

## Psalm 4 Retreat – The Journey from Confined to Spacious **Leader's Guide**

This **Guide** follows along with the Attendees' Handout called **Retreat-Psalm 4 From Confined to Spacious - Handout**. The colors used in both papers are important for following along.

All black text is for the leader to speak to the group.

This orange text signifies Beth Ann's instructions for the leader.

*Purple italic text signifies Beth Ann's personal thoughts the leader may share if they are appropriate for the group.*

Attendees have the agenda appearing throughout their handout. **Page 2** of this Leader's Guide is **Page 1** of their handout, which is an overview of the entire Psalm 4 study on one page. Familiarize yourself with both the Leader's Guide and the Attendees' Handouts beforehand. A black bracket appears on the left margin of the Leader's Guide next to text that the Attendees have in their handouts so that you are aware of the information they have in front of them.

### *Suggested Agenda*

8:30	–	9:00	Registration and breakfast
9:00	–	9:30	Worship
9:30	–	10:00	Part 1, <b>Cry, Why</b>
10:00	–	10:30	Time away to think and write
10:30	–	10:45	Break
10:45	–	11:00	Sharing
11:00	–	11:30	Part 2, <b>Rely (Remember and Wait)</b>
11:30	–	12:30	Lunch
12:30	–	12:45	Praise
12:45	–	1:00	Prayer, Recap or Q&A
1:00	–	1:30	Part 2, <b>Rely (Trust and Receive)</b>
1:30	–	2:00	Break for quiet refreshment
2:00	–	3:00	Ministry time, prayer
3:00	–	3:20	Part 3, <b>Fly</b>
3:30	–	5:00	Ministry time



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 devotionals by Beth Ann Phifer

This is the Attendees' Page 1

Psalm 4 records David's journey into freedom.  
 Four little words will guide us as we make the same journey:

**Cry, Why, Rely, Fly**

Legend of Colors: black-NASB version, orange - other versions,  
 olive green - KJV, blue italics - original Hebrew words

**Psalm 4 Retreat – The Journey from Confined to Spacious Personal Journal Sheets**

written June 18, 2013

Part 1				
<b>Cry</b>	Help!	<sup>1</sup> Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! God who vindicates me You have relieved ( <i>rāhab</i> ) me in my distress ( <i>sar</i> ); freed /enlarged affliction Be gracious to me and hear my prayer.	Confined Place ↓	What is your cry? _____ _____ _____
<b>Why</b>	What I don know	<sup>2</sup> O sons of men, how long will my honor become a reproach? will I be insulted? How long will you love what is worthless and aim at deception? Selah.		What is your why? _____ _____ _____
Part 2				
<b>Rely</b>	What I know in the pause	<b>Remember</b> <sup>3</sup> But know that the Lord has set apart the godly faithful for Himself; The Lord hears when I call to Him. <div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <b>Wait</b> The Peering Pause: be still, pour out, wait, peer, rest  <sup>4</sup> Tremble (<i>rāgaz</i>) be angry stand in awe, and do not sin;            Meditate reflect commune (<i>āmar</i>) in your heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.         </div> <b>Trust</b> <sup>5</sup> Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and trust ( <i>bātah</i> ) in the LORD. <b>Receive</b> <sup>6</sup> Many are saying, "Who will show us any good?" Lift up the light of Your countenance ( <i>pānîm</i> ) upon us, O Lord!	The Journey	What do you know? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Part 3				
<b>Fly</b>	Result of Trust	<b>In Abundance</b> <sup>7</sup> You have put gladness in my heart, More than when their grain and new wine abound. <b>In Peace</b> <sup>8</sup> In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, O Lord, make me to dwell in safety.	↓ Spacious Place	How does it feel to fly? (John 15:11) _____ _____ _____
<b>Talk</b> thinking, writing, sharing, praying, discussing			<b>Walk</b> IHTML - I Have This in My Life	



9:00 – 9:30 Worship

9:30 – 10:00 Part 1

## Part 1 (Verses 1-2) – Cry, Why

### Introduction – Affirmation of the Attendees' Value and Explanation of their Page 1.

As I share, please feel free to use the space on Page 2 of your handout to write your thoughts. You will have an opportunity to take time after this first half hour to think and write.

