

## MONSTERS IN OUR MIDST

### "FACING THE MONSTER OF MISUNDERSTANDING"

#### PSALM 59:1-17

#### **This Week's Core Competency**

**Peace** – I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, others, and me. Philippians 4:6-7 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Paul has this to say about peace in Romans 12:17-19: "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.*"

Paul's words imply the truth that living at peace with everyone may not be possible. Particular people can make peace unattainable. That was certainly the case with regard to David and Saul. When it came to Saul, David did everything right and nothing wrong. At least that's what Jonathan, Saul's son, told his father on one occasion. The Bible says, "Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, 'Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly. He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The LORD won a great victory for all Israel, and you saw it and were glad. Why then would you do

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*It is a wise thing to find in the greatness of our difficulties a reason for casting ourselves upon the Lord.*

– C. H. Spurgeon

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wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?" (1Sa 19:4-5).

Nevertheless, Saul incessantly dogged David's steps for a decade looking for any and every opportunity to take his life. During this time, on more than one occasion he actually turned his anger on his son for befriending David. Once when David didn't show up for dinner with the king, suspecting that Jonathan was covering for him, Saul's anger flared up and he railed: "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you? As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send and bring him to me, for he must die!" (20:30-31).

There was nothing Jonathan could say and nothing David could do to change Saul's mind. David spared the king's life more than once, but even after that, Saul's empty words notwithstanding, David remained convinced that Saul would continue to hunt him down (27:1). So what did David do when he could do nothing? He turned to the Lord in prayer. If he couldn't make peace with his enemy, he could pray for deliverance from the threat of that enemy and others like him. Psalm 59 contains David's personal prayer and lament when Saul sent troops to his house at night to kill him the following morning. "Deliver me from my enemies, O God," he prayed. "Arise to help me; look on my plight!" he asked. He pleaded his case before the Lord, asking God to vindicate him by giving those who slandered him what they deserved. Finally, he rested in God, his fortress, refuge and strength, confident that he would sing God's praise once deliverance came. When we find ourselves in David's shoes, we can do no better than David did.

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# day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

## Psalm 59:1-17

For the director of music. [To the tune of] "Do Not Destroy." Of David. A "miktam." When Saul had sent men to watch David's house in order to kill him.

1 Deliver me from my enemies, O God;  
protect me from those who rise up against me.

2 Deliver me from evildoers  
and save me from bloodthirsty men.

3 See how they lie in wait for me!  
Fierce men conspire against me  
for no offense or sin of mine, O LORD.

4 I have done no wrong, yet they are ready to  
attack me.

Arise to help me; look on my plight!

5 O LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel,  
rouse yourself to punish all the nations;  
show no mercy to wicked traitors. "Selah"

6 They return at evening,  
snarling like dogs,  
and prowl about the city.

7 See what they spew from their mouths-  
they spew out swords from their lips,  
and they say, "Who can hear us?"

8 But you, O LORD, laugh at them;  
you scoff at all those nations.

9 O my Strength, I watch for you;  
you, O God, are my fortress, 10 my loving God.

God will go before me  
and will let me gloat over those who slander me.

11 But do not kill them, O Lord our shield,  
or my people will forget.

In your might make them wander about,  
and bring them down.

12 For the sins of their mouths,  
for the words of their lips,  
let them be caught in their pride.

For the curses and lies they utter,

13 consume them in wrath,  
consume them till they are no more.

Then it will be known to the ends of the earth  
that God rules over Jacob. "Selah"

14 They return at evening,  
snarling like dogs,  
and prowl about the city.

15 They wander about for food  
and howl if not satisfied.

16 But I will sing of your strength,  
in the morning I will sing of your love;

for you are my fortress,  
my refuge in times of trouble.

17 O my Strength, I sing praise to you;  
you, O God, are my fortress, my loving God.

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

\* Circle "Do Not Destroy" in the superscription to Ps 59.

\* Underline with one line "Deliver" (2x), "protect," and "save" in vv. 1, 2.

\* Underline with two lines "enemies," "those who rise up against me," "evildoers," and "bloodthirsty men" in vv. 1, 2.

