from my family in the event of terrorist attack

Economic hardship



The number two fear is dying. The number one fear is public speaking. (You've probably heard the old joke that if they had a choice between being the dead guy and the guy giving the eulogy, most Americans would choose to be the dead guy.)

List some of your greatest fears:

3. According to Psalm 27, what frightened the king?
4. Find Psalm 27 in your own Bible. It probably begins with something along these lines: "The LORD is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life..." Note the three metaphors: the Lord is my *light*, *salvation*, and *strength*.

**Light.** "Light" is often used as a way of saying "deliverance." In [Job 33:28](#), we read "He will **deliver** his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the **light**." It might also mean guidance, as we see in [Psalm 43:3](#) Send forth your **light** and your truth, let them **guide** me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell.

**Salvation.** As Christians we read the word "salvation" and may think of the New Testament meaning of eternally being secured from the penalty of sin—hell. But the Hebrew mind probably would have thought more along the lines of military deliverance.



**Strength of my life.** This term is a bit ambiguous. It may mean either "refuge" or "stronghold," depending on which root is intended. Either way, the ramifications are similar. It carries the idea of a place of safety in battle.

Put the three together and you have a commander-in-chief finding guidance, deliverance, and refuge in a war.

[Ephesians 6](#) talks about spiritual warfare and the need for every Christian to stand against the wiles of the devil. What battles are you facing? Is the Lord your light, salvation, and strength?

5. Read again...

*27:4 I have asked the Lord for one thing—  
this is what I desire!*

*I want to live in the Lord's house all the days of my life,  
so I can gaze at the splendor of the Lord  
and contemplate in his temple.*

The idea in verse 4 is probably not that the psalmist wants to live literally inside the temple (probably actually tabernacle) gates. Rather, he wants to stay perpetually with the one who resides there—he wants to stay in God's presence. Contrast this with the battles envisioned in the previous verse. Rather than facing military threats all the time, the psalmist would prefer to focus on being with God.



The word translated here “contemplate” could also mean “inquire.” Before a battle, the king might go to the temple and seek a word from God about the military plans. Consider these examples:

*1 Samuel 23:2 [Samuel] inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?"*

*The LORD answered him, "Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah."*

*1 Samuel 23:4 Once again David inquired of the LORD, and the LORD answered him, "Go down to Keilah, for I am going to give the Philistines into your hand."*

*1 Sam. 28:3-6 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in his own town of Ramah. Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritists from the land. The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all the Israelites and set up camp at Gilboa. When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets.*

*1 Samuel 30:8 and David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?"*

*"Pursue them," He answered. "You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue."*

Take a few moments to ask God to help you in the battle you're facing. Ask Him to show you strategies and weapons that will arm you to win against the enemy.



6. Read **Psalm 27:5**. Here's one translation:

*For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock.*

*In the shelter of His tabernacle:* Another way of saying this is that He will hide me in his Succoth tent, or His sacred tent. The Feast of Succoth is the Jewish celebration of Tabernacles. Note how Joab ran to the tent of the Lord for safety:

*1 Kings 2:28 - 28 When the news reached Joab, who had conspired with Adonijah though not with Absalom, he fled to the tent of the LORD and took hold of the horns of the altar.*

Apparently the tent of the altar was a place of refuge. Have you ever played “tag”? Remember running “home” and announcing “SAFE!”? Spend a few moments imagining that, although surrounded by enemies, you are “home free” in His tent.

*High upon a rock:* The psalmist pictures himself high upon a rocky summit. Imagine the Jews camping out at Masada (consider renting the “Masada” mini-series from your local library). The psalmist *knows* God will lift him to an inaccessible place, a safe place where his enemies can't reach him.

## What Are You Holding?

7. Read **Psalm 27:12**. Some translations talk about enemies “breathing out cruelty” while others translate it as “testifying.” The roots are similar, but it probably has the idea of “witness,” so the enemies are testifying cruelty or violence against him. What are your enemies saying about you? Are they the accusing



voices in your head from past sins that Jesus has covered? Are they modern-day people who are against you? Is it laundry? Is it the unjust boss? What do they say? The name “Satan” is actually not a proper name but, rather, simply means “the accuser.”

8. Lists the psalmist’s requests in verses six through twelve. What are his expressions of confidence? Why do you think they’re mixed together?
9. Read v. 13 in another translation. The psalmist believes he will see God’s goodness in the land of the living. In other words, he has more than an eternal hope. He has a temporal hope. He believes he is going to be spared from his enemies’ swords and he is going to see God’s goodness while he’s still alive. This keeps him from despair. What hope keeps you from despair?



10. Read v. 14. Most translations use “wait” rather than “rely” here. Sometimes waiting is the hardest work of all. As you are battling, for what have you had to wait? For test results? For a rebellious child to change? For your husband to notice your needs? For your parents to affirm you? What is the difference between merely waiting and waiting *on the Lord*? Spend some time waiting in His presence. Ask Him to help you wait well.

11. Back in verse one, the psalmist asked a question. If God is his light, salvation, and strength, who’s left to fear? Who’s stronger than God? Of what are you afraid? Proverbs teaches us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Proverbs ends with the exhortation that a woman who fears the Lord will be praised. Remember the words of Jesus: “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). If that One who can and has saved you from hell is on your side, whom shall you fear?



### Group Option

As a group, draft a common psalm of praise. Choose something for which you are all thankful and draft the praise as follows:

1. Introduction to the prayer
2. Thing for which you're grateful
3. Words of gratitude for that thing
4. Closing words

### Play Your Hand

Decorate a playing card or a playing-card-sized piece of paper or cardboard that expresses one of the following:

- An area of your life where you experience fear.
- What God's "light" looks like. His salvation. His strength.
- The enemies that are "breathing out cruelty" against you.
- What "waiting" feels like.
- What does *fearlessness* look like in the face of your enemies? ("Whom shall I fear?")