

# "Staying Centered"



Outline [avl here](#).

Video avl here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVoK\\_pU\\_s9I&ab\\_channel=HeartlandBible](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVoK_pU_s9I&ab_channel=HeartlandBible)

## [Psalm 27:7-14](#)

Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud;

be gracious to me and answer me!

<sup>8</sup>You have said, "Seek<sup>[a]</sup> my face."

My heart says to you,

"Your face, Lord, do I seek."<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Hide not your face from me.

Turn not your servant away in anger,

O you who have been my help.

Cast me not off; forsake me not,

O God of my salvation!

<sup>10</sup> For my father and my mother have forsaken me,

but the Lord will take me in.

<sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, O Lord,

and lead me on a level path

because of my enemies.

<sup>12</sup> Give me not up to the will of my adversaries;

for false witnesses have risen against me,

and they breathe out violence.

<sup>13</sup> I believe that I shall look<sup>[c]</sup> upon the goodness of the Lord  
in the land of the living!

<sup>14</sup> Wait for the Lord;

be strong, and let your heart take courage;

wait for the Lord!

Transcription:

Pastor Thom Rittichier

An opportunity arose for me again recently to help someone learn to ride a bike. Have you had that privilege recently, helping someone learn to ride a bike? Have you ever had that privilege? Do you remember your learning to ride a bike? Do you remember the apprehension of that? I was working with two grandsons this time, in the process of learning to ride a bike. And there is this apprehension...I want to, but I don't want to fall. And there is also that unique sensation of...I can't do this, I can't go that fast, I'll fall. And then the reasoning...If you don't go faster than this, you are going to fall. Because you see, you're on two wheels here. And those two wheels have got to have some momentum to stay up. So there is that sensation of trying to center yourself. And there is this thing of training wheels that we have to factor in here. So there are training wheels that are set up so that rather than two wheels, you have in essence, four wheels, and you're really not riding a bicycle. Okay. And then there is the arrangement of training wheels that are not equal to the size of the back wheel. And so there is this experience of relying on the training wheels that are shorter than the back wheel. So you sit there kind of contorted with your body, and you're absolutely not learning to ride a bicycle. And that is kind of a hard thing to unlearn, once you get it, but when you do get it, when that sense of staying centered comes and you have the momentum of going forward. Once that dawns on you, how that feels and how it works, then it kind of does go like this. It kind of does.

This morning, we are going to look at a believers life, staying centered, having the momentum to be able to move forward without the training wheels. And you know, sometimes as you get that sense of balance, you start to think, maybe I'm going to go on to the unicycle here. You ever do that? Okay, well, maybe not a unicycle. But that sense of staying centered in the believers life is very vital. We're going to look in on a believer who for sure is spoken about in the New Testament as a believer. We're going to be talking about staying centered. And this is King David, who we're going to look at. David wrote this Psalm that we look in on and this was written about him in the New Testament. Just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works. David was a believer. He speaks here of God imputing, giving to someone's account righteousness, right standing with God, apart from what the person does, apart from works, and here's the quote that David wrote, "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.", Romans 4:6-8. That is the forgiveness, that is being a believer, that you trust that God puts on Christ your sin, and imputes to you righteousness, apart from what you do. Most people think that they're going to have to be good enough to go to heaven. It's an impossibility for people to be good enough to go to heaven. It is impossible, because you can't be as good as God intends, as God requires, because our goodness has to match His perfection. All have sinned, they fall short of that glory of God, and the wages of that sin is death, everlasting separation from God. So God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith He loved us, makes a person alive in Christ. David talks about that being alive in the blessedness of the forgiveness. He is the outstanding example, the Old Testament and New Testament uses, of a person after God's own heart. Why? Because inherently, David had a heart like God's? No, David says he was all together born in sin. As he faces and confesses his sin to God, he realizes it's not the natural inclination of his heart. What it is, he chose to

bend his heart to God, and follow God's own heart. That's expressed to us. That puts the person in a position of having his lawless deeds forgiven, his sins covered, and the Lord not counting his sin against him. David was that believer according to the New Testament. And this morning, we're going to look at Psalm 27 where David, as a believer, demonstrates to us handling one of the biggest, if not the biggest, challenges of the believers life.

