

Preaching the Psalms Series

(19)

Psalm 5

How to Deal with Lies and Slander,

Psalm 5:1-12

Psalm 5:1-12 (NASB)

¹“Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my groaning.

²Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, For to You I pray.

³In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order *my prayer* to You and *eagerly* watch.

⁴For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You.

⁵The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity.

⁶You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.

⁷But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You.

⁸O LORD, lead me in Your righteousness because of my foes; Make Your way straight before me.

⁹There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.

¹⁰**Hold them guilty, O God; By their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, For they are rebellious against You.**

¹¹But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You.

¹²For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield.”

(Psalm 5:1-12) Introduction: since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Japan) on August 6 and 9, 1945, the world has lived in fear of nuclear destruction. The most dangerous weapon known to humanity, however, is far simpler and more common than sophisticated nuclear warheads. It has damaged and destroyed far more people than all the collective weapons of war in world history.

It is extremely deadly and each of us possesses it:

James 3:5-8 (NASB)

⁵“So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and *yet* it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!

⁶And the tongue is a fire, the *very* world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of *our* life, and is set on fire by hell.

⁷ For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race.

⁸ But no one can tame the tongue; *it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.*

Sinful and self-centered people use words to ruthlessly destroy others. When we are stabbed by slander and lies, we usually feel helpless to defend ourselves. It is just impossible to know everybody who has heard an untrue rumor or story about us. It is even more impossible to control whether they believe it. Sinners enjoy a juicy morsel of gossip and are prone to believe the worst without caring to verify its truth. What can we do when others slander and lie about us?

The historical setting of [Psalm 5](#) is not provided in Scripture. The context of its writing is clear, however, from [verses six](#) and [nine](#): David's enemies were trying to overthrow him by slandering him.

Psalm 5:6 (NASB)

⁶ “You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.”

Psalm 5:9 (NASB)

⁹ “There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.”

Many good commentators think it is to be included with [Psalms 3](#) and [4](#) and connected to Absalom's rebellion. Some solid scholars agree with liberal critics who argue that David could not be the author, and that the biblical notation is incorrect. They date its writing after the completion of Solomon's temple, based on [verse seven](#).

Psalm 5:7 (NASB)

⁷ “But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You.”

The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* explains that this is a weak argument: “the Hebrew word used here for “temple” (*hêkāl*) is also used of the tabernacle (cf. [1 Sam. 1:9](#); [3:3](#)).

1 Samuel 1:9 (NASB)

⁹ “Then Hannah rose after eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD.”

1 Samuel 3:3 (NASB)

³ “And the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD where the ark of God *was*.”

Furthermore the word ‘house’ in [Psalm 5:7](#) can refer to the tabernacle (cf. ‘house of the Lord’ in [23:6](#); [Joshua 6:24](#); [1 Sam. 1:24](#)) as well as the temple.”

Psalm 23:6 (NASB)

⁶ “Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

Joshua 6:24 (NASB)

²⁴“They burned the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only the silver and gold, and articles of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.”

1 Samuel 1:24 (NASB)

²⁴“Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with a three-year-old bull and one ephah of flour and a jug of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh, although the child was young.”

Psalm 5 is a song of lament to the Lord, and it is also the first *imprecatory* psalm (see Keys to Understanding Psalms). David cries out to God for the destruction of his enemies. Notice this contrast: in **Psalm 4** David pleads *with* his enemies; in **Psalm 5** he pleads *against* his enemies.

To the chief musician or director of music indicates it is intended for use in the congregation. *Nehiloth* means that it is written for accompaniment by flutes.

In this prayer of David, the Holy Spirit, the great Inspirer of Scripture, shows us what to do when we are lied about and slandered. It stands as a timeless pattern for us to follow as long as we live in a wicked, sin-cursed world. **This is, *How to Deal with Lies and Slander*, [Psalm 5:1-12](#)**

1. Turn to the Lord for help (vv. 1-3).
2. Confess God’s holiness: Five facts (vv. 4-6).
3. Make a renewed commitment to be faithful in prayer and worship (v. 7).
4. Pray for three major things (vv. 8-12).

1. ([Psalm 5:1-3](#)) Turn to the Lord for help.

Psalm 5:1-3 (NASB)

¹“Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my groaning.

²Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, For to You I pray.

³In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch.”

