

# *June* PRAYER GUIDE

## PRAYING THE PSALMS

### HOW TO USE **THIS PRAYER GUIDE**

These devotions with prayer prompts are intended to assist our church family as we seek Christ personally in our daily time with Him and corporately during our monthly family prayer service. It is vital that we pursue the Lord in prayer with a humble heart and depend on His guidance and leadership.

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## Introduction to the Psalms

As we devote our prayer time to the book of Psalms this month, let's begin by looking at some background information. The Psalms is a songbook with 150 prayers, poems, and hymns. These poems were written over many centuries in Israel's history. It is also known as the psalter. This word comes from the Greek term *Psalmoi*, which means poems sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments. The songs served as a temple hymnbook and devotional guide for the Jewish people. While each Psalm's subject ranges from worship, war, peace, judgment, messianic prophecy, praise, and lament, almost every psalm contains a note of praise to God.

Psalms has many different authors. While David is credited with 73 psalms, as noted by the subscription under the title of the psalm, in the New Testament, he is credited with writing Psalm 2 and 95 also. Twelve psalms were attributed to Asaph, and ten were by the Sons of Korah. Other writers were Solomon, Moses, Heman the Ezrahite, and Ethan the Ezrahite. Fifty psalms are anonymous, although some of those are traditionally credited to Ezra.

A theme we find repeated in Psalms is God's provision of a Savior for His people. Several psalms contain prophetic images of the Messiah. Psalm 2:1-12 describes the Messiah's triumph and kingdom. His death and resurrection are seen in Psalm 16:8-11. Psalm 22 depicts the weeping Savior on the cross and contains clear crucifixion prophecies, all of which were perfectly fulfilled. In Psalm 45:6-7, the glory of the Messiah and His bride is shown; and in Psalms 72:6-17, 89:3-37, 110:1-7, and in 132:12-18 His reign's glory and universality are on display.

*Pastor Tim Keller says, "We are not simply to read the psalms; we are to be immersed in them so that they profoundly shape how we relate to God. The psalms are the divinely ordained way to learn devotion to our God. They are written to be prayed, recited, and sung—to be done, not merely to be read."*

As you begin reading through the psalms this month, may you taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! (Psalm 34:8)

**Questions to Consider:** Have you read through Psalms entirely? Have you ever prayed the Psalms?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Father, thank you for giving us the book of Psalms to reveal yourself to us in such a mighty way.

**When were the Psalms Written?**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 117:1-2 Praise the Lord, all Nations! Extol him, all peoples! For great is His steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!*

The Psalms span a time frame of about a 1000 years. Most of the Psalms were written between 1010 and 930 BC during the time of David and his son Solomon. The oldest psalm, Psalm 90, was written by Moses in approximately 1500 BC, when the first generation of Israelites were dying in the wilderness after the Exodus. Ezra was most likely the final editor of the work in 450 BC in celebration and thanksgiving after returning the exiles to Jerusalem.

**Questions to Consider:**

Do I appreciate the Psalms as a book of praises and prayers as much as I should? Will I take the time to study them so I can better know the God of the Bible?

**Prayer Prompts:**

- Thank you, Father God, for giving us Your written Word that we may better know You.
- Your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, increase our desire to want to study Your Word more so we can proclaim the excellencies of You who called us out of darkness into Your marvelous light.
- Let the words of our mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in Your sight.

*Psalm 25:4-5 Make me know your ways O Lord: teach me Your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation, for You I wait all the day long.*

## Who Wrote the Psalms

**Key Scripture:** *2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

As we read from yesterday, the Psalms span a time frame of about 1000 years. Two-thirds of the writers of the Psalms are identified in the superscriptions or title at the top of the Psalm. We know that King David wrote at least 73 of the Psalms. Second Samuel 23:1 tells us David was "the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel."

David also organized the temple ministry, including the singers (1 Chronicles 15:16; 16:7; 25:1). The Sons of Korah were descendants of Levi, who served as musicians and gatekeepers in the temple at Jerusalem, wrote ten Psalms (Ps. 42, 44-49, 84, 85, and 87). Asaph was the father of the clan of temple musicians who served throughout the history of the temple. Asaph and sons wrote 12 (Ps. 50, 73-83). King Solomon, son of David, wrote two (Ps. 72, 127). Moses wrote Psalm 90 during the time the Israelites were in the wilderness after God brought them out of Egypt. Heman the Ezrahite, was a musician from the family of Kohathites, who founded the Korahite choir (2 Chronicles 5:12) wrote Psalm 88. He may be the same person who was one of the wise men during Solomon's reign (1 Kings 4:31) along with Ethan, the Ezrahite who wrote Psalm 89. The remaining Psalms remain anonymous, although Ezra is thought to be the author of some.

Dr. W. Robert Godfrey states that the Psalms are words of God given to us to speak to Him. Through this book, God has given us a rich songbook and divinely inspired guide for our prayers.

**Questions to Consider:** Have you ever prayed the Psalms back to God? If not, would you like to learn? If your answer is yes, have you taught someone else how to pray the Psalms?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Read and meditate on Psalm 19.
- Father, thank You for the Psalms. I love You, Father, and Your Word. Please give me wisdom as I read through Your Word that I will look more like Jesus. Forgive me for my lack of faith at times create in me a clean heart and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

## Forms of the Psalms

**Key Scripture:** *Psalms of Lament: Psalm 10, 12, 38, 83*

The Psalms are the most quoted Old Testament Scriptures found in the New Testament and were written in five Forms which include Praise (Hymns), Lament, Thanksgiving, Historical, and Wisdom.

Most notably, the psalmists would use language in the form of poetry and song as they warned against concealing sin and taught to let the Israelites' voices be heard. They encouraged the reader to be transparent and vulnerable before God.

The largest category of Psalms (one-third of them) were written in the form of lament. A lament is "a passionate expression of grief or sorrow that is a declaration before God on the occasion of a distressful situation." In times of crisis, the writers of Psalms rightly knew to cry out to God with confidence and praise as they made their requests to Him.

Thus, we should imitate their format as we worship today. All of the Psalms, and especially the Laments, were written and designed not for us to read through but for us to passionately proclaim before God and others as a form of authentic and acceptable worship. In church gatherings and homes today, the Psalms are still read aloud, prayed through, and sung by new and seasoned Christians.

