

Psalm 143 is a Psalm of David. In fact, it is a moving prayer of David. One of the many things David has taught us in these Psalms is that God does not want us mediocre in prayer; He wants us passionate.

Now the particular thing that David emphasizes in this Psalm is that he is a “servant” of God (143:2, 12). That Hebrew word “servant” means that David was one who worked in the service and business of God. David was one who labored for God (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 600).

David was under attack and there were those who literally were seeking to destroy him and crush him. Now because he was a true servant of God, he knew he had the great privilege of praying and talking to God. That is what he did.

A SERVANT OF GOD WHO IS UNDER ATTACK HAS THE PRIVILEGE AND RIGHT TO PRAY AND ASK GOD FOR HIS DELIVERANCE AND GUIDANCE.

This entire book of Psalms has been a stirring study. But there has been a key theme that has surfaced over and over again in almost every one of the Psalms. The theme is prayer. It is clear that God wants us praying to Him. God wants us crying out to Him. When we are involved in the business of God and in one way or another every believer is involved in the business of God, we will discover that there will be times when we come under attack. Those attacking us are real people with real names and they are real enemies.

It is in these very moments when we need to cry out to God. When a servant of God is under attack and when a servant of God cries out to God, he will discover that God is uniquely tuned into the specific situation.

David was the biggest and best servant of God alive at this time. But he never got too big to stop depending on God and talking to God. He knew he needed God’s help and over and over again he asks God for it.

There are six contextual observations we want to make from this Psalm:

CONTEXTUAL OBSERVATION #1 – David asks God to hear and answer his prayer. 143:1

Now because God is Omniscient (all-knowing) and Omnipresent (everywhere present), he obviously sees everything and knows everything. When David asks God to “hear” his prayer, he is specifically asking God to tune into his prayer requests and answer him. David was a servant under attack and he is asking God to specifically answer his personal prayer.

Now David appealed to two attributes of God connected to Him answering prayer:

Attribute #1 - David bases his prayer on God's faithfulness. **143:1a**

Any confidence we have and any hope we have in prayer is based on who and what God is. God is always faithful. He is always faithful to His character, His Word and His people. It is this very quality that moved David to pray. God has promised to hear the prayers of His people and God is always faithful to do what He says in His Word.

Attribute #2 - David bases his prayer on God's righteousness. **143:1b**

God is a righteous God. When His people are under attack, God will come to their rescue and He will defend them.

CONTEXTUAL OBSERVATION #2 – David asks God not to enter into judgment against him. **143:2**

This is important to see. David had just appealed to the righteousness of God as a basis for answering prayer and David knows that the righteousness of God condemns everyone. No one has ever measured up to the righteousness of God.

One time a young man went to a friend of Spurgeon and said, "I do not think I am a sinner." The friend said, "Would you be willing to tell your mother and your sister everything you have ever done, said or thought?" The man said, "No." So the friend of Spurgeon said, "Then how dare you say in the presence of the Holy God that you are not a sinner?"

David knew he was a sinner. Even the best of servants are still sinners. There is no man or woman alive who has never measured up to the righteous standards of God. In fact, David believed this and taught this to his son Solomon (Eccl. 7:20).

As David prayed, his thinking was this—I am a sinner and God can send any kind of trouble he wants to me legitimately. However, I am also a servant of God and I am asking that God not enter into judgment with me, but that He will come to my rescue.

If we are going to approach the Holy God in prayer, we cannot go to God and demand things as some self-righteous individual. We must humbly approach Him admitting the truth.

CONTEXTUAL OBSERVATION #3 – David describes what his enemies have done to him. **143:3-4**

David's enemies had many negative things against David that produced some very real negative effects. We may notice that the noun "enemy" is singular (**v. 3**), but in **verse 9 and 12** it is plural. David had many enemies but of course the driving power behind all of them was Satan.