Instead of rushing to defend himself throughout the kingdom or attacking enemies who were his fellow countrymen, David called upon the Lord to deliver him from this critical situation. He beseeched God to deal with those who were lying about him.

Both David and his enemies were Israelites, citizens of God’s chosen nation and children of the covenant. Why should the Lord listen to David over his enemies? David’s basis for expecting God to help him rather than his enemies is revealed in the following verses.

- a. Ask Him to hear your words—your sighing—your cry for help ([v. 1](#)).

Psalm 5:1 (NASB)

¹“Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my groaning.”

Vicious lies about the king were flying throughout Jerusalem because Absalom's first plan of attack was a carefully-strategized war of words. David's rebellious son charmed potential followers with flattering words, who in turn spread false rumors about the king to their friends and associates.

David realized he was powerless to quench the vicious tongues of his foes, so he told his side of the story to the only One Who could help Him, the Lord. *Meditation* or *sighing* (**hagig**) literally means murmur or whisper. Israel was buzzing with the murmuring of deceived followers of Absalom who whispered accusations against their king. In contrast, the godly, slandered king whispered only in the ears of the Lord.

Consider (**bene**) means to separate mentally. David called upon God to discern between what was being said about him and the truth.

b. Submit to the Lord as your King and your God (v. 2).

Psalm 5:2 (NASB)

²“Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, For to You I pray.”

David's frustration and desperation are apparent in his words to the Lord. The people were listening to Absalom's murmuring supporters; but David pled with the Lord to listen to his voice rather than theirs. He claimed God's attention by announcing his allegiance and submission to Him.

The king of Israel bowed himself before his *King* and his *God*. Note, David addressed God as *Elohim*, the strong, powerful one; the one whose might exceeds all others. David called upon his King to use His power to overcome those who were trying to destroy him with venomous lies.

David also appealed to God on the basis of his faithful obedience to Him. The Lord was *his God*. He sought the Lord's attention and assistance because he believed the promise revealed in God's law: The Lord will help those who obey His commands (**Deuteronomy 27:16-19**; **Deuteronomy 30:11-20**).

Deuteronomy 27:16-19 (NASB)

¹⁶“‘Cursed is he who dishonors his father or mother.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

¹⁷‘Cursed is he who moves his neighbor's boundary mark.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

¹⁸‘Cursed is he who misleads a blind *person* on the road.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

¹⁹‘Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

Deuteronomy 30:11-20 (NASB)

¹¹“For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach.

¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’

¹³ Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’

¹⁴ But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.

¹⁵ See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity;

¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it.

¹⁷ But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them,

¹⁸ I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong *your* days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it.

¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you, life and death, the blessing and the curse. So, choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,

²⁰ by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

As David would shortly point out, God destroys liars and deceivers ([v. 6](#)).

Psalm 5:6 (NASB)

⁶ “You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.”

In contrast, David lived in submission to God and His statutes. It is important to understand that David did not speak as a man who felt he held claim to God’s blessing or that God was obligated to help him. His attitude was that of one who was confident in the sincerity and holiness of his walk with God.

In the midst of his crisis, David wanted to act only in obedience and submission to God. Instead of directing his distraught emotions toward his foes, he poured them out to the Lord. Unlike his enemies, he did not want to react in any way that displeased God. The slandered king refused to retaliate by returning evil for evil; rather, he submitted himself to God, and committed the handling of the situation to Him.

c. Seek God in the morning: Stated twice to stress its importance ([v. 3](#)).

Psalm 5:3 (NASB)

³ “In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order *my prayer* to You and *eagerly* watch.”

David was faithful in His fellowship with the Lord. In fact, he began each day in prayer. Unlike so many people, he did not speak with the Lord only when he was in distress or desperately needed something. David was a daily visitor to the throne of grace.

Morning prayer is so significant that it is mentioned twice in this verse. Why is it so important? First, prayer in the morning recognizes God as the greatest priority of our lives. Before David met with anyone else, he first met with the Lord. Before he tended to any of the day's affairs or business, he first sought the Lord in prayer. The first appointment on his daily calendar was with God. Prayer at the beginning of the day acknowledges God as the most important being in our lives.

Second, morning prayer is important because it recognizes God's as the greatest power in our lives. Every day, David's first activity was to *direct* his voice to the Lord in prayer. *Direct* or *lay* (**arak**) means to set in order, to arrange, to place in a row.