What does it mean to go deep with God? According to the author, Beth Ann's, understanding from Scripture, *depth is the revelation of simple truth*. God is the one Who reveals His heart to us. 2 Corinthians 11:3 talks about the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. The Lord's message is simple and can be grasped by everyone who listens to Him.

Jesus is our Passover Lamb, sacrificed to bring us back to God. That is your value. You are wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14), and you are His workmanship (Ephesians 2:10). He knows you fully and loves you fully. Before we begin – **We must understand and believe the following 4 truths in order to walk in His love and freedom:**

(Feel free to write notes on Page 2) **Leader, read slowly so they can write it down if they like.**

1. I don't (and never will) deserve God's love.
2. I cannot earn God's love. I can only receive it.
3. He delights to lavish His love on the undeserving and receptive.
4. My obedience is my expression of gratitude to God for His love. It is not my ticket to heaven or favor.

**Ephesians 2:19-22** says this about you:

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the Cornerstone in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

**Revelation 21** speaks of the heavenly Jerusalem, a city of rare gems and stones of every color.

**★ You are a gem of great value to this building today; you are a part of the blessing.**

**There is no pressure today, just be yourself. Be honest with God and yourself.**

**Leader** - Explain Page 1 of their handout slowly (Your Page 2). Say this:

Psalm 4 records David's journey into freedom. Four little words will guide us as we make the same journey: **Cry, Why, Rely, Fly**

Explain the legend of colors: black-NASB version, orange - other versions, olive green - KJV, blue italics - original Hebrew words

So, we will work our way through this journey in 3 Parts as you see on Page 1. On the last row of Page 1, you'll see the words **Talk** and **Walk**. The first column is what we'll be **talking** about. The 2<sup>nd</sup> column, the **Walk**, is about the questions we'll ask that will help us **walk** out the **Talk**.

Let's turn to Page 2 of your handout.

When you discover the Hebrew words and their meanings in Psalm 4:1, the Psalm's theme emerges. Verse 1 says,

**You relieved me in my distress.** Other versions say, **You freed me from my affliction.**

See in your handouts:

The **Hebrew word** for **relieved** is *rāhab*. This word means *enlarged, wide, broad, roomy, open, expanse*.

The **Hebrew word** for **distress** is *sar*. This word means *narrow, tight, distressed from an enemy, confined, restricted, bound, a hard pebble like flint; anguished from adverse circumstances*. It also means *an emotional response when pressed by external enemies, internal wrong decisions, passions, or difficult situations*.

In other words, this tiny phrase in Psalm 4:1 means,

**Lord, You brought me into a wide, broad, roomy expanse when I was in a confined, restricted place.**

There is a picture of dancing in a field of fragrant flowers with the blue sky above and with no fear of falling off a cliff. It is a spacious place in the soul.

This restricted place of distress could be many things. It could be persecution, pain or anxiety, betrayal, depression, a death of someone dear, chronic disease, a loss of a job or a friend, a disability. It could be fear or overwhelming thoughts. The restricted place is anything that keeps you in confinement or hinders you from moving in freedom.

Today, we are asking the Holy Spirit to break the chains when we find ourselves in those confined places and bring us into freedom!

We don't know David's location when he was in this constricted place, but we have read about his many distresses. He spent time in caves hiding from his enemies and running from Saul's pursuit with many close calls.

In Verses 1 and 2 of Psalm 4, David cried out from his tight, restricted spot. **His tight spot brought about questions** he had for God. His **cry** and his **why** rose up to God.

