



## Psalm 55 Personalized for Sexual Abuse

In his booklet *Recovering from Child Abuse: Healing and Hope for Victims* David Powlison identified Psalms 55, 56, and 57 as particularly good Psalms for helping victims of abuse put their experience into words. The Psalms were meant by God to help us put our experiences into words, but for many people (especially those who were “silenced” after their abuse) this can be difficult.

The example below is an attempt to rewrite Psalm 55 to put the experience of sexual abuse at the hands of a family member or trusted friend into words. It is advised to read Psalm 55 in your Bible first. Then read this post. Afterwards you might try to rewrite it to allow God to give words to your experience.

Psalm 55 (ESV)	Psalm 55 Personalized
<p><i>To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Maskil of David.</i></p>	<p><i>A song of me, my pain, my story, and my God.</i></p>
<p>1. Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy!</p>	<p>1. Oh God please hear me. Don't pretend that this is not happening. I need you!</p>
<p>2. Attend to me, and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and I moan,</p>	<p>2. Be silent no longer. Say something. Let me know you are there. I am overwhelmed as I cry and convulse over what happened to me. I can't eat, sleep, or think.</p>
<p>3. because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked. For they drop trouble upon me, and in anger they bear a grudge against me.</p>	<p>3. My abuser made such awful noises. He took pleasure in my pain and degradation. He over-powered me. There was nothing I could do. He must hate me to keep doing this. What have I done?! What could cause such hatred and disregard?!</p>
<p>4. My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen upon me.</p>	<p>4. My soul quakes. Heart-break feels romantic compared to this. This is worse than death.</p>
<p>5. Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me.</p>	<p>5. Panic attacks and the fear of panic attacks assail me. My body tremors in rebellion against me. I can't control my movements. Fear divides my heart, soul, mind, body, and will to attack them separately.</p>
<p>6. And I say, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest;</p>	<p>6. Like Jenny in Forest Gump, I want to be a bird and fly away. I want to escape to a place of rest.</p>
<p>7. yes, I would wander far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; Selah</p>	<p>7. That place of rest would have to be far away, but there is one, right? I would travel however far, by whatever means, if only You promise there is somewhere I can go.</p>
<p>8. I would hurry to find a shelter from the raging wind and tempest.”</p>	<p>8. If you would just tell me the direction I would leave now. I would drive all night. I want peace more than sleep. Without peace sleep is useless. Sleep is just part of the storm with its nightmares and waking up realizing I've got to fake it through another day.</p>

9. Destroy, O Lord, divide their tongues; for I see violence and strife in the city.
10. Day and night they go around it on its walls, and iniquity and trouble are within it;
11. ruin is in its midst; oppression and fraud do not depart from its marketplace.
12. For it is not an enemy who taunts me—then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me—then I could hide from him.
13. But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend.
14. We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng.
15. Let death steal over them; let them go down to Sheol alive; for evil is in their dwelling place and in their heart.
16. But I call to God, and the LORD will save me.
17. Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice.
18. He redeems my soul in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me.

9. Take justice! Do to them what they have done to my soul. Don't let them multiply my shame by talking of this deed. Don't let them mock me or worse talk like nothing happened.
10. I can't believe I live in a world/country where this is "common." It's always being reported on the news or another documentary. Every time I hear it I am reminded. The pain echoes; worse it flashes back.
11. There is a whole industry of sexual degradation in our culture – porn. Its bigger than the NFL. They write and glorify stories like mine. There is an audience who pays for it, even with children.
12. But I can't blame culture or an "industry" for my pain. It is no stranger who dined on my soul. It was not an enemy who was getting even. If it were, then I could be more protected. I could appeal to family and friends for help... and they might believe me.
13. But I knew him! I trusted him! My trust was used against me. My trust was the Trojan horse that let him in. How was I supposed to know?
14. We had so many good talks before that. We went to church together. We prayed together. He taught me Bible lessons. How much of that was a lie? What does it mean to have your soul betrayed by a friend and a "friend of God"?
15. May the death they have sparked in me explode in their own life and them live to experience it. Oh, that they would know the full degree of pain it was possible for them to create. Let their heart vomit its content into their own soul.
16. But I call to you God. No one is capable of handling what is before me except You. It takes omnipotence to overpower my pain, omnipresence to get your arms around it, and omniscience to fathom it. Only You can help me.
17. My pain is before me all day and at night when I am not sleeping. I don't know what else to do but cry to You. So You hear from me a lot. Everything in my life reminds me of my pain and my pain reminds me of my need for you constantly.
18. You are the one who keeps soldiers safe in the midst of battles. I am in the fight of my life and won't make it without You. My abusers, pain, memories, and fears out number me greatly.

19. God will give ear and humble them, he who is enthroned from of old, because they do not change and do not fear God.

20. My companion stretched out his hand against his friends; he violated his covenant.

21. His speech was smooth as butter, yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.

22. Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

23. But you, O God, will cast them down into the pit of destruction; men of blood and treachery shall not live out half their days. But I will trust in you.

19. God I trust the lies and deception do not outlive You. You hear, see, and know the truth. This sin was as arrogant against You as it was ravaging to me. He will not stand or smirk in Your presence.

20. My father/uncle/friend attacked me and violated the trust of our friendship and, with it, my willingness to allow anyone to get close again.

21. I replay his words over and over again, but cannot figure out what I should have heard. The terror of his intentions was hidden from so many. Were all of his compliments intentional instruments of death or were some of them sincere?

22. This was not my fault. God calls me righteous as His child. He asks me to cry to Him. He is not ashamed of me. God is angered by anyone who would shun or condemn me for what happened to me.

23. But God is more angered by my rapist. Sexual predators will answer for their sin. Yet in His fury against them God is still safe for me. I will come near, leave my shame, look in Your eyes, and have my trust restored.