\* Circle "offense" and "sin" in v. 3.

\* Circle "nations" in vv. 5, 8.

\* Box "like" indicating comparison in v. 6.

\* Circle "spew" in v. 7.

\* Bracket the rhetorical question in v. 7.

\* Box "but" indicating contrast in vv. 8, 11, 16.

\* Highlight the repeated phrase in vv. 9, 17.

\* Box "then" indicating result in v. 13.

\* Draw a line from "evening" in v. 14 to "morning" in v. 16.

\* Number 1, 2, 3 "sing," "sing," and "sing praise" in vv. 16, 17.

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## day 2

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Read 1 Samuel 18:8-17. Describe the historical event that occasioned Psalm 59.
2. Put what David wants from God in your own words.
3. On what does David base his appeal for God's help?
4. David's own deliverance is in view in verses 1-4. Whose deliverance is in view in verses 5-8?
5. Explain the use of *comparison* in verse 6.
6. "They spew out swords from their lips" (v. 7) must be *figurative*. What does it mean, and how do you know?
7. Put the point of the *rhetorical* question in your own words.
8. David wants God to use the nations as an object lesson. For whom and how so?
9. Explain the use of *contrast* in verse 16.
10. **Discussion:** God is our "fortress," our "refuge," and our "Strength." Talk about the meaning of those metaphors. (Did you ever build a fort as a kid?)

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## day 3

# EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

The superscription of Psalm 59 indicates that its writing was occasioned by Saul's attempt on David's life, which is narrated in 1 Samuel 19:8-17. David had returned to Gibeah and the royal residence after winning a decisive victory over the Philistines (v. 8), which only fueled the women's refrain "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands" (18:7) and reignited Saul's jealousy, leading to yet another spontaneous and unexpected attempt on David's life. We see Saul sitting with his spear in hand as David plays the harp in the king's presence. David must have sensed what was coming for as one commentator suggests, the spear was a dead giveaway. "The 'spear in his hand' served as a clear indication that Saul was having problems; only a deeply troubled individual would sit armed for war inside the safest house in Israel!" (Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, NAC, 207). Saul tried to pin David to the wall, but David again made good his escape (v. 10; cf., 18:11).

What happens next serves as the occasion for Psalm 59. "We move now to another paragraph in which Saul's child saves David, though this time the break seems permanent. Reconciliation looks hopeless after this episode. Michal's ruse shows just how morbid and insane Saul's preoccupation with David is. When troops are dispatched to put David under surveillance with the intent of killing him in the morning, she helps him escape during the night. She anticipates the soldiers may search the house and so places an 'idol' (*terapim*) in David's bed with appropriate disguise . . . The ruse works, giving David time to escape. But when Saul realizes what Michal has done, he becomes angry with her. In order to calm the unpredictable Saul, she deceives him, now for a second time (her 'He is ill' was the first). Michal appears to have no hesitation about the deceptions, and the narrator relates the events in an apparently approving tone. Saul's obsession is so severe and irrational that lies contrived between daughter and father seem justifiable. The reader is left with the sad but undeniable realization that Saul is hell-bent on destroying David" (Bill T. Arnold, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Samuel*, 283-84).

The conflict between Saul and David resulted in part from *misguided expectations*. Saul, of course, knew that God had taken the right to rule from him (1Sa 15:28). Knowing this, coupled with recurring

bouts of paranoia, made it easy for him to suspect that David was scheming to take the kingdom from him. Although he was pleased with Jesse's son (16:22) at first, after hearing the women sing David's praises, in anger he thought to himself, "What more can he get but the kingdom" (18:8)—to which the narrator added, "And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David" (v. 9). Later when Saul realized that "the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David" (v. 28), he became even more afraid of him and "remained his enemy the rest of his days" (18:29). His son's support for David only made matters worse (20:30-31). David, of course, was not scheming to do away with Saul. The fact that he passed up two opportunities to take Saul's life made that abundantly clear.