Psalms are primarily used as a means of worship, and you should desire to read and pray them back to God. Devote yourself to reading a Psalm each day aloud and with your family (when applicable), and use the pattern of the Psalm as a format to pray back to God in your own words.

### Questions to Consider:

Do you daily lament over sin or trials and surrender your situations to God as the psalmists have taught? Would you commit to reading a Psalm each day to encourage an authentic pattern of worship in your own life?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Father, would You help me understand more of what it means to say "It is well with my soul?" I am broken and lament over my sin. I surrender to You and look for Your guidance to restore me back to a right relationship with You and others.
- Meditate on Psalm 19:14, Psalm 38:4, and Psalm 83:16

## How the Psalms are Organized

As most of us can attest, reading through a Psalm often appeals more to our emotions than to our logic. We read them and truly feel what the writer was going through and relate it to our present circumstances. It is believed that Ezra was likely the one who took the time to gather all of the 150 Psalms collected over a 1000 year period and carefully organized them into five distinct Books. These Books correspond to the Five Books of Moses and have been divided up into collections that celebrate God as King in a similar fashion.

For example, Book 4 includes what are known as "The Royal Psalms"—Psalms 93-99, which unanimously celebrate God as the eternal King over His chosen people, the only Savior of the world, and also the coming final Judge. This collection firmly establishes His justice and righteousness and would've been used in a particular order of worship at a temple service.

The themes found in the Pentateuch are generally the same themes found in the Psalms from the beginning of time in Genesis, culminating with Moses' final teachings on Mt. Sinai—namely, that God is Creator, Protector, Healer, Redeemer and the final Judge of all humanity.

Prayer does not always change our situations as God is sovereign over how life unfolds for each of us, but earnest prayer should change us inwardly, as it is one of the tools to grow us in our relationship with the Lord. Therefore, as you pray the Psalms back to God, the intent is that you will be changed from inside, and that you will know God more fully.

### Questions to Consider:

Do you desire to know God more fully? Will you commit to praying through a Psalm each day as a form of worship, knowing that, if done with pure motives and a clean heart, this action will please the Lord?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Father, we know You always answer us when we cry out and You walk beside us in our times of trouble. Give us the wisdom to understand that the specific outcomes we ask for may not be Your will and help us to surrender to Your plans above our own.
- Please give us strength and confidence in You in times of weakness, accepting that You are strong and give us strength in our weakness.
- Meditate on 2 Corinthians 12:10 and Psalm 93:1

## The Path of the Righteous

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 1:6 For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.*

Read Psalm 1

In this opening psalm of the entire book, we see there are only two paths in life: the path of the righteous and the path of the wicked. The person who chooses to avoid the advice of worldly people but instead seeks wisdom in the Word, the law of the Lord, will be blessed and shown God's favor. In the middle of this psalm is a beautiful word picture comparing the blessed person to a flourishing tree, planted by life-giving water, producing fruit seasonally. We are to understand the law of the Lord as the water nourishing the roots of this tree. As it grows, it does what it should naturally do—that is, produce fruit at the right times. The person submitted to the wisdom of the Lord will also naturally display God's work in their hearts over the course of time. A mind and heart soaked in the wisdom of the Word will produce a harvest of righteousness.

In contrast, the path of the wicked is described as useless, like chaff that is blown away in the wind. The chaff is the outer casing, the husks, of the wheat kernel. It serves a protective purpose briefly; however, in harvest time, it is removed easily at the threshing by the wind. It has no lasting value and can't be used for nourishment. This is what the wisdom of the world and wicked people is—valueless, unsatisfying, temporary.

The reader is told to take heed in the final verse of this psalm: the Lord sees both paths but is only protecting one—the path of the righteous. The other path leads to death.

### Questions to Consider:

Whose wisdom do I seek in this world? Do I read Scripture regularly? Am I meditating on it throughout the day? Is the wisdom of the Word evident in the fruit (words, actions) produced in your life?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, help me to be nourished by Your Word, which will produce wisdom in my thoughts and actions. Help me to "gain understanding from your precepts, and therefore hate every false way" (Psalm 119:104).
- Meditate on Matt 7:17-20

## The Promised Anointed King

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 2:7-8 The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession."*

Read Psalm 2.

As the original audience sang this psalm, they would be reminded that the Lord had chosen David and his line of descendants to reign as kings over the Israelite nation. "He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son" (2 Sam 7:13-14). The nations around them would rise up against them; however, it would be in vain. The Lord would scoff and laugh, rebuking them because His promise for His Anointed to reign would not be thwarted by the nations.

Today, we read this psalm in light of what we know about our reigning King, Jesus. Paul refers to this psalm in Acts 13:32 and clarifies what Jesus's resurrection meant: "What God has promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus." He goes on to point out that while David died, the "one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay" (Acts 13:37). At the resurrection, Jesus was anointed as our eternal, reigning King, ruling to the ends of the earth. At the end of the psalm, we are instructed to serve and rejoice, knowing we are blessed to find refuge in Him.

### Questions to Consider:

When I think of Jesus, do I think first of His kingship? Do I consider His perfect, eternal power even when surrounded by plotting people and raging nations? How do I take refuge in Him?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Jesus, help me to remember Your royal position, Your mighty reign through all eternity. No plan of Yours can be thwarted, no matter how overwhelming the circumstances of this life may seem.
- Help me to purposefully take refuge in You through Bible study, prayer, and worship.
- "I know that You can do all things; no purpose of Yours can be thwarted." Job 42:2



**God Has Not Forgotten**

*Key Scripture: Psalm 10:17 O LORD, You hear the desire of the afflicted.*

Read Psalm 10. This Psalm is a lament Psalm. Laments can be thought of painful prayers that lead to trust. Many times laments ask two questions: Where are You, God? and If You love me, why is this happening to me? (Mark Vroegop). Laments are often a path to praise that meanders through brokenness and disappointment. They often follow a repetitive pattern: turn to God, complain, ask and trust.

