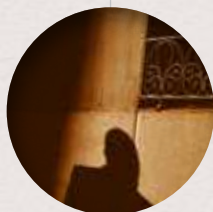
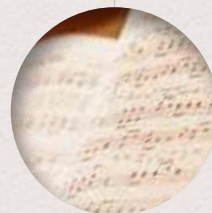


QuickSource
Psalms



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Adults • Summer 2025

A MOMENT IN TIME

Photo albums are like time capsules. In a matter of moments, we can be transported back to a special moment or event, thanks to a single, still image in a book. We might spend hours flipping pages and reviving memories of days gone by. Through photographs, we can bring family vacations back to life and recall old friendships. We can laugh about how we used to dress or reflect on the influence of a family member who has since passed away.

In a sense, photo albums tell our stories as human beings. The good times and the bad are laid out in front of us. The mountains we climbed and the valleys we endured come back to life. Pictures serve as a microcosm of all our emotions and experiences. Single moments captured on film (or, these days, on a phone) represent hundreds of other snippets of where we've been and what we've done.

When you stop and think about it, photo albums remind us of who we are—and maybe who we long to become.

The book of Psalms provides that kind of window to the human soul. The psalms served as a hymnal of sorts for the ancient Israelites, but it really tells the story of every human. Across 150 chapters, Psalms hits on topics that still resonate with people today. It provides an honest look at what leads to our celebrations and our frustrations. Like the images in a photo album, each psalm paints a picture of who we were, who we are, and who we'd like to be.

Psalms addresses almost every human need imaginable. That includes the greatest need of every person who has ever lived: a personal relationship with God. While the birth of Jesus the Messiah was still in the future, the message of the Psalms is that God loves us and wants a relationship with us. He has the power to deliver us, to set us free from the sin that holds us captive.

Thankfully, God is still in the delivery business. He still redeems and rescues those who will come to Him in faith. If you're ready to turn the page and start a new chapter of your story with God, here's what you must do . . .

- **Admit** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning from your sin.
- **By faith receive** Jesus as God's Son and accept His gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross. Jesus also rose from the dead, making a new, eternal life possible for us.
- **Confess** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: "Dear God, I know that You love me. I confess my sin and need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen."

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a pastor or another Christian about your decision. Show others your faith in Christ by asking for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith.

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*Evangelistic Emphasis

MEET THE WRITERS

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HOW TO USE QUICKSOURCE

Using **QuickSource** as your primary resource for preparing to lead a small Bible study group (with the group using the **Personal Study Guide**).

1. Read the core passage, using the Key Words as a quick commentary on the passage.

2. Review the outline provided on the Talking Points page (page two of each session) to organize your thoughts and identify the key points in the passage.

Tip: You can record your notes on the second page if you desire, giving you a way to remember insights gained.

3. Review the questions with response prompts on the Discussion Plan page (page three of each session), recording your response to the questions as you do so.

Some questions/prompts are included in the *Explore the Bible Personal Study Guide*. The corresponding PSG page numbers for these questions are noted. These page numbers correlate to the regular print version of the PSG and may differ from large print versions. The prompts are adapted from the comments in the *Personal Study Guide*.

Tip: Additional “Bonus” questions are also provided in the Discussion Plan, along with the For Further Discussion QR codes. These extra questions are found only in *QuickSource*.

4. Consider ways of using the Bible Skill and Object Lesson ideas to lead your group.

Look for ways of using these ideas, in addition to the questions included on the Discussion Plan page.

5. Read the Dig Deeper feature (page four of each session), looking for ways of using that information when leading the group.

The information found in the Dig Deeper feature is available only in *QuickSource*.

6. Review and refine.

- Add transition ideas to move from one question to the next.
- Consult the *Explore the Bible* Extra page (goExploreTheBible.com/leaderextras) for an idea about using a current news event to begin and end the group time.
- Listen to the weekly *Explore the Bible* adult podcast to gain further insights about this week’s study. The podcast can be found on Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, Spotify, Google Podcasts, goExploreTheBible.com/adults-training, or on MinistryGrid (MinistryGrid.com/ExploreTheBible).

7. Gather the items needed to lead the group.

If you plan on using a visual from the *Explore the Bible Leader Pack* or creating your own (see p. 65 for a listing of items and suggested sessions for using them), do so early in the week. Be sure to have extra copies of the *Personal Study Guide* on hand to be given to guests.

8. Arrive early.

The group time starts when the first person arrives. Make sure you are that person so you can set the tone and direction for the group Bible study time.

9. Lead the group in a time of Bible study, following your plan.

10. Evaluate the group time.

Note what you learned about the people in the group as well as things you may need to work on to improve as a teacher. Also make sure any follow-up actions promised to the group are carried out.

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

The book of Psalms serves as the superlative worship resource for God's people. The worship experience could involve a gathering of people who meet with Him together at a specific time and place. Or it could be a personal time in which individuals turn to the Lord to enjoy intimate fellowship with Him. Either way, the Psalms help believers embrace a lifestyle of worship and service.

The translation of the book of Psalms from Hebrew to Greek underscores its unique purpose. In the Hebrew title of this remarkable Bible book, the word *nebel* actually meant "harp." When it was translated from Hebrew into the Greek language, the word *psalterion* in the title meant "the plucking of strings." The psalms functioned to provide God's people with a tool that would enable them to come into His presence and sing praises to Him. No wonder God's people came to refer to the Bible book as "The Book of Praises."

Along with being a tool for worship in the days of the Old Testament, the Psalms have nourished New Testament believers spiritually in Christ. These ancient hymns strengthen contemporary Christ followers in their walk with Jesus so they can honor Him with their lives. Through the psalms, the Lord also shows us how to make Him the center of our attention.

Additionally, more than a few of the psalms hold a special place in believers' hearts because their words point us directly to Jesus. They provide us with dynamic expressions of worship that declared the reality of His messianic mission long before Bethlehem.

COMPOSITION AND COLLECTION

The development of the book of Psalms reflects God's eternal power at work across the long time frame of Old Testament history, which included almost ten centuries. According to Bible scholars, Moses wrote the first psalm as he led the Israelites through forty years of wandering in the wilderness. The difficulties

and victories during those long years cultivated an intimate relationship between him and the Lord. Psalm 90 captured the depth of their relationship and the priority of living with fulfillment in His presence.

Most of the remaining psalms were composed during the days of David and Solomon, the most prominent kings in Israel's history. Along with their responsibilities as leaders, David and Solomon each had a passion for worship and a gift for songs and poetry. As a result, they produced many of the lyrics found in the book of Psalms.

Ezra the priest could have been the writer of Psalm 127. Considered to be the last psalm written, it was probably composed after God's people returned from Babylonian exile.

At some point in the history of Israel, the Lord led individuals to bring the psalms together into one volume. The Holy Spirit inspired the writers to compose the psalms. Then, He guided one leader after another to follow His leadership so the psalms could be turned into songs for worship, first at the tabernacle and then at the temple. He also preserved the psalms so they would be used from one generation of God's people to another.

In addition, the Lord led countless people to play significant roles in producing, collecting, and incorporating the psalms into worship. For that reason, He deserves all of the credit for making the book of Psalms a reality. His active involvement in the composition and collection of the psalms underscores His sovereign power and the absolute reliability of Psalms as the Word of God.

ORGANIZATION

During the years in which the Lord orchestrated the composition of the psalms, He also guided the process for arranging them to form the Bible book. The process rendered the arrangement of the 150 psalms into five separate "books."



This organization bears a striking resemblance to the arrangement of the first five books of the Bible that form the Pentateuch.

Book One includes Psalms 1–41. Of course, Psalm 1 introduces the entire Bible book and introduces the idea that God’s people need to live according to God’s ways. If they do, they will experience the blessings associated with being devoted to Him. In contrast, those who reject His ways will falter and fail. Other psalms in this section reflect the influence of David and Solomon. The final psalm ends with a doxology (41:13).

Book Two consists of Psalms 42–72. They were likely gathered approximately three centuries after the completion of the psalms in Book One. The collection has been attributed to King Hezekiah. He sought to call God’s people back to Him by recalling King David’s spiritual leadership (2 Chron. 29:30–31). This section of psalms also ends with a doxology in Psalm 72:18–20.

Book Three incorporates Psalms 73–89. The first eleven psalms in this section have been attributed to Asaph, a devoted Levite who led worship services and directed one of the choirs at the temple. He also wrote Psalm 50. The psalms in Book Three helped the people of Israel recognize the holiness of God’s name and His sanctuary. The doxology in Psalm 89:52 concludes this section.

Book Four encompasses Psalms 90–106. The psalms in this section appear to have been written after Israel’s return to Jerusalem following the nation’s exile in Babylon. Nehemiah and Ezra led God’s people through the challenging work of national and spiritual restoration. These psalms call to mind Israel’s spiritual struggles when Moses led them through the wilderness. The closing doxology is located in Psalm 106:48.

Book Five includes Psalms 107–150. These psalms were added to the collection approximately six hundred years after the psalms in Book One were compiled. Ezra’s ministry also provides the context of this section. The lyrics of these psalms draw attention to the power of God’s Word and the need to praise Him for His presence. Psalm 150:6 is the closing doxology for Book Five and, of course, the entire book of Psalms.

THEMES

Three major themes run through the book of Psalms. First, readers are confronted with the power of God as psalmists challenge His people to behold the miracle of His creation. They also lead worshipers in singing hymns that declare His greatness. Further, they proclaim His leadership in establishing His kingdom and preparing His people for the arrival of the Messiah.

The presence of God also takes center stage in a large number of the psalms. Not only does God awaken His people with His presence, but He also comforts them with the tender assurance that He will never leave them. At the same time, He instructs believers regarding His ways and how they can live according to the ordinances He has given. His determination to be faithful to us emanates from His faithful love for us.

Finally, the glory of God remains a constant theme throughout Psalms. In particular, the songs found in Book Five give special attention to guiding God’s people to praise Him for who He is and to thank Him for what He does. This should lead contemporary Christ followers to do the same, acknowledging that what God does is a reflection of who He is—He is worthy of praise for both.

TYPES OF PSALMS

Many psalms are not neatly or easily categorized. However, identification of type helps readers gain insight into the psalm's use and original context. The religious feelings and expressions found in the psalms may overlap between classifications. A few psalms (25; 34; 119) are acrostically arranged according to the Hebrew alphabet, probably to aid memorization.

LAMENT

Laments are emotional cries to God for deliverance from distress. A lament can be expressed by the community or an individual. (Pss. 3-5; 7; 12-13; 17; 22; 25-27; 35; 39-44; 54-60; 62; 64; 69-71; 74; 77; 79-80; 83; 85-86; 88; 90; 94; 120; 123; 126; 134; 137; 140-142; 144)

THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving psalms are also spoken by the community and the individual. They are expressions of gratitude to God for His abundant blessings. (Pss. 9-11; 16; 23; 30-31; 34; 48; 62; 66-68; 75; 91-92; 106-109; 115-116; 118; 121; 124-125; 129; 131; 138-139)

HYMN

The hymn is closest in form to a song of praise as sung in modern forms of worship. Hymns normally include a call to praise and describe the reasons for praising God. (Pss. 8; 15; 19; 24; 29; 33; 46; 52; 65; 81-82; 87; 100; 103-105; 111; 113-114; 117; 122; 135-136; 145-150)

ROYAL

These psalms celebrated the rule of Israel's earthly king. They may have included an oracle for the king. In some cases, prayers were made to intercede on behalf of the king. Some royal psalms have messianic implications/fulfillments. (Pss. 2; 18; 20-21; 45; 50; 61; 63; 72; 84; 89; 101; 110; 132)

ENTHRONEMENT

Enthronement psalms celebrate Yahweh's rule and reign as King. These are closely related to the hymns; the main difference is a celebration of Yahweh as king over all creation. (Pss. 47; 93-99)

PENITENTIAL

Penitential psalms are expressions of contrition and repentance. (Pss. 6; 28; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; 143)

WISDOM/DIDACTIC

This type of psalm presents practical guidelines for godly living. (Pss. 1; 14; 36-37; 49; 53; 73; 76; 78; 112; 119; 127-128; 133)

God's Wisdom

Pursuing godly wisdom leads to a fruitful life.

Psalm 1:1-6

1 How **happy** **A** is the **one** **B** who does not walk in the advice of the **wicked** **C** or stand in the pathway with sinners or sit in the company of mockers! **2** Instead, his **delight** **D** is in the LORD's instruction, and he **meditates** **E** on it **day and night**. **3** He is like a **tree** **F** planted beside flowing streams that bears its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. Whatever he does **prosper**s. **4** The wicked are not like this; instead, they are like **chaff** **G** that the wind blows away. **5** Therefore the wicked will not stand up in the judgment, nor sinners in the **assembly of the righteous**. **6** For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to **ruin**. **H**

For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at goExploreTheBible.com.

Exploring Key Words

- A** "Blessed" (ESV; NIV); joy and satisfaction that stems from trusting and obeying God's Word. In the New Testament, Jesus used the Greek equivalent in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-11).
- B** A specific, godly individual, held up as an example for others to imitate.
- C** "Ungodly" (KJV). The term applies broadly to evil people, especially criminals. Along with "sinners" and "mockers," it defines those who reject God and His Word.
- D** The term is drawn from the root word meaning "to feel a strong positive attraction." It is used 123 times in the Old Testament.
- E** The Hebrew wording can refer to mumbling to oneself. In this context, it implies concentrating on something to understand it (see Josh. 1:8).
- F** Believers are called to reflect on God's Word in the course of all daily activities. The verse suggests not a moment should go by without the influence of Scripture on our lives.
- G** The one who delights in God's Word is like a tree that thrives because of its constant supply of water, even in a dry climate.
- H** This is not a guarantee of earthly success or wealth. Rather, it serves as a promise of spiritual blessing from God's hand.
- I** The husks and straw removed by threshing grain. The chaff is lightweight, so the wind blows it away when the grain is tossed into the air.
- J** The fellowship of saints. This is a reference to the final judgment where the righteous will be separated from the unrighteous.
- K** "Perish" (ESV; KJV); "destruction" (NIV). While the righteous will be blessed, the wicked will be utterly lost and broken beyond repair.



The Righteous Person (Ps. 1:1-2)

- This psalm contrasts the righteous with the wicked—how they think, how they live, and how they relate to God.
- Verses 1-2 reveal that righteous people are not influenced by worldly wisdom. Instead, they take delight in God's wisdom found in His Word. As a result, the righteous person is blessed.

Benefits of Righteousness (Ps. 1:3-4)

- The righteous person is like a well-nourished tree. He enjoys abundance and prosperity.
- In contrast, wicked people are like chaff, which is easily separated from the grain and blown away by the wind. The lightest breeze carries it away.

Day of Judgment (Ps. 1:5-6)

- The wicked person will be condemned for his sin on the day of judgment.
- Meanwhile, the righteous will be known and cared for by God. They do not need to fear the day of judgment.

Summary Statements

Pursuing godly wisdom leads to a fruitful life.

- Believers should pursue godly wisdom by prioritizing the study of God's Word.
- Knowing and obeying God's Word leads to spiritual growth and a life that pleases God.
- Each person is faced with a choice—the path that leads to blessing or the path that leads to destruction.

Memory Verse

Psalms 1:1-2

Key Doctrine

The Scriptures

The Holy Bible is a perfect treasure of divine instruction.
(See Psalm 119:140; 2 Peter 1:19-21.)

ENGAGE

How many decisions have you made today? Which were inconsequential and which will have significant consequences? (PSG, p. 8)

- Researchers claim that our brains make thousands of decisions each day. Most of us start our day deciding what we are going to do. When we make decisions to do certain things, we are deciding to not do other things.
- Some decisions are not too important while others have lasting consequences. Psalm 1 indicates that one of the most life-changing decisions we can make each day is to delight in God's Word and to meditate on it throughout the day.

Bonus: How do you go about making decisions? How does that process change when it feels like there is more at stake?

EXPLORE

1. THE RIGHTEOUS PERSON (PS. 1:1-2)

Bonus: When have you felt most happy? What role did God and His Word play in that situation?

- Verse 1 begins with the phrase, "How happy is the one." This expression does not mean that we will never experience difficulties as faithful believers. Rather, it describes the joy one experiences from living a life of faithful obedience to God and being assured of His favor.
- The three statements in verse 1 describe a downward spiral (walk, stand, sit) into ungodliness. They address how one thinks, how one acts, and ultimately what one becomes. It is the opposite direction from the life of happiness to which the psalm referred.
- In contrast, the righteous person does two things: delight in God's Word and meditate on it. Delighting in God's Word involves giving it one's undivided attention because of your love for the One who gave it.

What evidence is there that you delight in God's Word? (PSG, p. 11)

- The Hebrew word "meditates" means "to utter" the words, considering their meaning, implications, and applications. This is done "day and night," allowing the Word to influence every part of our lives.

2. BENEFITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (PS. 1:3-4)

How are you experiencing the blessings of walking in God's wisdom? (PSG, p. 12)

- The righteous are compared to a well-watered, fruit-producing tree. These blessed people are watered by God's Word, which strengthens them and produces fruit in their lives.

- In contrast, the wicked are like the useless chaff that gets blown away by the wind. In ancient Israel, farmers winnowed their grain by tossing it into the wind. The husks and debris (chaff) would blow away, while the edible grain would fall to the ground and be gathered.

Bonus: Why would this image resonate with the psalmist's audience? What is a contemporary illustration we could use today?

3. DAY OF JUDGMENT (PS. 1:5-6)

Bonus: When you think about your future, what things come to mind? How often do you think about eternity?

- Most scholars agree that verse 5 describes what will happen in the final judgment. All of us will face God in the final judgment. On that day, He will separate the wicked from the righteous. (See Matt. 7:23.)
- Meanwhile, God "watches over (or "knows") the way of the righteous." This includes all believers who have been made righteous through faith in Jesus. This speaks to God's never-ending care and serves as the evidence and security of our salvation. While the wicked face the consequences of rejecting God and His Word, the righteous experience His unmerited blessing and favor.

What steps can you take to walk more closely with God? (PSG, p. 14)

CHALLENGE

As a group, reflect on the importance of God's Word in the life of a believer.

Discuss ways believers can begin or continue to prioritize the study of God's Word and encourage other believers to do the same. (PSG, p. 15)

Challenge individuals to evaluate their own level of "delight" in God's Word.

What is the role of the Bible in your life? How much time would you say you spend reading and studying it on a weekly basis? What actions can you take to increase that time? (PSG, p. 15)



For Further Discussion

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

**BIBLE SKILL (P. 14, PSG)**

Use other Scripture to help understand a Bible passage.

The psalmist wasn't the only one to emphasize the importance of life choices. Compare Psalm 1 with Deuteronomy 30:19-20 and Matthew 7:24-27.

How are these passages similar? What common themes are found in all three passages? Write a summary statement of the teaching found in all three passages.

Instruct adults to complete the Bible Skill on page 14 of the PSG. Encourage them to compare Psalm 1, Deuteronomy 30:19-20, and Matthew 7:24-27. After a few minutes, allow a few adults to share their responses to the questions in the activity. As a group, create the summary statement as directed.

OBJECT LESSON: DOMINOES

Prior to the session gather several dominoes and place them on a small table. Align the dominoes so that when the first one is pushed the others will fall. Direct the group's attention to the dominoes, pushing the first one so that the others fall. Explain that this might be called, "the domino effect."

Share that in a similar fashion, the decisions we make will have an impact on other aspects of our lives. Ask: **How has the "domino effect" impacted your life?** Allow a few volunteers time to respond.

