

PSALMS

Chapter 25

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. 2 O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. 3 Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. 4 Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. 5 Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long. 6 Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. 7 Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD! 8 Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. 9 He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. 10 All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies. 11 For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my guilt, for it is great. 12 Who is the man who fears the LORD? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose. 13 His soul shall abide in well-being, and his offspring shall inherit the land. 14 The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant. 15 My eyes are ever toward the LORD, for he will pluck my feet out of the net. 16 Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. 17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. 18 Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins. 19 Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me. 20 Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me! Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you. 21 May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you. 22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

Ps 25 The psalmist prays for God's covenant mercies when suffering affliction for sins and when enemies seize the occasion to attack, perhaps by trying to discredit the king through false accusations (see note on 5:9). Appealing to God's covenant benevolence (his mercy, love, goodness, uprightness, faithfulness and grace; see vv. 6–8, 10, 16) and to his own reliance on the Lord (see vv. 1, 5, 15, 20–21), he prays for deliverance from his enemies (see vv. 2, 19), for guidance in God's will (see vv. 4–5, 21; see also vv. 8–10, 12), for the forgiveness of his sins (see vv. 7, 11, 18) and for relief from his affliction (see vv. 2, 16–18, 20). These are related: God's forgiveness will express itself in removing his affliction, and then his enemies will no longer have occasion to slander him. And with God guiding him in "his way" (v. 9)—i.e., in "the demands of his covenant" (v. 10)—he will no longer wander into "rebellious ways" (v. 7). This psalm is linked with Ps 24 by its reference to "lifting up the soul" in reliance on God (see v. 1; 24:4). Structurally, the psalm is an alphabetic acrostic (somewhat irregular, with an additional, concluding verse that extends the lines beyond the alphabet). It is composed of four unequal stanzas (of three, four, eight and six verses). The first and fourth stanzas are thematically related, as are the second and third (an abba pattern). (CSB)

Acrostic psalm.

Format: Vv 1–3, prayer for victory; vv 4–5, prayer for teaching; vv 6–7, appeal to God's memory; vv 8–10, the Lord instructs sinners; vv 11–15, those who fear the Lord; vv 16–18, prayer for forgiveness; vv 19–21, prayer for deliverance; v 22, prayer for redemption. (TLSB)

The 25th psalm is a psalm of prayer in which the righteous pray that God will make them godly, forgive their sins, guard them from sin and shame, and finally deliver them from all enemies and

all evil. Along with this the psalm mocks the false, self-centered spirits and teachers. It belongs to the Second Commandment and the Second Petition. (Reading the Psalms with Luther)

25:1–3 Prayer for relief from distress or illness and the slander of his enemies that it occasions. (CSB)

These verses are very similar to the many prayers for protection which are typical in this section of Psalms. Note the chiasmic (criss-cross) arrangement of verse three. It contrasts the fate of the ungodly and the godly in terms similar to the contrasts of Psalm 1. (PBC)

25:1 *to you I lift up my soul* – Gesture of offering. David’s life is dedicated to God. (TLSB)

The word order beginning with “unto you” is emphatic and not merely stylistic. The idea of lifting himself up to the Lord signifies his focusing on God by faith. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

25:2 *put to shame* – The verb “be ashamed” (s.v. Ps. 31:1) actually means to be destroyed or ruined, the idea of being put to shame referring to the resultant circumstances. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

let me not be put to shame – The main prayer is for God to deliver from enemies; and if he does not do so, then they will triumph and the psalmist will be put to shame. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

There are enemies in the picture who gloat over his downfall. (Leupold)

25:3 *none who wait (hope) for shall be put to shame* – Though God’s child requests many things from God in prayer, God acts in His own time. David waits for God to answer, but he has confident hope. (TLSB)

“Hope” is a word for faith that stresses waiting for or longing for the results, but the waiting is with confident expectation. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

A principle is at stake – a man is in distress who trusts in the Lord. Such individuals can never be abandoned by Him. (Leupold)

wantonly treacherous – David has given no cause for the hostility of his adversaries. (CSB)

25:4-11 The psalmist now turns from the consideration of his enemies to consideration of his own sins. He contrasts his own sinfulness with the goodness of God. This contrast is expressed by the striking opposites: “Remember your mercy,” but “Remember not the sins of my youth.” He prays for forgiveness and for renewal of his spiritual life, and he bases his plea on the grace and mercy of the Lord. (PBC)

