

Psalm 4

How to Get Relief from Adverse Circumstances, Psalm 4:1-8

Psalm 4:1-8 (NKJV)

¹ Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in *my* distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

² How long, O you sons of men, *Will you turn my glory to shame? How long* will you love worthlessness *And* seek falsehood? *Selah*

³ But know that the Lord has set apart for Himself him who is godly; The Lord will hear when I call to Him.

⁴ Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. *Selah*

⁵ Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the Lord.

⁶ *There are* many who say, “Who will show us *any* good?” Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.

⁷ You have put gladness in my heart, More than in the season that their grain and wine increased.

⁸ I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

1. (Psalm 4:1) Call upon the God of righteousness.

Psalm 4:1 (NKJV)

¹ Hear me when I call, O God of my **righteousness**! You have relieved me in *my* distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

a. For relief from distress (**v. 1**).

Psalm 4:1 (NKJV)

¹ Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have **relieved** me in *my* **distress**; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

b. For mercy (**v. 1**).

Psalm 4:1 (NKJV)

¹ Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in *my* distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

Theological Insight

Mercy (*khanan*) means God **stooping down**. This is not earned—it is **granted out of God’s character**. Mercy is not God giving us what we deserve—it is God **withholding judgment and extending grace**.

Illustrations

1. Biblical Illustration – The Tax Collector (Luke 18:13)

Luke 18:13 NKJV

¹³ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’

He offered no defense —only dependence. And Jesus said he went home justified.

Application:

God responds not to pride, but to **humble cries for mercy**.

2. Biblical Illustration – The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:20)

Luke 15:20 NKJV

²⁰ “And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

The father didn’t wait for a speech — he ran, embraced, and restored.

Application:

God’s mercy meets us **before we finish our explanation.**

3. Modern-Day Illustration – A Failing Christian

A believer who has stumbled in sin feels unworthy to pray. Yet when they return, they find no rejection, but restoration.

Application:

God does not relate to you based on your perfection, but on **His mercy.**

Everything we receive from God is due to His mercy. We never deserve His lovingkindness or assistance, but only His wrath. **Gracious (khanan)** literally means “**to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior.**” Through His marvelous grace, we have been brought into a relationship with the God “**who stoops down to help needy human beings.**”

c. To hear and answer your prayer (v. 1).

Psalm 4:1 (NKJV)

¹ Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

Theological Insight

David prays with assurance because of **relationship**, not **performance**.

Prayer is **not shouting into the void**—it is speaking to a **present, attentive God**.

Illustrations

1. Biblical Illustration – Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:36–38)

1 Kings 18:36-38 NKJV

³⁶ And it came to pass, at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, “Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be Known this day that *You are* God in Israel and I *am* Your servant, and *that* I have done all these things at Your word.

³⁷ Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that *You are* the Lord God, and *that* You have turned their hearts back *to You* again.”

³⁸ Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that *was* in the trench.

Elijah prayed a **simple prayer**—and God answered **with fire**.

Application:

Power in prayer is not in **length**—but in **alignment** with God.

2. Biblical Illustration – Jesus at Lazarus’ Tomb (John 11:41–42)

John 11:41-42 NKJV

⁴¹ Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.

⁴² And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me.”

Application:

Before the **miracle came**, the confidence was **already there**.

3. Modern-Day Illustration – Persistent Prayer

A parent prays for a prodigal child **for years**. Nothing changes—**until one day**, everything does.

Application:

God’s silence is not absence—He is working in ways you cannot yet see.

Because of his covenant relationship with the Lord, David boldly requested God’s attention and action on his behalf. He prayed in full assurance that God would answer him. We too have the same privilege of prayer: we can enter God’s holy presence any time, any place. The Lord’s door is always open to us. We can call out to Him with complete confidence that He will answer us according to His will.

Thought 1. David’s basis for calling out to God was the Lord’s faithfulness. Throughout life, time and again, God had given David relief from distress. **“Power in prayer comes in part from our memories. Satan wants to make us forget the answers to prayer which we have already received.”**

When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the Lord ordered them to build memorials as a reminder of the great victories He had given. After He miraculously parted the overflowing waters of the Jordan River, God commanded Joshua to build a memorial with twelve stones for future generations (Joshua 4:1-9).

Joshua 4:1-9 NKJV

The Memorial Stones

¹ And it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over the Jordan, that the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying:

² “Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe,

³ and command them, saying, ‘Take for yourselves twelve stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan, from the place where the priests’ feet stood firm. You shall carry them over with you and leave them in the lodging place where you lodge tonight.’”

⁴ Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe;

⁵ and Joshua said to them: “Cross over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel,

⁶ that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, ‘What do these stones *mean* to you?’”

⁷ Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever.”

⁸ **And the children of Israel did so, just as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones from the midst of the Jordan, as the Lord had spoken to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and laid them down there.**

⁹ **Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant stood; and they are there to this day.**

Generations later, the Jews instituted the **Feast of Purim** as an annual memorial to God's deliverance from destruction at the hand of wicked Haman (**Esther 9:26-28**).

Esther 9:26-28 NKJV

²⁶ **So they called these days Purim, after the name Pur. Therefore, because of all the words of this letter, what they had seen concerning this matter, and what had happened to them,**
²⁷ **the Jews established and imposed it upon themselves and their descendants and all who would join them, that without fail they should celebrate these two days every year, according to the written *instructions* and according to the *prescribed* time,**
²⁸ ***that these days should be* remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city, that these days of Purim should not fail *to be observed* among the Jews, and *that* the memory of them should not perish among their descendants.**

Many of the psalms are reminders of God's past faithfulness and recount His mighty acts on Israel's behalf. In our times of deepest distress, we can be encouraged by remembering all the prayers God has answered in the past. Every problem He has solved, every need He has provided, every sickness He has healed—all of these remind us that God is faithful. He did it before, and He will do it again. He loves us enough to give His Son for us, and He will not fail us (**Romans 8:32**).

Romans 8:32 NKJV

³² **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**

He will always show Himself strong on our behalf, and He will always prove sufficient for our every need.

1 Corinthians 1:9 NKJV

⁹ **God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Deuteronomy 7:9 NKJV

⁹ **“Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments.**

Psalm 77:10-11 NKJV

¹⁰ **And I said, “This is my ^languish; *But I will remember* the years of the right hand of the Most High.”**

¹¹ **I will remember the works of the Lord; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.**

Psalm 89:1 NKJV

¹ **I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever; With my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations.**