

Part 1 – Examine, Test and Prove

In chapter twenty-five, part 1, we learned that we should look to God by trusting in Him to help us in all our times of trouble and temptations. We should ‘lift up’ our soul to Him, not in pride – but in earnestly asking Him to help us overcome the desires and emotional pulls of the carnal mind (heart) so we can obey Him faithfully and sincerely. We also learned that God won’t let us be ‘ashamed’ when we trust in Him. He also won’t let us be spiritually weak or feeble nor disappointed for following Him faithfully IF our heart is right with Him. If we seek those things which matter most (loving Him and our fellow mankind) rather than coveting earthly riches, fame and power (ect.), then He’ll always help us through the hard times and give us peace of mind, even when we do have to endure some trials and tribulations. And peace of mind is something that can’t be bought, yet it’s more precious than anything else on earth. However, those who do not ‘wait’ on God (bind their soul to His through studying His Word and listening to His Holy Spirit) will be ‘ashamed’ in every meaning of the word. They will be spiritually weak and feeble. They will be ashamed and disappointed because they’ll never have all they want in life, because lust in their heart continues to fuel an unquenchable desire for ‘more and more’ of *everything*. And this is also what causes them to transgress God’s laws, which brings upon them cursings instead of the blessings they coveted so much. So, in verses 1-2 we learned how we should worship God by ‘looking up’ to Him in faith, and trust that He is faithful to reward those who love and obey Him, *just as much as* He is faithful to punish those who do *not*.

In part 2 we learned that another part of worshiping the Lord (YHVH) is asking Him to show us His ways (how He thinks, how He acts – i.e. what is righteous vs unrighteousness) and to teach us (even ‘goad’ us if necessary) how to walk in *His* ways (course of life, mode of action) so we can walk down the *one and only* path (road) to eternal life. That’s why David asked the Lord (YHVH) to lead and teach Him *truth* because, only through having a personal relationship with the Lord (through Jesus Christ) can we find eternal life. And doing so is based upon having intimate communication with Him via the Holy Spirit, which is given to us when we seek Him through His Word (which truly is His Holy Spirit *in written form*) - diligently, consistently and sincerely. And because the Lord (through Jesus Christ) teaches us what truth and righteousness is, He thus teaches us how to live eternally; which is what makes Him the *one and only* ‘God of salvation’. He saves us, not only by protecting us from evil (John 17) but also from bringing us out of the confusion and darkness that lies and deception keep our heart and mind in. And we also learned another part of worshiping the Lord (YHVH) is learning to ‘wait’ upon Him day and night. But this doesn’t mean we are to sit around and do nothing. Rather, we are to look to Him for guidance (via His Word and Holy Spirit) and bind our soul to His through, sincere faith in Jesus Christ and the Word of God, which teaches us the ‘right path’ to walk in to find eternal life.

We also saw another aspect of worshiping the Lord in that David asked God to remember his tender mercies (compassion) and lovingkindnesses (being kind in forbearance with our sins as we learn to change from the inside out) which are truly eternal. For even in the first earth age God showed His tender mercies and lovingkindnesses when He did not kill all the rebels but devised a

plan to save them (as many as possible), through this earth age, when He sent His only begotten Son (Jesus Christ) to die for our sins so we can learn what God's righteous ways are and how to walk down the path that leads to eternal life (i.e. how to do what's right so we can live forever with our Heavenly Father). And then David showed us another part of worshiping the Lord (YHVH) when he asked Him *not* to remember the foolish sins of his youth (when he didn't know better) as well as his transgressions (sins, even rebellious sins, when he did know better) but to remember David according to His mercies (not giving us what we deserve because we repent sincerely and are striving to do better). And David also pointed out that he realized God forgives us *for His sake*. Our Heavenly Father truly loves us and *wants* to forgive our sins because He *wants* us to change who we are (from the inside out) so we can live with Him forever.

