



# THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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## Praying Against Wickedness

When you watch the news, you quickly see that this is a wicked world. You can look around you and see it where you live. No area is exempt. I live in a rural area, a “small-town, USA.” Even here, there is every form of evil. It is on display. It seems to go unchecked.

How is the believer to respond to this wickedness? What does God want you to do about the evil around you? **Psalm 5** deals with praying against wickedness. This psalm helps us to know how to pray about – how to respond to – the wickedness around us.

The psalmist gives us the following directions about praying concerning this:

### **Pray with boldness about the wickedness around you (5:1-3).**

The opening words of David’s prayer show that he is grieved. He prays to God with a burdened heart. What has him so grieved and burdened? The wickedness around him has stirred his heart. Slander and lies abound. People had no problem breaking God’s law. There was no fear of God. Evil actions filled the land.

All this evil has moved him to pray with boldness. He calls on God to listen to him.

Notice the phrases he uses to plead with God to listen to Him:

“*Give ear*” (5:1) – This means to broaden the ear. The picture is one of a person who is hard of hearing, cupping his hand behind his ear in order to hear.

“*Consider*” (5:1) – David is so burdened that much of his praying is groans and sighs. This is the aching and yearning of a soul that cannot be expressed in words.

“*Hearken*” (5:2) – This means to prick up one’s ears. Have you ever seen a dog prick up its ears when you hear a shrill sound? This is the meaning of this word.

David is not being irreverent but bold. He is calling on His God and King to act! His burden and grief over the evil around him stirs him to be bold with God. David commits himself to enter God’s presence with boldness on a daily basis.

In **Psalm 5:3**, we see that his praying will not be done in a careless or thoughtless way. David declares that he will “direct” his petitions to the Lord. The word “direct” means to arrange. This word refers to laying in order the pieces of wood on the altar for a sacrifice. David says that he will put his prayers in order and then bring

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against the destruction of evil and establishment of righteous. It is the holiness of God.

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them to the Lord. He will also watch, waiting on the Lord to answer.

What a powerful example for our prayer lives! We miss so much of the sweetness and power of prayer because we do not arrange our requests. At the same time, we don't often expect an answer. We too often rush into the presence of God without forethought and meditation. It is important to be bold and burdened in prayer. However, that is no excuse for laziness.

Before we pray, we need to think carefully about what we will say. Meditate on what you need to ask of God. Our prayer lives need to be characterized by holy preparation and patient expectation. This is true for all of our praying, but especially in our praying about the wickedness around us.

No matter what the level of wickedness, we must boldly cry out to God. We must enter His presence with definite requests. Then, we must start looking for the answer. Our praying can have a righteous impact in the midst of a wicked world. We can expect that our praying will be a force for righteousness. Through bold praying, you can see the wickedness around you arrested and eradicated. Yet, you must be bold in praying about it before God.

Ask yourself, "What wickedness is going on around me? What evil is practiced around me?" You might consider making a list of these things. Then, write down the opposing righteous virtue. If it is immorality, its opposite is purity. If it is drugs, its opposite is the filling of the Spirit and the joy of the Spirit. This can be a prayer guide to help you pray boldly about the evil around you. Pray for the destruction of evil and the establishment of righteousness.

### **Acknowledge the holiness of God (5:4-6).**

In **Psalm 5:4**, David focuses on the holiness of God. He exalts God's Sinlessness and His hatred of what is evil. This is the reason that you should pray against the wickedness around you. It is the reason you should stand against evil through intercession. Here you have the foundation and motivation for praying

**5:4** – God does not take pleasure in wickedness. No matter how innocent it may seem, regardless of how small, charming, or proudly it presents itself, God is opposed to sin. He will not tolerate it. No wicked man may dare to think that God hears him or has fellowship with Him. God is opposed to evil.

**5:5** – God hates in. He is opposed to all who do evil. Those who live in rebellion have no footing before God nor do they have a future with God.

**5:6** – We must remember that God hates sin in the most radical way – far beyond our ability to imagine. He is utterly opposed to sin and to those who would practice it in spite of His mercy and goodness.

David uses the holiness of God to pray against the wickedness of men. How can you use God's holiness to pray against evil?

(1) **Praise Him for His holiness.** When you enter His presence, adore Him for His holiness. Openly admit and announce that He hates sin and that He is opposed to those who perpetrate evil. Confess that He is sinless and pure. Praise Him for being righteous. Use these verses to adore His holiness.

(2) **Plead for His intervention.** Based on His holiness, ask Him to intervene in the wickedness around you. Because of His hatred of evil, pray that He will act in behalf of those who have been wronged. Ask Him to bring an end to the wickedness. Pray that He will bring down what is evil that he might establish what is right (**Psalm 7:9**). Ask Him to save and change. Pray for Him to thwart the wicked (**5:10**). Plead with Him to hinder the efforts of evil people.

### **Humble yourself before Him (5:7).**

In **Psalm 5:7**, David draws a line between the wicked and himself. He declares that there is distinction. When David prays, "But as for me," he makes known that he is different from

the wicked. He declares that he has a privilege that they do not have.

David says that he will come into God's presence. This is a contrast with **Psalm 5:4**; the wicked cannot approach Him. Why does David have this privilege? The answer is, "in the multitude of Your mercy." The mercy that he speaks of is the covenant love of God. It is the unfailing love that God has for those He is in relationship with. This is the only difference between David and the wicked. This is the only reason that David can enter God's presence. It is not because of David's merit but God's mercy.

