

**WILL GOD'S SCRUTINY REVEAL YOUR MUTINY:
Walk faithfully before an all-knowing God:
An Exposition of Psalm 26:
2nd Edition:**

INTRODUCTION:

Several years ago, in Long Beach, California, a fellow went into a fried chicken place and bought a couple of chicken dinners for himself and his date late one afternoon. The young woman at the counter inadvertently gave him the proceeds from the day—a whole bag of money (much of it cash) instead of fried chicken. After driving to their picnic site, the two of them sat down to open the meal and enjoy some chicken together. They discovered a whole lot more than chicken—over \$800! But he was unusual. He quickly put the money back in the bag. They got back into the car and drove all the way back. Mr. Clean got out, walked in, and became an instant hero. By then the manager was frantic. The guy with the bag of money looked the manager in the eye and said, “I want you to know I came by to get a couple of chicken dinners and wound up with all this money. Here.” Well, the manager was thrilled to death. He said, “Oh, great, let me call the newspaper. I’m gonna have your picture put in the local newspaper. You’re the most honest man I’ve heard of.” To which they guy quickly responded, “Oh no, no, don’t do that!” Then he leaned closer and whispered, “You see, the woman I’m with is not my wife...she’s uh, somebody else’s wife.”

He wanted the good parts of his life exposed but his bad parts hidden. He was trying to compartmentalize his life before others. **Do you and I do that?** And though we may be somewhat successful with each other in hiding the “embarrassing sinful appetites, tendencies or addictions,” there is no way we can hide our thought, motives, and activities before the omniscient Holy God of the Bible.

David is aware of God’s omniscience and so in his request for vindication he asks God to scrutinize his life because there is no truth to the accusations being made against him; he is a man of integrity (at this point in his life):

God see the whole character of a person. He is omniscient, omnipotent, and sovereign; He knows all things actual and all things potential. And in this psalm we have David asking for God’s vindication because he claims before God that he is a person of integrity. In fact, to demonstrate that He is indeed faithful, he welcomes the omniscient God of the Bible to scrutinize his life:

Therefore, this message is:
**WILL GOD’S SCRUTINY REVEAL YOUR MUTINY: WALKING WITH BARE
INTEGRITY BEFORE AN OMNISCIENT GOD!**

I will begin by examining this psalm. Then I will proceed to ask ourselves whether we can make the same request of God: *invite God to scrutinize our lives to determine if it is indeed true that we are faithful believers, who pro-actively make it our singular ambition to allow Jesus Christ to be preeminent in our lives.* Remember, David may be a king, but he is human...just like us.

II. THESIS STATEMENT & OUTLINE OF PSALM 26:

PSALM 26: If I could summarize this psalm in one statement it would be that David asks for God's vindication because of his personal integrity.

1. David's asserts that he is a person of integrity: (vv. 1-3)
2. David gives proof of his integrity (vv. 4-8)
3. David prays for a reward in view of his integrity (vv. 9-12)

1. Assertion of integrity 26:1-3:
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¹*Vindicate me, O Lord, For I have walked in my integrity. I have also trusted in the Lord; I shall not slip.*

²*Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart.*

³*For your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in your truth.*

This psalm appears to be the claim made by a man, David, whereby he declares before God that he is innocent of unspecified charges of wrongdoing which has been brought against him. There is nothing in this text that enables us to know that he was accused of doing, nor the circumstances in which he refutes the charges. But what we do find is that David ask God to vindicate him from these false charges. Evidently, his troubles are undeserved and he is suffering.

To be sure, he is not saying that he is without sin. Rather, he affirms that the whole intent of his heart/his mind is to do the will of God. Therefore, this psalm is not about positional sanctification. Rather, this psalm is about living faithfully as a saint in a hostile world. This is proven by (1) David appealing to God in view of his circumstances, (2) divine vindication in view of false accusations, (3) his invitation to God to scrutinize his life, (4) his proof of integrity by not associating with those who are against God, (4) and his passion to do God's will. In fact, after he makes this petition, he makes 7 claims regarding his behavior, from verses 1,3-8 alone. Then in verses 11-12 he makes to more claims. This has led some to call this psalm a "protective" psalm because David asking God to vindicate him because God truly is number one in his life. Others call this a psalm of an innocent man, the claims of the righteous; the safety of a pure life, or "A man who has done no wrong prays to God."

