

*Messengers
For
Christ*

*Outreach Program
Handbook 7
Psalms*

Psalms 1:1-2:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.² But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Psalms 1 & 2 are the preface or introduction to the entire Book of Psalms. The use of “blessed” in Psalms 1:1 and 2:12 form “bookends” which set it apart as a unit. The Latins called the figure *inclusio* because of the importance of the subject matter between the two (FOS; Bullinger page 245). This introduction sets three of the major themes of the Psalms.

1. The battle between good and evil for the hearts of men.
2. The importance of the Torah in directing the hearts of men into the ways of God.
3. The longing in the hearts of men for the coming Messiah.

Psalm 1 establishes the Torah as spiritual nerve center around which the community of believers was to rally. It is one of three Psalms designated as Torah Psalms (the other two being Psalm 19 and Psalm 119) although several other Psalms reference and reinforce the centrality of the law (such as Psalms 37:30-31; 40:8; 78:1, 5, 10; 94:12; 105:45). Both Psalms 1 & 2 address “meditating” albeit in entirely different ways. Psalms 1:2 speaks of the delight of the godly who meditate on the Torah day and night, while Psalms 2:1 speaks of the raging heathen who imagine (i.e. meditate on) vain things. The contrast of the ways of the righteous and the wicked which concludes Psalms 1 leads to the warning in Psalms 2:11-12. Thus warning that if one does not want to perish [‘abad] in his way [derek] (Psalms 2:12) one should not take the way [derek] of the ungodly (Psalms 1:6) which shall perish [‘abad].

Therefore, the contrast presented in Psalm 1 of the blessedness of a godly man in verses 1-3 and the doom of the ungodly in verses 4-6 is completed with crescendo in Psalm 2. The repetitions and correspondences mentioned previously are of divine design rather than coincidence.

Among the many purposes of the Psalm 1 is to distinguish between the godly and ungodly and to show the importance of delight and meditation in the law of the Lord in fostering the character and compassion that distinguishes the one from the other. This amazing Book of Psalms opens with a benediction describing the godly man both by what he does not do as well as what he does. The first verse is a negative description of what the godly does not do, and the second verse is the positive picture of what he does. Then verse three follows the literal descriptions with a simile of a tree planted by rivers of living water.

Spurgeon calls Psalm 2: “The Psalm of Messiah the Prince; for it sets forth, as in a wondrous vision, the tumult of the people against the Lord’s anointed, the determinate purpose of God to exalt his own Son, and the ultimate reign of that Son over all his enemies.” He also suggests that “this Psalm will be best understood if it be viewed as a four-fold picture. (In verses 1, 2, 3) the Nations are raging; (4 to 6) the Lord in heaven derides them; (7 to 9) the Son proclaims the decree; and (from 10 to end) advice is given to the kings to yield obedience to the Lord’s anointed. This division is not only suggested by the sense but is warranted by the poetic form of the Psalm, which naturally falls into four stanzas of three verses each.”

As the first Psalm was a contrast between the godly and ungodly, the second contrasts between the rebellion of the ungodly to God’s anointed with the exaltation of the righteous Son of God by God and those who trust and serve him with fear. In the first Psalm, we see the wicked driven away like chaff since they do not go away of their own accord. In the second we see them broken and dashed to pieces like a potter’s vessel. In the first Psalm, we beheld the righteous like a tree planted by the rivers of water and in the second we see him blessed because of His trust in the anointed one. The two Psalms are worthy of the very deepest attention as they present three of the important themes of the Psalms. Although some of the ancients joined the two into one, they are, however, two Psalms. This is attested to as Paul quotes the second Psalm when speaking to the Jews in Antioch in Pisidia in Acts 13:33. Acts 4:25 also tells us that David wrote Psalm 2, and Hebrew 1:5 and 5:5 attest to its Messianic character and its far-reaching prophetic nature.

An expectancy of God’s deliverance through the coming Messiah is interwoven through a number of Psalms, in fact, the Psalms is the Old Testament book most quoted in the New Testament. In many cases these passages find their ultimate fulfillment in Christ Jesus our Savior. – Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

Affirmations: I’m a blessed man who delights in the Word of God. I meditate on the truth.

Recommended Reading: Day 1: Psalm 1 The Way of the Righteous & Psalm 2 The Triumph of the King;
Day 51: Psalm 85 Prayer for Mercy for Israel & Psalm 86 Prayer for Deliverance

Psalms 107:15:

Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

The title of this first book of the *Kethubim*,¹ Psalms, comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew word for song, *mizmor*, which was *psalmos*. “Psalms” was the name that Luke, a gentile, used when referring to the book (Luke 20:42; Acts 1:20; 13:33 & 35). However, the Hebrew title of the book is *Tehillim* (“praises”). How fitting, since praise is another prevailing theme of the sacred poems, prayers and worship songs of which it is comprised. Psalms 33:1 exhorts us to, “Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.” More than half of the uses of *tehilla*, “praise,” in the Old Testament occur in Psalms. Indeed, of the 56 times the phrases “praise the Lord” or “praise ye the Lord” occur in the King James Version of the Old Testament, 41 are found in the Book of Psalms.

Although praise is a most appropriate, becoming thing that we believers can do, the word of God and Psalms in particular may portray praise differently from what we may think. God’s idea of “appropriate” praise and our idea of “appropriate” praise may be very different. The praise He requests is joyous and uninhibited, spoken and sung, public and private and it ought to be glorious in every respect (Psalms 66:2). It should not be unusual for it to be shouted and just plain loud! The image of the healing of the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple in Acts 3 comes to mind as he was walking and leaping and praising God.

Psalms is replete with declarations of intent and commitment to praise the Lord. Psalms 34:1 records David’s vow, “I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.” (See also Psalms 35:28; 71:6, 8, 14). It is almost immediately followed by his invitation to all of God’s people to, “Magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.” In Psalms 9:14, David’s request for mercy and deliverance from trouble was so he could show forth God’s praise.

Each of the last five Psalms (146–150) begins and ends with an exclamatory: “Praise ye the LORD!” or, in the Hebrew, “Hallelujah!” They comprise a sort of “Hallelujah Chorus,” to this “Hallel” book — the “book of praises,” as it was called by the Israelites. “Hallelujah!” occurs 22 times in the Book of Psalms which is the number of letters in the Hebrew language, and some rabbinic scholars infer from this that the very purpose of language is for God to reveal His Word so that man may respond with thanksgiving and praise to God for doing so. The Book of Psalms then closes with the great exhortation: “Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD!” (Psalms 150:6).

One of the great functions of praise is that it shifts our focus from ourselves to Him. I Peter 2:9 says God’s people should “proclaim [His] excellencies” [ESV]. When we begin to extol and exalt the Lord, our focus shifts to Him. Instead of seeing our misery we see His might. Then we can as Psalms 105:5 says, “Remember His wonders which He has done.” Praise frees us to recall the ways in which He has impacted our lives. We’re told to do so joyfully (Psalms 100:1), all throughout the entire day (Psalms 113:3), and in the presence of others (Psalms 108:3 & 111:1). When we recognize the Lord’s faithfulness and righteousness and our hearts respond with praise, our worries will dissipate as we expect God to provide.

As we delve into this wonderful Book of Praises let’s take time daily to reflect on the Lord’s mighty work in our lives. God inhabits the praises of His people (Psalms 22:3), let’s provide an atmosphere of praise and enjoy the pleasure of His company throughout our days.

1. For details on the Hebrew canon see *The Companion Bible Appendix 1* or: <https://levendwater.org/companion/append1.html>

Praise is the appropriate response to God for it redirects credit and glory from us to Him. We are to speak of how amazing God is to our friends, family, neighbors and anyone we meet. The Psalms help us to do that. Also, they keep us humble, reminding us that there is a God and we are not him. — Edward Sowden

Affirmations: God’s praise is continually on my lips. I praise the LORD for his goodness and His wonderful works on my behalf.

Recommended Reading: Day 2: Psalm 3 Confidence Facing the Enemy; Psalm 4 Thoughts in the Night & II Samuel 15:13-31; Day 52: Psalm 87 Privileges of Living in Zion & Psalm 88 Prayer in the Face of Death

Psalms 5:11:

But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

God's people throughout history have loved the Book of Psalms. This sacred collection of lyric poetry captures a vast spectrum of experiences with which we can all identify. Some Psalms lament the worst of situations while others celebrate the joy and thanksgiving of victory. They address the entire range of emotion as we are allowed to see the inner feelings of the writers whose souls are stirred by God.

The Psalms bring difficulty and hope together amid the tension of hardship and grace that is so typical in the life of every believer. The Psalms tell stories of hope and disappointment, of need and provision, of apprehension and solace and of terror and trust. People in the Psalms get angry, cry out with confusion, make foolish choices, ask for forgiveness, and grow wiser and stronger. Athanasius, an outstanding church leader in the fourth century, declared "that the Psalms have a unique place in the Bible because most of the Scripture speaks to us, while the Psalms speak for us."

Psalms teach us that God is worthy of mankind's worship and has provided the pattern for a respectful yet exuberant approach. They allow for worship with one's whole body. The psalmists clap their hands, stomp their feet, lift their arms, kneel and bow. They allow for almost any expression you may want to make including laughing, shouting, being silent, singing, playing an instrument, weeping, sighing, and many others. Perhaps more than any other book of the Bible, the Psalms speak to the joys and sorrows of life and historically believers have found great solace in praying them.

Not only are the Psalms beautiful and able to speak to our souls and bring tears to our eyes, but they challenge us. They challenge us to trust honestly and courageously in God's almighty power no matter what's going on around us. They challenge us to obediently submit to the authority of the Word of God. We see the psalmists expressing their reverence for God and bowing humbly to His will throughout the Psalter. Their commitment to trust often followed their frustration in struggling with their situations.

Almost a third of the Psalms brings some sort of complaint to God and asks Him to solve it. The psalmists looked to Him for intervention, but they did not know when it would come. God does not always take care of our problems as quickly as we might like. The songs of lament remind us that we may experience difficulties for a long time, and yet we continue to look to God to resolve the problem. Psalms encourage us to acknowledge the depth of our feelings, and to give the matter into God's hands. John Calvin called Psalms "the anatomy of all the parts of the soul" clarifying that, "There is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn. . . all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated."

One of most important things we can learn in walking with God by the spirit is how to use Scripture as he intended. All Scripture is inspired by God, but not all Scripture is appropriate for every situation or every state of the soul. There is variety in the God-breathed word that covers the full spectrum of life. Sometimes we need comfort, sometimes instruction, sometimes correction all of which God's Word supplies. Psalms better than any other book trains us in how to approach God and handle our emotions for our benefit and His glory.

Finding scripture designed to address specific challenges we face is delivering. When anxious, Psalms that point to God as my rock, refuge or shepherd strengthen me (e.g. Psalms 23:1; 27:1, 34:1, 44:1, 62:1, 142:1). When tempted, Psalms that direct me in the ways of God's righteous statutes provide the wisdom and direction I need (e.g. Psalms 1:1; 19:1, 25:1, 37:1, 119:1). When riddled with guilt, Psalms that help me hope in God's mercy and unfailing love comfort me (e.g. Psalms 32:1; 51:1, 103:1, 130:1). When elated and longing to tell God of my love and praise Him for His goodness Psalms direct me in how to honestly do so (e.g. Psalms 63:1, 84:1, 116:1, 146:1).

It has been said by church historians that in those periods of Christian history where renewal, revival, and awakening took place and the church was at its strongest, that coincidental with those periods in church history, there was a strong focus on the Psalms in the life of God's people—particularly in the worship of God's people. — R.C. Sproul

Affirmations: I love to read Psalms. I garner great strength, wisdom and solace from Psalms.

Recommended Reading: Recommended Reading: Day 3: Psalm 5 A Morning Prayer & Psalm 6 Prayer for Mercy During Trouble; Day 53: Psalm 89 God's Covenant with David

II Samuel 23:1-2:

Now these *be* the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,² The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue.

We cannot be absolutely sure who composed the Psalms. Although some Psalms have superscriptions naming individuals, not all of them do. Neither can we be sure that these superscriptions were original to the psalm itself; they may have been added later (albeit by other ancient sources). They were already in extant when the Septuagint was translated and continued in the Greek version on their way into our English Bibles. The superscriptions are not the only way to determine the composers of the Psalms. Psalm 2, which has no superscription, has David identified as its writer in Acts 4:25.

Based upon the information in the Books of Samuel and Chronicles, I agree with the majority of conservative scholars who understand the use of names in the inscriptions in the authorial sense even though they are in many instances later than the original composition of the psalm. The Hebrew phraseology used is rather ambiguous. Although generally taken to mean “belonging to” or “composed by,” it may also be understood in the sense of “concerning” or “for the use of” or “dedicated to.”

Since mankind is composed of individuals with very different and distinct temperaments, it seems logical that it would require several writers to cover the entire range of human emotion and situational predicaments that the Psalms address. Although the varied writers may have penned their Psalms upon personal experience, II Timothy 3:16 assures us that they were led by the spirit and God-breathed. The Psalms cover about a thousand-year period from the time of Moses (Psalm 90) to the return from the Babylonian captivity (Psalms 126 and 137). They are grouped into five books each of which ends with a doxology. The Psalter in its current form is a collection of instruction, prayer and praise that spanned centuries. Although David undoubtedly had his hand in early groupings (Psalms 72:20), it was most likely put into its final form by postexilic temple personnel, who completed it probably in the third century B.C..

Author	Book 1 (1-41)	Book 2 (42-72)	Book 3 (73-89)	Book 4 (90-106)	Book 5 (107-150)
Moses				Psalms 90	
David	Psalms 3-32, 34-41	Psalms 51-65, 68-71	Psalm 86	Psalms 101, 103	Psalms 108-10, 122, 124, 131, 133, 138-145
Solomon		Psalm 72			Psalm 127
Asaph		Psalm 50	Psalms 73-83		
Sons of Korah		Psalms 42-49	Psalms 84-85, 87-88		
Heman			Psalm 88		
Ethan			Psalm 89		
Anonymous	Psalms 1-2, 33	Psalms 66-67		Psalms 91-100, 102, 104-106	Psalms 107, 111-121, 123, 125-26, 128-130, 132, 134-37, 146-150

Historically, the books of Samuel portray David as a musician who skillfully played the harp (*kinnor*) (I Samuel 16:14-23), and composed Psalms like his lament over Saul and Jonathan (II Samuel 1:17-27). Samuel also records David’s song of praise “when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul” (II Samuel 22), which is essentially a duplicate of Psalm 18. The other poetic composition attributed to David in Samuel is the *Last Words of David* recorded in II Samuel 23:1-7 which is prefaced by comments calling David the sweet psalmist of Israel.

The Books of Chronicles also records David’s musical legacy. David along with the priests was noted as the founders of the musical tradition of the temple. He assigned musical duties to the Levites (II Chronicles 23:18; Ezra 3:10), directed the manufacture of musical instruments, assembled an orchestra for the temple (I Chronicles 23:5; II Chronicles 7:6; 29:26), and designated the times when the Levites were to perform certain musical duties.

In the Psalms, we have a collection of 150 prayers that were inspired originally by the Holy Ghost. If you want to know how God is pleased and honored in prayer, why not immerse yourself in the prayers that he himself has inspired? — R.C. Sproul

Affirmations: I want to be a man after God’s own heart like David was. I love to sing God’s praise!

Recommended Reading: Recommended Reading: Day 4: Psalm 7 The Prayer of a Wronged Man, Psalm 8

God’s Glory and Man’s Honor & II Samuel 16:5-9; 20:1;

Day 54: Psalm 90 Eternal God and Mortal Man & Psalm 91 The Security of the Godly

Psalm 72:18-20:

Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.¹⁹ And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.²⁰ The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

The Book of Psalms is seen by many as the most miscellaneous of the sacred books. It contains a hundred and fifty compositions, although the Hebrew and Greek versions arrive at the number differently. The Hebrew Psalms 9 and 10 are joined into the Greek Psalm 9. The Hebrew Psalms 114 and 115 are also joined as the Greek Psalm 113. Then the very next Hebrew Psalm, 116, is divided into two in the Greek numbering resulting in Greek Psalms 114 and 115. Then Hebrew Psalm 147 is also divided into the Greek Psalms numbered 146 and 147. Then both numbering systems finish with the same final three Psalms: 148, 149, and 150.

Although each Psalm is complete in itself, they vary in length, from two sentences (Psalm 117) to a hundred and seventy-six (Psalm 119), as well as in subject, style, and tone. The compilation of many authors from different ages tempts a superficial reader to regard it as a random or fortuitous collection of unconnected and incongruous materials. However, it is neither unconnected nor incongruous.

In the Hebrew Bible, as it was finally canonized, the Book of Psalms is divided into five smaller books to correspond in number with the books of the law. The Midrash (an early Jewish commentary) on Psalms 1:1 says, ‘Moses gave to the Israelites the five books of the law, and correspondingly with these David gave them the five books of the Psalms. Bullinger goes so far as to name the first book of the Psalms, the Genesis Book, the second, the Exodus Book and so on. The five divisions correspond roughly to the five books of Moses.

Book 1	Psalms 1-41	Like Genesis, this book details blessing, fall, and redemption.
Book 2	Psalms 42-72	Like Exodus, this book describes ruin, and rescue by God.
Book 3	Psalms 73-89	Like Leviticus covers God's tabernacle, this book covers God's temple.
Book 4	Psalms 90-106	Like Numbers, this book tells of God's kingdom compared to neighboring nations.
Book 5	Psalms 107-150	Deuteronomy was about God and his Word, and this book consists of praise for God and his Word.

The last psalm in each of the five books has a concluding doxology (an expression of praise). “Amen” occurs in only 4 verses in Psalms. These verses are the concluding doxologies to the first four books. The fifth doxology is Psalms 145:21. It is also a blessing but does not have an “amen.”

Psalms 41:13: [End of Book 1]

Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

Psalms 72:19: [End of Book 2]

And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.

Psalms 89:52: [End of Book 3]

Blessed be the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

Psalms 106:48: [End of Book 4]

Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

Psalms 145:21: [End of Book 5]

My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

The reason for the lack of a concluding “amen” at the end of Book 5 is because it’s followed by an epilogue known as the Hallelujah Psalms. Each of the 5 doxologies at the end of each book parallels Psalms 146-150 as the fivefold grand doxology to the entire Psalter. Just as the introduction (Psalms 1 & 2) is enveloped by the figure *inclusio* (See Day 1 lesson.) so is this conclusion. This self-contained unit is enclosed by an initial and final “Praise ye the LORD.” What an exuberant way to open and close the books of Psalms.

The form in which we find the psalter now is the same that our Lord read from and quoted while he walked the Bible lands. Paul also used the same one in Antioch when he quoted the second psalm. We also handle the same book. What an exciting thought.

The delightful study of the Psalms has yielded me boundless profit and ever-growing pleasure; common gratitude constrains me to communicate to others a portion of the benefit, with the prayer that it may induce them to search further for themselves. — Charles Spurgeon

Affirmations: God does wondrous things for me. I bless and praise His glorious name.

Recommended Reading: Day 5: Psalm 9 Praise to God for Deliverance & Psalm 10 God Hears and Acts;

Day 55: Psalm 92 Praise for the Lord’s Goodness & Psalm 93 The Majesty of the Lord

Psalms 88:1: *< A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite. >*

O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day *and* night before thee:

All ancient Hebrew manuscripts have no breaks or spaces between the Psalms. They are not separated from one another like our modern versions. The only marks of division were the numbers in the margins. The inscriptions in the Psalms were always affixed to the Psalms following them. However, when we read the Psalms that appear in Habakkuk and Isaiah we find that these independently occurring Psalms not only had superscriptions, they had subscripts, too.

In each of these independent examples (Isaiah 38:9-20, and Habakkuk 3) we find three parts to each psalm: 1. The superscription or title proper. 2. The body of the Psalm itself. 3. The subscription. In the third chapter of Habakkuk we find a psalm with both a superscription and a subscription.

1. A Superscription: “A Prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, upon *Shigionoth*” (3:1);
2. The Prayer or Psalm itself (3:2-19a);
3. The Subscription: “To the chief Musician upon *Neginoth*” (3:19b).

We find the same arrangement in Hezekiah’s Psalm of Praise and Thanksgiving for his recovery from sickness, recorded in Isaiah 38:

1. The Superscription: “The writing of Hezekiah, king of Judah, when he had been sick and was recovered of his sickness” (38:9);
2. The Psalm itself (38:10-20a);
3. The Subscription: “Therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments, all the days of our life, in the house of YHWH” (38:20b).

These two examples give us a key to these ancient inscriptions. It seems apparent that the preceding superscription was a title, and the closing subscription an amplifying instruction regarding its performance or some explanation of its content. E. W. Bullinger in his Companion Bible, following the discovery and suggestion of James Thirle, appends the phrase “to the chief musician” as a subscript to the proceeding psalm instead of a superscript to the one following it.

This clarifies two immediate difficulties. Psalm 88 as it reads in most versions except for the Companion Bible lists two composers for it: the sons of Korah and Heman. However, noting the phrase “to the chief musician” and placing it as subscript to the previous psalm we have Psalm 87 with the subscript: “A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth.” The superscript on Psalm 88 reads: “Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite.”

Psalm 9 has the superscription: “To the chief Musician upon *Muthlabben*, A Psalm of David.” Let us also recognize that this first part appears to be a subscription to Psalm 8 rather than a superscription to Psalm 9. “Upon *Muthlabben*” means “relating to the death of the one coming between.” In the ancient Jewish Targum, the inscription reads: “To praise, relating to the death of the man who went out between the two camps.” This appears to be a reference to Goliath, who is actually called the “man between the two camps or hosts” (I Samuel 17:4, 23). Our KJV misses this using the translation “champion.” Try reading Psalm 8 again now in the light of this as a subscript and see it as the celebration of David’s humility before his great God who wrought victory over Goliath.

“To the chief Musician” is in the Hebrew *lam natsach*. In the piel conjugation it means to act as overseer, superintendent, director or chief. (See its usage in I Chronicles 23:4; II Chronicles 2:2, 18; 34:12-13; Ezra 3:8-9.) It describes a formal act by which a Psalm, which may have been originally written in connection with other circumstances, was officially handed over to the *leader* or *superintendent* of the Temple worship. It denotes a new special status, which made it appropriate for temple worship. This formal act shows certification by those responsible for the oversight of temple worship. This authentication was ordered by David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Ezra and others responsible for its oversight (II Chronicles 8:14; 32:18; 29:25-30; 30:21, 36. Ezra 3:10; Nehemiah 12:24, 36, 45, 46).

Psalms are basically prayers and hymns, by their very nature they are addressed to God or express truth about God in song. — Gordon Fee

Affirmations: I sing Psalms in worship to God. The Lord fights my battles for me.