**Cries** and **whys** don't mean that we don't trust God. Our Father welcomes our dialogue with Him. In Psalm 62:8, David exhorts us: **Trust in Him at all times, O people;**  
**Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.**

**The Leader may share a large cry in your life.**

*Author – I can remember some small cries and some huge cries in my life. I can remember times of sweetness when I had no cries or whys.*

*My hugest cry came after 18 years of walking with the Lord. My pain was so great, I didn't think I could endure it. Torment was a word I used to describe those three years. The constriction of*

*this affliction was so tight, pressing on me so strongly that is pushed out large **cries** and **whys**. My cries were huge at this time:*

*Where are You? Why would You allow this? What should I do? How can I be healed?  
Is my life over? Some smaller (but still important) cries have been: Why did my father pass away so soon? How do I clear up that misunderstanding? Why didn't I get the job?  
Why was I betrayed?*

10:00 – 10:30 Attendees think and write **Dismiss Attendees for Personal Time**  
Leader guides the attendees through Page 3 of the handout, saying, There are questions on Page 3 of your handout to spur thought. If you don't have any tight, restricted places right now, that's great; you can use this time to pray for others. Then, the Leader guides them to a place to think and write about the questions. Encourage them to be honest as they pour out their hearts to God. Let them know to take a break at 10:30 and be back in the group at 10:45.

10:30 Break

10:45 Back in the group for sharing time

Encourage the attendees to share from Page 3 of their handout. Be sure to let them know that it is o.k. if they don't feel comfortable sharing. If they are willing, ask them how it was for them to write their **cries** and **whys**. Was it difficult or releasing? Was the process familiar to them?

11:00 – 11:30

## Part 2 (Verses 3-6)

David teaches us to **Rely** on God in the confined place by:

**Remembering, Waiting, Trusting** and **Receiving**

Verse 3 – **Relying** is **Remembering**

Please see Page 4 of your handout.

In Verses 1-2, David's **cries** and **whys** reflect **what he doesn't know**.

In Verses 3-6, David **remembers what he does know**, what he can **rely** on.

In Verse 1, David **asks** God to hear his prayer, but

In Verse 3, David **knows** God hears his prayer.

Let's read Verse 3 together.

*But know that the Lord has set apart the godly (faithful) for Himself; The Lord hears when I call to Him.*

What does David **remember** about God in Verse 3? Use your handout to write your thoughts.

Let people share the answers if they like. Here are some answers:

- God has set apart the godly for Himself.
- He has a great love for His people.
- The Lord actually hears when I call to Him.

David **remembered** that God set him apart. Whatever he didn't understand, **he knew he belonged to God**. A bride's veil represents that she is set apart exclusively for the marriage covenant. The unveiling represents the intimacy that is only realized in the context of the covenant. The veil in the temple was taken away when we were invited into His intimate presence, the Holy of Holies, His very heart.

Another aspect of this intimacy of being **set apart** is found in 1 Corinthians 12:13 – even though we only see in part, He fully knows us. We are fully known by Him and loved. If you have received Jesus, you belong to God. (See John 1:12-13). Affirm that you are His.

*Beth Ann: In one of the most constricted times of my life in the middle of confusion and pain, I knew I belonged to God. I remembered that He caused me to be born again into His family. Nothing could erase that from my memory. Whatever was wrong, I knew I had placed myself in His hands; I was His responsibility.*

On Page 4 of your handout, you'll see another question.

What do you **remember** about God? What do you know about Him from Scripture or personal experience?

I want to encourage you to take some quiet moments in the next week to write out your answer. You don't need to labor over the answer, but write what the Lord brings to your mind.

## Verse 4 – **Relying** is **Waiting**

On Page 1 of your handout, Verse 4 is in **a red box**, because it is the heart of our solution to bring us out into the spacious place. What does it mean to **wait**? We are going to look at this verse slowly word for word.

Let's say Verse 4 together –

**Tremble**, and do not sin; **Meditate** in your heart upon your bed and be still. Selah.  
First, we **tremble**, then we **meditate**.

