

How to Endure a Grudge

Psalm 7 (KJV)

1 O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me: **2** Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver. **3** O Lord my God, If I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; **4** If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:) **5** Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah. **6** Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded. **7** So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore return thou on high. **8** The Lord shall judge the people: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me. **9** Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins. **10** My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart. **11** God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. **12** If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. **13** He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors. **14** Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. **15** He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. **16** His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate. **17** I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high.

On Dealing with Grudges

Jimmy Carter ran for president of the United States against Ronald Reagan in 1980. According to David Wallis in the New York Times Magazine, prior to a televised debate between the two candidates, columnist George Will came upon Carter's debate notes and sneaked them to the Reagan camp. Many pundits felt that Reagan won that debate, and he went on to win the election. Carter did not forget what George Will had done to him.

In a 1997 interview with Wallis, Carter said:

I was teaching forgiveness one day in Sunday school, and I tried to go through my memory about people for whom I had a resentment. George Will was one of those people, so I wrote him a note. I asked myself, what do we have in common, and I had known he had written a book about baseball which I had refused to read. I went to a bookstore and found a remaindered copy. Paid a dollar for it. So, I wrote him a note and told him the facts: that I had a feeling of resentment toward him, that I had found his book delightful and I hoped that we would be permanently reconciled. He wrote me back a humorous note. He said his only regret was that I didn't pay full price for the book.

Anyone can hold a grudge. It takes character to initiate reconciliation.

All of us have had grudges to deal with in our walk with the Lord. Some of those grudges we have held against other people. Some of those grudges were against us and those grudges fed the fires of slanderous and malicious tongues.

This psalm speaks to that very matter. The Psalms are full of life, the ups-and-downs and ins-and-outs of life. When we read the Psalms, we can see ourselves from the scope of the mountain top as well as the ventures that take us into the valleys of life.

Psalm 7 Introduction and Background

If we were to begin in Psalm 3 and read all the way through Psalm 7, which we must understand that Psalm 3 to Psalm 41 were penned by David, there are some things we would discover. There is a rising intensity in what David senses in his spirit. This is also the longest one of those that have been written to this point.

Psalm 3—A prayer for deliverance from military or physical danger.

Psalm 4—An evening psalm where David opens his heart to the distress he is feeling.

Psalm 5—A psalm of great sighs and cries for the help of the Lord.

Psalm 6—A psalm that gives us some insight into the deep personal anguish that David feels.

Now we come to Psalm 7 and David is quite overwhelmed by the injustice that has come to his life from his enemies. There are some clues that we discover as we read the superscription of this psalm.

It is a shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the Lord, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite.

A shiggaion means a “loud cry.” That is why we can see the escalation of intensity in David’s voice. Furthermore, this psalm is the only one in the entire Bible that has this description about it. It is a cry for divine justice to prevail over the enemies. But what was it that motivated this cry? It was that a grudge had been lodged against David that wouldn’t give him rest.

We read that David wrote this psalm “concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite.”

There are some things we know about Cush that gives us some clues as to why this attack was so bitter.

He was from the tribe of Benjamin, which is where Saul came from. It could have been written at a time when David was hunted by Saul’s men (1 Sam. 22:8; 24:9; 26:19). Cush could have been one of those men who was opposing David with very bitter words.

It could have also taken place after the death of Saul and it would have been natural for the tribe of Benjamin to have opposed David’s full control of the nation which took some eight years after Saul’s death.

The Benjamites seemed to be a thorn in David’s side. Years later, when David was forced to flee from Jerusalem, because of Absalom, Shimei, a Benjamite, cursed him as he fled the city. He mocked David as being a “man of war” and a “man of blood spill” and a “scoundrel.”

Later, David had returned to Jerusalem, another Benjamite, Sheba, led a revolt against him (2 Sam. 20:1-2). Neither Shimei nor Sheba can be attached to Cush except to say that this grudge that the tribe of Benjamin displayed against David seemed to be rooted deeply.

The smoldering hostility seemed to agitate them against David and he had to endure it for a lifetime. It was a grudge that they could not let go of.

Because I want you to lock on to what this psalm is about, I am going to use an outline so that you can incorporate it into your mind. It is again from Steven Lawson's fine preaching commentary on the Psalms... Save Me... Search Me... Support Me... Shield Me...