Recommended Reading: Day 6: Psalm 11 The Lord Our Refuge & Psalm 12 Good Thoughts for Bad Times; Day 56: Psalm 94 An Appeal to God to Avenge & Psalm 95 A Call to Praise the Lord

Psalms 27:1: <A Psalm of David.>

The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Hebrew poetry is characterized by the correspondence of thought patterns. This is called parallelism. It is valuable to distinguish several typical types of parallelism. Understanding even the basics about parallelism will give us a greater appreciation of the poetry in Psalms. **Synonymous parallelism** is where a thought is uttered; then, the same idea is expressed again in slightly different words (e.g. Psalms 119:105: “Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Psalms 15:1: “Who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?”) **Antithetic parallelism** is where the following thought contrasts the previous (e.g. Psalms 1:6: “For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the wicked shall perish.” Psalms 20:8: “They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen and stand upright.”) **Synthetic or Climatic parallelism** further develops a thought begun in the first line by adding a little more to enrich one’s thinking. Thus, it has a cumulative effect (e.g. Psalms 1:1: “Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” Psalms 19:7-8: “The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple. ⁸ The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes.”)

Emblematic parallelism uses images to convey the poetic meaning. It is also called comparative parallelism since it often uses a simile, metaphor or other figure of comparison. While one line conveys the main point in a direct fashion, the next line illuminates it by an image. There is a movement from point to picture, examples:

Psalms 113:5-6:

Who *is* like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high, ⁶ Who humbleth *himself* to behold *the things that are* in heaven, and in the earth!

It can also be extended, like in Psalm 23.

Psalms 23: <A Psalm of David.>

The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. ³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. ⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. ⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

These are just a few of the simplest forms of parallelism in Hebrew poetry. There are others, and the ones we have mentioned may be found together. Hebrew poetry structures thought (rather than external form like meter or rhyme) so that patterns of deliberate contrast or intentional repetition appear.

In addition to parallelism there is other figurative word-play that is poetic in nature. The figure *acrostic* identifies specific groupings of lines or words conveying ideas of order, progression, and completeness (the grandest example is Psalm 119). *Alliteration* is the consonance of sounds at the beginning of words or syllables (e.g. Psalms 122:6: Pray [לְשָׁאַל] for the peace [שָׁלֹם] of Jerusalem’). *Paronomasia* is a word play through the repetition of words of similar sound, in order to emphasize or heighten the impact of the wording (Psalms 18:7: “The earth shook (שָׁקַע, vattigash) and trembled (שָׁקָרָת, vattirash).” Or, the earth shaked and quaked. Psalms 40:3: “Many shall see it (אָנָה, yirû) and fear (אָרְאָה v’yîraû).” Or, many will peer and fear.)

When he [the psalmist] speaks a whole world of images rises from his words as they call to each other, repeating, following or clashing, with each other. He makes his point not by reasoning but by hammering; he reveals not by describing but by actually touching; he teaches not by explaining but by putting his words on our lips. — J. Gelineau

Affirmations: I use repetition to retain things in my memory. I use images to establish the truth in my mind.

Recommended Reading: Day 7: Psalm 13 The Deserter Soul & Psalm 14 The Fate of the Fool;

Day 57: Psalm 96 A Call to Worship the Lord & Psalm 97 The Lord’s Power and Dominion

Psalms 16:8: I have set the Lord always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Psalms 62:6: He [God] only *is* my rock and my salvation: *he is* my defence; I shall not be moved.

As we read above, David was unmoving because he recognized God's presence and kept his eyes on Him. David kept God at a place of priority and prominence (his right hand) and did not therefore allow himself to be shaken by the negative situations he faced. David had developed an understanding of Who God was. He knew through experience what God could do. David faced the difficulties of life (often self-inflicted) with a hope and confidence he otherwise would not have had. He declared, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." When we allow God to be our Shepherd, we will not want anything, either.

David described the reality of God's presence in his life in a unique way. In Psalms 40:3 he said, "And he hath put a new song in my mouth, *even* praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD." In Psalms 144:9, David emphatically commits himself declaring, "I will sing a new song to Thee, O God; Upon a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to Thee" (NAS). The unidentified psalmist in Psalm 33 after encouraging God's people to rejoice and praise the Lord also exhorts them to join him in singing a new song unto the Lord. Like David's in Psalm 40, this new song was sung with praises unto God.

Psalms 33:1-4:

Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: *for* praise is comely for the upright. ² Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings. ³ Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise. ⁴ For the word of the LORD *is* right; and all his works *are done* in truth.

[See also Psalms 96:1-8; 98:1-9; 144:9; 149:1-6; Isaiah 42:5-10].

For far too many, God's compassionate presence is an illusive dream not a genuine reality. It ought not be so. God wants to be involved in everyone's life. His Word is the touchstone for truth. Through it God makes Himself known. Psalms in particular reads like a diary of God's interactions with real people having real problems. It describes a faithful God answering the cries of His people.

Psalms 33:4:

For the word of the LORD *is* right; and all his works *are done* in truth.

Psalms 30:2:

O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

Psalms 31:22:

For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou hearest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee. (KJV)

Psalms 120:1 <A Song of degrees.:

In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.

No matter how depressed or manic we feel, our heavenly Father is accessible and attentive. He is always on our side, absolutely and eternally for us. Regardless of how well or poorly we judge our performance; He is with us, His Word never changing, His love never ending. Our recognition of this and our response of praise because of it, allows us to remain unmoving regardless of what is going on around us.

Let's enjoy our new song and sing forth the praise of God. Keeping Him always before us, honored at our right hand, we will not be moved. One of the main reasons we shall not be moved is because He is always moving on our behalf. He is our rock, our salvation and our defense (Psalms 62:2), so, let's enjoy and appreciate it.

The Book of Psalms lifts the veil of Old Testament narrative to reveal how God works in the inner life of His chosen people. Its themes range from praise to lament, war to peace, and from jubilation to judgment. The psalmists' pleas for God's deliverance, their impassioned cries for His vengeance, and their delight in His salvation seen and promised all illustrate what it means to be "after [God's] own heart." Psalms introduction in the A.W. Tozer Bible.

Affirmations: I have set the Lord always before me so that I shall not be moved. I sing my new song of praise unto the Lord.

Recommended Reading: Day 8: Psalm 15 The Happiness of the Holy & Psalm 16 Joy in God's Presence;
Day 58: Psalm 98 Praise to a Righteous Lord & Psalm 99 Praise to a Holy God

Psalms 119:1-3: ALEPH.

Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.² Blessed *are* they that keep his testimonies, *and that* seek him with the whole heart.³ They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.

An acrostic is a composition, usually in verse, in which the initial or final letters of the words or lines, taken in order, spell a word or phrase or follow the regular order of the alphabet. An acrostic arrangement of the letters in a text can have a significance of its own that is generally independent of the words in which they occur. The design of this particular figure is to attract our attention to the special importance of certain passages.

As early as the 1st & 2nd centuries B.C., the Jews noted that the number “22” was significant in not just being the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, but also the number of generations from Adam to Israel, the number of works of creation, and the number of books in the Jewish canon of the Bible (Josephus, the book of Jubilees 2.23). As mentioned in lesson 2, “Hallelujah!” occurs 22 times in the Book of Psalms which caused some rabbinic scholars to infer that the very purpose of language is for God to reveal His Word so that man may respond with thanksgiving and praise to God for doing so.

Although the alphabetic structure may be an aid to memory, E. W. Bullinger says in *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* that through “the use of this peculiar figure, our attention is attracted to the special importance of certain passages.” He notes 13 such passages in the scriptures and states that “whenever we meet with them, we are asked to give great attention to them, and put marked emphasis upon them.” In these poetic acrostic texts, we have consecutive units of lines, verses, or groups of verses which begin with the sequential letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This form draws our attention to these special contexts that God wants to group together and highlight.

Another suggestion is that the acrostic format is used when a thorough handling of a subject is presented. As such, it is symbolic of totality or completeness (*Basics of Biblical Hebrew*, Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, page 6.) Motyer also suggests it is “a poetic way of saying that a total coverage of the subject was being offered.”

Even today, when they try to sell us a multivitamin and they want to communicate that it has everything that we need, what do they say about it? They say it has everything from A-Zinc. That’s one way to show completeness.

The individual verses of Psalms 9-10, 25, 34, and 145 begin with words whose first letters consecutively course through the Hebrew alphabet from *aleph* to *tau*. In Psalm 37 we find the same arrangement for alternating verses, and in Psalms 111 and 112 we find the form in each line not each verse. In Psalm 119 we find the form in eight verse sections or stanzas. Each of these units or stanzas testifies to the value of the Word of God in the life of a believer or to some special effectiveness, usefulness, or benefit of the same.

So then, we find thorough praise of the qualities of God in Psalms 111 and 145, the just man in Psalm 112, the virtue of the good wife in Proverbs 31, the complete grief of a man who saw Jerusalem overthrown in Lamentations 1-4, or in the case of Psalm 119, complete devotion to and appreciation of the Word of God as the psalmist describes and praises God’s Word in an all-encompassing fashion by working through the entire alphabet in an eight-fold manner.

Psalm 119 is largely a collection of prayers and meditations on the Word of the Lord. I am amazed at its variety and profundity as it seems to be the result of deep experience, meticulous observation, and earnest meditation. In every verse the psalmist either praises some excellent quality of God’s Word, declares his love and affection for God’s Word, affirms his awareness and awe of the power of God’s Word, or expresses thanksgiving for the usefulness and efficacy of God’s Word. There is no doubt that Psalm 119 is a unique presentation that God highlights so we do not miss its special purpose and impact.

I used to read five Psalms every day — that teaches me how to get along with God. Then I read a chapter of Proverbs every day and that teaches me how to get along with my fellow man. — Billy Graham

Affirmations: I pay particular attention to acrostics. I shout “Hallelujah!” several times a day.

Recommended Reading: Day 9: Psalm 17 Deliverance from the Wicked

Day 59: Psalm 100 A Song of Praise and Joy & Psalm 101 A Perfect Heart

Psalms 90:1-2: A Prayer of Moses the man of God.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.² Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God.

Psalm 90 (identified as a prayer of Moses, the man of God) is probably the oldest of the Psalms. It contrasts the eternity of God with the transitory nature of mankind. The psalm pivots on verse 12 which is a simple prayer that finds its way to my lips rather consistently. Moses' request as the man of God was on behalf of all of God's people when he asked, "So teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom." Unless we understand and value the brevity of life and the time we have, regardless of how long or short it is, we will never gain a heart of wisdom.

Today's lesson on "Psalm 90" is day 10. We are counting off each day in the handbook and in each email because it is important to learn to number our days. This is number 10, and we have 90 remaining. I keep mentioning numbers because Moses prays in Psalms 90:12, "Teach *us* to number our days. . ." He also tells us why: "That we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom."

We are to number our days not so that we fret and worry about things, but rather that we apply our hearts unto wisdom. God wants us to gain a heart of wisdom, so we mustn't waste time. We can't afford to because time is limited. We only have 100 days in this MFC program. We focus our attention so that we get the most out of it. By now you should see more and more of the boxes in your checklist checked off. You should be getting into the groove and things should be getting simpler.

David, like Moses was aware of life's fleeting nature and prayed a similar prayer in Psalms 39.

Psalms 39:4-5:

LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it *is*; *that* I may know how frail I *am*.⁵ Behold, thou hast made my days *as* an handbreadth; and mine age *is* as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state *is* altogether vanity. Selah.

David also reminds us in Psalms 144:4 that man's "days *are* as a shadow that passeth away." The brevity of life demands that we not tolerate laziness and complacency. We mustn't be content to merely survive when there are so many opportunities to serve God and His people. Life is far too short, and our accountability for what we do with our lives is far too serious, not to make the most of our days.

In the marvelous 139th Psalm which describes the growth of the human embryo, verse 16 declares a remarkable truth. "Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in Your book and planned before a single one of them began" [Holman Christian Standard Bible]. All of our days were written in God's book even before we were born. Each day of our lives is vitally important in the plan of God. Wisdom will allow us to redeem the time. That doesn't mean to go faster, get in a hurry, or rush through each day! Nor does it require us to refuse to relax or never take a break! I agree with Charles Swindoll's observation that "I cannot recall one place in any of the four Gospels where Jesus Christ was said to have been in a hurry. . . or labored continuously, day and night, without proper refreshment or rest. After all, that wouldn't be 'making the most of your time' by any stretch of the imagination."

We have sufficient time each day to fulfill God's perfect plan. The schedule sheets are designed to help you prioritize and plan how to use your time most effectively. If at the end of the day when you go through your check list you realize you left something out, be sure to schedule it into your next day so you don't repeat the omission. You may have to say "No" to some things so you can say "Yes" to others.

When we read the Psalms, we are meant to learn things about God and about human nature and about how life is to be lived. Some poetry makes no claim to instruct the mind. The Psalms do. They are meant to be instructive about God and man and life. — John Piper

Affirmations: I number my days to apply my heart unto wisdom. I enjoy God's plan for my life.

Recommended Reading: Recommended Reading: Day 10: Psalm 18 Calling Upon God in Distress &

II Samuel 22:1-51; Day 60: Psalm 102 God's Years and Man's Days & Psalm 103 The Benefits of the Lord

Psalms 40:12-13:

For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me. ¹³ Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.

Often in life when we make a mistake, we know that we did it, how we did it and why we did it. At those times we simply confess our sin, knowing God is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. However, there are other times when things are not so clear, when our sin is not as apparent and understanding our errors is difficult. We often wonder what's going on and find ourselves confused. David did, and he asked God, "Who can understand his errors?" and pleaded with Him to, "cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Psalms 19:12). Obviously, there is some difficulty attached to this. It is not always easy to understand why or how we blow it, especially when we repeat the same behavior over and over again. This erotesis or rhetorical question is intended to get us to think. It is not designed to breed defeat and discouragement, but to spur us on to focus our attention on the matter at hand.

The ASV and the NIV use "discern" instead of "understand," and the NRS uses "detect." Both of which present the idea of trying to figure it out. The BBE uses "has full knowledge of." The New American Standard asks, "Who can detect heedless failings?" The Amplified queries, "Who can discern his lapses and errors?" It is not that our errors cannot be understood, discerned or detected, but it is going to take some effort to do so. The errors David is referring to are not easily understood. They are hard to understand.

"Error" is the Hebrew word, *shegioth*. It is only used this once in the Old Testament. The verb, from which this noun comes, *shagah*, is used 21 times. The primary emphasis in the root *shagah* is on sin done inadvertently or unintentionally. It is something perpetrated in ignorance, not willfully. Job allows for the possibility that he may have sinned unknowingly, when he asks that his miserable comforters make him aware of where he did (Job 6:24; 19:4). Again, this makes allowance for or implies unconscious or unintentional sin. It's as if Job said, "If I blew it, I'm still blowing it because I am not aware of it yet." He did not know about it, but he wanted to so he could correct it.

David, too, wants to discern and detect his errors. He wants to be clear on it. In the second part of Psalms 19:12 he asks for God's help. He is clear about the problem, and he is concerned enough to ask for help. This is something he doesn't attempt on his own; he seeks God's assistance so that he may be cleansed from secret, hidden, unconscious or unknown faults. "Cleanse" is the Hebrew, *naqah* in the piel, the intensive conjugation. It could be translated "thoroughly, meticulously, or completely cleanse." It shows an intensive cleansing. "Secret" means "hidden." From whom are these faults hidden? They are not hidden from God. They are hidden from the ones committing them. David, like we just read of Job, was imploring God to show him his secret faults. These are hidden away either out of our ignorance or our simply not wanting to deal with them.

Have you ever had a closet in your house that was so full of stuff that it was like a booby-trap? You were almost afraid to open it, not knowing what might tumble out. Our souls can get like that. They easily get cluttered with emotional stuff, the lies of the world, the hurts from the past, and other junk accumulated over the years. However, when stuff spills out, don't unthinkingly kick it back in and the shut the door as quickly as you can. Instead, deal with it. Decide if you want it in your closet, i.e. your life. If not, toss it. If you have been wrong to have kept it as long as you have, repent. Tell God you are sorry, and you no longer want to be that way. Make decisions to stop it from coming back; forgive; release the power it has had over you. If things keep coming up in life, and they shouldn't be there, deal with them. Don't keep putting them back in there.

If we really want deliverance we will act like it. If we want our souls emptied of the hurts and sorrows of the past, we must pour it out (Psalms 62:8) like we would empty a bucket of dirty water. That paints a vivid picture doesn't it? Pouring out our soul or heart is like cleaning out the cluttered closet. Some things need to be confessed and discarded. Other things like cares and worries need to be given to God in faith, believing for His Word and will to come to pass. Still others need to be discussed and talked over with the Lord and then put back in an orderly fashion.

This cry of David for help is repeated in Psalms 139:23-24 where David goes to God saying, "Search me, O

God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Then when we pray this prayer and God brings stuff up for us to deal with, we should earnestly endeavor to get it done.

Sometimes things are so deep-seated that we can suffer from them for years without actually realizing what is going on. We know something is wrong even though we cannot put our finger on it (Psalms 51:6, 10). We need to be honest and truthful with God, deep down inside. He wants His truth not only on the surface, the periphery of our lives, but He wants it at the very heart of it. Our relationship with God and His Word should not be superficial; it ought to be in depth. We need be diligent in the oversight of our lives, and God wants to help us. We must request and pursue His deliverance.

Hebrews 12:15 instructs us to look diligently “lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.” That is what happens so often. We did not even know it was there and all of a sudden, there is an explosion. What has been fermenting and brewing under the surface comes to light. Someone burns the toast and “all hell breaks loose.” If we have gotten off the ball, God can help us get back where we should be. If we do not handle things, they will spring up. Not only will they affect us, but it will negatively impact those around us also.

God knows the secrets of our hearts, even when we do not (Psalms 44:21). There is nothing hid from Him (Psalm 139). He knows our thoughts before we even think them. So often we try to present to God our nice, neat, together “spiritual side,” while we try to keep everything else from Him. Let’s get real with God! He already knows our problems; He’s just waiting for us to ask for help. David has shown us the way to cleanse our hearts of those secret, hidden faults. We cannot do it without His help. Whenever we do not know what’s going on, we can rest assured that God does. He wants to help us cleanse our ways. He offers His help. Let’s accept it and rejoice in His salvation.

The Psalms, like no other literature, lift us to a position where we can commune with God, capturing a sense of the greatness of his kingdom and a sense of what living with Him for eternity will be like. — Gordon Fee

Affirmations: God cleanses me from secret faults. God leads me in the way everlasting.

Recommended Reading: Day 11: Psalm 19 The Works and Word of God & Psalm 20 A Prayer for the King;
Day 61: Psalm 104 God the Creator of the Earth

Psalm 45:1: To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah, Maschil, A Song of loves. My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

In addition to identifying the writer, the superscriptions may note the name of the collection (like the songs of degrees in Psalms 120-134), special occasions, subject matter, musical and liturgical notations (noting instruments to be used or the tune to be played in their liturgical use in temple worship) or historical background of the occasion of its composition. It is the general consensus of biblical scholars that these titles form part of the primitive sacred text and that were somehow connected with their liturgical use in temple worship.

Shoshannim (Psalms 44 & 49) relates to the spring festivals and *gittith* (Psalms 7, 80 & 88 as subscripts) relates to the fall festivals. *Muth-Labben* (death of the champion, Psalms 8 subscript), *mahalath* (the great dancing, Psalms 7 subscript), *mahalath-leannoth* (dancing & shouting, Psalms 87 subscript), *aijeleth-shahar* (the day dawn, Psalms 22 subscript), *jonath-elem rechokim* (the dove of the distant woods, Psalms 55 subscript), *al-taschithoth* (the cry at a crisis, Psalms 56, 57, 58 & 74 subscripts) and *nehiloth* (inheritances, Psalms 4) relate to subject matter. 'Al 'alamoth, (the maiden's choir Psalms 45) *sheminith* (the men's choir, Psalms 5 & 11 subscripts) and *Jeduthun* (Jeduthun's choir, Psalms 38, 61, & 75) relate to special choirs.

The eight Hebrew words denoting different literary or musical types of Psalms are:

shir: always rendered song in Psalms (42x) suggesting poetic words intended to be sung. (Used 13x with *mizmor*).

mizmor: Occurs 57x only in Psalms always rendered psalm suggesting a poetic form intended for musical accompaniment and meditation.

miktam: used 6 times only in Psalms suggests the covering of the lips in secrecy, so "a silent private prayer" might be the best translation.

maskil: used 13x only in Psalms of presenting songs and poems in a skilled, intelligent, and artistic way for purposes of instruction.

shiggaiion: occurs only in Psalms 7 and Habakkuk 3:1 suggests that it has something to do with the ecstatic, passionate character of the poetry as being cried aloud.

tehillah: a song of praise occurs 57x 30 of which are in Psalms. It is always rendered praise (the plural form being the Hebrew title of the Book of Psalms).

tefillah: occurs 77x always rendered prayer. Used 29x in Psalms and is the general term for prayer in the Psalms.

Thirteen Psalms have superscriptions that contain historical information linking the psalm with what was transpiring in the life of David when he wrote them. The recommended reading at the bottom of each lesson will include with each of these thirteen Psalms the scripture corresponding to each of the historical superscriptions. Besides these thirteen Psalms with historical superscriptions there are also more than twenty historical or national Psalms which capture great lessons to recount and sing of from history. Psalm 105 is one such example. It commences with an anthem of praise to God for his wonderful works (vv. 1-5), and then rehearses some of them noting the covenant that Jehovah made with Abraham (vv. 6-15); the adventures of Joseph, and the sojourn of Israel in Egypt (vv. 16-24); the devastating plagues which God rained upon evil Egypt (vv. 25-38); Israel's wandering in the wilderness (vv. 39-41), and ends celebrating the conquest of Canaan (vv. 42-45). Day 46 is one such historical lesson from the life of Joseph.

The Psalms are much more than poetry. Many of them bear the title, *Maskil*, or teaching psalm. They are thus intended to instruct the mind as well as to encourage the heart. They are designed not only to reflect a mood, but to show us also how to handle that mood; how to escape from depression or how to balance exaltation with wisdom. — Ray C. Stedman

Affirmations: Psalms captures my heart and plays upon its strings. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

Recommended Reading: Day 12: Psalm 21 Splendor and Success of the King & Psalm 22 A Cry of Anguish;

Day 62: Psalm 105 The Lord Remembers His Covenant

Acts 2:34-35:

For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, ³⁵ Until I make thy foes thy footstool. [Quoted from Psalms 110:1]

The Psalms are quoted more frequently in the New Testament than any other book of the Old Testament. There are more than one hundred direct references or allusions from the Psalms in the New Testament.¹ Jesus loved the Psalms and saw himself in them. He personally described himself as the stone rejected by the builders which became the head of the corner (Psalms 118:22/Matthew 21:42); as he who comes, blessed in the name of the Lord (Psalms 118:26/Matthew 23:39.). While on the cross he personally applied to himself the cry of triumph of the persecuted psalmist (Psalms 22:1/Matthew 27:46) and with his dying breath, he quoted Psalms 31:5 from the cross, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” (Luke 23:46). When Jesus asked the Jewish leaders of his day, “How then doth David in the Spirit call him [the Messiah] Lord?” (Matthew 22:41-46) he was quoting from Psalms 110:1.