Therefore, in view in order to "clear" his name, "demonstrate" his integrity, he appeals to God.

Vs. 1: ¹*Vindicate me, O Lord, For I have walked in my integrity. I have also trusted in the Lord; I shall not slip.*

1. The word vindicate, *shaphat*, usually means "judge me." Here it implies declare righteous. Why?
2. Because David conducts his life with moral goodness; he is guiltless before God and is not liable for sin or wrong. In other words, his lifestyle and daily behavior demonstrates that he is blameless. Interestingly, this word "blameless" is the same word used to characterize Job in Job 1: "*There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.*"

3. Moreover, David asserts that his trust, his reliance is in God.
4. Then David says, “*I shall not slip.*” David’s trust in God is unfaltering because of whom his trust is in. Therefore, because he is relying on God he will not slip, waver, wobble, turn, or go out of control (Gal. 5:16-18; Eph. 5:18).

² *Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart.*

Related to verse 1 he invites God to scrutinize his life: “*Examine me Lord and prove: test my mind and my heart*”:

1. This word for “examine” is *bachan* which means “to probe, try, test, examine.” He invites God to examine his claim. He was confident that when the Lord would do this He would find David blameless.
2. He then adds the complementary word, “*test.*” The word “*test*” “*tsaraph* pronounced “*tsaw· raf:*” means to examine, formally, refine, i.e., taking out all the impurities. This word may be likened to the idea of a smelter, refining metals.
3. It could also be said that by using this word “test” or “refine”, David is aware that he is not sinless. So, while affirming his integrity before God, praying to be tested, David is aware of his need for purification. Expressing this need to God is what is needed before a believer who wants to grow in holiness.
4. *Where does he invite this scrutiny... his mind and heart!* Or if we translate this phrase, “mind and heart” a different way: “my thoughts and innermost feelings.”
 - a. **my mind:** inmost being , i.e., heart, mind, spirit of a man as a core of the inner person;
 - b. **heart,** mind, soul, spirit, self, i.e., the source of life of the inner person in various aspects, with a focus on feelings, thoughts, volition, and other areas of the inner life.
5. Then he adds in verse three: *For your loving-kindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in your truth.*
6. When saying “*before my eyes,*” David means “I am always aware of” or “I keep in mind”, your loyal love. So, he is saying that I always remember that you love me faithfully. His conduct in life is being obedient to his truth. Now both truth and loyal love are two aspects of divine quality; here once more, we see two qualities upon which David depending upon: Loyal love and truth. Therefore, David is saying that God has motivated and enabled him to walk with integrity of heart. This is not a man of self-confidence.

2. Proof of integrity 26:4-8:

Here we see implications of this disposition in view of his association with others:

⁴ *I have not sat with idolatrous mortals. Nor will I go in with hypocrites.*

⁵ *I have hated the assembly of evildoer, and will not sit with the wicked.*

26:4-5 David cited his separation from sinners and their assemblies as evidence that he was not wicked and deceitful (cf. 1:1). He was not speaking of his social preference but of his spiritual commitment. These were enemies of the Lord.

1. **Idolatrous mortals** are men of worthlessness: they are those who give themselves to the pursuit of vanity, scoundrels, imposters, and deceitful men. Interestingly, this phrase is sometimes expressed as “people who cheat others.”
2. **Hypocrites** are those whose ways and motives are hidden from others. Literally, they are those whose ways are hidden. The word “go in” generally means the idea of associating with, consorting; it is the idea of “keep company with.”
3. **Gathering of evildoers:** and will not sit (*dwell, remain*) with the wicked. Evildoers denote wickedness: it denotes the negative behavior of evil thoughts, words and deeds, a behavior not only contrary to God’s character, but also hostile to the community and which at the same time betrays the inner disharmony and unrest of a man.

So, he is not identified with the vain—the cheaters, those with hidden and wrong motives, or those who are hostile toward God.

