

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm Four: God's Remedy For The Afflicted Who Face Painful Verbal Abuse

(Psalm 4:1-8)

I. Introduction

- A. Some say that "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but **words** will never harm me!" However, reality teaches that **words DO** damage us! Besides, Patricia Evans who has "worked extensively in counseling and recovery settings with battered women," in her book, The Verbally Abusive Relationship, p. 13 reports that "**Physical** abuse is **always preceded** by **verbal** abuse." If verbal abuse occurs, it is only a matter of chance and time that **physical** abuse will **follow**!
- B. Well, how do we **handle** painful verbal abuse? Is there an authoritative word from **God** on the matter?
- C. Psalm Four is David's insight on **how** he **handled** such verbal abuse as follows:

II. God's Remedy For The Afflicted Who Face Painful Verbal Abuse, Psalm 4:1-8.

- A. The "similarities in . . . expression and structure" between the Davidic Psalm Four and his Psalm **Three** where the enemy is son, Absalom have led scholars to conclude that David composed **both** psalms for the "same crisis," Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, p. 794! If so, this psalm takes on an added thrust of application to instruct one relating to a difficult, close **relative** to whom one **must** relate!
- B. The problem David faces in this psalm is **slander** over a **long period** of **time**, Psalm 4:2. By way of implication the matter was so critical to his welfare and so bothered David that his sleep was threatened, Ps.4:8a. Specifically applied to his conflict with Absalom, David saw him **discredit** his **administration** before the entire nation in order to win a following unto himself **away from** his father, David, 2 S. 15:1-6!
- C. David's solution is worth itemizing as a **remedy** for all who face prolonged, painful, verbal abuse:
 1. Step One - Confess any sins outstanding to God so that we can pray in accord with His Biblical will.
 - a. David calls God the God of **his** righteousness, claiming the righteousness of God applied to his personal standing as a basis for his current deliverance, 4:1a.
 - b. He was right with God, so we must be right with God before praying, also, 1 Jn. 1:9; Ps. 66:18!
 2. Step Two - Depending upon memories of God's former resolutions to equally critical concerns of one's past, **pray** to God **righteously** for His intervention, Psalm 4:1b.
 3. Step Three - Trust in the sovereign immutability of God to be **unaffected** in **His** attitude toward us though **many other** people may be swayed to believe the enemy's lies, Ps. 4:3a,b:
 - a. David states that God is not **able** to be **seduced** by the lies, but is **immutably** impartial and sovereignly sets the upright apart for Himself where He has no such fellowship with the ungodly who slander, and for those who follow their lies, Ps. 4:3a.
 - b. Thus, David is confident that God will hear his prayer no matter **what** the slanderer achieves, 4:3b.
 4. Step Four - With such confidence in **God**, David instructs other similar sufferers **not** to ventilate their infuriated revenge on their **persecutors**, but **rather** to direct all of their frustrations in prayer to God so they can rest in **silence** before **men** about their frustrations, Ps. 4:4.
 5. Step Five - **Focus** on **worshipping** and **trusting the Lord INSTEAD OF** letting the injustice **eat away inside** of us to where we take **vengeance**, Ps. 4:5-6. If we allow the injustice done by our enemy to distract us toward taking revenge, the **abusive party** then controls **US** by our **reactions**, even if they are negatively expressed toward him, for **that satisfies his deep need control us**. That in turn just equips him to continue more abuse to satisfy his need for continued **control**, *Ibid.*, Evans, p. 40!
 6. Step Six - Because of God's resulting peace of mind, one realizes that he **himself** is much more blessed than his **pathetic, abusive opponent** is **at his BEST** ("when **their** grain and new wine abound," something that happens at the most blessed time of harvest in the agricultural society of Palestine), 4:7.
 7. Step Seven - Having come to a resolution by taking these steps, the psalmist can lie down and get some rest, trusting that God alone is able to protect him from his opponent, Ps. 4:8.

Lesson: *Painful, prolonged, verbal abuse can be matched ONLY by a discerning, Almighty God who is immutable to being confused or controlled by the abuser, for any foolish, knee-jerk reaction to it only plays into the hands of the verbally abusive party. Such futile reactions meet his morbid need to control the feelings and actions of others EVEN IF those reactions are VENGEFUL! We respond best by following Psalm 4's steps to handle weaknesses WITHIN US so the offender cannot CONTROL US!*