

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) “The God of Mercy: From Distress to Redemption”

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.

Exodus 34:6-7 NKJV

⁶ And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,

⁷ keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.”

I. THEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)

Mercy is not merely something God *does*—it is something God *is*.

In Exodus 34:6–7, when God reveals His glory to Moses, He does not begin with power, wrath, or sovereignty—though all are true. He begins with mercy:

⁶ “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth...”

This is the **self-disclosure** of God’s nature.

- Mercy is **not reactionary**—it is **intrinsic**.
- Mercy is **not occasional**—it is **abounding**.
- Mercy is **not weak**—it is **holy compassion toward the guilty**.

Definition:

Mercy is God withholding the judgment we deserve while acting in compassion toward us in our misery.

II. MODERN-DAY INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

We live in a world that understands:

- **Justice** → “You get what you deserve.”
- **Fairness** → “Everyone should be treated equally.”

Is the following a biblical concept?

- Fairness → “Everyone should be treated equally.”

Short answer: partially—but not fully. The statement “everyone should be treated equally” reflects a moral intuition that overlaps with Scripture, but as stated, it is not a complete or precise biblical concept. Let’s clarify it carefully.

1. What is biblical about this idea?

Scripture strongly affirms **impartiality**—that people are not to be treated with favoritism based on status, wealth, ethnicity, or influence.

James 2:1 (NKJV)

“My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.”

Acts 10:34–35 (NKJV)

“In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.”

Deuteronomy 10:17 (NKJV)

“For the Lord your God... shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.”

Biblical principle:

God does not show favoritism—and neither should we. So, in that sense, the idea behind “fairness” aligns with **God’s justice and impartiality**.

2. Where the statement becomes unbiblical (or incomplete)

The phrase “everyone should be treated equally” breaks down when examined through the full counsel of Scripture.

A. God does not treat everyone identically

God is impartial, but **He does not act uniformly toward all people in every respect.**

Different roles (**Romans 12:4–6**)

Romans 12:4-6 NKJV

⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,

⁵ so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith.*

Different callings (**Ephesians 4:11**)

Ephesians 4:11 NKJV

¹¹ And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.

Different levels of accountability (**Luke 12:48**)

Luke 12:48 NKJV

⁴⁸ But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

Even in salvation history: Israel was chosen uniquely (**Deuteronomy 7:6**)

Deuteronomy 7:6 NKJV

⁶ “For you *are* a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

The church has distinct blessings (**Ephesians 1:3–5**)

Ephesians 1:3-5 NKJV

³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,

⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

Conclusion:

Equality of worth ≠ sameness of role, function, or treatment.

B. Justice in Scripture is not “equal treatment” but “righteous judgment”

Leviticus 19:15 (NKJV)

“You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.”

Notice:

- Not favoritism toward the rich
- Not favoritism toward the poor
- But **righteous judgment**

Biblical justice is not flattening everyone into identical outcomes—it is rendering what is right according to truth.

C. The Gospel itself is not “equal treatment”

If God treated everyone “**equally**” in a strict sense:

All would receive **justice alone** → condemnation (**Romans 3:23; 6:23**)

Romans 3:23 NKJV

²³ For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 NKJV

²³ For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But instead, God gives **mercy to some** through Christ

Romans 9:15 (NKJV)

“I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy.”

This is not unfair — it is grace.

Key distinction:

- **Justice** = getting what you deserve
- **Mercy** = not getting what you deserve
- **Grace** = receiving what you do not deserve

The Gospel operates on mercy and grace, not “equal treatment.”

3. A more biblically accurate formulation

Instead of saying:

“Everyone should be treated equally”

A more precise biblical statement would be:

“All people are equal in worth before God and should be treated with impartiality, while being judged and dealt with according to righteousness, truth, and God’s sovereign purposes.”

4. Summary for teaching clarity

- **Biblical:**
 - All people bear God’s image (**Genesis 1:27**)

Genesis 1:27 NKJV

²⁷ **So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.**

- God shows no partiality
- We must not show favoritism
- **Unbiblical (if absolute):**
 - Everyone receives identical treatment
 - Everyone has the same role or outcome
 - Justice = equal outcomes
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- **Biblical balance:**
 - Equal **value**
 - Impartial **treatment**
 - Righteous **judgment**
 - Sovereign **grace**