David, on the other hand, expected better from Saul. He had served Saul faithfully and effectively and had given him no real reason to turn on him (cf., 19:4-5). Saul should have treated him like Jonathan did. Perhaps that's what David expected. Frustrated, he explicitly asked Jonathan, "'What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father, that he is trying to take my life?'" (20:1). The implied answers to all these rhetorical questions clearly indicate his innocence. In the end, David found himself between a rock and a hard place; he refused to take Saul's life (26:9-11) while Saul refused to give up trying to take his (27:1).

Psalm 59 can be divided into three parts based on the repeated word "Selah" (i.e., "interlude"), which appears at the end of verse 5 and verse 13. The first part contains David's lament (vv. 1-5). In it he prays to the LORD for deliverance (vv. 1-2) and then describes in detail his lamentable state. "Bloodthirsty men" are lying in wait for him even though he is completely innocent, having done "no offense," no "sin," "no wrong" (vv. 3-4). Then turning from his complaint, he cries out "O LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel, rouse yourself to punish *all the nations*, show no mercy to wicked traitors" (v. 5). David's allusion to "Israel" and to "all the nations" broadens the applicability of his prayer by suggesting that his personal lament later functioned as a national lament also.

The second part (vv. 6-13) contains David's confession of trust. In it he likens his enemies to dirty dogs, arrogant curs filled with hate (vv. 6-7), incessantly hurling their insults and threats at him.

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They think no one, not even God, can hear them, but they are wrong. God laughs in the face of their hate speech and mocks their intentions. He will repay them for their slander by giving them what they truly deserve. He will bring them down for their tongues' transgressions and use them as an object lesson to show that he rules over Jacob (vv. 8-13).

The third part (vv. 14-17) contains a repetition of David's lament depicting his opponents as

prowling dogs and a repetition of his confession of trust in God, whom he describes in terms of three metaphors: "fortress," "refuge," and "Strength" (vv. 16-17). In it he *contrasts* the danger he faces from snarling dogs *at night* (v. 14) with the deliverance he is certain will come from God *in the morning* (v. 16). And in a final crescendo of praise, he declares his intention to sing, shout (v. 16), and raise of psalm of praise to God (v. 17) in whom he has placed his confidence.

## *The Message of the Passage*

*When threatened and maligned by those who misunderstand or hate you, turn to the Lord, your fortress, refuge and strength, for deliverance.*

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about how God revealed himself to you . . .

–Write about how God wants you to change you . . .

–Write about how God wants to use you to change your world . . .

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# notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

**"Do Not Destroy"** Heb. *al-tashheth* (NET; NASB). "Perhaps this refers to a particular style of music, a tune title, or a musical instrument. These words also appear in the superscription to Pss 57-58, 75" (the NET Bible, 2<sup>tn</sup> on Ps 59); cf., "set to Al-tashheth" (NASB); "to be sung to the tune 'Do Not Destroy'" (NLT).

**When Saul had sent . . .** Cf., 1Sa 19:8-17. "According to the superscription, David wrote this psalm on the occasion when Saul sent assassins to surround David's house and kill him in the morning (see 1 Sam 19:11). However, the psalm itself mentions foreign enemies (vv. 5, 8). Perhaps these references reflect a later adaptation of an original Davidic psalm" (the NET Bible, **sn** on Ps 59). "The adventure and its song have flowered into something greater, so that 'all the nations' (5, 8) and 'the ends of the earth' are in view in the completed psalm, which must be dated after David's accession, when he can speak of 'my people' (11) and of the world-wide repercussions of his enemies' defeat (13)" (Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, TOTC, vol. 15, 228-29)

v. 1 **protect me** Lit., "set me on high;" cf., "set me securely on high" (NASB). "The word 'protect' (1), like the kindred word 'fortress' (9, 16, 17), contains the thought of what is set high up, out of reach; hence NEB's phrase 'be my tower of strength'. By contrast, David's house was no protection, but a death trap, as he realized (1 Sam. 19:12)" (229).

v. 1 **enemies . . .** "It is very likely that the four different terms for the evil-doers in verses 1-2 are synonymous, and refer to the oppressors in general without specifying particular types" (A. A. Anderson, *Psalms 1-72*, NCBC, 435).