The apostles drew on the wealth of material from the Psalms that showed Jesus Christ was Messiah. In their preaching Peter and Paul used texts from Psalms to show that much of what had been written in Psalms had been fulfilled in the risen Christ (Acts 2:25-35/Psalms 16:8-11; Acts 13:33/Psalms 2:7; Ephesians 4:8/Psalms 68:18). When Peter and John returned to the assembly after having been told by the religious leaders not to preach Jesus Christ, they prayed for boldness quoting Psalms 2:1-2 and applying it as a prophecy of what had happened to Jesus Christ. Psalms speaks about the nations conspiring and the people plotting vain things, and about kings and rulers gathering together against the Lord and His anointed which the church recognized when they cried, “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together” (Acts 4:27). Even before Pentecost Peter, quoting from Psalm 69, declared, “The Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas” (Acts 1:16ff).

In addition to the direct quotations, there are numerous allusions to Psalms in the New Testament. For example, David said, “All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: ‘He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him’” (Psalms 22:7-8). Matthew, Mark and Luke record the actions of Christ’s enemies mocking him, shaking their heads at him and telling him to save himself, since he claimed to be the Son of God (Matthew 27:39-44; Mark 15:29-32; Luke 23:35-39).

One striking example of how David’s words applied to Jesus Christ is Psalms 22:18, which says, “They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.” The apostle John showed how this prophecy was fulfilled by the soldiers who divided Christ’s clothes into four parts and cast lots for his tunic (John 19:23-24). Psalm 69 is another messianic psalm. Jesus Christ himself said he was hated without a cause, “but this is to fulfill what is written in their Law, ‘They hated me without reason’” (John 15:25). This was a quote from Psalms 69:4. When one rereads this psalm in light of the events in Christ’s life, it is obvious that many other verses apply to Christ, even if not quoted in the New Testament. For example: “I endure scorn for your sake, and shame covers my face. I am a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my own mother’s sons” (Psalms 69:7-8). When Jesus evicted the money changers from the temple, saying, “How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!” (John 2:16), his disciples remembered the scripture (Psalms 69:9) where it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me” (John 2:17). Other messianic Psalms include Psalms 110 and 118. These Psalms, like many other parts of the Old Testament in which there are prophecies concerning Christ’s first coming, were used by the apostles and evangelists as they preached the gospel.

1. The “Index of Quotations” in the United States Bible Society’ 4th edition of the Greek New Testament lists over 400 from Psalms. Some authorities suggest that Isaiah rather than Psalms is the most often quoted book, but from my calculations Psalms is the one.

No one who takes the words of the Psalms on his lips and their meaning in his heart, who allows the rhythm of their images to take hold of him and their accents to echo through his being, can possibly remain indifferent to them. They may overwhelm or shock, bring peace or exaltation, but inevitably they draw us beyond ourselves; they force us to that meeting with the God without whom we cannot live and who transforms our whole life. — J. Gelineau

Affirmations: I see Jesus in the Psalms. The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want.

Recommended Reading: Day 13: Psalm 23 The Shepherd Psalm & Psalm 24 Song to the King of Glory;
Day 63: Psalm 106 God’s Mercy to Israel

Psalms 107:1-2:

O give thanks unto the LORD, for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever. ² Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so*, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

We are redeemed, and we should say so. Our bold declaration of it is a reminder of our redemption and our enemy's doom. We should talk about the greatness of God all the time. Like the psalmist, let's invite all to, "Come and hear, all ye that fear [respect] God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul" (Psalms 66:16). I love to declare the great things God has done for me. God gave me a wonderful wife. I have 6 great kids. Each one of us has experienced miraculous healings. We have had our lives touched by God in so many ways. We're peaceful; we're prosperous; we're healthy. God has opened up so many doors for us. He has allowed us to touch the lives of so many people. He's done wonders for my soul.

We work with God as fellowlaborers. He confirms the Words we speak with signs, miracles and wonders. We are life-savers. When we speak people turn from darkness unto light and from the power of Satan unto God. God gave us holy spirit so we could be effective witnesses (Acts 1:8). All we have to do is open our mouths and speak the truth in love.

The early church could not but speak the things which they had seen and heard (Acts 4:20). We, too, should do the same. God even gave them specific direction on where and to whom to speak (Acts 5:20 & 16:6-10). God can be as specific with us as He was with them. When we determine to tell our story, He can direct us to the people and the places where we should go. When we get there, what do we do? We speak with a purpose.

God is opening doors of utterance for us to speak, and there are hungry and needy people everywhere. Jesus Christ directed his followers to preach the gospel promising that signs and wonders would follow them as they did (Mark 16:15-20). So, opportunities must be provided, and we take advantage of them. Paul prepared himself and was ready when the opportunities arose (Romans 1:15-16). Paul was ready and willing to preach the gospel because he understood the "good news" and knew what it had done for him and what it would do for "every one that believeth." The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, wholeness, in every category of life. Peter also encouraged us to be ready to speak.

I Peter 3:15: But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

We are different from most of the world because we have hope. The power of God has changed us. Right in the middle of the context on the hope in II Corinthians 4:13, Paul quoting Psalms 116:10 says, "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." We speak because we believe this Word of God is true.

Matthew 12:34 says, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." If we put an "abundance" of the Word in our hearts, we will inevitably bubble up all over people with it. That's part of the preparation. Then, we reach out with the truth of God's Word being dynamic witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. We share what we know from God's Word and what God has done for us. We have earned the right to tell our story like no one else can.

Haggai had the opportunity to announce God's Word to God's people saying, "From this day on, I will bless you" (Haggai 2:19 ESV, NAS, NIV). What great expectation that must have built within their hearts. Their futuristic hope became a present-tense reality. We, too, rest in our expectation. There is a day of deliverance for every one of us, a day when God rends the heavens and intervenes on our behalf. What a change in our lives and attitudes when we expect that day is *today*!

Only the Word of the Lord can provide a solid basis for our "today-is-the-day!" expectation. We do our best to be optimistic and enthusiastic and maintain positive mental attitudes. We repeat helpful clichés and success slogans and control what comes out of our mouths with confession of the Word all of which can be helpful.

However, there is nothing quite like receiving a personal word directly from the Lord to us. Whether it comes by a revelation, sign or vision or another believer speaking into our situation, if we are otherwise minded, God will reveal whatever it is we need unto us (Philippians 3:15).

When Haggai delivered God's message to His people saying, "From this day forward, I will bless you!" it did not guarantee that they would never again have a problem. They could take solace that any problem would be followed by blessing. His prophecy not only provided for immediate deliverance that day, it also enhanced hope for everyday to follow. "From this day on" indicates that this was not a "one-time" blessing. They expected a whole new way of life for the rest of their lives. So should we! So, let's say so.

The Book of Psalms is a collection of sacred poems that record the inspired responses of the pious to the full gamut of human experiences, relating them to the variegated character and working of God within the context of His covenant relationship with His people. — Jim Van Dine

Affirmations: I am redeemed and I say so! I am ready to speak for God and expect doors of utterance.

Recommended Reading: Day 14: Psalm 25 Prayer for Guidance and Protection & Psalm 26 The Basis of Judgment; Day 64: Psalm 107 The Lord's Goodness to Men

Psalms 108:1-2: *< A Song or Psalm of David. >*

O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. ² Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.

Most people today know someone with an addiction of some sort. Alcoholics can't stop drinking. Drugs, both legal and illegal, are abused. Smokers crave nicotine constantly. Sugar and chocolate are also indulged to one's hurt.

Almost everyone seems to have a dependency of some kind. Materialistic people are dependent upon money for their happiness. Egocentric performing artists must have a continual supply of adulation and applause from their adoring fans. Authority figures are driven by a consuming hunger for power. Perverts have an insatiable appetite for "kinky" sex.

The thing about addictions is that they cause one to try to "get a fix." "A fix" is how the addict usually deals with his dependency. But, the "fix" doesn't last long, and the craving keeps the addict continually in the position of needing another.

We Christians are dependent also. The difference is we depend upon God and our Lord Jesus Christ. However, this is not a mark of weakness; it is a mark of intelligence. Our reliance is upon the only absolutely dependable thing in the universe, and our heart is "fixed," because we trust in Him. The person who trusts in God is never really afraid because his heart is "fixed" on the Lord.

Psalms 112:1 & 7:

Praise ye the Lord. Blessed *is* the man *that* feareth the Lord, *that* delighteth greatly in his commandments. . . . ⁷ He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed [*kun*], trusting in the Lord.

When the psalmist said his heart was fixed, he meant it was prepared, it was set in order. Like Ezra's heart in Ezra 7:10. To "fix" one's heart, one has to get it in order, get it right. We establish our hearts before God by establishing godly habit patterns. It doesn't have to take a long time. (100 days is more than enough when we are diligent and faithful.). When God is involved things often happen suddenly.

In I Corinthians 16:15 Paul praises the house of Stephanas, the firstfruits of Achaia, saying, "They have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." The household of Stephanas had so disciplined their lives with pureness of heart and singleness of mind that service to God had become a natural outgrowth of their passion for the truth.

Nowadays, the word "addicted" doesn't carry a positive connotation, but the service of the house of Stephanas was an addiction in the good sense. "Addicted" is the Greek word, *tassō*, meaning "to put in order, to arrange, and to assign a place." They had so arranged their lives as to make the ministry of the saints their priority. They didn't let things come above it. They loved it so much, they wouldn't think of stopping. If they wanted to stop, it would be difficult. Like Jeremiah, as recorded in Jeremiah 20:9, it was a fire in their bones, and they couldn't help but speak the Word. Sounds like they would have made good *Messengers For Christ*.

Jeremiah 20:9:

Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But *his word* was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not *stay*.

He never lost his freewill, but he had so hidden the Word in his heart that it issued in his life even when he was discouraged and tricked into thinking he did not want to speak for God anymore. When our hearts are fixed our cravings are only satisfied by obedience and praise.

Psalms 57:7:

My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.

We use our obedience and praise to get our hearts fixed (stayed or prepared) on the things of God by repetition and enthusiasm. When we make a habit of delighting in God's Word, we will have a heart that's fixed! We can make it through any disaster because we made up our minds to trust in the Lord before the disaster ever happens. Let's get our hearts fixed!

The Psalms weave an emotional fabric for the human soul. These inspired lyrics take us by the hand and train us in proper emotion. They lead us to emotional maturity. — Kevin Swanson

Affirmations: I fix my heart on the things of God. I have prepared my heart and I trust God.

Recommended Reading: Day 15: Psalm 27 David's Song of Confidence & Psalm 28 A Prayer for Help;

Day 65: Psalm 108 A Song of Confidence in God

Psalms 94:12-13a:

Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law; ¹³ That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity

There is a blessedness associated with those God teaches and a benefit of rest. That's one of the reasons the psalmist declares his great longing for God's Word. In Psalm 119 he affirms: "My soul breaketh for the longing *that it hath* unto thy judgments at all times" (v. 20). ". . . I have longed after thy precepts. . ." (v. 40). "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! *yea, sweeter* than honey to my mouth!" (v. 103). "I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments" (v. 131). Jesus said that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. In Psalms we see that promised being fulfilled time after time.

In the King James Version "teach me" occurs fifteen times, and all but one of them are in Psalms. The only one that isn't is in Job 6:24. Job is the first to make the request, but he wasn't speaking to God. He was speaking to the miserable comforters saying, "If you're so smart teach me something." The other fourteen are all in Psalms with nine of those fourteen in Psalm 119. The other five are in Psalms of David who pleads for the Lord's instruction.

Psalms 25:4-5:

Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. ⁵ Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou *art* the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

Psalms 27:11: Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

Psalms 86:11: Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.

Psalms 143:10:

Teach me to do thy will; for thou *art* my God: thy spirit *is* good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

In Psalms 119, this heartfelt request of "teach me" often follows an expression of God's greatness. It is as if after graciously expressing how magnificent God is, he requests further instruction that will take him even deeper into how important this awareness is to his life.

Psalms 119:12:

Blessed *art* thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes. [Then I'll know more about how blessed you really are.]

Psalms 119:64:

The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes. [Then I'll understand your mercy to an even greater extent.]

Psalms 119:68:

Thou *art* good, and doest good, teach me thy statutes. [Then I'll know you are better than I ever thought.]

How's that for an accurate Biblical picture of how God is. Do you see the fervor that the "O LORD" adds to the first two requests? There is indeed a longing to be taught. This same request "teach me" follows the psalmist's declaration of his own ways. Again, it is as if after graciously expressing or confessing what he has done, he requests further instruction that will take him even deeper into how important the lesson has been.

Psalms 119:26:

I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes. [Then I'll get even better at it.]

Psalms 119:108:

Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments. [Then I will have even more reason to offer you praise and worship.]

He also commits himself to action that flows from this request.

Psalms 119:33:

Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it *unto* the end.

That's the proper heart; that's why we want to learn—so we can do it. He acknowledges what he has learned from God's Word as reason for his request.

Psalms 119:66: Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.

Psalms 119:124: Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.

Psalms 119:135: Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes.

The psalmist also acknowledges the responsibility that comes from this request. For, once we know the Word, we're responsible to do it.

Psalms 119:102: I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.

Note what the psalmist says about his interaction with the Bible. As he read it, he realized that God was teaching him. He heard the voice of God in the pages of the Bible! What a tremendous truth! We can be personally taught by God as we read His Word. Would you like God to speak to you? He has! He does! He absolutely will continue to! When we come to the Bible reverently, humbly, with open hearts, God speaks directly to us. Psalms is specifically designed for that kind of personal instruction.

The frequent repetitions of “Teach me!” in Psalms are not frivolous. They are composed from two different Hebrew words but the fourteen uses are always in the imperative mood. The psalmists knowing the Lord’s desire to teach and having the meekness to do as the Lord directs intentionally demands the Lord perform His promise. The cry of, “Teach me!” proceeded from a sound heart and a zealous affection. Indeed, the repeated cry addresses not only his desire to obtain it, but also the necessity which he acknowledges it to be. Those blessed with the most instruction are often those seeking for even more.

Perhaps more than any other book of the Bible, the Psalms speak to the joys and sorrows of life. And if there is a single theme running through the Psalms, it surely is that God will satisfy the longing of those who thirst for Him. — C. Donald Cole

Affirmations: I cry “Teach me!” from a sound heart with zealous affection. I long for God’s Word.

Recommended Reading: Day 16: Psalm 29 The Lord of the Thunderstorm & Psalm 30 The Lord My Helper;
Day 64: Psalm 109 A Cry to God for Help

Psalms 32:4-6: For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. ⁵ I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. ⁶ For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

Selah is an enigmatic word used always in Psalms. It occurs 71 times in the Book of Psalms and 3 times in the model Psalm — “the Prayer of Habakkuk” found in Habakkuk 3. Since that is the case most interpreters connect it somehow with music. Some regard it as being derived from (*salah*) to pause, and take it to mean that the singing is to pause while the instruments play an interlude, and others consider it derived from (*salal*) to lift up or exalt suggesting that it means that the voices are to be lifted up, while the instruments are subdued.

Since Romans 15:4 tells us that Psalms was written “for our learning” and II Timothy 3:16 tells us it is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction which are instruction in righteousness, why should we assume to limit the meaning of *selah* to musical performance. Since all other words are associated with the subject-matter not with music. Why should *selah* be any different.

If it means to pause, why should it not refer to our minds and thoughts directing us to pause and reflect on what is “written for our learning?” If it means to lift up, why should it not refer to the lifting up of our hearts? Why should we not lift up our thoughts and attention and look up to God, Who is communicating His will to us with these words.

Instead of relying on the guesswork of its etymology, let’s investigate the uses to see how the God-breathed word defines it. The way it is used will elucidate the meaning of the word. It occurs in only 39 out of the 150 Psalms, and in 31 of these 39 “to the chief musician” is found in the subscription. In 16 of these 39 Psalms, *selah* occurs once. In 15 of them it occurs twice. In 7 Psalms it occurs three times, and in one Psalm it occurs four times.

The question is whether it belongs to what follows it, or to what precedes it. It is true there are four Psalms where *selah* does occur at the close of a Psalm. But is it accurately placed there or should it rather be in the superscription of the following psalm (which would be the reverse of what we found to be the case with “to the chief musician.”) However, in the model psalm in Habakkuk 3 it occurs right in the middle of a verse twice (Habakkuk 3:3 & 9). This also happens in (Psalms 55:19 & 57:3). But since verse divisions were added to the text later, they are really devoid of authority when it comes to rightly dividing the scriptures. (Although the dividing of the Hebrew Text into verses by the Massorites happened much earlier than the New Testament scriptures.)

Selah is best understood as not coming before or after that to which it directs our attention, but rather right in the middle of it connecting the end of one subject with the beginning of another. *Selah* challenges us to pause to consider some wonderful inter-relation between them. Sometimes it marks an expansion of what has been said or a contrast to what has been said or to give an explanation of it or to call our attention to the latter, as being the cause or the effect of the former, or the reason or consequence of it. In every case, it bids us to look back at what has been said and mark its connection with what follows. Many consider “*selah*” as being an exhortation to “consider these words” or “think on these things.” Years ago, when I was only a boy, I heard a preacher say that “*selah*” was instruction to “stop and think about it.” Bullinger goes even further to refine the contemplation suggesting that it means, “That being so, note well what follows.”

The one point to be borne in mind is that it is neither the beginning nor the end of one paragraph; but it is the connecting-link of two thoughts, statements, or subjects. When *selah* comes at the end of a psalm, it is the connecting link between the two Psalms, either as a whole, or as connecting the end of one with the beginning of another. A good example of this is its use between Psalms 3 & 4. Both of which were Psalms of David relating to when David fled from Absalom. The first being a morning prayer and the later an evening prayer. (A careful study of the 74 passages will show how far they bear this conclusion out. You can find it in E.W. Bullinger’s “The Chief Musician,” pages 108-208.)

There is arguably no collection of poetry in the history of the world that has impacted as many people as deeply and profoundly as the Psalms. — Billy Kangas

Affirmations: I love reading God’s Word. I follow God’s instruction and consider things as He directs.

Recommended Reading: Day 17: Psalm 31 My Times Are in Thy Hand & Psalm 32 A Prayer during Distress;

Day 67: Psalm 110 The Prosperity of the Righteous & Psalm 111 The Lord’s Wonderful Works

Psalms 33:1-3:

Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: *for* praise is comely for the upright.² Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings.³ Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.

Psalm 33 begins with a call to worship exhorting the righteous to assemble in celebration. What a more apt description of praise can there be than to rejoice in the Lord. The assembly is encouraged to express their joy with various instruments and songs. Any and every instrument can be an instrument of joy in the hands of the joyful. God deserves the best praise we can offer, and it is fitting, becoming and appropriate for us to do so.

Psalms 33:4-9:

For the word of the LORD *is* right; and all his works *are done* in truth.⁵ He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.⁶ By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.⁷ He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.⁸ Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.⁹

For he spake, and it was *done*; he commanded, and it stood fast.

The word of the LORD provides reason for our praise declaring the excellence of His character and the majesty of His works. This psalm encourages us to remember how God's spoken Word in the past wrought miracles. That remembrance should evoke praise and awe as we marvel at His wonderful works. Remembering what He has done in the past fosters us to trust him in the present and the future.

Psalms 33:10–12:

The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.¹¹ The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.¹² Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD; *and* the people *whom* he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

Verses 10-12 shift from the past to the present. The council of the Lord in the present assures us of His blessing. We have been chosen, and therefore we will be provided for.

Psalms 33:13–17:

The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.¹⁴ From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.¹⁵ He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.¹⁶ There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.¹⁷ An horse *is* a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver *any* by his great strength.

Verses 13-17 shift the focus to individuals in the present. It speaks of God's omniscience. God has formed every heart and can see inside each of us. God not only sees our hearts; he sees our actions. God is concerned with our concerns. Acknowledging God's awareness of everything going on in our lives should be a great source of comfort.

Psalms 33:18–22:

Behold, the eye of the LORD *is* upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;¹⁹ To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.²⁰ Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he *is* our help and our shield.²¹ For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.²² Let thy mercy, O

LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

Verses 18-21 shift to the future. God's watchfulness over our lives brings us joy and helps us live for God. Most things in which people place their hope are unreliable. Even the things that people usually look to for security are an illusion. However, our hope for God's exercise of His mighty power in our lives is linked to His unfailing loving-kindness. We have entered into a relationship with God. God will do everything He has promised to do in our lives, and He has the power to do it. The psalm then concludes with a short request in verse 22.

Psalm 33 encourages us to rejoice in our relationship with God. By remembering God's voice from the past, looking for his plan and watchfulness in the present, and anticipating his power in the future, lasting joy can be found. In every situation, we can be assured that God is good and working on our behalf. No wonder praise is comely.

The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God which made David dance.
— C.S. Lewis

Affirmations: I rejoice in the Lord. I pray for God's mercy and lovingkindness as I wait on Him.

Recommended Reading: Day 18: Psalm 33 The Lord Provides and Delivers;

Day 68: Psalm 112 The Prosperity of the Righteous & Psalm 113 A Hymn of Praise to God

Psalms 34:1-5: A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. ² My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. ³ O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. ⁴ I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. ⁵ They looked unto him, and were lightened [NIV & NAS have radiant]: and their faces were not ashamed.

In Psalm 34 David rejoices in God's great deliverance. He makes a statement of truth in Psalms 34:5 whose simplicity continues to elude people today. When people look to God they are radiant. When they look anywhere else, they will be disappointed. Setting our affection on God and the things of God will make a difference in our lives. The result of looking unto God is radiance. It's a countenance that reflects the glory of God to a needy world. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. Any light that we have comes from Him. This is the secret of peace and happiness and of real progress in Christian living. No matter how much we look at ourselves. . . . No matter how much we look at others. . . . Those efforts only defeat and frustrate. They never enable us to live the abundant life that Jesus Christ came to make available.

Psalms 34:4 tells us David sought the Lord. For the most part people do not do that. Instead, they seek what the Lord can do for them. They seek the blessing rather than seek the Blessing, the One who has blessed them. They are in it for what they can get and go after it with "full speed ahead!" Problems arise, however, when they get the things they sought, because they do not provide the satisfaction, meaning, or contentment that was anticipated. Only a relationship with the Blessing can fulfill the longing in our hearts. Then the things He gives mean so much more to us because we know the love with which He gave them.

Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Since this is true, we are blessed. Then we need not seek the blessing; we need to seek Him, Who is the Blessing. We seek Him in love and gratitude for all He has done for us. Only knowing Him as a loving heavenly Father will ever fill our soul's most sincere desires.

