

INTRODUCTION

What is your least favorite emergency drill at school? Favorite? Why? Has your family ever practiced preparing for emergency procedures in case of fire, hurricane, tornado, or anything else?

Do you feel like you are well prepared to respond to those types of emergency events, or do you think fear would send you into panic mode? Explain.

Emergency drills have been practiced in homes and schools for many decades, and these days, we prepare for more types of emergencies than ever before. Add to those drills our attention to having insurance, smoke alarms in every room, carbon monoxide detectors, security systems, and storm shelters—it's clear we want to be ready for whatever happens! The thing is, we can be completely prepared, and our knowledge and supplies can still let us down. God will never let us down, though. That's why, in Psalm 57, David placed his hope for protection in God.

DISCUSSION

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 57:1-11.

David wasn't having a drill; his emergency was real life! He was hiding in a cave while Saul was chasing him to kill him. Where did David say he found refuge?

Since he had found a hiding place, why do you think David didn't say his place of refuge was the cave?

Where are some places you are tempted to take refuge instead of God?

In verse 4, David described his circumstances as very tense and dangerous. How, then, is it that he was so confident (v. 7)?

What was David intentional to do (7-11)?

How can you focus on God in hard times? Why will that be hard to do if you spend all of your other time focusing on yourself and your circumstances?

How does it help you to focus on God when there is chaos all around you?
When have you experienced that in your own life?

How do you think David's attitude in this emergency impacted other people (v. 9)?

GOING DEEPER

How does your relationship with God in the day-to-day prepare you to trust Him in the hard times?

If you were going to make a spiritual emergency plan, what steps would it include?
Why?

APPLICATION

In what situation right now do you need to find refuge in the Lord? How does Psalm 57 encourage you in that?

What would change in your life this week if you decided to praise God in your struggles instead of complaining or living in a state of panic?

PRAYER

Thank God for the protection He gives you in relationship with Jesus, so that no matter what happens in this life, your eternity is safe with Him. Ask Him to help you praise Him, even in the hard times, so that others might praise Him, too.

COMMENTARY

PSALM 57

57:1. David began with the passionate plea that God would have mercy on him. His petition is repeated twice to express urgency and is an identical opening to Psalm 56. Ultimately, it was in God that his soul took refuge for protection. As David trusted in God, he realized he was under the shadow of God's wings. This pictures the divine care he sought that was compared to the care of a mother bird for her young.

57:2-3. God Most High is a divine name which emphasizes that God is lifted up above all his creation, over all circumstances, and that he rules over all. This sovereign God, lifted up and transcendent, fulfills his purpose without any wavering, according to his eternal decree. God can be trusted, David said. He sent from heaven and saved him, rebuking those who hotly pursued him. He was referring to Saul and his skilled warriors. God's overruling purposes are always a great motivation for prayer.

57:4-5. Detailing his persecutors, David lamented, I am in the midst of lions and ravenous beasts. He pictured these men with teeth like spears and arrows, meaning they had tongues which were like sharp swords. They were able to inflict disabling, deadly harm. Such is the power of the tongue! In the midst of describing these attackers, David's mind suddenly turned to God: Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth. This God-centered focus on divine supremacy was the strength of his life in every adversity, a sure anchor for his soul in the midst of trouble. David requested that God show his sovereign glory by coming to his rescue.

57:6. Returning to the detailed portrayal of his foes, David continued exposing them before God. Like a hunter seeking prey, they had spread a net for his feet to trap him (Pss. 7:15; 9:15). But God had promised to keep the feet of the righteous from slipping (Pss. 37:24; 55:22). Instead of ensnaring David, they had fallen into the pit they had dug for him.

57:7-8. Still looking heavenward, David steadied his heart in God. My heart is steadfast, he repeated twice, underscoring the firm resolve of his soul to trust in God. Rather than pouting about his plight, he declared, I will sing and make music in worship of almighty God. He roused his own heart, Awake, my soul! as if to say, "Let not my soul be sluggish or dull toward God." David vowed to awaken before dawn to begin the day by offering fervent praise to God.

57:9-10. Looking beyond the confinement of the cave in which he found himself, David vowed, I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations and the peoples. Once he was delivered from his trouble, his worship of God would be his public witness to the unbelieving Gentile nations. David must praise God because his love was great, reaching to the heavens. Because God's name was high and lifted up, so David's praise must be.

57:11. Repeating the earlier spoken refrain, David concluded, Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. This was an appeal for God to demonstrate his sovereignty by intervening in David's life, reversing his plight and turning back his enemies. Such a rescue, a deliverance, would display God's glory over all the earth.