25:4-5 What he needs to understand better is the way in which God is leading him. He is the only one who can give him this understanding, for He is the God who has always helped heretofore, and for that reason His faithful one waits unwaveringly on Him. (Leupold)

25:4 *make me to know...teach me* – These two imperatives make the petition urgent and direct. What he desires to learn are the ways and the paths of God, that is, the proper conduct of life that would harmonize with the will of God. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

your ways ... your paths – Metaphors for “the demands of his covenant” (v. 10; see Dt 8:6; 10:12–13; 26:17; 30:16; Jos 22:5; see also vv. 8–9; 18:21; 51:13; 81:13; 95:10; 119:3, 15; 128:1). (CSB)

Hbr derek, “trodden path,” used for a “pattern of behavior or custom.” “The way of the Lord” is twofold: He punishes sinfulness, but He also shows mercy to the repentant (TLSB)

Note Exodus 33:13 TLSB - Moses wanted to know more about God, whose ways are higher than human ways. Moses had found favor in God’s sight but seems confused as to why. He wants to understand why and how God shows favor.

25:5 *your truth* – A life of faithfulness to the Lord. (CSB)

all day long – He constantly hopes in the Lord, and the Lord has proven to be his saving God; therefore, he prays to be instructed and led in the right way. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

25:6–7 *Remember* – Remember your long-standing (“from of old”) “mercy and love,” but do not remember my long-standing sins (those “of my youth”). (CSB)

David does not excuse past sins or claim that they were not sinful, nor does he teach an age of accountability. Rather, he confesses that sin has affected his entire life. All sins require God’s forgiveness. (TLSB)

One of the pleas that God’s saints often presented was the appeal to the mercies and love of God, which had been so marvelously manifested in the past. (Leupold)

love – Appeal to God’s “(unfailing) love, kindness, mercy” is frequent in the OT since it summarizes all that the Lord covenanted to show to Israel as well as to David and his dynasty. (CSB)

25:7 *Remember not sins* – One dark cloud is in the sky – sins – both the careless ones of the days of youth and more deliberate one of more mature years (“transgressions” is “rebellions”). Therefore the plea that God may graciously not take note of them but recall His “steadfast love” which has been the refuge of all His saints. (Leupold)

25:8–15 Confidence in the Lord’s covenant favors. In this context of prayer for pardon, David implicitly identifies himself with sinners (v. 8) as well as with the humble (v. 9)—those who keep God’s covenant and those who fear the Lord. As sinner he is in need of forgiveness; as humble servant of the Lord he hopefully awaits God’s pardon and guidance in covenant faithfulness. (CSB)

25:8-11 In the next four verses the psalmist will continue the petition for forgiveness. He begins by appealing to God’s attributes, good and upright. God is good and upright in that he shows sinners the way – exactly what he had prayed that God would do. Now he uses a different word for “teach,” a word that means to point in the right direction related to the word for “instruction,

law (s.v. Ps. 1:2). If God is good and upright, then the way that he teaches sinners to follow will be the same. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

25:8-9 God does not require humans to earn His forgiveness or gifts. He teaches sinners and leads the humble (those not esteemed by the world). (TLSB)

From contemplating his personal needs and distress the writer turns to the contemplation of the Lord and the manner in which He deals with the children of men, especially with those who are His own. (Leupold)

One great favor that flows from the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord is that He guides men in the way of good conduct. For the word “way” used in v. 8b seems to dictate that interpretation, and we have, therefore, ventured to render “the right way.” This thought is developed more fully in verse 9. (Leupold)

25:9 *humble* – Those who acknowledge that they are without resources. (CSB)

God guides and instructs them as to what He would have them do. But a man must show teachable-ness. (Leupold)

25:10 *all the paths of the Lord are steadfast love* The Lord’s benevolent dealings (see 103:7; 138:5) with those who are true to his ways. (CSB)

“All the ways of the Lord are steadfast love and truth,” it is almost imperative, we believe, to think of these “ways” as being the ways in which He leads men. (Leupold)

his covenant – Those who live in the Lord’s covenant (by faith) receive the blessings of God’s steadfast love and faithfulness. Faith does not earn these blessings, but receives them. (TLSB)

