

# God's Deliverance

## SESSION 7

**Psalm 18:16-29**

**Memory Verse: Psalm 18:3**

**God protects and defends those who belong to Him.**

Looking back can be a beneficial exercise for believers. We're wise when we take some time to reflect on the successes, as well as the failures, in our past. Even more important, we do well to ask the Lord to help us so we can see clearly what He has done in our lives to shield and uphold us.

God can use our long look into the past to strengthen us as we take a look ahead toward the challenges that are coming into view. We can be confident that the Lord who helped us in the past will continue to protect and defend us as we step into the future.

As you study this session, reflect on how God has met your needs and brought you through hard times in the past. Thank Him for those times and ask Him to help you apply those experiences to struggles you are having now. Consider how you can challenge the adults in your Bible study in this area.



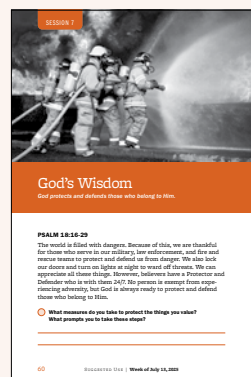
### ***Weekly Podcast: Group Leader Training***

Scan here to gain insights about this week's study on Apple podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, or at [goExploreTheBible.com/adults-training](https://goExploreTheBible.com/adults-training).



The world is filled with dangers. Because of this, we are thankful for those who serve in our military, law enforcement, and fire and rescue to protect and defend us from danger. We also lock our doors and turn on lights at night to ward off threats. We can appreciate all of these things. However, believers have a Protector and Defender who is with them 24/7. No person is exempt from experiencing adversity, but God is always ready to protect and defend those who belong to Him. (PSG, p. 60)

**What measures do you take to protect the things you value?**  
**What prompts you to take these steps?**



## Understand the Context (Psalm 18)

Psalm 18 has some overlap between the categories of “hymns” and “royal psalms.” Either way, this psalm focuses on praise. It contains sections similar to verses in a hymn that can be sung in personal or congregational worship, including a call to praise. In addition, it offers insights that prompt worshipers to praise the Lord.

The details provided in the prelude of Psalm 18 established the setting for this hymn. Just as helpful, the entire psalm can be found in 2 Samuel 22, as David reflected on the number of ways the Lord had taken care of him. Long before he became the king of Israel, he had survived Saul’s repeated attempts to kill him (1 Sam. 17–31). During his reign as king, he had to overcome an assortment of challenges. In particular, he defended himself against his enemies who tried to remove him from the throne (2 Sam. 1–21). Looking back on all of his victories, he gave the Lord the credit for each of them.

Psalm 18 begins with a call to praise. David expressed his love for the Lord who had been faithful to rescue him from his enemies (18:1-3). He went on to describe the anguish he faced as he found himself at death’s door. He turned to the Lord and pleaded for help. The Lord heard his cry and reached into his desperate predicament. He took hold of His creation and used it as His weapon to deliver David from the deep water of death (18:4-19).

As David continued to craft his hymn of praise, he gave attention to his walk with the Lord. He testified that he had been faithful to the Lord and blameless before Him. His testimony didn’t imply that he had reached a level of sinless perfection. Rather, it underscored one of his primary convictions: living with integrity before the Lord. Consequently, God blessed him with tremendous courage, which equipped him to defeat his enemies (18:20-29).

The Lord’s gracious ways with David served as the primary theme for the remainder of the psalm. He celebrated what the Lord had done to strengthen him for battle and secure his victories. David compared Him to a rock that never moved or cracked. God had always been there for David, strengthening him, protecting him, fighting battles for him, and making him triumphant.

Because of the Lord’s leadership, David reigned over pagan nations as well as the kingdom of Israel. He subdued each of the nations so David could lead them. In response, David pledged that he would declare his devotion to the Lord to all people everywhere (18:30-50). This was yet another indication that God’s salvation was available to all who would believe in Him, not just the Israelites.

**As you read Psalm 18:16-29, identify all the things the Lord had done for David. (PSG, p. 61)**



**VISUALIZE:** Guide the group to picture these scenarios:

- Warning signs that say, “No swimming beyond this point”
- Highway workers wearing neon vests and hard hats
- People fastening their seat belt in a car or plane

**ASK:**

**What’s the overall theme of these scenarios? Why is it important to protect ourselves and others?**

**RELATE:**

*Each day we take steps to protect ourselves from harm’s way. Each day, there are people who stand in the gap to offer protection to others.*

**READ:**

Direct a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 60 of the PSG.