**DIG DEEPER****BECOMING RIGHTEOUS**

The first psalm serves as the gateway to the rest of the book of Psalms. It sets the tone for the entire psalter because of its concern for God, for godly living, and for the hope of the godly in realizing the fulfillment of God's promises.

Psalm 1 ultimately contrasts the two fundamental ways of approaching life here on earth. Throughout the Old Testament's wisdom literature, the writers repeatedly contrast the "wicked" and the "righteous." The righteous are those who obediently embrace God's Word (or *Torah*), while the wicked are those who do not. Psalm 1 reminds its readers that these choices determine life or death, blessing or curses.

This psalm conveys the repeated topics of wisdom literature (like the book of Proverbs) into a song so that when the righteous sing it, they will own its values. In particular, they will experience an increasing desire to be a people who love God's Word. They will be drawn to it and believe it. They will see themselves as heirs and stewards of its redemptive hope. Most important, they will seek to live out its requirements.

What the Old Testament demonstrates in part through wisdom literature, the New Testament reveals more clearly. Left to ourselves, humans have no hope of becoming righteous. As Paul wrote, "there is no one righteous, not even one" (Rom. 3:10). None of us perfectly walk in the ways of God. But Jesus has.

During his earthly ministry, Jesus emphatically stated that He always did what the Father commanded (John 8:29). In other words, Jesus never stepped outside of God's will. He lived the perfectly righteous life we were required to live. And He died the punishing death we were required to die because we could not live up to that standard. Then, He rose again so that anyone who repents and believes in him can have his righteousness credited to their account.

In His grace, God "made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21). Trusting God and obeying His Word are the keys to righteousness in Psalm 1—and today.

God's Truth

God reveals Himself and His will in Scripture.

Psalm 119:1-16

1 How happy are those whose way is **blameless**, **A** who walk according to the LORD's **instruction!** **B** **2** Happy are those who keep his decrees and seek him with **all their heart**. **C** **3** They do nothing **wrong**; **D** they walk in his ways. **4** You have commanded that your precepts be **diligently kept**. **E** **5** If only my ways were **committed** **F** to keeping your statutes! **6** Then I **would not be ashamed** **G** when I think about all your commands. **7** I will praise you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous judgments. **8** I will keep your statutes; **never abandon me**. **H** **9** How can a **young man** **I** keep his way pure? By keeping your word. **10** I have sought you with all my heart; don't let me wander from your commands. **11** I have **treasured** **J** your word in my heart so that I may not sin against you. **12** LORD, may you be blessed; teach me your statutes. **13** With my lips I proclaim all the judgments from your mouth. **14** I rejoice in the way revealed by your decrees as much as in all riches. **15** I will **meditate** **K** on your precepts and think about your ways. **16** I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

Exploring Key Words

- A** Not literal perfection, a basic desire to do what is right according to God's Word.
- B** In Psalm 119, the writer alluded to God's Word in various ways (see "Dig Deeper," p. 16). The Hebrew term rendered "instruction" is related to *torah* and could refer to upholding the law.
- C** The Hebrew word *leb* conveys totality of one's inner nature and will (see Matt. 22:37). It can identify whatever holds our attention. Believers should demonstrate a complete devotion to God's "decrees," another synonym for His Word.
- D** "Iniquity" (KJV); "unrighteousness" (NASB).
- E** "Fully obeyed" (NIV). The Hebrew word translated "diligently" (*meod*) suggests passion and forcefulness. There is a sense of exerting great effort and energy to keep God's precepts.
- F** "Directed" (KJV); "steadfast" (ESV; NIV). The image is of something that has been firmly established over a long period of time. Obedience is a lifelong lifestyle for believers.
- G** This word often occurs in contexts of humiliation and shattered human emotions. Our sin brings about a feeling of shame and disgrace. The psalmist felt this deeply when he was disconnected from God's commands.
- H** A prayer that the Lord will deal kindly with his loyal servant by not leaving him in his time of distress.
- I** This was not about age. Instead, it referred to one who lacks experience and wisdom and would be easily tempted to deny God.
- J** "Hidden" (NIV); "stored up" (ESV).
- K** In mysticism, meditation strives to empty the mind. For believers, meditation fills the mind with God's Word. The goal is to avoid sin by internalizing His precepts.

**God's Instruction Given** (Ps. 119:1-4)

- God's Word teaches us how to daily live godly lives. His instruction is meant to be kept and lived out by His people.

Obedience to God's Word (Ps. 119:5-8)

- Full, not partial, obedience to God's Word is the goal. We will not be ashamed of our actions when we are following God's instruction.
- Knowing and doing what God says leads us to worship Him.

The Goal of God's Word (Ps. 119:9-16)

- God's Word helps us pursue righteousness and resist the temptation to sin.
- Because of our relationship with Him, it is a personal joy and delight to follow God's Word.

Summary Statements*God reveals Himself and His will in Scripture.*

- We will find God in His Word when we seek Him there.
 - God's Word is meant to be obeyed.
 - Believers are to treasure, study, and live by God's Word.
-

Memory Verse*Psalm 119:11***Key Doctrine***The Scriptures*

Scripture reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. (See 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12.)

ENGAGE

Do you tend to read instruction manuals or ignore them? Why? (PSG, p. 16)

- Special days such as Christmas and birthdays are especially fun when young children are receiving presents. What often comes next is the task of putting a toy together so the child can enjoy it. This is where having an instruction manual is helpful.
- In Scripture, God reveals who He is and teaches His people how they can experience abundant life by living in faithful obedience to Him. Psalm 119 demonstrates how God's Word is our instruction manual for this life, teaching us how to experience true joy in life by walking in His ways.

Bonus: When has the Bible given you help when you really needed it? How does that give you confidence in God's Word for the future?

EXPLORE

1. GOD'S INSTRUCTION GIVEN (PS. 119:1-4)

What are some things that influence our actions, decisions, and behavior? (PSG, p. 19)

- The word "happy" appears twenty-three times in Psalms to describe the blessings people experience when they live in right relationship with God.
- Living "blamelessly" means to live with integrity. This is done by living life according to God's will as revealed in His Word.
- To seek the Lord with all one's heart means to be in a continuously active pursuit of God. It is a life characterized by ongoing, persistent prayer, asking the Lord for discernment to understand and practice His Word.
- Doing "nothing wrong" does not mean never sinning. Rather, it means doing nothing that would characterize us as wrongdoers. Doing nothing wrong means always seeking to do what is right.

Bonus: What practical steps can you take to pursue a blameless life moving forward?

2. OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD (PS. 119:5-8)

Bonus: How did you develop a "moral compass" in your life? How do you know when that compass has drifted off its "true north?"

- Psalm 119 expresses the hope of believers who deeply desire to obey God's Word, while also recognizing that they are far from perfect. The word "statutes" speaks to the truth that God has defined right and wrong. We are to live within the moral boundaries He has established.
- The psalmist realized that if his ways were truly committed to keeping God's statutes, then he "would not be

ashamed" when thinking about the Lord's commands. If he disobeyed God's Word, he would be ashamed of his sin, but obedience honors God and keeps us from shame.

- Knowing what the Bible says does not necessarily mean one will know God, but it is impossible to truly know God apart from knowing His Word. The psalmist asserted that he would obey God's statutes with no hint of hesitation. He did not want to experience life and its challenges apart from God and His Word.

What obstacles hinder you from knowing and obeying God's Word? (PSG, p. 21)

3. THE GOAL OF GOD'S WORD (PS. 119:9-16)

Bonus: What makes God's Word so precious? What does that mean for its role in your life?

- Keeping God's Word involves an ongoing commitment to knowing and obeying God's Word. Given that we are sinful creatures, there is nothing simple about that. But verse 10 is the key. Seeking the Lord with all one's heart means living with a desire to honor and obey Him in every aspect of our lives.
- God's Word was so precious to the psalmist that he stored it up in his heart, the very core of his mind and will. Memorizing this precious treasure protects us against sin.
- Living according to God's Word was a joy to the psalmist and his greatest desire. Unlike those who worshiped false gods, he didn't have to guess what God's will was for his life. God had communicated it through His Word.

How has God's Word helped you make godly choices? (PSG, p. 23)

CHALLENGE

As a group, talk about practical tips for getting in the Word on a regular basis.

Discuss with your group ways believers can encourage one another to study and obey God's Word. (PSG, p. 24)

Challenge adults to spend time talking to God about how His Word can help them avoid sin.

How does treasuring God's Word in your heart help you as you seek to keep from sinning against Him? (PSG, p. 24)



For Further Discussion

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

**BIBLE SKILL (P. 23, PSG)****Memorize a verse and apply it to a real-life situation.**

Memorize Psalm 119:11 in your preferred Bible translation. Then write the verse in your own words. Finally, write a couple of sentences, here or in a journal, stating how the verse can help you face a difficult situation.

To help adults memorize Psalm 119:11, lead the group to read the verse aloud together, emphasizing “treasured.” Repeat the activity two more times, emphasizing “my heart” the first time and “may not sin” the second time. Encourage adults to repeat this practice during the week ahead as they commit the verse to memory.

OBJECT LESSON: THESAURUS

Display a thesaurus and encourage adults to share how it is used. Talk about times when a person might need to find a synonym for a given word. (Examples: *When writing a paper for school or preparing a presentation for work*) Note that while this is a hard copy, it is not hard to find a thesaurus online these days.

Direct the group to examine Psalm 119:1-4 in pairs, noting words that are similar in nature. (Examples: *instruction, decrees, precepts*) Allow a volunteer to read the content for “Did You Know?” on page 18 of the PSG. Use “Dig Deeper” below to supplement the discussion.

Explain that each of these words provide a picture of what happens when we continually love the Lord and obey His Word. Challenge adults to evaluate their attitude toward the Bible as they spend time with God this week.

**DIG DEEPER****GOD’S WORD**

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible at 176 verses. A poetic masterpiece, Psalm 119 celebrates the gift of God’s Word. In nearly every verse, the psalmist includes one of eight synonyms for God’s Word, each carrying a distinct focus.

- **Instruction (Law)** is the Hebrew word *torah* and means any instruction flowing from God.
- **Decrees** derives from the root “inscribe.” As the author of His decrees, God reveals his sovereignty by establishing his divine will in nature and in the covenant community.
- **Precepts** only occurs in Psalms and is synonymous with God’s revelation. The root word points to His authority to define the relationship between Himself and His creation.
- **Statutes (Testimonies)** comes from the words for “witness” and “testify.” It points to the Lord’s covenant with his people.
- **Commands** is a frequent designation for anything the Lord has ordered.

- **Judgments (Rules)** focuses on God’s Word as the revelation from the supreme Judge.
- **Promises** denotes anything God has spoken, commanded, or promised.
- **Word** refers to anything God has said. It is the most general term for divine revelation.

In Psalm 119, the psalmist gave believers an effective tool through which to know God better.

BONUS CONTENT**The Acrostic Psalms**

Multiple psalmists penned their thoughts as acrostic poems. Discover more about these creative psalms.

God's Glory

God teaches us about Himself through His creation and His Word.

Psalm 19:1-11

1 The heavens **A** declare the glory **B** of God, and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands. **2** Day after day they **pour out speech**; **C** night after night they communicate knowledge. **3** There is no speech; **there are no words**; **D** their voice is not heard. **4** Their message has gone out to the whole earth, and their words to the **ends of the world**. **E** In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun. **5** It is like a **bridegroom** **F** coming from his home; it rejoices like an athlete running a course. **6** It rises from one end of the heavens and circles to their other end; nothing is hidden from its heat. **7** The instruction of the LORD is **perfect**, **G** renewing one's life; the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise. **8** The precepts of the LORD are right, **making the heart glad**; **H** the command of the LORD is radiant, making the eyes light up. **9** The **fear of the LORD** **I** is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are reliable and altogether righteous. **10** They are more desirable than **gold** **J**—than an abundance of pure gold; and sweeter than honey dripping from a honeycomb. **11** In addition, your **servant** **K** is warned by them, and in keeping them there is an abundant reward.

Exploring Key Words

- A** In Hebrew poetic parallelism, “expanse” is associated with “heavens.” While the term can refer to God’s dwelling place, here it refers to what can be seen from an earth. The celestial elements of creation testify to God’s greatness.
- B** The Hebrew word *kabod* refers to weight and value attached to someone or something. Here, it emphasizes the immensity of God’s splendor and honor.
- C** “Uttereth” (KJV). Literally “gush” or “bubble up.” God’s glory is communicated without ceasing.
- D** As expected, creation does not speak with an audible voice, but its message about God remains clear and understandable.
- E** The inhabited world. No one can escape what the created world says about God, and everyone is accountable for it. See Romans 10:17-18.
- F** The psalmist used two images to describe the power and majesty of the sun: a bridegroom taking his bride and an athlete running a race. Each sunrise provides a witness to God’s glory.
- G** The Hebrew word *tamim* suggests completeness and wholeness. God’s Word lacks nothing. It is sufficient for all our needs. It renews those who have lost their strength.
- H** “Rejoicing the heart” (ESV; KJV); “giving joy to the heart” (NIV).
- I** Obedience to God with an attitude of humility and reverence.
- J** As today, gold was a valuable commodity in the ancient world. However, God’s Word is even more valuable.
- K** One who commits himself to carrying out someone else’s will—in this context, the covenant of the Lord.



Creation (Ps. 19:1-6)

- The heavens announce God's glory and majesty for all to see. God's work is revealed in creation.
- Like the sun He created, God is always at work. His glory is evident to all people and in all places.

God's Word (Ps. 19:7-11)

- God's Word also reveals God's majesty and sovereignty. It has the power to restore us and to make us wise.
- God's Word discloses God's truth. The instruction found in Scripture is perfect, trustworthy, right, and valuable.
- An abundant reward is found in keeping God's Word.

Summary Statements

God teaches us about Himself through His creation and His Word.

- Believers can learn about God's glory by examining His creation.
- Believers can learn about God's glory by studying His Word.

Memory Verse

Psalm 19:14

Key Doctrine

God

God is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. (See Genesis 1:1; Romans 1:20.)

ENGAGE

Of all the people you know, whom do you know best? How did you get to know that person? (PSG, p. 25)

- There are a number of ways we can get to know people. They include paying attention to what they say about themselves, what they've done, and what they communicate about their plans for the future.
- In the Bible, God has revealed Himself to us in these ways. One might think the first thing the Bible communicates about God is that He is the Creator. However, the fact that we have Genesis 1:1 and the rest of the Bible reveals more than that. It reveals that God wants us to know Him through both His creation and His Word.

Bonus: How much time do you spend reading and reflecting on God's Word each day? What impact does that time (or lack of it) have on your life?

EXPLORE

1. CREATION (PS. 19:1-6)

Bonus: When has something in nature drawn you closer to God? Why is that so special?

- In Psalm 19, David expressed his awe as he observed how the heavens declare God's glory. Verse 1 uses synonymous parallelism with three words in the second line matching three words in the first. The word pairs are (1) "heavens" and "expanse"; (2) "declare" and "proclaims"; and (3) "the glory of God" and "the work of his hands."
- What God created is a demonstration of His glory. The word "glory" literally means heaviness or weightiness.
- In verse 4, the focus shifts from general statements regarding the heavens to a poetic personification of the sun, the most dominant and impressive entity in the heavens. David compared the sun to a groom stepping out to claim his bride and to an athlete running a race.
- Witnessing the sun run its course in the heavens not only reflects the glory of its Creator by its splendor, but it also reflects His glory through its faithfulness. Furthermore, it bears witness to God's power and wisdom to create the sun and earth in perfect relationship to one another as the sun continually sustains life on earth.
- Some peer into the heavens hoping astrology will help them divine what the stars communicate about themselves. Others only look to the skies for scientific knowledge. But David recognized that the heavens reveal truths of eternal significance about God.

What misconceptions about God might people draw if they only depend on what they see in creation—apart from His written Word? (PSG, p. 30)

2. GOD'S WORD (PS. 19:7-11)

Bonus: What are some possessions you consider valuable? What makes them so precious to you?

- Nature reveals the power and beauty of God, along with His wisdom and goodness. But the Lord also has provided for our spiritual lives by revealing Himself through His Word.
- Once again using poetic parallelism, David expounded on the blessing and centrality of God's Word to all of life. God's Word not only reveals the glory of God but also the way to God.
- The psalmist used a series of adjectives to describe God's Word. He wrote that Scripture is perfect (without error), trustworthy, right, pure, and righteous. He also affirmed that it brings joy to our hearts and endures forever. All in all, nothing is more reliable and more beneficial than God's Word.
- The "fear of the Lord" references our response to God's Word. It involves reverence and humility. We can always trust that God's judgments are morally right because He alone is altogether righteous (Ps. 33:5).
- People in ancient Israel greatly desired gold and honey. However, David exclaimed that nothing compares to the value of God's Word. The wise desire it more than anything else. Its rich impact on one's life is beyond measure. True satisfaction and delight come from the sweetness of knowing God's Word and faithfully obeying it.

Highlight in verses 7-11 the various terms used to describe God's Word. What do these terms suggest to you about the purpose of the Bible? (PSG, p. 31)

CHALLENGE

As a group, reflect on some reasons why God's Word is unique from any other book.

Discuss with your Bible study group what benefits you receive by studying God's Word together. (PSG, p. 32)

Challenge adults to spend regular time reading and studying God's Word this week. Encourage them to record what they learn about God in a journal.

What is something you have learned about God in His Word this week? How can that knowledge be put into action? (PSG, p. 32)



For Further Discussion

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

**BIBLE SKILL (P. 30, PSG)**

Use other Scripture to understand a Bible passage.

Compare Psalm 19 to Romans 1:18-32. ***How are they similar, and how are they different? What can humanity know about God from nature? How has humanity generally responded to the truths about God revealed in nature? How does and will God respond to humanity's idolatry and suppression of the truth?***

Direct individuals to work through the Bible Skill on page 30 of the PSG. After a few minutes, allow some volunteers to share their responses to the questions. Share information from the Dig Deeper feature below to explain the distinctions between general revelation and special revelation. Discuss how the psalmist affirmed both in Psalm 19.

OBJECT LESSON: SEEDS

Display a package of seeds. Invite volunteers to share their experiences with gardens. Talk about how it feels to see plants sprout and to enjoy the fruit of their work. Explain that each day we see God's creation at work, from sunrise to sunset, from seed to fruit. Read Romans 1:20, affirming that God's invisible attributes are evident daily.

Share that while the psalmist provided a clear argument for God's presence and power in nature, he also emphasized the importance of God's Word in knowing God and living out His plan for our lives. Note that just as seeds grow into fruitful plants, God's Word allows us to grow deeper and become more fruitful as followers of Christ

**DIG DEEPER****GOD'S REVELATION**

Our God is a God of revelation. He reveals Himself to us so we can know Him and His ways. There are two primary ways through which God reveals Himself to us: what he has made and what he has written.

Theologians categorize these different means as "general revelation" and "special revelation." The first emphasizes God's work through creation, while the second focuses on God's Word. This would include both the Bible, His written Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17), and Jesus, His "walking" Word (John 1:1) Psalm 19 wonderfully conveys God's multi-faceted revelation of Himself to humanity.

In verses 1-6, the psalmist illustrated how God has generally (or widely) revealed himself through the beauty, intricacy, and complexity of the created world. When individuals observe nature, consider God's directing influence in history, and inwardly sense right and wrong, they encounter God's general revelation. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul pointed out that the created world is sufficient means for us to know there is a God because "his invisible attributes, that is,

his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made. As a result, people are without excuse" (Rom 1:20).