I want you to turn there with me to Psalm 27. We're doing a series in the Psalms. The Psalms are about living life interpersonally with God, a life where God is in it. And God is big in it. This series is called "When God is Big", and it's a series on Psalms. And David, in this Psalm, demonstrates to us a struggle that we have. I want you to notice that David, in verses one through six, which we looked at last week, talks to other people in a testimony. And he is just absolutely exuding confidence. It's just coming out of him, this confidence in his relationship with God, this confidence that God is present and active in his life, this confidence to handle the difficulties or whatever comes after you, like Matt was talking about. Notice how he does this in verses 1-5, "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is my stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers", people who have it in for you, "assail me to eat up my flesh," quite a violent effort here against David, of whom shall I be afraid he says, "my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumbled and fall," what confidence he had, they are going to wipe out in coming after me, I'm not going to be taken in by them, "Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident." David is exuding confidence as he has this "one thing" pursuit in his life, that he may be in the presence of God. "One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD," the house refers to God's household, that I may live there, in the household of God "all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple." Because the LORD takes care of me. David is exuding confidence here. "For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock." Now I want you to know that abruptly changes for David, the difficulties undermine, they erode that confidence so that David gets to the point where he says this to God in verse 12, "Give me not up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have arisen against me, and they breathe out violence." David has a tremendous mood shift that happens right here before our eyes. We see and he expresses the feeling of this, his heart in this, when suddenly this great confidence, that God's on my side and he's going to handle it, all wipes out from under and it's like a crash that he sees as being eminent.

I want you to know that I am not coming up with that on my own. There is a Bible teacher by the name of Leopold, if you're going to be a Bible teacher, that'd be a neat name to have wouldn't it, Leopold. What's your name, Leopold? Well, that's just sounds like wisdom. Alright, so here's what he says, "Aside from this note of confidence the second most prominent feature of the psalm is its obvious change of mood: the first half (vv. 1-6) being on the very heights of supreme confidence in God, the second section (vv. 7-12) being on the lower level of" sorrowful, mournful, "plaintive petition." he says, prayer to God. Leopold goes on to say that David grows timid and fearful, doubt assails him. When fears and doubts assail, we have a song that goes that way. Because that is

the experience of those who are believers. There are times of great confidence when we say, Yeah, let's go! And there are times when we say, Lord, I'm just not sure, I'm fearful. And that's what this Psalm is about. A pastor by the name of James Montgomery Boice said this about this Psalm, "What we have here is an unfolding of two closely related moods by the same inspired author, "...David speaking by inspiration of God, God breathed..." And the point is that these two apparently opposing moods are also often in us, frequently at the same time or nearly the same time. Don't you find that you are often both confident and anxious, trusting and fear, or at least that your mood swings easily from one to the other? I do. It's part of what it means to be a weak human being. Since that is true of us, it should be a comfort to realize that it was also true of David. We can be instructed by what he did at such times." That's the benefit of this Psalm, handling the challenge, if not the biggest challenge of our waffling wavering confidence in God. I've had folks in our congregation tell me about their life and it is just like David, we're fickle. Yeah. David talks about handling it. And today we add two things here. It involves talking to our Lord in prayer. The New Testament verifies and the Old Testament demonstrates, David bending his heart to God, a believers life. And then dealing with this fluctuating, up and down, confidence in God. It involves talking to our Lord in prayer and it involves talking to oneself, inside coaching, inside of us.

