



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"From Wrestling to Rest"

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts: Psalm 77; Psalm 17; Exod. 14; Ex. 34:6-7; Luke 6:27-36

Have you ever had a night where you couldn't sleep—not because of caffeine, but because your heart was troubled? That's the place where Asaph is in Psalm 77. He says, *"My voice is to God—and I cried out; my voice is to God—and He heard me!"* He waves his hands in the night, unable to be comforted, wrestling with the question: "Has God changed? Has His mercy run out? Has He forgotten me?" This is not a neat, tidy story but a faithful one. The psalmist flails in the night, questions hard things, and then deliberately remembers who God is and what He has done

Psalm 17 gives us David's prayer in the same spirit—his heart has been tested, his motives searched, and he's asking God not only to protect him but to *act*. These two psalms together give us a roadmap for what to do in those long, sleepless nights when life feels like it's pressing you through the smelting fire. The question we face is this: Who will we trust—our emotions or God's unchanging character? And what will we look like when the night is over?

1. HONEST WRESTLING IN THE NIGHT (Ps. 77:1-10)

The psalmist begins with a full-throated cry: he remembers, roars, and muses. He refuses quick comfort because he's after real encounter, not religious clichés. Hands outstretched, heart exhausted, he names his distress (*tsar*)—that tight, squeezing place—and he keeps coming to God. He's doing the work of faith in the dark: remembering God, crying out, and letting his thoughts and words go back and forth until truth steadies him.

Then come the questions: Has God rejected forever? Has His *chesed* (covenant love and loyalty) failed? Has His promise ended? Has He forgotten to be gracious and compassionate? Asaph knows the "right answers," yet he still asks, because this is where faith is forged—in the gap between what we know and what we feel. He admits how grievous the thought is that God's right hand could have changed. Experience screams one story; God's Enduring Word sings another. Which voice will rule the night? Faith doesn't deny emotion; it refuses to enthrone it.

2. REMEMBERING GOD'S DEEDS REFRAMES THE DARKNESS (Ps. 77:11-20)

The hinge of the psalm is a holy decision: "I will remember." He chooses to call to mind God's wonders of old, to meditate on His works, and to consider His ways. Memory becomes the lamp that pushes back the night. As he rehearses God's past faithfulness—Passover, the Red Sea, the thunder, the shaking earth—he sees again that God's way is *holy* (set apart, one-of-a-kind). God often leads where we never would, precisely to reveal who He is.

Then comes the line that steadies weary hearts: *"Your way was in the sea... Your footprints were not seen."* (Ps 77:20 TLV) At the cul-de-sac of the Red Sea, Israel couldn't see the path or the footprints—only water and Pharaoh. Yet God was working a way where there was no way. In your present night, you may not see how He is moving. But unseen footprints do not mean absent faithfulness. The psalm closes with a shepherding image: *"You led Your people like a flock*

by the hand of Moses and Aaron.” (Ps 77:21 TLV) He hasn’t changed. Remembering reframes reality.

3. RESTING IN GOD’S JUSTICE SHAPES OUR CHARACTER (Ps 17)

Psalm 17 shows the fruit of wrestling: a restful confidence in God’s justice that shapes how we live. David comes with integrity—no deceit on his lips—and anchors his hope in God’s face: *“From Your presence let my vindication come.”* He invites examination: test me, visit me in the night, refine me in the fire. Under pressure he resolves, “My mouth will not sin,” and “My steps have held to Your paths.” He refuses the violent shortcuts available to him – (think of the opportunities he had to kill Saul) – choosing God’s way instead.

David then asks God to act in line with His covenant love: be wondrous – miraculous/extraordinary) in *chesed*; protect me as the apple of Your eye; hide me in the shadow of Your wings. He entrusts the outcome to the Lord rather than mirroring the arrogance and callousness of his enemies. The climax is the prayer that matches our deepest desire: *“As for me, I in righteousness will behold Your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with Your likeness.”* (Ps 17:15 TLV) That’s rest. Not merely a change of circumstance, but a transformation of character—becoming like the Father who calls us to love even our enemies (Luke 6:27–36).

CONCLUSION

The journey from wrestling to rest moves through honest questions, deliberate remembrance, and surrendered righteousness. We don’t deny the squeeze; we bring it into God’s presence. We choose to rehearse His works until our hearts remember His ways. And we resolve, by His Spirit, to walk in His paths—guarding our mouths, gripping His way, and trusting His justice. When the night lifts, may we wake satisfied in His likeness.

If you’re in the night right now—pressed, fearful, angry, tempted to take matters into your own hands—bring your wrestling to the Lord. Choose today to remember His wonders and entrust your vindication to His face. Ask Him to test and refine you, and to shape you into Yeshua’s likeness through this trial. Bring your heart to Him and lay down retaliation, anxiety, and despair. Pray, “Abba, when I awake from this, let me be satisfied with Your likeness.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Which question in Psalm 77 (about God’s *chesed*, promise, or compassion) most mirrors your present struggle—and why?
2. What are two specific “wonders of old” you can deliberately remember this week to reframe your night?
3. Where are you tempted to take a violent or vengeful shortcut (in words, tone, or actions), and how does Psalm 17 redirect your steps?
4. What practices help you “guard your mouth” and “grip His paths” when pressure rises?
5. How would your current trial look different if your primary goal became, “When I awake, I’ll be satisfied with Your likeness”?

CLOSING PRAYER:

ADONAI, ADONAI, gracious and compassionate God—slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness—thank You that Your *chesed* has not ceased and Your promises have not ended. In our night, teach us to remember Your deeds and to trust Your unseen footprints. Examine us, refine us, and keep our lips from sin and our feet on Your paths. Hide us in the shadow of Your wings. Work wonders of love for those who take refuge in You. And when this night lifts, satisfy us with Your likeness. In Yeshua’s name—Amen.