So, the Lord (YHVH) does show great mercy, grace and loving kindnesses to those who fear and revere Him, because *that's how He saves us* – if we choose to humble ourselves in sincere repentance and change (from the inside out) from our wickedness. So, the verses we covered continued to show how *worthy* the Lord (YHVH) is to be worshiped and also how *unworthy* we are to be forgiven - as well as showing us how to obtain true forgiveness from the Lord. And it all rests upon our accepting the one and only path to forgiveness and eternal life – which is to accept, believe in and *follow* our 'good' Shepherd (Ps 23) Jesus Christ.

In part 3 we learned that that the Lord (YHVH) is good and upright in *all* His ways. And, because He is so, He wants to teach us how to be that way too. After all, only by putting on *His* righteousness (via putting His Words into, and allowing His Holy Spirit into, our soul) can we live forever with Him (i.e. have eternal life). So, He therefore teaches us 'sinners' in 'the way' (to eternal life) and guides us also in learning to have good judgment in our life. But that's only *if* we are 'meek', which means to be humble. And that's because, if we are not 'meek' (humble) then truly, *we're not teachable*. We have to be *willing to follow* the 'good' Shepherd (Ps 23) in order for Him to teach us. And the methods He teaches us are (1) through His Word (which we are to diligently study) and (2) giving us His Holy Spirit to help us understand His Word *and* how to 'live it' *sincerely*, from the heart. We also learned that all that 'paths' (roads) of the Lord (YHVH) are mercy and truth, but that's only to those who are trying to obey His Word. We can't obtain mercy (not getting the punishments we deserve) if we are not trying to stop sinning, let alone if we don't even know we're sinning. And, even when we do become Christians, we'll still 'fall short' and sin *at times* simply because we're in a flesh body. So, what God expects from us is to study His Word, to learn what we need to change in our life (from the heart), and *sincerely* strive to do it. What He does *not* want from us is to rebel against Him. *And refusing to study His Word is indeed rebelling against Him, because we're refusing to learn how to do what's right.* Further, we also must learn to recognize the Holy Spirit when He spiritually speaks to us and strive to obey Him. That too is a part of following the Lord (our 'good' Shepherd, Ps 23). For the Holy Spirit teaches us *truth* and how to obey it in our everyday life, *sincerely*. And this is all part of truly worshiping Him 'in spirit and in truth', as Jesus taught us in John 4:23-34.

In part 4 we learned that those who fear (and revere) the Lord (YHVH) are those who He will teach in ‘the way’ which He will choose. And that’s simply because *they are teachable*. And ‘the way’ He chooses to teach them is through His Son, Jesus Christ, who indeed is ‘the way’ *to eternal life* because He teaches us what righteousness is *and* helps us to be righteous (John 14:6). And, as we faithfully study God’s Word, Jesus Christ will teach us still yet today, as He sends His Holy Spirit into our heart and mind, helping us to understand the Word of God *and* to understand how to *obey it* throughout our daily life. We also learned that those who fear (and revere) the Lord will indeed ‘dwell at ease’, and that’s because the Holy Spirit gives us peace of mind that passes all carnal understanding. As such, we who truly accept Jesus Christ (and who faithfully love and serve Him) will be allowed to inherit the earth, which is why the Lord will show us (who fear and revere Him) the ‘secret’ about His covenant. His ‘secret’ is simply teaching us how to live forever by teaching us how to do what’s right, from the heart. And His ‘secret counsel’ (which teaches us how to live forever) can only be found *in God’s Word*. So, it behooves us to study it daily, diligently and sincerely so we can be taught in *His* righteousness (Mth 6:33), which is the only way we’ll be allowed to live forever, *and* reign with Jesus Christ when He returns to the earth to take full control of it forevermore.