Save Me!

Psalm 7:1-2 (KJV)

1 O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me: **2** Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.

In all the distress of life, David called out to the Lord.

I put my trust in You! I take my refuge in You! Only You can save me!

When you are enduring the tongues of those who have no evidence of wrong doing, trust in the Lord. One of the things that you will come to understand is that the devil hates you and he will stir his minions against you. He needs physical bodies to do it and so he will use flesh and blood, but your fight is not with flesh and blood. It is with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places.

David's cry to the Lord is that He would save him from the attack of the lion who is working to tear him to pieces. That is a provoking analogy that David uses for one whose slanderous words are being lodged against him.

There are a couple of things that made this so difficult for David to have to bear out:

Slander is a wearying matter to have to stand up to. These outright lies against him attacked his integrity. False accusations are difficult to deal with. Most people aren't in the position of a king, but it still is very difficult to deal with these sorts of attacks.

What do you do when you find yourself in this place? Do you respond like they have? To do this brings you down to the accuser's level. Do you protest loudly and openly? That only tends to add fuel to the fire. Do you attempt to clear the air and rehabilitate your reputation? If you are innocent there isn't any way to repent and bring about restoration.

What shall we do when we find ourselves in this place? There is only one way to respond to it and that is just as David did. He took the accusations to the Lord in a place of prayer and made his appeal to God there for justice.

"Whereas [a false accusation] may deceive and convince our fellow human beings, it cannot deceive God." – P. C. Craigie

There are answers that are laid out for us in this psalm as to how we are to conduct ourselves while being attacked by false tongues who bear a grudge against us. We do ourselves well to take these matters to heart as we walk with God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (KJV)

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: **17** That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The power of Psalm 7 in a believer's life is what Paul noted that Scripture is given for: instruction in righteousness. The reason: that the man of God may be perfect and thoroughly equipped with good works.

This is a matter of holiness and the walk of holiness is not an easy way to walk, but it is the right way to walk.

Search Me!

Psalm 7:3-5 (KJV)

3 O Lord my God, If I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; **4** If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:) **5** Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it;

yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust.
Selah.

David's first cry is "save me." His second cry is "search me."

In Psalm 7:4, we can see the charge that David is denying. David is saying that he is not guilty of repaying evil to those who are at peace with him. Furthermore, he is denying that charge in a place of prayer and not in the courts of man's opinions.

There are hints of something that took place in Psalm 6 that we again can see in Psalm 7. Remember in Psalm 6 where the thought was given that we are to reason with the Lord in our prayer.

In Psalm 6:5, he reasoned with the Lord and said, "Lord, don't you know that once I am in the grave I can no longer praise You?" Therefore, he pleads with the Lord to restore back to him physical and spiritual strength.

He launches into a presentation of his cause again. There is one word that tips my hand to understanding this, "if."

If I have done this...

If there be iniquity in my hands...

If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me...

If I am guilty of these things, Lord, then You can let the enemy pursue me! But the matter that David is getting at is for the Lord to search out his heart. That is the mark of a man of God! He longs for the Lord to search the deep parts of his soul.

Search me...

Try me...

Know my heart and my thoughts...

Know my integrity...

Refine me...

Examine me...

We need to again see this matter as God does; just because you can take vengeance, doesn't mean that you should. Leave it in the hands of the Lord! He can work it out like no one else can.

David concludes that part of the prayer with a further emphasis on his innocence (v. 5). He says, "Lord if I am guilty of this then let my enemies put me in the dust... Let them put me in the grave." David is so sure of his innocence; he is willing to put his life on the line. He is confident in knowing that his enemies cannot be victorious over him.

Support Me!

Psalm 7:6-9 (KJV)

6 Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded. **7** So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore return thou on high. **8** The Lord shall judge the people: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me. **9** Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.

We come to the third cry of David. The first, "save me" (v. 1-2), the second, "search me" (v. 3-5), and the third, "support me" (v. 6-9).

I know this is not an English lesson, but let the power of the Word work for you here. Look at the verbs in this four-verse segment:

Arise. .

Lift up...

Awake...

Return... (Actually could be "rule")

Judge...

