

SUMMER IN THE PSALMS

The Bible's collection of 150 psalms has a way of providing what is necessary for the lives of God's people. Songs for sorrow, happy songs, reflections on the mysteries of death and life, on poverty and prosperity, and advice on everything from balancing work and rest to finding a marriage partner and raising children.

The psalms give expression to the people's response to the word and acts of God. It is important to notice that the great majority of the psalms are addressed to God.

Lament and praise are the two fundamental themes running through the Psalms, but the basic theme is praise. This is why the name of the book of Psalms in its original Hebrew form is one word: 'tehillim,' which means "praises."

The psalms originated in real-life situations, and they continue to appear in the midst of our current-day lives. They help us to cry out to God, and comfort us, knowing that God's faithfulness will prevail in our struggles. They help us praise the Lord for the abundant blessings poured out on us.

May you be blessed as we immerse ourselves in the Psalms this summer!

"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

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

~C.S. Lewis

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July 7, 2019 ~ Psalm 113 is part of the Egyptian Hallel, a group of praise psalms with emphasis on Egypt. The Hallel psalms, both "Egyptian" and "Great" were sung at the three yearly feasts that all the males had to attend. Psalm 113 was typically sung before the meal during the Passover yearly feast.

July 14, 2019 ~ Psalm 69:1-16, written by David, seeks God's deliverance from destruction. He was experiencing criticism and rejection from the Israelites because of decisions he had made to do God's will.

July 21 ~ Psalm 27, written by David, begins with trust, sinks into a lament, and finally rises again to confidence in God.

July 28 ~ Psalm 23 ~ includes the theme verse for our youth mission trips this summer! 23:b "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Come hear the youth share their experiences!

Read the psalm of the week at least twice per day. Try to memorize it by the end of the week.

Questions to ponder about the Psalms

- 1) What type of Psalm is it?
- 2) Is it more individually focused, or more communal?
- 3) How can you relate to what the psalmist writes?
- 4) Write your own short psalm in the same style as the psalm for the week (ie. Lament, thanksgiving, trust, etc.). You could even challenge yourself to put your psalm to music!

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