How do we look unto a God Who is invisible? We look at him in the scriptures and in the face of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 12:2a directs us to look unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith. So, the Christian believer has to quit looking at himself and look at Christ! We have to look at what the scriptures teach us that we are in Christ Jesus. That is the secret to living. To quit looking at ourselves and to look at God Who shed abroad in our hearts His presence and power by the holy spirit. We can also look unto Jesus, for as he said in John 14:9, "He who has seen me has seen the Father."

Hebrews 12:2a in the New English Bible reads, "Our eyes fixed on Jesus on whom faith depends from start to finish." The Greek word for "looking" is *aphoraō*. It is a compound word made up of *apo*, "away from" and *horaō*, to perceive with the eyes, used of bodily sight. Bullinger translates it "to look away from one thing so as to see another." Bauer's lexicon says it means "to fix one's eyes trustingly on someone." A good translation of Hebrews 12:2 would be, "Looking away from all else unto Jesus. . . ."

We look to Jesus because he is the author, the *archēgos*. He is the founder, the originator, the leader, the one who breaks the ground and sets the standard. Thayer says *archēgos* means the one who takes the lead in anything and thus affords an example. Jesus stands at the head to lead. As dearly beloved children of God, let's play follow the leader with him. He has blazed the path for us. Let's walk in his steps.

Not only is Jesus the author of faith, he is the finisher, *teleiōtēs*. He is the perfecter or consummator. He is the one who alone brought faith's work to completion. In him we find God's work of faith brought to completion. Hebrews 12:3 makes the choice we have to make very clear saying, "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

Not only are we to look to Jesus, but we are also to "consider him." "For" is the Greek word *gar*. Thayer says it is a particle of affirmation and conclusion. "Truly therefore" consider him. It explains fully how we are to look to him by directing us to further action – to consider him, *analogizomai*. *Analogziomai* is in the middle voice which means we are to think for ourselves, no one can do it for us. It is one of eleven Greek words translated "consider." It is also a compound word, comprised of *ana*, (which is used as a prefix to show repetition and intensity and to strengthen the action of the verb) and *logizomai* meaning "to reckon or think it through," or "to come to a correct and logical conclusion."

A literal translation according to usage of Hebrews 12:3 could be: "Truly therefore consider for yourself in detail how Jesus Christ bore up under pressure and be strengthened as you think it through again and again realizing that he is in you. . . ." The choice presented to us in this verse is to consider him in detail or to faint in our minds. We can look to him by considering in detail what he endured for us realizing that same strength is in us, or we can faint in our minds. We can look to him and be radiant, or we can look to anything else and be overwhelmed.

Hebrews 3:1,2a: Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; ² Who was faithful to him that appointed him. . . .

By looking at his example of faithfulness we, too, can become faithful. This is part of what God has made available to us in Christ Jesus. Jesus Christ was faithful to Him Who appointed him, and we can be, too. If we want to be radiant we must look unto him.

All Christians would profit from a more deliberate effort to use the Psalms in their worship. — C. John Collins

Affirmations: I look away from all else unto Jesus and am radiant. I consider his sacrifice and am faithful.

Recommended Reading: Day 19: Psalm 34 A Psalm of Praise and Trust & I Samuel 21:10-15;

Day 69: Psalm 114 The God of the Exodus & Psalm 115 To God Alone belongs Glory

Psalms 37:4-5:

Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.⁵ Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass.

“Delight” in Psalms 37:4 is in the hithpael conjugation which primarily expresses a “reflexive” action. It is action we both take and receive. It is something we must do for and to ourselves. If we don’t do it; it will not happen.

Delight in God has transforming power and lifts us above the gross desires of our old-man nature. Delight in God is not only sweet in itself, but it sweetens the whole soul until the longings of the heart become such that the Lord can safely promise to fulfill them. Such grand delight in God molds our desires until they become the desires of God. We should let our heart be so filled with God that it overflows with delight.

God provides exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think. He can do for us far more than all our friends. It is better to be content with God alone than to go about fretting and pining for the trifles that we think will fulfill us. Nothing but the love of God makes life meaningful, and His Word is what makes His love known. God satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness (Psalms 107:9).

It is good to have longings, and the more intense they are the better. The Lord will satisfy soul-longings, however great and all-absorbing they may be. Let us greatly long, for God will greatly give. We are never in a right state of mind when we are contented with ourselves and are free from longings. I had a motto for many years, “Always thankful never satisfied.”

Desires for more grace, and groanings which cannot be uttered, are growing pains, and we should wish to feel them more and more. God grant that we sigh and cry after better things, and for more of the best things! Jesus promised that they which hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled [*chortazō*, filled according to appetite] (Matthew 5:6).

I don’t consider hunger and thirst to be pleasant sensations, although they press for fulfillment. Therefore, those hungering and thirsting after righteousness shall pursue its fulfillment. Not only will they have their hunger relieved with a little food, but they shall be filled, satiated, satisfied. What delightful morsels God supplies. Remember manna? “What is it?” God provides all that is needed and fills with only the best.

Come on! Let’s not fret because we long and hunger. The challenge before us is to keep our yearning pure. Let’s hear the voice of the psalmist as he also longs and hungers to see God magnified. “Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.” “O magnify the LORD with me and let us exalt his name together.” “I will praise the name of God with a song and will magnify him with thanksgiving.”

When our hearts stand in awe of His Word, and we respect it continually, it will be more than just a vain curiosity. It will be a longing that presses for fulfillment. Delight is the impetus for spending time with God in His Word as it stimulates our passion to live for God to blossom and become fruitful. We want to know God’s Word, so we can do God’s will.

If we want to be men and women after God’s own heart, we have to be involved on a heart-level. Superficial pleasantries and niceties rarely make for a meaningful relationship. But when we live our lives with delight and passion for the things of God, even a mundane and routine life can be transformed by a heartfelt personal relationship with God, the Author of the Book.

The Psalms do not simply *express* emotions: when sung in faith, they actually *shape* the emotions of the godly.
— C. John Collins

Affirmations: I delight myself in God. God stirs in me the desire to do His will

Recommended Reading: Day 20: Psalm 35 A Plea for Judgment;

Day 70: Psalm 116 Deliverance from Death & Psalm 117 Praise for God’s Steadfast Love

Psalms 118:8-9:

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.⁹ It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.

The command to “trust in the Lord” in Proverbs 3:5 & 6 comes with a promised benefit.

Proverbs 3:5-6:

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.⁶ In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Relying on our own understanding should be forsaken and replaced by acknowledging God in all our ways. Although these verses in Proverbs may be the best known of the scriptures on trust, nearly half of all uses of “trust” in the KJV Old Testament occur in the Psalms. As early as Psalms 4:5 we are encouraged to put our trust in the LORD and as late as Psalms 146:3 we are warned to not put our trust “in princes, *nor* in the son of man, in whom *there is no help.*” “Trust” in Psalms is predominantly translated from the Hebrew synonyms *batach* and *chacah*.

Batach means to trust in, feel safe, or be confident or careless. It expresses a sense of well-being and security resulting from having something or someone in whom to place confidence. The LXX never translates this word with “believe in” but with “to hope,” in the positive sense of “to rely on God” or “to be persuaded” stressing the feeling of being safe or secure. *Chacah* means to seek refuge or flee for protection stressing the insecurity and self-helplessness of even the strongest of men.

Trust is something that’s personal. We can’t borrow it or catch it. It must be developed through personal commitment and involvement. It is based on goodness and fostered by deliverance (Psalms 22:4-10; 37:40).

Psalms 18:1-2: <To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David, the servant of the LORD, who spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day *that* the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said,>

I will love thee, O LORD, my strength.² The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

Psalms 91:2:

I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Psalms consistently expresses the value of trust in God as opposed to the folly of any other kind of security. Friends, weapons, wealth and idols form no basis for trust (Psalms 41:9; 44:6; 49:6; 52:7; 135:15-18). Neither is there any cause for hope in anything but God’s unwavering loyalty and gracious kindness for He promises to defend them that trust in Him (Psalms 5:11; 17:7; 18:30). Only those who trust in God will be given joy and gladness (Psalms 16:9 & 33:21) and know inner peace and absence of fear (Psalms 4:8 & 27:3).

Trust is built on knowing God (Psalms 9:10). David repeatedly declares His trust in God (Psalms 7:1; 11:1; 13:5; 16:1 ;25:2; 26:1; 28:7; 31:1, 6, 14; 56:3-4, 11; 57:1²; 61:4; 141:8; 143:8). Taking refuge in God “blesses” (Psalms 34:8) and “saves” (Psalms 7:1 & 17:7). Trust is also associated with mercy (Psalms 13:5; 21:7; 32:10; 52:8; 57:1). One who trusts God should be easily identifiable. Such a one should rejoice (Psalms 5:11), find goodness (Psalms 31:19) and never be ashamed (Psalms 31:1), desolate (Psalms 34:22) destitute, (Psalms 141:8) or confused (Psalms 71:1). Our trust in God will always be rewarded. Our sufficiency is of Him (II Corinthians 3:4-6).

There is no other book in which there is to be found more express and magnificent commendations, both of the unparalleled liberality of God towards his Church, and of all his works; there is no other book in which there is recorded so many deliverances, nor one in which the evidences and experiences of the fatherly providence and solicitude which God exercises towards us, are celebrated with such splendor of diction, and yet with the strictest adherence to truth; in short, there is no other book in which we are more perfectly taught the right manner of praising God, or in which we are more powerfully stirred up to the performance of this religious exercise. — John Calvin

Affirmations: I trust God. The Lord is my strength, my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer.

Recommended Reading: Day 21: Psalm 36 Wickedness Confronts God’s Love;

Day 71: Psalm 118 The Lord’s Mercy

Psalm 119:17: GIMEL. Deal bountifully with **thy** servant, *that I* may live, and keep **thy word**.

Psalm 119:162: **I** rejoice at **thy word**, as one that findeth great spoil.

In Psalm 119 the Word of God is referred to by 14 Hebrew synonyms translated into 11 different English words in the King James Version. This is the figure of speech *synonymia* which is the repetition of words similar in sense, but different in sound and origin. Not one of them separately can portray the magnitude of the Word's magnificence, but collectively they convey the fullness of the divine revelation that is the Word of God. The total count of these synonyms in Psalm 119 is 231. Remembering that there are 176 verses in the psalm, we realize that, on average, there is more than one per verse. One of these synonyms occurs in every verse except 122. After the three-verse introduction, God is addressed in every verse except 115, where He is mentioned. There are also two other facts that are obvious to me now but were not observed until I did a word frequency list for Psalm 119.

The most frequently occurring word in Psalm 119 is "thy" which occurs 209 times. The second most frequent is "I," used 142 times, followed by "me," occurring 89 times. When we total all the first and second-person pronouns we find:

1. First-person pronouns (I, me, my, mine, myself —those referring to the psalmist) occur 312 times.
2. Second-person pronouns (thy, thee, thou, thine —those referring to God) occur 261 times.
3. The different English synonyms used for God's Word occur 231 times.

Since there are only 176 verses in Psalm 119, we will usually find at least one first-person pronoun (representing the psalmist), one second-person pronoun (representing the Lord), and one of the synonyms for God's Word in every verse, on average. What we find in each verse is the psalmist relating to God, talking to God, developing his relationship with God through His wonderful, matchless Word. It is the interaction of these three that gives the psalm depth and framework. The building of the relationship between the psalmist and God with God's Word is at the very heart of this magnificent psalm. Noticing this as you read can add a remarkable personal aspect, infusing the longest chapter of the Bible with an intensely intimate *I-You* relationship focus.

The frequency of this chord is increased as we note two other additions. Besides the pronouns referring to God, we also find "Lord," (Jehovah), occurring 24 times, 22 of which are in direct address. Furthermore, we read, "thy servant" 13 times. This is another way the psalmist speaks of himself. He is God's servant.

These three elements form a chord that plays through the psalm after the three-verse introduction. What a harmony is set for life when these three notes are played together. Indeed, verse 54 speaks of the Word as the song the psalmist sings, saying, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." What a melody of prayer and praise echoes throughout this beautiful psalm. When we compose the song that will be our life, let's remember the chord in Psalm 119.

The example that God sets before us in Psalm 119 is of someone seeking to build his relationship with God through the Word of God which was magnified above all God's name. It's such a beautiful enfolding of the psalmist's relationship with God, showing how it is built on the solid foundation of His Word. We see how he yearns for it as he says, "Look thou upon me . . ." (Psalms 119:132) and "Make thy face to shine upon thy servant . . ." (Psalms 119:135). As such, it is an example for us to follow as we yearn to know our Heavenly Father more intimately.

As born-again sons of God we have a right to intimacy with our loving Heavenly Father. Our intimacy with God is based on the exceeding riches of His grace and kindness toward us which He communicates in His Word. Part of the relationship we see develop between Jehovah and His servant is seen in the servant's dependence and the Lord's faithfulness. Our dependence upon God is counter-balanced by God's faithfulness to us. They relate to each other.

Man, the dependent creation, can relate to God, the dependable Creator. God is dependable. His faithfulness to His Word which He has declared and prescribed for us never wavers. He doesn't change and neither does His Word. That's the standard. That's how we relate to each other. We depend upon God to fulfill His Word, and He is faithful to do so. We relate to God through His Word. We meditate upon it, speak about it, remind Him of it, and He faithfully brings it to pass.

What a privilege our Heavenly Father has given us, to speak directly to Him. What a lesson for us to direct our hearts to the Lord in prayer and praise for what He has done. The psalmist was building his relationship with the Lord God Almighty through the greatness of God's wonderful, matchless Word. We can do the same. There is no way for us to know the will of God without knowing the Word of God.

The Psalms are impassioned, vivid and concrete; they are rich in images, in simile and metaphor. Assonance, alliteration and wordplays abound in the Hebrew text. Effective use of repetition and the piling up of synonyms and complements to fill out the picture are characteristic. — Notes from NIV study Bible

Affirmations: I build my relationship with God with His word. I give all my heart in all my ways at all times.

Recommended Reading: Day 22: Psalm 37 Blessings to the Righteous;

Day 72: Psalms 119:1-8 Keepers of God's Law & Psalms 119:9-16 Purity the Fruit of the Law

Psalms 38:1, 21-22: < A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance. >

O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. . . ²¹ Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me. ²² Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.

Psalms 38 and 70 both have the same titles: "A psalm of David to bring remembrance," and Psalms 38:1 has the same translation in the KJV as Psalms 6:1. Although Psalms 38 has a penitential tone (as do Psalms 6, 32, 51, 102, 130, and 143), it's impossible to pinpoint a time in David's life when it was written. Although it may be a commemoration of his own sickness and endurance of cruelty; it may simply have been composed by him for the use of the sick and slandered, without any specific reference to himself.

Psalm 38 is typical of many of David's Psalms which express guilt for his sins. David knew the chastening of the Lord was richly deserved, and he reasonably dreaded it. Therefore, he requested a merciful response. He never blames anyone else for his shortcomings, but rather takes responsibility for them and cries for help as he pours out his complaint before the Lord. What agony of mind and body David suffered, and Psalm 38 records the frustration of heart and spirit that he endured. Psalm 38 maps out a plan for surviving any kind of personal failure, large or small. David gives us an example of clinging to hope when burdened by sin and attacked by friends and enemies.

Although the entire psalm is a beautiful penitential prayer, the Psalm opens and closes with 5 specific requests for help and deliverance. The central section alternates between recounting his sin and suffering and his treatment from others. In verse 1 David expects rebuke and chastening for his wrongdoing, but he earnestly requests a merciful response from his compassionate God. In verses 2-10 he laments his sin and suffering, and in verses 11-16 David speaks of how his friends treated him. Then in verses 17-18 he again expresses regret for his sin and suffering, and in verses 17-18 he speaks of how his enemies treated him before closing with three earnest requests in verses 21 & 22.

We find an "O" in front of every mention of "Lord" or "God." This exclamation shows the earnestness, feelings or passion of David's cries to God. This psalm is quite an expose on the pain of sin. In verses 1-4 we see David dealing with the weight of sin. He describes the pain of the consequence of his sin as arrows piercing him, and the burden of sin as a weight pressing upon him, a weight too heavy to bear. In verses 5-8 we see the suffering of sin. David clearly identifies this pain to be the result of his foolishness. David is distressed and diseased with pain. David mourns all day long. These descriptions of his pain from sin are very real. David experiences the devastating effects of sin as his heart is heavy with anguish. He is torn up with all that he must endure.

In verses 9-14 David expresses the sorrow of sin. Verses 9-10 seem to describe the emotional and spiritual sorrow he feels. David's sorrow continues as friends, companions, and neighbors stay away from him. Sin tainted him and separated him from those most important to him. David recognizes that he has done wrong. He doesn't try to justify or excuse himself, but he does show us what an honest response should be. David declares his hope and trust in God (vss 15-17) and confesses his iniquity and resolves to return and follow the thing which is good (vss 18-20). He then petitions God to draw near and make haste to help him.

David closes the psalm with some final petitions. Note that David's prayer has not yet been answered. This is fairly rare in the Psalms. Many Psalms that are prayers begin with petitions and end with thanksgiving for the answers to the petitions. In this psalm, David is still seeking the Lord to answer his prayer. At times, answers to our prayers come quickly, before we even expect them. More often, answers to our prayers come later than we expect. We must not limit the Lord to give us comfort and deliverance when we think we have greatest need of it but must leave our prayer at His feet. God hears us and He will answer our prayers in His time and in His way.

Over the first four verses we might write the word "Conviction." We have the expression here of a convicted soul, of a man who is not trying to make excuses for his sins.... Over verses 5 to 14 we may write the word, "Humiliation." As he continues looking into his own heart, as he continues dwelling upon the sin that has crushed his life, he is bowed down before God in a sense of deepest humiliation.... From the 15th to the 20th verse we have his confession.... In the last two verses he expresses his confidence. H. A. Ironsides

Affirmations: I have godly sorrow when I sin. I regularly call on and expect God's mercy.

Recommended Reading: Day 23: Psalm 38 The Burden of Suffering;

Day 73: Psalms 119:17-24 Eyes to See God's Law & Psalms 119:25-32 Prayer for understanding the Law

Psalms 119:43-45:

And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments. ⁴⁴ So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever. ⁴⁵ And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.

Jesus promised his disciples that if they continued in the Word they would experientially know by the truth and the truth would make them free. The only real freedom in life comes from doing God's Word. James talks about "doers of the word" (James 1:22-25) and explains that the way we continue in the Word is by doing it. Then we will be blessed by the perfect law of liberty. The law of liberty sets us free from our old man nature to walk in the spirit as freemen.

In this stanza we find the psalmist interacting with the Word of God. It is appropriated (v. 41), trusted (v. 42), hoped in (v. 43), kept (v. 44), sought (v. 45), spoken of (v. 46), loved (v. 47) and sworn to (v. 48). Furthermore, he vows to delight himself in it and meditate in it. Thus, he establishes a personal witness and testifies to its efficacy in his life.

Psalms 119:41-45 [VAU]:

Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, *even* thy salvation, according to thy word. ⁴² So shall I have wherewith [i.e., the Word] to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word. ⁴³ And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments. ⁴⁴ So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever. ⁴⁵ And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.

The psalmist appropriates God's mercy, even His salvation, without hesitation because he knows what God has declared in His Word. Therefore, he like Mary can declare, ". . . be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). After appropriating God's mercy and salvation, he realizes he has the wherewithal to answer when reproached. In verse 43 he pleads that the Word of truth would remain in his mouth. In verse 44 "so" indicates a result. The result is that he has "wherewith to answer." "Wherewith" is the Hebrew word *dabar*, one of the synonyms for God's Word. Once the psalmist receives God's Word, he can use it to answer for himself. He trusts God's Word to be effectual in handling the reproach. He resolves to continue in the future as he has done in the past. Indeed, for the rest of his life he intends on obeying this wonderful Word of the Lord. He vows to keep it, and in verse 45 he foresees a future of liberty pursuing it. He anticipates the liberty he will enjoy because he is confident of his commitment to seek God's precepts which are individual and specific details of the Word of the Lord that He has prescribed for his benefit.

Psalms 119:46-8:

I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed. ⁴⁷ And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. ⁴⁸ My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.

In verse 46 he resolves to speak of God's testimonies before kings without shame. His interaction and deep involvement with the Word of God provides the basis for his freedom and resolve to testify to it. What an ardent plea. He wants his mouth ever ready to speak for his God. The Word of his God has provided for him in the past, and he reasons from God's judgments that what he has learned of right and wrong will prove effective once again. This verse is a specific illustration of the general truth that the previous verse declared. As a workman of the Word, he is not ashamed of his workmanship (II Timothy 2:15).

In verses 47 and 48 the psalmist repeats "thy commandments, which I have loved." This doubles and establishes his profession of love for God's Word. This repetition of "thy commandments, which I have loved" falls between his resolve to delight himself in and to meditate upon God's Word. It is not unusual to find "delight," "meditate," and "love" occurring in close proximity. When it comes to loving God's Word, we can often gage our love by our delight in it and our meditation upon it.

Regarding the phrase, "I will lift up my hands unto thy commandments." E. W. Bullinger has a note in the Companion Bible that says to lift up the hand is an idiom that means to swear by. Its first use is in Genesis 14:22 & 23, where Abraham swears an oath to not receive anything from the hand of the King of Sodom. The psalmist is giving testimony under oath.

The psalmist relinquished himself to God's will as declared in His Word. He swore allegiance to what God's Word declared. He professed his love for the Word and declared his resolve to keep it in the forefront of his mind — repeating, musing and meditating on it. God's Word provided the basis for his personal witness. Indeed, he made God's testimonies his testimony and spoke with resolve.

No single book of Scripture, not even of the New Testament, has, perhaps, ever taken such hold on the *heart* of Christendom. — J.J. Stewart Perowne

Affirmations: I will walk at liberty. I swear to be faithful to the truth.

Recommended Reading: Day 24: Psalm 39 In Time of Trouble; Day 74: Psalm 119:33-40 Praise for God's Steadfast Love & Psalms 119:41-48 Salvation Through God's Law

Psalms 40:7-8:

Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me,⁸ I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart.

Jesus knew he was what the Word of God said he was. Among the first recorded words that Jesus spoke was his declaration in Luke 2:49, “I must be about my Father’s business?” Then from the opening day of his ministry when He declared, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:21) until he said, “It is finished” before giving up the ghost, he did just that.

What an example he set for us. Jesus Christ “blazed the trail” before us, and we have the privilege to continue in the path, to walk in his steps, and do the works he did. In order to do them, we must believe the same words of God that Jesus believed. When we hide God’s Word in our minds and hearts, we can have the same success that he did.

Hebrews 10:7, 9-10:

Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. . . .⁹ Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.¹⁰ By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

Hebrews quotes and identifies Psalms 40:7-8 as referring to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ could do the will of God because he had hidden God’s Word in his heart and he lived it day by day. He hid God’s Word in his heart, and he delighted in doing God’s will day by day. We have the same privilege and opportunity to take this wonderful Word of God, the greatest reality in life, and hid it in our hearts, which is the greatest place to put it. We do it for the same reason, “to not sin against Him” (Psalms 119:11). Then we can walk with power and might, vitality and joy and be the men and women He has called us to be.