**REFLECT:**

**What measures do you take to protect the things you value? What prompts you to take these steps?** (PSG, p 60)

**TRANSITION:**

*In today’s session we will examine Psalm 18. As we do, think about how David praised God for deliverance. Identify areas of our life where you can demonstrate gratitude to our mighty God for protecting and defending you in times of adversity.*

NOTES

## Group Activity Option

### Music

Secure copies of the lyrics for “Love Lifted Me” (*Baptist Hymnal*, 2008, No. 107). Enlist three volunteers to read each verse with the group singing the chorus between each verse. Ask: ***Are there times when you know that “love lifted you”?*** Guide the group to pray silently, praising God for His protection in times of adversity.

## The God Who Rescues (Ps. 18:16-19)

**16** He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he pulled me out of deep water. **17** He rescued me from my powerful enemy and from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me. **18** They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD was my support. **19** He brought me out to a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me.

**(v. 16) He reached down:** Earlier in Psalm 18, David testified that the Lord came down and helped him in his time of deep distress (18:9). Therefore, he lived in the confidence that he could ask the Lord to help him once more (Ps. 57:3; 144:7). The Lord responded to David's plea when He **reached down** from heaven. The Hebrew for **took hold** (*laqach*) suggests placing something in one's hand and carrying it. The Lord grabbed David and held him with a firm grip.

**(v. 16) Deep water:** The Lord also removed David from a dangerous crisis that could have taken his life. David used vivid imagery to describe what the Lord had done. Like someone drowning in **deep water**, David realized that he could never save himself. Only the Lord could save him.

Jonah expressed the same realization as he languished in the stomach of a gigantic fish (Jonah 2:5-6). Likewise, the Lord led Pharaoh's daughter to draw Moses out of the water (Ex. 2:10).

---

### Key Doctrine

#### God the Father

God is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. (See Psalm 147:3-5; Jeremiah 32:17.)

**(v. 17) He rescued me:** The imagery of drowning also provided David with a fitting description of his enemies. Like deep water, his foes had the power to take his life. Their hatred of him fueled their actions and made them a powerful force. David understood that they were **too strong** for him, so he leaned into the Lord's strength to rescue him from disaster. The writer of Hebrews also instructed struggling disciples about the Lord's power to rescue them (Heb. 2:14).

**(v. 18) My support:** David elaborated on the cruelty of his enemy. He noted that a devastating personal **calamity** had taken a toll on his strength and left him defenseless.

In that moment of extreme weakness, his enemy attacked. This violent aggression would have destroyed David, but the Lord sustained him. David's testimony of the Lord's **support** in his weakness resonated with the declaration of Moses that God's people could count on Him to stand against their enemy (Deut. 32:35-37).

**(v. 19) A spacious place:** The Hebrew word for **spacious place** (*merhab*) implies more than a generous amount of square footage. It suggests a safe place that would offer comfort. Such a place stood in stark contrast to the severe constrictions that crowded David and left him feeling like a prisoner to his difficulties.

David's testimony about the Lord's provision of a safe, secure place resembled the crisis that Moses and the Israelites faced as they found themselves at the Red Sea. The oncoming Egyptian army created a dangerous dilemma that the Lord addressed by parting the waters and giving His people a path for crossing over to safety (Ex. 14:1-22).

**(v. 19) Delighted:** The Lord rescued David and provided him with a place of comforting safety for an important reason. He **delighted** in David. He took pleasure in David as His servant and His child. In other words, He loved David. While the king was far from perfect, the Lord knew that He had David's heart.

Centuries earlier, the Lord demonstrated a similar love for Israel when He rescued His people from Egyptian bondage and established a covenant relationship with them (Ex. 19:4). During Solomon's reign, the Queen of Sheba affirmed that the Lord demonstrated His unending love for the kingdom of Israel. She recognized that God had verified His delight with Solomon by blessing him lavishly with both wisdom and material possessions (1 Kings 10:9).

## EXPLORE Psalm 18:16-19

1



**APPLICATION POINT:** Believers can call upon God in times of adversity.

**CONTEXTUALIZE:** Using Understand the Context (PSG, p. 61) set the context for Psalm 18. Point to **Pack Item 1** (Map: Kingdom of David and Solomon) and note that David wrote Psalm 18. Direct adults to scan Psalm 18:1-15 to identify the characteristics of God. Display **Pack Item 4** (Poster: God in Psalms), noting how many of these characteristics are found in Psalm 18.

