Psalm 17: Honest Prayer for Vindication Now. Today, the theme of Psalm 17 is very appropriate. Oh, our personal enemies are not exactly the same as David's. We don't have Philistines or Syrians charging us, but the enemies we face are just as dangerous. Our enemies are things that we are all familiar, but they certainly aren't very glamorous.

Our enemies are bills, fatigue, business, meetings, non-Christian work acquaintances, demands at work, peer pressure, and the list could go on forever! Yes, we are faced by many things, and people, that can interfere with our commitment to live a Christ-centered life and serve our Lord. In verse 12, David accurately described what we face. "They are like a lion hungry for prey, like a great lion crouching in cover".

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In the first six verses, David stated the basis for his plea for the Lord's help, and that basis is rather surprising. In verse one, he called his plea a righteous one. David wrote, "Hear a just cause, O Lord, give heed to my cry; give ear to my prayer, which is not from deceitful lips. Let my judgment come forth from Your presence; let Your eyes look with equity.

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You have tried my heart; You have visited me by night; You have tested me and You find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress. As for the deeds of men, by the word of Your lips I have kept from the paths of the violent. My steps have held fast to Your paths. My feet have not slipped. I have called upon You, for You will answer me, O God; Incline Your ear to me, hear my speech."

In verse 2 David stated that there is no wrong in his heart. In verse 3 he wrote, "I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress." In verse 4 he says that he has kept from the ways of the violent, and in verse 5 he says that he had not slipped from the Lord's path. David's words were brave, but was there a hint of self-righteousness in his prayer?

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As Jesus went on His way, a rich young ruler approached Him and asked Him what he needed to do. The young man claimed to have followed the 10 commandments, and he was sincere, because the scriptures state that Jesus loved him. But when Jesus told him to sell all his possessions, give to the poor, and follow Him, the young man left in sorrow. He would not give up his wealth to follow the Lord.

David's words sound very much like that young ruler. Later, with the affair with Bathsheba, David would realize that he was just as flawed as anyone else. Christians are not "perfect" people as the world defines perfection. But through the "Good News", we know today that perfection can only be achieved in Jesus Christ. We cannot do it alone. It is only when our lives are replaced with the perfect life of

our Lord, that we can approach the throne of grace with boldness and confidence.

In verse 8, David used two vivid examples in his prayer. “Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadows of your wings…” How many of us have heard the expression, “He’s the apple of their eye”? The source of that saying is ***Psalm 17***. The apple of the eye is the pupil. The eye, especially the pupil of the eye, is one of the most important parts of our body. It is also one of the best protected parts. In a spiritual sense, the eye is also significant, because it is often called the door or gateway to the heart. In other words, the eye is very precious. In verse 8, David is asking the Lord to keep him – protect him as if he was the pupil (or apple) of His own eye.

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David’s prayer was a plea, or petition, that God accept Him, and consider him precious in His sight. We can echo that prayer, but we can do it with confidence! As Christians, we ARE God’s children, and as children, our Father is concerned for us just like any Father. Again, what a blessing we enjoy today!

The second image is also very rich, “hide me in the shadows of your wings”. David often used this idea to describe his relationship with God. The picture is of a mother hen spreading her protective wings over her chicks. Again, what a beautiful description of what God does for His children! As a Christian, we are precious in our Father’s eyes. In many ways, we are protected from the dangers that we face. We

are not exempt from the trials of life, but we will never be tempted by more than we can handle.

One of the deadliest weapons that Satan will try to use against Christians is discouragement, and a sense of isolation. “No one knows what I’m experiencing,” or “***I feel all alone***.” But that is not what the Bible teaches. Christians are NOT alone. We are not simply cast out the door to find our own way. Every step, we experience protection and guidance. There is nothing miraculous about this, as some misuse the word, but we not neglected by our Father or our Savior. OUR job is to grow, mature, stay alert, and not allow Satan’s lies to divert us from the inheritance that is promised.

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