The Hebrew word for **tremble** is *rāgaz*. It means to *stand in awe, quake, rage, shake, or disturb*. It suggests an *agitation from deeply-rooted emotion. It expresses intense emotion.*

The Hebrew word for **meditate** is *āmar*. This word means *commune, reflect, utter, speak, direct conversation, see, or make visible*.

**In other words**, David instructs, **Be in great intense agitation in your soul. Be deeply shaken and disturbed, but come to God and look at Him until you see Him. Focus on God as long as it takes for you to understand, for you to see your situation from His perspective.**

David **waited** on God to speak to him in his distress. He moved **toward** God rather than **away** from Him. Our grief and turmoil are expected when we are pressed by affliction, but this verse cautions us **to not turn our strong emotion against God**. So, go ahead and *tremble*, go ahead and rage, express your deepest feelings and pain, but do not sin by turning away from God in your pain or turning inward. Rather, turn to Him.

**So, how do I wait before God in His presence during this difficult time? –**

**The Peering Pause** from Psalm 4:4:

**The Peering Pause.** The Peering Pause is a simple outline of the process found in Verse 4 that will keep us moving toward the spacious place with God. **The Peering Pause** will take us through the **waiting** period. Imagine yourself **actively peering** through the dimness or pain until He makes things clear and calms your heart.

**The Leader speaks out the 5 Steps, saying,** I will slowly speak the 5 steps and then we will say them together from your handout on Page 4.

**The Peering Pause – 5 Steps** (from Psalm 4:4)

- **Be still** before God.
- **Pour out** your heart honestly to Him in your stillness.
- **Wait** for Him to speak truth in the confusion.
- **Peer** as you wait for the sight that He will bring in His timing, and
- **Rest** in His love.

**The Leader asks everyone to join in repeating the 5 Steps before lunch.**

Let's read the 5 steps together:

- I will **Be still** before God in His presence.
- I will **Pour out** my heart honestly to Him in the stillness.
- I will **Wait** for Him to speak truth in my confusion and pain.
- I will **Peer** until I see truth in His timing, the truth that will settle my heart.
- I will **Rest** in His love.

**Dismiss for lunch**

11:30 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 12:45	Praise
12:45 – 1:00	Prayer, Recap or Q&A
1:00 – 1:30	Part 2 continued

## **Part 2** (Verses 5-6) – **Rely Trust and Receive**

Let's look at **The Peering Pause** again on Page 4 of your handout.

*Beth Ann shares: The Peering Pause was born out of a trial in 2007. I was blindsided by a hurtful situation. Since I was between jobs and alone during the day, I lay on my back paralyzed by the situation. All I could do was be still remembering my new birth years before. I knew I was His. I remember peering, just peering until I could hear God speak in the confusion. I told Him I would wait until I could hear Him speak to my pain. I didn't hear Him right away. I eventually had to move on and wait for him to speak as I walked out my trust in Him and my gaze upward.*



We see **The Peering Pause in the confined place** in the following poem by Amy Carmichael. Amy was a missionary to India who opened an orphanage and founded a mission in Dohnavur. She served for 55 years without furlough until she died in 1951. She wrote many books and poems. Here is a poem that you will find on Page 5 of your handout: **Leader can read or have someone else read it.**

Thou art the Lord Who slept upon the pillow.  
Thou art the Lord Who soothed the furious sea.  
What matter beating wind and tossing billow  
If only we are in the boat with Thee.

**Hold us in quiet through the age-long minute,  
While Thou art silent and the wind is shrill.**

Can the boat sink while Thou, dear Lord, art in it?  
Can the heart faint that waiteth on Thy will?

So, we said that **Relying** on God is **Remembering** and then **Waiting** in the **Peering Pause**. After the waiting period, **trust** and **receiving** will come.

**I'm going to touch a bit on trust and receive.** Follow along with me on Page 5 of your handout.

- **Verse 5 – Relying is Trusting**

*Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and trust in the Lord.*

The Hebrew word for **trust** is *bātah*. This word is a bit different from faith. It means *to rely on, feel safe, be confident, careless, to feel secure, to be unconcerned; to hope in; not wishing, but expected; the sense of well-being and security that comes from having someone in whom to place confidence.*

In the quiet waiting, David's trust is enlarged. He feels safe. His rage and fear are diffused as he hears God's voice and basks in the beauty of His presence.