Although general revelation assures us that God exists, it cannot save us from our sins. It is insufficient in itself to explain the gospel or to reveal what the Lord requires from us. For that, God has revealed himself more specifically through what he has written through the Scriptures.

Thus, the psalmist turned a somewhat abrupt corner in verses 7-11. He shifted his attention away from the created world to the Scriptures. It is through God's Word that we better understand God's personal attributes and His care for us. We are confronted with our disobedience against him and what his Son, Jesus Christ, has done to reconcile us to Him.

What could seem like two disjointed sections of Scripture on the surface is actually one cohesive description of God's multi-faceted revelation of Himself to humanity.

God's Reign

As Creator and King, God alone deserves our worship and praise.

Psalm 96:1-13

1 Sing a new song **A** to the LORD; let the whole earth sing to the LORD. **2** Sing to the LORD, bless his name; **proclaim his salvation B** from day to day. **3** Declare his glory among the nations, his wondrous works among **all peoples. C** **4** For the LORD is great and is highly praised; he is **feared above all gods. D** **5** For all the gods of the peoples are **worthless idols, E** but the LORD made the heavens. **6 Splendor and majesty F** are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. **7 Ascribe G** to the LORD, you families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. **8** Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name; **bring an offering and enter his courts. H** **9** Worship the LORD in the splendor of his **holiness; I** let the whole earth tremble before him. **10** Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns. The world is firmly established; it cannot be shaken. He judges the peoples **fairly.**” **11** Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice; let the sea and all that fills it resound. **12** Let the fields and everything in them celebrate. Then all the trees of the forest will shout for joy **13** before the LORD, for **he is coming K**—for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with his faithfulness.

Exploring Key Words

- A** Not necessarily a new composition, but rather a response to a fresh experience of God's grace.
- B** “Shew forth” (KJV); “tell” (ESV). The content of the “new song” is God's greatness. While His people have many reasons to praise Him, they have no reason for neglecting to praise Him.
- C** The message of God's salvation was not reserved for the Jews. The Lord intended for His people to share the good news with all nations.
- D** No false god or idol can hold a candle to the one, true God. See also Psalm 95:3-5; Isaiah 45:5-7; Habakkuk 2:18-20; Romans 1:18-23.
- E** The Hebrew wording emphasizes that idols are insufficient and feeble. While the Lord stands as Creator of all, idols are good for nothing.
- F** These words suggest royalty. They appear together six other times in the Old Testament, all emphasizing God's reign and the importance of humanity's submission to Him.
- G** “Give” (KJV). The Hebrew word (*yahav*) can also mean “to go” or “to bring.” The psalmist emphasized that God deserves glory, so His creation should offer it willingly by acknowledging His position and authority.
- H** True worship focuses on God alone. We approach Him with humility and wonder.
- I** Highlighting God's holiness emphasizes His perfection and His “otherness.” He deserves worship from His creation because He stands above His creation.
- J** “Righteously” (KJV); “with equity” (NIV; ESV). Sin may seem to go unpunished for a time, but God will set all things right.
- K** The psalmist's call to worship included an eschatological element. As King, God will judge the world through Jesus one day.



NOTES

God's Reign (Ps. 96:1-6)

- The whole earth is invited to recognize and embrace God's reign as King over all creation.
- As God's people, we are called to praise Him, declaring His glory to all nations.
- He is the one true God who created all things.

God's Majesty (Ps. 96:7-9)

- Every person is encouraged to praise God for His glory and strength.
- We are called to worship God for His holiness and to stand in awe of His splendor.

God's Judgment (Ps. 96:10-13)

- God's people are directed to tell all nations that He reigns.
- He has firmly established the work of His hands and holds the authority to judge all people.
- Jesus will return one day as Judge of the righteous and the wicked.

Summary Statements

As Creator and King, God alone deserves our worship and praise.

- All people are to recognize God as sovereign over all creation.
- All people are to praise God because He is holy.
- Believers are expected to tell all nations about God's glory and anticipate the day Jesus returns.

Memory Verse

Psalm 96:10

Key Doctrine

Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. (See Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 10:13-15.)

ENGAGE

Who is the most famous person you have ever met or encountered? What celebrity would you like to meet? (PSG, p. 33)

- The first verse in the Bible states, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). The Bible goes on to reveal that God not only created all things, but He also sustains all of creation and rules over it. Everything we are and have are gifts from God.
- People tend to crave the worship and praise of others for their accomplishments, but apart from God we can accomplish nothing of eternal significance. Therefore, He alone deserves our worship and praise.

Why do so many people idolize celebrities? (PSG, p. 33)

Bonus: What drives us to seek affirmation from others? How can we be sure God is getting the credit He deserves?

EXPLORE

1. GOD’S REIGN (PS. 96:1-6)

Bonus: If you had to describe God, what words would you use? Why?

- Verses 1-3 include several imperatives, including the command to sing a “new song.” This song could have contained new content written by David for the occasion or been an affirmation that God’s mercies are new each day. It also could have been “new” in the sense that it was not reserved for Israel and reflected the availability of God’s mercy to all nations.
- Verse 2 defines the content of the song. People were commanded to bless God’s name and to confess the salvation He provides. We are called to declare God’s amazing works in the world and among His people.
- God deserves this praise because He is greater than any other so-called god. While He is our Creator and Sustainer, idols are worthless and powerless.
- As King, the Lord displays both “splendor and majesty.” In the Old Testament, this phrase uniquely describes His glory. Wherever God is, His splendor and majesty—along with strength and beauty—are present.

How can we know that God is sovereign over all? (PSG, p. 37)

2. GOD’S MAJESTY (PS. 96:7-9)

Bonus: Think about a time when you were on a mission trip to a foreign country? What was it like working and worshiping with believers from a different culture?

- David saw a day when everyone would “ascribe” glory to God. The word “ascribe” means to give someone what they are due. In this case, it involves giving honor and glory to God rather than to worthless idols.
- He envisioned a time when every ethnic group from every nation would worship the Lord. Of course, this continues to be fulfilled through the work of Jesus. It will be fulfilled completely in eternity (see Rev. 7:9-10).
- In Psalm 95:6, David exhorted Israel to worship and bow down before the Lord. Here, he called peoples from every nation to join them and do the same. The word “worship” literally means to bow oneself down. It is an expression of submissive reverence and respect.

What makes God worthy of your worship? (PSG, p. 38)

3. GOD’S JUDGMENT (PS. 96:10-13)

Bonus: What comes to mind when you hear the word “judgment?” Why?

- Verse 10 offers three affirmations related to God: His sovereignty over creation, the stability of His kingdom, and His equity in judging humanity.
- The entirety of all creation is called upon to rejoice in the Lord. Humanity alone is too small to give God the praise He deserves.
- One day, He will judge the world through Jesus, so we must let people know so they can prepare for His return.

How should God’s majesty and impending judgment affect my decisions and actions each day? (PSG, p. 40)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss what it means to say God is holy.

What does it mean to say the people of God are to be holy? Practically speaking, what does holiness look like in daily life? (PSG, p. 41)

Challenge adults to choose one or two verses from this psalm and turn them into a prayer to God.

What is your response to the truth that God is sovereign over the nations? How does your response compare to the instructions in Psalm 96? (PSG, p. 41)



For Further Discussion

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week’s study.

**BIBLE SKILL (P. 40, PSG)**

Dig deeper into the background and usage of key words or phrases.

Four key words in Psalm 96 underscore the richness of worship: sing, ascribe, tremble, and celebrate. Read the following passages that contain these words or concepts:

Sing: Psalm 59:16; James 5:13; Revelation 15:3

Ascribe: Psalm 68:34; Acts 12:21-24; Revelation 19:7

Tremble: Psalm 119:120; Isaiah 64:2; Daniel 6:26

Celebrate: Exodus 12:14; Psalm 68:3; Habakkuk 3:18

What insights about worship do you gain from these passages?

Direct the group to work in pairs to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 40 of the PSG and to discuss the verses listed. Allow volunteers to share their insights.

OBJECT LESSON: OFFERING PLATE

Display an offering plate or whatever your church uses to collect offerings. Highlight the call to bring God offerings in verse 8. Lead a brief discussion about both tangible and intangible offerings we can bring to the Lord.

Explain that biblical stewardship involves more than our money. Note that it involves using everything God has given us for His glory, including our time and our talents. Encourage adults to share how bringing the offering of our hearts and service, as well as our finances, is part of honoring and praising God as King over all creation.

**DIG DEEPER****THE CONTEXT OF PSALM 96**

Psalms is more than a book of Scripture. Each psalm is also a poem originally set to music. God's people sang these poems in their personal and corporate worship times. They were what we might call hymns or praise choruses today.

Psalm 96 highlights the Bible's continuity as it appears outside the book of Psalms in a key moment of worship among God's people. This would be the celebration spurred when King David brought the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem.

The ark of the covenant (or ark of the Lord) was the original "coffin-like" container for the Ten Commandments. Its origin goes back to Moses at Sinai when God gave the original stone tablets to him. The ark was the symbol of God's presence among His people as they journeyed through the wilderness to the promised land and beyond.

After generations of up and down faithfulness among God's people (which led to losing the ark at one point to the Philistines), King David led a procession marking the ark's safe arrival in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6; 1 Chron. 15). Afterward, great festivities and

worship followed. And because 1 Chronicles 16:23-33 is very similar, many scholars believe some version of Psalm 96 was included in the people's corporate worship together during this event.

Psalm 96 is a hymn celebrating how God's kingship over all creation warrants praise and worship from all kinds of people from everywhere on earth. In further continuity of Scripture, this psalm foreshadows the coming of the greater King, Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who commands His church to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19) while promising His continual presence (28:20).

And at the end of the age, what the ancient Israelites originally sang, the church will sing anew. Hear John's prophecy: "After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: Salvation belongs to our God, who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb!" (Rev. 7:9-10).

God's Promise

God faithfully fulfilled His promise to send a Messiah, the Lord's anointed Deliverer.

Psalm 132:1-14,17-18

1 LORD, remember David **A** and all the hardships he endured, **2** and how he **swore an oath** **B** to the LORD, making a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob: **3** “I will not enter my house or get into my bed, **4** I will **not allow my eyes to sleep** **C** or my eyelids to slumber **5** until I find a place for the LORD, **a dwelling** **D** for the Mighty One of Jacob.” **6** We heard of the ark in **Ephrathah**; **E** we found it in the fields of **Jaar**. **F** **7** Let’s go to his dwelling place; let’s worship at his footstool. **8 Rise up, LORD**, **G** come to your resting place, you and your powerful ark. **9** May your priests be clothed with righteousness, and may your faithful people shout for joy. **10** For the sake of your servant David, do not reject your **anointed one**. **H** **11** The LORD swore an oath to David, a promise he will not **abandon**: **I** “I will set one of your offspring on your throne. **12** If your sons keep my covenant and my decrees that I will teach them, their sons will also sit on your throne forever.” **13** For the LORD has chosen **Zion**; **J** he has desired it for his home: **14** “This is my resting place forever; I will make my home here because I have desired it.” (. . .) **17** “There I will make a **horn grow** **K** for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed one. **18** I will clothe his enemies with shame, but the crown he wears will be glorious.”

Exploring Key Words

- A** The request for God to remember is a request for God to act. In this case, the prayer expressed a desire for God to bless David’s faithfulness.
- B** Promise to keep a vow. This oath/vow often included a public ceremony before a priest in the presence of the congregation.
- C** David’s passion was to build a temple for the ark of the covenant. His pledge to sacrifice sleep underscored the sincerity of his commitment.
- D** “Habitation” (KJV). In the wilderness, God lived among His people at the tabernacle. David wanted to build a more permanent house for the “Mighty One of Jacob.”
- E** An area near Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2). As a native of Bethlehem, David may have heard about the status of the ark there.
- F** Kiriath-jearim (1 Sam 6:21–7:2). The city was about nine miles west of Jerusalem. The ark stayed here for many years after the Philistines sent it back to Israel.
- G** As part of the celebration marking the ark’s return, Israel called on God to “rest” among them. His “rest” would guarantee rest for them.
- H** David, the one set apart by God as king. Ultimately, though, it points to Jesus as Messiah, which means “anointed one.”
- I** “Turn from it” (KJV); “revoke” (NIV). God would keep His promise to sustain David’s royal line if they remained faithful to Him. This line eventually led to Jesus.
- J** Originally, a stronghold within Jerusalem. Over time, it became synonymous with the city and was seen as the dwelling place of God.
- K** Sometimes associated with the Messiah, often described as a “branch” or “sprout” (Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Ezra 29:21; Zech. 3:8).



NOTES

God's Dwelling Place (Ps. 132:1-10)

- The psalmist asked the Lord not to forget David's acts of devotion. David had vowed to build a temple and to place the ark of the covenant inside.
- The ark was found in Jaar (likely, Kiriath-jearim) and brought to Jerusalem. The psalmist encouraged the people to go worship God in His dwelling place.

God's Commitment (Ps. 132:11-14)

- The Lord made an oath to David that one of his descendants would remain on the throne ruling Israel. This leader must faithfully obey God's law.
- The Lord also chose Zion to be the place of His dwelling.

The Coming Messiah (Ps. 132:17-18)

- God promised to send a future Messiah, also a descendant of David, who would deliver His people.
- When the anointed One comes, His enemies will be defeated.

Summary Statements

God faithfully fulfilled His promise to send a Messiah, the Lord's anointed Deliverer.

- Believers should be intentional in their worship of God.
- Believers can be encouraged because God is faithful to keep His promises.
- Believers can know that Jesus is the Messiah who delivers us from sin.

Memory Verse

Psalm 132:11-12

Key Doctrine

God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. (See John 1:1,14; Romans 1:3-4.)

ENGAGE

Has anyone ever broken a promise made to you? How did you react? (PSG, p. 42)

Bonus: Describe the plot of your favorite book or movie. What makes it so compelling?

- The entire Bible is one grand narrative. It begins with creation. Next, it recounts the fall, when sin entered the human race through Adam and Eve. This is followed by the covenant God made with Abraham, promising He would use Abraham and his descendants to bless the nations, anticipating the coming of the Messiah.
- Later, God made a covenant with David, promising the Messiah would be his descendant. Finally, beginning in Matthew, the New Testament indicates Jesus is the long-anticipated Messiah.

Bonus: When has God kept a promise to you? What impact did it have on your relationship with Him?

EXPLORE

1. GOD'S DWELLING PLACE (PS. 132:1-10)

When and where do you find it easiest to worship God? How do you worship God—beyond what you do at church on Sundays? (PSG, p. 47)

- Asking the Lord to remember means more than asking Him to keep something in mind. Rather, it is asking God to act in light of what the psalmist was asking Him to remember. In this instance, he began by asking God to act on behalf of David in light of all of the hardships he had endured.
- The psalmist indicated that David made “a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob.” He was committed to building a place for the ark of the covenant to reside. He was more committed to the building of the Lord’s house than to enjoying the comfort of his own house and even his bed. David would not sleep until he had fulfilled his vow.
- First Samuel 4–6 recounts how the Philistines captured the ark and eventually returned it to Israel. It was taken to the home of Abinidab in Jaar (Kiriath-Jearim). Once David learned about the ark’s whereabouts, he set about bringing it to Jerusalem with a large celebration. His faithfulness in this was the basis of the psalmist’s prayer for the king’s blessing.

Bonus: What are you asking God to do in your life right now? Why are you confident that He will respond to your request?

2. GOD'S COMMITMENT (PS. 132:11-14)

How have you experienced God’s faithfulness to His Word? (PSG, p. 48)

- Verses 2-5 recalled the oath David made to the Lord. Verses 11-18 recall an oath God made to David. He promised that He would place one of David’s offspring on the throne to rule Israel. Given God’s character, the psalmist was sure God would keep His promise.
- However, in order for David’s offspring to remain on the throne, they needed to faithfully obey the statutes God gave in His covenant with Israel. (See 2 Sam. 7:12-16.)

Bonus: Why did God put stipulations on His covenant? What does this say about His desire for complete obedience in our lives?

- The Lord chose to place His throne in Zion. David did not make this decision; God did. This offered hope even when later kings failed to honor God’s covenant.

3. THE COMING MESSIAH (PS. 132:17-18)

Bonus: What are some symbols of power in our culture? Why are they significant?

- The Lord stated He would “make a horn grow for David.” Horns were often used as symbols of strength. The psalmist was saying that a powerful king, the Messiah, would come from David. (See Matt. 1:1.)
- While the priests were called to worship God clothed in righteousness and salvation (vv. 9,16), the Messiah’s enemies would be clothed in shame. The Messiah’s “crown” represents His power and rule, while “glorious” indicates His power and rule would shine and flourish.

Why is it significant that all of Jesus’s enemies will be defeated? (PSG, p. 49)

CHALLENGE

As a Bible study group, discuss ways believers can be intentional in their worship of God.

How can your Bible study group time incorporate worship? (PSG, p. 50)

Encourage individuals to spend some time praising God for His faithfulness.

What are some promises in God’s Word that have encouraged you in the past? Is there a promise of God that you are clinging to right now? (PSG, p. 50)



For Further Discussion

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week’s study.

**BIBLE SKILL (P. 46, PSG)**

Use other Scripture to understand the context of a Bible passage.

Psalm 132:6 references an event that occurred earlier when the ark of the covenant was captured by the Philistines then returned to Israel twenty years later. Read about that incident in 1 Samuel 4:1–7:1. ***What are the truths revealed about God in this passage that deepen your understanding of Psalm 132?***

Direct adults to work in teams of three or four to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 46 of the PSG. Give each team a sheet of paper and pencil. Encourage them to create a time line of events related to the ark. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share their time lines. Discuss the events surrounding the ark's return to Israel and encourage the group to respond to the question at the end of the activity.

OBJECT LESSON: DRIVER'S LICENSE

Display a driver's license and ask the group to identify the purpose and value of a driver's license. Explain that it grants the privilege of legally driving on public roads. Note that this privilege can be revoked if a person breaks certain laws or statutes.

Share that in the same way, God's promise to David came with a stipulation. Read aloud Psalm 132:12 to identify the condition God made. Highlight that God kept His promise to David with the coming of Jesus.

**DIG DEEPER****GOD WITH HIS PEOPLE**

Throughout Scripture, one can observe how God gives people the gift of His presence. For example, in the exodus, God accompanied the Israelites in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:21–22). Later, He instructed the people to build the tabernacle, where His presence would dwell among His people (25:8–9). It was placed in the middle of the camp, highlighting God's desire to be central to their lives.

The tabernacle was a portable structure that the people carried through the wilderness. Centuries later, though, David planned for a permanent sanctuary in Jerusalem. Later, Solomon, David's son, oversaw the temple's completion. But first, David determined to bring the ark of the covenant from Kiriath-jearim (also known as "Jaar") to Jerusalem.

The basic Hebrew term translated "tabernacle" comes from a verb meaning "to dwell." Biblically, it is often translated as "dwelling," "dwelling place," "habitation," and "abode." It is closely associated with the word *shekinah* used in discussions of the Lord's presence and His glory. By commissioning the construction of the ark, the tabernacle, and the temple, the Lord demonstrated His intention to live in close proximity to His people.

As significant as each of these means of dwelling were, they all pointed to the superior manifestation of God living among His people—the advent of Jesus Christ. In John 1:14, the apostle wrote, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The phrase "dwelt among us" literally means "pitched his tent" (or "tabernacled") among us.