When I was a young boy growing up in a small Methodist Church in my hometown our minister had a favorite benediction he would give quite frequently. It came from Psalms 19:14. He would say, “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.” I think that helped to instill in me from my earliest years the desire to want my life to be pleasing to God. If the Lord truly was my strength and my redeemer, then I would want my mind and heart and the words which came out of my mouth to be acceptable with Him. Another favorite of his was one of the first verses I memorized as a freshman in high school. It came from Psalms 139:23-24, which reads, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts and see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

During my teen years I was never quite sure what I thought and felt. It seemed I would fluctuate and change often enough that I was never as convinced about things as I thought I should be. I took comfort in knowing that God really knew my heart even when I was not sure that I did. I knew He had to know it better than I did, because I was not sure. But I longed for a relationship with Him and frequently poured my heart out to Him. I so wanted to think and feel about Him the way the Bible described others doing. It is of no surprise, I guess, that Psalms was a favorite book of the Bible for me. The more I read the book, the more convinced I became that God wanted a relationship with me as badly as I wanted one with Him. Therefore, I knew He would help me and guide me along the way.

Psalm 139 taught me of how intimately God knew me and how precious His thoughts were to me. God knows our hearts so completely, we never need to be concerned about hiding things from Him — we can’t! It is not possible to hide things from Him. Besides, we don’t need to. He is concerned with us developing our hearts. He is concerned with us committing and dedicating our hearts to Him. Psalms 7:9-10 tells us “God trieth the hearts and reins” and then “saveth the upright in heart.” Indeed, the psalmist invites God to “Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart” (Psalms 26:2). As we hide the Word it rejoices the heart (Psalms 19:8). The Lord strengthens our hearts (Psalms 27:14). Therefore, when the Lord speaks our hearts respond (Psalms 27:8). Hallelujah!

You really appreciate the Psalms when you go through the dark valleys. If the Psalms don’t mean much to you now, they will when you retreat to them in times of stress. — Chuck Missler

Affirmations: I am what the Word of God says I am. I can do what the Word of God says I can do.

Recommended Reading: Day 25: Psalm 40 Delight in the Will of the Lord & Psalm 41 Psalm of the Compassionate;

Day 75: Psalms 119:49-56 Comfort in God’s Law & Psalms 119:57-64 The Lord Our Portion

Psalms 42:11:

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God. [This verse is repeated in Psalms 43:5.]

You may feel silly “talking to your heart,” but do it anyway! Tell yourself what you want to believe. Voice to yourself what it is that you are feeling most deeply. Just venting the words will do two things: it will clarify to you what you truly are feeling, and you will give release to some of your pent-up emotions. The psalmist not only admits he was downcast in his soul; he went on to tell himself what to do about it: “Hope in God!” He goes on further to say he would praise God for the “help of His countenance.” He praised God not for a specific act that God had taken or would take, but for the sheer comfort of knowing that God was present with him.

Proverbs 23:19 tells us to guide our hearts in the way. To do so we will have to talk to ourselves. That will take practice, careful consideration, and perseverance. David talked to his heart throughout the Psalms. In Psalms 103:1-2 he directs himself saying: “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits...” When we find ourselves in precarious situations facing difficulty, we, like the psalmists mustn’t be afraid to be honest and ask ourselves the hard questions. I’ve found three keys that have helped me guide my heart in the way:

1. Admit to myself – speaking aloud – what I am feeling.
2. Voice aloud my decision to hope in God believing that God and His Word has the solution.
3. Voice aloud my decision to praise God for Who He is and acknowledge His presence and power are in me and with me in every situation.

Psalms 42 is a Maschil, a psalm designed to instruct. After a beautiful description of his thirst for God, Psalms 42:3 records the psalmist in the face of deep sorrow crying, “My tears have been my meat day and night.” But he talked to himself pouring out his soul and challenging and confronting himself with the truth. This isn’t being negative; it’s identifying the problem you are asking God for help with.

Psalms 42:5-6a:

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And *why* art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him *for* the help of his countenance.⁶ O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.

The next step is to turn from speaking to ourselves to speaking to God. Admit our feelings to God. Cast our concerns on Him and voice our decision to trust Him — to remember that He is with us and will always be faithful to His Word. In II Corinthians 10:5, Paul talks about taking every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ. When we feel overwhelmed, stressed, worried, anxious, fearful, or in despair, we need proper dialogue with ourselves. We need to speak the truth to ourselves just like the psalmist in Psalm 42.

In the parable in Luke 12:45, the servant got into trouble because he said the wrong thing to himself in his heart. Similarly, Romans 10:6 warns us to “Say not in thy heart...” What we say makes a difference. Proverbs 18:21 tells us that “Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue.” Let’s use it to our benefit. After all, no one is more influential in our lives than we are because no one talks to us more than we talk to ourselves.

The psalmist determines to handle the situation with praise, and the best praise is done whole-heartedly (Psalms 9:1; 111:1; 138:1). The next step is to turn from speaking to oneself to speaking to God. We admit to God what we are feeling even though He already knows. We cast our concerns on Him and voice our decision to trust Him — to remember that He is with us and will always be faithful to His Word.

Psalms 138:1-2: <A Psalm of David.>

I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods [*diamonion* in the LXX] will I sing praise unto thee.

² I will worship toward **thy** holy temple, and praise **thy** name for **thy** lovingkindness and for **thy** truth: for **thou** hast magnified **thy** word above all **thy** name.

Did you notice the sevenfold recognition of the greatness of God in verse 2? That’s why we praise Him with our whole heart; we recognize His greatness.

Proverbs 3:5,6:

Trust in the LORD with **all thine heart**; and lean not unto thine own understanding. ⁶ In **all thy ways** acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

We acknowledge Him by acknowledging His Word. We acknowledge Him by bringing to our minds certain truths or facts of Him that we know from His Word, and He directs our paths.

Psalm 62:8:

Trust in him **at all times**; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

We trust Him with all our hearts, in all our ways, at all times. That covers it all. . . with all our hearts, in all our ways, at all times. Let's not leave God out of anything in our lives. We make Him a part of everything that we do. He has made it really simple; He wants to be a part of all of our lives.

Psalm 119:20:

My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.

What a longing the psalmist had for the greatness of God's Word – at all times. That is the kind of heart we have spiritually, and we need to let it out. We need to be transformed and let the love of God that has been shed abroad in our hearts come out and shine forth.

Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have not originated them but they are talking to you, they bring back the problems of yesterday, etc. Somebody is talking. Who is talking to you? Your self is talking to you. Now this man's treatment [in Psalm 42] was this: instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" he asks. His soul had been depressing him, crushing him. So he stands up and says, "Self, listen for moment, I will speak to you. — D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Affirmations: I talk to my heart to keep it in the way. I give all my heart, in all my ways, at all times.

Recommended Reading: Day 26: Psalm 42 Yearning For God & Psalm 43 A Plea For Judgment;

Day 76: Psalms 119:65-72 God's Law Taught by Affliction & Psalms 119:73-80 Confidence in the Law

Psalms 8:3-6: When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;⁴ What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?⁵ For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.⁶ Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all *things* under his feet:

David's question still echoes in the hearts of humble God-fearing men, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" When considering the vastness and wonder of creation, it is amazing that God gave man a place in it second only to Himself with dominion over the works of His hands (Genesis 1:26-28). Job asked a similar question, "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him (Job 7:17 KJV)? At another place David says, "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God" (Psalms 40:17). It's only because of God's love, grace and mercy that He bestows such favor upon us.

Psalms 5:12:

For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as *with* a shield.

We are righteous now, so we are favored. His favor will compass us and shield us from harm. We all have a feel for the word "favor." It's part of our vocabulary and guides our prayers and speech. In Psalms 5:12, the Hebrew word translated favor is *ratson*. It refers to pleasure, delight, goodwill and acceptance. To have God's favor is to be singled out for special attention. Having God's favor is having His goodwill and being in a position to receive blessings from His hand.

Mankind is very special to God. God clarifying even more in Ephesians elaborates saying, we, His born-again sons of body, soul and spirit, "are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." We are His masterpiece, His treasure! He considers us among the most valuable of all His creations. God has crowned mankind with glory and honor! We are important handiwork, His prized possession! We need to see ourselves in that light. We are not what we used to be. Our old man is dead; the very divine nature of God is within us; and the blood of Jesus has cleansed us from all sin. We are a royal family crowned with glory and honor and highly favored by God.

Some believers live without that knowledge. Since we know and believe we have been crowned with glory and honor, we should act in light of that wonderful truth. As we do, confidence will increase, and we will have the courage to face anything. Revelation knowledge allows us to see ourselves the way God sees us — crowned with glory and honor! He sees us highly favored and successful in everything we set our hand to do. When we truly believe that God has crowned us with glory and honor, we will take authority over adverse circumstances in our lives and expect God to turn adversity into victory!

We should expect victory in every situation simply because we know we are the object of God's affection. Let's bask in God's amazing, unconditional love; we're His masterpiece! He wants to put us on display and show us off. We live in the administration of the mystery which God kept secret so He could surprise the whole world when He put us on display.

Ephesians 3:10: NLT

God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

Let's never forget we are favored by God. Let's wake up all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places as we walk in the steps of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Peter 2:21). God wants to lavish His favor upon all of us. His favor will bring victories in our lives that we cannot acquire in our own strength and in our own might. Psalms 44:1-3 recounts how the hand of God wrought victory and provided possession of the Promised Land because God had favor upon them. When we consider the greatness and grandeur of God, we, like David, may ask, "What is man that Thou art mindful of Him?"

The Psalter is for the most part a book of prayer and praise. In it faith speaks to God in prayer and of God in praise. But there are also Psalms that are explicitly didactic (instructional) in form and purpose (teaching the way of godliness). — Notes from NIV study Bible

Affirmations: God displays His wisdom and might in my life. God is always mindful of me.

Recommended Reading: Day 27: Psalms 44 Appeal to God for Deliverance & Psalm 45 The King's Marriage; Day 77: Psalms 119:81-88 A Longing for Comfort & Psalms 119:89-96 God's Unchangeable Law

Psalms 119:97-99: MEM.

O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.⁹⁸ Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they *are* ever with me.⁹⁹ I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies *are* my meditation.

When I lived at an Indiana Bible College we had a lot of fruit trees on grounds. We were not allowed to pick any of the fruit from the trees to eat, but it was available to eat any of the fruit that had fallen from the trees. That usually provided enough for a nice snack. However, on occasion, there was no fruit on the ground. On those occasions, bumping into or shaking a tree was a common tactic. Sometimes it would yield fruit and sometimes it wouldn't.

I often feel that is how I eagerly approach Psalms. When I want a snack from the wonderful Word of God, I simply read a verse and shake it. Often that produces the desired result, but sometimes it does not. If not, I proceed to the next verse and shake away. Eventually, I get what I desired. I have never found the entire tree barren; I have never been denied a hunger-satisfying snack that was sweeter than honey.

I think it was Martin Luther who suggested that way to study the Bible. Just pick a verse and shake it like you shake a fruit tree. If you keep shaking a verse, sooner or later the fruit will fall in your lap. Luther also said if the fruit doesn't fall, go to another verse. Eventually, you will find a verse where the fruit falls in abundance. Then you can stop and feast on God's Word. I have had many a feast on Psalms.

There is a unique phrase in Psalms 119:97 that grabs my heart every time I read it. It's where the psalmist exclaims, "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day." He so loved God's law that he asks God to take note of it. The psalmist also adds in verse 159, "Consider how I love thy precepts." He wanted God to take note of his love for Him because he knew God would respond to it (Psalms 91:14; 116:1; 119:132; 122:6; 145:20).

His meditation was both the cause and effect of his love. He meditated on God's word because he loved it, and then loved it even more because he meditated on it. He could not get enough of it, so passionately did he love it. Familiarity with the word of God fosters affection for it, and affection for it seeks yet greater familiarity.

The Psalmist avowed his love for God's Word and meditated on it. Indeed, the twelve occurrences of love in Psalm 119 are almost all professions of love for the wonderful Word of God. A great key to loving God's Word is declaring or professing that love.

Psalms 119:47-48:

And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.⁴⁸ My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.

In verses 47 and 48, the psalmist repeats, "Thy commandments, which I have loved." This doubles and establishes his profession. The repetition of "thy commandments, which I have loved" falls between his resolve to delight himself in them and to meditate upon God's Word. It is not unusual to find "delight," "meditate," and "love" occurring in close proximity. When it comes to loving God's Word, we can often gage it by our delight in it and our meditation upon it.

The word "how" in verse 97 (O, how I love the law!) indicates a superlative love. It imports a comparison and notes a greater love in the psalmist towards the word than towards anything else. Indeed, in Psalms 119:127, he declares that he loves the Lord's commandments "above gold, yea, above fine gold." He even says in Psalms 119:167 that he loved them exceedingly.

There was no comparison. His love for the Word far surpassed his love of gold. "Yea" as it is used in verse 127, adverbially, means "not only this but even." Even the finest of gold sank in comparison. Wealth brings with it so many conveniences and advantages so that men naturally esteem it; and gold, as the symbol of it, is much esteemed. Yet in the judgment of the psalmist, God's laws are more enriching, and bring with them more comfort and blessing than the choicest treasures. The Psalmist could not boast that he always kept the commands; but he could declare that he loved them above anything else in life.

Perhaps more than any other book of the Bible, the Psalms speak to the joys and sorrows of life. And if there is a single theme running through the Psalms, it surely is that God will satisfy the longing of those who thirst for Him. — C. Donald Cole

Affirmations: I love God's Word. I delight in God's Word as one who finds great spoil.

Recommended Reading: Recommended Reading: Day 28: Psalms 46 The Presence of God in Calamity & Psalm 47 God the King of the Earth;

Day 78: Psalms 119:97-104 The Love of God's Law & Psalms 119:105-112 God's Law a Lamp to the Feet

Psalms 25:3, 5, 21:

Yea, let none that wait [*qavah*] on thee [God] be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause....⁵
 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou *art* the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait [*qavah*] all the day....²¹
 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on [*qavah*] thee [the Lord].

Waiting, biblically, is not accompanied by boredom and complacency; nor is it characterized by fretting and worrying. Rather waiting is the confident, disciplined, expectant, active interaction with God that allows us to rest in hope. Hope expects; it anticipates! Hope enables us to live in the power and certainty of the future without yet realizing it.

When we are not clear on what God wants, there is protection in waiting. The old man of the flesh is usually in a hurry and wants instant gratification. It has little patience. Its focus is on “what I want” and not on “what God wants.” When circumstances are uncontrollable, when people are inflexible and when problems are unexplainable we would be wise to not be in a hurry, but, rather, wait on the Lord. He has answers for us, and He will respond to our cries. Revelation does not always come on demand; sometimes we have to wait to hear the voice of God.

Psalms 25:3 is the first of more than a dozen verses that encourage us to wait upon the Lord. Sometimes the Hebrew word translated wait is *qavah* which means to wait, look for, hope or expect. There are anticipation and expectancy in the waiting. We find it in the 3 verses above and in Psalms 27:14; 37:9, 34; 40:1; 69:6 & 130:5. There are also 8 other verses with various other Hebrew synonyms for “wait” (Psalms 33:20; 59:9; 62:1, 5; 69:3; 130:6). David personally knew the benefit and blessing of waiting for he testified, “I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry” (Psalms 40:1). Like David, our expectations must be directed toward God, and no one else (Psalms 62:5-7)! As we wait, we keep our eyes on the Lord and hold the words of His promises close to our hearts. We may not have the direction at the moment, but we are confident that the answer will come.

Psalms 130:5:

I **wait for the LORD**, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. ⁶ My soul **waiteth for the Lord** more than they that watch for the morning: *I say, more than* they that watch for the morning.

When the flesh is denied it will grow impatient and expose itself. It will suddenly become ugly and demanding, railing at us and condemning us. When that happens, we know it is not the voice of God. Waiting on the Lord exposes selfish and prideful desires. Servants should desire to carry out their master’s will, not their own.

Psalms 123:2:

Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* unto the hand of their masters, *and* as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes **wait upon the LORD** our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

We are workers together with God, and we must not move independently of His direction. We do much on our own according to His Word and will, but when we engage spiritually in bringing deliverance to someone, we must proceed as He directs. This waiting should be a strengthening process.

Isaiah 40:31:

But they that **wait upon the LORD** shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

We cannot demand revelation from God. We do not squeeze it out of Him by giving, by praying, or by any other good work. We walk on the Word and do the best we can, if we need more information, God will see that we get what we need. (See also Psalms 69:3; Hosea 12:6; and Micah 7:7.)

In Jeremiah 42, a remnant of God’s people came to Jeremiah seeking a word of direction from the Lord. So, the prophet went to prayer, “And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah” (Jeremiah 42:7). On the tenth day, God finally spoke to Jeremiah. The prophet had waited patiently until he knew he was hearing God’s voice. It is as important to know when we do not have revelation, as it is to know when we have it. Although technically, it is one and the same. If you know one, you automatically know the other.

If God does not give us word of knowledge, word of wisdom and discerning of spirits we do not have it. Despite how our hearts may long to understand and help, sometimes we just have to wait like Jeremiah did in order to help. When the Shunamite woman came to Elisha after the death of her son, Elisha said, “Let her alone; for her soul *is* vexed within her: and the LORD hath **hid it from** me, and hath not told me” (II Kings 4:27). If He does not tell us, we just wait until He does. Elisha quickly found out what the problem was when she told him herself.

Even Daniel, under the threat of death, received from God the king’s dream and its interpretation, but it did not come the instant he asked. Timing is very important, and we must be willing to wait on His timetable.

Proverbs 20:22: Say not thou, I will recompense evil; *but wait on the LORD*, and he shall save thee.

Indeed, God promises to meet our every need. We mustn’t take things into our own hands but rather wait on the Lord who opens His hands and satisfies the desires of every living thing.

“Wait on the Lord” is a constant refrain in the Psalms, and it is a necessary word, for God often keeps us waiting. He is not in such a hurry as we are, and it is not his way to give more light on the future than we need for action in the present, or to guide us more than one step at a time. When in doubt, do nothing, but continue to wait on God. When action is needed, light will come.” — J.I. Packer

Affirmations: I wait on the Lord with expectation. God renews my strength and I move forward.

Recommended Reading: Recommended Reading: Day 29: Psalms 48 A Song to Mount Zion & Psalm 49 The Folly of Trusting Riches;

Day 80: Psalms 119:113-120 God’s Law a Hiding Place & Psalms 119:121-128 The Psalmist Loves God’s

Psalms 32:7:

Thou *art* my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

There is a place to get away from the storms of life. God is our hiding place, our refuge, our fortress, our shield, and we can dwell in the secret place of the most High and abide under the shadow of His wings.

Psalms 91:1-2:

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.² I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Psalms 119:114: Thou *art* my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.

When the entire world is in an uproar and we are tempted to despair, we must remember that God is ever with us; we are never alone. He is our unchanging, solid rock Who's perfect and permanent. He can create order out of chaos. He did it after the fall of Lucifer when the world was "*tohu va bohu*" (Genesis 1:2; Isaiah 45:18), and He is still doing it today. There is great comfort in knowing that God is not the *author* of confusion, but of peace" (I Corinthians 14:33).

Although life may seem random and senseless, it will eventually make sense. Romans 8:28 teaches us "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose." God is actively working things out for our benefit. Although God does not create suffering and sin, they still submit to His mighty hand. Although He does not produce or desire them He can turn them around for good. He's a master tactician and the greatest planner (Jeremiah 29:11). He can handle everything, and that's why we humble ourselves under His mighty hand (I Peter 5:6). God will be a shelter for us from the storms of life.

Psalms 27:5: For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. (See also Psalms 17:8 & 31:20)

There is a time coming when everything will become perfectly clear (I Corinthians 13:12), and we will know even as we are known. God had Isaiah give His people some interesting counsel. In Isaiah 26:20 He said, "Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment. . . ." He wanted time alone with them. That's where we go to hear His voice. Hearing the voice of the Lord is largely a matter of will (Psalms 95:7). It's something that we must desire.

Are you enjoying some special moments with God every day? That can become a vital part of our day — time alone with God. When we shut the chamber doors of our hearts to everything and everyone else, we can enjoy intimate fellowship alone with Him. Jesus spoke of this kind of special communion. Jesus referred to this in Matthew 6:6, "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." We know we have been commissioned to carry the gospel to the world, but we mustn't forget to shut the door and hide ourselves away with God first. It may only take a few moments, but it has a profound effect. Jesus, himself, enjoyed such moments (Mark 1:35).

Yes, we must go and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). But our adventure, our journey, the impact of our time and effort will be far more powerful and effective if it is preceded by time spent with God to receive His wisdom and His grace. We will do far more to bless the world when we have first spent time with God in our secret place (Psalms 62 & 91).

The manner in which the whole collection [Psalms] has been arranged suggests that one of its main purposes was instruction in the life of faith, a faith formed and nurtured by the Law, the Prophets and the canonical wisdom literature. Accordingly, the Psalter is theologically rich. Its theology is, however, not abstract or systematic but doxological, confessional and practical. So a summation of that "theology" impoverishes it by translating it into an objective mode. — Notes from NIV study Bible

Affirmations: God hides me from trouble. I enjoy time alone with God.

Recommended Reading: Day 30: Psalms 50 True and False Religion;

Day 80: Psalms 119:129-136 The Psalmist Keeps God's Law & Psalms 119:137-144 God's Law Is True

Colossians 3:16:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Scripturally singing isn't optional. Believers are more than just invited to sing; we are commanded to sing. It's a way to get the word of Christ to dwell in us richly. The Book of Psalms is replete with God's call for His people to sing His praises. Ephesians 5:19 that says that we are to speak to one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...." Singing can powerfully refresh our souls and reorients our thoughts and attitudes. "Singing with grace in your heart" or "singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart" rejuvenates. The Corinthians church was always ready with Psalms (I Corinthians 14:26).

We certainly understand singing when we're happy and times are good (James 5:13), but we also find many examples in scripture of song strengthening one during times of distress and trial. In Acts 16, when Paul and Silas are imprisoned for answering the Macedonian call what do they do? Sing! (Acts 16:25). As Jesus faced his final challenges he sang. At the Last Supper, Jesus and his disciples sang a hymn together (Matthew 26:30); Mark 14:26. This was probably one of the *Hallel* Psalms (Psalms 113–118 & 136). Then the very next day, Jesus died with a psalm on his lips (Psalms 22:1). Singing matters. Souls need songs.

God thinks singing is so important that He ordained ministries of music. In II Chronicles 20:19-23 the Korahites "stood up to praise the Lord, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice." The Korahites' singing wasn't just for entertainment they strengthened God's people to rise to the occasion and prepare themselves for war as they went out and came home before the army singing.

