

Psalm 141 – Let My Prayer Be Like Incense

“Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”
—Psalm 141:2 (NKJV)

This psalm is a heartfelt cry from David, not only for protection from the wicked but also for inward purity and spiritual discernment. It’s a model prayer for every believer who longs to walk uprightly before God in a world filled with snares, temptations, and compromise.

1. A Cry for Divine Attention (v. 1)

“LORD, I cry out to You; make haste to me! Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You.”

David opens with urgency. His prayer is not casual—he’s desperate for God’s presence and quick response. Like someone calling out for help in the dark, he longs for God to hear and draw near.

Personal Application:

Have you ever found yourself praying, “Lord, please answer quickly”? That’s not a lack of faith—it’s honest dependence. God invites us to pour out our hearts, not hide our fears. When urgency grips your soul, don’t hold back. Call on Him. He is near.

2. Prayer as a Pleasing Offering (v. 2)

“Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”

David wants his prayer to be more than words—he wants it to be worship. Just as incense rose from the altar in the tabernacle and the evening sacrifice pleased the Lord, David’s prayer is a spiritual offering meant to delight the heart of God.

Personal Application:

When you pray, do you believe your words are rising to God like incense? Prayer isn’t only about requests—it’s communion with the Lord. Lift up your heart and hands. Worship isn’t limited to music; it happens when we surrender our spirit in prayer.

3. Guard My Lips and My Heart (vv. 3–4)

“Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips. Do not incline my heart to any evil thing...”

David doesn’t just want to be protected from others—he wants to be protected from himself. He knows how easily the mouth can speak careless or corrupt words, and how quickly the heart can drift toward compromise. So he asks for two things: a guard over his *words* and a compass over his *desires*.

Personal Application:

Words are powerful. One sentence can destroy trust or start healing. Ask God to place a guard over your mouth. And don’t stop there—ask Him to keep your heart from entertaining what your lips should never say and your feet should never follow.

4. Welcoming Godly Correction (v. 5)

“Let the righteous strike me—it shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me—it shall be as excellent oil...”

David understands the value of correction. Rather than resist rebuke, he welcomes it from those who walk in righteousness. He sees correction as kindness—a healing balm to his soul.

“For still my prayer is against the deeds of the wicked.”

Even while receiving correction, David stays grounded—he continues to pray against wickedness. He wants nothing to do with the lure of evil.

Personal Application:

Do you welcome correction from godly people? Or do you get defensive? God often speaks through others to refine our character. The truth may sting at first, but it brings healing. Thank the people who care enough to tell you the hard things.

5. The Fall of the Wicked (vv. 6–7)

“Their judges are overthrown... they shall hear my words, for they are sweet.”

David foresees the collapse of those who oppose what is right. When that happens, others will finally listen to the words of truth that were previously ignored.

“Our bones are scattered at the mouth of the grave, as when one plows and breaks up the earth.”

This grim image may refer to Israel’s suffering or the aftermath of relentless oppression—bones scattered like plowed ground. Yet this also reminds us that God can raise what seems hopeless, just as He did in Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones.

Personal Application:

Sometimes truth is rejected—until everything falls apart. Stand firm. Your words of faith and integrity may be mocked today but honored tomorrow. And even when everything around you feels broken, trust that God can restore life to what looks like a graveyard.

6. Eyes on God, Not the Trap (vv. 8–10)

“But my eyes are upon You, O GOD the Lord; in You I take refuge...”

David ends with confidence. His gaze is fixed on God, not on the danger. He knows there are traps around him, but he trusts the One who sees every snare. He prays that the wicked would fall into the very traps they set for others.

Personal Application:

Don’t waste your energy trying to predict or control the enemy’s tactics. Keep your eyes on the Lord. He is your refuge. He’s your escape route. The schemes of the wicked may be crafty, but they’re never hidden from God.

Final Reflection

Psalm 141 reminds us that *true holiness begins in the secret place*. Before we ever engage with enemies or respond to pressure, we must first pray:

- “Guard my lips.”
- “Purify my heart.”
- “Let my prayer rise like incense.”
- “Keep my eyes on You.”

Prayer:

Lord, I want my prayer to be a sweet aroma to You. Place a guard over my mouth and purify my heart so that I don't fall into the traps of compromise. Help me receive correction with humility, and protect me from the snares of the enemy. My eyes are on You—be my refuge and guide me in truth. In Jesus' name, Amen.