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read **Psalm 18:16-19** as the group listens for God's actions to protect David.

**ASK:** What do these verses reveal about God? (PSG, p. 64)

**RECAP:** Share that the powerful enemy David mentioned may have been King Saul. Share the following from page 63 of the PSG to explain David's connection with Saul: *When God gave David tremendous military successes, Saul became jealous and wanted to permanently eliminate David either by his own hand or that of Israel's enemies, the Philistines. Saul watched David's military successes pile up. He witnessed the dancing and heard the songs praising David. Even Jonathan, Saul's own son and heir to the throne, loved David.*

**TRANSITION:** It is comforting to know that believers faced with difficult times do not need to face them alone. Like David, God still provides a spacious place for the ones in whom He finds delight.



OUR GOD IS OUR...	
Shield	Psalms 3:3, 28:7, 119:114
Rock	Psalms 18:2, 42:9, 95:1
King	Psalms 5:2, 44:4, 76:12
Shepherd	Psalms 23:1, 80:1
Judge	Psalms 7:11
Refuge	Psalms 46:1, 62:7
Fortress	Psalms 31:3, 71:3
Avenger	Psalms 26:1
Creator	Psalms 8:1, 6
Deliverer	Psalms 37:39-40
Helper	Psalms 30:2
Protector	Psalms 5:11
Provider	Psalms 78:23-29
Redeemer	Psalms 107:2

NOTES

### Group Activity Option

#### Case Study

Share the following case study and discuss the final question: *Jim had a well-paying, satisfying job until a recession caused his company to lay off employees and ultimately close. He was confident that he would find a new job quickly, but he was still looking six months later. Meanwhile, his savings dwindled and he wondered how he would take care of his family. Based on Psalm 18:16-19, how can the Bible study group support Jim?*



## Faithfulness Rewarded (Ps. 18:20-24)

**20** The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; he repaid me according to the cleanness of my hands. **21** For I have kept the ways of the LORD and have not turned from my God to wickedness. **22** Indeed, I let all his ordinances guide me and have not disregarded his statutes. **23** I was blameless toward him and kept myself from my iniquity. **24** So the LORD repaid me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

**(v. 20) According to my righteousness:** When David said he was **rewarded** on the basis of his **righteousness**, he did not mean that he had earned God's favor through his own actions or good works. Being righteous meant being made right with God, and it resulted from faith in Him (Gen. 15:6). That has always been God's standard, and He honored David's faith and dependence on Him.

In the New Testament, Paul echoed the same message about righteousness. He wrote that people only could be made right with God by placing their faith in the risen Christ (Rom. 10:9-10; Eph. 2:9-10). It is not something any of us can earn.

**(v. 20) Cleanness of my hands:** Although being righteous started on the inside, David demonstrated his commitment to God through his actions. Along with a clean heart, he also lived with clean **hands**. What he said and what he did validated his relationship with the Lord.

### Key Cross Reference

#### David and Saul

The subscript at the beginning of Psalm 18 mentions David's flight from King Saul. Many scholars believe Saul's unjust vendetta accounted from some of the fear and anxiety David expressed in the psalm. Yet, as he was running for his life from Saul, David maintained a righteous heart and clean hands. For example, twice he had a chance to kill Saul, but he refused. Read the passages below and reflect on David's words and actions. Ask God to help you consider how you can follow his example when you are treated unfairly.

- 1 Samuel 24
- 1 Samuel 26

**(v. 21) Ways of the LORD:** David demonstrated his devotion to the Lord by living according to His **ways**. As he sought to please the Lord, he gave himself to taking God's Word to heart and applying it in his life. Of course, pleasing the Lord meant keeping His commands (Deut. 8:6). Obviously, David knew about the temptation to turn away from the Lord and the outcome of such a foolish decision.

**(v. 22) His ordinances . . . statutes:** In the wilderness, the Lord commanded His people to obey His **ordinances** and **statutes** (Lev. 18:4-5). David took the Lord's commands seriously (Ps. 19:9-10). The terms used here represent distinct, but complementary, aspects of God's instructions. Taking His Word to heart would help His people grow in their walk with Him.