In part 5 we learned that when we keep our spiritual ‘eyes’ (heart and mind) of understanding focused on the Lord (YHVH) He’ll always pluck our ‘feet’ out of the ‘net’ of lies, deception and temptations that are continuously set before us. And because these ‘nets’ of the wicked are set forth in hidden ways we don’t always see, when we keep our eyes (mind and heart) focused on the Word of God, the Holy Spirit will help us see (and avoid) those ‘nets’ that can cause us to stumble in faith or even to sin at times. This is why we need to learn to ‘walk in the Spirit’ instead of ‘walking after the flesh’, which means to think with our ‘new man’ the Holy Spirit is helping create in our soul, instead of our carnal mind (Gal 5, Rom 8). We also learned more about true worship regarding sincere repentance. It requires us to humbly examine our inner self to see who we truly are, what we truly desire and why we’re really doing what we’re doing – are we on the right path (following Jesus Christ) or are we merely pretending to be? Further, repentance is not merely a ‘one-time thing’ in our life, but should be done *whenever* we see we’ve sinned, even daily if need be - for we *all* fall short and sin and times, no matter how hard we try not to. And we must also be *sincerely* sorry for our sins, as well as sincerely *serious* about our efforts to stop sinning (from our heart and mind to our words and actions). We also learned how David worshiped the Lord, even when he had problems continue to come into his life. He knew how to ask the Lord *humbly* for help, and had the faith to know that He could, and *would*, help *in due time*. Our Heavenly Father has infinite foresight and thus knows how, and *when*, to help us so that we’ll not only grow closer to Him (in faith) but also grow stronger from learning how to endure hard times. And this is why we should trust in Him because, when we do so, He’ll *always* keep (guard and protect) our soul, deliver us from evil and not allow us to be ashamed (or disappointed) of our trusting in Him. He’ll also teach us to put on integrity and uprightness (as we study His Word), which is what preserves our soul from spiritual corruption. David then closed this beautiful Psalm by asking that God (our Creator) would redeem Israel (all those who believe in Jesus Christ) out of all ‘his’ troubles. And there will be troubles that lay ahead. But,

just as the Lord was faithful to deliver David out of all his troubles, and from all his enemies (as chapter 18 explained), so too will he do for us, *as long as we remain faithful to Him*. And that's a vital point we must *never* forget; we have to remain faithful to Jesus Christ (and follow Him for He alone is our 'good' Shepherd that leads us to eternal life) *if* we want to be saved from (not only our enemies but also) the wrath of God, when Jesus Christ returns to 'pour' it out.

So, now that we have covered a beautiful chapter that explained what truly worshipping the Lord (YHVH) is, we now move on to a new chapter, which is another Psalm of David. And the *Companion Bible* notes that this Psalm is written **with reference to Psalm 17**, which was a Psalms that *taught us how to overcome sin and deception* and reminded us of the great promises we have been given for doing so. But, the 'reference' to Psalm 17 in this Psalm is the commonality between this Psalm and Psalm 17 when *David claims his heart is clean in the sight of God, and is so sure of his sincere repentance* (that cleansed his soul) **that he asks the Lord to test his heart to see if there is any sin left within him that he does not see**. And this is why **this Psalm is considered a Psalm 'of the righteous'** – and therefore makes claims that only those who are truly righteous can make – not those who are self-righteous hypocrites - but those who are *seriously wholehearted in their devotion*. They are *not* half-heartedly worshiping Him nor with hypocrisy, or with guile - but are really 'in tune' with our Heavenly Father because they study His Word sincerely and *take it into their heart and mind* and strive to obey it, *from the heart*, each and every day. Therefore, **let us never forget what truly makes us 'righteous' – it only comes from having the Word of God and the Holy Spirit within us**. For only when we 'put on' the Lord's (YHVH) righteousness can we be righteous and (again) we do this by putting off our 'old man' *which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts* (Eph 2:22), and not serving sin any longer (Rom 6:6). And then we must daily renew the spirit of our mind (Eph 4:23) through studying God's Word (Col 3:10), which is what puts on the 'new man' in our soul, which *is created in righteousness and true holiness* after the image of God and His Son, Jesus Christ (Eph 4:24). So, with these things in mind, let's now take a look at this next great Psalm of David...