Verse 1 begins by turning to God and asking questions. The New Living Translation renders these questions as "O Lord, why do you stand so far away? Why do you hide when I am in trouble?" The questions presume God is, in fact, far away, hidden, and detached from the affairs of man. But is He? Scripture tells us, "I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence!" (Psalm 139:7). Perhaps the Psalmist feels God is "far away" because he sees the injustice of verses 2-11.

Verses 2-11 complain about the life and times of the wicked. These people are boastful, prideful, prosperous, deceitful, oppressive, and premeditatively evil.

The Psalmist moves to asking for justice. "Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up your hand; forget not the afflicted" (v. 12). The Psalmist implores God to hold the wicked accountable.

Sometimes what you see and feel makes you a poor theologian (Harris). Thus, the Psalmist rehearses truth. He practices the discipline of speaking truth to himself so that it might lead him to trust the One who is "king" (v. 16). Let us be diligent to know the truth of God's Word and then intentionally choose to trust it. We must navigate the brokenness of this world by what we know, not by what we see or feel.

What do we know? We know Jesus has conquered sin and death and stands ready to offer eternal life to all those who will receive it (1 John 5:12). While we still live amidst a broken and sinful world now, one day, this world will give way to total and complete worship of the one true God (Phil 2:10-11).

**Questions to Consider:** Do you feel as if God is far away? Are there complaints you need to bring before God humbly? Do you "rehearse truth" to yourself to lead you into trust and obedience to God?

**Prayer Prompts:**

- Father, I come to you with difficult and painful circumstances—ones I don't always understand. Yet, I have hope in Jesus that one day all things will be made right again. Strengthen me now and help me trust You in every trial.

**Suffering and The Lord**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 22:19-21 "But you, O LORD, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid! Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog! Save me from the mouth of the lion! You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!"*

Read Psalm 22

Often in the Psalms and the entire book of Lamentations, we run into what has been called Psalms of Lament. These psalms open up to us the inner struggles of people just like us who are experiencing crippling doubt brought about by painful circumstances or incredibly strenuous trials. Psalm 22 starts with the famous cry that we know from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Note other sections in this psalm where David describes his emotional turmoil (vs. 2, 14, and 15). All of this anguish is poured out before the Lord.

But psalms of lament also capture the writer's sense of hope and trust in the Lord. This psalm, though written by David, is about the "greater David," our Lord Jesus. When He quoted the first line of this psalm from the cross, he was being both prophetic and reminding us that the Lord will bring justice and set all things right regardless of our circumstances. Jesus may suffer death, but the Father will raise Him to life. Likewise, even when it may seem completely hopeless for us, God Almighty is on our side. Even if we find nothing but suffering and evil in this life, we will reign with Him in the next. Hope in the Lord, and wait on Him "For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him" (v. 27).

**Questions to Consider:** How does reading through someone else's struggle help you with your own? According to this psalm, how should we respond when we face difficult trials? Where does praise for God (v. 22) fit in the idea of lament?

**Prayer Prompts:**

- Spend time thanking the Lord for how you have seen Him deliver you in the past.
- Pray a prayer of dedication, telling the Lord that you are resolved to hope and trust in Him no matter what.
- Read Col. 1:11. Pray for His strength to help you endure life with patience and joy.

**Psalm 41**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 41:12 "As for me, You uphold me in my integrity, And You set me in Your presence forever."*

Psalm 41 is a psalm of David that seems to be about his own personal experience while also describing the personal experiences that Christ faced. Like many of the psalms, one could read it as if the whole thing described the things He went through or the way He felt. Psalm 41:1-3 is about David's recognition of how God takes care of the one who takes care of the needy. God seems to sustain and restore the one who is caring for those in need.

In verses 4-9, David recognizes his need for God for two reasons. One is because he has sinned against God and needs God's grace. Secondly, he needs God because he has many enemies that have risen up against him. This section is so interesting because it fits the life of Jesus so well. Jesus Himself even quotes from Psalm 41:9 in John 13:18 as if this passage was written specifically about Him. Both David and Jesus had men rise up against them to accuse them falsely; they even had some of their closest and most trusted "friends" betray them.

In verses 10-13, David writes of how he trusts in the Lord despite all those who rise up against him for destruction. David is confident in his relationship with the Lord, and he holds tight to the promises of God. I find it interesting that David recognizes God's favor upon him by the sheer reality that his enemies have not actually overtaken him. He understands that no matter who rises up against him or whatever his circumstances are, that standing with God is what matters most. Both David and Jesus cared for those who were in need. They stood faithful in times of trouble and were men of integrity. David repented of his sin, and Jesus never sinned. Both were hated by many, and they were both betrayed by people they loved. Both David and Jesus were able to overcome the enemy.

**Questions to Consider:** Are you seeking to care for those in need the way Jesus did? Does the enemy have any ground to stand on when bringing accusations against you? Are you a person of integrity?

**Prayer Prompts:**

- Pray that God would show you any sin within you so that you may confess it. Pray that God would help you be a person of integrity and uphold you in your integrity.
- Pray that God would give you the grace to stand firm even when those closest to you will not.

## Hope in the Lord

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 42:5, 10 "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."*

Read Psalm 42. Life in a fallen world is necessarily going to bring its share of challenges, frustrations, disappointments, and hardships. The psalmist conveys his deep state of distress over his personal and Israel's, trodden condition. But his prayer provides us a beautiful path we can follow through our struggles.

The psalmist unveils his despair before the Lord, truthfully sharing his dryness, sorrow, and suffering as he laments Israel's condition. We, too, can truthfully share our feelings with the Lord. He asks God, with a yearning for understanding, why he must face these challenges. We, too, can seek to know God's will in our lives. He recalls the stories of the good the Lord has done: Psalm 42:6, "My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar."

We, too, can choose to remember and know that God is good in all circumstances. This psalmist chooses to put his hope in God, to praise Him, and to call Him Savior. When we choose to glorify Him in our struggles and call Him Savior despite our circumstances, we will know the God who refreshes us like a stream of water—He who is the living God who gives us hope. Psalm 42:1-2 "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God." When can I go and meet with God?

