

Preaching the Psalms Series

(24)

Psalm 6

How to Pray for Healing, Psalm 6:1-10

Psalm 6:1-10 (NASB)

¹ O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger, Nor chasten me in Your wrath.

² Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I *am* pining away; Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed.

³ And my soul is greatly dismayed; But You, O LORD—how long?

⁴ Return, O LORD, rescue my soul; Save me because of Your lovingkindness.

⁵ For there is no mention of You in death; In Sheol who will give You thanks?

⁶ I am weary with my sighing; Every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my tears.

⁷ My eye has wasted away with grief; It has become old because of all my adversaries.

⁸ Depart from me, all you who do iniquity, For the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping.

⁹ The LORD has heard my supplication, The LORD receives my prayer.

¹⁰ All my enemies will be ashamed and greatly dismayed; They shall turn back, they will suddenly be ashamed.

(Psalm 6:1-10) Introduction: It is interesting to read what leaders of various religions have said about health. **Buddha** declared, “**Health is the greatest gift,**” and “**Without health, life is not life.**” Indian revolutionary and Hindu leader **Mohandas Gandhi** taught, “It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver.” **Lao Tzu**, the founder of Taoism stated, “**Health is the greatest possession.**”

Sadly, these all turned to powerless sources as the wellspring of health. Their false philosophies revolve around false gods, impotent figures that cannot grant, preserve, or restore health. They worshipped fictitious idols that can do nothing to heal.

The one true God, however, declares Himself to be a healing God (Exodus 15:26).

Exodus 15:26 (NASB)

²⁶ “And He said, “If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer [*Jehovah Rapha*].”

He revealed Himself as *Jehovah Rapha*, the Lord who heals. In this psalm, David turned to Him when his body was racked with intense pain and his soul was plagued with severe depression. He believed, as we must believe, that God had the power to heal him.

Scripture does not disclose the specific historical setting of this psalm. The heading identifies its author as David, who composed it to be sung in the congregation. *Neginoth*

means it is to be accompanied with stringed instruments. *Sheminith* means *the eighth* and is apparently a reference to the octave in which it is to be performed. [Psalm 6](#) is a great consolation to those who are suffering and a great encouragement for us to cry out to God when we are sick. This psalm is a great teacher on the subject of sickness, faith, and healing.

This is, *How to Pray for Healing*, [Psalm 6:1-10](#).

1. Ask God not to rebuke or discipline you in anger (judgment): Ask Him to correct you in love (v. 1).
2. Pray for God to heal you (vv. 2-7).
3. Declare your confidence in God (vv. 8-10).

2. ([Psalm 6:2-7](#)) Pray for God to heal you.

[Psalm 6:2-7 \(NASB\)](#)

²“Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I *am* pining away; Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed.

³And my soul is greatly dismayed; But You, O LORD—how long?

⁴Return, O LORD, rescue my soul; Save me because of Your lovingkindness.

⁵For there is no mention of You in death; In Sheol who will give You thanks?

⁶I am weary with my sighing; Every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my tears.

⁷My eye has wasted away with grief; It has become old because of all my adversaries.”

Some sincere believers are hesitant to petition God for their own needs. They believe it is selfish to ask for God’s help and think they should always pray for others. While this attitude is noble, it is not the teaching of Scripture, nor is it the example of the psalms. David cried out to God for relief from his pain and for the healing of his sickness.

Scripture commands the sick and suffering to pray ([James 5:13-16](#)).

[James 5:13-16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹³“Is anyone among you suffering? *Then* he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.

¹⁴Is anyone among you sick? *Then* he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;

¹⁵and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

¹⁶Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

The Bible unquestionably declares that neglecting to pray for others is a sin ([1 Samuel 12:23](#)), but it is certainly not a sin to pray for ourselves.

1 Samuel 12:23 (NASB)

²³“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way.”

a. When to ask for healing (vv. 2-3).

Psalm 6:2-3 (NASB)

²“Be **gracious** [**hānan**] to me, O LORD, for I *am* pining away; Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed.

³And my soul is greatly dismayed; But You, O LORD—how long?

Psalm 6:2-3 (NKJV)

²“Have **mercy** [**hānan**] on me, O LORD, for I *am* weak; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are troubled.

³My soul also is greatly troubled; But You, O LORD--how long?”

David begged God for *mercy* (**hānan**). This word means “to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior.” In [verse 4](#) David calls upon God’s *mercies* or *unfailing love* (**hesed**), but here he simply pleads with God to pity him.

Psalm 6:4 (NASB)

⁴“Return, O LORD, rescue my soul; Save me because of Your **lovingkindness**.”

Psalm 6:4 (KJV)

⁴“Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy **mercies' sake**.”

