

Gamma 26

Study 13

Praying His Beauty: A Study of Psalm 27

1. What are the three metaphors David uses to describe the Lord in Psalm 27?

- David describes the Lord as his "light," which signifies joy, holiness, perfection, and truth. Darkness is the opposite of light, and for David, the Lord being his light is the very "reason for living" and his "meaning of life".
- The Lord is also described as David's "salvation," meaning deliverance from his enemies.
- Lastly, God is depicted as a "stronghold," which implies indestructibility and security for those who are with God. The speaker emphasizes that with God as a stronghold, David is "basically indestructible".

When we ponder what God is to us through these metaphors, it brings "joy and peace".

2. How does David's contemplation in Psalm 27, particularly in the face of external and internal devastation, demonstrate an experiential understanding?

David contemplates God's nature not in abstract terms, but amidst real-life external threats (enemies, armies) and internal devastation (forsaken by family).

His confidence and singular desire for God despite these trials illustrate an experiential understanding.

3. Reflection Question - What thoughts do you dwell on when you face difficulties and trials?

4. What "one thing" does David ask of the Lord, despite his numerous sufferings?

The "one thing" David asked for is to dwell in the house of the Lord forever and gaze on His beauty.

This is significant because he could have prayed for protection (even though God is already his stronghold), reconciliation with his family, or the destruction of his enemies, but instead, he asks for God Himself. It reveals his true desire for deep, intimate, and unbroken fellowship with God.

David's life was falling apart, but he knew that this intimate fellowship was "the answer." He yearned for "continuing pleasure of the presence of God in his life," like "staying in church the whole day rather than going back for six days and coming on the seventh day".

God recognised this deep desire in David, despite his flaws, that he "actually wants God for himself not what God will do for him"

5. What does "seeking God's face" primarily signify?

"Seeking God's face" (panin) does not refer to a physical face, but rather to the experience of God's intimate presence and a deep, personal relationship with Him. It signifies a desire to truly experience God beyond merely knowing about Him.

David's desire is expressed as, "I read about you but I want to experience you". It represents a deep, personal yearning to truly encounter God beyond merely intellectual knowledge.

6. Reflection Question - Have you ever "sought God's face"? If yes, why and if no, why not?

7. How is the desire for intimacy with God, or "seeking His face," a divine initiative rather than purely a human one?

The ability and longing to seek God originate from God Himself, not purely from human effort.

As Jesus states in John 6:44, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him". We will never seek him on our own and it is only when He asks us to seek his face then we will reply "Your face do I seek".

The "actual loneliness" and "desire for intimacy with God" actually comes from God Himself. Even a "spiritual feeling of abandonment by God" can be a "good sign" that one is in close fellowship, as the very desire for His presence proves "you are actually God's son or daughter and that he wants you close to him". This highlights that our faith is a result of God drawing us.

8. How does the analogy of the "golden ratio" connect our natural human response to God's beauty?

The analogy of the "golden ratio" and attractive design suggests that humans are instinctively drawn to and find pleasure in beauty.

Similarly, God's beauty is inherently attractive and desirable to our spiritual dimension, drawing us in and providing satisfaction.

9. What are the five ways Tim Keller suggested to seek God's beauty?

- **Seek it Existentially**

Desiring to experience God's beauty personally and deeply in one's heart, not just intellectually. You want "a sense of... his holiness and glory" in your heart.

- **Seek it Deliberately**

This involves intentionally setting aside time for worship, wordless contemplation, or disciplined pursuit of God's presence. It requires effort and discipline, as it "doesn't come automatically".

- **Seek it in the Word**

Understanding and experiencing God's beauty comes through studying His Word. David's desire to "inquire" and "teach me your way" (Psalm 27:11) shows that he knew "to dwell in God's presence is to dwell in his word" and allow it to transform how one lives.

- Seek it in Jesus

In the New Testament, God's ultimate glory and beauty, which resolves the tension of human sinfulness, is found in the person and redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

- Seek it Patiently

This encourages believers to "Wait for the Lord; Be strong, Let your hearts take courage, Wait for the Lord" (Psalm 27:14). Waiting patiently "expresses faith and grows your soul and character," as things in the Christian life don't always come immediately.

10. Reflection Question - How can we help one another "seek His face" daily?

Takeaway

Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face.
And the things of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.