

# **The Man Who Thoroughly Trusts God—Psalm 91**

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*Sparks from the Altar*

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## THE MAN WHO THOROUGHLY TRUSTS GOD—PSALM 91

No doubt Psalm 91 was originally a psalm prescribed for public worship. It has been attributed to Moses more often than to any of the other Old Testament writers. It could easily have been a psalm which was sung in the wilderness and may have been used by the Levites in their worship. There are five divisions to be noted in this psalm, each of which speaks of aspects of our walk with God.

Verses 1 and 2 speak of a personal position with God. In them the use of the first person gives forth a statement of trust. The condition of these verses must be met so that the promises that follow will be ours. Verses 3 and 4 are the response from a second person concerning deliverance and refuge. In verses 5 through 8, the promises of personal protection from the Lord are described fully and completely. Verses 9 through 13 are another response from the second person affirming the immunity that God gives us from plagues, pestilences, and disasters in the world. Verses 14 through 16 come from one speaking as the mouthpiece of God, possibly a priest or a high priest. Here the promises of God are given to the man who thoroughly trusts in Him with all his heart and who positions his life in God.

The psalm begins: He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust!” Verses 1–2. This is the position of trust. Say it over and over again until your heart actually sings it to God. Develop an awareness of Him, a sensitivity to His presence and to the flow of life that comes from Him. The Lord’s presence is everywhere; there is no place where you can flee or hide from the Lord (Psalm 139:7–12). To every believer Jesus has said, “And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:20b. In a walk with God, it is imperative to develop that sensitivity, to reach out and draw from Him until it becomes easy to receive the anointing of the Lord. You can feel it flowing through you. When you learn how to draw upon this anointing, you can tune into it at any time. The Holy Spirit is not given to us to be dormant. We are to be continually aware that there is something alive and meaningful in God that He wants to minister to us. Oh, let us learn to dwell in that secret place of the Most High!

When Isaiah prophesied about all the things that were going to take place in the earth and spoke of the troubles and the storms that would be brewing, he said, And a man shall be as a hiding-place.... Isaiah 32:2, ASV. We do not need a cave or a bomb shelter; what we need is the Man Christ Jesus. The Lord, our precious Savior, is to be our hiding place. We learn to find Him as our refuge and our fortress, our God, in whom we trust.

It is difficult to shake the feeling that we have to be personally adequate and sufficient for every situation. We can foresee that today, tomorrow, or in the weeks to come, certain problems will

come that we will be inadequate to meet. There may be bills coming due for which there is not enough money. There may be decisions to be made for which the wisdom is lacking. Whatever the need, He is the One to Whom we must come. We must put our trust in the Lord and learn to hide and dwell in Him.

To be effective in God, we must learn to develop an awareness of His presence and His protection. Too many things distress us. When the satanic assault comes, there is a way to find that secret place in God. We need to be able to shut out these things by affirming, "Lord, You are my fortress. They can storm that fortress, but I am hiding in You, and I am going to be protected." Lord, help us to do this!

Verses 3 and 4 of Psalm 91 speak of the protection that will come as we learn to do this. For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper, and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge.... In symbolic language this speaks of a bird that flies to another bird for protection from the snare of the one who sets traps to catch little birds in his nets. We can go deeper and deeper into God's presence until we find refuge. We fly under the wings of God to find protection and help in the time of need.

When we have our minds set upon the Lord, we will be kept in perfect peace (Isaiah 26:3). The Holy Spirit brings forth that fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The peace of God depends upon a sense of security. We do not have peace if we are forever fearing an assault by the enemy. We do not have peace if we think that everything will go wrong. We have peace as we learn to come into His very presence and abide there in that secret place.

Among believers today there is too much worry, too much confusion, too many who are distracted from seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Draw near to the Lord. Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6. Commit to the Lord all your cares and problems, the responsibility for your life, and thoroughly trust Him for every need. Why should there be any disturbance within your heart? You are serving the Lord, and He is your refuge and your fortress! All you have to do is come under His wings, because He will take care of you. In this position of trust, the peace of God can begin to keep your heart (Philippians 4:7).

We are talking about two kinds of faith. One positions itself in God and continually draws from the presence of the Lord; the other positions itself in the presence of the enemy and becomes alert to fighting the devil all the time. Be more concerned about developing an awareness of God than of the devil. Seek the security that comes from thoroughly trusting the Lord for every need you have.

In Psalm 91:5–8 we find more of the wonderful personal protections that are ours: You will not be afraid of the terror by night.... When children are fearful, instead of pointing to external causes which seem to trigger the fear, parents should look inside their own hearts. Where fear dominates, parents may be exposing the child or the home to too many fears by their own unbelief. Things of spirit are highly contagious. Learn to trust God! Learn to sing the praises of the Lord! Learn to say and believe, You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day; of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or of the destruction that lays waste at noon. “You will not be afraid” is both a promise and a command. You do not dare to be afraid.

Do you lie awake at night and worry about your troubles and problems? This is not the life of faith! Human diligence must be coupled with a complete committal of everything to the Lord. Trust completely that God will take care of you, and then you will be at your best. He will bring you the resources of heaven, and you will be able to add your own resources to the situation for God to meet your need.

