

Title: “Lead us not into temptation...”**[Slide 1]****Text: Psalm 27****Mirror, Mirror on the Wall...****[Slide 2]****Psalm 27:**

The Psalm that we are going to look at this morning is Psalm 27. Let’s stand and read it together:

[Slide 2]

*The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?*

*The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?*

[Slide 3]

*When the wicked advance against me
to devour me,
it is my enemies and my foes
who will stumble and fall.*

*Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not fear;
though war break out against me,
even then I will be confident.*

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*One thing I ask from the LORD,
this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.*

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*For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent
and set me high upon a rock.*

*Then my head will be exalted
above the enemies who surround me;
at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make music to the LORD.*

[Slide 6]

*Hear my voice when I call, LORD;
be merciful to me and answer me.*

*My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"
Your face, LORD, I will seek.*

*Do not hide your face from me,
do not turn your servant away in anger;
you have been my helper.
Do not reject me or forsake me,
God my Savior.*

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*Though my father and mother forsake me,
the LORD will receive me.*

*Teach me your way, LORD;
lead me in a straight path
because of my oppressors.*

*Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,
for false witnesses rise up against me,
spouting malicious accusations.*

[Slide 8]

*I remain confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.*

*Wait for the LORD;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the LORD.*

“Mirror, mirror on the wall, who’s the smartest phone of all?”

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Now that we’re in the age of Smartphones, I guess it was just a matter of time before somebody asked the question: “Mirror, mirror on the wall, who’s the *smartest* phone of all?”

And who better to ask than Siri, Apple’s digital oracle?

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Well, a funny thing happened when she was asked, “Who is smarter, Siri or Google Now?” Siri answered by linking to an article about a recent challenge which pitted the Artificial Intelligence Agents of Apple, Google and Microsoft against each other in a straight up competition to answer 3086 questions. When it came to “most enhanced results” and “complete answer,” Google got it best 88% of the time. Siri came in second at 53% and Cortana came in last at 40%.

At least Siri got this question right: Google Now was the smartest smartphone of all. Of course what made Google Now so smart was the fact that Google has the best “knowledge base.” Only Google Now could google the question.

Spiritual Intelligence Agent?

Google Now, Siri and Cortana are all quite useful for finding out stuff: like how to get to a restaurant or comparing the prices before you make a purchase. But what about the really heavy stuff? Try asking Google Now how to say you’re sorry after you have a fight with your spouse. Try asking Siri whether or not to have a risky operation. Try asking Cortana what happens after you die.

For the real questions of life we need something far smarter than Google. We need a Spiritual Intelligence Agent. We need to know and hear God’s voice in real time as we go through our life journey.

Psalm 27 is a song about just that: knowing that the God who created us is there for us to guide us each step of the way. His Holy Spirit is our Spiritual Intelligence Agent.

As Jesus told His disciples:

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John 16:13 NIV

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

“One Thing I ask”

Total Confidence:

David’s song begins with a burst of total confidence:

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Psalm 27:1 NIV

*The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?*

*The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?*

David's confidence in God is greater than any threat that comes against him:

- Attacks from evil people who are out to devour him
- Enemies and foes out to defeat and humiliate him
- Armies that wage war against him

In every case, David knows that God will keep him safe and sound. It doesn't matter if the danger lurks within or without; the result is the same. He will come out on top.

So how is it that David can be so confident in the face of "dangers, toils and snares"? What's his secret?

"One thing I ask..."

The thing that makes David so confident is that he knows he has the very best Spiritual Intelligence Agent in the world. When trouble comes and he needs to know what to do or how to move forward, he directs his questions to the God who created him. That is why he says:

[Slide 13]

Psalms 27:4 NIV

*One thing I ask from the LORD,
this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.*

All David needs is a "good connection" and God's direction. All he asks is that he might *be where the LORD is* and that he be able to *seek* him.

