

The Man Who Will Not Compromise

Psalm 141

Introduction: 1) One of the most difficult, if not the most difficult, Christian disciplines is prayer. Many of us struggle to pray. I know I do. Others struggle how to pray. What are the types of things I should pray for?

2) Jesus gives us a “model” for prayer in the greatest sermon ever preached, His Sermon on the Mount. We find it in Matthew 6:9-13 and its parallel account in Luke 11:2-4. We also find other places in the Bible where we receive instruction in the discipline of prayer. A quartet is found from the pen of King David in Psalms 140-143.

3) In the psalm before us, Psalm 141, we find a prayer for sanctification and protection crafted as a wisdom psalm, where David asks the Lord for guidance and deliverance as he seeks to live a life without compromise to the glory of God. He knows he needs God’s help. He knows temptations to walk down the wrong path are an ever present danger. He knows he needs the correction of good friends. All of this is essential if he is to live wisely and not foolishly, if he is going to live a life of righteousness that pleases God (v. 5).

Transition: The man who will stay true to His Lord no matter what needs an intense prayer life and a specific prayer life. Five particulars can be identified in Psalm 141, a psalm in which every word in every sentence is a prayer.

I. He will ask the Lord for help. 141:1-2

A life without compromise will run to the Lord. In the psalm, David actually asked the Lord to run to Him! Perhaps he was trapped (v. 9)! This man or woman recognizes their need of the Lord if they are to stand strong and courageous. Such a person will have a sense of urgency, especially in times of trouble and temptation, when situations and circumstances

arise that test your devotion to the Lord who should have your attention, “your eyes” (v.8).

When the evil one and his schemes are looking you in the face how should you respond?

1) Call on the Lord. 141:1

- Twice David cries or calls to *Yahweh* (Jehovah). There is desperation in his voice as he asks the Lord to 1) make haste (*NIV*, “come quickly”) and 2) give ear to my voice.
- Faced with the sirens of the modern world that calls us to sell our soul for personal peace and prosperity, the man who will not compromise cries to the Lord.

2) Worship the Lord. 141:2

- Urgency is complemented by worship. The Lord he runs to is the Lord he worships. David wants the Lord to know that though he has run to Him (or asked the Lord to run to him), no disrespect is intended. He needs Him. He wants Him. He will worship Him.
- Let my prayer be as incense means let my prayer be a sweet aroma and a pleasing offering.
- Lifting up of the hands (cf. Ps. 134:2) was a demonstration of worship and adoration. Reference to the evening sacrifice (note the word “as”) may indicate this was a prayer prayed at night as he prepared to go to bed, a prayer he voiced after a long and difficult day.

II. He will ask the Lord for wisdom. 141:3-4

- James 1:5 says, “if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

- Wisdom is something we should ask the Lord for daily and specifically. For me it is in the areas of patience, decision-making, words, and the dispositions of my heart and mind that I need the Lord's perspective and enablement.
- "Wisdom is the ability to see life as God sees it and then respond as He would."
- David highlights four areas where wisdom from above is essential (cf James 3:13-18).

1) Give me wisdom with my words. 141:3

- With beautiful Hebrew poetic parallelism David asks God to temper his tongue and muzzle his mouth.

— Set a guard...my mouth

— Keep watch over the door of my lips

- James 3:1-12 provides an expanded commentary on the trouble with the tongue.
- Ill. "sticks and stones..."

2) Give me wisdom in my heart. 141:4

- Proverbs 4:23 reminds us, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life."
- Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"
- David knew, as must we, the deceptive power of the heart; the real you and me on the inside. He knew he could not trust it. He needed the Lord to guide and control it! He knew we all need a "spiritual heart transplant." Jesus taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation" (Matthew 6:13). To avoid the snare of temptation, we need the Lord's help.

3) Give me wisdom in my actions. 141:4

- David notes the close connection between what I think and what I do. If my heart is leaning toward evil it will eventually do evil.
- Jesus powerfully reinforces this when in Mark 7:21-23 he says, “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”

4) Give me wisdom with my companions. 141:4

- Often Satan tempts us thru our companions, the people we hang out with. The wisdom of choosing good friends cannot be overstated.
- David warns us concerning those who are evildoers, but whose evil is camouflaged with delicacies. These are men of influence and status, popular and powerful, whose wealth and position allow them to enjoy the “finer things of life” as the world measures things.
- In our own strength and “will power” we will give in and maybe even sell out. We must ask the Lord to not even allow our heart any inclination at all in this direction.