It is the word used of laying wood in an orderly fashion for a sacrifice ([Leviticus 1:7](#)), arranging the pieces of a sacrifice on the altar ([Leviticus 1:8](#)), and setting the showbread in orderly rows on the tabernacle table ([Leviticus 24:5-8](#)).

[Leviticus 1:7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁷“The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire.

[Leviticus 1:8 \(NASB\)](#)

⁸“Then Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head and the suet over the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar.”

[Leviticus 24:5-8 \(NASB\)](#)

⁵“Then you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it; two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake.

⁶ You shall set them in two rows, six to a row, on the pure gold table before the LORD.

⁷ You shall put pure frankincense on each row that it may be a memorial portion for the bread, even an offering by fire to the LORD.

⁸ Every sabbath day he shall set it in order before the LORD continually; it is an everlasting covenant for the sons of Israel.”

In this same orderly way, David laid out his prayers—his praise, requests, and commitments—to the Lord every morning. He petitioned the Lord for his needs, and he *looked up* to the Lord as the only one who could supply his needs. He waited in expectation for God to answer and to bestow everything he needed throughout the day—**wisdom, strength, protection, material provision, patience, courage, guidance, grace, victory.**

Thought 1. The wise person is able to discern when, and when not, to answer a fool ([Proverbs 26:4-5](#)).

[Proverbs 26:4-5 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴“Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Or you will also be like him.

⁵ Answer a fool as his folly *deserves*, That he not be wise in his own eyes.”

If we fight back against people who lie about us, we risk sinking to their level. It is often best to turn the matter over to the Lord, as David did, and to simply continue to do right—to stand in truth and righteousness rather than to stand against our opposition ([Ephesians 6:13-14](#)).

Ephesians 6:13-14 (NASB)

¹³ “Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, **HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**”

Pastors and other leaders must especially discern when to publicly respond to unjust criticism and untrue accusations. **Nehemiah** set a good example for God’s servants to follow. He refused to come down from the great work he was doing to battle his critics ([Nehemiah 6:2-3](#)).

Nehemiah 6:2-3 (NASB)

² “Then Sanballat and Geshem sent *a message* to me, saying, “Come, let us meet together at Chephirim in the plain of Ono.” But they were planning to harm me.

³ So I sent messengers to them, saying, “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?”

They were trying to draw him into a debate and argument for an unholy purpose: to provoke him to react wrongly, which would give them greater accusations against him ([Nehemiah 6:10-13](#)).

Nehemiah 6:10-13 (NASB)

¹⁰ “When I entered the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined at home, he said, “Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you, and they are coming to kill you at night.”

¹¹ But I said, “Should a man like me flee? And could one such as I go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.”

¹² Then I perceived that surely God had not sent him, but he uttered *his* prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

¹³ He was hired for this reason, that I might become frightened and act accordingly and sin, so that they might have an evil report in order that they could reproach me.”

As God’s servants, we must be wise to the ways of Satan and those who follow his promptings. We must carefully guard ourselves from saying or doing anything that would harm us and our effectiveness for the Lord ([Matthew 10:16](#)).

Matthew 10:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.”

Matthew 5:44 (NASB)

⁴⁴ “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Psalm 88:13 (NASB)

¹³ **“But I, O LORD, have cried out to You for help, And in the morning my prayer comes before You.”**

Psalm 119:147 (NASB)

¹⁴⁷ **“I rise before dawn and cry for help; I wait for Your words.”**

Isaiah 50:4 (NASB)

⁴ **“The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples, That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens *Me* morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple.”**

Thought 2. Morning is a strategically crucial time for prayer. Note these quotations from great men of God:

Morning prayer is our duty; we are the fittest for prayer when we are in the most fresh, and lively, and composed frame, got clear of the slumbers of the night, revived by them, and not yet filled with the business of the day. We have then most need of prayer, considering the dangers and temptations of the day to which we are exposed, and against which we are concerned; by faith and prayer, to fetch in fresh supplies of grace.

Did He hear your voice this morning? Did you start the day without any word with Him, and have you wondered why things went wrong today? They always will if you launch out on the work of the day without speaking to Him first...If you want to be a strong overcoming believer in a day of difficulty, be sure to start the day with God.

“In the morning.” This is the best time for communion with God. An hour in the morning is worth two in the evening. While the dew is on the grass, let grace drop upon the soul. Let us give to God the mornings of our days and the morning of our lives.