

Dr. Chuck Swindoll opens this psalm with these words: “We have all been ‘done wrong’ haven’t we? Maybe that describes your circumstances right now: an intolerable working situation; a husband, wife, parent, or child who takes advantage of you even when you treat him (or her) kindly; a friend who has turned against you due to a misunderstanding of something you did with only the purest of motives. Such feelings grind away at our peace so severely we wonder how we can continue. Whatever the mistreatment you are having to endure, please accept this warning: DON’T BECOME BITTER! DON’T BACKSLIDE!” (*Living Beyond the Daily Grind*, Vol. 1, p. 84).

Any person who chooses to live godly will have wrong done against him (or her). That is true with every biblical character and it was certainly true with David. David was hated and hounded. He was pursued and persecuted. He had been chosen by God, but he was challenged by people. In the midst of his troubles he learned to go to God. **What we find in David’s life is a lot of personal and private prayer.** Difficulties drove David to his knees. That is certainly evident from Psalm 26. **In this psalm, David goes to God in prayer and asks God to put him to the test to prove his faithfulness.**

The main point is this:

**IN THE MIDST OF TERRIBLE OPPOSITION, WE WILL FIND GREAT STABILITY IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THAT HAS TRUE FELLOWSHIP AND TRUE WORSHIP.**

Our relationship with God can actually deepen as our trials and troubles deepen. That is precisely what happened in the life of David. His circumstances put spiritual meat on his bones and actually enhanced his spirituality. Troubles and trials drove David to God.

In this psalm there are three specific requests:

**REQUEST #1** – The request for vindication. **26:1**

The Hebrew word “vindicate” is one that means David is asking God to litigate his case and make a judgment that either results in acquittal or condemnation (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 844).

David was not afraid of God’s judgment, he welcomed it and he actually asked for it. Basically what David is asking is first judge me and then judge them.

There are two reasons why David asks God to do this:

**Reason #1** - Because David had lived a life of integrity.

The word “integrity” which shows up here and again in **verse 11**, is one that means David lived life in full, complete and whole accordance with the Word of God.

David was an upright man who governed his life by the whole counsel of God. When he failed, he took care of it God's way. When he made decisions, he did so in light of God's Word. He was a complete man of God and he was not afraid of God's judgment.

There is a very vital connection between a life that has walked with integrity and a life that has walked in truth (**26:1, 3**). One may appear to have integrity but not really have it, because real integrity comes from walking in truth.

David asks God to vindicate him because his life had both—integrity and truth.

**Reason #2** - Because David had a trust that was unwavering.

David totally and completely trusted in God. He never slipped or wavered in his complete confidence in God and as a result, he could ask God for His judgment. Charles Spurgeon said no man can trust God if he walks crookedly (*Psalms*, p. 131). By virtue of the fact that David had an unwavering trust in God, indicates he lived a straight life before God.

Now the most logical prayer for the believer to make to God is “enter not into judgment with thy servant.” However, there may be moments of severe trial and trouble when it is very fitting to pray “enter into judgment with thy servant.” When we decide to make that prayer, we had better be sure that our lives are marked by true integrity and unwavering trust.

**REQUEST #2** – The request for a test. **26:2-8**

Most people want to avoid exams or tests, but David asks God for one. There are three different Hebrew words used in **verse 2** that describe this: 1) “Examine”; 2) “Try”—intensive Piel stem, which refers to an extensive exam; 3) “Test.”

Collectively, these three Hebrew words describe a request for God to very carefully and closely scrutinize his life to determine his faithfulness of mind and heart. David is asking God to carefully examine his mind and heart and intensely scrutinize him to refine him.

I don't ever remember wanting an exam at this level. Even though I would study and prepare for an exam, I don't ever recall going to the professor and saying, “I hope you make this exam as tough and intense as you possibly can so I can be proved.” Most people whine about exams. David wanted this exam and he went to God and asked God to give him this kind of exam.

There are seven reasons David dared to ask for this:

**Reason #1** - Because David was focused on God's grace. **26:3a**

We must start right here in our theology. God is a God of lovingkindness and mercy. God is a God who is in the business of helping the helpless and the hopeless. David could appeal to God to test him and try him because he knew this about God.

**Reason #2** - Because David had always walked in accordance with God's truth. **26:3b**

Dr. Merrill Unger said walking in a way that is consistent with God's truth means to walk one step at a time in a way consistent with that truth. Now this is a critical key to not fearing the judgment of God.

Last Sunday night, 13 million people watched a 34-year-old man named Nik Wallenda perform an amazing stunt of walking on a 2-inch-thick steel cable for ¼ mile across the Grand Canyon, that dropped some 1500 feet. The walk across took him 22 minutes. Every step was intense. In fact, that is the key to accomplishing this feat; you are focused on every single step.

That is the way David walked through life. He learned, sometimes the hard way, that the key was to watch every step and line it up with the truth of God.

**Reason #3** - Because David would not fellowship with deceitful people. **26:4a**

One of the real keys to fellowship with God is not fellowshiping with deceitful liars and traitors. The word "deceitful" literally means worthless people of falsehood. We could understand this to mean worthless people who don't tell the truth.