So this morning, we're going to talk about staying centered. Like going forward on a bicycle requires staying centered. You know sometimes that's a challenge. I do tend to ride a bicycle quite frequently. Well, at least as frequently as I can make it happen. And frequently, there are challenges to staying centered on the bike. There is a person texting on a phone and you see their eyes off the road and coming your direction and it's difficult. You have to adjust. There's garbage on the road. I mean, there's metal and glass and that kind of thing. Every year, I blow out about four tires from the stuff on the road. And that's when I'm trying to stay centered and moving around it. It's a challenge. And staying centered is probably the biggest challenge of the believers life. And David helps us here with this. Look with me first at what he has to say in verses 7 through 12. "Hear, O LORD,". This is obviously a prayer. "Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud". David is imperatively going after God in this prayer. "Hear, O LORD," when I pray, "be gracious to me and answer me! You have said, 'Seek my face'. My heart says to you, 'Your face, LORD, do I seek.' Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation! For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me in. Teach me your way, O LORD, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. Give me not up to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence." David is talking in prayer. And as we see him talking to the Lord in prayer, I want you to see and feel with him, this wavering and what he does.

First of all, he goes after hoping in prayer, or when he's praying. You notice that he's clearly wavering. Hear me, O God, I'm crying. Verse 9, "Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger." "The Lord will hide me," verses five and six. He will take me in, he will protect me. And then here in verse 9, Lord, take up for me. Don't turn away. David has hope when praying. Praying is essential in this, it is essential in living your life with God in it and God, being big. Praying is essential. And there is this hoping, this anticipation of the future in your praying. You hear. That's what he's crying

out, you hear. Which means take interest, be gracious as you give attention and interest. Bend down to me. Be gracious in kindness and favor. I don't deserve that. David's hoping that God hears. He'll pay attention, that he will express kindness and favor and that he'll respond to him. God will answer, he will answer, the feeling is there. The confidence that God is really in this difficulty, that he's really doing something in this difficulty, something good, something good for me and for others, perhaps many, definitely for himself, that confidence wavers and it often wavers for me in the emotion of the initial response to the difficulty that comes. You have any difficulties? Can I share you this, then you are in accord with what Jesus said when he said, In this world you will have trouble, you will have, that you will have. And it's the problem that when the trouble comes, we can't find what God's doing, where God is at. And our confidence gets shaken in this. For some, it is chronic trouble...physically, relationally troubles...that go on and on and on. It's chronic trouble. For others, there's pop up troubles. Ones where some might say, Well, if this is the way God treats his servants then I'm going to think about this again. And I want you to know that was my heart once, that's what I said when God brought trouble into my life. Well, if this is the way he treats his servants, and what was being undermined here, a confidence that God is my salvation, he's my light, he's my rescue, absolute. And pursuing the feeling rather than relying on a undergirding of God. A feeling like God just doesn't seem to be holding me up. When that's the case, pray with hope, anticipation of the future, that he hears and inclining to you with attention, that he's gracious when I don't deserve his favor. And he responds. He answers. Folks, we need this Psalm. We need and we are encouraged. David was after God's own heart.

Secondly, hearing for being heard. And notice what he says here in verse eight. He says this quite prominently. He says, "You say, 'You have said'", This is what God said. God said, 'Seek my face'. That word "to be seeking your face" means that you go after being in God's presence, you go after coming in contact and interaction with his person. God has said, Seek my face. In Deuteronomy he commands, Seek my face, I will be found by you when you seek me with all of your heart. There is no substitute for that. There is no substitute for you personally seeking God's face. There is no substitute. Nobody can teach you. You can't wamp it up by yourself. You must individually seek his face. That's what God has said. And he says it over and over and over. He says it again in Psalm 105. He says, Seek, seek, seek and you will find, knock and it will be open. Ask and it will be given to you. There you go. He said, seek, that's His Word. And hearing His Word becomes a basis for being heard. Notice what he says. He says, "My heart says to you, 'Your face, LORD, do I seek.'" Hearing His Word is a basis for being heard. It's how it happens. Jesus said it like this. He said, in John 15:7, he said this very clearly to his followers before he left. He said, If you abide in me, if you settle down and live with me, interactively, and my word abides in you, you're hearing what's being said by me to you, and my word abides in you. Then ask whatever you want. And it will be done for you. That is an amazing promise from Him, who is true, and never shaded the truth. Abiding, hearing, asking. When the confidence goes, praying needs to be there with hoping, and hearing needs to be taking place, hearing from him, in order to be heard. This is the way.