Psalm 6:4 (ESV)

⁴“Turn, O LORD, deliver my life; save me for the sake of your **steadfast love**.”

Psalm 6:4 (AMP)

⁴“Return [to my relief], O Lord, deliver my life; save me for the sake of Your **steadfast love and mercy**.”

He asks the Lord to look down upon him with compassion and to show kindness to him. David was powerless to heal himself; nothing he could do had the power to relieve his pain, but God could help him. God alone had the ability to heal him and to ease the pain he was suffering.

In desperation, David described his condition to the Lord. First, he was physically *weak* [**umlal**]¹—exhausted, feeble, and unable to care for himself ([v. 2](#)).

Psalm 6:2 (NASB)

²“Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I *am* **pining away** [**umlal**]; Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed.

Psalm 6:2 (NKJV)

²“Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I *am* **weak** [**umlal**]; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are troubled.

He felt that his life was slipping away. This word is used in the Old Testament to “express the process of withering of leaves [and] crops ([Isaiah 24:7](#); [Joel 1:10, 12](#)).” He was in excruciating, unrelenting pain. His suffering was so severe that his *bones*, the very core and frame of his body, were trembling in agony.

Isaiah 24:7 (NASB)

⁷ “The new wine mourns, The vine decays, All the merry-hearted sigh.”

Joel 1:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ “The field is ruined, The land mourns; For the grain is ruined, The new wine dries up, Fresh oil fails.”

Joel 1:12 (NASB)

¹² “The vine dries up And the fig tree fails; The pomegranate, the palm also, and the apple tree, All the trees of the field dry up. Indeed, rejoicing dries up From the sons of men.”

Second, he was in severe emotional distress ([v. 3](#)).

Psalm 6:3 (NASB)

³ And my soul is greatly dismayed; But You, O LORD—how long?

Psalm 6:3 (NKJV)

³ My soul also is greatly troubled; But You, O LORD--how long?”

His *soul* was intensely troubled. He trembled not only because of physical pain, but because of emotional anguish. Note that his emotional pain was far worse than his physical pain. Physically he was in agony (*vexed*), but emotionally he was in anguish (*sore vexed*).

Acute, ongoing pain can cause people to plunge into the depths of depression. And many are powerless to pull themselves out of the pit of despair. Medical experts have repeatedly documented the impact of a positive mental attitude upon healing.

As an example, the Apostle Paul says that he survived the trouble and afflictions he bore by renewing his inward person—his soul—daily in the Lord ([2 Corinthians 4:16](#)).

2 Corinthians 4:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ “Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.”

b. Why ask God for healing ([vv. 4-7](#)).

Psalm 6:4-7 (NASB)

⁴ “Return, O LORD, rescue my soul; Save me because of Your lovingkindness.

⁵ For there is no mention of You in death; In Sheol who will give You thanks?

⁶ I am weary with my sighing; Every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my tears.

⁷ My eye has wasted away with grief; It has become old because of all my adversaries.”

David suffered spiritual as well as physical pain ([v. 4](#)).

Psalm 6:4 (NASB)

⁴ “Return, O LORD, rescue my soul; Save me because of Your lovingkindness.”

He could not renew himself in the Lord because he was out of fellowship with God. His sin placed a solid barrier between him and God, and he felt forsaken by God. In

desperation and fear for his life, David begged God to turn back to him and to deliver him from his intense suffering.

Note that David's basis for crying to God for healing was his covenant relationship with the Lord. His hope that God would deliver him was based on the Lord's love and faithfulness to His promises. The Lord is the God of mercy, the God of steadfast, unyielding love ([v. 4](#)).

Psalm 6:4 (NASB)

⁴“Return, O LORD, rescue my soul; Save me because of Your lovingkindness.”

The man after God's own heart ([Acts 13:22](#)) prayed for healing so that he might continue to live to worship and serve the Lord ([v. 5](#)).

Acts 13:22 (NASB)

²²“After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, ‘I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will.’”

Psalm 6:5 (NASB)

⁵ For there is no mention of You in death; In Sheol who will give You thanks?

David was genuinely convinced that he was going to die; consequently, in desperation, he begged God for his life. The Bible warns that persistent sin can cost believers their lives. If we stubbornly continue in sin, God may choose to take us to heaven prematurely to keep us from harming others ([1 Corinthians 5:4-5](#); [1 Corinthians 11:30-32](#)).

1 Corinthians 5:4-5 (NASB)

⁴“In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus,

⁵ I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

1 Corinthians 11:30-32 (NASB)

³⁰“For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.

³¹ But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.

³² But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.”

David offered a sound reason for God to heal him: if he died, he could no longer praise or be a witness for the Lord here on earth. David was implying that if God would let him live, he *would remember* His mercy and lovingkindness. His life would be a memorial to God's goodness and faithfulness.