Psalm 26

1 A Psalm of David.

Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide

The word '**judge**' here is *shaphat* (#8199), a primitive root that means: **to judge**, i.e. **pronounce sentence** (for or against); by implication, **to vindicate or punish**; by extension, **to govern**; passively, **to litigate** (literally or figuratively). The *Companion Bible* notes that the meaning of 'judge' here is *to vindicate* – so David is asking the Lord (YHVH) to vindicate him – or to 'do him justice'. And the reason he asks this is because he 'walked' (lived his life) in '**integrity**', which (like Ps 25:21) is the Hebrew word *tom* (#8537) that means: **completeness**; figuratively, **prosperity**; usually (**morally**) **innocence**. So, David is declaring his moral innocence and asks God to vindicate him – which implies there were people who were making false claims about his moral uprightness (which is also called slandering). [From all the Psalms we have studied so far

we can see that indeed, there were many slanderers against David throughout his life]. Further, David also shows his faith that God will indeed hear His calls to vindicate him because he goes on to say that he knows he won't 'slide' (which means to 'waver' #4571) *because* he trusts in the Lord (YHVH). And this is an important point; when we ask our Heavenly Father for something, we *must trust* that He'll answer us *according to the promises His words give us*. But, we should *also* remember that the time, and 'the way', He answers our prayers *are totally up to Him*. And we should be happy with this. So, many times patience is required before we get answers to our prayers and they likely will not be answered in the exact way we expect them to be. James 5:10-11 cites the prophets (even Job) as examples of how we should patiently endure trials and tribulations and in Heb 10:36 Paul tells us that: *ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise*. In other words, we have to remember that God does not 'pay' (reward) His servants until they have done the work. The 'penny' parable in Mth 20 is a good example of this.

But faith in our Heavenly Father will cause us to be happy with whatever 'way' our Heavenly Father answers our prayers, for we know (trust) that *He knows best* and we should be truly ok with that, *if* we really do have faith in (and love) Him. And let us never forget that, the only way we can expect God to fulfill His promises *is if we fulfil our part of them*. As such, God's promise to protect us, and even 'vindicate' us, is *only* if we are serving Him *and* (just as important) if we are not *willfully* sinning ourselves. What right to we have to ask Him to judge others when we're doing the same sort of thing, or worse? (James 2, 5:9, Rom 14). Obviously, we don't have any right to ask for judgment upon them; and if we do, we're only calling for judgment upon *our own* head! And, this fact explains why David goes on to pray the following...

Psalms 26

2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

Let's look at several of the words in this verse so we can better understand what David is saying. First off, what is the difference between examining and proving someone? Well, the Hebrew word '**examine**' is *bachan* (#974), a primitive root that means: **to test** (especially metals); generally and figuratively, **to investigate**. It's also been translated as prove, tempt and try (trial). Now, the word '**prove**' here is *nacah* (#5254), a primitive root that means: **to test**; by implication, **to attempt**. It's also been translated as adventure, assay, tempt and try. Further, the word '**try**' is the Hebrew word *tsaraph* (#6884), a primitive root that means: **to fuse** (metal), i.e. **refine** (literally or figuratively). It's also been translated as cast, (re-) fine (-er), founder, goldsmith, melt, pure, and purge away. So, the words are closely related but one calls for investigation and the other calls test him *to clean him*, even as metals are purified with fire.