Previously, God had demonstrated His presence through physical structures. In Jesus, God took up residence among His people in the Word-made-flesh. Today, as Jesus's followers, we experience another manifestation of God's presence—His Spirit literally lives within us (1 Cor. 3:16).

BONUS CONTENT***The Gospel in Psalms***

Learn more about what the psalms teach us about Christ and the gospel.

God's Messiah

The Messiah will reign forever.

Psalm 110:1-7

1 This is the declaration of the **LORD** to my **Lord**: **A** “Sit at my **right hand** **B** until I make your enemies **your footstool**.” **C** **2** The **LORD** will extend your **mighty scepter** **D** from Zion. Rule over your **surrounding enemies**. **E** **3** Your people will **volunteer** **F** on your day of battle. In holy splendor, from the womb of the dawn, the dew of your youth belongs to you. **4** The **LORD** has sworn an oath and will not take it back: “You are a priest forever according to the pattern of **Melchizedek**.” **G** **5** The **Lord** is at your right hand; he will crush kings on **the day of his anger**. **H** **6** He will judge the nations, **heaping up corpses**; **I** he will crush leaders over the entire world. **7** He will drink from the brook by the road; therefore, he will **lift up his head**. **J**

Exploring Key Words

- A** The two uses of “Lord” are distinct. The first refers to God by using His covenant name (Hebrew, *Yahweh*). The second refers to a human ruler, such as David or a king in his line (Hebrew, *adon*).
- B** Position of favor or privilege. The earthly king was established by God and operated as His agent for His people.
- C** Total victory in battle, where an enemy is forced into submission. In the New Testament, similar imagery is applied to Jesus the Messiah (see Eph. 1:22; 1 Cor. 15:25; Heb. 10:13).
- D** “Rod” (KJV). A sign of royal authority. In this context, it also implied divine authority since God was the One who established the king.
- E** “In the midst of your enemies” (ESV; NIV). The Davidic king was secure on the throne God provided. Israel was surrounded by adversaries, but God protected the nation and its king.
- F** God’s people will follow Him without reservation. When the Messiah initially came, He was rejected by His own. When He returns, His army of believers will be at His side.
- G** The “king of Salem” and “priest to God Most High” who met Abram after a battle (Gen. 14:18-20). Likewise, the Messiah serves as both king and priest. See Hebrews 5:1-10; 7:1-22.
- H** “Day of his wrath” (KJV; ESV; NIV). God will be the One who punishes the nations, using the Davidic king as His instrument of judgment.
- I** Not violence for the sake of violence, but a severe judgment that is required to bring justice to the world.
- J** Expression that relates to victory in battle. It indicates joy and triumph.



NOTES

Jesus as King (Ps. 110:1-3)

- The immediate context of the psalm relates to King David and his royal line. Its ultimate fulfillment, however, comes through Jesus the Messiah.
- God will appoint Jesus to sit at His right hand. He will give Him strength and empower Him to reign over His enemies.

Jesus as Priest (Ps. 110:4)

- God will also appoint Jesus as a priest. As a descendant of David and the Son of God, Jesus fulfills the dual roles of priest and king forever.
- In this dual role, Jesus gives fullest meaning to the ministry of Melchizedek, the mysterious priest-king who met Abram (Abraham) in Genesis 14.

Jesus as Victor (Ps. 110:5-7)

- One day, Jesus will return and defeat his enemies once and for all.
- He will judge the nations and defeat rulers.

Summary Statements

The Messiah will reign forever.

- Because Jesus holds all authority, we're to worship and honor Him.
- Since Jesus is also our priest, we can come to Him with our needs.
- Believers can trust God's promise that Jesus will return and restore righteousness.

Memory Verse

Hebrew 4:14-15

Key Doctrine

God the Son

Christ ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. (See Hebrews 4:14-15; 7:14-28.)

ENGAGE

Why is hope important? What can cause a person to lose hope? (PSG, p. 51)

- We live in a fallen world. Both internationally and locally there is constant poverty, strife, injustice, immorality, bloodshed, war, godlessness, and the never-ending foreboding of an escalation of all these things.
- It seems as if everything is out of control; but it is not. God is in control. The day is coming when Jesus will come again, defeat His enemies, and establish His eternal kingdom with those who belong to Him.

Bonus: What can you do to remind yourself regularly that God really is in control?

EXPLORE

1. JESUS AS KING (PS. 110:1-3)

How does God's authority shape the way we approach Him? (PSG, p. 55)

- In our English translations, "LORD" in all capital letters is a way of indicating that the word is "Yahweh" in Hebrew—God's personal, covenant name. When we see "Lord" in lowercase letters, it actually means "master."
- Psalm 110 begins with the LORD's (Yahweh's) declaration to David's "Lord," meaning someone greater than David. This is a reference to the Messiah.
- In the Old Testament, sitting is often associated with a place of honor and respect reserved for kings. David foresaw his Lord being co-ruler with Yahweh. What's more, Yahweh would make the Messiah's enemies His footstool. He would defeat and completely subjugate them under His feet.
- The psalmist stated that Yahweh will extend the Messiah's "mighty scepter." Jesus will have the authority and power to defeat His enemies and establish His rule over all nations.
- Meanwhile, the Messiah's own people will join their King on His day of battle. Prophetically, this refers to both Jewish and Gentile believers who have come to saving faith in Jesus. (See Rev. 17:14; 19:6-16.)
- While the immediate context of the passage could relate to God's blessings on David and his royal line, New Testament writers make it clear that this verse is prophetic, anticipating Jesus the Messiah. (See Matt. 22:43-45; Luke 20:42-44; Acts 2:33-34; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 10:13.)

Bonus: How can believers demonstrate the lordship of Jesus through their lives each day?

2. JESUS AS PRIEST (PS. 110:4)

Bonus: Based on what you know from the Old Testament, what was the role of a priest in Israel? Why was this an important job?

- Just as God had promised David that one of his descendants would sit on the throne of Israel forever (Pss. 89:3-4; 132:11-12), He swore an irrevocable oath that Jesus would serve as "priest forever."
- Verse 4 reveals some important truths about Jesus's priesthood. First, Jesus's priesthood was not handed down through the levitical priesthood. Jesus's blood sealed His priesthood (Heb. 2:9-18; 4:14-15; 9:11-14).
- Also, His priesthood reflects the work of Melchizedek (see Gen. 14:19-20). He was a priest-king who blessed Abram and received offerings from him long before the levitical priesthood was established. Melchizedek is the perfect type to anticipate the coming of Jesus as king and priest.

What makes Jesus uniquely qualified to be our priest? (PSG, p. 56)

3. JESUS AS VICTOR (PS. 110:5-7)

Bonus: How often do you reflect on Jesus's return? What do you think it will be like?

- Earlier, God invited the Messiah to sit at His right hand. Here, He promised to be at Jesus's right hand in battle. The Father will empower the Son to crush His enemies.
- The Hebrew wording echoes the promise of Genesis 3:15, where God promised that the offspring of the woman (the Messiah) would crush the serpent's head. God will judge the nations through His Son, and none of His enemies will escape His righteous judgment.
- The psalm concludes with a picture of the victorious Messiah refreshing Himself after defeating His enemies. The phrase "lift up his head" anticipates the completed work of redemption and the exaltation of Jesus.

How should believers live today in light of Jesus's anticipated return? (PSG, p. 58)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss Jesus's ministry as our High Priest

What does Jesus do as our priest? Why do we need Jesus to be our priest? (PSG, p. 59)

Challenge individuals to submit to Jesus's authority.

What will it look like for you to live under His authority this week? (PSG, p. 59)



For Further Discussion

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

**BIBLE SKILL (P. 58, PSG)**

Use additional Scripture to learn more about a Bible character.

Melchizedek served as the pattern for the Messiah as King and Priest, yet his identity has been veiled in mystery because the Bible contains little information about him. Read the following Scripture passages: Genesis 14:17-20; Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6-10; 6:19-20; 7:1-28. ***How do these verses give you a more complete portrait of Melchizedek as a king and a priest? How do your impressions about Melchizedek give you a better grasp of the messianic mission of Jesus?***

Direct adults to complete the Bible Skill on page 58 of the PSG. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share things that stuck out to them about Melchizedek. Briefly share connections between Jesus and Melchizedek as priests and kings.

OBJECT LESSON: ICE WATER

Display a glass of ice water. Share that water refreshes and is necessary for life. Point to the returning Messiah drinking from the brook when all the enemies have been defeated (Ps. 110:7).

Enlist a volunteer to read John 4:10-14, where Jesus described Himself as “living water.” Briefly discuss how Jesus offers refreshment. Note that He also fits the description of the conquering King in Psalm 110. Remind adults that His return will mean judgment for those who reject Him and His offer of salvation. Highlight that, in contrast, believers can trust God’s promise that Jesus will return and restore righteousness to the world.

**DIG DEEPER****THE GREATER DAVID**

Among Israel’s kings, no name is more significant than David’s. His very name probably means “favorite” or “beloved,” and he remains a central figure in the history and practice of Judeo-Christian faith.

David was not born into power or prestige. He grew up as an obscure shepherd boy in the town of Bethlehem, the youngest and least of his brothers. Yet, God chose him for His purposes and set him on the path to greatness among his people. The primary qualification was not his bravery or his wisdom. Instead, David had a heart that pursued God faithfully.

Over time, David began to distinguish himself among his countrymen. He became an unlikely hero among the Israelites when he defeated the mighty Philistine giant, Goliath. He also served in King Saul’s court as a talented musician. He was the king’s armor bearer and earned a reputation as a valiant military warrior in his own right.

Spiritually, he followed God. Despite his imperfections and personal sin, God recognized him as a man after His own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). So, when Saul failed to meet the Lord’s standards for kingship, God sent Samuel to anoint David as a replacement.

But the throne didn’t come to David immediately. After approximately fifteen years—including many years running for his life from Saul—David became king. He was considered the ideal leader of God’s people, and the Lord promised that His royal Messiah would come through David’s lineage. This would be Jesus, and He would be even greater than David.

In its immediate context, Psalm 110 deals with David’s dynasty in the life of God’s people. Yet, it also points beyond the human achievements of David or his heirs to the coming Messiah. When the Israelites sang this psalm in faith, they ultimately were celebrating God’s promises to David and expressing their yearning for the day when that promise would be fulfilled.

Psalm 110 is one of the most quoted Old Testament texts in the New Testament because New Testament writers understood that its ultimate subject was Jesus Christ—the one Matthew called “the Son of David” (Matt. 1:1). During his earthly ministry, Jesus even applied this psalm to Himself when confirming His role as the Messiah (Matt. 22:44).

He continues to serve as the greater David, the greater King. And one day, He will judge His enemies as described in Psalm 110.

God's Deliverance

God protects and defends those who belong to Him.

Psalm 18:16-29

16 He reached down **A** from on high and took hold of me; he pulled me out of deep water. **17** He rescued me from my powerful enemy and from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me. **18** They confronted me in the day of my calamity, **B** but the LORD was my support. **C** **19** He brought me out to a spacious place; **D** he rescued me because he delighted in me. **E** **20** The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; he repaid me according to the cleanness of my hands. **F** **21** For I have kept the ways of the LORD and have not turned from my God to wickedness. **22** Indeed, I let all his ordinances guide me and have not disregarded his statutes. **23** I was blameless toward him and kept myself from my iniquity. **24** So the LORD repaid me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight. **25** With the faithful you prove yourself faithful, **G** with the blameless you prove yourself blameless, **26** with the pure you prove yourself pure, but with the crooked you prove yourself shrewd. **H** **27** For you rescue an oppressed people, but you humble **I** those with haughty eyes. **28** LORD, you light my lamp; my God illuminates my darkness. **29** With you I can attack a barricade, **J** and with my God I can leap over a wall.

Exploring Key Words

- A** Biblical writers often described God using “anthropomorphism.” This involves attributing physical qualities to a spiritual God so people can understand Him better. Here, reaching, holding, and pulling highlight God’s intervention in rescuing His servant from “deep water.”
- B** “Disaster” (NIV). The Hebrew term suggests distress and destruction caused by oppression.
- C** “Staff.” In response to human calamity, God offers divine protection and provision.
- D** The threat was compared to being in a tight well of deep water, but the rescue felt like being pulled out and set down in a broad place. The Hebrew wording sometimes referred to a large field.
- E** A deep emotion expressing pleasure with something or someone.
- F** David was not perfect. Instead, he was emphasizing his desire to walk with integrity before God. This involved keeping His ways and avoiding evil (v. 21), as well as obeying Him and living a blameless life (vv. 22-23).
- G** “Show yourself merciful” (ESV). The word is associated with God’s loyalty and lovingkindness (Heb., *hesed*). From the earliest days of the law, God had promised to honor those who honored Him.
- H** “Froward” (KJV); “tortuous” (ESV). While God blesses the faithful, He also deals wisely with those who reject Him. He ensures that they feel the consequences of their choices.
- I** “Bring down” (KJV; ESV); “bring low.” God judges the arrogant. See Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6; and 1 Peter 5:5-7.
- J** The psalmist’s courage in the face of his enemies is based on his confidence in God’s power and protection.



NOTES

The God Who Rescues (Ps. 18:16-19)

- This psalm was written by David after the Lord rescued him from his enemies, likely in the form of a military victory.
- In his time of need, he declared that God had delivered him from present danger. God took delight in him as He placed him in a safe place.
- Underlying God's mighty acts to save is His love for His people.

Faithfulness Rewarded (Ps. 18:20-24)

- Continuing to praise God, the psalmist proclaimed that God delivered him because he had been faithful and blameless in the sight of God. He had followed God's commands.
- David was not claiming sinless perfection. Instead, he was acknowledging his desire for integrity in his pursuit of God.

Hope Given (Ps. 18:25-29)

- The psalmist highlighted how God is faithful to those who have been faithful to Him.
- With the crooked, however, God is shrewd. He will humble the proud.
- Because of His faithfulness, God's people can have confident hope when facing any obstacle.

Summary Statements

God protects and defends those who belong to Him.

- Believers can call upon God in times of adversity.
- God rewards those who faithfully follow Him.
- Believers can trust God to be faithful to them.

Memory Verse

Psalms 18:3

Key Doctrine

God the Father

God is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise.
(See Psalm 147:3-5; Jeremiah 32:17.)

ENGAGE

What measures do you take to protect the things you value? What prompts you to take these steps? (PSG, p. 60)

- The world is filled with dangers. Because of this, we are thankful for those who serve in our military, law enforcement, and fire and rescue teams to protect and defend us from danger. We also lock our doors and turn on lights at night to ward off threats.
- We can appreciate all these things. However, believers have a Protector and Defender who is with them 24/7. No individual is exempt from experiencing adversity, but God is always ready to protect and defend those who belong to Him.

Bonus: How can you show gratitude to people who keep you safe? How can you show gratitude to God for keeping you safe?

EXPLORE

1. THE GOD WHO RESCUES (PS. 18:16-19)

Bonus: When have you needed a rescue? Who came to help?

- Psalm 18 is a record of how God saved David from the hands of his enemies, possibly King Saul (1 Sam. 17-31). Verses 16-19 describe how God saved him. The expressions “reached down,” “took hold,” and “pulled” are poetic descriptions of God’s protective hand.
- David painted an image of himself being thrown into “deep water,” turbulent and violent waves in the midst of a ferocious storm at sea. From his perspective, David’s situation looked hopeless and he was going to drown.
- However, while David’s enemies sought his calamity, God provided His support. The Hebrew wording is similar to the description of God fighting the Egyptians on behalf of Israel at the Red Sea.
- After being trapped in deep water, David found relief in the “spacious place” God provided. David had trusted God, and the Lord responded with help because He delighted in His servant.

What do these verses reveal about God? (PSG, p. 64)

2. FAITHFULNESS REWARDED (PS. 18:20-24)

Bonus: What is the relationship between obedience and God’s blessing?

- Verses 20-24 are written in a chiasmic structure. This means verse 20 corresponds to verse 24, and verse 21 corresponds to verse 23. This draws attention to the central point of God and His Word in verse 22.

- David was not arrogantly claiming moral and spiritual perfection. His clean hands and pure heart were grounded in his obedience and faithfulness to God. The Lord only delighted in him because he kept a clear conscience before God (see 1 Pet. 3:21).
- Verses 21-24 communicate what single-hearted, daily devotion to God looks like. David followed God’s laws and avoided wickedness. Again, he wasn’t perfect. He made many mistakes in life. But, in general, he looked to follow God’s directions and experience God’s favor.

What steps of faithfulness to God do you need to take today? (PSG, p. 66)

3. HOPE GIVEN (PS. 18:25-29)

Have you seen God’s faithfulness expressed in your life recently? (PSG, p. 67)

- David turned from God’s works to directly addressing the Lord. He confessed that God is faithful to the faithful, highlighting God’s lovingkindness and mercy. He also said God was blameless and pure.
- But while God blesses those who honor Him, He is “shrewd” with those who reject Him. This means He knows how to deal with them. Ultimately, He will humble those who arrogantly go their own way.
- David knew that when believers walk through dark times, God brings light and hope. With His leadership, David could confidently overcome any barrier put before him.

Bonus: How would you describe your level of confidence in God right now? How can you nurture more confidence in Him?

CHALLENGE

As a group, share personal experiences of times when adults called on God for help.

Why do we sometimes neglect praising the Lord? (PSG, p. 68)

Encourage individuals to make a list of reasons the Lord is worthy of our praises.

Spend time in prayer, asking the Lord to increase both your faith in Him and faithfulness to Him. (PSG, p. 68)



For Further Discussion

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week’s study.



BIBLE SKILL (P. 67, PSG)

Read, reflect on, and react emotionally to a Bible verse.

Focus on Psalm 18:16. Read the verse aloud several times. Each time, emphasize different words or phrases as you read. For example, in one reading emphasize the word “he” each time it appears. Then read the verse again, emphasizing all the action words. Take note of your thoughts. ***How does the verse move you emotionally? What feelings were evoked by the different words and phrases as you emphasized them? How can you turn this verse into a prayer?***

Direct adults to get into groups of three or four and to work through Psalm 18:16 as instructed in the Bible Skill activity on page 67 of the PSG. After a few minutes, challenge the group to say the verse aloud together. Review the questions at the end of the activity. Then, lead the group in quoting the verse again.

OBJECT LESSON: LIGHTS

Display a light bulb, flashlight, lantern, or another light source. Direct adults to read and reflect on Psalm 18:28. Discuss ways that light impacts our lives. Encourage individuals in the group to share situations when they were in a dark place and needed more light.

Point out that throughout the New Testament, light is a symbol of Christ. Allow adults to suggest verses that connect the work of Jesus and light. Challenge adults to focus on their own situation. Ask: ***How does Christ provide light in your life? How are you a light for your family, neighbors, coworkers, and others who cross your path?***



DIG DEEPER

WAS DAVID PERFECT?

Since no one is perfect, how could David assert his own righteousness (v. 20), appeal to the cleanness of his hands (v. 20), and claim to be blameless (v. 23)? At a cursory glance of Psalm 18, it could feel like King David had no problem boasting about his own perfection and that God rewarded him with deliverance because of it. One could easily take this assertion as absurdly self-righteous on David’s part. Yet, a deeper reading offers more clarity.

First, Psalm 18 is historically rooted in 2 Samuel 22 after God delivered David from his enemies. Earlier in 2 Samuel, the prophet Nathan confronted David regarding his many sins surrounding his adultery with Bathsheba and the death of her husband Uriah.

In brokenness, David confessed, “I have sinned against the LORD” (2 Sam. 12:13a). So, within that context, it’s apparent that David was fully aware of his own personal sinfulness before God. He was not claiming perfection in his song of testimony.