Here's a sampling of what the Book of Psalms says about singing:

Psalms 5:11: Let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you.

Psalms 9:2: I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

Psalms 51:14: Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.

Psalms 59:16: I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.

Psalms 63:7: For you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.

Psalms 81:1-4: <To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of Asaph.> Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.² Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.³ Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.⁴ For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.

Sometimes singing initiates joy and sometimes joy is the genesis of singing. We repeatedly find joy and singing bound together in scripture. When we sing praise to God we glorify Him. Whether joyful or somber our obedience to Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19 will cause us to make a joyful noise. We sing "to God" and "to the Lord" because they are worthy of our praise. What a joy to sing to them and about them. Singing provides a unique way of uniting our heart, soul, mind, and strength to focus entirely and completely on them. In a world of distraction, singing allows us to grab and focus the attention of all our senses upon them.

The Apostle John describes a glimpse of eternity with a great multitude of people from every tribe and languages singing before the Lamb (Revelation 7:9-10), "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" Revelation also records the redeemed singing new songs (5:9 & 14:3) as well as old favorites (15:3). Won't it be great to be there and be a part of the chorus?

Praise is the rehearsal of our eternal song. By grace we learn to sing, and in glory we continue to sing. What will some of you do when you get to heaven, if you go on grumbling all the way? Do not hope to get to heaven in that style. But now begin to bless the name of the Lord. — Charles Spurgeon

Affirmations: I teach and admonish with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. I sing with joy and grace from my heart.

Recommended Reading: Day 31: Psalms 51 The Penitent's Psalm; II Samuel 11 & 12;

Day 81: Psalms 119:145-152 A Cry for Salvation & Psalms 119:153-160 Keeping God's Law in Adversity

Psalm 51:1: To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba

Have mercy [*chanan*] upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness [*chesed*]: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies [*racham*] blot out my transgressions.

God's deep, tender love, mercy, and forgiveness toward His people is seen throughout Psalms. Psalms 51:1 has 3 Hebrew synonyms: *chanan*, *chesed* and *racham*, which are used predominantly in Psalms. *Chanana*, a verb used 30 of its 78 times in Psalms, means to have mercy, be gracious or show favor. *Chesed* is used 127 of its 248 times in Psalms and refers to an act of kindness, love or mercy usually reserved for close friends and family members. It expresses both God's loyalty to His covenant and His love for His people along with a faithfulness to keep the promises He made to them. *Racham* is used 44 times in the Old Testament and 11 of them are in Psalms. *Racham* is a plural noun showing intense compassion. It is translated 10 of those 11 times in the KJV into the phrase "tender mercies" (Psalms 25:6; 40:11; 51:1; 69:16; 77:9; 79:8; 103:4; 119:77, 156; 145:9).

God's lovingkindness, *chesed*, refers to loyalty borne out of love and kindness toward those to whom one is responsible. It refers to the fidelity of obligations or a mutual liability of those belonging together. Although *chesed* refers to conduct in accordance with the rights and duties of mutual relationship between allies, it connotes goodness or kindness beyond what is expected or deserved, based solely on ready magnanimity towards others. It has an element of permanence and reliability implicit in a family or a covenant between friends. It refers to conduct in accordance with social norms, but that concept is not based on legal notions. The term is used of the virtue that ought to knit society together. It is not a mere love, but loyal love; not merely kindness, but reliable kindness; not merely affection, but affection that has committed and dedicated itself. It describes a deep devotion.

God's tender mercy, *racham*, speaks of having one's emotions stirred which leads to tender, heart-felt concern. Every one of the 12 times the phrase "tender mercy(ies)" occur in the KJV, it is always a translation of *racham*. *Racham* means to tenderly regard or love someone especially as parents love their infant children. *Racham* expresses intensely forcible compassion aroused by the sight of weakness or suffering in those that are dear and/or need help. God's *racham* is an active desire to, in some way, aid the distress of those who are the blessed objects of His compassion. It is shown to those who are in misery or distress, irrespective of what they deserve. In His mercy, God reveals Himself as a compassionate God, who pities those who are in misery and is ever ready to relieve their distress.

Chesed and *racham* occur together five times in Psalms (51:1 above & the 4 below) and 6 times in the rest of the Old Testament (Isaiah 63:7; Jeremiah 16:5; Lamentations 3:22; Daniel 1:9; Hosea 2:19 & Zechariah 7:9).

Psalms 25:6:

Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies [*racham*] and thy lovingkindnesses [*chesed*]; for they *have been* ever of old.

Psalms 40:11:

Withhold not thou thy tender mercies [*racham*] from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness [*chesed*] and thy truth continually preserve me.

Psalms 69:16:

Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness [*chesed*] is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies [*racham*].

Psalms 103:4:

Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness [*chesed*] and tender mercies [*racham*];

What comfort knowing we have been coronated. Let's proudly display God's lovingkindness and tender mercy.

The Psalms teach us about God and our relationship with Him; that is the heart of theology. The Psalter may be thought of as a portrait gallery of God, presenting us with multiple images of who God is. — Tremper Longman

Affirmations: I am crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercies. God lavishes them upon me.

Recommended Reading: Day 32: Psalm 52 The Fate of the Wicked; Psalm 53 The Fate of the Fool & I Samuel 22:6-23; Day 82: Psalms 119:161-168 Peace in Keeping God's Law & Psalms 119:169-176 A Prayer for Understanding

Psalm 134:1-3: <A Song of degrees.>

Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD. ² Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary, and bless the LORD. ³ The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.

Psalm 120-134 are each titled “A Song of [the] Degrees.” They are short, averaging about seven verses, which is less than half of the average psalm length of about 16 verses. Though brief, they are profoundly inspirational. They are grouped into five units of three in which the first deals with trouble, the second deals with trust and the third deals with triumph. Jerusalem/Zion is mentioned 12 times in these Psalms (Psalms 122:2, 3, 6; 125:1, 2; 126:1; 128:5²; 129:5; 132:13; 133:3 & 134:3). Peace is an important concept occurring seven times. Two Psalms end with the blessing: “Peace [shalom] be upon Israel” (Psalms 125:5 & 128:6). Psalm 122 is a prayer for the peace of Jerusalem. God’s protective oversight is another recurring theme of these Psalms (Psalms 120:1; 121:2, 7, 8; 123:2; 124:8; 125:2; 126:1; 127:1; 130:7). Two consecutive Psalms mention the blessing of children (Psalms 127:3-5 & 128:3). The short three verses of Psalm 134 provide a fitting conclusion to this collection: “Praise the Lord, all you servants of the Lord who minister by night in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the Lord. May the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth, bless you from Zion.”

Some modern versions translate the phrase as “Songs of Ascent” and suggest that they refer to either songs sung on the journey of the returning exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem in the last half of the sixth century B.C. or that they were Psalms that were sung by the Israelites as they journeyed to Jerusalem to attend the agricultural festivals (Exodus 23:14-17; 34:18-24; Leviticus 23:4-44; & Deuteronomy 16:1-17), most likely the Feast of Tabernacles citing the harvest imagery found in several of the Psalms: 126:5-6; 127:2; 128:2; 129:6-8; 132:15. The Mishnah suggests that the Levites sang these fifteen Songs of Degrees at the Feast of Tabernacles as they stood on the fifteen steps that led from the Court of Women to the Court of Israel.

The title, “Song of [the] Degrees,” has, in Hebrew, the definite article. This suggests that certain well-known “degrees” are alluded to. The only “degrees” of which the Bible speaks are the degrees on the great sun-dial of King Ahaz, at Jerusalem which miraculously went back ten “degrees” as a sign that fifteen years were to be added to Hezekiah’s life! This supernatural happening is recorded in II Kings 20:5-11 where the word “degrees” is certainly given emphasis by repetition.

These “Songs of the Degrees” relate to Hezekiah and the degrees on the sun-dial of Ahaz given to signify the extra 15 years added to Hezekiah’s life. Hezekiah was the godliest of Judah’s kings (II Kings 18:5-6). He was very interested in Psalms and spiritual songs and was responsible for restoring temple worship (II Chronicles 29), taking great care that all was done “according to the commandment of David” (v 25), and “with the instruments ordained by David” (v 27), and “with the words of David” (v 30).

Hezekiah was himself a psalm-writer (Isaiah 38:9-20). Isaiah 38:20 also refers to Hezekiah’s songs sung to the accompaniment of the stringed instruments. What could this set of “songs” composed by Hezekiah be? It seems almost certain, from their connection, that they were the “Songs of the Degrees” which now appear in our Book of Psalms. Note that the number of the “Songs of the Degrees” is fifteen, and the number of the years which were added to Hezekiah’s life is also fifteen. Also, note that the shadow went back ten degrees on the sun-dial, and ten of the “Songs of the Degrees” are left anonymous. Only five have noted authors; David wrote 4 and Solomon 1. There was no reason for Hezekiah to attach his name to the remaining 10 since the “songs” were known quite well to be Hezekiah’s, the putting of his name with them was deemed to be quite unnecessary. It went without saying that they were his. He himself spoke of them as “MY Songs”—as though, even then, they were already well-known.

Whenever I read the Psalms, I feel like I am eavesdropping on a saint having a personal conversation with God.
— R.C. Sproul

Affirmations: The Lord watches over me. The Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth, blesses me.

Recommended Reading: Day 33: Psalm 54 A Prayer for Deliverance, Psalm 55 The Lord Will Sustain & I Samuel 23:19-26:1; Day 83: Psalm 120 A Prayer for Deliverance, Psalm-121 Help from the Lord & Psalm 122 The Peace of Jerusalem

Psalms 102:1-4: <A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.> Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee.² Hide not thy face from me in the day *when I am in trouble*; incline thine ear unto me: in the day *when I call* answer me speedily.³ For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.⁴ My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.

“Pray” or “prayer” occurs 40 times in the KJV of Psalms. Some Psalms are identified as prayers in the titles (Psalms 17, 86, 90, 102 & 142). Book Two [Psalms 42-72] closes with the epilogue, “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended” (Psalms 72:20). Prayers form a major part of the Psalter. In the Old Testament, there are at least a dozen Hebrew words for “pray” and “prayer.” The most common of those in Psalms are *tephillah* and *palal*. Psalms is fertile ground for study regarding how to pray.

In Luke 11:1, the disciples ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. I dare say each of us could use instruction in how to approach God in prayer. Much of the prayer in Psalms reflect the conventions of a court trial, giving the appearance of invoking God as Judge. The NIV Study Bible Introduction to Psalms describes the prayers in Psalms as presenting their cases before the heavenly King/Judge, saying, “When beset by wicked adversaries, the petitioners appeal to God for a hearing, describe their situation, plead their innocence (“righteousness”), lodge their accusations against their adversaries, and appeal for deliverance and judicial redress. When suffering at the hands of God (when God is their adversary), they confess their guilt and plead for mercy.”

It also notes 14 aspects of the psalmists’ appeals to God. Although not all of them appear in every prayer, examples of them may be found throughout Psalms. (1) address to God: “O Lord,” “my God,” “my deliverer”; (2) initial appeal: “Arise,” “Answer me,” “Help,” “Save me”; (3) description of distress: “Many are rising against me,” “The wicked attack,” “I am in distress”; (4) complaint against God: “Why have you forsaken me?” “How long will you hide your face from me?”; (5) petition: “Be not far from me,” “Vindicate me”; (6) motivation for God to hear: “for I take refuge in you,” “for your name’s sake”; (7) accusation against the adversary: “There is no truth in their mouths,” “Ruthless men seek my life” (“the wicked” are often quoted); (8) call for judicial redress: “Let them be put to shame,” “Call him to account for his wickedness”; (9) claims of innocence: “I have walked in my integrity,” “They hate me without cause”; (10) confessions of sin: “I have sinned against you,” “I confess my iniquity”; (11) professions of trust: “You are a shield about me,” “You will answer me”; (12) vows to praise for deliverance: “I will sing your might,” “My lips will praise you”; (13) calls to praise: “Magnify the Lord with me,” “Sing praise to the Lord”; (14) motivations for praise: “for you have delivered me,” “for the Lord hears the needy.”

Early on in my Christian life, I remember one of my teachers telling us to, “Get real with God.” When I approached him afterward and asked him how that was done. He explained, “When you go to God, let Him know what is really going on. Tell Him exactly how you feel, exactly what you are thinking. Pour out the anguish in your heart, don’t try to say the right thing, say the real thing. You don’t have to pretend that everything is OK or that you are happy or content with your life. God expects us to be challenged and chastened. If we are not, we are not growing.”

I don’t know how true or accurate that advice was, but I found it very helpful. It lifted the burden of trying to think and feel the way I thought I should, and allowed me to approach God honestly, imperfectly with all my doubts and fears and lay them at His feet. He was always able to work with me if I was willing to admit I needed help. One of the major themes of I John, the fellowship epistle, is honesty. Without honesty it’s impossible to walk in fellowship.

Attitude adjustments come frequently, but I rely on the promise of Philippians 3:15 that if I in any thing I be otherwise minded, God shall reveal it to me. Maturation and growth means change, and I rely on God to help me navigate the changes I need to make. Prayer has been vital in doing so, and Psalms has been profitable in showing me how.

It is not that every sentiment expressed by a psalmist is admirable, but that in praying the Psalms, we confront ourselves as we really are. The Psalms are a reality check to keep prayer from becoming sentimental, superficial, or detached from the real world. — Richard H. Schmidt

Affirmations: I pray in joy and sorrow. I find in Psalms the words I need to express my heart honesty.

Recommended Reading: Day 34: Psalm 56 A Song for the Distressed; I Samuel 21:10-15; Psalms 57 The Mercy and Truth of God & I Samuel 22:1;

Day 84: Psalm 123 A Song of Confidence in God & Psalm 124 God’s Deliverance

Psalms 126:1-3: <A Song of degrees.>

When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.² **Then** was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.³ The LORD hath done great things for us; *whereof* we are glad.

How strange that God's people would be surprised when God delivers with His mighty hand. God can turn any situation "right side up." There is nothing beyond His power and providence. We expect Him to work in a mighty way in the lives of His people. **When** God worked in such a mighty way to turn the captivity of His people, they could hardly believe it. It was almost too good to be true. They had lived so long under the oppression that they had almost given up hope. Now it was as if they wondered, "Could it indeed be real?"

God turned their sorrow into rejoicing. The time in captivity is not as important as the deliverance from the captivity. "**When**" deals with time. Proverbs 13:12 says, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but *when* the desire cometh, *it is* a tree of life." We should never give up hope; so what if it takes longer than we would like; we should not dwell on the length or misery of the captivity, but rather rejoice when the deliverance comes.

Christians who dwell more upon what they have gone through than upon what God has done for them, rob themselves of the joy of living. Enduring difficult situations is seldom fun, but the end of the captivity is always a cause for rejoicing. What is our impression of life? Is it continual conflicts, deep afflictions, and sad adversities? Or, is it a continual feast upon the great things God has done for us?

Then is another word that deals with time. It refers back to verse one. Look at what happened when God turned the captivity of His people. First, let's note the response of God's believing people: "our [plural] mouth [singular]" and "our [plural] tongue [singular]." The people responded unanimously with laughter and singing. It was as if they had one mouth and one tongue. They were united in their rejoicing. The pain of the captivity was swallowed up by their elation of God's mighty power working on their behalf.

Next, let's note the response of the unbelieving heathen: "**The Lord hath done great things for them.**" They recognized it was not by chance. God worked deliberately and completely. They recognized that it was not just common or ordinary things that God did. They recognized that God moved on their behalf.

Then verse three begins like verse two ends. This time it is God's people declaring, "**The Lord hath done great things for us.**" (That's the figure anadiplosis.) God's people are the "apple of His eye" (Deuteronomy 32:10; Psalms 17:8; Zechariah 2:8). What was the end result? God's people were glad. They spoke of it, and it changed their attitude or disposition. Psalm 40 echoes similar sentiments.

Psalms 40:1-5:

I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.² He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings.³ And he hath put a new song in my mouth, *even* praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.⁴ Blessed *is* that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.⁵ Many, O LORD my God, *are* thy wonderful works *which* thou hast done, and thy thoughts *which are* to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: *if* I would declare and speak *of them*, they are more than can be numbered.

We should speak of God's wonderful works. Yes, we may endure trials, but we are delivered out of them (II Timothy 3:11; 4:17, 18). Yes, we have our weaknesses and shortcomings, but we also have an all-sufficient Savior, who works on our behalf and helps us overcome our frailties. God can turn any captivity. Remember how God turned the captivity of Job?

If we remember and recount the difficulties we have been through, let us not forget that we have been through them safely and profitably. We have not remained in captivity. He has turned our sorrow to rejoicing. The deeper our troubles have been, the louder our thanks to God should be. He has led us through all and preserved us until now. As Charles Spurgeon once said, "Our griefs cannot mar the melody of our praise, we reckon them to be the bass part of our life's song."

REMEMBER: "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

The Psalms draw a hard and fast distinction between the righteous and the wicked, something that is not appreciated in a period of religious syncretism. — Kevin Swanson

Affirmations: The Lord has done great things for me. The joy of the Lord is my strength.

Recommended Reading: Day 35: Psalm 58 The Punishment of the Wicked; Psalm 59 Triumph Over Enemies & I Samuel 19:11-17; Day 85: Psalms 125 The Lord the Protector & Psalm 126 Zion's Captivity

I Corinthians 15:57-58:

But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Stepping away from Psalms for just a minute we see Paul telling the Corinthians that their labor in the Lord is never in vain. He makes this bold assertion in spite of other statements he made which may be considered contrary to it. He told the Galatians, “I am afraid of you, “**lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain”** (Galatians 4:11). He told the Philippians, “Do all things without murmurings and disputings... that I have not run in vain, **neither laboured in vain”** (Philippians 2:14, 16). He also told the Thessalonians, “...I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, **and our labour be in vain”** (I Thessalonians 3:5). If it was possible that Paul’s labor for the Lord might have been in vain, how could he tell the Corinthians that their labor could *not* be? It’s a matter of perspective. If one labors in the Lord, it is never in vain. There will always be a reward for the laborer. However, the recipients of the labor may not receive the same benefits that the laborer does if they do not continue in the Word. It’s the effect upon those on whom the labor was performed that becomes vain or fruitless. It’s vain from the receivers’ standpoint, not the laborers’.

Psalms 127 speaks of the vanity of trying to build and protect our families without the Lord’s assistance.

Psalms 127:1-5: <A Song of degrees for Solomon.>

Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain.² *It is* vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: *for* so he giveth his beloved sleep.³ Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD: *and* the fruit of the womb *is his* reward.⁴ As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man; so *are* children of the youth.⁵ Happy *is* the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

Unless we want to labor in vain, we must invite the Lord into our labor. Otherwise, our efforts will be ineffective, pointless and fruitless. This psalm presents two basic activities of life that concern all people at all times and in every culture. It is the trust psalm in group three of the Songs of Degrees. It uses two common concerns to teach us to rely upon the Lord and deliberately trust Him in every aspect of our lives. The two activities are building a house and protecting a city.

Some commentators suggested that two unrelated poems have been spliced together rather poorly, asserting verses 1 and 2 are a reference to building and watching and the vanity of doing these things apart from the Lord and then verses 3 to 5 suddenly shift to the blessing of having children and family. Actually, it’s the idea of building a house and raising a family that unites the psalm. “House” has multiple meanings; two of which are a dwelling and the household that dwells there. In II Samuel 7, we find an interesting word play surrounding these two uses. David tells Nathan he wants to build the Lord a house, and the Lord tells Nathan to tell David, “You’re not going to build Me a house; I’m going to build you a house.” Of course, what David meant was that he wanted to build the Lord a temple and the Lord says, “No David, you’re not going to build Me a house, a temple; I’m going to build you a house, a dynasty, a family that will continue to reign on the throne forever.” The house being built is not just the dwelling, but the people who live there, too. Building a house and protecting a city (i.e. the people in it) cannot be accomplished apart from the Lord’s participation.

Remember this psalm is part of the Songs of Degrees. “Lo” is an asterismos, emphasizing the blessing of children, which would have been denied Hezekiah had the Lord not moved the sun back 10 degrees and added 15 years to his life. Let’s allow God to build our house and establish a legacy of believing in our families.

Key words frequently highlight major themes in prayer or song. Enclosure (repetition of a significant word or phrase at the end that occurs at the beginning) frequently wraps up a composition or a unit within it. The notes on the structure of the individual Psalms often call attention to literary frames within which the psalm has been set. — Notes from NIV Study Bible

Affirmations: I don’t labor in vain. I am beloved of the Lord, and He gives me sweet sleep.

Recommended Reading: Day 36: Psalm 60 Prayer for National Deliverance; Psalm 61 The Prayer of a Troubled Heart & I Samuel 19:11-17;

Day 86: Psalm 127 The Vanity of Work without God & Psalm 128 The God-Fearing Family

Psalm 63:1-2: <A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.>

O God, thou *art* my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; ² To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

I love the morning as my first waking thoughts turn to God. As I lift my prayer and praise to Him, my whole day begins with great expectation (Psalms 57:7-8; 59:16). He satisfies me with His mercy and lovingkindness (Psalms 90:14; 143:8), and He certainly quenches my thirst, providing exceedingly above all I can ask or think.

When we were raising our kids, many times we had to make decisions that were hard and disappointing for them. Whether it was moving and changing schools again, putting down a beloved family pet, or changing family vacation plans, we would always remind them of God's promise that joy would come in the morning. They could be sad and disappointed for the rest of the evening, but we expected the weeping to be over as they realized God's joy in the morning.

Psalms 30:1-5:

I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me. ² O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. ³ O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. ⁴ Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. ⁵ For his anger *endureth but* a moment; in his favour *is* life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.

The morning is a great time for renewal and new beginnings. Jeremiah also talked of it in Lamentations saying in 3:22-23 that the Lord's compassions fail not, they are new every morning. Jesus also set a great example as recorded in Mark 1:35 when he rose a great while before day going out to a solitary place to pray. There are not many days where I rise up "a great while before day" anymore, although there were more than 30 years of my life when I typically beat the sun up. However, 6:30 flights and busy schedules often demand it, even now.

The habit I acquired during that time that continues to pay dividends is directing my first waking thoughts to God with prayer and praise, regardless of the time I arise. The discipline you will be learning with the program will be to rise up early enough to get everything done before you leave the house in the morning. That way, the activities of the day can't interfere, and you are better prepared for them as they come.

Perhaps Jesus took his example from Abraham who, "gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD" (Genesis 19:27). Maybe it was Jacob who, in order to set up an altar, "rose up early in the morning" (Genesis 28:18). Moses is another option. When Moses gave the people the laws of God, he "wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill" (Exodus 24:4). Later, when he was to receive the commandments a second time, "Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto Mount Sinai" (Exodus 34:4). "Joshua rose early in the morning" to lead Israel over the Jordan, and then to capture Jericho; and to take Ai, (Joshua 3:1; 6:12; 8:10).