Negative Effect #1 - David's enemies persecuted his soul. **143:3a**

Negative Effect #2 - David's enemies crushed his life. **143:3b**

Negative Effect #3 - David's enemies forced him to live in dark places. **143:3c**

Negative Effect #4 - David's enemies caused his spirit to be overwhelmed. **143:4a**

Negative Effect #5 - David's enemies caused his heart to be appalled. **143:4b**

These people were literally having a major negative effect on David. As we have seen in Psalms, many of the things they did against him were verbal. People were always talking about him behind his back and running him down.

CONTEXTUAL OBSERVATION #4 – David describes his memory of God's Word and work. **143:5-6**

As David was going through these things in life, the only thing that kept him going was his concept of God. There are three specific things David did to cope. All three of those things begin with a word that starts with the letter "M":

Coping Action #1 - David had memories of the days of old. **143:5a**

David is thinking back on past ancient things God has done in His Word when He dropped various enemies. There were some epoch moments like the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, the Egyptians and the Red Sea, the various conquests of Joshua.

Furthermore, when David remembered the days of old, he could think back on those moments in life when God had done things for him. He could think back on those times he was watching the sheep and God protected him from a bear and lion. He could think back on those times he fought Goliath and God won.

Having memories of what God is capable of doing is a wonderful key to praying with confidence.

Coping Action #2 - David meditated on all the acts of God. **143:5b**

David spent his day thinking about all the kinds of things God does. When you let your mind meditate on things, you begin to think of His power in being able to answer prayer.

Coping Action #3 - David mused on the works of God. **143:5c**

The word "muse" is one that means to mentally consider. David let God's great work in creation and in redemption roll through his mind. He would look at the sky or at animals or at life and think about the tremendous work of God.

Verse 6 says that as David was doing this, he stretched out his hands to God. His parched soul thirsted after God. His soul searched for God like parched ground searches for water. Then David said, “Selah,” which means stop and think about this.

When we find ourselves low, one of the best things we can do is let our mind think about the greatness of God. Think about God’s sovereignty and His omnipotence. It is that kind of thinking that can lead one to realize that I am praying to a powerful God.

Thinking accurately about God was one of the critical factors in David praying to God.

CONTEXTUAL OBSERVATION #5 – David asks God for a quick response. **143:7-9**

When David prayed, he did want instant answers. He wanted instant deliverance from his enemies. He wanted God to immediately intervene and come to his rescue. **In fact, verse 8 says he wanted an answer by morning.**

Now there were four reasons he wanted a quick answer:

Reason #1 - He would become like those who go down to the pit. **143:7**

David needed a quick answer because he literally thought he was about to die.

Reason #2 - He trusts in God. **143:8a**

This is what trouble should do; cause us to trust in God. God permits us to get into situations in which we can trust God.

Reason #3 - He needs God to teach him the way to walk. **143:8b**

We need to be taught by God in the ways we should walk when we are in trouble. In order for that to happen, we need to talk with God. It is one thing to pray to get out of trouble; it is quite another to ask God to teach us how to live when we are in trouble.

Reason #4 - He takes refuge in his relationship with God. **143:9**

When most people find themselves in difficulty they do not run to God as a refuge, but David did.

CONTEXTUAL OBSERVATION #6 – David asks God to help him spiritually develop.
143:10-12

There are six desires David had.

Desire #1 - David wanted God to teach him. **143:10a**

There are lessons to be learned when going through difficult times. God is able to teach us those lessons if we ask Him and desire to learn them.

Desire #2 - David wanted God's Spirit to lead him. **143:10b**

God's Spirit is good. God's Spirit will always lead into that which is good. All things do work together for good to those who love God; but in order for the believer to know that, God's Spirit must be in control.

Desire #3 - David wanted God to revive him. **143:11a**

Desire #4 - David wanted God to bring him out of trouble. **143:11b**

Desire #5 - David wanted God to cut off his enemies. **143:12c**

Desire #6 - David wanted God to destroy those who afflicted his soul. **143:12b**

Notice how many enemies David wanted God to eliminate—"all" of them.

David wanted God to destroy his enemies and be merciful to him. David was willing to talk to God about them and then leave it to God to destroy them. Enemies can do you great harm.

When we are attacked we need to pray. That is what David did and he ended the Psalm by reminding God that he was God's servant.