**Questions to Consider:** Are you dry, weary, and sorrowful over life's circumstances? Do you need to remember the goodness of the Lord, to praise Him, and to have your hope restored by Him?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Father God, I take this moment to praise You, reflecting on the goodness of who You are and what You have done for me. I acknowledge that I can let life's circumstances weigh me down, leaving me weary and worn.
- I'm so thankful to know that You are a living God, the breath of life and living water. I pray Your Spirit will be with me day and night, refreshing and restoring me, returning me to the hope I have in You

*Psalm 42:8, "By day the Lord commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life."*

**God Is Our Refuge**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 46:10-11 "Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."*

Read Psalm 46

Beginning in verse 1, we are struck with images of how God is with us. Verse 10 instructs us to "Be still, and know that I am God!" Throughout this chapter we see several instances of God's power, refuge, and compassion for His people. We should not take for granted the fact that while God is our refuge (v. 1) during difficulties, He is also personally present (v. 1) during those times. Scripture states that He is "Emmanuel, God with us" (Matt 1:23). While He may not completely remove us from the struggles or difficulties, He will certainly be there to help us through them.

We are also reminded how the Lord is with us in verse 7. In His gracious love to us, He chooses not to leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5). Because God is true to His character, we do not have to be afraid. He is our refuge—"a shelter or protection from danger or distress; a safe place during a storm" (Webster's Dictionary). We are to take delight in His shelter.

In verse 4, the refuge of the Lord is referred to as "the Holy Habitation." We should be mindful of the many ways that the Lord is seen as a "Holy Habitation" in our lives and praise Him for these moments, good or bad. In the concluding verse of this Psalm, the psalmist also praises God for His presence with them and His fortress over them.

**Questions to Consider:** How have you seen God as a place of protection in your life (v. 1)? Why should we praise God in the midst of trial? How? (Remember the names of God)

**Prayer Prompts:**

- Lord Jesus, please cleanse my heart as I repent for the times that I ran to other things for refuge instead of You. Please help me to find comfort in You and You alone.
- God, please help me to be still in You and exalt Your name above all others. Please help me to boldly proclaim Your name to those around me, and help me to show them how You alone are my refuge.

**A Prayer For Restoration**

*Key Scripture: Psalm 51:2-4 (ESV) Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.*

Read Psalm 51. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

The God of refuge in Psalm 46 is the same God of restoration in Psalm 51. David cries out in lament to God after his sinful encounter with Bathsheba is brought to his attention. He pleads, "Be gracious to me, oh God (v. 1)!" God showed the ultimate gift of graciousness via His death on the cross; this is called divine grace. He made a gracious divine intervention on our behalf. He righteously judges us and brings our sin to our attention. This process is called sanctification, and it is an act that purifies us for His purposes. While David could have been killed for his sinful act, the Lord saved him and continued to use him for great things—even to be in the lineage of Christ Jesus.

In verse 7, David exclaims, "Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow." Interestingly enough, hyssop was used as the branch that brushed blood above the door frames during Passover, and also the same branch was used to offer our Lord a drink while He hung on the cross. The hyssop that David speaks of is an important symbol of purification throughout the Bible. This symbolism represents the vital importance of the shedding of blood by the Lamb to cover the sins of His people, and David is aware of that importance, as shown here in this Psalm. While David repents his great transgressions against the Lord, he also cries out to Him in praise, just as we should do.

**Questions to Consider:** In what ways has God revealed your sin to you? How can you praise God during these times of vulnerability?

**Prayer Prompts:**

- Consider reading Psalm 51 out loud as a prayer of repentance and submission to the Lord.
- Lord Jesus, be gracious to me as I have sinned against You. Thank You for making me aware of the sins that are in my life. Purify and remove these transgressions from me.
- God, restore the joy of Your salvation to me, and give me a willing spirit. (v. 12)

**For All Have Sinned**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 53:1-3 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."*

Read Psalm 53. They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity; there is none who does good. God looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all fallen away; together, they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

The necessity of personal cleansing from sin in yesterday's Psalm 51 guide is expanded in Psalm 53 to the sinfulness of every person. All need forgiveness.

Before a relationship with Christ, everyone is "the fool." This foolishness is not about immaturity or lack of smarts but total corruption and repulsive iniquity. The imagery is sin's pervasive rotting gangrene. Not only do the unsaved say, "There is no God," but also they live in deliberate resistance, rejection, and rebellion against God. Left alone, we deny our Creator and the magnitude of our sin. Not just one of us, but all of us have turned away (Eccl 7:20; Isa 53:6; Rom 3:10-18).

In our sinful state, we downplay our treason against a holy God. And when we attempt goodness, it's as filthy rags before Him (Isa 64:6). Change only comes by God's grace. The Spirit works within our deceitful hearts. The Word presses us to confess, "I was this fool. Apart from God, I did nothing good." We did not seek Him, but Jesus came to seek and to save us (Luke 19:10). The Christian's response in faith must lead to grateful, sacrificial worship. Truly, "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!"

**Questions to Consider:** In what areas of my life do I still minimize sin? Why? What does this say about Jesus's perfect life, death, burial, and resurrection in my place?

**Prayer Prompts:**

- Father, without You pursuing us, we run from You. Thank you for Jesus – our perfect substitute, bearer of our iniquities on the cross. Though He knew no sin, He was made to be sin for our sake so we could be gifted His righteous (Isaiah 53; 2 Cor 5:21).
- Help me mourn over sin. And, give me bold obedience to speak Your praises so You may bring others out of darkness into Your marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

**Psalm 72**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 72:18-19 "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, Who alone works wonders. And blessed be His glorious name forever; And may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and amen."*

Read Psalm 72. David wrote Psalm 72 as a prayer for his son Solomon. In this passage, he prays for Solomon to be blessed and to be righteous in the way that he lives and judges the people. David prays that his son would take care of the needy and that all people would be subject to him and bowed down before him. David prays this for his son, and David's prayers were answered. Solomon had a righteous reign that was marked by peace. Solomon judged the people rightly and was indeed kind to the needy. Nations came to him with gifts and bowed down to him. David wanted great things for his son, so he asked God to give them to Solomon. I wonder how often we pray for the blessings of other people. David is not praying for his own blessings but for the blessings of his son. He is calling upon God, the God who "works wonders," and is asking Him to work wonders in his son's life. What a great testimony in the Scripture of a father who is calling upon God on behalf of his child! David asks the Lord for all these blessings for his son, and then he turns his attention to God and proclaims praise to God.