So, David is asking the Lord (YHVH) to investigate His heart and mind by testing him to see if he is correct in thinking he has fully repented for all his sins; for David had examined himself and found nothing. However, it's easy for us to overlook our own faults, so he's asking for God's help to see if there's anything else he needs to clean out. As David told his son, Solomon, in 1

Chron 28:9, ***the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.*** So, David well knew (and understood) that the Lord (YHVH) is the only one who can help us see our sins, for He alone can search our heart and mind and see what our intents and ‘imaginings’ are. As Ps 44:21 also points out, He knows all the ‘secrets’ of our heart as well as our thoughts (Ps 94:11). In Jer 17:10, the Lord (YHVH) also says that: ***I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*** So truly, the Lord (via His Holy Spirit) is the only one who can help us with our weaknesses (Rom 8:26-27) because His Holy Spirit searches our heart and helps us to see our sins and change them. And, He does this when we diligently study His Word. For, as Heb 4:12 explains: ***the word of God is quick [makes alive], and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.***

And this brings up another point from verse 2. David asks the Lord to ‘try’ (test as if He was purifying a precious metal) his ‘reins’ and his ‘heart’... but what is the difference? Well, the Hebrew word for ‘reins’ is *kilyah* (#3629), which means (believe it or not) **a kidney** (as an essential organ) but, figuratively, it means **the mind** (as the interiorself) – which is much more understandable in the context of this verse than ‘kidney’. And secondly, the word ‘heart’ is *leb* (#3820), which means (not surprisingly): **the heart; also used (figuratively) very widely for the feelings, the will and even the intellect;** likewise for *the centre of anything*. So, our ‘reins’ is simply our mind – our thought process but our ‘heart’ is our carnal mind (Rom 8, the part we’re supposed to subdue, even spiritually ‘kill’, because it’s the part of us that wants to sin and ‘act like an animal’) – it is therefore where our emotions, feelings, desires (even lusts and pride, etc.) are, which means it’s also where our intentions and motivations are too. **So, while our heart and mind are both part of our spirit (intellect), there is the ‘carnal’ side of us (our heart) that we must control with our mind.**

It might be easier to understand this by considering times you have tempted to sin – you are tempted because of what? Well, because you *desire* to sin but, many times you probably ‘knew better’. The part of you that ‘knows better’ is your ‘higher self’ or your mind, the *real you* that *knows* you should not sin - but the ‘lower’ part (your heart, the carnal mind) *wants* to sin. And for some people, even their mind is defiled because they truly desire to sin even in their mind (their true self from the first earth age). But, when we accept Jesus Christ, we do so because we realize that sin is not good and only leads to cursings and, eventually, spiritual *death*. So, we who follow our ‘good’ Shepherd, Jesus Christ, *work to control the part of us that wants to sin* (our heart, the carnal mind). This means we work to control (subdue, even spiritually ‘kill’) our emotions and desires, along with our thoughts, including imaginations – even fantasies and daydreams - so they align with God’s Word and not the ‘worldly ways’ of the Devil (Satan) (James 4). And this is how we put off the ‘old man’ (who wants to sin) and put on the ‘new man’ (who does not want to sin). But, it takes discipline and understanding right from wrong to do this. That’s why we study God’s Word to learn the difference between right and wrong, because we can’t always

discern that, especially when we're thinking with our 'carnal mind' (our heart). And when we do put out the effort to discipline our heart and mind to obey God's Word, then the Holy Spirit gives us strength in our soul (will power) to refuse to do wrong - even when our heart (carnal mind) tries hard to pull at us to sin. In other words, when we ask for God's help (in Jesus Christ) then the Holy Spirit *will* give us the *internal strength* (will power) - inside our own heart and mind – to help us quench the sinful thoughts, desires, lusts, pride, greed, etc. This is why Paul wrote...