**(v. 23) Blameless:** David believed that no one could find fault with him. The Lord had protected him because he was a man of integrity. He didn't wear a mask of faithfulness to the Lord in order to shroud a sinful lifestyle. Despite the stress created by his enemies, David avoided **iniquity** to the best of his ability. Again, he was not perfect, but he placed his unwavering trust in God.

**(v. 24) In his sight:** David repeated his testimony about his **righteousness** and **cleanness** of hands (see v. 20). He also added an important phrase. He noted that he was blameless in the **sight** of the Lord.

Although David committed adultery with Bathsheba and arranged her husband's death, he eventually returned to God's plan. Confronted with his sinful behavior, he repented and sought God's forgiveness and mercy (2 Sam. 11:1-12:13; Ps. 51). His example reminds us that being righteous does not mean being perfectly sinless. It means being acceptable to the Lord (Ps. 19:14).

## EXPLORE Psalm 18:20-24



**APPLICATION POINT:** God rewards those who faithfully follow Him.

**READ:** **Read aloud Psalm 18:20-24** while the group listens for why David felt God rescued him.

**DISCUSS:** Direct the group to examine the poetic structure of these verses as described on page 64 of the PSG. Lead a brief discussion on why God's Word (v. 22) stands at the center of David's poetic structure.

**SHARE:** *These verses reveal both David's attitude and actions toward God. David was far from blameless or perfect, but he sought to live with integrity. He chose to obey rather than disregard God's Word. David exhibited faithfulness toward God.*

**REVIEW:** Divide adults into groups of two or three. Instruct them to read Psalm 19:7-11 and to identify similarities and differences between those verse and Psalm 18:20-24. After a few minutes let volunteers report. Highlight the importance of honoring and obeying God's Word as we strive to maintain righteous hearts and clean hands.

**ASK:** **What steps of faithfulness to God do you need to take today?** (PSG, p. 66)

**TRANSITION:** *David moved from examining his own attitude and actions to rejoicing in God's faithfulness.*

---

NOTES

---

### Group Activity Option

#### Antiphonal Reading

Remind the group of the poetic structure of these verses. Divide the group into three teams. Assign each team specific verses to practice reading together. Assign Psalm 18:20, 24 to the first team, Psalm 18:21, 23 to the second team, and Psalm 18:22 to the third team. Guide the group to read their assigned verses chorally, listening for the parallelism and rhythm in the verses.

## Hope Given (Ps. 18:25-29)

---

**25** With the faithful you prove yourself faithful, with the blameless you prove yourself blameless, **26** with the pure you prove yourself pure, but with the crooked you prove yourself shrewd. **27** For you rescue an oppressed people, but you humble those with haughty eyes. **28** LORD, you light my lamp; my God illuminates my darkness. **29** With you I can attack a barricade, and with my God I can leap over a wall.

**(v. 25) Faithful:** David affirmed the reason for being faithful to the Lord. He had complete confidence in the Lord being **faithful** to him. God's goodness toward His people emanated from His love (Neh. 9:17). Jesus taught His disciples about God's faithfulness in His parable about a master who distributed money to his servants. He affirmed the servants who had been loyal to him with what he had given to them. Rewarding them demonstrated his faithfulness to them (Matt. 25:21-23).

**(v. 25) Blameless:** Being **blameless** had to do with being a person of integrity. God's people who live with integrity are not be guilty of being pretentious or hypocritical in relationship with Him. Instead, they demonstrate complete sincerity as they follow Him. Their integrity reflects the Lord's influence in their lives. The apostle John wrote that Christians who seek to be upright prove that they belong to the Lord (1 John 3:7-10).

**(v. 26) Pure:** David affirmed the Lord's purity as well as His faithfulness and integrity. He also noted that God's people should strive to reflect **pure** lives as they serve Him. John shared the same sentiment. In his first epistle, he taught that believers belong to the Lord as His children. One day, we will see Him personally. Our confidence in His return should prompt us to strive toward spiritual purity that imitates His purity (1 John 3:1-3).

**(v. 26) Crooked . . . shrewd:** God's people exhibit godly character traits that He affirms and nourishes. Borrowing from John the Baptist's message, they make the way straight between them and the Lord (John 1:23). Others choose a **crooked** path that leads them to a warped and twisted lifestyle.

David warned that the Lord would hold people accountable for their foolish choices. God will judge their actions, and they would find Him hostile to their plans.