In David's time it was customary for a worshiper to go to the Temple to *inquire of the LORD*. What that meant was that the person would go to seek God's guidance for something that was going on in his or her life. When David says that he wishes to seek the LORD, this is what he is talking about. He is saying that God is his Spiritual Intelligence Agent, if you will. God has

the true and greatest knowledge of everything that David needs to know. He doesn't need to ask anywhere else.

Good info, good results:

Good things happen when you get good directions. David says:

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Psalm 27:6 NIV

*Then my head will be exalted
above the enemies who surround me;
at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make music to the LORD.*

David had no idea of what the future might hold. He had no way of knowing how to respond to the threats that he encountered. But when he chose to hide himself in the LORD, God kept him safe. And when he chose to inquire of the LORD for direction, God led him to victory.

Life is just as confusing for you and me as it was for King David. We face challenges from within our own thoughts and emotions, as well as challenges and difficulties from the outside. And we have no way of knowing what's around the corner. There is no Siri, Google Now or any other form of artificial intelligence that can tell us the future! Only the LORD, working through His Holy Spirit, can lead us to victory.

David's Prayer

A good connection:

So what does it look like to *actually* seek God? What does it look like to go to Him as our Spiritual Intelligence Agent? David gives us a glimpse of how that worked for him in the prayer that comes next in the psalm. He begins by making sure that he has a "good connection" with God:

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Psalm 27:8-10 NIV

*My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"
Your face, LORD, I will seek.*

*Do not hide your face from me,
do not turn your servant away in anger;
you have been my helper.*

*Do not reject me or forsake me,
God my Savior.*

*Though my father and mother forsake me,
the LORD will receive me.*

David wants nothing less than a "face to face" connection. To seek a person's face in biblical times meant to seek their favor and acceptance – essential to a "good connection." Four bars, nothing less! The great blessing in Numbers states:

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Numbers 6:24-26 The Message

*GOD bless you and keep you,
GOD smile on you and gift you,
GOD look you full in the face
and make you prosper.*

Teach me and lead me:

Assured of that good connection, David gets right to the heart of the matter:

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Psalm 27:11-12 NIV

*Teach me your way, LORD;
lead me in a straight path
because of my oppressors.*

*Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,
for false witnesses rise up against me,
spouting malicious accusations.*

Notice first of all that David *doesn't* ask for victory. He asks God to show him the right path – the way forward. In the end, it's not about his problems or enemies. What matters is that he moves forward on the path that God has chosen for him.

How easy it is to fall into the trap of taking the bait when someone comes against us. We might think that we can win an argument or silence an opponent by getting in the ring with them. But all that happens is that we come down to their level. We end up doing the same things that they have done to us. And we end up in worse shape than when we started!

David asks for *God's path*. His oppressors are looking for him to make even the slightest mistake. He asks God to show him a path that is straight and true. He asks for a path that only goes where God is taking him.

The Answer:

The song ends with David receiving the answer to his request for guidance.

First, he proclaims, again, his total confidence in God as His Protector and Guide:

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Psalm 27:13 NIV

I remain confident of this:

*I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.*

Then the song ends with God's answer to his prayer:

Psalm 27:14 NIV

*Wait for the LORD;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the LORD.*

Wait! Isn't that often the hardest thing to do? We want things to be all better *now!* How much more so in an age of instantaneous communication? Doesn't Google pride itself in how fast it can give you the answer to just about anything?

The word that David uses here means "wait for, with tenseness, eagerness." It forms the root for the Hebrew word for "hope." To wait means to look forward to something, to hope for it, knowing that it's going to come true.

In his letter to the Christians in Rome, Paul encouraged them to do the same thing. Their journey from death to eternal life was to be a hope-filled journey:

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Romans 8:24-25 NIV

For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

My little dog knows when he is going to get a reward. But before I give him the treat, I tell him to "sit." So he sits down, sometimes just barely, waiting for me to give him the treat. Any doubt in his eyes? Not a shred. His waiting is filled with the full expectation that the treat is on the way.

The Lord knows that while we may have a million questions and fears, what we need most is His direction and protection for the next step on the path. When we dare to wait for Him to lead, we will discover that He is right there to "lead us not into temptation, but to deliver us from evil."