Let me add this too, handling failing confidence like this. I cannot tell you that you will stand objectively and look at it when your confidence falters, you won't. What you'll do

is you will experience it subjectively. Especially the more you put yourself out there to do what the Lord has told you to do. To reach out to your neighbor, for Christ, to communicate how to be saved through faith in Christ. You put yourself out there to do that. And confidence will waver and your knees will begin to bend. Whenever you take up to serve the Lord, you can be sure that confidence will be challenged. Let me let me share this from a couple of other guys. And then let me share it from my life. C.C. Ryrie was a Bible teacher. He had a decision to make about engaging in God's service. And then he said he went back and he reviewed everything he had taught and said to other people, well, at least a lot of it, to other people on making decisions. And he said he put it down and he wondered if anybody was ever helped by interesting. John Piper, the guy who has been greatly influential, talks about on his Mondays after attempting to put himself out there...and if you've ever seen Piper preach, it's like he takes his heart and he pours it out to be seen...And on Mondays, he's all blue and questioning himself. For me, there's times where I'm talking with folks and dealing with issues and laying it out. And they leave and I think, What I've just done, has it been a help? You will have your knees begin to buckle. It is part and parcel of being in with Jesus, in service. It is part of that, there is an opponent, an adversary to all that we're doing. And don't you think for a moment, there won't be fiery darts fired at you, when you attempt to go forward and serve Him, you will. When you're thinking about reaching out to your neighbor to present Christ, you will. David speaks to us here about handling failing confidence. And I want you to know, David was a servant of the Lord. He was sinful, we know it. So he can speak to us about those times of failing confidence.

So see and feel the struggle of failing trust here. Look what he says after saying, "Your face, LORD, do I seek." "Hide not your face from me." Like God is going to hide out from him now. Come and seek me, come and seek me, come and seek me. And suddenly this is in his heart. Don't hide from me! You know, I've had people preach about when God deserts you. God deserts you? Let's see, do you know anything about the New Testament on this? I will never leave you nor forsake you. What are they talking about? They're talking about the sensation, the feeling, the mood, what's going on for me as I'm trying to serve the Lord. Hide not your face from me. Turn not away from your servant in anger. God angry? Well, here's the situation. You see, David had a few adversaries, a few people who were opposed to him, and they were in a place where he was in the squeeze, and he was feeling it. Notice how he describes it here. Verse 12, "Give me not up to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses, slanders, have risen against me, and they breathe out violence." That's what he was going through. Can I tell you this? Slander, it's not a new trick by Satan. It's been around for a long time. Let's see, Adam and Eve...Has God said? If God weren't so self centered here, he wouldn't try and keep you away from this wonderful tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Has Gods said? You know, there's something up with him....Slander towards God. Satan again with Job, this is the second time in the scriptures we hear him speak. And he says... Well, yeah, Job, you're protecting him. But if you take away your hand from him, watch what he does....Slander. First of all, slandering God to people, secondly, slandering people to God. And then the third time we hear speak in the Scriptures, and this is the only other time, Matthew chapter four, he's slandering the Son of God to his face. And I want you to know that that old trick hasn't gone away, it's still well circulated. Where there is slander to people who are trying to serve. And sometimes folks, it comes from inside the camp of God. It

does. It does. Just get online and see how some of the servants of God by proposed professing believers are ripping apart other believers. We had a Bible study by a lady who has attempted to serve ladies in the church for a long time. Anybody know the name? Beth Moore. You can go online and see her ripped to pieces by professed believers. And what's the point? I had to interact frequently because we chose intentionally to stay with her lessons on, of all things, John 15. And here I've found that there was not a departure from God's truth, in women teaching women. But there was a motive on the part of others. I'm gonna stop there. Because I think we hear enough of the slander. I just wanted you to see it's real. The struggle of the failing trust. Don't hide.

