

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm Five: Overcoming When Facing Unjust Confusion And Self-Doubt Due To Opposition (Psalm 5:1-12)

I. Introduction

- A. It is a part of life to face opposition to in life at work, school, ministry, recreation or home life. But what can make this experience especially difficult is the **confusion** or **self-doubt** that comes when the opponent unloads upon us accusations as to our motives, calling or methods of operation.
- B. Patricia Evans calls it *crazy-making*, the recipient of the opposition having "anxiety or fear of being crazy," "an internalized 'critical voice'" or "a growing self-doubt," The Verbally Abusive Relationship, p. 43.
- C. Psalm Five identifies this challenge and provides us the vehicle of handling the problem.

II. Overcoming When Facing Unjust Confusion And Self-Doubt Due To Opposition, Psalm 5:1-12.

- A. Verse 8 reveals that David had enough confusion and self-doubt from facing his opponents that he needed to request God's "gentle herding" of him like one would herd a frightened, confused animal!
 1. The KJV, NASB and NIV versions all translate Psalm 5:8a as "**Lead** me, O Lord . . .", but the Hebrew word for "Lead" here is *naha*, translated better as "gently lead/guide or even *herd* me out of trouble, O Lord," Theol. Wordbook of the Old Testament, Harris, Archer & Waltke, v. II, p. 568; B.D.B., Hebrew and English Lexicon, p. 634; Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 979.
 2. The reason David uses this word is explained in the phrase, ". . . because of mine enemies" which displays that his enemies so oppressed David that he didn't know **what** to think **or do!**
- B. We thus break down the psalm into **steps** to take when our opponent has us confused and in self-doubt:
 1. Step One - Compare the degrees of righteousness we see in GOD and in the OPPONENT to begin to ascertain where the **truth** lies, Psalm 5:4-6 with 5:9.
 - a. To **begin** to handle his confusion, the psalmist focuses on the **righteousness** of **GOD**, recalling that GOD (1) takes no pleasure in evil (5:4), that (2) He cannot tolerate the boastful (5:5a) or (3) sinners (5:5b), that (4) He destroys liars (5:6a,c) and (5) the violent man (5:6b).
 - b. However, in **contrast** to a righteous **GOD**, David's **opponents** (1) do not speak words that are upright and thus true (5:9a), they (2) plan to destroy others in their thoughts (5:9b), they (3) destroy men by their words (5:9c) and (4) deceitfully use flattery to control others for their purposes (5:9d).
 - c. Consequently, David realizes that his opponents are **wrong**, a good starting point to handle being confused and full of self-doubt because of their efforts and words against him!
 2. Step Two - Based upon this conviction that somehow the opponents are wrong, **pray** for help, 5:1-2!
 3. Step Three - In praying, **depend** upon God's **grace** (lit., *chesed* in the Hebrew, v. 8a) in the **position** we have in Christ as believers, and make sure we are experientially cleansed of sin, Psalm 5:8a; 1 Jn. 1:9.
 4. Step Four - In praying, **approach** God with utmost **respect** for Him, knowing that God will not treat roughly those who may be acting wrongly due to **confusion** as they truly **respect** Him, Psalm 5:8b.
 5. Step Five - In praying, **request** these **changes** in the matter by God: (a) request God's "gentle leading" as we admit to God that we are confused by our opponent (and may be accidentally wrong), Psalm 5:8, and see "II,A,1-2" above! (b) Then request that God makes the direction we are to think and act ones that are **obvious**, or "**straight** before (our) **face**," Psalm 5:8b. (c) Request that ((a)) the opponents be declared guilty by God so that they are classified as rebels against **Him** (5:10d) ((b)) that their intrigues against us backfire upon them (5:10b) ((d)) so that they are neutralized from afflicting **OTHER** innocent people, Psalm 5:11-12. (d) Request that **OTHERS** who trust and love the Lord be protected by God from these opponents so that **they** can be joyful in Him, Psalm 5:11.

Lesson: *When confused and full of self-doubt from facing an opponent who verbally and actively puts us into that state, (1) examine ourselves before GOD to make adjustments according to HIS authority and NOT according to the OPPONENT'S input, for we serve GOD, not the OPPONENT, cf. Gal. 1:10b; 1 Cor. 7:23; Rom. 14:3-4. (2) If we are RIGHT with GOD, in a spirit of humility, we should request divine clarity and protection for us and others from the ERRANT input from the opponent as that INPUT is DESTRUCTIVE against the WILL OF GOD, cf. Rom. 14:3-4! In this way, we remove ourselves from the temptation of again being confused by these verbal abusers!*