He goes on to say, "and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple" (**5:7**). God has graciously saved Him. He had brought Him into relationship with Himself. He had taught David to trust and fear Him. In this verse, David humbles himself before the Lord. He acknowledges that the only difference between the wicked and him is the mercy of God.

Why is import to humble yourself as you pray against wickedness?

**(1) It leads you to pray that God will have mercy on those who practice evil.**

Sometimes we can get hardened to those who do evil. We can want them only to face the judgment of God. Yet, we must remember that the only difference between us is the mercy of God. We have experienced God's grace and mercy through Christ. This should drive us to pray that God will have mercy on wicked people. The wickedness of our own hearts should lead us to plead for God to have mercy on and save them.

**(2) It helps you keep the proper perspective in praying for the destruction of evil.**

Our goal is not just to pray for an end to wickedness. It is also for the establishment of righteousness. It is for people to come to know God and to be changed by Him. It is for righteous behavior to replace wickedness.

**Pray for God's guidance (5:8-9).**

David now pleads with God to guide Him in the midst of wickedness. He cries out to God, asking Him to direct his every step. The wicked

were everywhere. Ungodly people were watching (**Psalm 5:9**). They were waiting for him to do evil. His enemies wanted him to

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stumble. There were also believers who were watching his example.

David desired clear leadership in the midst of this wicked society, "Lead me, O LORD . . . make thy way straight before my face" (**5:8**). He longed for God to lead him in righteousness in the eyes of a wicked world.

What an example for our praying! How we need to plead this before God! We must plead with Him to guide us in the midst of all the wickedness. The purpose of this is to reveal a difference in our lives. Our lives need to show that we do believe in God and love Him. The watching, wicked world needs a living testimony to the power of God and His Word.

We must not only pray against wickedness. We must also strive to live righteous lives. We must seek to act on our praying. We have to seek to be salt and light in the midst of this wicked generation. This verse reveals the necessity of praying and acting in faith. We are to pray against evil. We are then to go out in the power of the Spirit, challenging it with God's Word and changed lives.

**Plead that you will find your joy in God (5:10-12).**

In the midst of praying against evil, David asks that the people of God will rejoice in Him. Notice the requests he makes: **Rejoice (5:11) - Shout for joy (5:11) - Be joyful in thee (5:11)** He asks that the people of God will have overwhelming joy in God in the midst of a wicked society. This world is filled with evil, misery, and suffering. Yet, there is unceasing joy in God and His Word.

The people of God can rejoice for two reasons. First, God blesses the righteous (**5:12**). If God blesses you, who can curse you? God blesses His people. The wicked world cannot change this. Second, God surrounds His people with favor (**5:12**). God's hand is on you in this wicked world. You experience His protection and defense. Even when adversity comes your way, you still are surrounded by His favor. God's favor acts as a shield around your life.

It is essential to ask for this while praying against wickedness. Why is it crucial? First, it guards you against discouragement. There is much to discourage the believer in this world. When you look around and see the evil, you can sink under frustration and hopelessness. Yet, you can find joy and hope in God. The character of our God sustains us in the midst of a wicked society. Second, it enables you to pray for the long haul. You can persevere in pray because the joy of the Lord sustains you (**Nehemiah 8:10**). It can enable you to withstand the onslaught of discouragement that the world heaps on the believer. It helps you to remain faithful in praying.

**Remember that Jesus Christ is the true Savior (Matthew 2:16-18).**

I realize that this is not in **Psalm 5**. However, in every sermon and study, we must end by running to Jesus. That's what I'm going to do here. I want us to run to Jesus.

**Matthew 2:16-18** records how Herod murdered the baby boys that he suspected were around Jesus' age. It's kind of an odd twist to the Christmas story, isn't it? I mean, it's kind of like having Roman boots trampling across the manger scene. I wonder how many people include this part of the story in their reading or telling about the birth of Jesus.

Yet, we must ask why this is here. Why does God add these details to the story of the birth of His Son? In the previous verses, you have the precious, heartwarming story of our Savior's coming into the world. Then, you have this startling, horrific account of the murder of innocent children. Why are they connected?

They are connected because it tells us why Jesus came. Jesus came to be a Savior in sinful, harsh world. He came to save sinful

people in the midst of a world gone wrong. Jesus came to give us hope and peace in the midst of a startling, horrific world.

Ultimately, this is why we can pray against evil. It is because we have a Savior who came to do something about evil (**1 John 3:8**). We have a Savior who came to change our wicked hearts. We have a Savior who came to give us strength and hope in the midst of a fallen, desperately wicked world.

The Christmas story is about the coming of Jesus – a Savior who has come to save us from this wicked world. The account of Herod's murderous act is a stark reminder of the world we live in – fallen, evil, and brutal. Yet, Jesus has come to give us life and hope. Jesus is our only hope in this world. As you celebrate Christmas this year, rejoice that you have a Savior who has come to deliver you and strengthen you in the midst of a fallen, evil, and brutal world. Let it drive you to pray against the evil of this world and the drawing of many to this precious, powerful Savior.

You may be reading this and not have the hope or peace of Jesus. Jesus Christ came to save us from our sin. He came to set us free from the despair of this brutal, fallen world. You can be forgiven of your evil. You can have hope and peace. Won't you turn to Him right now? Pray this prayer, trusting Jesus:

*God, I have sinned. I have a bad heart that leads me to do evil. I want to be changed. I trust Jesus your Son right now. I believe you sent Him into the world as the only Savior. I commit my whole life to Him. Have mercy on me and forgive me. Change me; make me different. I give myself to You. Amen.*



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