During the time of the Judges, Gideon "rose up early on the morrow" to prove God's will through putting out the fleece (Judges 6:38). Hannah and Elkanah, in praying for the son who would later become Samuel, "rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD" (I Samuel 1:19).

Certainly, there are exceptions, and people who work 2nd and 3rd shift have their own sleep routines to master, but late sleeping is in general, not a good thing. Proverbs teaches the young that "he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame" (10:5). It challenges the sluggard, "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? (6:9). God promises a reward to early risers saying, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me" (8:17). The psalmist also commits himself in light of that, saying, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up" (Psalms 5:3).

We are not under the law, and we have God's love and favor regardless, but discipline has its own rewards. A lack of discipline often indicates a lack of self-respect because self-respect is the root of discipline. The sense of dignity will grow with the ability to say no to oneself and do what doesn't come easy.

The book of the Psalms, which is the primary devotional literature of the whole Bible, is full of complaints. — David Augsburger

Affirmations: I seek God early. I expect joy to come every morning.

Recommended Reading: Day 37: Psalm 62 Confidence in God & Psalm 63 The Thirsty Soul;

Day 87: Psalm 129 Israel's Enemies & Psalm 130 Waiting on the Lord

Psalms 32:11:

Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy [*ranan*], all ye that are upright in heart.

Psalms 47:1 <To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.>

O clap your hands, all ye people; shout [*ruwa*] unto God with the voice of triumph.

There are three Hebrew words in Psalms translated shout. *Ranan* occurs 53 times in the Old Testament and 25 of them are in Psalms. It is usually translated “rejoice,” “shout for joy” or “sing aloud.” 80% of the time it is in the piel conjugation that shows intensive or intentional action. These shouts were deliberate and passionate. In its first use in Leviticus, it refers to the response of the people when God consumed the burnt offering with fire (Leviticus 9:24). *Ruwa* occurs 46 times in the Old Testament and 12 of them are in Psalms. It is usually translated as “make a joyful noise” or “triumph. 75% of the time it is in the hiphil conjugation showing a causative action. In its first use in Numbers, it refers to the alarm or war-cry (Numbers 10:7-9). *Teruwah* occurs 36 times in the Old Testament and 5 of them are in Psalms. It refers to a shout or sound and is translated differently in each of its 5 uses. In its first use in Leviticus, it refers to the blowing of trumpets on Tishri 1 (Leviticus 23:24).

In Psalms, we find the psalmists passionately expressing themselves. In Psalms, we find a variety of shouts. Shouts of love and hatred. Shouts of rejoicing and suffering. Shouts of praise and expectation. Using the figure personification, we also find valleys and flocks shouting for joy (Psalms 65:13). David gives a series of instruction on shouting:

Psalms 5:11:

But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy [*ranan*], because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

Psalms 32:11:

Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy [*ranan*], all ye that are upright in heart.

Psalms 35:27:

Let them shout for joy [*ranan*], and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

David also personally vows to shout of God’s goodness:

Psalms 51:14:

Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud [*ranan*, shout for joy] of thy righteousness.

Psalms 59:16:

But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud [*ranan*, shout for joy] of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.

Psalms 63:7:

Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice [*ranan*].

David also invites God’s people to join him in shouting for joy:

Psalms 95:1-2:

O come, let us sing [*ranan*] unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise [*ruwa*] to the rock of our salvation. ²

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise [*ruwa*] unto him with Psalms.

The Sons of Korah also encourages us to add clapping to our shouting.

Psalms 47:1 <To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.>

O clap your hands, all ye people; shout [*ruwa*] unto God with the voice of triumph.

Let’s give a shout out to the Lord our God and His only begotten Son who always cause us to triumph!

Yank some of the groans out of your prayers, and shove in some shouts. — Billy Sunday

Affirmations: I shout praise with the voice of triumph. I shout with joy for my God defends me.

Recommended Reading: Day 38: Psalm 64 Appeal for Aid Against Enemies & Psalm 65 God’s Provisions for the Earth

Day 88: Psalm 131 A Song of the Humble & Psalm 132 The Promise to David and Zion

Psalms 133:1-3: <A Song of degrees of David.>

Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! ² *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; ³ As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore.

Psalm 133 is an example of emblematic parallelism. The truth expressed in verse one is followed by images to illustrate and expand upon it. While verse one conveys the main point in a direct fashion, the next two verses use similes to illuminate it by beautiful imagery. The first shows the pleasantness of unity, and the second its profitableness

Verse 1 starts with “Behold.” It’s the figure asterismos — to call our attention to a wonder seldom seen. Although rare, it may be seen, for it is a characteristic of God’s household. It is well worthy of admiration so inspect it. . . . gaze upon it. . . . wonder at it. . . . focus attention upon it —UNITY! It is not just good and pleasant; it is *so* good and *so* pleasant that it defies measure. The Psalmist uses the word “how” twice in attempt to solicit our estimation and secure our attention.

Examples of brethren dwelling together in unity are not all that frequent in scripture. Abraham and Lot did, but only for a while (Genesis 12:5; 13:1-8). Ruth and Naomi did (Ruth 1:16-17). David and Jonathan did (I Samuel 18:1-4; 19:1-7; 20:4, 35-42). The Rechabites did (Jeremiah 35:2-10, 18). The early church did (Acts 2:44-47). Note it is unity not uniformity that is good and pleasant. God authors unity in diversity (I Corinthians 12:4-6).

In order that we may the better understand the unity, the psalmist gives two comparisons. The first is: “*It is like the precious ointment. . . .*” This unity has a sweet fragrance like that of the precious ointment with which the first High Priest was anointed at his ordination. This was a holy oil consecrated and used only in the Lord’s service on the Lord’s high priest alone! This anointing oil set Aaron apart for the special service of the Lord, even so, those who dwell together in unity are fitly framed together (Ephesians 4:16) to glorify God in service to the body of Christ. Although it was the head that was anointed, the extravagant and precious ointment didn’t stay on the head it *ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard and went down to the skirts of his garments*. The blessing is pervasive. It moves. It doesn’t stop where it starts but influences and affects the entire body.

Verse 3 gives the second point of comparison. Unity is *as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion*. This choice dew descends refreshing and enlivening as it goes. Holy concord is as dew, mysteriously blessed, full of life and growth for all plants of grace. This dew has the Lord’s blessing resting upon it, and like “the precious ointment” it descends affecting, prevailing and touching as it goes.

Jesus certainly knew the blessing of unity. He maintained unity with his heavenly Father and proudly spoke of it saying, “*I and my Father are one*” (John 10:30). It was also part of his high priestly prayer in John 17.

John 17:20-23:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; ²¹ That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. ²² And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: ²³ I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Paul exhorted the Ephesians to walk worthy in the beginning of the practical section of Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 4:1-3:

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, ² With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love ³ Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We do not have to establish it, that’s God’s job. It’s the masterpiece He created (Ephesians 2:10). All of us together placed in this beautiful masterpiece as it has pleased Him. He does, however, require us to keep or maintain it. This will secure the blessing for us. Then we can live with the aroma of the precious ointment and enjoy the refreshing of the dew forevermore.

It’s written in the Psalms that “deep calls to deep,” which is what happens when you get a glimpse of what someone else has gone through or is currently in the throes of and you find yourself inextricably, mysteriously linked with that person because you have been reminded again of our common humanity and its singular source, the subsurface unity of all things that is ever before us in countless manifestations but requires eyes wide open to see it burst into view.” — Rob Bell

Affirmations: I endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. I dwell in unity with my brethren.

Recommended Reading: Day 39: Psalm 66 God’s Power and Works & Psalm 67 God Governs the Nations;

Day 89: Psalm 133 Brotherly Unity & Psalm 134 Blessings for the Night Watch

Psalm 23:1-3 <A Psalm of David.>

The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. ³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

The first verse of the beautiful Shepherd's Psalm is, "The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want." Then the rest of the psalm gives reason after reason why the initial statement was true. David knew the shepherd's life and understood that no better shepherd could be found than the Lord. His care and oversight of our lives are matchless. David also encouraged God's people to fear the Lord as he did for those who did would have no lack.

Psalm 34:9-10:

O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for *there is* no want to them that fear him. ¹⁰ The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

Jesus lived a life without lack because he sought not his own will but his Father's (John 5:30; 6:38). He also directly taught to not have anxious care but to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness first, and all other things would be added unto us. It is available to live without lack. God can supply all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

Matthew 6:31-33:

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? ³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. ³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

God took care of the Children of Israel for 40 years while in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing (Deuteronomy 2:7; Nehemiah 9:21). When He fed them with manna from heaven, even those who "gathered little had no lack" (Exodus 16:18; II Corinthians 8:15). Even the widow who provided for Elijah had no lack of oil or meal because the LORD God of Israel declared that it be so (I Kings 17:14). God also provided shepherds who would feed His people so they would lack nothing. (Jeremiah 23:4).

The first-century church lived without lack (Acts 4:34). Neither should there be a lack for believers today. Everything we could ever need and every problem we could ever face has been amply supplied and paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ. God's exceeding great and precious promises have supplied it all (II Peter 1:4; Philippians 4:19). When we become convinced that God's Word is true, and we become skillful in the Word of righteousness (Hebrews 5:13), we, too, will not want. Really! God is not a man that He should lie.

Numbers 23:19:

God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

I Kings 8:56:

Blessed *be* the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.

Can we get in agreement with those scriptures? If we do, we like David will be able to say, "The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want." Let's be cheerful, smiling and rarely complain. With no lack, we can be successful and remain humble and compassionate. We not only know where we want to go in life; we know how to get there. Jesus blazed the trail, and we can walk in his steps. That's why we are full of hope for the future and convinced that God's Word will come to pass in our lives. Enjoy your days wanting no good thing.

Praising God is contagious; especially for those of us who like to be affected by Him. — Shelena Griffiths

Affirmations: I shall not want. I seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Recommended Reading: Day 40: Psalm 68 The God of Israel;

Day 90: Psalm 135 Praise to the Lord

Psalms 136:1-3:

O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever. ² O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy *endureth* for ever. ³ O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

What a grand opening to an amazing Psalm. Three times the psalmist commands God's people to give thanks, marking each imperative with an "O" to show how intensely earnest his plea is. Not only is each plea impassioned it is followed by a reason. Indeed, every verse in the psalm repeats the same refrain, "His mercy endureth for ever." Surely God deserves our constant gratitude for His mercy does indeed endure for ever.

Psalm 136 offers a healthy perspective on gratitude. Our lives overflow with gratitude when we're convinced of God's love and mercy. The Hebrew verb for "give thanks," *yadah*, conveys the idea of verbally acknowledging something—this thankfulness is more than just an attitude. The basic difference between *yadah* and its synonym *halal* is that *halal* tends to stress the "acclaim of," "boasting of," or "glorying in" an object, while *yadah* emphasizes the "recognition" and "declaration" of a fact. The former emphasizes the action evoked by an object, and the latter stresses the initiation by the subject. Both words express praise for Who God is and what He does. They are responses to God's great character and His wonderful works.

Mercy is the Hebrew, *chesed*. It's translated love, mercy, kindness, goodness, lovingkindness and favor. It is graciousness and favor extended to someone to whom a person is responsible. It speaks to loyalty borne out of love and kindness and refers to the fidelity of those belonging together. It connotes goodness or kindness beyond what is expected or deserved, based solely on ready magnanimity towards others. It has an element of permanence and reliability implicit in a family or a covenant between friends. Because it is so rich in meaning, it is hard to translate into English. Very few words have a wider spectrum of translation than *chesed*.

The repetition of the aetilogia (the figure of speech that renders a reason for what is said or done) that ends each verse is also an amoebaeon (refrain) or epistrophe. Such figurative emphasis attests to the import of the statement. The KJV phrase, "His mercy endureth forever," is rendered different in many translations. Some of them are: "His grace continues forever" (CJB); "His love is eternal/endures forever" (CSB/NIV); "His steadfast/loyal/faithful love endures/continues forever" (ESV/NET/NIRV/NLT/NRS); "His lovingkindness is everlasting. (NAS) & "His goodness is forever" (PST). However it is translated, it has always been a significant cry of triumph for God's people.

We also find it in other Psalms (Psalms 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 118:1-4, 29 & 138:8) and in important historical records. When King David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, we read in I Chronicles 16:34, "O give thanks to the LORD for He is good; for His mercy endures for ever." Later in I Chronicles 16:41, we read of people specifically chosen to give thanks to the LORD because His mercy endures for ever. It is used in the record in II Chronicles 5 of when the Temple was completed, and the priests came out and praised the Lord saying, "give thanks to the LORD for He is good; for His mercy endures for ever," at which time the glory of the LORD so filled the Temple that the priests could no longer minister there! (See also II Chronicles 7:1-6.) In II Chronicles 20:21, when King Jehoshaphat went into battle He sent the singers out before the army, and they sang this phrase: "Praise (same Hebrew words as "give thanks") the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever." Then as they began to sing their enemies destroyed each other. When Ezra rebuilt the temple the priests and Levites decked in their grand regalia sang praise, giving thanks "unto the LORD; because *he is* good, for his mercy endureth for ever" (Ezra 3:11). When God described the joy of His people after their return from captivity He said, "the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD *is* good; for his mercy endureth for ever" (Jeremiah 33:11)." So, this phrase which is repeated in every verse of Psalm 136 is a famous one in Old Testament worship and history. Should it not remain a favorite one of ours as we give thanks unto the LORD remembering that He *is* good and His mercy endures for ever?

Praise is the rehearsal of our eternal song. By grace we learn to sing, and in glory we continue to sing. What will some of you do when you get to heaven, if you go on grumbling all the way? Do not hope to get to heaven in that style. But now begin to bless the name of the Lord. — Charles Spurgeon

Affirmations: I give thanks unto the Lord for He is good. God's mercy to me never ends.

Recommended Reading: Day 41: Psalm 69 The Prayer for Deliverance;

Day 91: Psalm 136 A Litany of God's Wonders

Psalms 71:1-3:

In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.² Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me.³ Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou *art* my rock and my fortress.

Sometimes I daydream about going to an exclusive resort with my wife taking nothing with us but a Bible. The thought of getting away from the daily hassle of life and pampering ourselves is very alluring. Then I get tickled thinking that is available unto me anytime I want to take refuge in God. He is “my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort.”

Psalms teaches us to be personal with God. So often we have not because we ask not (James 4:2). God will be whatever we need Him to be (Exodus 3:14). Why not ask specifically? Other translations of Psalms 71:3a are: “Be a rock of refuge for me, where I can always go” (Holman Christian Standard Bible). “Be my protector and refuge, a stronghold where I can be safe!” (New English Translation). “Be a sheltering rock for me, always accessible (New Jerusalem Bible). “Be my rock of safety where I can always hide” (New Living Translation).

Our English word, “resort,” is usually associated with a place of rest and relaxation. It carries with it the idea of vacation, recreation, amusement, refreshment, renewal, and revival. In the midst of the daily hustle-bustle of life we can “continually” resort to the Lord just as the psalmist did. We may not be able to get away physically or geographically, but there is the continual opportunity spiritually to commune with the Lord in the midst of all our other responsibilities.

After being given a picture of a smiling Jesus, I quickly gathered several others of my own and placed them at strategic places throughout the house. Then as I look at them I find myself entering into them. . . walking the road to Emmaus with him, inspecting the nail prints in his hands or helping him return sight to a blind man. Those short mental excursions renew my strength.

I’ve found that without times of solitude and rest, it’s very difficult to remain continually peaceful. Jesus’ life-style included time alone with his heavenly Father (Mark 1:35). When Jesus chose the twelve, he spent the whole night before in prayer (Luke 6:12-13). He so wanted to be right. Mark 6:7-13 records how Jesus sent out the twelve, and how they had such wonderful success teaching, preaching, and healing. They returned very excitedly.

Mark 6:30-32:

And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.³¹ And he said unto them, **Come ye yourselves apart** into a desert place, **and rest** a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.³² And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

In this day of instant everything, it is a real challenge to come aside from the pleasures and influences of a 21st-century society to spend time with God. We can get so busy with our “coming and going.” We neglect to enjoy our relationship with our wonderful and loving heavenly Father, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Oftentimes we find *ourselves* coming apart because we have failed to “come apart” and have that time of rest and refreshing that is so important.

Jesus told his disciples to “come apart and rest” (Mark 6:30). When is the last time we did that? Jesus, himself, found it important to withdraw into a solitary place. With only seventy weeks to minister, he chose times to be *alone* in silence where he could hear the “still, small voice” without the clamor, pressure and demands of his world. If we want to enjoy intimacy with God, we should do the same.

The Psalms are much more than poetry. Many of them bear the title, Maskil, or teaching psalm. They are thus intended to instruct the mind as well as to encourage the heart. They are designed not only to reflect a mood, but to show us also how to handle that mood; how to escape from depression or how to balance exaltation with wisdom. — Ray C. Stedman

Affirmations: God is my refuge, my rock, my safe dwelling. I rest when I need to, so I can be my best for God.
 Recommended Reading: Day 42: Psalm 70 Deliverance from Persecutors & Psalm 71 The Prayer of an Aged Man; Day 92: Psalm 137 Captives in Babylon & Psalm 138 The Lord a Faithful God

Psalms 139:23-24:

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴ And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Reading Psalm 139 always stirs my heart, especially David's bold request at the end of it to search him and lead him. In verse one David declares that God has already done so, yet he requests God continue to repeat His investigation. Indeed, God is the only One capable of exploring, examining and investigating our hearts for only He knows the secrets of the heart (I Chronicles 28:9; Psalms 44:21; Jeremiah 17:10; Romans 8:27; & II Corinthians 2:9-11). David wanted his heart, thoughts and ways pure before God. Truly he was a man after God's own heart. No wonder he was chosen to be the servant leader of God's people (Psalms 78:70-72).

Psalms 139:23-24 are verses my minister used to recite at the end of his sermons. I have repeated the same request many times. I so want my thoughts, ways and heart to be pleasing to God. I consciously try to set my affection upon things above (Colossians 3:2) and bring my thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ (II Corinthians 10:5). I'm inspired by David's desire not to live a futile life. He denies complacency any foothold in his life and desires God to evaluate and to elevate his life beyond trivial pursuits. David wanted reproof and correction, so he would bring glory to the One who had fearfully and wonderfully made him. Don't we all want the same?

The opening of the psalm makes it clear that David was acutely aware of God's presence with him at all times. He wanted to eliminate anxious thoughts and offensive ways and embrace the greatness that God desired for him. We serve an awesome God Who is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. He not only knew us and formed us in the womb but continues to gloriously direct our steps today. Philippians 1:6 comforts us by reminding us that God who began a good work in us will bring it to completion.

Just how should we interact with the Lord God Almighty who knows everything about us and is always present with us? Do we find His abiding presence comforting or concerning? Does it please us or make us anxious? We could ask the same questions about His detailed and intimate knowledge of us. However, it is His presence with us and His knowledge of us that makes His leading of us so personal and intricate.

Earlier in Psalms, we find David making a similar request:

Psalms 26:1-3: *< A Psalm of David. >*

Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; *therefore* I shall not slide. ² Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart. ³ For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.

The Hebrew word for "examine" in Psalms 26:2 is the same as "try" in Psalms 139:23, *bachan*. In Psalms 26 it is followed by two close synonyms, *nacah* and *tsaraph*. They basically mean "to refine or purify." David wants God to test him for impurities using a word with an implied comparison with refining. Of course, he expects to pass the test. Psalms 139:23 notes the impurities he worries about are anxious, excited thoughts that tend to disquiet the soul.

In Psalms 139:24 his prayer continues with the intent of eliminating any wicked way. "Wicked" is a rare Hebrew word used to emphasize the pain or sorrow the "way" would cause. The final request is to be lead or guided in the right way of living that will endure (Psalms 1:6). Being lead by the hand of God is something he has already voiced and expects to happen (Psalms 139:10).

What a heart David had for God and the things of God. Let's follow his example and enjoy thee pureness of heart the servant-leadership epistles direct us to (I Timothy 1:5; 3:9; 4:12; 5:2, 22; II Timothy 1:3; 2:22; Titus 1:15; 2:14).

There's Psalms that tell you things that nobody tells you - that you're fearfully and wonderfully made, that you're beautiful, that you have worth, basically. — Michaela Coel

Affirmations: I want God to search me and lead me. I have a heart like David.

Recommended Reading: Day 43: Psalm 72 A Prayer for the King;

Day 93: Psalms 139 The Prayer of a Believing Heart

Psalms 73:1-3: <A Psalm of Asaph.>

Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.² But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.³ For [giving us the reason] I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

In Psalm 73, Asaph gets into trouble because he looks at others. He starts with a positive declaration, but it doesn't take long before he's distracted. He recognized that God is good to Israel and those of a clean heart. However, he did not realize that goodness himself. When it came to him, things weren't working out right. Indeed, he felt like he was in slippery places. His foundations were removed, and his feet were unsure. What he had counted on or relied upon before was now failing him. The next verses tell us why. He looks around and saw the wicked prospering, and he was entrapped by the deceitfulness of riches.

He then carefully notes his observations.

Psalms 73:4-12: For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.⁵ They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.⁶ Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.⁷ Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.⁸ They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.⁹ They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.¹⁰ Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.¹¹ And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?¹² Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.

From the outside looking in, they all seemed to have everything together. Nothing ever seemed to go wrong for them. They even mocked God without consequence. He became confused seeing gain without godliness. He began to doubt himself and became disgruntled, thinking that all his effort was apparently in vain.

Psalms 73:13-16: Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. [I do the Word, and what do I have to show for it?] ¹⁴ For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.¹⁵ If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.¹⁶ When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;

It didn't matter what he did; he seemed to always get into trouble. When he tried to figure out why it only caused him pain. His attitude suffered as he let himself be distracted. However, he did turn things around. It started when he went to the sanctuary of God. The other believers helped him get his thinking straight. He finally understood that his observations were wrong when he saw things from God's perspective.

Psalms 73:17-18: Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.¹⁸ Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.

Before he thought that he was in slippery places, now he realizes that the wicked are the ones without the proper foundation for life. Their momentary success pales in the light of eternity.

Psalms 73:19-21: How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.²⁰ As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.²¹ Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins [a word for *mind* that indicates the mind's ability to direct one's life].

He was almost embarrassed when he realized how inappropriately he had been thinking. He felt foolish like a beast led about. If we do not control our thinking, our adversary will be more than happy to lead us about like a brute beast, too.

Psalms 73:22-24: So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee. [That's how he was when he was distracted by the wicked.] ²³ Nevertheless [but not now that he is thinking correctly he realized] I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.²⁴ Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

Well hallelujah! It's about time he got it right and realized God's presence with him is more important than anything the wicked had to offer. When he looked around he was distracted from the true riches of life – not any longer. He has set his affection on things above and is thrilled by God's presence in his life.

Psalms 73:25-28: Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.²⁶ My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.²⁷ For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.²⁸ But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.

Drawing near to God is a good thing! Our trust in Him is shown by speaking of His greatness. Even when our flesh and heart fail, God is still the strength of our heart and our portion forever. He is our all in all. Let's learn from Asaph's mistakes and avoid the trap he fell into.

