**Turning Psalms into Questions and Prayers by David Powlison.**

As David Powlison (CCEF) counsels people from the Psalms, he suggests turning to Psalms 55, 56, and 57, using four different colored markers to mark four different questions and thoughts to personal the Psalm. Here’s an excerpt:

You are not alone.

David wrote these psalms, and he went through an experience similar to yours.

You are not alone.

Jesus made the psalms the voice of his own experience. Jesus said these words. Jesus felt these things. He’s been there with you.

You are not alone.

To make these Psalms into your own prayer, start by getting four different colored markers. You are going to follow four strands through each psalm; strands that will help you express and redefine your experience.

**1. What happened to you?**

Take the first marker, and underline all the phrases in each psalm that express the sort of thing that **happened to you**. You will find phrases like “the stares of the wicked…they bring down suffering upon me…my companion attacks his friends” ([Psalm 55:3](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2055.3), [20](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2055.20)), “men hotly pursue me; all day long they press their attack…many are attacking me…they conspire, they lurk; they watch my steps’ ([Psalm 56:1](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2056.1), [2](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2056.2), [6](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2056.6)), “they spread a net for my feet…they dug a pit in my path” ([Psalm 57:6](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2057.6)).

**2. What does it feel like?**

Now take the second marker and underline all the phrases that **express how you felt**—your anguish, your fear, your terror. Look at phrases like these, “I am distraught…my heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death assail me; fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me.  I said, ‘Oh that I had wings like a dove!  I would fly away and be at rest…’ ([Psalm 55:2](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2055.2), [4-6](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2055.4-6)), “When I am afraid…my lament…my tears” ([Psalm 56:3](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2056.3), [8](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2056.8)), “I am in the midst of lions…I was bowed down in my distress” ([Psalm 57:4](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2057.4), [6](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2057.6)).

**3. What is said about God?**

Use the third marker to underline what the psalms **say about God** and what he is doing. Start with some of these phrases, “the Lord saves me…he hears my voice…He ransoms me unharmed…he will sustain you” ([Psalm 55:16-18](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2055.16-18), [22](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2055.22)), “For you have delivered my soul from death, and my feet from stumbling,” ([Psalm 56:13](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2056.13)), “He sends from heaven and saves me; rebuking those who hotly pursue me…for great is your love reaching to the heavens, your faithfulness reaches to the skies” ([Psalm 57:3](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2057.3), [10](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2057.10)).

**4. What does faith say?**

Use the fourth marker to underline all the phrases that are cries of faith. “Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea; hear me and answer me…**but** I call to God and the Lord saves me…**but** as for me, I trust in you” ([Psalm 55:1](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2055.1), [2](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2055.2), [16](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2055.16), [23](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2055.23)), “Be merciful to me, O God…when I am afraid, I will trust in you…in God I trust: I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me…Record my lament; list my tears on your scroll…God is for me” ([Psalm 56:1](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2056.1), [3](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2056.3), [4](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2056.4), [8](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2056.8), [9](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2056.9)), “Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed…I cry out to God Most High…My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast;” ([Psalm 57:1- 2](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2057.1-%202), [7](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2057.7)).

Take the phrases you underlined and rewrite them, in your words, as a prayer.

Now find a place—a park bench, your car, your bedroom—where you are comfortable making some noise to God, and say these prayers out loud to him.

Remember, you are talking to the Lord who loves you, who hears you, who has saved you and who will redeem your soul in peace. Crying out to the Lord and praying out loud helps you realize that God is right there, listening to you.

Then, you will one step more equipped to encourage others to do the same.