25:11 *For your names sake* – The prosperity of the Lord’s servant brings honor to the Lord’s name. (CSB)

This means in accordance with your reputation as a faithful, compassion and good God. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

name – The name of the Lord is the manifestation of his character. (CSB)

25:12 *the way he should chose* A Christian who is sorry for his sins also has the desire to avoid sin and to live a life pleasing to God. (PBC)

The Lord teaches the devout, obedient worshiper his ways. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

25:13 *inherit the land* – Retain their family portion in the promised land (see 37:9, 11, 18, 22, 29, 34; 69:36; Isa 60:21). (CSB)

God once promised the land of Israel to His people if they kept the covenant. Part of their responsibility was to teach His commands to their children (Dt 6:7). When the children lived in the covenant, they would continue to possess the land. (TLSB)

They will dwell in prosperity (literally “in good,” (s.v. Ps. 34:8), the idea of good including anything that promotes, enhances, and enriches life. The verb “dwell” means lodge, spend the night”; it signifies that he will spend his time in what is good. This goodness will extend to the next generation that will inherit the land (cf. Ex. 20:12; Lev. 26:3; Deut. 4:1). The people who trust and obey the Lord will be blessed in their lives and will find perpetual enjoyment of the good things from God. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

25:14 *Lord is for those who fear him* – Takes them into his confidence, as friends (see Ge 18:17–19; Job 29:4). (CSB)

Those who have faith live in a close, personal relationship with God. (TLSB)

Those who honor God and order their lives in accordance with his will because of their reverence for him.). (CSB)

25:15 *eyes...toward Lord* – By “eyes” he means his spiritual focus and commitment, as the eyes of a servant would be to a master, waiting for any instruction (cf. Ps.123:2). (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

the net – A poetic description of David’s affliction by his enemies. He depicts himself as a helpless animal, trapped in a net. (TLSB)

It is an attitude of expectant prayer – expecting God to “release” (literally “bring out,” his feet from the snare, meaning the entanglements and perplexities of life, whether due to his own faults or to the enemies alone. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

25:16 *turn to me...be gracious* – The prayer here is more urgent. “Turn” would mean to look favorably (the opposite of hiding his face) and therefore heighten the verb “be gracious” (s.v. Ps. 4:1). (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

25:16 *I am lonely and afflicted* – Again the troubles of his heart have grown vast, he is in distress from which God’s strength alone can deliver him. (Leupold)

The reason he needs God’s favorable response is because he is alone, without a friend or helper for this crisis, and afflicted. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

25:17 *heart* – Biblical language the center of the human spirit, from which spring emotions, thought, motivations, courage and action—“the wellspring of life.” (CSB)

bring me out of my distress – His troubles have multiplied, and so he is desperate for God to deliver him from his distressed. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

25:18 *forgive all my sins* – Vv 16–20 summarize David’s afflictions. His problems are not all external. He is a sinner who deserves some of these calamities. He rightly pleads for God’s forgiveness. (TLSB)

25:21 *integrity and uprightness* – Personified virtues – frequently refer to covenant benefits; here they are personified. Pardon is not enough; David prays that God will enable him to live a life of unmarred moral rectitude—even as God is “good and upright” (v. 8; see 51:10–12). (CSB)

Having already confessed his sinfulness and being confident in God's grace, David prays for God's help that he may have integrity and be upright. (TLSB)

25:22 A concluding prayer in behalf of all God's people – The psalmists stood before God, the royal King, as his servants responsible for the well-being of his people.). (CSB)

Redeem – Here, as often, a synonym for “deliver.” (CSB)

David's personal plea is expanded to include the whole nation. (TLSB)

It is a prayer that is timeless as the whole world waits for the day of redemption (Rom. 8:19-22). (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

Ps 25 David prays, “For You I wait all the day long” (v 5). God promises to answer prayer, but we may be impatient or tempted to question His answers. Even when our faithfulness fails, God is faithful. He hears our prayers and truly acts for our good. In faith, we patiently wait for Him. • Almighty God, give us the trust and patience to wait for You and the faith to believe Your promises. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. (TLSB)