If you want to have fellowship with God, you cannot have fellowship with these kinds of people.

**Reason #4** - Because David would not associate with pretenders. **26:4b**

I love something Spurgeon said, we should never cultivate communion with hypocrites because when we do we rendezvous with hell (*Psalms*, p. 132).

More and more as we search the Scriptures, it is obvious that godly people are very careful about whom they permit into their circle. The Apostle Paul was very particular about who he allowed to travel with him. Jesus was very particular about which apostles He actually allowed to see Him transfigured.

David was very clear that he would not fellowship with deceitful people or pretenders.

**Reason #5** - Because David hated the assembly of evildoers. **26:5a**

Don't miss what is stated here—there are assemblies of evildoers and we should hate them! There are religious people who regularly gather together, not because they are interested in actually understanding the Scriptures and being right with God, but they are gathered for wicked purposes.

At the time David wrote this psalm there were all kinds of people who went through religious motions who were not right with God. Some of these people went to the tabernacle and pretended to worship God, but the fact is, it was nothing more than an assembly of evil doers.

**Reason #6** - Because David would not sit with the wicked. **26:5b**

Not only would David refuse to fellowship and associate with wicked people, he would not even sit with them. One of the things that happens when one is right with God, is that he will separate himself from those who are not right with God.

**Reason #7** - Because David maintained true fellowship and worship with God. **26:6-8**

In order to have true fellowship with God and true worship of God, there are four necessary ingredients that David mentions:

**(Ingredient #1)** - David had washed hands that were innocent . **26:6a**

Hands that are innocent are hands that have been washed clean of any unclean thing. It isn't that there aren't some unclean things; it is that one right with God gets cleaned up from them.

**(Ingredient #2)** - David properly considered the sacrifices at the altar. **26:6b**

Andrew Bonar said: "The meaning is, that he will go round and round the altar, looking at it, looking at the blood on its base, and the blood on each of the four horns, towards the north, south, east, and west and beholding the smoke of the fire, and thinking of the sacrificial victim that has died there, all in the way of joyful thanks, for salvation provided for men! It is a survey of redemption-work, taken by the Redeemer; such as survey as every member of his body often takes after having felt the power of free forgiveness, and while aiming at innocence. For the compassing of the altar takes place after pardon..." (*Psalms*, p. 91).

**(Ingredient #3)** - David gave thankful proclamation and declaration. **26:7**

David was a great witness for God. He was always thankful to God for who God was and for what he had seen God do. It didn't matter that he was surrounded by enemies. He was a consistent witness for the Lord.

**(Ingredient #4)** - David had a love for God's house . **26:8**

People who love God love God's house. In fact, in this Grace Age, to forsake ourselves from assembling together with other believers is sin. Godly people love to go to church where they can be taught the Word of God. They love to be around others who love God's Word.

Dr. Chuck Swindoll has a good word on this point: “Unfortunately, we live in a day of de-emphasis regarding the value and necessity of public worship. I realize that some churches may fail to point the worshiper to the living Christ and to teach His marvelous Word. But this does not mean that all churches and all public worship gatherings are to be ignored. Hebrews 10:23-25 leaves us no option—we are to assemble together for the purpose of mutual stimulation toward the expression of love and good deeds...for encouragement! This is so important when undergoing mistreatment. We need each other. Christian friend, do not neglect this God-ordained, healthy expression of your faith. Let me add one more thought here. Show me a believer who consistently neglects the regular services of a church that faithfully preaches and teaches the Word, and I’ll show you one whose cutting edge on spiritual things is getting dull—one who is losing ground, spiritually speaking” (*Ibid.*, p. 90).

If we want fellowship with God, we must be clean through washing, we must consider what makes us clean—the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we must be thankful for all God has done for us and given to us and we must go to church to hear God’s Word.

**REQUEST #3** – The request for a judgment different from those evil. **26:9-10**

David was not afraid of judgment, but David did not want his outcome to be the same as those wicked. He did not want their doom. Now keep in mind that all people are sinners and when God sends His judgment against sinners, He could legitimately include everyone. David asked God not to do that. He asked God to preserve him and use him.

Wicked people devour innocent people. They have wicked schemes and they bribe and manipulate other people. Wicked people are cutthroats and verbal assassins.

David was never like that. He was a man of integrity. He walked in ways that were right before God and he did not want the kind of judgment brought on wicked people.

What David wanted is clearly stated in **verse 11**. He wanted redemption due to God’s grace. He wanted to stand level in a right relationship with God. He wanted to end up blessing the Lord in the congregations of those who would bless the Lord (**Verse 12**).

**PRACTICAL LESSONS:**

- 1) Godly people are not afraid to be put to the test by God to prove faithfulness.**
- 2) Godly people keep away from deceitful people who pretend to be right with God.**
- 3) Godly people maintain a constant and consistent commitment to public worship.**
- 4) Godly people walk before God and pray to God in a context of truth.**
- 5) Godly people realize God’s judgment will come.**