*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a **sound** mind.*
2 Tim 1:7

The word 'sound' here means *discipline*, i.e. *selfcontrol* (#4995), which teaches us that **a sound mind is a healthy mind because we are disciplining it** – we're controlling it so it doesn't cause us to sin in any form - not in our thoughts, desires, intentions, motivations, words or actions. And that's why this word comes from #4994, which means *to make of sound mind*, i.e. (figuratively) *to discipline or correct*. And this comes from the word #4998 which means a *safe (sound) in mind*, i.e. *self-controlled* (moderate as to opinion or passion). This is the essence of putting off the 'old man' (which is uncontrollably sinning). ***It takes a lot of work (daily) to learn to control your 'inner man' instead of letting it control you, especially*** when you are first learning to change from the 'old man' to the 'new man'. And frankly, most people – even those who call themselves Christians – never learn how to make this internal transformation from the 'old man' to the 'new man' (Rom 12:2), who is made in the image of Jesus Christ Himself (Col 3:10) – i.e. *they don't learn how to put on Christ's righteousness, but instead willingly remain ignorant of God's righteousness* (i.e. His Word) and claim they are righteous without him, which is truly just being self-righteous (Rom 10). But the *only way* we can truly be righteous is if we put on God's righteousness by putting His Word in our heart and mind and allowing His Holy Spirit to lead, guide and direct us in our daily life – even to help us see our sins, because we simply cannot see them all. So, this is the essence of what David is asking the Lord, which can also be summed up in another Psalm that we've covered a few chapters back...

12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.
*13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; **let them not have dominion over me:** then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression [i.e. apostasy].*
14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.
Ps 19:12-14

So, David is not claiming to be without sin; he's saying that he has searched his heart and does not see any sin; and is asking the Lord for help to see if he has any sin left, for He alone can look deep into our heart and mind and see if there's any sin there. And He is also able to help us see it in a way that we'll be able to respond to; that's why His Holy Spirit is called 'grace' – His Holy Spirit so graciously helps us to see our sins *in a gentle way* (if we are sincerely trying to see our sins) – not the way like mankind shows us our sins – with vile condemnation and hatred – but

with loving kindness in giving us truth, mercy, grace and strength to help see our faults *and* change them. Truly, the depth of His love, for those who fear Him, is far beyond anything mankind can muster or even (most of the time) understand (Rom 11:33, Phil 4:7, Eph 3:16-21).

Psalms 26

3 For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.

The word ‘**lovingkindness**’ here is the same as it was in the last chapter (vs 6) and it means **kindness**; by implication (towards God) **piety**; rarely (by opposition) **reproof**, or (subject.) **beauty** (#2617). And David also uses the same analogy as he did in the last chapter (vs 15) where he said that his ‘eyes’ were ever towards the Lord (YHWH) because David looked to Him to ‘pluck’ his ‘feet’ out of the ‘net’, which means David looked to the Lord for understanding of how to avoid the snares and traps in life (both physically and spiritually) that lead us into trouble, even into sinning against God – for a ‘net’ can also be lies and deceptions that cause us to fall to (trap us into) sin. But, as Ps 37:24 says, even when we fall, we won’t be utterly ‘cast down’ because the Lord (YHWH) holds us up with His hand, which is Jesus Christ (Rom 8 explains this in more detail). So, what David is saying here in this verse 3, is that: he remembers the lovingkindness (kindness) of the Lord and *that is what his deepest desire in life is* – to obtain kindness from the Lord. This should be our deepest desire in life too (Mth 6:33) - we too should deeply desire to obtain His lovingkindness, grace and mercy – and to keep in our memory and understanding (Eph 1:18) how kind our Heavenly Father is... *to those who* fear, revere and love Him. And that’s why David then states that he has ‘walked’ (habitually) in His truth. And this is an important point. For, as the Scriptures clearly point out, God only shows kindness to those who fear (and revere) Him...