Second, when David recounted, “I let all his ordinances guide me and have not disregarded his statutes” (Ps. 18:22), he was recalling how God’s ordinances and statutes include provisions for receiving forgiveness of sins. For example, after the king’s confession in 2 Samuel 12:13a, Nathan confirmed, “And the LORD has taken away your sin; you will not die” (2 Sam. 12:13b). Therefore, when David says, “For I have kept the ways of the LORD and have not turned from my God to wickedness” (Ps. 18:21), a significant part of keeping the ways of the Lord is regularly confessing his sins and receiving the Lord’s forgiveness for them.

Thus, David ultimately was stating that, while he was not perfect, he had held fast to the life of faith. Despite his failures, he still longed to pursue God and to be a man after His heart. The Scriptures say, “But to the one who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5). That was David’s story. His own righteousness was only a reflection of God’s righteousness in him.

God's Faithfulness

God deserves our worship because of His faithfulness toward His people.

Psalm 105:1-11,42-45

1 Give thanks to the **LORD**, **A** call on his name; **proclaim his deeds** **B** among the peoples. **2** Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell about all **his wondrous works!** **C** **3** Boast in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the **LORD** rejoice. **4** Seek the **LORD** and his strength; seek his face always. **5 Remember** **D** the wondrous works he has done, his wonders, and the judgments he has pronounced, **6** you offspring of Abraham his servant, Jacob's descendants—**his chosen ones.** **E** **7** He is the **LORD** our God; his judgments govern the whole earth. **8** He remembers **his covenant** **F** forever, the promise he ordained for a thousand generations—**9** the covenant he made with Abraham, swore to Isaac, **10** and confirmed to Jacob as **a decree** **G** and to Israel as a permanent covenant: **11** “I will give the land of Canaan to you as your inherited portion.” (. . .)

42 For he remembered his **holy promise** **H** to Abraham his servant. **43** He **brought his people out** **I** with rejoicing, his chosen ones with shouts of joy. **44** He gave them **the lands of the nations,** **J** and they inherited what other peoples had worked for. **45** All this happened so that they might keep his statutes and obey his instructions. **Hallelujah!** **K**

Exploring Key Words

- A** This psalm celebrates God's faithful dealings with His people as revealed in the Pentateuch.
- B** Those who experience God's faithfulness are expected to share His faithfulness with others. Testimony is a powerful part of witnessing.
- C** The Hebrew word rendered “tell” can refer to meditation. In this context, though, reflecting on God's faithfulness led His people to talk openly about all He had done for them.
- D** Humans naturally forget what God has done, so we must be diligent to recall His goodness. Israel often failed to recall God's work and suffered the consequences for it.
- E** God had chosen Abraham's descendants as His covenant people. He sealed His commitment with a three-fold promise of shaping them into a nation, giving them a land, and making them a blessing to the world.
- F** God sovereignly affirmed His covenant with Israel (Gen. 35:10-15), specifically focusing on the land as their inheritance (Ps. 105:11).
- G** “Law” (KJV); “statute” (ESV). The Hebrew wording includes an obligation of obedience to whom it is due.
- H** While His people might forget His covenant, God never does. He is faithful to them, even when they are faithless toward Him.
- I** A historical reference to the exodus from Egypt. God had demonstrated great power and loyalty to His people in freeing them from bondage.
- J** Canaan. God fulfilled His promise of providing a land for His people. He also used them to punish the pagan nations living in that region.
- K** “Praise the LORD” (NIV; ESV). The single word in English includes two words in Hebrew: *halal* (praise or glorify) and *Yah* (God).



Call to Worship (Ps. 105:1-6)

- The psalmist uses ten imperative statements to call God's people to worship Him and to tell of His deeds.
- They were commanded to always seek the Lord wholeheartedly. Additionally, they were challenged to remember all that God had done, along with all His ordinances.

Covenant Made (Ps. 105:7-11)

- The people were called to praise God for His longstanding covenantal relationship with them.
- As the sovereign Ruler of the whole earth, God promised Abraham that his descendants would one day inherit the land of Canaan. He affirmed this covenant with both Isaac and Jacob.

Covenant Fulfilled (Ps. 105:42-45)

- Because of His covenant promise with Abraham, God brought the Israelites out of Egyptian captivity to the promised land.
- God fulfilled the promise He made to Abraham. In addition, His protection and provision were given so that the Israelites would obey His commands.

Summary Statements

God deserves our worship because of His faithfulness toward His people.

- Believers should be ready to tell others of what God has done.
- Believers can praise God for His sovereignty over all things.
- God's past faithfulness motivates believers to trust Him and obey Him.

Memory Verse

Psalm 105:1-2

Key Doctrine

Man

Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. (See Ephesians 2:1-10; Colossians 1:21-22.)

ENGAGE

What is the best example of faithfulness you have witnessed in your lifetime? (PSG, p. 69)

- “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” has been a favorite hymn of believers for over a century. It was written in 1923 by Thomas Chisholm, a pastor in Kentucky.
- The title comes from Lamentations 3:23, but throughout the Bible it is evident that the people of God recognized the faithfulness of God. Psalm 105 not only demonstrates that we need to remember God’s faithfulness in keeping His promises, but we also need to recognize He deserves our worship because He is faithful to do so.

Bonus: If a friend asked you to describe ways God has been faithful to you, how would you respond?

EXPLORE

1. CALL TO WORSHIP (PS. 105:1-6)

Bonus: What are some important memories in your life? Why do you want to remember them?

- Psalm 105 is a hymn. In the psalms, hymns typically include a call to praise God in song. They also describe the reasons for praising God.
- The psalmist called on his readers to “give thanks to the Lord.” This call to give thanks lays the foundation for the rest of the psalm, which recounts God’s faithfulness to Israel across time.
- Calling on God’s name involves magnifying Him in praise. Proclaiming His deeds reminds believers that there is a missional aspect to praising God.
- People are prone to boast in themselves, but His name should be the focus of our boasting. The Lord is above everything; He is transcendent.
- The psalmist emphasized the need to remember the wondrous things God has done as an essential part of both seeking the Lord and praising Him. Through the patriarchs like Abraham and Jacob, God graciously chose Israel to be His holy people. They needed to reflect on Him and His covenant regularly.

Which of the imperatives found in these verses come easy to you? Which are more challenging? (PSG, p. 73)

2. COVENANT MADE (PS. 105:7-11)

How does an understanding of God’s sovereignty influence your faith? (PSG, p. 75)

- The psalmist recognized that the Lord is not a localized, national deity who only held authority over Israel. Rather, He holds all authority and governs the whole earth. Wherever the people of God are, they are under God’s rule. What’s more, He is always near to them.

- In the Old Testament, a covenant established a relationship between two parties. The agreement to establish a covenant usually involved responsibilities required by both parties for the covenant to stand.
- God initiated His covenant with Abraham, which included promises that would bless the entire world. God pledged Himself to fulfilling His covenant promises. The apostle Paul recognized Jesus as the ultimate fulfillment of God’s promises through Abraham.
- In verse 11, the psalmist highlighted God’s promise to give Abraham’s descendants the land of Canaan. The rest of the psalm highlights God’s faithfulness to keep this promise.

Bonus: How well do you keep promises? What can you learn from God’s example?

3. COVENANT FULFILLED (PS. 105:42-45)

Bonus: How should God’s faithfulness affect our obedience? Why?

- Psalm 105:12-45 recounts the ways God protected and provided for Israel through the wilderness to the promised land. He “remembered” His covenant with Abraham and was faithful to do everything He had promised. As a result, the people rejoiced and praised Him for His faithfulness.
- The psalmist concluded by emphasizing that God’s people should “keep his statutes and obey his instructions” in response to His faithfulness to them. In addition, “Hallelujah” (which means “praise God”) is an imperative that challenges believers toward gratitude and worship.

Why is it important that God has made and keeps significant promises to His people? (PSG, p. 76)

CHALLENGE

As a group, recount to each other the things God has done.

Discuss ways you can proclaim His deeds among people who do not yet know Him. (PSG, p. 77)

Challenge adults to reflect on God’s faithfulness to them in the past.

What reasons do you have to give thanks to the Lord? What hinders you from giving thanks to God and praising Him? (PSG, p. 77)



SCAN ME

For Further Discussion

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week’s study.

**BIBLE SKILL (P. 76, PSG)**

Use multiple Scripture passages to understand a key biblical concept.

Psalm 105 focuses on God's covenant with His people. Study the following Bible passages and take note of the insights you gain regarding the covenants He made with His people: Genesis 17:1-8; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Luke 22:19-20; and Hebrews 9:11-15. ***What do these verses reveal about God's faithfulness?***

Group adults into four teams and give each team a sheet of paper and a pencil. Assign one of the passages from the Bible Skill activity on page 76 of the PSG to each team and direct them to record their thoughts about how their passage relates to God's covenant as described in Psalm 105:1-10, 42-45. (Note: For larger groups, more than one team can study the same passage. For smaller groups, an individual can be a team.) After a few minutes, allow each team to report. Discuss the question at the end of the activity.

OBJECT LESSON: PHOTO ALBUM

Ask: ***When was the last time you took a “selfie” to remember a special time? Is it still on your phone?*** Discuss responses and why it's important for us as humans to record special times in our lives. Highlight the importance of remembering.

Display a photo album that contains several pictures of special people, pets, vacation places, or events in your life. Talk about what kind of events we would want to remember if we took “pictures” of our relationship with God. Ask: ***Why is it important to remember special times in our spiritual lives?***

**DIG DEEPER****A PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER**

The psalmist's original recipients were a part of something so much bigger than themselves. Their faith in God did not occur in isolation. They were the descendants of Abraham and Jacob—patriarchs with whom God graciously made a relational, spiritual covenant.

God called those patriarchs to Himself, set apart their descendants, and miraculously worked on their behalf. The psalmist reminded his audience that they were the descendants of the promise, God's “chosen ones” (Ps. 105:6). Therefore, they should see the larger picture. They also were challenged to remember God's miraculous works among their ancestors.

Throughout the chapter, the psalmist recounted significant moments in Israel's history: God's covenant with Abraham and reiterating the covenant with Isaac and Jacob; God's provision in the famine through Joseph; God raising up Moses; God's work through the plagues in Egypt; God's deliverance from Egyptian slavery and His victory at the Red Sea crossing; and

God's provision of water and manna in the wilderness. In composing this psalm, the psalmist wanted the congregation to recognize that they were heirs and beneficiaries of all these great deeds that God had performed.

More than a mere sentiment, this recognition and remembrance should have compelled them to live holy lives marked by gratitude for the past, faith in the present, and hope for the future. Today, believers are still a part of something bigger than ourselves. Our faith today is no more in isolation than the people of Israel.

The Abrahamic covenant found its ultimate fulfillment in the life and work of Jesus Christ. For all who place faith in Him, the New Testament commends, “Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:1-2a).

God's Conviction

Believers should repent and confess their sins to God knowing that He will not abandon them.

Psalm 38:1-8,18-22

1 LORD, do not **punish me** ^A in your anger or discipline me in your wrath. **2** For your **arrows** ^B have sunk into me, and your hand has pressed down on me. **3** There is **no soundness** ^C in my body because of your indignation; there is no health in **my bones** ^D because of my sin. **4** For my **iniquities have flooded** ^E over my head; they are a burden too heavy for me to bear. **5** My wounds are **foul and festering** ^F because of my foolishness. **6** I am bent over and brought very low; all day long I go around in mourning. **7** For my insides are full of burning pain, and there is no soundness in my body. **8** I am **faint** ^G and severely crushed; I groan because of the anguish of my heart. (. . .)

18 So I **confess my iniquity**; ^H I am anxious because of my sin. **19** But my enemies are vigorous and powerful; many hate me for no reason. **20** Those who **repay evil for good** ^I attack me for pursuing good. **21** LORD, do not abandon me; my God, **do not be far from me**. ^J **22** Hurry to help me, my Lord, my salvation.

Exploring Key Words

- A** Suffering does not always derive from sin, but David clearly connected the two here. This was punishment and “discipline” from the Lord.
- B** The anger of God was so fierce that David felt like he had a target on his back. God’s arrows went straight into his being.
- C** “No health” (NIV). The Hebrew term can mean “safety” or “peace.” But here it suggests a physical weakness. Not all sickness is the result of sin, but David recognized the impact of God’s “indignation” on his physical well-being.
- D** Another reference to physical pain as a result of the psalmist’s sin. The poetic repetition of the idea provides emphasis to the truth.
- E** “Gone over” (ESV; KJV); “overwhelmed” (NIV). David had lost control of the situation and was “drowning” in the mess his sin had created.
- F** “Stink and are corrupt” (KJV). The combination of the Hebrew words suggest the odor caused by decay. David could not live with the putrid festering that characterized his life and separated him from God.
- G** “Feeble” (KJV; NIV; ESV). The Hebrew also can be rendered “numb.” Sin promises pleasure, but, as David discovered, it only brings pain and robs us of our vitality.
- H** David was “anxious” (“sorry,” KJV; ESV) for his sin. So, he confessed it to God. The wording conveys the idea of making an open statement that denounced his actions.
- I** His change of heart only intensified the opposition of David’s enemies. They apparently stepped up their attacks against him.
- J** Since David confessed his sin, the separation between God and himself evaporated. He could trust God to be near him and rescue him.

**Conviction** (Ps. 38:1-4)

- David was suffering from the consequences of his sin, so he called out to God in prayer.
- The guilt of his sin was a heavy burden from which he needed relief. David recognized his sinfulness.

Anguish (Ps. 38:5-8)

- Because of his sin and God's punishment, David was sorrowful and in physical distress.
- He described the depth of his suffering. He felt faint and anguished as sin robbed him of his strength and energy.

Confession (Ps. 38:18-22)

- David came clean before the Lord, recognizing that his sin was the root cause of his misery.
- Still, he had enemies to face who would attack him for no reason. David called upon the Lord, asking for His help.

Summary Statements

Believers should repent and confess their sins to God knowing that He will not abandon them.

- The Holy Spirit convicts us so that we will recognize and turn from our sin.
- We can expect conviction of sin to create a range of emotions in us, including guilt and sorrow.
- When we experience conviction, we should respond by confessing our sins to God and seeking His forgiveness.

Memory Verse

Psalm 38:21-22

Key Doctrine

God's Purpose of Grace

Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end.
(See John 5:24; Romans 8:29-30.)

ENGAGE

How difficult is it for you to ask someone for forgiveness? Does it make a difference if you know that the one you wronged loves you unconditionally? (PSG, p. 78)

- One of the most difficult things to do is asking for someone's forgiveness. To do so means we must assume responsibility for our actions. It means owning the truth and admitting to others we have done wrong.
- Also, when we have sinned against someone and ask for their forgiveness, there is no guarantee they will. We do not have to worry about this concerning God. When we repent and confess our sins to God, we can know He will forgive us.

Bonus: *How should God's forgiveness affect our willingness to forgive others?*

EXPLORE

1. CONVICTION (PS. 38:1-4)

How might God convict us of our sin? What are the benefits of the Holy Spirit's conviction? (PSG, p. 81)

- David began this psalm acknowledging his difficulties were from the Lord and the result of his own sin. The psalm never reveals what David's sin was, but God's discipline brought about a great deal of suffering to David.
- David was overcome by his sense of God's displeasure and described the Lord's discipline as arrows that sunk into him. He also felt God's hand pressing on him.
- David's sin and God's response took a heavy, physical toll on the psalmist. Not every physical problem happens as a direct result of a specific, personal sin, though our bodies are dying as a result of the fall in Genesis 3. David's admissions about his physical and spiritual condition should remind us that sin not only has devastating spiritual consequences, but it also impacts our physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Bonus: *How do you tend to respond to crises in your life? What can you learn from David's comments in these verses?*

2. ANGUISH (PS. 38:5-8)

Bonus: *What is the worst sickness or injury you have suffered? What made it so terrible?*

- David said his wounds were "foul and festering." The term "foul" means they were repulsive, giving off a repugnant odor. "Festering" suggests that they were discharging infectious fluid. This could have been literal or metaphorical; but, either way, David said his suffering was the result of his own sinful "foolishness."

- Phrases like "bent over" and "brought very low" suggest unrelenting pain that robbed David of his vitality and strength. His suffering left David in a constant state of "mourning" and sorrow.
- Even though believers are secure in their salvation, there is always loss when we sin. There may be lost opportunities to serve the Lord, lost blessings, lost peace of mind, or the loss of physical health as David described. Be sure that there are always consequences to our sin.

Why might people underestimate or dismiss the consequences of sin? (PSG, p. 83)

3. CONFESSION (PS. 38:18-22)

What obstacles might keep us from confessing our sins to God? (PSG, p. 85)

- David knew the Lord and trusted in Him. Therefore, he knew that instead of excusing his sin, ignoring his sin, or living in continued anxiety because of it, he needed to confess his sin to God, trusting that the Lord would be faithful to forgive him.
- David indicated he had a lot of enemies. They were enemies of good and of those who did what was good. So, they weren't just enemies of David, but also of God.
- David's hope was steadfastly anchored in the Lord. He knew that the Lord is faithful, so he cried out to God. He declared that God was his "salvation."

Bonus: *How much confidence do you have in God to forgive and sustain you? What practical steps would help you increase your faith in Him?*

CHALLENGE

As a group, reflect on times when God used hard times to draw individuals closer to Him.

Discuss why and how God sometimes uses difficult situations to get our attention and to remind us of His faithfulness. (PSG, p. 86)

Challenge adults to examine their lives this week and to ask God to reveal sins that need confession.

How are you experiencing the Holy Spirit's conviction? How will you respond? (PSG, p. 86)



For Further Discussion

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

**BIBLE SKILL (P. 85, PSG)**

Use a Bible dictionary to learn more about the biblical concept of salvation.

David's affirmation of God as his Savior opens the door for further study into the doctrine of salvation. In the Old Testament perspective of salvation, deliverance and victory come into view. The New Testament provides the complete picture of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ. Read the article on salvation in a Bible dictionary. ***What insights do you learn to help you to appreciate David's affirmation? In what ways can you affirm Jesus to be your salvation?***

Guide the group to work in teams of three or four to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 85 of the PSG. Provide copies of a Bible dictionary for each team. Suggest one member of the team read the article on salvation before the group answers the questions. After a few minutes, review the questions and allow time for volunteers to share their responses.

OBJECT LESSON: STONE

Distribute a small piece of gravel or stone to each person. Guide the group to reflect on what would happen if they put the stone in their shoe and began walking. Ask: ***How would it feel? Would you stop and try to remove it before moving forward?***

Explain that sin is like the gravel in our shoe. Say: *Even if it seems small, it constantly grates and causes pain.* Direct adults to read through the passages for this session and to identify the ways David experienced pain and discomfort because of his sin.

Highlight the role of confession in finding forgiveness. As time allows, walk the group through the Plan of Salvation on the inside front cover of the PSG. Let them know that you are available to speak with anyone who is struggling with sin or is thinking about God's offer of salvation through Jesus.

**DIG DEEPER****THE IMPACT OF SIN**

As humans, we tend to think of ourselves as fundamentally good people who do bad things now and then. We reduce sin down to simple mistakes. However, the Bible presents a far more comprehensive diagnosis of human sin and its effects.

One theologian has defined sin as “any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature. Sin is here defined in relation to God and his moral law.”¹ He goes on to emphasize that because of Adam and Eve's original sin in Eden, every human is born a sinner by nature.

