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**BIBLE STUDY**

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**“GO HARD IN THE PAINT”**

**Psalms 63**

 **[A Psalm] of David**

**“GO HARD IN THE PAINT”** comes from basketball slang. In the sport, the paint, also called the key or free throw lane refers to the rectangular lane underneath the hoop on a basketball court. Because more shots are made closer to the net, the paint sees a lot of action in a game, so players going for baskets in the paint need to be aggressive in their efforts, or go hard, to use another slang phrase. To go hard in the paint spread from the court to youth slang for “to give it one’s best.” The background of this psalm reminds us of this popular expression. It tells of the time when David was in the wilderness of Judah, which refers to either or both periods when he was a fugitive from Saul (1 Samuel 23:14, 24; 24:1; 25:1) or his son Absalom. Most likely when he fled Jerusalem during Absalom’s rebellion (2 Samuel 15:28). Yet he longs for the closeness of God to experience his Glory.

***Psalms 63:1 " O God, thou [art] my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;"***

In the expression “thou art my God” in Hebrew is arranged grammatically as “My God You are,” by which he underscored not simply the deity of the Lord but also the comforting and joy-giving truth that the Lord, who is the only real deity, was his God, personally and intimately. In this scripture, the psalmist David proclaims, “Early will I seek thee.” Many believers, along with David, believe the bible encourages that the best time to seek God is the first thing in the morning.

***Proverbs 1:28 “Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:”***

***Proverbs 8:17 “I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.”***

***Isaiah 26:9 “With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”***

***Hosea 5:15 “I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.”***

David’s longing for God is deep: my soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns [lit., “faints”] for You. The description is heightened by the image of desperate thirst in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

***Psalm 42:1 “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.”***

His experience in the dry, desolate wilderness without water prompts David to consider his thirst, that of his soul. What he truly thirsts for is not water but God. David’s being in the wilderness sets the stage both for his thirst for God and for drawing a parallel to Israel’s wilderness wandering with the hope of entering and subduing Canaan. The mention of the king at the conclusion of the psalm puts this psalm in the context of the Torah’s (Pentateuch’s) anticipation of the deliverance brought by the great King who will arise from Judah and rescue God’s people. The water, that David is speaking of, is the Spirit of God. The reason we know for sure that the water David is thirsting for, is the Spirit, is the fact that Jesus told the woman at the well she would never thirst again, if she drank the water, He gave her. This is really speaking of righteousness through the Spirit of God. All of this leaves no doubt that the dry and thirsty land, in verse one above, is a land without the Spirit of God.

***John 4:14 "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."***

***John 6:35 "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."***

***Psalms 63:2 "To see thy power and thy glory, so [as] I have seen thee in the sanctuary."***

David’s thirst had been satisfied when he was able to gaze on the glory of God in his sanctuary, the tabernacle. But, in the wilderness, David longs for God’s glory. Although when David was in the wilderness removed from God’s presence, he had seen Him in the sanctuary and knew of God’s power and His glory.

***Exodus 13:21-22***

***21 And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:***

***22 He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.***

David wants very much to be able to worship, again, in the sanctuary where he had witnessed the presence of God. We know that in David's youth, he had been in close relationship with the Lord. This is really what he is desiring, again, here. Believers should refuse to attend church, where the presence of God is not evident. There is no more hollow feeling, than to seek God and not be able to sense His presence.

***Psalms 63:3 "Because thy lovingkindness [is] better than life, my lips shall praise thee."***

By the statement “thy lovingkindness is better than life”, David meant that God’s “chesed” which will bring him into the glory and complete joy of the next life, is better than anything that the present life has to offer. “Chesed” is a [Hebrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_language) word that means “kindness or love between people”, specifically of the devotional piety of people towards God as well as of love or mercy of God towards humanity.

***Psalm 17:7 “Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them.”***

***Psalm 26:3 “For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.”***

***Isaiah 63:7 “I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.***

***Jeremiah 9:24 “But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.”***

Even in the wilderness, David finds satisfaction, joy, and comfort in praising God. Better than life itself is the faithful love that God demonstrates toward those who fear him. To live this life without God is not worth living. The only life worth living, is the life we live in Him.

***Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."***

We Christians, even more than David, have much to praise the Lord for. He paid the price for our sins that we might live in His righteousness. Our lips should not stop day and night praising His wonderful name. God inhabits the praises of Israel. Christians are spiritual Israel.

***Psalms 63:4 "Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name."***

Had you ever really thought of it being possible that we might bless the Lord? Notice, how long David says he will praise Him. He says as long as there is breath in his body, he will praise God. Can we who have received so much more than David, do less? Notice, how David blesses Him. He lifts his hands toward heaven and praises Him. This reminds me of the offering that is waved before the Lord in the tabernacle. Do you suppose, by raising our hands toward heaven to bless the Lord, that we are dedicating our work with our hands to Him? Even the lifting of the hands must be done in the name of the Lord.

