

Suggested Answers for Leaders

Observation - What does it say?

1. David's request for guidance (vv. 1–7) reveals that he also needs...Forgiveness:

- "Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways" (v. 7). David's request for God to guide him is accompanied by a plea that God not hold his past sins against him.
- "According to your love remember me" (v. 7). David is asking God to relate to him on the basis of His mercy rather than David's sinful record.
- "In you, LORD my God, I put my trust" (v. 2). His dependence upon God includes trusting God to deal mercifully with his guilt.

2. David's request for guidance (vv. 1–7) reveals that he also needs...deliverance:

- "In you I trust, O my God. Do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me" (v. 2).
- "No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame" (v. 3). Thus, even while asking God to teach him His paths (vv. 4–5), David is conscious that he needs God to protect him from his enemies and preserve him from disgrace.

Connection: David needs guidance because he is a sinner living in a hostile world. He needs God both to show him the right path and to forgive his past wandering and protect him from present dangers.

3. David's request for forgiveness (vv. 8–15) reveals that he also needs...Guidance:

- "He instructs sinners in his ways" (v. 8).
- "He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way" (v. 9).
- "All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful" (v. 10).
- "Who, then, is the man that fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him" (v. 12).
- "He will spend his days in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land" (v. 13).
- Forgiveness is therefore not merely removal of guilt. David needs God to teach, instruct, and guide him into a different way of living.

4. David's request for forgiveness (vv. 8–15) reveals that he also needs...deliverance:

- "My eyes are ever on the LORD, for only he will release my feet from the snare" (v. 15). The image of a "snare" shows that David is in danger and needs God to rescue him. His confidence that God will guide him is connected with his confidence that God will keep him from being trapped.

Connection: David does not simply want God to say, "Your sins are forgiven." He needs forgiveness that results in a changed direction, and he needs God's guidance and protection to keep him from returning to destructive paths.

5. David's request for deliverance (vv. 16–22) reveals that he also needs...guidance:

- After asking for grace and help (v. 16), relief from troubles and anguish (v. 17), and rescue (v. 20), David adds: "May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope is in you" (v. 21). The reference to "integrity and uprightness" connects deliverance with the way David lives. He needs God's help not merely to escape his circumstances but to remain on the right path.

6. David's request for deliverance (vv. 16–22) reveals that he also needs...forgiveness:

- Look upon my affliction and my distress and take away all my sins" (v. 18). This is perhaps the clearest connection in the entire psalm. In the middle of his plea for deliverance, David asks God to "take away all my sins." His deepest problem is therefore not merely his enemies or his circumstances. He also needs reconciliation with God.

Connection: David recognizes that true deliverance includes more than being rescued from enemies. He needs God to remove his sin, direct his life toward integrity, and rescue him from his troubles.

Interpretation - What does it mean?

- Past sin can cloud our judgment, weaken our confidence in God's willingness to forgive, and create consequences that make present circumstances more difficult.
- Receiving God's guidance brought David into the way of truth and obedience (sin always involves un-truth and disobedience). As God taught David his ways, he was better able to avoid repeating his past failures and to respond rightly to present threats. Guidance therefore connects forgiveness with changed direction: God not only forgives the sinner but teaches him how to walk differently.
- Receiving guidance and deliverance from God reveals that he is good and upright (v. 8), merciful and gracious (v. 6), forgiving (v. 11), faithful and steadfast in His covenant love (v. 10), that he teaches sinners (v. 8), guides the humble (v. 9), and protects those who fear Him (vv. 12–14). David's experience shows that God's guidance and deliverance flow from His character: He is not merely powerful enough to rescue His people; He is good enough to lead, forgive, teach, and preserve them.

Application - What do I do with this? (individual responses)