"Blessed be the Lord God." "Who alone works wonders." "Blessed be His glorious name forever." After all the requests David makes, he praises the Lord and shows where his heart really is. His heart is not really about all his son's glory; it is about all of God's glory. He desires for his son to be a righteous king and to bring God glory, but what he desires most seems to be the glory of God.

**Questions to Consider:**

Who am I praying blessings upon? Do I pray for my children as David prayed for his? Do I desire God to be blessed more than I desire my family to be blessed? Do I pray like I believe God is a God who works wonders?

**Prayer Prompts:**

- Pray for blessings upon someone today in a way that would bring God glory.
- Pray in a way that reflects your belief of how great God is.
- Pray that the whole earth would be filled with His glory.



**Freedom in the Lord**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 73:28 "But as for me, it is good to be near God..."*

Read Psalm 73

What does it take to pull you away from God? Psalm 73:2 "But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold."

This psalmist speaks truthfully of the things that nearly pulled him away from God: prosperity, health, freedom from burdens, a carefree lifestyle. He reveals the condition of his heart at his longing for these things: grieved, embittered, senseless, ignorant, a brute beast. The culture we live in begs and pulls at us to also long for the things of the world. Lack of getting them can leave us feeling envious, working in vain, afflicted, punished. But when we find ourselves focusing on the unfairness of life, we have the great privilege of knowing what God thinks of these successes: Psalm 73:16-18 "When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God: then I understood their final destiny. Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin."

We must be on guard from falling into the trap of the world: pride, violence, iniquity, evil imaginations, scoffing, speaking with malice, arrogance, oppression. We can pray daily for the Lord to reveal and remove these seeds before they bloom and grow. And when we allow the Lord to do so, we will live in freedom from desiring the world, Psalm 73:25 "And earth has nothing I desire besides you." And when we live in this freedom, we can have compassion for those who succeed in this world yet will eternally perish, and we can share the goodness of the Lord, Psalm 73:28 "I will tell of all your deeds."

**Questions to Consider:** Do you observe the signs of envying the world in your heart? Are you willing to speak truthfully to God about it? Will you let him set you free?

**Prayer Prompts:**

- Father God, it's hard sometimes to look around and see others succeeding in life in ways that I am not. I admit that I wish I had things that made my life easier. I'm thankful that You've taught me the signs to see when I'm slipping into desiring the world.
- I pray that You will reveal and set me free from these things. And I am deeply thankful to know my eternal condition is secure with You. I pray for those whose eternity is not with You. Lord, please give them eyes to see and ears to hear.

**Psalm 76**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 76:11-12 "Make vows to the LORD your God and fulfill them; All who are around Him are to bring gifts to Him who is to be feared. He will cut off the spirit of princes; He is feared by the kings of the earth."*

Read Psalm 72

This psalm shows the power of the Lord. The psalmist records a song to the Lord that first talks about when He protected His worship site and His worshippers. In verses 1-3, we are reminded several times of His strength and His greatness throughout the land of Israel. We see the psalmist then describe a time that the Lord helped them in battle in verses 4-6. The words the psalmist chooses highlight the powerfulness in which the Lord protected His army. In verses 7-9, God's role as judge and helper of His people is clear. Judgment here is only from the Lord to save His people. The psalmist ends the passage in verses 10-12 by reacting once more to God's power and greatness.

God shows us His power through mighty works throughout the Bible. In the Old Testament, we see His power while He guides the Israelites to trust Him. In the New Testament, we see His power as He forms the church. These are just some examples of His power throughout the Scriptures. He continues to give us glimpses of His power today through salvations and works within the lives of His children.

**Questions to Consider:**

Where do you see God's power in your own life? How do you need to be trusting and resting in His power instead of your own?

**Prayer Prompts:**

- Lord, You are great among Your world. Thank You for protecting Your people in the days of this psalm and continuing to protect Your people now. Help me see Your greatness throughout the world to worship You in spirit and truth.
- Help me allow You to be the judge in my life and those around me without me trying to take on that role. Because of Your greatness and awe for You, help me follow through with my vows to You and offer pleasing worship.

**Psalm 77**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 77:1-2 My voice rises to God, and I will cry aloud; My voice rises to God, and He will listen to me. In the day of my trouble, I sought the Lord; In the night, my hand was stretched out and did not grow weary; My soul refused to be comforted.*

Read Psalm 77

This psalm speaks of God's comfort for His people. In the first few verses, we see the Psalmist confess the great pain he is dealing with and the heavy burdens he is experiencing. He knows he needs to reach out to God, but even that seems complicated. Starting in verse 7, he questions how long this will last for him. He feels so distant and doubts whether God is even there. But, by God's grace and mercy in verse 10, we see the Psalmist turn and realize God's comfort. Then verses 11-20 spells out the wonders of the Lord and provides thankfulness for the things He has done. Even though the pain is not gone, the grief is changed, and the Psalmist is still able to rejoice in the works and greatness of God.

Like the Psalmist, I have been through times in my life that I have cried out to God and felt distant. As a Christian, you can be in a place where you know you should be reaching out to God, but your heart "refuses to be comforted." If this is you right now, pray that God would renew your heart and mind to "meditate on all Your work, And on Your deeds with thanksgiving." If this is not you right now, pray for those struggling (I promise there are some around you). Let God comfort you to glorify Him.

**Questions to Consider:**

Do you feel distant from God and are so troubled you can't sleep or speak? Are you turning your pain and grief over to God so He can comfort you?

**Prayer Prompts:**

- Lord, I cry to you with the pains in my life right now. The burdens that You know I am trying to hold onto myself are heavy. I feel distant from You and don't understand how You will redeem the situation that is on my heart.
- Please help me to focus on Your deeds and wondrous works. Show me how You are leading Your people and help me meditate on Your Word.

**Psalm 84**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 84:2, 12 "My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; (v. 2); O LORD of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you! (v. 12)"*

Read Psalm 84. Psalm 84, appropriately called the Pilgrim Psalm, reflects on the pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem, where God's people will once again worship and sacrifice as they did in previous years. No doubt, the Psalmist remembers the destruction of the temple and reminisces fondly on its earlier days of glory and splendor. He longs for this again and finds extraordinary delight in worshipping God in His temple—the most important place for God's people and the symbol of His presence among them. While the Psalmist longs for and journeys to the place of worship, God, Himself, remains the ultimate object of his joy. Joy is found in the very presence of the living God.