**(v. 27) Rescue:** David assured God's people that they could put their complete trust in the Lord. Along the way, oppression would strike them. Humbled by poverty or affliction, they could depend on Him to **rescue** them. However, self-exalting individuals could expect a different response. God has promised to humiliate the proud (Prov. 3:34; Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5).

**(v. 28) Light my lamp:** David reflected on what the Lord had done for him personally. As he wrote, he chose a simple, but insightful, way to testify to the Lord's faithful ways. He used the word picture of **lamp** that drove away **darkness** to describe the Lord's influence in his life. Isaiah mentioned light and darkness in his prophecy about the Messiah (Isa. 9:1-2). Matthew pointed out that Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy (Matt. 4:15-16).

**(v. 29) With you:** Throughout his life, David faced incredible challenges, but God helped him each time. So, David declared that the Lord's presence kept him from being afraid. The Lord gave him the courage to charge any **barricade** and strengthen him to overcome any **wall**.

---

### Bible Skill

**Read, reflect on, and react emotionally to a Bible verse.**

Focus on Psalm 18:16. Read the verse aloud several times. Each time, emphasize different words or phrases as you read. For example, in one reading emphasize the word "he" each time it appears. Then read the verse again, emphasizing all the action words. Take note of your thoughts. ***How does the verse move you emotionally? What feelings were evoked by the different words and phrases as you emphasized them? How can you turn this verse into a prayer?***

---



## EXPLORE Psalm 18:25-29



**APPLICATION POINT:** Believers can trust God to be faithful to them.

**READ:**

**Instruct the group to read Psalm 18:25-29 silently**, noting key words that reveal more characteristics of God.

**DISCUSS:**

Write the following phrase on the board: *What goes around, comes around.* Allow volunteers to suggest how this phrase relates to these verses. Lead a brief discussion related to the words David used to describe how God responds to people.

**ASK:**

**How have you seen God's faithfulness expressed in your life recently?** (PSG, p. 67) Encourage adults to share times when they have seen God be faithful. Talk about why we can count on Him to be blameless and pure.

**MEMORIZE:**

Turn to Psalm 18:3. Share that this is the memory verse for this session and that it provides a great summary for the entire Psalm. Lead the group in reading it together aloud a few times. Encourage them to continue reading it and reflecting on it as they memorize it this week.

**TRANSITION:**

*Verse 29 focuses on David's testimony of how God rescued him from his enemies. Because he trusted God, he had the courage and passion to fight any battle against any foe. God can still provide that kind of confidence and strength when we humble ourselves before Him. This week, think about how you can apply these verses to your life as you face struggles and challenges in life.*

---

NOTES

---

### Group Activity Option

#### Object Lesson: Lights

Display a light bulb, flashlight, lantern, or other light source. Direct attention to Psalm 18:28 and discuss ways that light impacts our lives. Ask: ***How does Christ provide light in your life? How are you a light for your family, neighbors, coworkers, and others who cross your path?***

## CHALLENGE

---

- SUMMARIZE:** Review these points from Apply the Text on page 68 of the *Personal Study Guide*:
- *Believers can call upon God in times of adversity.*
  - *God rewards those who faithfully follow Him.*
  - *Believers can trust God to be faithful to them.*
- APPLY:** Encourage adults to read through today's focal passages again and look for ways these statements are described in the verses. Challenge them to consider how they can apply each of these to their lives.
- SHARE:** Ask a volunteer to share a testimony of a time when they called on the Lord and felt His guiding presence. Be prepared to share your own experience.
- ASK:** **Why do we sometimes neglect praising God?** (PSG, p. 68)
- LIST:** Direct adults to the second set of questions on page 68 of the PSG. Guide the group to list reasons the Lord is worthy of our praise.
- PRAY:** Lead the group to pray silently, asking the Lord to increase their faith in Him and faithfulness to Him as their Protector in times of adversity.

---

## After the Session

Text or email the group, reminding them to be mindful in praising the Lord and allowing His light to guide their path. Encourage them to create their own list of reasons to praise God for His deliverance and protection. Suggest they read the focal passages again and use David's words as a model for their list. Let them know that you are praying for them.

## LEADER EXTRAS



For free bonus introduction and application ideas that connect to a current news event, go to **[goExploreTheBible.com/LeaderExtras](https://goExploreTheBible.com/LeaderExtras)**.

EXPLORE  THE BIBLE.