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

*13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth **them that fear him.***

14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

15 As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

*18 **To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.***

Ps 103:11-18

17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

18 The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

19 He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.

Ps 145:17-19

And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

Luke 1:50

So, in every generation, the Lord shows kindness (mercy and grace) to those who fear (and revere) Him. Proverbs 16:6 explains *why* this is when it says that: *By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.* When we fear (and revere) the Lord we will depart from evil, and *that's* why He shows us loving-kindness in giving us mercy (not giving us what we do deserve, punishments) and grace (giving us what we don't deserve, His truth and Holy Spirit). As Ps 147:11 explains so beautifully: *The LORD **taketh pleasure** in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.* It truly pleases the Lord (YHVH) when we fear to do evil and respect Him because that's what causes us to strive to understand, *and obey*, His Words sincerely (from the heart). But those who refuse to hear Him (refuse to study His Word) are rebelling against Him; and, as such, they do things that are quite offensive to Him (they do wickedly and work iniquity) - which is why Jesus Christ will tell those who have not obeyed Him to get away from Him when He returns at His Second Advent (Mth 7:21-23). Jesus will have *no part* with unrepentant (i.e. rebellious, habitual) sinners and *no one* who has worshiped Satan (the antichrist) will be allowed to rule with Jesus Christ in His eternal government.

So, in this verse 3 (and onward for a few verses) David is 'laying out' his 'case' for why he thinks that he is 'righteous'. David has repented so sincerely that he trusts that he is righteous in God's eyes, and that's why he asks God to search his heart, mind, words and deeds to find if there be any sins. This truly is a person who is so totally devoted to God that they don't mind being shown their faults. And within David's reminding God (not that He needs it, but He does like to hear from us) of the reasons why he wants God to 'judge' (vindicate), examine and test him, lies the fact that *judgment can be either good or bad*. And if God judges and examines David and finds him to be faultless, then that is reason for God to bless David. So, one could even say that David is asking for blessings here because he believes he is worthy of them. Not because he has never sinned in his life; but because he was working hard to clean the sin out and could find no more sin and therefore, was asking God to see if he could find anything wrong. ***This kind of total devotion and love for our Heavenly Father is what we should all strive for.*** Because, if God does see we're trying to obey Him, with all our heart and mind, body and soul... then He will bless us. And if there's things we need to change, He'll help us see it and help us to change our sins, so long as we remain *willingly to obey Him*. And this kind of communication is actually a process our Heavenly Father *wants us* to initiate with Him in prayer. As He said in Isaiah...

25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

26 Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.
Isa 43:25-26

This is exactly what David is doing in this chapter. And to reiterate, he is not saying he has never sinned, but David believed when God forgives us that our sins are removed forever - which is

true, *so long as we believe in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ*, which David did (he understood what the blood sacrifices symbolized, Heb 8-10). And for that reason, David could say he could not find any fault in his soul because he had made a good repentance. And then he is now going on to explain the things he has done in obedience to God's Words. So, David is 'pleading' (reasoning, communicating) with the Lord, just as our Heavenly Father wants (Is 43). Again, not because He *needs* to be reminded but because it shows Him that we have read His Word and know of His promises and *what we have to do to obtain them*. Further, it also shows us that we *want* Him to bless us and we have *conscientiously* been trying to obey Him *from the heart* (sincerely).

But, critically, if there was something David needed to correct, he would be willing to do it. And that's an important thing for us all to remember. We *have* to be sincere when we ask the Lord to search and examine and test our inward parts *because* it's likely he might just find something we need to change - and we *must* be willing to change it IF we want to be pleasing to Him! But always remember that 'judgment' to those who love and revere the Lord is not bad. When He chastises us, it's always for our good (Heb 12) and He is ever so gracious to bless us with spiritual blessings (such as peace of mind a joy in our heart). And He is also gracious to bless us with physical things but He is also careful to do so in a way that won't corrupt our heart because, as Paul reminds us in 1 Tim 6:10: *the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* Therefore, it's wise for us to strive to put on 'godliness with contentment' because that's what truly brings 'great gain' in our life (1 Tim 6:6). Therefore, let's close part one with a beautiful summary of what we've learned in this chapter, from another Psalm of David...

*23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:
24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*
Ps 139:23-24

We'll pick this up in part 2...

AMEN.