"Blessed" is used three times throughout the psalm (vv. 4, 5, 12) to depict the one who trusts and places himself under the protection of the Lord. Even amidst the valley of Baca (weeping), the pilgrim will prevail and arrive before God in His temple. Verse 10 makes a startling comparison. A mere 24 hours (one day) in God's courts is better than a thousand "elsewhere." Friend, have you been "elsewhere"? I can think of some pretty nice "elsewhere's." But remarkably, the Psalmist cannot. In all the world, nowhere compares to being in the "courts of God." Moreover, the Psalmist would rather be a low-ranking doorkeeper (letting people in and out) than any other esteemed position the world offers. All of this is meant to convey the Psalmist's greatest desire—namely, to be in the presence of God with fellow citizens of the kingdom.

Furthermore, the Psalmist is wise enough to stay away from the wicked (v. 10) and informed enough to know God is the source of illumination and protection (v. 11) and withholds "no good thing" from those who follow Him. The Psalmist knows God—and knows Him well. This is his joy, knowing the living God and being near to Him. "He who has God and everything else has no more than he who has God only." A. W. Tozer

**Questions to Consider:** Do you cultivate a deep desire to be in God's presence daily? Where is "elsewhere" for you? What is it about that place that attracts you? Do you have that same longing to be in God's presence?

**Prayer Prompt:** Ask God for a heart that cries out to Him in worship.

**Praising God's Fulfilled Promises**

*Key Scripture: Psalm 89:1-2 "I will sing of the Lord's great love forever... you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself." Psalm 89:28-29 "I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever..."*

Read Psalm 89.

God is trustworthy and forever faithful. Whatever He promises, He fulfills. This Psalmist beautifully describes God's power and purity as well as how all of heaven rejoices in His majesty and praises His enduring faithfulness and unfailing love. The meditations of our minds and hearts should also be to joyfully answer the call to worship and continually delight in and show adoration to our God, who is beyond all comparison.

God made a strong covenant with His chosen servant, David, when He promised David would have a glorious reign and that David's descendants would be preserved forever. David's throne is established as long as the heavens endure (v. 29). Indeed David was a mighty king, but a disobedient Israel eventually became a nation divided into two kingdoms. Yet even though all the division and weakness, God never broke His promise. Centuries later, a new king arrived from the line of David, the Messiah, our eternal King! The covenant was fulfilled. The love and kindness promised to David are ours as well. We can walk in the light of His presence by placing our faith in Him, knowing that He will keep His promise to save us. Praise God that He is faithful to fulfill His promises. With God on the throne, love, truth, righteousness, and justice will reign forever!

**Questions to Consider:**

Do you believe in God's promises? Do you rejoice in His unfailing love, strength, truth, and righteousness? Do your actions flow out of love and faithfulness?

**Prayer Prompts:**

- I praise You, Heavenly Father, for Your many characteristics that are the foundation of Your eternal throne: love, faithfulness, holiness, righteousness, justice, truth, and strength.
- I praise You for the peace of knowing Your promises will always be fulfilled. Let us always call out, "You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior" (Ps. 89:26).

**Psalm 90**

*Key Scripture: Psalm 90:1-2 "Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations...from everlasting to everlasting you are God..."*

Read Psalm 90.

Psalm 90 is the oldest of all the psalms. Penned by Moses, the man of God, this psalm marks the beginning of Book Four. Though written centuries later, it is as if Psalm 89 anticipated Psalm 90. The Psalmist appeared to doubt the covenantal faithfulness and steadfast love of the Lord (Ps 89:46-49). Yet, with Moses's prayer immediately following, his words become a response—affirming these gracious attributes of God. Moses knew God in a way no one else did. "The Lord used to speak to Moses' face to face, as a man speaks to his friend..." (Exodus 33:11). As the man, God used to deliver the people of Israel from slavery, Moses witnessed the signs and wonders the Lord worked in Egypt, during the Exodus, and throughout the forty years of wilderness wandering. God promised to be with Moses every step of the way.

The Lord promised to teach him what to say and what to do. The Lord even chose to dwell among His people and promised to protect and provide for them. Not a single promise ever failed. Thus, Moses praised the Everlasting God—the Maker of heaven and earth—for His immanence and transcendence as His people's "dwelling place." Likewise, Moses uniquely knew Israel. He witnessed both the great suffering and the great sinfulness of God's people. Imagine what it must have been like to lead them out from the land of slavery to the land of promise—only to watch them fall into sin and succumb to death (as a result of their disobedience). Moses knew God's anger and wrath were justified. Man's faithlessness and rebellion stand in stark contrast to God's faithfulness and steadfast love in Psalm 90. Though Moses does lament that life is short, and man is sinful, He petitions the Lord for mercy and ends his prayer with words of hope. Regardless of our circumstances, we can trust in the faithfulness and steadfast love of the Lord. In Christ, God provided a propitiation for sin and protection from eternal suffering. May we steward our time wisely and seek the wisdom of God as we learn to navigate through the wilderness of this sinful, fallen world.

**Questions to Consider:** Do you doubt God's faithfulness or love as a result of your circumstances? How is God's work evident in your life? How are you stewarding the time God has given you?

**Prayer Prompts:** Read Revelation 21:1-8. Praise God for the eternal hope we have in Christ.

**Let Us Sing Songs of Praise**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 95:3-7 "For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In His hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are His also. The sea is His, for He made it, and His hands formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, the sheep of His hand."*

Read Psalm 95.

In this psalm, David uses descriptive words to draw the people to and encourage the people to praise God, explaining why He is worthy to be praised! He uses the phrases "for the Lord is a great God".... "a great King above all gods." "'The Lord is a Great God' and 'a great King above all gods' are expressions prevalent in the Psalms that celebrate the Lord's kingship" (Holman Christian Standard Study Bible). The Lord God is greater than any gods we can imagine.