In another Psalm, David wrote that we are actually guilty of sin at conception, so we are born into sin (Ps. 51:5). Paul said that apart from Jesus, “we were by nature children under wrath” (Eph. 2:3). The sin nature has been passed to every one of us. As a result, we are not sinners because we do sinful things. Rather, we do sinful things because we are in fact sinners. And the consequences are disastrous.

In a broad sense, sin brings devastation on the world through broken relationships, societal ills, war, death, and despair. But, more specifically, it also ransacks our lives as individuals. At a minimum, our sin nature means we feel the effects of aging and dying. More painfully, we suffer hurt and abuse from others.

Tragically, we even experience the effects of our own foolish choices. Like the psalmist, sin leaves us reeling in our minds, broken in our spirits, and hurting in our physical bodies. Although there is not always a correlation between our suffering and sin, our sinful choices bring consequences we can feel. And, like the psalmist, it robs from us all the joy of life.

Yet, the hope of the gospel is this: “just as sin entered the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned . . . how much more will those who receive the overflow of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:12,17).

1. Wayne Grudem. *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 490.

God's Forgiveness

Experiencing God's forgiveness leads to worship.

Psalm 32:1-11

1 How joyful **A** is the one whose transgression **B** is forgiven, **C** whose sin is covered! **2** How joyful is a person whom the LORD does not charge **D** with iniquity and in whose spirit is no deceit! **3** When I kept silent, **E** my bones became brittle from my groaning all day long. **4** For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was drained **F** as in the summer's heat. *Selah* **5** Then I acknowledged my sin **G** to you and did not conceal my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the guilt **H** of my sin. *Selah* **6** Therefore let everyone who is faithful pray to you immediately. When great floodwaters come, they will not reach him. **7** You are my hiding place; **I** you protect me from trouble. You surround me with joyful shouts of deliverance. *Selah* **8** I will instruct you and show you the way to go; with my eye on you, I will give counsel. **9** Do not be like a horse or mule, **J** without understanding, that must be controlled with bit and bridle or else it will not come near you. **10** Many pains come to the wicked, but the one who trusts in the LORD will have faithful love **K** surrounding him. **11** Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Exploring Key Words

- A** "Blessed" (ESV; KJV; NIV); joy and satisfaction in one's situation or circumstances. It often stems from trusting and obeying God's Word.
- B** The psalmist used four different Hebrew terms for rebellion against God in verses 1-2. They are translated as "transgression," "sin," "iniquity," and "deceit." Each highlights a different aspect of sin.
- C** Literally, "lifted up" or "carried away." It highlights God removing sin's burden. The term is the poetic parallel to "covered," which implies putting something offensive out of sight.
- D** A legal term where one is declared not liable for a crime. Therefore, the charges are dropped, and the individual escapes punishment.
- E** When the psalmist refused to confess his sins to God.
- F** This actually was an act of mercy, as God worked to get the psalmist's attention and draw him toward confession and forgiveness.
- G** In general, the Hebrew word *yada* means "to know," but it has a broad range of interpretations. Here, it relates to recognizing guilt and making a confession for it.
- H** Guilt is not a subjective feeling about sin, but a liability for punishment. When God removes the sin, He also removes the guilt (punishment).
- I** This term sometimes refers to protection from enemies. Here, however, it means deliverance from the guilt of sin.
- J** Stubbornness is ingrained in human nature. But acting like an animal that refuses to obey its master only leads to pain and frustration.
- K** In contrast to the woes of the wicked, God's people experience His covenant loyalty and love (*hesed*). This love is unconditional.



NOTES

Joy (Ps. 32:1-2)

- In this psalm, David celebrated the joy of God's forgiveness and called others to confess as he had.
- Because he confessed his sin to God and received His forgiveness, the weight of sin's burden was gone. Additionally, his sin was no longer counted against him.

Forgiveness (Ps. 32:3-5)

- Before he confessed his sin, David felt deep lament that continued day and night. God's discipline sapped his strength.
- When David confessed his sin, God forgave him.

Instruction (Ps. 32:6-11)

- David called others to seek the Lord and thereby avoid the consequences of their sin. Only God can deliver individuals from sin's guilt.
- David warned his readers that failing to humble themselves before God will result in God's chastening.
- The wicked will have many distresses, but the one who trusts the Lord will be surrounded by His love.

Summary Statements*Experiencing God's forgiveness leads to worship.*

- We can celebrate God's forgiveness knowing that He no longer counts our sins against us.
- We can turn to God when we are burdened by our sins and count on His forgiveness.
- Believers are to tell others how they can experience God's forgiveness.

Memory Verse*Psalm 32:1***Key Doctrine***God's Purpose of Grace*

Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. (See Psalm 32:1-5; 1 John 1:7-9.)

ENGAGE

Bonus: *How much do you struggle asking for forgiveness? What makes it so difficult?*

- There is nothing like the joy believers experience when they are walking in fellowship with God. In contrast, there is nothing that robs believers of joy more than living unrepentantly in sin.
- From experience, David knew what that was like. In Psalm 32, he gave testimony to what it is like to live with unconfessed sin, offered instruction on what we must do to experience the Lord's forgiveness, and described the joy that comes as a result of experiencing the restoration of our fellowship with Him.

What does guilt feel like? What does forgiveness feel like? (PSG, p. 87)

EXPLORE

1. JOY (PS. 32:1-2)

Bonus: *What are things that bring you joy? Why?*

- Verses 1-2 begin with the theme that carries the message of the entire psalm—the joy of experiencing God's forgiveness. Both verses begin with “how joyful.”
- David used four different Hebrew words denoting sin. “Transgression” means a deliberate act of rebellion, while the Hebrew word translated “sin” describes a failure to meet God's standard of holy behavior.
- Next is “iniquity,” which is often used as a summary word for all sins against God. Finally, “deceit” refers to betrayal or treachery. This offers a fairly comprehensive list of sins.
- In contrast, God offers forgiveness for sin. The word “charge” refers to keeping accounts in the financial world or being held responsible in the legal world. God frees us from our debt to sin and the punishment for our crimes.

What is the source of joy in these verses? What would it take for you to personally experience this joy? (PSG, p. 90)

2. FORGIVENESS (PS. 32:3-5)

Other than deep distress, what indicators let us know that we have sinned? (PSG, p. 91)

- David's initial refusal to confess cost him the fellowship he normally experienced with God. He soon discovered that sin is like a disease that eats away one's vitality and joy.
- The internal pain of unconfessed sin caused David to groan incessantly. His condition changed only when he confessed his sin to the Lord.
- The word “acknowledged” means that David agreed with God about his sin. Confessing sin is not informing God of it, because He already knows. Confessing sin expresses remorse over sin because it's offensive to God.

- When David confessed his sin, God immediately forgave the guilt of his sin. This was not about David's guilty feelings. It referred to his guilty standing before God, the righteous Judge. When God removed the sin, He also removed the guilt that required punishment.

Bonus: *How do people attempt to justify their sin? Based on these verses, what would David say about these attempts?*

3. INSTRUCTION (PS. 32:6-11)

Bonus: *What's the best piece of advice you've ever received? What made it so special?*

- David realized the foolishness of waiting to confess sin to God. He exhorted his readers to seek the Lord's forgiveness immediately so they wouldn't experience what he had experienced. By refusing to let unconfessed sin linger, believers can avoid His discipline.
- Usually, the psalmists use “hiding place” to describe protection from enemies (see Pss. 27:5; 31:20). Here, though, it refers to escaping the overwhelming guilt of sin. David knew that when he was hidden in God, he was hidden from the “trouble” that accompanies His discipline.
- This psalm is a “maskil,” a song of instruction. Verses 8-9 instruct believers in “the way to go.” Rather than being like a stubborn animal, they should submit to God and avoid the pain and misery that sin creates.
- In Psalms, the wicked oppose God and reject His law. They have no hope for God's help. But the one who trusts in the Lord experiences His forgiveness and has a hope that won't disappoint: God's “faithful love.”

How would you describe God's forgiveness to an unbeliever? (PSG, p. 94)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss how believers can know they are forgiven.

How can and should believers celebrate and express their joy in response to God's forgiveness? (PSG, p. 95)

Challenge adults to consider how Psalm 32:5 represented a turning point for David.

How can you turn verse 5 into a prayer? (PSG, p. 95)

For Further Discussion



Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

**BIBLE SKILL (P. 94, PSG)**

Use other Scripture to help understand a Bible passage.

An important principle of Bible study is that Scripture interprets Scripture. Comparing passages within Psalms 32 and 51 provides a fuller understanding of confession and forgiveness. Compare 32:1-2 to 51:1-2 and note the differences in the introductions to each psalm. Compare 32:3-5 to 51:3-12 and observe the different perspectives on the value of confessing sin and the joy of being forgiven. Compare 32:6-11 to 51:13-19 and identify the next steps to be taken after sin has been forgiven and a believer's relationship with God has been restored.

Direct adults to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 94 of the PSG. After they have compared the passages, allow a few volunteers to share what resonated with them. Highlight the common themes of confession and forgiveness. Give adults a few minutes to speak with God silently about an unresolved sin in their lives.

OBJECT LESSON: BEFORE/AFTER PHOTOS

Display “Before” and “After” pictures. Explain that advertisers frequently use “before and after” pictures to convince consumers that what they are selling really works. Encourage adults to suggest products that might use “before and after” photos.

Briefly discuss how Psalm 32:4-5 reflects a “before and after” experience in David’s life. Contrast his suffering before confession and the forgiveness he enjoyed after confession. Allow adults a few moments to talk with God silently about sins they might need to confess. Let them know that you will be available after the session to talk and pray with anyone who is struggling with a spiritual issue.

**DIG DEEPER****OBJECTS OF CONFESSION**

Confessing sin is an integral part of the Christian life. It requires agreeing with God that what you have thought, said, or done violates His character and His Word. More than a one-time occurrence, the New Testament teaches that regular confession is a spiritual discipline. When we do, we receive God’s forgiveness through our faith in Christ.

John noted that Jesus’s blood covers our sin. That allows us to walk in fellowship with God and others. But if we deny our sin, we are deceiving ourselves. We’re blinded to the truth, and that damages our relationship with Jesus and fellow believers (1 John 1:7-9).

In this passage, John revealed three “objects” involved in our confession. First, we must agree in our own hearts that we have sinned. It might sound strange to confess your sins to yourself, but John noted that those who deny their sins are deceiving themselves. So, we first need to acknowledge our sins in our own hearts.

We also must confess our sins to God. He is the One against whom we ultimately sin, and He has the

power to forgive. He will cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1:9).

Finally, we should confess our sins to other Christ followers. Where John implied the importance of Christian community (1:7), James stated it more directly. He wrote that confession brings healing (Jas. 5:16a).

Whether it is in your private prayer times or in an accountability group, confession is one of God’s spiritual essentials to keep us real. It also keeps us in right fellowship with Him and with others.

BONUS CONTENT**Thanksgiving Psalms**

Bible scholars label Psalm 32 a thanksgiving psalm. Find out how these reflective psalms draw believers closer to God.

God's Care

God is our good Shepherd who leads us daily.

Psalm 23:1-6

1 The **LORD** **A** is my shepherd; **B** I have what I need. **C** **2** He lets me lie down in green pastures; **D** he leads me beside quiet waters. **3** He renews my life; **E** he leads me along the right paths for his name's sake. **F** **4** Even when I go through the darkest valley, **G** I fear no danger, for you are with me; **H** your rod and your staff—they comfort me. **5** You prepare a table **I** before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; **J** my cup overflows. **6** Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD **K** as long as I live.

Exploring Key Words

- A** *Yahweh*, the covenant name of God The first word of the psalm evokes rich imagery of God's protection and provision for His people.
- B** Scripture often refers to God as a shepherd (Ps. 74:1; 80:1; Isa. 40:11). Just as a shepherd cares for his sheep, so the Lord provides for, guides, and protects His people. Israelites might speak of "our God," but "my" is much more personal.
- C** "Shall not want" (KJV; ESV); "lack nothing" (NIV). God meets every genuine need.
- D** Such pastures were seasonal in ancient Israel. During winter and spring, sheep did not roam. They could find satisfaction in one spot.
- E** "Restoreth my soul" (KJV); "restores my soul" (ESV); "refreshes my soul" (NIV). God revives the spiritual vitality of His people.
- F** While God provides for His sheep, everything He does ultimately demonstrates the glory of His character and name (Isa. 48:11).
- G** "Valley of the shadow of death" (KJV; ESV). Intense darkness that suggests evil or danger from an enemy. Shepherds protected flocks from things like bandits or wild animals.
- H** David went from talking about the Lord to talking with the Lord. Whatever the danger, he had no fear because of the Lord's presence.
- I** Seeing God as shepherd emphasizes His care. However, He also is a gracious host who provides good, even when enemies seek evil.
- J** In Jewish society, oil symbolized rejoicing (Ps. 104:15) and was a key commodity in welcoming guests (Ps. 45:7; Luke 7:46).
- K** David knew the power of dwelling with God. He would walk in God's presence for His entire life—and into eternity.



NOTES

God's Provision (Ps. 23:1-3)

- David, the psalmist and a shepherd, proclaimed the Lord to be his Shepherd. Because of this truth, his needs were met.
- The Lord led him to green pastures and still waters, renewed his life, and guided him in the right paths.

God's Protection (Ps. 23:4)

- In difficult times, the psalmist had no fear of danger thanks to the Lord's presence.
- The Lord's rod and staff also provided comfort to him. These tools were used by shepherds to defend, protect, guide, and gather sheep.

God's Care (Ps. 23:5-6)

- As a host would care for an honored guest, the Lord attended to David's needs. God's goodness and love were constantly with him, as they are with all of God's people.
- David expected to dwell in the house of the Lord for his whole life.

Summary Statements

God is our good Shepherd who leads us daily.

- Believers can rest in the fact that God knows and provides for our needs—both physical and spiritual.
- Believers are to choose faith over fear.
- Because God cares for His people, we can rely on His goodness and love.

Memory Verse

Psalms 23:1

Key Doctrine

God the Father

God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.
(See Matthew 6:9-13; 7:11.)

ENGAGE

Can you give an example from your life that illustrates the saying, “Familiarity breeds contempt”? (PSG, p. 96)

- The Roman philosopher Lucius Apuleius is credited with being the first to say, “Familiarity breeds contempt.” It means people can become so familiar with something that they begin to lose appreciation for it. They start taking it for granted.
- Few Bible passages are more recognized than Psalm 23. In one sense, this familiarity is a good thing. In another sense, such a familiarity may result in a failure to carefully examine and appreciate the gold mine that is Psalm 23.

Bonus: *When has Psalm 23 given you comfort?*

EXPLORE

1. GOD’S PROVISION (PS. 23:1-3)

How can you best position yourself to receive God’s provision? (PSG, p. 100)

- Shepherding was one of the world’s earliest occupations. Because sheep and their wool were central to the economies of every ancient Near Eastern nation, shepherds were vital to the existence of these peoples.
- David was an experienced shepherd. He was aware of the job’s all-encompassing responsibilities and the dangers that came with them. Using the metaphor of a shepherd, David declared that God was his King, Provider, and Savior.
- David joyfully sang that he lacked nothing because of the Lord’s provision. “Green pastures” pictures abundant grass in the fields where the sheep could graze and rest in the spring. This picture contrasts the barren conditions of hot summers and highlights God’s generous provision.
- Water was especially scarce in the Judean wilderness. Finding “quiet waters” provided a place where sheep could rehydrate, and the shepherd could clean their wounds.
- “Renews” means to bring something back to its original state. David was saying that the Lord restored him spiritually. The Lord led David “along right paths.” He directed David’s steps for David’s good and for His glory.

Bonus: *When has God led you to “green pastures” and “quiet waters”? How did you respond?*

2. GOD’S PROTECTION (PS. 23:4)

Bonus: *What kinds of things scare you? Why?*

- Shepherds in the Judean wilderness often needed to lead their flocks through the narrow, serpentine canyons to get their flocks to better pastures on the other side. Not only was the terrain difficult, but they also were places where robbers and wild beasts lurked in the shadows.

- David knew his Shepherd was always with him, even in the most difficult and dangerous circumstances of life. Knowledge of this truth wiped away his fears.
- David found comfort in His Shepherd’s rod and staff. The rod was used to correct, protect, and count the sheep. Shepherds used a staff to guide the flock and to rescue sheep in distress.

When have you needed God’s protection or guidance? How did He provide for you? (PSG, p. 101)

3. GOD’S CARE (PS. 23:5-6)

Bonus: *How do you need God to move in your life right now? What holds you back from asking Him?*

- Verse 5 changes the imagery from the Lord as shepherd to the Lord as host preparing a table for David. In Israel’s culture, hosts assumed full responsibility for the safety of their guests. Consequently, David’s enemies were no threat to him in God’s presence.
- The second part of verse 5 refers to the ancient custom of rubbing a guest’s head with perfumed oil as a refreshing gesture of hospitality (Luke 7:46). “My cup overflows” proclaims the Lord’s abundant blessing on David.
- David said “goodness and faithful love” would be lifelong companions for him. “Goodness” refers to that which promotes, protects, produces, and enhances life. “Faithful love” is an English translation of the Hebrew word, *hesed*. It refers to the Lord’s covenant love, loyalty, and mercy.

How have you experienced God’s goodness and love? (PSG, p. 102)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss ways the Lord has provided for, is providing for, and will provide for your needs.

What difference should God’s provision, presence, protection, and guidance make in our approach to life? (PSG, p. 103)

Challenge adults to consider how embracing God as shepherd would change their lives.

What can you do in your life to position yourself to live in faith not fear? (PSG, p. 103)



For Further Discussion

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week’s study.

**BIBLE SKILL (P. 102, PSG)**

Use other Scripture to help understand a Bible passage.

Read the following verses about God as Shepherd: Isaiah 40:11; John 10:11-15; Hebrews 13:20-21; and 1 Peter 2:21-25. ***How do these passages deepen your understanding of what it means to say “the Lord is my shepherd”?***

Encourage adults to work in pairs. Give each pair a sheet of paper and pencil and direct them to list as many characteristics of sheep as possible. After a few minutes, allow the pairs to share their lists. Record responses on the board. Talk about why sheep need a shepherd to take care of them.

Direct the pairs to work together to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 102 of the PSG. After a few minutes, review the passages in the activity and allow volunteers to share their responses to the question.

OBJECT LESSON: UMBRELLA AND PONCHO

Put on a rain poncho. Hold up an umbrella and slowly open it. Explain that an umbrella offers protection from pouring rain, but an umbrella is of little use in windy conditions. Note that the poncho offers more protection when the wind is blowing.

Share that in Psalm 23:4, God’s presence with His sheep allays fear and strengthens our faith, regardless of the circumstances. Allow adults to take a few minutes for silent prayer, thanking God for His presence and provision throughout their lives.

**DIG DEEPER****SHEPHERDS IN SCRIPTURE**

The language of shepherding permeates the Scriptures. The Bible mentions shepherds and shepherding more than two hundred times.

Readers find the first keeper of flocks in Adam’s son, Abel (Gen. 4:2). Shepherding was also the chief occupation of Israel’s patriarchs, including Abraham (12:16) and Jacob (30:31-40). Before God called him to lead Israel out of Egypt, Moses tended the flocks of his father-in-law (Ex. 3:1). He was shepherding when he encountered God at the burning bush.

As cultivation of crops increased, shepherding fell from favor, and owners assigned the daily tasks of shepherding to younger sons, hirelings, and slaves. David, who wrote Psalm 23, was one of those younger sons (1 Sam. 16:11-13).