⁶ *I will wash my hands in innocence; So will go about Your altar, O Lord,* ⁷ *that I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all Your wondrous works.* ⁸ *Lord, I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where your glory dwells.*

1. Rather, he identifies himself with worshipping God. What an identity! By using the word innocence, he is literally saying, “empty, bare” that is, there is no wrongdoing or said a different way: “God, I have done no wrong.”
2. The altar was more than just the place of sacrifice; it symbolized God’s table, where his fellowship and presence could be known. It is the place where people worship God.
3. 26:6-8 He preferred the sanctuary of the Lord to the meeting places of the wicked (cf. v. 5). Washing the hands in innocence is a figurative way of saying that his actions were righteous (cf. Matt. 27:24). He offered sacrifices to God in worship and praised God rather than ignoring Him as the wicked did.

3. Prayer for reward 26:9-12:

⁹ *Do not gather my soul with sinners, Nor my life with bloodthirsty men,* ¹⁰ *in whose hands is a sinister scheme, And whose right hand is full of bribes.* ¹¹ *But as for me, I will walk in my*

integrity, Redeem me and be merciful to me. ¹² *My foot stands in an even place; In the congregation I will bless the Lord.*

1. **26:9-10:** David asked God to spare him from a premature death in the company of the wicked. Evidently he expected God to judge the wicked this way and wanted God to separate him from them in His judgment as David had separated himself from them in his behavior. It appears that some people were grouping David together with others who were wicked in their thinking, but he did not want God to do that.
2. **26:11-12:** Having called on God to do right, the psalmist promised to do the same. By stating, “As for me”, David is using an emphatic phrase, possibly stressing the differences between evil and himself.
3. He would continue to do right as he waited for God to redeem him from his trouble. “Redeem” (Heb. *padah*) means to ransom or purchase out of trouble. This word often refers to the Israelites’ deliverance from Egypt in the Old Testament (e.g., Deut. 7:8; 2 Sam. 7:23; Mic. 6:4).
4. David felt he was on solid footing in his request. He looked forward to praising God publicly for saving him from his accusers. Some of have taken this phrase not figuratively, but literally, saying of the “level place in the Temple court...literally the temple floor.”
5. Then he closes this psalm by saying, “In the congregation I will bless the Lord.” This word, assembly or “great congregation” is in the plural form which seems to refer to the people of Israel gathered for worship in the Temple.

David can appeal confidently for vindication from the false accusations of spiritual enemies because he has a righteous standing before Him. Once more, this was not a claim to being sinless but to being righteous because of God's work in his life. The upright behavior of the righteous is evidence that David, by God's grace, different from the wicked.

How Should We Then Live?

6 Principles on how to walk with bare integrity before God:

1. **Invite God to regularly scrutinize your life.** If God has called us to be holy, to make Him our singular passion, then it seems that it would be spiritually profitable to invite God’s scrutiny in our lives. I say this because God honors authenticity. Seeing our reaction to this idea reveals more about us than it does about God. God already knows everything actual and all things potential. Therefore, he already knows our innermost thoughts, feelings, motives, and activities. Therefore, our response to this idea may shed light on how we are deceiving ourselves or attempt to deceive God.
 - a. Can we as believers, indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, make the same assertion to God as David did? Can we say to him, God, I have walked in my integrity; I walk in such a way that it reveals that I trust you. Examine me, God. Scrutinize my heart and mind, and you will see that it is the case. I have walked in your truth! If we can, we should keep asking God to scrutinize our lives? For no-one is immune to sin. It can lead us to places we never thought possible. Moreover,

if we don't continually invite God's scrutiny, we may forget that it is all about Him. Thus, our spirituality becomes our pride. If we can say to God that we are faithful, blameless believers, it is not because of our own effort, but because we have allowed the Holy Spirit to work in us; we are people who yield to God in the moment-by-moment details of daily living. Be careful of pride.

b If you and I are reluctant to ask for God's scrutiny, why?

2. **In your daily life don't ever allow sin to become more attractive than God.** If that is the case, there is a tremendous danger here if that is the case: Let me illustrate:

Dr. George Sweeting wrote in *Special Sermons for Special Days*:

“Several years ago our family visited Niagara Falls. It was spring, and ice was rushing down the river. As I viewed the large blocks of ice flowing toward the falls, I could see that there were carcasses of dead fish embedded in the ice. Gulls by the score were riding down the river feeding on the fish. As they came to the brink of the falls, their wings would go out, and they would escape from the falls.

“I watched one gull which seemed to delay and wondered when it would leave. It was engrossed in the carcass of a fish, and when it finally came to the brink of the falls, out went its powerful wings. The bird flapped and flapped and even lifted the ice out of the water, and I thought it would escape. But it had delayed too long so that its claws had frozen into the ice. The weight of the ice was too great, and the gull plunged into the abyss.”