vv. 3, 4 **offense, sin, wrong** Cf., "fault," "sin," "guilt" (NJB); "transgression," "sin," "fault" (NRSV, ESV). "The point of the three synonyms for sin is to emphasize that the Psalmist has neither committed a wrong against his enemies, nor offended God; therefore he is suffering innocently from an unprovoked attack" (436).

v. 5 **nations** "This reference to the nations is problematic. Either the Psalm was a national lamentation or individual lament for the use of the community" (437). One commentator solves the problem this way: "Here the picture widens as David, now king, applies the personal prayer of 4b to a larger situation. But it was the kind of prayer he was already capable of praying in his youth, as his far-ranging words to Goliath show in 1 Samuel 17:45f" (Kidner. 229). In other words, the prayer David originally prayed was later revised and prayed by him or one of his sons. "It must have been revised for use by one of David's royal sons when Jerusalem was under siege by a hostile force made up of troops from many nations-as when Hezekiah was besieged by the Assyrians (see 2Ki 18:19). (Some, however, ascribe it to Nehemiah; see Ne 4)" (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Ps 59).

v. 6 **like dogs** These dogs are like not house pets! "The enemies are compared to wild dogs (see on 22:16) which haunted the refuse dumps, and which were regarded as unclean and savage. Their activities would be thought offensive and disgusting. This simile is further elaborated in verses 7 and 15" (Anderson, 437).

v. 7 **spew** "Bellowing [RSV] is hardly appropriate. The root idea is of bubbling up or bursting out; so in terms of dogs JB has 'See how they slaver at the mouth', and in human terms NEB translates it 'From their mouths comes a stream of nonsense'. Cf. its use in proverbs 15:2, 28. But 'nonsense' is too mild; the second line (lit. 'swords in', not snarling with) implies destructive talk, and the final line blasphemy" (Kidner, 230)

v. 11 **wander about** "Thus they would be living witnesses to the reality of God's retribution" (Anderson, 439).

vv. 16, 17 **sing . . . sing praise** "Three different words are used for this, which might be rendered 'I will sing . . . I will shout . . . (16); I will raise a psalm' (17)" (Kidner, 232).

### Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

"Soup or salad?" the waitress asked. "What exactly is on a super salad?" the customer asked. Misunderstanding. It happens all the time. In our text this week David is fleeing for his life because he has been misunderstood by Saul. David was content to wait for God's timing on his ascension to the throne but Saul was convinced he was trying to take it from him. Psalm 59 records David's anguish as he waits on God to deliver him. Sometimes misunderstanding in our families, especially between parents and children, is the result of miscommunication. Here are some helpful communication tips to help you avoid misunderstandings with your children. Be Clear. Say what you mean. Children are not capable of comprehension at an adult level. Be Concise. Use short simple phrases. Make sure consequences for behavior are clearly presented. Be Consistent. Keep the same values and expectations over time. Follow through with commitments. When members of your family find themselves in a misunderstanding, use it as an opportunity to model Christ-like character. Pray about it first and then remind your children that we are to be humble and consider others better than ourselves. (Phil. 2:3). Conflict is inevitable but how we approach it is optional. May we bring glory to Him in everything - including our misunderstandings!

#### What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Psalm 59:1-17

1. Who is David asking for deliverance from?
2. Read verse 4. According to David, did he deserve this unfair treatment?
3. What is David's solution to the situation he is in? (vv. 16-17).

#### What Do You Think

1. How was David feeling at the beginning of Psalm 59? At the end?
2. Did David trust God to take care of him in hard times?
3. Do you trust God to take care of you in hard times?

#### What R U Going To Do

In Psalm 59, David writes about worshipping the Lord in the morning. Make a plan to take a few minutes each morning this week and worship God by praying, singing or reading the Bible. Circle the days you keep to that plan. M TU W TH F S

### MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Peace: I live without worry because things are good between God, others, and me.

Memory Verse

Psalm 59:16 *But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble.*

### KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC \_\_\_\_ and Verse \_\_\_\_\_. Family completed **Say** \_\_\_\_\_ **Think** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do** \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_ Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.  
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

*2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians*

*6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

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**Wendy Hollabaugh** (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is [tbulick@pantego.org](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).