***Psalms 63:5 "My soul shall be satisfied as [with] marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise [thee] with joyful lips:"***

In this hope his soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, that is, highly valued and nourishing food sources. The fat of the offering was burned as a sweet-smelling savour to God. The fat, then, could be a spiritual blessing that we receive in our soul when we bless God. This beautiful experience can make us alive with joy, and nothing but praise could come from our lips. The dry bones in Ezekiel needed but a breath of the Spirit of God to make the fat and marrow come on them and make them alive again. I won't tell you where it is, it is good to search the Word for morsels of truth. When you, like David, realize that God’s faithfulness is more important than life-sustaining necessities such as food and water, you, too, will praise [him] with joyful lips. Such genuine worship will sustain you in your own wilderness experiences.

***Psalms 63:6-7***

***6 "When I remember thee upon my bed, [and] meditate on thee in the [night] watches."***

***7 "Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice."***

David said he will remember God on his bed and meditate on God in the night watches, emphasizing the importance (and benefit) of meditating in all wakeful hours of the night. As he lay awake at night, David could have been consumed by his troubles. Instead, he disciplines himself to meditate on God because he is his helper. David, perhaps, was like many of us. He was so busy during the day, that his best time to be quiet and think of God was on his bed at night. Sometimes just thinking of God and His plans early in the night get me so excited that, I forget what time it is and visit most of the night with him. In the “shadow of thy wings” is one of David’s favorite phrases, since it so beautifully and concisely expresses his sense of relationship with, security in, and submission to the Lord.

***Psalm 17:8 “Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,”***

***Psalm 36:7 “How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.”***

***Psalm 57:1 “Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.”***

***Psalm 63:7 “Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.”***

How beautiful to feel the protection underneath the protecting wings of God. We talked about how a mother hen will get her little chickens under her wings before the storm comes for their protection. This just means that God is that protective, and even more, of us. Just knowing that God is protecting us should make us rejoice. David says, you have been my help in the past, and I know you will protect me now.

***Psalms 63:8 "My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me."***

David is saying, that even though he made some mistakes, he sought the Lord with everything within him. He would not be denied. He just came to the Lord over and over. This sense of personal intimacy is poignantly emphasized by the statement “my soul followeth hard after thee” is the verb “clings” and is the same one used to express the bond between husband and wife. This “Right Hand”, and its mention all through the Bible, is speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ. God’s right hand, a metaphor for his sovereign power, supports David. David’s musings should make you ask where you focus during your times of suffering. To whom do you first turn for help?

***Psalms 63:9-10***

***9 "But those [that] seek my soul, to destroy [it], shall go into the lower parts of the earth."***

***10 "They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes."***

Even though David is in the wilderness, chased from his throne and hunted like an animal, he is certain that his enemies would be defeated. This was not self-confidence but God-confidence. David's enemies were actually out to destroy him. They were not out just for David's life, but to destroy his reputation, as well. They were God's enemies, as well as David's, and their destination was hell. It really is no different now. There are people who do nothing except try to cause you to sin. The devil has sent them on a mission to steal your soul. They are out to destroy you. The flesh and the spirit of man are constantly in battle. The will of man has to do with the soul. The spirit or the flesh of man will control the will of man. If the spirit rules, the man is saved and will spend eternity in heaven. If the flesh rules, the man is headed for an eternity in hell. Those that live by the sword, shall die by the sword. Those who are opposed to God's family will die in the field of battle. A very good example of this is Ezekiel where 5 out of 6 of those opposed to Israel are killed. The scripture says that the animals and birds shall eat their flesh.

***Ezekiel 39:1-5***

***1 Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:***

***2 And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel:***

***3 And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand.***

***4 Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.***

***5 Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God.***

***Psalms 63:11 "But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped."***

In spite of the fact that a rebellion had taken his crown, David believes that the state of affairs was temporary. He is still the king. David will greatly rejoice because his enemies have been defeated by God. No matter the negative circumstances you face, put your confidence in the one whose love for you is “better than life.” Christians where is our rejoicing? Our enemy, the devil, has been defeated by the Lord Jesus Christ. This is prophetically speaking of Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords, as well. Everyone who swears by (places their confidence in) this future King will glory (lit., “boast,”), for He will fulfill all that He has promised, and so the mouths of those who speak lies and contradict what God has said, will be stopped. The swearing by Him, just means that we have professed our belief in Him with our mouth. The liars, spoken of, are children of their father, the devil, who is the author of all lies. Christians will not have to hang their head in shame, because they will reign over these liars for the 1000-year reign of Jesus as King on this earth.

**Questions**

1. What does “Go Hard In The Paint” mean?
2. When did David seek God?
3. My \_\_\_\_\_ thirsteth for thee.
4. What was the water that David was seeking?
5. What is the dry and thirsty land, in verse 1?
6. Where was David longing to worship again?
7. Thy \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is better than life.
8. God inhabits the praises of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
9. Who is spiritual Israel?
10. Why do we lift our hands to God?
11. What was done with the fat of the offering?
12. What did the dry bones in Ezekiel need to make them live?
13. Where was David, in verse 6, when he remembered God?
14. Why do you suppose this was a good place to worship and meditate on God?
15. How does the mother hen protecting her chicks relate to verse 7?
16. What is meant by David when he says, his soul followeth hard after thee?
17. Where will those who sought to destroy David wind up?
18. The spirit is constantly in battle with the \_\_\_\_\_.
19. What does Ezekiel chapter 39 say will happen to the enemies of God's people?
20. Who is verse 11 speaking of prophetically?
21. Why will the Christians not be ashamed at last?