III. He will ask the Lord for good friends. 141:5

- One of the great blessings of life has been good friends, friends you can trust guarding your back in a foxhole. The longer I live, the more I realize such friends are 1) few in number, 2) valuable beyond words and 3) essential to a consistent walk with God over a lifetime.
- Your friends will influence you. No debate. No question about it. Now, what do you need, according to v. 5, from these “fellow foxhole friends?”

1) Let them rebuke me when I need it.

- David says seek out friends who love you enough to rebuke you even when it hurts. You need friends who will strike you, hit you with hard, but healing, words.
- It is actually an act of “hesed” (NASV, “kindness”; HCSB, “faithful love”)
- In *The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name*, such love, whose origin is always God, is said to be, “never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love.”
- I need, you need, we all need, rebukes from friends who love us like this.

2) Let me receive it when they do it.

- How do you handle rebuke and correction? It is not easy to receive for any of us. David was no different. David has to ask the Lord to help him in this.
- “Lord, let him strike me. Lord, let him rebuke me.”
“Lord, let me see it as *hesed*.” Lord, let me receive it as excellent oil and an act of honor and respect. He/she loves me enough to tell me the truth and make me better for You! Praise the Lord! Don’t let me refuse it, help me to receive it. Help me remember Proverbs 27:6, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.”

IV. He will ask the Lord for vindication. 141:5-7

- Once again we encounter what is called an imprecatory psalm where the psalmist prays in very strong language for God to judge his enemies. Ultimately because of their evil, they are the enemies of God. These are men of power and authority, “judges” or “rulers.” David’s words are striking and startle our modern sensibilities. And yet do not miss the redemptive note in this stanza, tucked away at the end of v. 6.

1) Ask Him to judge the works of the wicked. 141:5-7

- David will continually pray against evil and those determined to do evil (v. 5).
- He asks God to throw them off the side of the cliff (v. 6).

He asks God to scatter their bones so that they do not even receive a decent burial (v. 7). This would point to their being under God's curse and judgment. One can/should hear the tremors of the end time judgments so graphically depicted in the apocalypse of Revelation 6-19, a judgment poured out by none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

2) Ask Him to approve the words of the righteous. 141:6

Such harsh words have a redemptive goal: that they would hear and receive the words of David and come to their spiritual senses.

V. He will ask the Lord for protection. 141:8-10

- David sees life as a titanic battle between good and evil, right and wrong, godliness and ungodliness. He knows that to engage in this battle is to run a risk and expose himself to danger. Yet as a man who will not compromise, he has no choice and neither do we.
- He also knows he dare not engage this battle without the help and protection of the Lord.

1) Look to Him. 141:8

- David will keep his eyes on his king, Yahweh his Lord (*NIV*, "O Sovereign Lord"). He will strive to maintain a Godward, heavenly perspective (cf. Col. 3:1-4).

2) Flee to Him. 141:8-10

- We must run to our Lord taking refuge in Him (v. 8).
- We must ask the Lord to “not make my soul bare,” “give us over to death” (*NIV*) (v. 8).
- We must ask the Lord to keep us from the snares and traps laid for us by these workers of evil. (v. 9).
- Indeed, we may pray that they are actually ensnared by their own evil devices (boomerang judgment) which God allows us, in grace, to safely escape.

Conclusion:

- The man who will not compromise is an incredible individual. I am not sure I have ever met such a man who completely and radically fulfills the portrait we see in Psalm 141. But then I turn to Jesus and I do meet such a man. Here I discover a man who in times of trouble:
 - 1) Asked the Lord for help, for as Hebrews 5:7 teaches, “in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, he was heard because of godly fear.”
 - 2) Asked the Lord for wisdom, for as Mark 1:35 teaches, “in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.
 - 3) Asked the Lord for good friends, for as Luke 4:12-13 says, “Now it came to pass in those days He went out to the mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God, and when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself, and from them He chose 12.”
 - 4) Asked the Lord for vindication, for in John 17:1 He prayed, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You.”

5) Asked the Lord for protection, for as He breathed His last breath he prayed, as Luke 23:46 records, “Father into your hands I commit My spirit.”

- Here is the man who would not compromise! Here is the man we have as an example. Here is the one who enables us to live as we ought. Here is the God we honor and worship and run to that we may live a life without compromise.