- **Verse 6 – Relying is Receiving**

*Many are saying, "Who will show us any good?" Lift up the light of Your countenance upon us, O Lord!*

The Hebrew word for **countenance** is *pānîm* and means face. In Hebrew, the face is the reflection of the heart and emotions. In David's quiet waiting, he received the reflection of the Lord's heart on his own face. David lifted his voice in a prayer of praise – **"Let me reflect You as I come through this trial!"**

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:16-18

*"...Whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.  
Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.  
So then with unveiled faces, we behold the glory of the Lord as in a mirror,  
and we are being transformed into the same image with increasing glory;  
this is from the Lord Who is the Spirit."*

1:30 - 2:00      Break for quiet refreshment

2:00 - 3:00      Ministry time      **Leader: use this time for prayer or sharing as the Lord leads.**



## 3:00 - 3:20      **Part 3** (Verses 7-8) – **Fly**

- We have walked with David today. We have offered up our **cries** and **whys** in honesty.
- We have chosen to come to Him with our **cries** and **whys** by **relying** on Him instead of turning away from Him or relying on someone or something else.
- We have **relied** on Him in **remembering** His love for us and His desire to hear us as His children.
- We have **remembered** how He has met us in the past.
- Then, we have **relied** on Him by **waiting** through the **Peering Pause**, **trusting** Him, and **receiving** His countenance upon us by the Holy Spirit's anointing.
- The more we turn our gaze to Him in our tight, paralyzing or dim situations, we dwell in **flight**. We dwell on His wings.

Deuteronomy 33:12 says of Benjamin, the Lord's beloved (that is us):

*Let the beloved of the Lord rest securely in Him for He shields him all day long and the one the Lord loves rests between His shoulders.*

The prophet Isaiah says (40:31),

*Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength;  
They will mount up with wings like eagles,  
They will run and not get tired,  
They will walk and not become weary.*

Now we are going to move on to Verses 7 and 8.

### Verse 7 – **Flying in Abundance**

*You have put gladness in my heart, more than when their grain and new wine abound.*

David **flies in abundance**. He has come into the spacious place. His circumstances have not necessarily changed and the pain is most likely still there. But God...

God has given David more joy than he had when his harvest was plentiful. This was a big deal for people living off the land. When their crop had just the right amount of sun and rain, and they pruned their vines carefully to yield the richest grapes, the abundance of their harvest resulted in a very joyful celebration! David **remembered** how happy they were when their harvest was abundant. He **remembered** how they danced and laughed!

His joy now (in the middle of the confining pressure of his situation) was even greater than the harvest celebration. David experienced deep freeing peace and joy that gave his circumstances no power over him. Do you **remember**:

- Paul and Silas singing hymns in prison in Acts 16:25?
- Do you **remember** Jesus asleep on the boat in the midst of the storm in Matthew 8:24?
- Do you **remember** Daniel's 3 friends walking around in the midst of the fire with Jesus in Daniel 3:25?

- Do you **remember** David hidden in a cave or behind a large rock looking up at the stars and saying, “You have put gladness in my heart!”
- Do you **remember** David intensely repenting after a very horrible sin in Psalm 51. He knew that God would restore to Him the joy of His salvation and that his tongue would joyfully sing of God’s righteousness! (Psalm 51:14)

David’s heart **flew in abundance** and **in peace**.

### Verse 8 – **Flying in Peace**

In peace I will both lie down and sleep for You alone, O Lord, make me to dwell in safety.

Steeping in the knowledge of his Lord brought David deep **peace**. Eventually he walked into a spacious beautiful field in his soul.