When severe trials and suffering confront us, we sometimes feel it would be better to go on to heaven than continue here on earth. But as believers, we should covet to live so that we may have more time to worship and bear witness for God.

David cried out to God for healing because he could no longer bear his pain and suffering (v. 6). He was a broken man—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Psalm 6:6 (NASB)

6 “I am **wearv** [yāga´] with my **sighing** [´anāḥâ]; Every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my tears.”

Psalm 6:6 (NKJV)

6 “I am **wearv** [yāga´] with my **groaning** [´anāḥâ]; All night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears.”

The suffering king provided a detailed description of his anguish:

⇒He was *wearv* or *worn out* (yāga´)—totally exhausted—even to the point of gasping for breath because he was too tired to inhale and exhale.

⇒He moaned in unceasing agony. *Groaning* [´anāḥâ] speaks of wailing, making audible sounds and sighs that are the uncontrollable expression of tormenting grief and pain.

⇒His pain and suffering were so great that he could not sleep. He lay awake and wept all night so profusely that his bed was literally drenched with his tears. His body could not find the rest it so desperately needed to revive itself.

⇒His vision was blurred (v. 7^a). His sleepless, exhausted eyes could no longer focus on his surroundings.

Psalm 6:7^a (NASB)

7 “My eye has wasted away with grief; It has become old because of all my adversaries.”

⇒His enemies gloated over him and rejoiced in his suffering (v. 7^b).

Psalm 6:7^b (NASB)

7 “My eye has wasted away with grief; It has become old because of all my adversaries.”

Could it be that David was not suffering from an illness, but from injuries inflicted upon him in battle? Either way, the crowing of his enemies rubbed salt in his wounds. It may be that they were taking advantage of his infirmity to gain ground against him.

Thought 1. David expressed the hearts of so many suffering people when he cried out, “How long?” (v. 3).

Psalm 6:3 (NASB)

3 And my soul is greatly dismayed; But You, O LORD—how long?

“Here we are given permission to question God, permission to cry out in our pain. If our prayers are not honest they are not prayers.” Scripture teaches that it is not wrong to question God when we are suffering, as long as we ask in faith and trust, not in doubt.

God promises to give us wisdom—insight and understanding—as we deal with the trials and sufferings of life:

James 1:5-6 (NASB)

⁵“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

⁶But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.”

When the Israelites came to the bitter waters of Marah, the Lord revealed Himself to them by a new name—a new dimension of His character. He called Himself *Jehovah Rapha*, the Lord that heals ([Exodus 15:26](#)).

Exodus 15:26 (NASB)

²⁶“And He said, “If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer [*Jehovah Rapha*].”

God is the Great Physician, the one who heals all your diseases ([Psalm 103:3](#)).

Psalm 103:3 (NASB)

³“Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases.”

This verse declares that the Lord heals *all* our diseases. How does He do this? How can the Bible make this claim when, in fact, many sicknesses are terminal and result in death?

Note **three ways** that *Jehovah Rapha* heals:

(1) Sometimes He heals *naturally*. Our bodies are amazing machines. They are designed by our Creator to naturally restore and rejuvenate themselves. God has also given humanity incredible knowledge about the body; He has revealed to us how to use substances and chemicals (medicines), as well as procedures and treatments, to help heal our bodies. The spontaneous recovery of the human body and the effectiveness of the medical arts fall within the realm of natural healing.

(2) Sometimes He heals *supernaturally*. God is still in the business of reaching down from heaven and sometimes touching the sick and infirm with His miraculous, almighty healing hand.

(3) Sometimes He heals *ultimately and finally*. God chooses to heal many of His dear children by releasing them from their bodies to never again know sickness or pain. Consider this: every person healed by natural or even supernatural means will suffer again. For example, every individual in the Bible who was miraculously healed by Jesus eventually died. But when we are liberated from our sin-cursed bodies through the process of death, we never again know suffering, sickness, or pain. “**Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord...**” ([Re. 14:13](#)).

Revelation 14:13 (NASB)

¹³“And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Write, ‘**Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord**’ from now on!” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.”

Luke 4:18 (NASB)

¹⁸“THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED.”

James 5:15-16 (NASB)

¹⁵“And the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

¹⁶Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

Revelation 22:2 (NASB)

²“In the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of* fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

Genesis 20:17 (NASB)

¹⁷“Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids, so that they bore *children*.”

2 Kings 20:1-5 (NASB)

¹“In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.’”

²Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying,

³“Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

⁴Before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

⁵“Return and say to Hezekiah the leader of My people, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.’”

Isaiah 53:5 (NASB)

⁵“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.”

Jeremiah 17:14 (NASB)

¹⁴“Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed; Save me and I will be saved, For You are my praise.”