He also calls the people to a place of worship by showing God as Creator and using illustrative phrases to give us a clear image of His creation: "depths of the earth," "heights of the mountains," "His hands formed the dry land." David also talks of God the Great Shepherd and calls His people the "people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand." As our great Shepherd, He is worthy of worship in our daily life, singing, or studying His Word! God is Sovereign over all creation, over all people, over all the earth!

**Questions to Consider:**

As you think about God as Creator and King after reading this passage, do you ponder all that He has created and all that He is King over? The earth and all that is within it, the people of the world, the creatures that inhabit the skies, the oceans, the dry land?

**Prayer Prompts:**

- When you begin your prayer time today, consider thanking God by listing specific parts of His creation that you are personally thankful for the ocean, the grass, the birds who sing to Him.
- Add a time of singing and worship to your Creator and King as you do your prayer times.

**A Psalm for Giving Thanks**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 100 "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into His presence with singing! Know that the Lord, He is God! It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise! Give thanks to Him; bless His name! For the Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations!"*

This particular psalm is one of thanksgiving or giving thanks to God. It begins with an excited declaration: "Make a joyful noise to the Lord"! Instead of listing why we should worship God, David speaks of WHO God is in short sentences beginning with verbs: make, serve, come, know, enter, and give. These words call us to do something, to act.

In some of the sentences, we are told what to do, in somehow to do it: "with gladness," "with singing," "with thanksgiving," "with praise"! In most translations, there are exclamation marks at the end of each command that tells us these are important and we should take note!

There are several key attributes of God and His character that David describes in this psalm. First, David declares that He is Lord, then God, then Creator ("He who made us"), then Father ("we are His children"), then Shepherd ("the sheep of His pasture").

When we pause to read Psalm 100 and consider the Father's steadfast love that "endures forever," that should bring a smile to our face and a comfort to our spirit. We are the people of God called to worship in His presence. As the psalm ends, He tells us, "His faithfulness is to all generations!"

**Questions to Consider:**

When you worship God by attending church or in service to God in your everyday life, do you do so with JOY and come into His presence with singing? With gladness?

**Prayer Prompts:**

- Begin your prayer time with pen and paper, listing the attributes of God you find in this passage and then spend time thanking Him for who He is!



**Psalm 106**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 106:1-2 "Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!"*

Read Psalm 106. Psalm 106 marks the end of Book Four. This descriptive praise psalm contrasts the failures of the nation of Israel with the grace of God. Following his opening words of praise and thanksgiving, the Psalmist prays for deliverance and the blessings of restoration. Note that the Psalmist does not make excuses, nor does he minimize sin (neither his own nor that of his people). On the contrary, he recounts the whole truth—confessing the good, the bad, and the ugly—that he might praise the Lord. This retrospective of Israel's sinful behavior reveals a pattern—a vicious cycle—that begins with forgetting the Lord and all of His "great things ... wondrous works ... and awesome deeds."

Nevertheless, time and again, God rescued Israel as a demonstration of His steadfast love and grace. Why? The Lord displayed covenantal kindness because He intended to keep His promise to bless the nations through Abraham's "offspring" (Gen 26:4). What's more, God continually revives His people by preserving a faithful remnant to start anew. Instead of rejecting them, He chose to make way for Israel to return and be restored to the right relationship with Him. The Lord does not give His people what they deserve—He gives them what they need. He "saved them ... and redeemed them from the power of the enemy." He does the very same for us. Verse 23 paints a vivid picture of exactly what the Lord did in Christ. "His chosen one stood in the breach ... to turn away His wrath from destroying them."

Though the Psalmist highlights the legacy of sin among the fickle, ungrateful, rebellious people of Israel, this psalm magnifies the grace of God.

*Adam Clarke writes, "But what a display does all this give of the power, justice, mercy, and long-suffering of the Lord. There were no people like these people and no God like their God." "'Blessed be the Lord ... from everlasting to everlasting!' Then all the people said, 'Amen!' And praised the Lord." (1 Chronicles 16:36)*

**Questions to Consider:** How should what you've learned from Psalm 106 impact your view of God? How should you respond? In what way do you see a reflection of your sin in the sins of the people of Israel?

**Prayer Prompts:** Ask the Lord to search your heart. Confess and repent of any sin(s) He brought to mind. Give thanks to the Lord for the specific ways in which He demonstrated His steadfast love for you.

**Psalm 107**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 107:1 Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!*

Read Psalm 107. The people of God experienced distress from various adversity, foe, or trouble. Suffering came through exile, rebellion, foolishness, or bondage, all a consequence of their sin. Affliction sprouted in different situations, but there was one common denominator—sin. In distress, they cried to the LORD, and He delivered them. They had much to be thankful for with the LORD. From His enduring, unwavering love, He responded to their cries with deliverance. Some wandered in wastelands with no place to dwell. Hungry, thirsty, faint, they cried to the Lord. He "satisfied their longing soul" and "filled them with good things." From wasteland to satisfaction. Some faced the shadow of death, "prisoners in affliction"; due to their rebellion. Through hard labor, God "bowed their hearts." In affliction, they cried to the Lord, who broke their bonds and delivered them from death. From the shadow of death to liberation. Some were rebellious fools who suffered divine judgment. Even though they spurned God when they cried out; God delivered them from the "gates of death" and "healed them from their destruction." Some were at wits end in stormy wind and waves. The LORD responded to their cries with rescue to a safe haven. From stormy seas to safe shelter.

What about you? Do you face adversity? Are you wandering in a wasteland? Have you rebelled against the counsel of the Most-High? Have you acted foolishly?

There is deliverance available through the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Cry to the Lord for salvation (Rom 10:9-10). For believers who face adversity, cry out to the Lord whose "steadfast love endures forever." Your trial has a purpose. God may deliver you from your circumstances. Or, God may leave you in the circumstance so that you may experience His presence more fully (Psalm 23:4; James 4:8). Possibly, your trial may complete in you what is lacking (James 1:4); or grow you in Christ-likeness (Rom 8:29). Just as the cry for deliverance was the same, so too the response. "Oh, give thanks to the Lord who is good."

**Questions to Consider:** In what will you call for the deliverance of the LORD? Have you called upon the name of the LORD for salvation?

**Prayer Prompts:** Cry out to the LORD, "Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!"

**The Greatness and Glory of God's Word**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 119:11 I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You. Verse 105 says, Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*

Read Psalm 119.