The Hebrew word for shepherding is often translated as “feeding.” Shepherds led their sheep to pasture and water while also protecting them from wild animals. At night, they guarded their flocks in the open (Luke 2:8) and in sheepfolds (Zeph. 2:6).

In multiple Old Testament episodes, God likens Himself to a shepherd and refers to His people as His flock (see Ps. 74:1; 80:1; Isa. 40:11). Through Ezekiel, God condemned evil shepherds (human leaders) and vowed to become a good shepherd for His people (Ezek. 34).

The New Testament mentions shepherds sixteen times. Though first-century culture looked down upon them, God first announced His Son’s birth to shepherds (Luke 2:8-20). Jesus also called Himself the Good Shepherd who would die for His sheep (John 10).

In one of his parables, Jesus likened a sinner to a lost sheep that a shepherd pursued (Luke 15:1-7). After His resurrection, Jesus commissioned Peter to feed His sheep (John 21:15-19), and Paul described the church and its leaders as a flock with shepherds. The Latin word translated “pastor” means shepherd.

From beginning to end, God uses the imagery of shepherds, sheep, sheepfolds, and pastures to help us understand our utter dependency on Him for care, direction, protection, and vitality.

BONUS CONTENT***Our Good Shepherd***

Shepherds are found throughout Scripture. Learn more about this important symbol in Psalm 23.

God's Greatness

Because God has made us, He knows us personally and is with us always.

Psalm 139:1-4,7-16

1 LORD, you have **searched me** **A** and **known me**. **B** **2** You know when I sit down and when I stand up; you understand my thoughts from **far away**. **C** **3** You observe my travels and my rest; you are **aware** **D** of all my ways. **4** Before a word is on my tongue, you know all about it, LORD. (. . .)

7 Where can I go to **escape your Spirit**? **E** Where can I flee from your presence? **8** If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in **Sheol**, **F** you are there. **9** If I fly on the wings of the dawn and settle down on the **western horizon**, **G** **10** even there your hand will lead me; your right hand will hold on to me. **11** If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me, and the light around me will be night”—**12** even the darkness is not dark to you. The **night shines like the day**; **H** darkness and light are alike to you. **13** For it was you who created my **inward parts**; **I** you knit me together in my mother’s womb. **14** I will praise you because I have been **remarkably and wondrously** **J** made. Your works are wondrous, and I know this very well. **15** My bones were not hidden from you when I was made in secret, when I was formed in the depths of the earth. **16** Your eyes saw me when I was **formless**; **K** all my days were written in your book and planned before a single one of them began.

Exploring Key Words

- A** To explore or to examine. The wording implies a thorough investigation of the situation.
- B** God’s character is a common thread in this psalm. Here, David affirmed God’s omniscience. The Hebrew *yadah* is used several times and suggests complete, intimate knowledge.
- C** Even from afar, God’s presence would be close enough to pick up on our thoughts and feelings.
- D** “Acquainted” (KJV; ESV); “familiar” (NIV). Again, God is omniscient. Wherever we go and whatever we do, nothing surprises God.
- E** God’s Spirit was active in the Old Testament. While He did not reside in believers, He did represent God’s presence among His people.
- F** A poetic parallel of rising to the heights of heaven. Sheol was the place of the dead, the underworld. One would descend into Sheol.
- G** “Uttermost parts of the sea” (KJV; ESV). The Mediterranean Sea was Israel’s western horizon. While individuals could try crossing the sea to escape God (like Jonah), their efforts would be useless because God is there.
- H** God is light (1 John 1:5). Darkness cannot reside where He is. He brings the power of light to even the darkest situations.
- I** “Reins” (KJV); “inmost being” (NIV). The Hebrew refers to the kidneys; but, poetically, it referred to the deepest part of a person’s being.
- J** God does all things perfectly and never misses a detail. Our physical composition as humans should elicit praise and adoration.
- K** “Unperfect” (KJV); “unformed” (ESV; NIV). Humanity in its embryonic state. God knew us before we had the appearance of being human, which gives us particular value and worth.



NOTES

His Knowledge (Ps. 139:1-4)

- David, who wrote Psalm 139, praised God for His intimate knowledge of him—including his thoughts, actions, and ways.

His Presence (Ps. 139:7-12)

- Because God is omnipresent, the psalmist could never be hidden from God. Wherever he went, God was present.
- No distance could separate him from God or His authority. Even his sin was not hidden from God's sight.
- God's consistent presence is a comfort for those who trust Him and a terror for those who strive to escape Him.

His Power (Ps. 139:13-16)

- David declared God to be his Creator, the One who made each part of him.
- Even in his mother's womb, he was not hidden from God. The days of his life were set out by God for His purposes.

Summary Statements

Because God has made us, He knows us personally and is with us always.

- Believers can praise God for His knowledge of them.
- Believers can be comforted by God's presence.
- Believers can be encouraged that God has purposefully created them to serve Him.

Memory Verse

Psalm 139:1

Key Doctrine

Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image.
(See Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 8:3-6.)

ENGAGE

Why is it important to know your purpose in life? What happens when you don't? (PSG, p. 104)

- Anyone who has given instruction to teenagers has likely been asked some form of this question: "Why do I need to know this?" They want to know its purpose for their lives.
- Having a sense of purpose is fundamental to all human beings. The reason for this is that God made us for His purposes—that we might love, serve, and glorify Him. In Psalm 139, David expressed his amazement over this wonderful truth.

Bonus: What are some steps you can take to identify God's purpose in your life?

EXPLORE

1. HIS KNOWLEDGE (PS. 139:1-4)

Bonus: Who knows you better than anyone else? How did they get to know you so well?

- God is omniscient. But what was amazing to David was that God had "searched" him. This word indicates intention. In the Old Testament, it is used to describe the activity of spies scouting out a land or scribes examining God's law. David used figurative language to declare that the Lord's knowledge of him was comparable to a purposeful examination of a matter.
- "When I sit down and when I stand up" describes everything David did in both his public and private life. God knew his deepest desires, disappointments, concerns, and motivations. Twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, God is aware of every detail of our lives.
- Others may not fully understand what we mean when we speak, but God does. If this is true about what we are about to say, it is also certainly true about whatever we are about to do. David's declaration in verse 4 recognizes the Lord's omniscience. Nothing in the past, present, or future has ever been hidden from the eternal, all-knowing God.

What do these verses reveal about God's care for us? (PSG, p. 107)

2. HIS PRESENCE (PS. 139:7-12)

When has God's presence provided comfort or peace for you? (PSG, p. 110)

- David also focused on God's omnipresence and its effect on him. Not only does the Lord know everything about us, but He is also everywhere.
- David's questions point to a human inclination to escape God's presence, which goes all the way back to the garden of Eden. But David recognized that God's omnipresence offers comfort to those who trust Him. At the same time, it proves ominous for those rebelling against Him.

- David relied on merisms to make his point. Merisms are polar opposites used together to express totality, completeness, or the whole. For example, David said God was in "heaven" and "Sheol," which contrast height and depth. He also referred to the "dawn" and the "western horizon," which refers to east and west. God would be in each of these places to guide David with His "right hand."
- Even if David attempted to turn the light into darkness to hide from God, it would be like children putting their hands over their eyes and thinking they are hidden from those standing in front of them. Whatever our darkness is, it can't keep God from seeing us. He always has His eyes on His children—even in the darkest times of our lives.

Bonus: How do people hide from God today? How can we help them feel the comfort of His presence?

3. HIS POWER (PS. 139:13-16)

Bonus: What does it mean to be made in God's image? Why is that important to understand?

- David recognized that from his conception, God was fashioning every part of him. The language depicts intricate care and precision, such as those who made thread and then wove it into fabrics.
- "Remarkably and wondrously" means that God created us uniquely in way that should produce awe and worship. God made us in His image to glorify Him.
- From the moment we were conceived, the Lord has had His eyes on us. He has made every human life for a purpose. No one is an accident.

How can you allow God to use your gifts and abilities for His kingdom this week? (PSG, p. 111)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss how God's presence comforts you.

Why should God's intimate knowledge of us elicit praise? (PSG, p. 112)

Challenge adults to see themselves as unique, created by God for His purposes.

How should knowing that God purposely created you to serve Him impact the way you live this week? (PSG, p. 112)



For Further Discussion

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.



BIBLE SKILL (P. 111, PSG)

Use multiple Scripture passages to understand a major doctrine.

Theologians speak of God as being omnipotent (all-powerful), omnipresent (present everywhere), and omniscient (all-knowing). Read the following Bible passages to gain more insight into these aspects of God's nature. God's omnipotence: Jeremiah 32:17; Luke 1:37; Ephesians 3:20. God's omnipresence: Genesis 1:1; Luke 2:30-32; Hebrews 1:3. God's omniscience: Psalm 147:5; Matthew 6:4-8; 1 John 3:20. ***How do these Scripture passages encourage you in your walk with the Lord?***

Direct adults to number off as 1, 2, or 3. Assign the 1s to read about God's omnipotence from the Bible Skill activity on page 111 of the PSG. Instruct the 2s to study God's omnipresence, while the 3s examine God's omniscience. After a few minutes, encourage adults to respond to the question at the end of the activity.

OBJECT LESSON: "DO NOT ENTER" SIGN

Display a sign that says "Private: Do Not Enter." Allow adults to suggest places that might have such a "keep out" sign. Share that sometimes we might like to put a sign like that on our lives to keep God at arm's length.

Explain that Psalm 139 makes it clear there is nothing God doesn't know about our lives. Emphasize that He is always with us. Share that while we can keep other people away at times, God always knows our words and our actions. Discuss how God's omniscience should affect our everyday lives. Use information from "Dig Deeper" below to supplement the conversation, especially related to how people might respond to God being with us at all times.



DIG DEEPER

GOD'S PRESENCE

In addition to God's omniscience (all knowing) and omnipotence (all powerful), the psalmist David emphasized that God is omnipresent. In other words, He is in all places at all times. Or, to put it another way, no place exists where the Lord's presence cannot be found.

To prove his point, David attempted to list places where people might try to "escape" the presence of God. He exists in the heights of heaven, as well as the depths of Sheol (the place of the dead). He can be found at sunrise (the wings of dawn, v. 9), along with the sunset (the western horizon). Trying to hide in darkness does no good because God's glory provides light in every situation. His majesty illuminates every context (vv. 11-12). Wherever a human might try to hide from God, He is there.

The ever-presence of God can produce one of two responses, depending on one's relationship with the Lord in the moment. For many, His presence provides hope and encouragement. They find comfort in

knowing He is near. For them, it is a blessing to know they cannot go "too far" for God to reach them. Regardless of their mistakes and sins, they have the assurance that God is never further than a prayer away.

In contrast, others may attempt to hide from God and escape from His presence. They may be trying to cover their sins or move away from the conviction and ultimate judgment that His presence creates. Rather than peace and comfort, they experience guilt and fear. They want to get away from God. Of course, their attempts are futile, which is a main pillar of David's argument in the psalm.

Truth is, we have never known a moment in time when God did not know us and was not near us. As David noted, the Lord created us in a way that should lead us to praise and glorify Him. He has always known us (even before we were born), and He always has had a plan for us.

If we will embrace His omnipresence, we can take comfort in all His presence means.

God's Righteousness

Believers can live with hope knowing that God will always do what is right and just.

Psalm 5:1-12

1 Listen to my words, LORD; consider my **sighing**. **A** **2** Pay attention to the sound of my cry, my **King** **B** and my God, for I pray to you. **3** In the **morning**, **C** LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I plead my case to you and **watch expectantly**. **D** **4** For you are not a God who **delights in wickedness**; **E** evil cannot dwell with you. **5** The **boastful** **F** cannot stand in your sight; you hate all evildoers. **6** You destroy those who tell lies; the LORD abhors violent and treacherous people. **7** But I enter **your house** **G** by the abundance of your faithful love; I bow down toward your holy temple in reverential awe of you. **8** LORD, lead me in your righteousness because of my adversaries; make your way **straight** **H** before me. **9** For there is nothing reliable in what they say; destruction is within them; their throat is an **open grave**; **I** they flatter with their tongues. **10** Punish them, God; let them fall by their own **schemes**. **J** Drive them out because of their many crimes, for they rebel against you. **11** But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them shout for joy forever. May you shelter them, and may those who love your name boast about you. **12** For you, LORD, bless the righteous one; you surround him with **favor like a shield**. **K**

Exploring Key Words

- A** "Meditation" (KJV); "lament" (NIV). A quiet murmur, usually spoken as a complaint.
- B** David was an earthly king. However, He recognized God as the true King. He longed for God's kingdom to be established more than his own. See Matthew 6:10.
- C** The psalms encourage prayer in the morning. See Psalm 30:5; 59:16; 88:13; 92:2. Of course, the apostle Paul urged his readers to "pray constantly" (1 Thess. 5:17).
- D** David pleaded his case to God. Once he did, he rested in God for the response. This implies an active waiting, not passive watching.
- E** "Hath pleasure in wickedness" (KJV); "pleased with wickedness" (NIV). Where God resides, evil cannot stand.
- F** The Hebrew wording is related to *halal*, which means "praise" or "shine." However, David used it negatively to describe those who take pride only in themselves.
- G** David found comfort in God's presence. He did not try to enter by virtue of his own goodness. He relied on God's faithful love.
- H** A smooth path or the right direction. This stands in stark contrast to those who follow their own inclinations. See Proverbs 3:5-6.
- I** Paul used the imagery of verse 9 to describe the human condition without Christ (Rom. 3:13). On our own, we have no hope of salvation.
- J** "Counsels" (KJV; ESV); "intrigues" (NIV). Sinners make their plans, but God makes sure their schemes collapse on them.
- K** Not a good luck charm or magical talisman. However, His shield is large enough and strong enough to protect all who trust in Him.



NOTES

The Source of Righteousness (Ps. 5:1-6)

- David, the psalmist, went to the Lord in prayer to plead his case.
- He proclaimed that God never delights in evil nor can boastful men stand in His presence. The Lord detests evil.

The Benefit of Righteousness (Ps. 5:7-10)

- In contrast, David knew that he could approach God because of His great love. He could ask for the Lord's guidance to walk in righteousness.
- His adversaries had spread lies and caused destruction. He asked God to punish them for their rebellion against Him.

God's Blessing on the Righteous (Ps. 5:11-12)

- The psalmist challenged all believers to praise God forever and asked God to protect His people.
- He concluded the psalm with a declaration of confidence in God's blessing and safety for the righteous.

Summary Statements

Believers can live with hope knowing that God will always do what is right and just.

- Believers can know for certain that God is fully righteous, and His acts will always be righteous.
- The righteous enjoy God presence and depend on His guidance.
- God will bless and protect the righteous.

Memory Verse

Psalm 5:12

Key Doctrine

Man

Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. (See Romans 3:22-24; Ephesians 2:8-10.)

ENGAGE

Is it easy or difficult for you to acknowledge you need help? (PSG, p. 113)

- Waking up in the morning and contemplating the day's challenges can be overwhelming, especially when yesterday's burdens are still a reality today.
- Psalm 5 is a morning prayer David prayed when he woke up with a heavy sigh and longed for God's help as he contemplated another day of contending with his enemies. He recognized he needed God's help for that day.
- David's prayer provides encouragement to believers as they wake up to similar mornings.

Bonus: *How can starting your day with God make things better?*

EXPLORE

1. THE SOURCE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (PS. 5:1-6)

Bonus: *Who do you turn to for help or advice? Why do you consider that person reliable?*

- In the Old Testament, when something is stated twice, it expresses emphasis. When it's stated three times, it is superlative. David's prayer begins with three parallel imperatives: "listen," "consider," and "pay attention." These three rapid imperatives communicate the intensity of David's petition: his "sighing" and his "cry."
- David also used three parallel expressions to address God: "LORD," "my King," and "my God." Taken together, these titles highlight David's personal relationship with Him. David's intensity was balanced by his submission.
- "In the morning" has more significance than simply identifying when he prayed during the day. It highlights that his situation weighed so heavily on his mind that it was his first waking thought. His first step in solving his problem was to take it to the Lord.
- David grounded his request in God's character. He knew that God loves what is good and despises what is evil. God rejects the boastful and wicked, while upholding those who put their trust in Him.

What were your first thoughts this morning? How do they compare with David's first thoughts? (PSG, p. 117)

2. THE BENEFIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (PS. 5:7-10)

For what area of life do you currently need God's guidance? (PSG, p. 118)

- Instead of contrasting himself with the wicked, David focused on God's "faithful love." The Hebrew word

hesed refers to the Lord's mercy, goodness, kindness, graciousness, compassion, and loyalty to His people.

- David did nothing to deserve to enter God's "house." He was accepted because of the *hesed* God had shown him. As a result, David was bowed in awe of Him.
- Proper worship always leads to proper obedience. But David needed God to help him resist his enemies. These individuals were bent on destroying others, so David asked God to reveal their guilt and crush their evil schemes.

Bonus: *How should God's justice define the way you pray about your enemies?*

3. GOD'S BLESSING ON THE RIGHTEOUS (PS. 5:11-12)

Bonus: *What can you praise the Lord for? What is holding you back?*

- As David concluded this psalm, he exhorted everyone who loves the Lord to "rejoice," to "shout for joy," and to "boast about" Him. To love the Lord's name is to love Him, as His name represents who He is.
- David praised the Lord for His faithfulness to bless and protect those who take refuge in Him. The words "refuge," "shelter," "surround," and "shield" emphasize this idea.
- As believers experience spiritual warfare, they can trust that God is holding nothing back to protect them (Rom. 8:37). As a result, they can join David in praising the Lord.

How did David's view of the character of God affect his perspective of his circumstances? (PSG, p. 120)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss how adults can hold one another accountable for seeking God and trusting His direction.

How does being a part of a Bible study group help you to recognize and experience God's presence and guidance? (PSG, p. 121)

Challenge adults to examine the content of their prayer lives.

How can recognizing God's loving and righteous character change the way you respond to life's difficulties? How does it change the way you pray? (PSG, p. 121)



For Further Discussion

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

**BIBLE SKILL (P. 120, PSG)**

Compare an Old Testament teaching to how it is expressed in the New Testament.

In Psalm 5, David pleaded with God to help him in his time of distress. In the New Testament, we see people in distress coming to Jesus for help. Luke 8:40-56 is the account of two people who brought their troubles to Jesus. Read this passage, then consider the following questions: ***What caused their desperation? How did they turn to Jesus for help? What did Jesus do in response? What does this teach you to do with your despair? What does it teach you about Jesus's response?***

Direct adults to work in groups of two or three to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 120 of the PSG. After a few minutes, review the questions from the activity. Allow volunteers to share their responses.

OBJECT LESSON: ROPE

Display a piece of rope and enlist two volunteers to pull on opposite ends of the rope. Explain that in Psalm 5 the psalmist seems to be in a tug of war with his enemies.

Emphasize that David recognized God as the source of righteousness and sought His help in conquering his enemies. Point out that he gave us a great example of trusting God's presence and depending on His guidance.

**DIG DEEPER****GOD'S HOLINESS**

Sometimes, we may be tempted to justify our actions by thinking that God will somehow “understand” if we step out of line just once. We rationalize our behavior by defining God through our own standard of right and wrong. However, this flies in the face of biblical teaching about God and His attitude toward sin. We cannot excuse our transgressions by expecting God to respond to sin as we might.