The use and solution here, see the solution. "You, O LORD, have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation!", verse 9b. The help is his history with you. History that is personal, that you have with him. Has God ever shown up big time in your life? Absolutely! And we've seen it. We know it. This is the solution, his history with you, personally. And here too, biblically, his history with us in salvation. He calls him here, "O God of my salvation". And David talks about his parents forsaken him, probably in reference to either his parents dying or 2 Samuel chapter 22 when his parents leave him in his conflict with Saul, possibly that, I'm not sure. David talks about being forsaken by the nearest and dearest, but God takes up. God takes up. Here's the solution, his history. Paul said it like this, He who began a good work in you will continue it until the day of Christ. He will, he will. God's not going to start this thing and drop it. There's a personal history he has with you and a rescue in salvation.

And then the humbling of the will to him. Notice what David says, verse 11, "Teach me your way, O LORD." I want to, in this circumstance, find out your way. The way of I AM, always and forever, what you need, I AM, to every generation of believers, Exodus 3. Teach me your way, what you want here. Here's the humbling of the will, not for me to get out of it, but you teach me your way. And now in my difficulty, wow, teach me your way because of my enemies. And my difficulty is these adversaries, and they are ready to tear me up. Sometimes there are difficulties in our life, sometimes there are chronic, sometimes they pop up. David gives us the clear instruction here on handling these, clear.

So now comes the time to talk to yourself. After that in prayer, you talk to yourself, it's you to your heart. Do you talk to yourself? You know, they used to say if you talk to yourself, you're crazy. You're crazy. I don't see that around now so much. If you talk to yourself, but you don't know who's talking, then you may be crazy. But if you got the picture of who's talking here, you're good. Okay, talking to yourself, talking to yourself, reviewing what I believe. Notice what David does here. Verse 13, "I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living." The goodness of I AM to me, his benefit, his help, and not when I'm dead, here and now. I believe this. I believe this. I put my trust in this. And here is the resolving to go on in your heart, talking to yourself. I resolve. I resolved not to push my time. But to learn his way here and to wait on him, in his time. Notice how David says this. Verse 14, "Wait for the LORD;" for I AM to show up. He is always and forever what you need, right on time, right on time. "Be strong and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!" Wait for I AM, always and forever what you need.

Folks, I'm going to challenge you here. I'm going to challenge you to step out in service for the Lord. Monday, we have an opportunity to present a cup of cold water in Jesus name. We've got a five in one bounce house and wall climbing thing coming in Monday to be set up on the fairgrounds, so we can give a cup of cold water in Jesus. Offering something in the post COVID climate where people are coming back together, in Jesus name. I'm going to challenge you, step out in service, there's an opportunity. Your confidence may waiver. You know, it's late, it's hot. Step out, step out, undergird yourself with trust in the Lord and be assured of this. That you will have opportunity to be knocked down. You will. Whenever you step out in service to the Lord, have opportunity to be knocked down. And then you can be praying, with hope. You can be humbling your will to his. You can be running to him and what he provides. This will be glory, honor given to God from you, when you stand up again and go at it again with confidence. Can I let you know a secret here? This world is opposed to serving Christ, you will feel it. But stepping up in confidence like this, it will ring true in your heart, this same thing that David needed to do.

Father in Heaven, as we come to for you, we pray we will be helped by this experience of David. This hoping and this hearing and this handling and this humbling of himself before you. We pray we'll see this as instructive when we step out to serve and there will be glory, honor to your name from our lives, in Jesus name, amen.