Leader, pause and look up 😊

The next page is a chart you can keep handy if it helps you. Beth Ann wrote it during and after a complete nervous breakdown that blindsided her in 1998. This chart is just part of her longer paper called ***Freedom from Depression and Anxiety***. These notes helped her navigate the **cries** and **whys** as she focused on God’s truth and away from the enemy’s lies.

## Why did this happen? – Right and wrong ways to think about my suffering

This chart is an excerpt from the paper entitled *Freedom from Depression and Anxiety* by Beth Ann Phifer found at [ShaleFragments.com](http://ShaleFragments.com)

Why had my life suddenly been catapulted into such tormenting suffering? As I cried out to God for answers, I began to make a list of possible causes. I learned that the cause didn't fall neatly into any one of these categories. The Psalmists moved from one cause to another in their search for answers in their pain.

This chart shows a list of my personal questions. The enemy's lies are in **brown**, and the truth of Scripture is in **green**. As I denounced the lies and received the truth, God freed me from harmful thoughts and brought healing to my spirit, mind and body.

<b><i>Was my suffering caused by...?</i></b>	<b><i>Wrong thinking (enemy's lies)</i></b>	<b><i>Right thinking (God's truth)</i></b>
<b><i>My sin?</i></b> I opened the door to evil. I allowed people to control me.	<b><i>lie</i></b> - I am a horrible sinner. How can God forgive me? I must not be His if this is happening to me.	<b><i>truth</i></b> - I made wrong choices. Thank You, God, for taking care of my sin at the cross. I receive Your forgiveness.
<b><i>Other's sin against me?</i></b> I had been oppressed by a series of manipulative relationships.	<b><i>lie</i></b> - My present state is completely the fault of others. I wish they had never come into my path.	<b><i>truth</i></b> - By God's grace, I choose to forgive. If necessary, I am willing to confront the perpetrator in love. God, give me discernment.
<b><i>The devil?</i></b> The enemy used my weakness to accuse, pounce and devour.	<b><i>lie</i></b> - I must be very bad if this is happening. The devil must have taken over. I might even be possessed.	<b><i>truth</i></b> - I remember when You gave me new life! Nothing is more powerful than Your love for me. I belong to You! You will always heal me.
<b><i>Heredity?</i></b> I was told after this crisis that there were a few women in my family that had suffered in this way.	<b><i>lie</i></b> - Well then... what did anyone expect? There was no way I could have avoided this crisis. I was destined to suffer this way.	<b><i>truth</i></b> - Lord, You have the power to cut across lines of heredity. Thank You for giving me compassion for others who suffer in this way.
<b><i>Environment?</i></b> Incidents in my life were depressing and fearful. Did I learn this behavior?	<b><i>lie</i></b> - Well then... what did anyone expect? There was no way I could have avoided this crisis.	<b><i>truth</i></b> - Holy Spirit, I thank You for the redemption and healing you bring into all the broken places of our lives.
<b><i>Personality?</i></b> My response of depression to life situations was due to a melancholy, meditative, artist personality.	<b><i>lie</i></b> - I am just a little leaf in a powerful stream. I can only give in to what I cannot control. God made me this way.	<b><i>truth</i></b> - Thank You for giving me a sensitive personality that sees Your beauty and feels deeply. Take me into the freedom of self-forgetfulness.
<b><i>Hormones?</i></b> Many people told me I might be going through physical changes, since I was in my 40s.	<b><i>lie</i></b> - I am just a little leaf in a powerful stream. I can only succumb to what I cannot control. God made me this way.	<b><i>truth</i></b> - No hormonal problems were detected after blood tests, however, my body would no longer allow for the fear and oppression.
<b><i>God's sovereign hand?</i></b> – He knew what was necessary to form me into the image of His Son and draw me closer to Himself.	<b><i>lie</i></b> - What kind of God are You that You would allow this pain? Why are You cruel? I thought You were love.	<b><i>truth</i></b> - God, You see the big picture. Everything You allow is covered in Your love. I am thankful for the beauty you brought into my life as a result of this great pain.