In Psalm 5:4-6, David provided a clear picture of how God feels about sin. We serve a Master who cannot delight in wickedness. It would violate His character and nature to find any sense of pleasure in our wrongdoing. In fact, God's holiness ensures that “evil cannot dwell” (v. 4) where He resides. Just as darkness cannot exist in the presence of light, sin cannot withstand the presence of our holy God. Where our holy God is present, Satan and his works of evil must flee (Jas. 4:7).

But while sin in a general sense stands in opposition to God, individuals who practice sin also live under the judgment of God. David referred to the “boastful” (Ps. 5:5). These are individuals who arro-

gantly trust their own inclinations above the faithful direction God provides. They cannot stand in God's presence (1:4-5). Eventually, those who reject God and refuse to submit to His authority will be destroyed. That is, they will experience eternal punishment and separation from the Lord.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Just as God's holiness serves as a warning for those who turn from His paths, His purity and perfection offer tremendous hope for those who embrace Him. For his part, David found relief and refuge in God's house, His presence. He understood that following God would lead him in the proper path and allow him to avoid the pitfalls that endangered his enemies.

God's holiness demands judgment of the wicked, but it also demands blessings on those who trust Him. The former group will experience His wrath and eternal punishment, while the latter will live in security under His shield of protection and provision.

God's Presence

God's presence brings peace and comfort even in times of adversity.

Psalm 42:1-11

1 As a deer longs **A** for flowing streams, so I long for you, God. **2** I **thirst** **B** for God, the living God. When can I come and appear before God? **3** My **tears have been my food** **C** day and night, while all day long people say to me, “Where is your God?” **4** I remember this as I pour out my heart: how I walked with many, leading the **festive procession** **D** to the house of God, with joyful and thankful shouts. **5** Why, my soul, are you so **dejected?** **E** Why are you in such **turmoil?** **F** Put your **hope** **G** in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God. **6** I am deeply depressed; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and the **peaks of Hermon,** **H** from Mount Mizar. **7** **Deep calls to deep** **I** in the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your billows have swept over me. **8** The LORD will send his **faithful love** **J** by day; his song will be with me in the night—a prayer to the God of my life. **9** I will say to God, my rock, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about in sorrow because of the enemy’s oppression?” **10** My adversaries **taunt** **K** me, as if crushing my bones, while all day long they say to me, “**Where is your God?**” **L** **11** Why, my soul, are you so dejected? Why are you in such turmoil? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God.

Exploring Key Words

- A** “Pants” (ESV; NIV). An intense craving. Without water, the deer will die. So, the psalmist longs for God.
- B** The psalmist had a spiritual thirst. Connecting with God was a necessary part of his existence. He trusted in God to meet his deepest needs.
- C** In his struggles, the writer wanted no physical food. His tears were the only thing he tasted.
- D** Likely, the annual Jewish festivals: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. During these, pilgrims journeyed to Jerusalem and assembled to remember God’s great deeds.
- E** The Hebrew wording means to be bowed down or prostrate. In this case, it related to mourning.
- F** In contrast to the relative quiet of dejection, the Hebrew word here refers to an upheaval. Something was aroused or roaring.
- G** Not just wishful thinking, but a firm conviction that God can be trusted and will come through.
- H** The highest mountain in Israel. It was the source of the Jordan River and was seen as a source of life.
- I** While the psalmist longed for “water” (v. 1), the image here is a flood. He is overwhelmed, drowning in his current situation.
- J** The writer used the Hebrew word *hesed*, which underscores God’s loyalty and mercy.
- K** Open hostility. The psalmist’s enemies were attacking him verbally, which left him feeling as if his bones were being crushed.
- L** Repeated from verse 3. While enemies questioned the reality of his God, the psalmist understood that the Lord was with him. As a result, his soul had every reason to hope.



NOTES

In Times of Longing (Ps. 42:1-5)

- The psalmist, one of the sons of Korah, declared his longing to be with God.
- Amidst his tears of desperation, he was taunted by mockers who questioned God. However, he remembered past joyful journeys to the house of God and expressed words of comfort that encouraged him to place his hope in God.

In Overwhelming Times (Ps. 42:6-8)

- The psalmist continued to share his feelings of distress while remembering times of worship in Jerusalem. He compared his feelings of distress to being overwhelmed by deep waters.
- He again voiced words of encouragement, reminding himself that God directed His love to him.

In Seasons of Waiting (Ps. 42:9-11)

- In this final refrain, the psalmist wondered aloud why God was not attending to his needs. He experienced taunting from his enemies.
- The psalmist again admonished himself to put his hope in the Lord who was his Savior and God.

Summary Statements

God's presence brings peace and comfort even in times of adversity.

- Believers can seek God's comfort in times of need.
- Believers can take comfort in God's love for them.
- Believers can know that God's timing is always perfect.

Memory Verse

Psalm 42:1

Key Doctrine

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. The Holy Spirit's presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. (See John 7:37-39; Romans 8:9-11; Ephesians 1:13-14.)

ENGAGE

Where have you turned for comfort in your times of adversity? (PSG, p. 122)

- There are people today who think mature Christians never struggle with feelings of discouragement. But this is not the case. Nearly one third of the psalms are laments, cries to God from people who were discouraged and seeking God's help.
- These psalms communicate that God understands our feelings of despair. He is ready to comfort and help those who seek Him and trust Him in times of adversity.

How would you counsel a friend who is struggling with discouragement? (PSG, p. 122)

Bonus: How do you feel knowing that so many psalms deal with discouragement?

EXPLORE

1. IN TIMES OF LONGING (PS. 42:1-5)

What do you desire more than anything else? (PSG, p. 125)

- The picture the psalmist painted depicts scarcity and drought. The expression “longs for” means “to have consuming desire.” The psalmist had a desperate yearning for God. As a deer cannot survive without water, his soul could not survive apart from God.
- The psalmist had no doubt that his “living God” would meet his needs. He knew he would be fully satisfied when he returned to worship God at His temple.
- Meanwhile, the psalmist's enemies taunted him. While scholars have suggested several possible meanings of “Where is your God?,” it is most likely that they were saying God had abandoned by his servant. This would have been a stinging statement in the midst of his isolation.
- The psalmist was heartbroken as he reminisced about leading processions of God's people with joy. Yet, these memories also reminded him that he was not alone in his faith in God. This is an important lesson for every believer.
- The psalmist declared that he would hope in God. When he looked to God, he saw the One who would save him.

The psalmist talked to himself in verse 5. In light of this verse, what do you need to be saying to yourself? (PSG, p. 127)

Bonus: What “enemies” drag you down spiritually? How can you respond based on the example set by the psalmist?

2. IN OVERWHELMING TIMES (PS. 42:6-8)

Bonus: What are some things that leave us feeling like we're drowning? How can we deal with them?

- Despite his sorrow, the psalmist was determined to “remember” who God is and what He had done. The “peaks of Hermon” and “Mount Mizar” suggest he was a long way from God's house in Jerusalem—maybe 100 miles or more. But he would focus on God where he was in the moment.
- Metaphorically, the psalmist was barely able to keep his head above water. It was as if he was literally drowning in his despair. Nevertheless, he recognized God's faithful love for him at all times.
- Whenever believers have feelings of alienation and despair, they need to be reminded of truth—God sends His “faithful love by day” to protect and to provide.

To what Bible truths can you cling when you feel overwhelmed? (PSG, p. 128)

3. IN SEASONS OF WAITING (PS. 42:9-11)

Bonus: What steps can you take to remember that God has not abandoned you—and never will?

- The psalmist exhibited strong faith in God while still wrestling with intense grief and sorrow. By calling God “my rock,” he confessed that God was trustworthy and that God would protect him and strengthen him.
- The psalmist answered his enemies' taunting question by speaking truth to himself. God had not abandoned him. Although he could not see it in the moment, the psalmist knew deliverance would come. Therefore, there was no reason to feel “dejected” or to live in “such turmoil.” But there was every reason to place hope in God.

What is this psalm telling you to do when you are in the midst of a hard season? (PSG, p. 129)

CHALLENGE

As a group, identify someone who is going through a time of adversity.

How can your Bible study group minister to that person? (PSG, p. 130)

Challenge individuals to write a prayer to God based on today's passage.

How does Psalm 42 prompt you to pray? (PSG, p. 130)



For Further Discussion

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

**BIBLE SKILL (P. 129, PSG)**

Compare two similar Bible passages.

Most Bible scholars believe Psalms 42–43 originally were one composition. Compare the two psalms. *What are the similarities? What words and phrases are repeated in both? How does Psalm 43 enrich the insights offered in Psalm 42?*

Ask: *What are some things that are often compared to one another? Are those fair comparisons or not?*

Briefly discuss responses. Direct adults to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 129 of the PSG. Highlight the comparison between Psalm 42 and Psalm 43. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share what they learned from the activity. Review the questions provided and challenge the group to continue reading and reflecting on both chapters during the week ahead.

OBJECT LESSON: PICTURE OF DEATH VALLEY

Display a picture of Death Valley on your computer or from a book. Explain that Death Valley, located in California’s Mojave Desert, is the hottest, driest, and lowest National Park in the United States. Allow adults who have visited Death Valley to share their experiences. Affirm that most people would not be eager to live in such a harsh environment.

Note that in Psalm 42 we find the psalmist desperately longing for relief from his spiritual dryness. Point out that he felt like he was living in a spiritual desert—even drier and lower than Death Valley.

Guide the group to reflect on a time of personal discouragement when they could identify with the psalmist’s struggles and how they were able to overcome. Emphasize the psalmist’s faith in God. Use “Dig Deeper” below to explain the role of biblical hope in navigating spiritual dry seasons in our lives.

**DIG DEEPER****BIBLICAL HOPE**

When many people talk about “hope,” they often use it to mean something we desire or want to happen. We hope the weather is nice for a picnic, or we hope the results of a test come out in our favor. It’s related to happy thoughts and counting on the best outcome. Some might call it “wishful thinking.”

However, this is different from the way “hope” is used in the Bible. Instead of wishful thinking, biblical hope is rooted in God’s promises and God’s character. As a result, it defines an absolute conviction toward Him and His power. In short, He will always do what He says He will do. We can count on it!

In Psalm 42, the writer was struggling with a personal crisis of belief. He felt overwhelmed and disconnected from God. Internally, he was living in turmoil and wrestling with doubts. Externally, he was facing critics and opponents who only drove him deeper into despair. Wherever he turned, he had more questions than answers.

Yet, he still had the faith to ask, “Why, my soul, are you so dejected? Why are you in such turmoil?”

While his world may have felt like it was collapsing around him, the psalmist never let go of the reality of God’s existence and the promises He had made to His people. He never let his turbulent emotions drift too far from the assurance of God’s words.

In other words, the psalmist never lost sight of hope.

Just as in the psalmist’s day, it’s easy for us to let our circumstances dictate our emotions. The pressures and problems we face can become so intense that they demand our attention and tempt us to forget what we know to be true about God. During those seasons, it would be beneficial to take a step back, catch our breath, and remind ourselves that God is faithful and can be trusted in every situation we face.

Ultimately, the Lord is in control of our present and our future. Nothing can touch us without passing through His hands, and God will use everything we experience for our good and His glory. That’s the root of biblical hope. And the more we experience His work in our lives, the more we learn to trust Him and worship Him.



LEADER PACK IDEAS

These items are available in the *Explore the Bible Leader Pack* (print and digital). Visit goExploreTheBible.com to purchase the pack.

Pack Item 1: Kingdom of David and Solomon (Sessions 1-14)

- Locate a map that highlights the areas controlled by Israel during the reigns of David and Solomon.

Pack Item 2: Types of Psalms (Sessions 1-14)

- Create a poster that identifies the categories found in the book of Psalms and list the chapters that fit into each category. See page 7 of the PSG.

Pack Item 3: Key Verse: Psalm 19:14 (Session 3)

- Create a poster with the text of Psalm 19:14.

Pack Item 4: God in the Psalms (Sessions 1, 3, 4, 7, 11, 13, 14)

- Provide a list of images that describe God in Psalms and the passages where those images are found.

Pack Item 5: Key Verse: Psalm 105:1-2 (Session 8)

- Create a poster with the text of Psalm 105:1-2.

Pack Item 6: Nature of God (Session 12)

- Create a poster with three headings: Omniscient (vv. 1-4); Omnipresent (vv. 7-12); and Omnipotent (vv. 13-16). During the session, direct adults to identify ways Psalm 139 affirms these attributes of God.

Pack Item 7: Psalms Time Line (Sessions 1-14)

- Locate a study Bible with a time line of the major people and events related to the book of Psalms. Include both biblical and non-biblical historical references to provide context.

Pack Item 8: Praying Scripture in Psalms (Sessions 1-14)

- Create a handout to help adults pray through key Scriptures in the book of Psalms. Provide these prompts: session/verse, general thoughts from the passage, what the passage teaches about God, how adults will respond to what He reveals, and space for a written prayer based on the passage.

Pack Item 9: Organizing the Psalms (Sessions 1-14)

- Create a handout similar to Pack Item 2. Provide more details about the various categories so adults can study them at home.

Pack Item 10: Authors of the Psalms (Sessions 1-14)

- Create a chart that identifies the human writers who penned the various psalms, along with the psalms they wrote. The list should include David, Asaph, Solomon, Moses, the sons of Korah, Heman, and Ethan. Note that many psalms are also anonymous.

Pack Item 11: A Hymn to God's Law (Session 2)

- Use a commentary, Bible handbook, or other source to create a handout that digs into the key points related to Psalm 119, including its acrostic structure and its focus on God's Word.

Pack Item 12: God as King (Session 4)

- Use a commentary, Bible handbook, or other source to create a handout that highlights how psalmists portrayed God as the ultimate King and Ruler over all creation.

Pack Item 13: Christ in the Psalms (Sessions 4-6)

- Use a commentary, Bible handbook, or other source to create a handout that examines messianic psalms and how they pointed people to the life and ministry of Jesus centuries later.

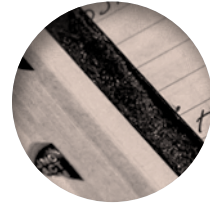
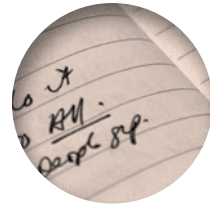
Pack Item 14: Our Forgiving God (Sessions 9-10)

- Use a commentary, Bible handbook, or other source to create a handout that focuses on how the psalmists portrayed the forgiveness of God, especially in the context of how pagan religions viewed their deities.

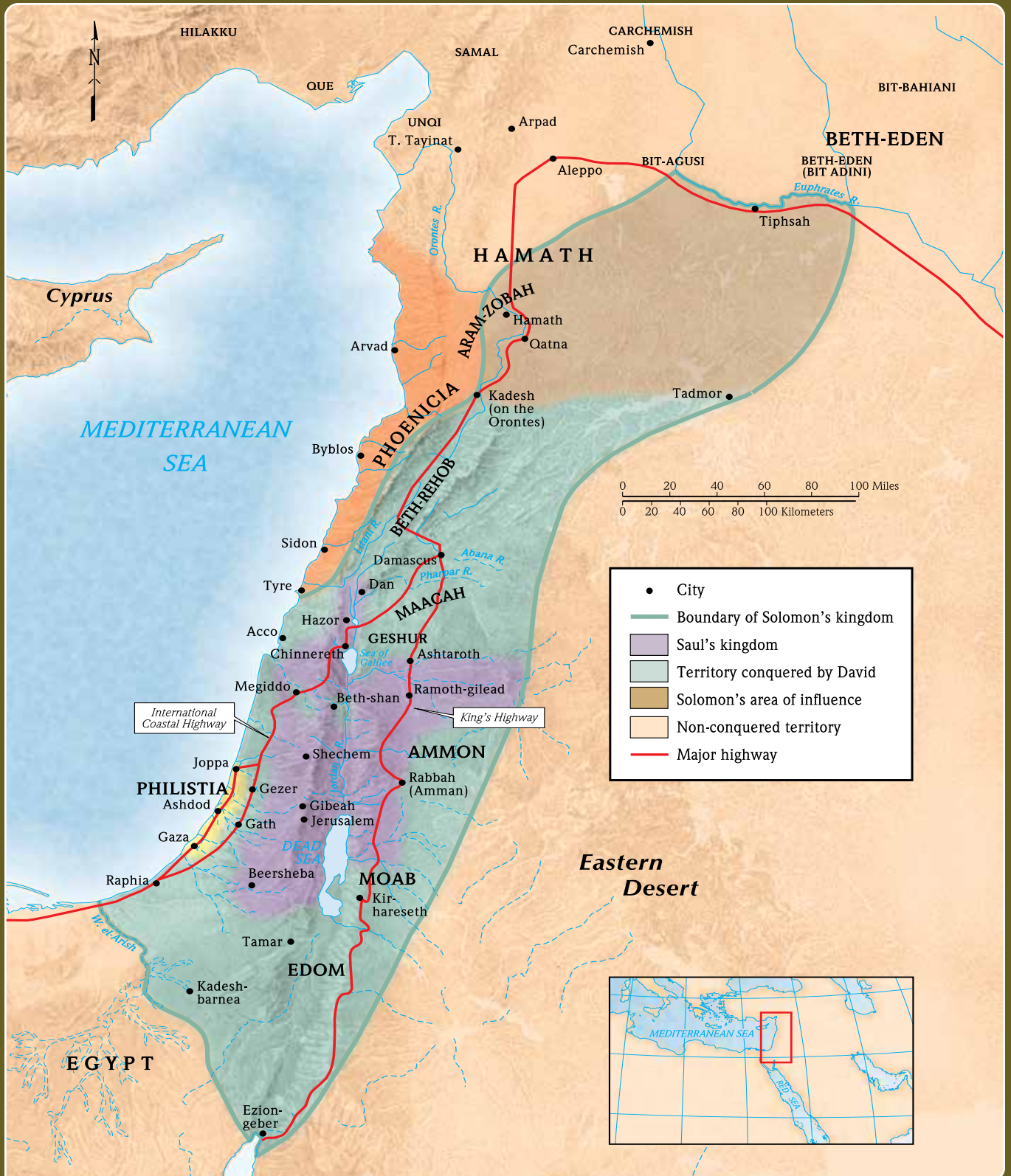
COMING **NEXT QUARTER**

NUMBERS, DEUTERONOMY

- Session 1: **The Journey** (Num. 9:15-23)
- Session 2: **Provision** (Num. 11:4-17)
- Session 3: **The Land** (Num. 13:17-31)
- Session 4: **Rebellion and Judgment** (Num. 14:11-24)
- Session 5: **Lack of Trust** (Num. 20:2-13)
- Session 6: **God's Plans** (Num. 22:22-35)
- Session 7: **Instructions Given** (Num. 33:50-56; 34:13-15)
- Session 8: **Remember** (Deut. 4:1-9,15-20)
- Session 9: **Love** (Deut. 6:1-9,20-25)
- Session 10: **Undivided Worship** (Deut. 12:1-11,29-32)
- Session 11: **Covenant Relationship** (Deut. 28:1-6,15-19)
- Session 12: **Fully Committed** (Deut. 30:11-20)
- Session 13: **God's Power** (Deut. 33:1-5,26-29)



Kingdom of David and Solomon



PSALMS

It's been said that music is the universal language of humanity. Something about songs just brings people together and challenges us to look deeper. For Christ followers, music is a vital part of our faith journey. It draws us closer to God and challenges us to become more like Him. That's why so many are captivated by the book of Psalms. This timeless songbook touches every aspect of our lives, offering wisdom, comfort, encouragement, and healing. As you study this sampling of the Psalms, let the ancient words meet you where you are. Listen as God speaks to your heart and reminds you just how much He cares about you.

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