A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not approach you. It is better to stand on this promise than on some illusive doctrine about a rapture taking place at some specific time before any trouble begins. The problem with such a doctrine is that for nine-tenths of the world, the rapture is too late. Tribulation has already started in many quarters as far as the gospel of Jesus Christ is concerned. Several countries have already known bloody purges. Missionaries and Christians have been slaughtered by the thousands and tens of thousands. Rather than depending on a rapture, how much better it is to stand upon this promise: You will only look on with your eyes, and see the recompense of the wicked. We may see judgment and we may see tribulation; but if we trust God and live in that secret place, we are going to come through any portion, or perhaps all, of the tribulation period, if it is the mind of God that we go through it.

Verses 9 and 10 continue the thought of the immunity against all the devastating things that could happen to us: For you have made the Lord, my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place. No evil will befall you.... This verse does not say that accidents cannot happen or that difficult circumstances will not come against us. It does say, No evil will befall you. As we trust God with all our hearts, the sovereign hand of God filters every circumstance and happening in our lives. Even in the things that Satan could use to destroy us, God’s hand is evident, and no evil will befall us. Thus we can affirm that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God.... Romans 8:28.

This truth is brought out in the story of Joseph. After many years of separation, he turned to his brothers in that moment of recognition and said, “You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good” (Genesis 50:20). What meaning this puts into our lives as God orders our steps and blesses

us! Whatever happens, the hand of God is there to see that the good He purposes to bring to our lives is worked out.

No evil will befall you, nor will any plague come near your tent. For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. Psalm 91:10–11. The angels of God are sent into situations for the specific purpose of aiding in the battle and bringing the blessing and the peace to the people of the Lord.

They will bear you up in their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone. Verse 12. You may think that this is one of those farfetched promises, but it is a true promise. It is not based on presumption—Satan even used it against the Lord Jesus Christ in the temptations in the wilderness (Matthew 4:6). It has reference to people who are assaulted by various forces. In the context, it is one of the promises of immunity that God has provided as He brings the believer through the harassments of the enemy.

You will tread upon the lion and cobra, the young lion and the serpent (or dragon) you will trample down. Verse 13. This represents a threefold classification of the foes that we must fight. The lion comes roaring at us and is seeking to devour us (1 Peter 5:8). While we are looking out for the lion, we must be careful that we do not step into the path of the cobra. The cobra represents the unseen foe. The dragon is the worst foe of all. Has anyone ever seen a real dragon? No, this foe dwells in the mind, in the imagination. Because of this, it is often the most difficult to face and to deal with. Dragons are the situations and problems we worry about when we should be trusting God. These are the foes that have bluster and form to them; but as we look more closely, we find nothing there. The things that have kept us in fear do not exist.

Satan can defeat more people in this area than in any other. People are alert to the lions, and they finally learn to be cautious of the cobras; but they do not know how to cope with the dragons. For all three classifications of these problems, you have the promise of the Lord that you will be immune from them. This does not imply that you will not find any lions or cobras or dragons, but you are going to trample them underfoot. In every case, when the foot is mentioned in Scripture, it speaks of subduing something. And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. Romans 16:20. The foot is used to crush the enemy. You are going to trample on him, whether he comes in all his raging fury, in his secret devices, or in his attacks against you in your imagination.

Open your heart and say, “O Lord, help me today to flee into You and find help.” God gives these promises to those who wholly put their trust in Him! Learn to practice the presence of the Lord, to flee into His presence, and to find His protection and immunity for the insecurities, the problems, and the major decisions before you.

Live courageously, without fear. Think of men like David who had faith to live, not recklessly, but with courage. David loved and trusted God and knew the significance of his destiny. He knew that God had raised him up to be a part of the history of Israel. He did not worry about protecting himself, thinking that if something happened to him, the plan of God would be thwarted. He had the faith and the courage to face everything that came to him since he trusted in God and had learned to practice the presence of the Lord. He said, I have set the Lord continually before me.... Psalm 16:8. In that place he was protected.

We belong to God. We have a destiny in God to fulfill. Yet at times we retreat, fearful of getting into the battle or committing ourselves wholly to the protection and immunity that God can give. We are afraid of what might happen. If we learn to trust God with all our hearts, we will still have difficulties; but we should battle through to the perfect will of God, rather than sit back in fear. Those who never make mistakes or stumble are those who are too fearful to try anything.

God gives a great deal of protection to the person who has courage to try. Position yourself on the front lines; the wounds are not deadly. Learn to practice the presence of the Lord. Learn to dwell in the secret place of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. There you will find the protection of His wings. You will not be defeated or destroyed. You will come through to what God really has for your life.

Are you more aware of your troubles than you are of the Lord? Do you practice the presence of the Lord, or the presence of problems? Which is more real to you—your fear or your trust? Which is the greatest motivation in your prayers—your drive to believe that He will be great to you, or your cry for God to help you in trouble?

“Because he has loved Me”—this is the whole key! Set your love upon the Lord. You can set it in many different directions, for love is flexible. But when a person’s love is set upon the Lord, then God promises, “therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name. He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him, and honor him. With a long life I will satisfy him, and let him behold My salvation.” Psalm 91:14–16.

Let us practice God’s presence. As we all become more and more aware of His abiding presence, we can draw upon it and bring immunity and protection and the fulfillment of the promise of every good thing that we desire.