The finest attractions of this world become deadly when we become overly attached to them. They may take us to our destruction if we cannot give them up—and as Sweeting observed, “Oh, the danger of delay!” Brother and sister in Christ, beseech God that you would have a greater passion for Him than that of the world. Pray every day that you would be passionate for Him.

3. **Allow God to speak peace rather than assume you have it.** It doesn't take much to deceive even ourselves. We can deceive ourselves into thinking that we are godly people, spiritually mature. Rather, what we are doing is suppressing the truth, the “true” reality of the situation. And you know if you are suppressing the truth when you are reluctant to invite God's scrutiny!
4. **Remember that grace does not issue a license to sin.** Grace never condones what God has condemned at the cross (Rom. 8:3). Lundgaard describes the cheap grace of license thus:

The flesh works to make you forget the design (that you are saved to be holy) and think only of the remedy (if you sin you'll be forgiven). It preaches its own gospel, a twisted gospel, to us: “Go ahead and indulge-it's already paid for.” ...You know the flesh has made a breach in your defenses when your heart is hardened by its deceitfulness (Heb. 3:13) so that you are careless about sin. You will look at your life and think about how often you need God's forgiveness, and so think of it as something common, nothing to worry over or take pains about. You'll know you are hardened when you begin to extend the boundaries of Christian freedom to include

indulgences that in the past would have shocked you. Your flesh will whisper to you that strictness and anxious care about obedience are *legalism*-the gospel came to deliver you from such things! And besides, if you really do commit a sin, you can be forgiven later.¹

If we want to love God whole heartily, being ever so faithful before, we are to live rightly in His grace by showing how thankful we are for that redemption. What deliverance! What joy!

5. **Do not ever associate with grace abusers.** Whether they are Christians or non-Christians, their siren songs are enchanting. Their appeals and enticements are made to target the flesh.

For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. 2 Peter 2:18.²

- a. If your mind is persuaded to believe a sin is good for your soul, and your affections work up an appetite for it, your will gives its consent-the dominoes fall and the flesh bares its putrid fruit in your life.
- b. The licentious whispers: He can make evil sound good and good sound evil.
- c. "The deceiver disguises what is undesirable and harmful (the hook in the fishing lure, for example) beneath what he thinks we want (a brightly colored fly, if you're a fish). He hides from our minds the painful consequences we ought to consider (if you bite the hook, you'll be captured, cleaned and cooked), so that we make a false judgment. He is subtle, alluring, and patient when he needs to be, pushy when he has to be, and he knows our weaknesses. He has one goal in mind and is unscrupulous in his pursuit of it."³
- d. License perverts true Christian liberty; it makes a travesty of grace. It treats sin lightly, something that grace never does. It diminishes the cost of Christ's death and demeans the value of the cross.

Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity-for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. 2 Peter 2:16, 19

¹ Kris Lundgaard, *The Enemy Within*, p. 65.

² Whether the false teachers are Christians or non-Christians in 2 Peter 2, they are grace abusers for they lead people away from Christ into ruin. As Tom Constable says, "The false teachers appealed to their audiences with boastful (lit. swollen) words, promising more than they could deliver, with vain words empty of anything to back them up. Their appeal was to "the lustful desires of sinful human nature" (NIV). "Grandiose sophistry is the hook, filthy lust is the bait, with which these men catch those whom the Lord had delivered or was delivering." Furthermore they appealed to people who were only just escaping from those who live in error. This group probably includes new Christians and or older carnal ones who were still in the process of making a final break with their pagan friends.

³ Kris Lundgaard, *The Enemy Within*, p. 57.

They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. Jude 4.

6. Regularly examine your life and see whether your daily activities reflect authentic worship to God.

- a. Every aspect of your life is to be “worth-ship” before God.
- b. There is to be no compartmentalization whereby one aspect of your life is sacred and the other part, non-sacred. Rather, your entire life is to bring glory to God. This is well stated by William Temple in his definition regarding what “worship is:

“To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.”

CONCLUSION:

Conclusion is simple: Be faithful: Routinely, regularly ask God to scrutinize your faithfulness to Him. Pray every day that you would have a passion for Him! Routinely examine your intimacy with God.