

Introduction: Nicki Gumbrel shares the following story:

“**Shane Taylor** was considered one of the most dangerous men in the UK prison system. Originally jailed for attempted murder, he had his sentence extended by four years when he attacked a prison officer with a broken glass, setting off a riot.

He was put in a segregation unit inside a maximum-security prison. He was given his food through a hatch. His door was not opened unless there were **six** officers armed with riot shields waiting outside.

Later, he was transferred to Long Lartin maximum-security prison where he was invited on [Alpha](https://www.alpha.org/)(<https://www.alpha.org/>).

During the course he prayed, ‘*Jesus Christ, I know you died on a cross for me. I hate who I am, who I’ve become. Please forgive me and come into my life.*’ At that moment he was filled with the Holy Spirit. He went running out onto the wing, telling everyone he could find, ‘*Jesus is real!*’

His behavior changed so much that he went from living in total segregation to getting a trusted job in the prison chaplaincy. He prayed for the prison officers and for his enemies and, when he came out of prison, he got involved in a church.

He met a young woman called “Sam”, who had also had a tough life and had been involved with drugs and criminal activity. She also came to faith in Jesus. Now, they are married and have five children.

Talking to **Shane** now, it is hard to imagine that he is the same person who terrified so many people in the past. He has experienced “*the wonder of \[God’s\] great love”* (Psalm 17:7). He says, ‘*Jesus has shown me how to love and how to*

forgive. He has saved me. He has forgiven me for what I have done. He has turned my life around.”

Scripture Reading: Psalm 17

Key Verses: Vv. 6 - 12

Know that you are loved and treasured by God

God’s love for you is so great because it is so intimate.

David calls on God and asks him to ‘show *the wonder of your great love*’ (v.7).

He prays, ‘Keep me as *the apple of your eye*’ (v.8a).

Then he prays, ‘Hide me in *the shadow of your wings*’ (v.8b). Again, this tells of God’s love, intimacy, and protection.

Jesus picked up this image as he looked over the people of Jerusalem in the days leading up to his crucifixion and longed for them to come and hide under his wings (Matthew 23:37).

David is surrounded by ‘enemies’ (Psalm 17:9), people with ‘callous hearts’ who speak arrogantly against him (v.10).

There may be times in your life when you literally face ‘enemies’, but whatever struggles or difficulties you may face, you can rely on God’s intimate love for you.

Psalm 17 Overview:

The psalmist's prayer was characterized by **petitions**.

I want to look at those petitions briefly tonight:

We clearly see The Appeal in the Petitions (Psalm 17:5, 7, 8, 13, 14)

The appeals for God to help him in his dire situation were the most prominent part of the petitions.

I. The Appeal for Support.

"Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Psalm 17:5).

II. The Appeal for Sympathy.

"Show thy marvellous lovingkindness" (Psalm 17:7).

This is an appeal for mercy and grace.

III. The Appeal to be Special.

"Keep me as the apple of the [thine] eye" (Psalm 17:8).

God is not partial, but He does have His favorites.

The term *"apple of the [thine] eye"* means something that is very special.

IV. The Appeal for Security.

"Hide me under the shadow of thy wings" (Psalm 17:8).

This is a figure that emphasizes the security of the godly.

V. The Appeal to Smite.

"Disappoint him, cast him down" (Psalm 17:13).

This is the psalmist's request about how he wants God to deal with the enemy.

VI. The Appeal to Save.

"Deliver my soul from the wicked... from men which are thy hand [by thy hand]" (Psalm 17:13, 14).

We can pray the same prayer.

Conclusion:

Lord, I call on you today. Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings.

Remember Job?

Job, in the middle of a long period of intense suffering, holds on to God's wonderful love. He says, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust [hope in] him' (13:15).

Job 13:15 (KJV)

¹⁵ Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

Hold on to God's wonderful love through the difficult days!

Invitation Hymn: "*Gentle Shepherd*" (2-3 verses)

*Bruce Beach, Th. B

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*The main points (1 -6) were borrowed from: Analytical Bible Expositor - Analytical Bible Expositor – Psalms.