Let... (Actually could be "allow")

Establish...

We can never win our battles with carnal accusers in the courts that they build. David is quite aware of this and so he makes his appeal to the Lord in Psalm 7:7,

the congregation will compass thee about. He pleads with the Lord to let his congregation of holy men and women gather up around so that the matter will be cleared in the courts of the Lord.

Take note from this... We don't need to believe every little negative and demeaning thing about our brothers and sisters in the Lord when the slander finally gets to our neck of the woods. If there is truth to it, then God will use His court and His ministers to deal with it.

You have to remember that the spiritual warfare of our day has in it men like Cush, Shimei, and Sheba, who are all Benjamites. They have words that are not true, but they want to lodge them so that they can annihilate God's faithful servants! Be careful before you buy into the idea of what some wandering, malicious tongue brings in your direction.

I have seen the lives of men destroyed and their walk with God sorely hurt because of the words of these kinds of people. I must commit myself to healing words, helpful words, and encouraging words to offset the activity of the enemy.

It is also helpful to point out a couple of matters here in Psalm 7:8. David says "my righteousness" and "my integrity." David is pleading with the Lord for a decision that will prove that he has been acting in righteousness and integrity despite the slander and the grudges that are being levelled against him.

We are filled with the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Ghost, but that transformation of the Spirit must be walked out in life. It is accomplished when we do so with righteousness and integrity.

Slander all you want, but I will still pray.

Slander all you want, but I will still be holy in my life.

Slander all you want, but I will maintain my integrity with the Lord.

Slander all you want, but I will do the right and godly thing.

Slander all you want, but I will still show you who has complete control of my life.

Live out your life in righteousness and integrity!

Shield Me!

Psalm 7:10-17 (KJV)

10 My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart. **11** God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. **12** If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. **13** He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors. **14** Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. **15** He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. **16** His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate. **17** I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high.

Now we come to the last cry of David... Save me (v. 1-2)... Search me (v. 3-5)... Support me (v. 6-9)... Shield me (v. 10-17).

David now shifts the Lord into battle gear. He describes the Lord as a victorious warrior.

He will save the upright in heart! The Lord is not disconnected from the righteous. In fact, the Lord is angry with the wicked every day... I know that goes against the popular churchianity that is prominent in America today. But God is not happy about the way the world treats His Bride.

David can see the Lord “whetting” or sharpening His sword. He can see Him with a bow that has the flaming arrows that are ordained for the enemies of the chosen saints of God. God will not falter or fail in taking on those who are against the holy church of God.

But David is not finished with his picture. He now makes the enemies of God pregnant with evil.

The enemies of David have conceived evil and trouble and in their pursuit, they are digging traps for the righteous, but they will end up falling into the hole they have made. His own devices that he planned for them will be his own down falling.

Cush, Shimei, and Sheba will all fall into the pit they intended to hurt David with! The bigger picture for us to understand is that there is coming a day that the devil will be dealt with. He is the slanderer, the accuser of the brethren.

Revelation 12:10 (KJV) And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

That is another joyous occasion that we can look forward to. It is one of the final parts of our salvation, to be relieved from the slandering and poisonous tongue of the enemy.

An Act of Faith

The knowledge of that did something to David that he gives in the last verse of Psalm 7:

Psalm 7:17 (KJV) I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high.

We are not clear if David had received the justice that he desired at this point in this psalm. But there is one thing that is clear, he was describing God in an act of faith. He had come to the Lord with his problem and in doing so, by prayer, the whole scene had changed in his mind.

There are those who conclude that prayer does not work. My response to that is that the only reason that prayer might not work in their lives is because they are prayerless. If you have any mileage whatsoever in prayer, there has been at least one prayer meeting where you got down on your knees and began to pray where you saw things turning.

Your initial prayer might have been that of a focus on the slanderers and the grudge bearers, but as you began to let your faith build, your focus turns to God.

Prayer shows us places where the train of the Lord will fill the Temple.
Prayer shows us places where the glory of the Lord filled the house.
Prayer leads us to places where manna can fall in a dry wilderness.
Prayer moves us into places where water can pour out of rocks.

Don't ever underestimate the power of your prayer!

1 John 5:14-15 (KJV)

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: **15** And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.