

Scripture Reading: Psalm 124

No matter what side of an argument you're on, you always find some people on your side that wish you were on the other side. —Jascha Heifetz

Verses 1 and 3 of today's Psalm reading say: "If it had not been the LORD who was on our side ... then they would have swallowed us up alive."

To say that God is on our side is controversial. Yet, many people feel that there have been times when they thought they were going to be "swallowed up alive."

One problem with the conversation about whether we can say — or *should* say — that "God is on our side" is the athletes who reference God in their post-victory interviews. The media doesn't understand that when an athlete praises Jesus after the victory, he or she is not *necessarily* saying that God was on their side. They are rather simply expressing *gratitude* for this moment of joy.

Another problem with the idea of God choosing sides is what some people call "civil religion." Americans, social scientists argue, for too long have felt that the United States enjoys favored nation status in the eyes of God. This is a good point: God is not necessarily on the side of the United States.

But, we can say with authority that God *does* take sides, can we not? In the Bible, *God takes sides all the time*. For example, God is against the wicked. God is against evil. God is on the side of those who have no one who will take sides for them. God is on the side of the unsupported, the friendless, the homeless, the orphan and the widow. God is on *their* side. And to the extent that we make the lives of these people miserable and difficult, God is *not* on our side. God is against us.

Still, we can safely say there's good news: *God is on our side!* Re-read the first verse of this psalm. "If it had not been the LORD who was on our side ..." The phrase is repeated in verse 2. So the Lord *does* take sides! Often, we hear the expression, "It's not a question of whether the Lord is on *our* side; it's a question of whether we are on the *Lord's side*." Yet, verses 1 and 2 seem to suggest that it's okay to say that it is the Lord "who was on our side." That's pretty good news!

What do we need to do now?

We need to live in a way that there will never be a reason for God to *not* be on our side, advocating for us, delivering us, and keeping us under the shadow of his wing. —Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Lord God, thank you for being on the side of the just and the righteous. Thank you for being against those who oppress the poor, widows and orphans. Help me to help those who are helpless as much as I can. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** Acts 18:12–19:10
Monday: Ezekiel 4-7
Tuesday: Ezekiel 8-11
Wednesday: Ezekiel 12-14
Thursday: Ezekiel 15-18
Friday: Ezekiel 19-21
Saturday: Psalms 106-108

VERSE TO REMEMBER
*O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
 for his steadfast love endures forever. —Psalm 107:1*

SUM RUN

DIRECTIONS: Below you see three boxes in which are 12 numbers. Each set of numbers is a different puzzle. The object is to look at the numbers and find the **THREE** numbers that add up to your **TARGET NUMBER**. There is only one right answer. **TIME YOURSELF** and record your time on the line provided. Then do the middle puzzle. Same rules apply. Time yourself again. Did your time improve? Finally, do the puzzle on the right and time yourself. Did you get any better?

Target #: 103

24	33	52	76
75	72	36	20
88	47	49	16

MY NUMBERS:

MY TIME: _____

Target #: 109

34	23	62	46
85	72	37	21
87	43	39	14

MY NUMBERS:

MY TIME: _____

Target #: 142

26	44	32	75
71	68	39	22
88	38	41	13

MY NUMBERS:

MY TIME: _____



Starting with the letter S (for September) name a:

S

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. girl's name | 5. body part | |
| 2. vegetable | 6. country | |
| 3. tree | 7. chemical element | |
| 4. animal | 8. occupation | |
| 9. make of car | 14. book | 19. spice |
| 10. tool | 15. fish | 20. color |
| 11. piece of furniture | 16. type of boat | 21. abbreviation |
| 12. planet | 17. sport | 22. movie title |
| 13. food | 18. footwear | 23. School subject |

ANSWERS TO SUM RUN:
 103: 20, 36, 47
 109: 14, 23, 72
 142: 22, 32, 88.

SUGGESTED RESPONSES TO "S" EXERCISE: 1. Sarah, 2. squash, 3. spruce, 4. snake, 5. scapula, 6. Syria, 7. sodium, 8. surgeon, 9. Saab, 10. saw, 11. sofa, 12. Saturn, 13. spaghetti, 14. Sense and Sensibility, 15. salmon, 16. sailboat, 17. soccer, 18. sandal, 19. sage, 20. sapphire, 21. St., 22. Saving Private Ryan, 23. social studies. Your answers may vary.