The Psalms draw a hard and fast distinction between the righteous and the wicked, something that is not appreciated in a period of religious syncretism. — Kevin Swanson

Affirmations: I will not be distracted by the apparent prosperity of the wicked. God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.

Recommended Reading: Day 44: Psalm 73 God Delivers the Righteous;

Day 94: Psalm 140 For Protection Against Enemies

Psalms 91:3, 14-15: Surely he shall deliver [*natsal*] thee from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome pestilence. . . .¹⁴ Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver [*palat*] him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. ¹⁵ He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver [*chalats*] him, and honour him.

One of the major themes of Psalms is deliverance. Not only are words like “deliver,” “save” and “rescue” frequently used, but cries for help like, “Help us, O God” and “Help me O Lord” also occur. Psalm 91 is certainly an encouraging psalm of deliverance. It is full of precious promises of God’s deliverance for all who love Him. I can’t think of a more concise, descriptive passage in the entire Bible for helping us understand how to safely abide in God’s care.

Psalm 91 is often called the Soldiers’ Psalm, and when I went through basic training in the army I was given a copy of it on a card. I was told that as early as World War I, many soldiers recited it daily. God is both willing and able to keep His promises. God will shield us as we confidently claim His refuge, safety, covering, freedom from fear, deliverance and protection. (Apparently, these cards are still available: <https://thefathersbusiness.com/product/psalm-91-cards/>)

Three times it states that God will deliver us, and in each case, a different Hebrew synonym is used. God delivers in various ways, and it may not always be in the way we expect. It’s important to know that His way of delivering us may vary so that we don’t get discouraged when it doesn’t happen in the way we desire. God delivers in different ways from different types of trouble and danger. Sometimes God delivers by quickly removing us from the trouble or danger. The word translated *deliver* in Psalms 91:3, *natsal*, means to snatch away, pluck or rescue. It is the word deliver that David used 3 times in Psalm 18 when David sang of how God snatched him out of the hand of his enemies (Psalms 18:1, 17, 48).

Sometimes God will send people to intercede and do it for Him (I Samuel 12:11; 30:18; Acts 23:23-24). Sometimes God will just tell you to leave a place or stop doing something (Proverbs 6:3, 5). God will tell us to just get out now. If God tells us to leave, we should do it immediately. We shouldn’t question it or try to figure it out; we should obey immediately and leave, getting out of there as fast as we can. We can think about it later. That snatching away may save our lives (Psalms 33:19; 56:13).

The second occurrence of deliver in Psalms 91 is in verse 14. It is the Hebrew *palat*. In the Psalter, *palat* is always on the lips of the Psalmist addressed to God either in testimony of praise for deliverance (Psalms 18:2; 70:5; 144:2) or in seeking God’s deliverance (Psalms 17:13; 40:17; 71:4). Only in Psalms 91:14 is God the subject of the verb, and He emphatically declares, “I will deliver him.” Every occurrence of *palat* in Psalms is in the piel conjugation which shows intensive or intentional action. When God performs our escape in this fashion, it is deliberate and intense.

The third and last Hebrew word is *chalats*. In Psalms 91:15, the promise to deliver is accompanied by promises to be with us in trouble and to honor us.

Psalms 91:15:

He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

The word “deliver” in Psalms 91:15 means to equip, to arm for war, to make strong, to brace up or invigorate. God’s will is always to deliver us. We just need to ascertain by the spirit how He wants to do it. Sometimes, He removes us from the situation (like when Jesus passed through the crowd when they were going to throw him off the cliff [Luke 4:29-30] or when the 4 leprous men went into the camp of the Syrians to find them gone [II Kings 7:5]) and sometimes He intervenes with miraculous works of power (like parting the Red sea or the Jordan and dropping the walls of Jericho), but often He just gives us the equipment to slug it out right where we are and win. If this is His choice of deliverance, He’ll stay with us through the fight and honor us with the victory.

God said that He would be with us in trouble. While He is with us, He has provided us the wherewithal to win. Let us put on the whole armor of God. It is the protection we need in battle. We need to use the manifestations of the spirit and the wonderful Word of God we have been given so we can fight and win. Let us use the sword of the spirit, the Word of God. It is a double-edged sword, sharp enough to pierce and penetrate any enemy.

The fight is usually between our ears. The battlefield is our mind, and that is where we win or lose. We all face adversity in our lives. However, it is not the adversity, but how we react to it that will determine the joy and happiness in our lives. So, let’s seek His help and except it regardless of how He chooses to deliver. Let’s also make sure we follow up His deliverances with lavish praise.

The Psalms are honest: there is no easy triumphalism and no attempt to disguise the trials that beset believers.

— G.W. Grogan

The Psalms wrap nouns and verbs around our pain better than any other book. — Joni Eareckson Tada

Affirmations: God is with me in trouble. I am fully equipped and ready for battle.

Recommended Reading: Day 45: Psalm 74 A Plea for Relief;

Day 95: Psalm 141 Conduct Amidst Trial

Psalms 105:17-19:

He [the Lord] sent a man before them [the children of Israel], *even* Joseph, *who* was sold for a servant: ¹⁸ Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron ¹⁹ Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him.

I hate to wait. Patience is not part of my natural temperament. However, Hebrews gives us an important admonition. Hebrews 10:36 says, “For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” That was certainly true of Joseph, the subject of today’s lesson. Psalm 105 gives us a unique insight into his life.

Joseph was seventeen years of age when the word of the Lord came promising him an awesome future (Genesis 37:2 5 & 9). God’s promise was established with two dreams. Although the dreams thrilled Joseph, and he shared them with his family, His family did not receive them with the same excitement. Joseph waited twelve long years for the fulfillment of that promise and endured much hardship along the way. If you are waiting to see your dream come to pass, you’re in very good company. Abraham waited 25 years. Moses waited 40 years. Jesus waited 29 years.

No waiting period is easy, but Joseph stayed put on the promise God gave him. Until that Word of the Lord came to pass Joseph was tested by it. That very promise tried him as a person, yet he never gave up on it. The Hebrew word translated *tried* in this verse means “to test or refine.” It occurs 7 times in Psalms (Psalms 12:6; 17:3; 18:30; 26:2; 105:19 & 119:140). It is a term used in the smelting of metals to describe the removing of impurities from them. It is the same word used in Psalms 12:6 for the purifying of silver. God refines us in much the same way as silver is purified.

Psalms 66:10:

For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

Although many people believe that God uses circumstances to test and refine them, Jeremiah had a different opinion. He said in Lamentations 3:33 that the Lord “does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.” It was not hardships which tested Joseph and refined him, it was the promise of God. All of the adversity and opposition were intended to break his resolve, but it did not. He, like Elizabeth and Mary, was convinced that “there shall be a performance of those things promised by the Lord” (Luke 1:45).

When our situations contradict the promises and assurances God has given us, we have two choices: we can be discouraged by the circumstance or be encouraged by the promise. Circumstances can change, but the Word of God will never change; it liveth and abideth forever (I Peter 1:23). Like Joseph, we can see a beautiful fulfillment of all those things promised us by the Lord (Numbers 23:19).

The story of Joseph shows us that the assault of the kingdom of darkness against God’s people focuses on destroying the dreams and desires God has deposited in our hearts. Satan will use any means possible to prevent us from realizing God’s plan. It may be surprising just who he will use and what he will do to stop us.

God placed a dream deep within Joseph that would guide and order his entire life. This dream revealed how God would raise Joseph into a position of authority. His family refused to believe it, and his brothers hated him, his dream, and his words. They were determined to destroy their younger brother, even though God was lifting him up.

God’s Word revealed to us, contains the plans for our future and the power to move us into His dream. The power of God’s Word will bring to pass every promise He has spoken and every dream He has given. Beware of the nay-sayers and the dream slayers! Don’t let your God-given dream die!

If you need a guide for your ongoing relationship with God, read Psalms. — Jim George

Affirmations: I have patience and I will receive the promise. The Word has been tried and it will try me!

Recommended Reading: Day 46: Psalm 75 The Justice of God & Psalm 76 The Victorious Power of God;

Day 97: Psalm 142 The Prisoner’s Prayer & Psalm 143 The Prayer of a Soul in Distress

Psalms 77:1-3: <To Jeduthun, A Psalm of Asaph.>

I cried unto God with **my** voice, even unto God with **my** voice; and he gave ear unto **me**.² In the day of **my** trouble I sought the Lord: **my** sore ran in the night, and ceased not: **my** soul refused to be comforted.³ I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and **my** spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.

Asaph tells us of the time in his life when he faced serious, grievous problems which kept him up at night and wouldn't stop. The reason his trouble ceased not was because he refused comfort. Although the comfort of God was available, it was not realized because it was refused. Freedom of will allows us to be miserable if we want. Sometimes, for whatever reason, our conditioned responses engender emotions that over power our logic and reasoning. They can be so powerful that we often feel incapable of controlling them. We know rationally and logically that we have been delivered, but we do not feel like it... sometimes we don't even seem to want it. We can even fight against ourselves. The next three verses explain:

Psalms 77:4-6: Thou holdest **mine** eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.⁵ I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.⁶ I call to remembrance **my** song in the night: I commune with **mine own** heart: and **my** spirit [the spirit of man, referring to his soul life] made diligent search.

Even his thoughts of God didn't relieve his trouble. The distress of the present outweighed any memories of God's grace and goodness in the past. Then he explains how the situation went from bad to worse – he complained. If you want to be overwhelmed, start complaining. Then he blamed God for his sleeplessness and became so depressed that he could not speak. He ransacked his experience, his memory, his intellect, to find or discover the reason the deliverance was denied him. That's the problem in a nutshell. He communed with his own heart and looked within himself for answers and deliverance. His introspection continued for he was resolved to get to the bottom of his sorrow and follow it back to its beginning. But, his introspection in verses 1-6 (with 20 references to himself) only led to his questioning God's willingness and ability in verses 7-9 (with 7 references to God).

Although he didn't speak, his mind was still active. He thought about his former days and considered how God worked even unto ancient times. He even recalled previous deliverances when he sang songs of praise in the darkest of nights. His heart mused as he inquired, "Why has this happened to me?" Then in verses seven through nine he asks a series of six questions all of which demonstrate his despair and his temporary lack of confidence in God. His despair caused him to consider that his trouble would never end.

Psalms 77:7-9: Will the **Lord** cast off for ever? and will **he** be favourable no more? [He had been favorable, why did it stop?] ⁸ Is **his** mercy clean gone for ever? doth **his** promise fail for evermore? ⁹ Hath **God** forgotten to be gracious? hath **he** in anger shut up **his** tender mercies? Selah. [Think on these things.]

Most of us, who have lived for any length of time and are honest about life, may understand the difficulty he was having. Things went from bad to worse as his mind wandered, driven by doubt. Although he was pressing for answers, he found none. His focus turned from his own inability to do anything to God's apparent unwillingness to act on his behalf. His uncertainty about God caused him to be double-minded. He was no longer sure of God's willingness and ability to help him.

Then in verse 10, he says, "This is my infirmity [my weakness]. . . ." "This" refers to what he has just described in verses two through nine, most specifically the doubt and confusion expressed in verses 7-9. Instead of continuing in his negative spiral down, he took responsibility for his thinking realizing that he had been working against himself. However, once he realized what the problem was, he summoned the resolve to do something about it. Now look at his bold resolve.

Psalms 77:10b-12: ... but **I will remember** the years of the right hand of the most High.¹¹ **I will remember** the works of the LORD: surely **I will remember** thy wonders of old.¹² **I will meditate** also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

"I will remember...." "I will remember...." "I will remember...." "I will meditate...." He made his mind work for him not against him. He not only remembered the goodness of God, he also meditated upon it. He repeated it to himself over and over again. Verses 10-12 show that he had made a complete turn around from

verses 2-9. Then he took the next step and began talking of all God had done. He set his affection on things above, and praised God for Who He is, thankfully recognizing what He had done.

Psalms 77:13-20: Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God? ¹⁴ Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people. ¹⁵ Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. ¹⁶ The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled. ¹⁷ The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad. ¹⁸ The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook. ¹⁹ Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. ²⁰ Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

If you want to be miserable, you can take lessons from Asaph and look within. When we place our eyes on ourselves, our weaknesses and inabilities often come to center stage. However, when we look at God's goodness and God's ability and declare it, we can get our thinking straightened out.

The Psalms weave an emotional fabric for the human soul. These inspired lyrics take us by the hand and train us in proper emotion. They lead us to emotional maturity. — Kevin Swanson

Affirmations: I refuse to complain. I will remember and meditate on the great things God has done for me.

Recommended Reading: Day 47: Psalm 77 The Call to God for Help & Psalm 78 God's Guidance for His People Day 97: Psalms 144 The Warrior's Psalm

Psalms 145:16-19:

Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. ¹⁷ The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. ¹⁸ The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. ¹⁹ He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.

In a world of unmet expectations, we desperately want to find someone or something that fulfills all our desires and meets all our expectations. Most things and most people never meet our expectations, but we have a God that can do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think (Ephesians 3:20). Indeed, Paul promised that his God would supply all our need according to His riches in glory (Philippians 4:19).

There are few things that I can think of that are more satisfying than a true and vital relationship with God and His son, Jesus Christ. They can bring true satisfaction for the longing soul, and for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5:6). Life today may not be totally satisfying, but if we delight ourselves in the Lord He will give us the desires of our hearts (Psalms 37:4). We should expect God to satisfy.

Psalms 16:11:

Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

Since Psalms deals with relationship, it has much to say about satisfaction. Psalms 107:9 says God “satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.” Even in the parched wasteland that this world is, God can satisfy (Isaiah 58:11 & Jeremiah 31:25).

We may, at times, be tempted to quit or hesitate when we tire, but the Word of God admonishes us to “not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9). In those times of temptation, we must remember that God alone satisfies us in drought satiating “*the weary soul*” and He will replenish “*every sorrowful soul*.”

Psalms 132:15:

I will abundantly bless her [Zion’s] provisions; I will satisfy her poor with bread.

David spoke often in Psalms of satisfaction for himself and God’s people. He said, “I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness” (17:15); “my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness” (63:5); “we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house” (65:4) “the meek shall eat and be satisfied” (22:26); “they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house” (36:8); “in the days of famine they shall be satisfied” (37:19).

Psalms 34:8:

O Taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

“Taste and see” invites us to a sumptuous feast which has long been ready. Come sit at God’s table and partake of His goodness. Make an experimental trial, of the goodness of God. We’ll never know unless we taste it for ourselves. We will only know that the Lord is good, really and personally, by experience. There are some things which can only be understood by being experienced and which, even then, are very difficult to describe or articulate in words. Don’t “wolf-down” the goodness of God. Use your palate; know and consider them. Enjoy each savory bite and remember its impact on your palate. Let it linger; don’t let it be forgotten or disparaged. I promise He will satisfy.

Some say that all that we can obtain of spiritual consolation or understanding in this life is but a taste, the real meal is yet to come. Yet, what an impression a simple taste can make. When we received Christ Jesus as Lord, we began a committed relationship with the Father and the son. We cannot know true satisfaction from the things of this world for they are only temporary, and they can only bring temporary or fleeting satisfaction. David, a man after God’s own heart, knew his heavenly Father, Who had him record in the beautiful 145th psalm that God opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing. Those who want to be truly satisfied can receive it from His hand. Let’s taste and see.

Bible history from Genesis on passes through the Book of Psalms. We must know something of what went before—and what comes after—in order to appreciate this fascinating and challenging book. Much in Psalms is prophetic as well as historical. — C. Donald Cole

Affirmations: I am satisfied by my relationship with God. God gives me the desire of my heart.

Recommended Reading: Day 48: Psalm 79 A Lament for Jerusalem & Psalm 80 A Call to God for Help;

Day 98: Psalm 145 The Goodness of the Lord & Psalm 146 An Exhortation to Trust God

Haggai 2:7: And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations [the Messiah] shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

Psalm 37:4: Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Psalm 20:4: NIV May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.

As we consider the desires of our hearts in our lesson today, I want to hone in on the three verses above that have much to say on the subject. The first is a simple statement of truth, the second is a promise from God and the last is a prophetic utterance. The simple statement of truth is that Jesus Christ is the desire of all nations. “All nations” is put by metonymy for the people of every nation. Whether they know it or not, what the people of every nation really desire is a knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord who makes known the Father unto us. The only way to know the Father is to know the Son for the Son makes Him known. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. That’s a hendiadys (three things said but one thing meant). Jesus is the way, yes, the true and living way; for no man comes to the Father but by Him. When this desire has its proper priority, the rest of our desires line up accordingly and are fulfilled progressively.

Psalm 37:4 is the promise. If we delight ourselves in the LORD, He shall give us the desires of our hearts. That promise is understood in two ways. The first is that when we delight ourselves in the LORD, the Lord will give us the things we desire, and the second is that when we delight ourselves in the LORD, the Lord will give us the desires in the first place. Both are probably correct for the Lord does it both ways. He often puts the desires in our hearts, and then He also brings those desires to pass.

The entire 20th Psalm is a prayer that expands on Psalm 37:4. In it, David prophetically declares that God will indeed provide the desires of our hearts.

Psalm 20:1-9: NIV <For the director of music. A Psalm of David.>

May the LORD answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.² May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion.³ May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings. *Selah*⁴ May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.⁵ We will shout for joy when you are victorious and will lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the LORD grant all your requests.⁶ Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand.⁷ Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.⁸ They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm.⁹ O LORD, save the king! Answer us when we call!

God indeed answers when we call. However, there is often a price to be paid to receive what He makes available. Craig von Buseck tells a story his dad related to him about an interview he once watched with a world-class pianist:

“The reporter remarked that he would love to be able to play the piano as well as this man did. With a slight smirk, the musician replied, “No you wouldn’t.”

The reporter was shocked. “What do you mean?” he asked.

“To be as good as me you would have had to have begun studying piano not long after you learned to walk. When your friends were out playing games, you would be inside playing your scales. You would have to play for eight hours every day, and then perform nearly every night. You would have to travel around the world, moving from one hotel to another. You would be constantly lonely, not being able to maintain long-term relationships. No, you wouldn’t want to be as good as I am.”

The point is there’s often a price to be paid. Those willing to pay it will receive the promises. God will give us the desires of our heart, but the primary desire of our heart should be to know the Christ who fully declared the Father to us (John 1:18). When we have Christ as our chief desire, all of the other desires of our heart can be submitted to His lordship. When that happens, we, like Jesus, can pray, “Not my will, but Thine be done.” When that happens, God will give us our hearts’ desire, which will also be His desire for us!

The Psalms do not simply *express* emotions: when sung in faith, they actually *shape* the emotions of the godly.

— C. John Collins

All Christians would profit from a more deliberate effort to use the Psalms in their worship. — C. John Collins

Affirmations: I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. God gives me the desires of my heart. I desire what God wants.

Recommended Reading: Day 49: Psalm 81 God’s Goodness to Israel & Psalm 82 Unjust Judgments Rebuked
Day 99: Psalm 147 The Might and Grace of the Lord & Psalm 148 Nature’s Praise of the Lord

Psalm 92:1-2: <A Psalm or Song for the sabbath day.>

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: ² To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night

The last five Psalms (146-150) comprise what might be considered a great “Hallelujah Chorus” to this “Hallel” book—the “book of Israel’s praises,” as the Book of Psalms was called by the children of Israel. The last five Psalms would then form an epilogue to the Psalter as a whole, corresponding in number to the five books of the Psalms and the five books of the Torah. Each psalm in this five-psalm group both begins and ends with an imperative and exclamatory “Praise ye the LORD,” or, in the Hebrew, “Hallelujah!” Two other Psalms also have this characteristic (113 & 117). Psalms 111 & 112 also begin that way but do not end with hallelujah! The word “Hallelujah” occurs 22 times in the Book of Psalms which is the numbers of letters in the Hebrew language. From this, some early rabbis suggest that the very purpose of language is for God to reveal His Word to man and for man then to respond with thanksgiving and praise to God.

Just as the Hallelujah Psalms all begin and end with the word “Hallelujah!” we should also start and end each day with thoughts and words of praise towards our Lord God Almighty, as the psalmist suggests in Psalms 92:1-2 above. Indeed, it seems as though the psalmists are unable to contain or constrain praise in their own souls, and they exhort the entire congregation with the imperative declaration: “Hallelujah!” or “Praise the Lord!” It is as if they are so filled with the delight of praise and wanting everyone else to enjoy the freedom and exaltation of the same, issue the command to the congregation to praise the Lord!

The first of these Hallelujah Psalms shows the importance of the individual to praise the Lord. If I do not praise Him, His praise will be incomplete. In Psalms 146, the command to the congregation to praise the Lord is followed immediately by another the psalmist directs to himself. Then he responds with resolve and commits to do so.

Psalms 146:1-2:

Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. ² While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

After the warning to trust no one but God (vss 3-5) the Psalm closes with 10 reasons to praise. The first 4 begin with “which” and the last six begins with “the Lord.” These are designed to encourage the rest of the congregation to make the same commitment he has and praise the Lord.

In Psalm 147, we find a special call for us to praise God. This psalm relates to the time of Israel’s restoration to God. It may be referring to the time of Nehemiah at the completion of the walls around Jerusalem (Nehemiah 12:27-43) as it describes the people singing to the Lord (v 7) and God granting peace to their borders (v 14). The overall message of the psalm is that we should always praise God for His love and concern for us and for Who He is, what He has done for us and what He will do for us. All the praise of Psalm 147 revolves around verse 11, “The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.”

Psalm 148 calls upon everything in heaven and on earth to praise God. It is pure praise with no petition in it. It celebrates God’s Word and faithfulness and reminds us that God keeps His promises. We find the phrase “fulfilling His word” in the center of the psalm. The psalm stresses how God always fulfills his word.

Psalms 148:5-6:

Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. ⁶ He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.

Psalm 149 emphasizes that God’s people have particular reason to praise the Lord, “For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation.” In the wonderful closing Psalm, we come to the culmination of praise where we are exhorted over and over again to praise the Lord. Psalm 150, after the initial “Praise ye the Lord,” lists 10 commands in climactic parallelism to praise God in different ways and with a variety of musical instruments (verses 1-5).

This is comprehensive praise. We are told where to praise Him, why to praise Him, how to praise Him and who is to praise Him. Then in the majestic finale, the congregation sings, “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.” As long as we are breathing (all the time!) we are to praise the Lord! Let’s give Him praise! Hallelujah!

I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. . . . The Scotch catechism says that man’s chief end is “to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him. — C. S. Lewis

Affirmations: While I live, I will praise the Lord. God delights in me and crowns me with salvation.

Recommended Reading: Day 50: Psalm 83 A Prayer for Israel’s Defense & Psalm 84 Longing for the Sanctuary; Day 100: Psalm 149 The Lord’s Love of Israel & Psalm 150 Let Every Thing Praise the Lord