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible. With 176 verses and most of them referring to God's Word in some form, it is obvious the Psalmist loved not only God but also His Word. He considered it blessed to obey His laws and sought Him with all his heart (v. 2). The Psalmist delighted in God's statutes, decrees, laws, and commands (v. 16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 77, 92, 143, 174). They delighted him or brought him great joy. He remembers the Lord's laws and finds comfort in them (v. 52).

God's laws were given to free us and protect us from going astray. And as believers in Christ, we have the Holy Spirit that gives us the strength to live according to His laws. We should count it as joy to read God's Word and obey His laws and not see it as a burden. His Word is what directs our paths towards righteousness. We should long for God's Word and laws as the Psalmist does (v. 20 "My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times").

**Questions to Consider:**

What consumes you? What do you long for? How much time do you spend in God's Word? Do you just read the Bible, or do you study it and meditate on it?

**Prayer Prompts:**

- Heavenly Father, thank You for blessing us with Your written Word that we might grow closer to You as we read and study it and obey Your commands.
- Show us where there is any unrepentant sin in our lives that we need to confess. And bless us with wisdom, understanding, and discernment as we study Your Word.

*Psalm 119:10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.*

*Psalm 119:15 I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.*

**Psalm 137**

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 137:5-6 "Let my right hand forget its skill! Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!"*

Read Psalm 137. By the waters of Babylon, the people of God hit rock bottom. Their enemies taunted them for a song of Zion. Distraught at the mere thought of their beloved Zion or the city of their God, they were even too low for lament. The remembrance of Zion caused the "tongue to stick to the roof of [their] mouth."

How could they sing of Zion to the very ones who destroyed their families, their city, and their temple? Anguished and brokenhearted, thoughts of Zion jolted their memory. Zion represented much more than a homeland and a life. Zion represented communion with their God. "For the Lord has chosen Zion, he has desired it for His habitation" (Psalm 132:13). Zion reminded them of God's presence and His covenantal blessing to them: they would be His blessed people who dwelt in a promised land, through whom all the nations would be blessed. That—they remembered.

Yet now, they were far from that reality, all because they failed to obey God. Instead of worshiping the one true God who chose them and set them apart, they falsely worshiped false gods. With identity amnesia, they failed to set God above their highest joy. Consequences led to the destruction of their beloved Jerusalem, their captivity, and deportation from the promised land to a place far from home. When ordered by their captors to "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!," it broke them. They hung their instruments. No song remained.

Through remembering, their thoughts turned to the LORD for judgment on their adversaries. In this imprecatory psalm—a psalm to "invoke judgment upon enemies"—they asked the LORD for vengeance on their behalf. Out of their broken hopelessness, they remembered God IS merciful AND just. God is their only source of retribution and deliverance. In forgetting—they remembered.

**Questions to Consider:** Have you pursued joy in someone or something besides the Lord? Do you find yourself in a desperate situation with little hope? Remember the Lord. Feed on His Word. Call to Him in prayer. Live your true identity in Christ. God is your only source of salvation.

**Prayer Prompts:**

- Father God, I confess or agree with You that in failing to set You as my highest joy, I have sinned against You, which results in consequences. I pray for godly sorrow that brings repentance. Thank You for forgiveness.

## God is Worthy to be Praised

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 145:3 Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. Psalm 145:4 One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty works.*

Read Psalm 145. Psalm 145, written by David, is penned as the last psalm in the collection of David's writings. Of interest, this particular psalm was part of Jewish liturgy (a prescribed form of public worship) as it was recited twice in the morning and once in the evening.

David shows us how great the Lord is through his monumental praise. He also shows us that God is worthy of all glory, honor, and praise. Verse 2 states, "Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever." David praised God every day. He did not say he would just praise God when it was convenient for him or when he was having a good day but that he would praise God every single day.

David reminds us, in this psalm, of the importance in memorizing God's Word and sharing that with others "so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom" (v. 12).

The promises of God are interwoven throughout Scripture, and there are many to be seen in this psalm. The Lord upholds all who are falling (v. 14). He satisfies the desire of every living thing (v. 16). The Lord is righteous in all His ways (v. 17). He is near to all who call on Him (vs. 18). He preserves all who love Him and will destroy the wicked (v. 20).

David also points out a beautiful list of God's attributes or characteristics. He states that God's greatness is unsearchable; He is mighty; His majesty is full of glorious splendor; His does awesome deeds, has abundant goodness, righteousness, mercifulness, steadfast love, and faithfulness. He is slow to anger, kind, and providential. What a blessing it is to know about God through His Word!

How encouraging it is for us to read this psalm from a man after God's own heart and to have such a great example of the love and adoration that he consistently had for the Lord, no matter what his circumstances were in life.

**Questions to Consider:** Do you have a heart of praise to the Lord as David did? Is your praise determined by emotion or circumstances? Have you committed to memorize God's Word and tell others about it?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Dear God, You and You alone are worthy of our praise. You are our God, King, Lord, and Savior and deserving of all we are and of all we have.

*Psalm 145:17 The Lord is righteous in all His ways and faithful in all He does.*

# DAY 29

## Waiting on the Lord

**Key Scripture:** *Lamentations 3:21–25 This I recall to my mind; therefore I have hope. Through the LORD's mercies, we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!" The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him.*"

I can remember eagerly (and not very patiently) awaiting certain events as a child, such as birthdays and Christmas mornings. I was so excited with anticipation to open my gifts. As a teenager, I was waiting for that crush to call or to get my driver's license or for summer break to begin. And even as an adult, I wait to hear if I have received the job I interviewed for or wait for my babies to be born. We have moments throughout our life when we must wait. Waiting can sometimes be challenging, especially in our current culture, where everything is at our immediate disposal.

In our times of waiting, however, we can recall what the Lord has done for us, how much He loves us, how many times He has shown us His love and what He is teaching us—all things we are undeserving of. We can remember how He ultimately demonstrated His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Waiting on the Lord points us to complete faith and trust in God, being dependent in prayer, never forgetting that He is Sovereign over all things.

*Charles Spurgeon said, "If the Lord Jehovah makes us wait, let us do so with our whole hearts; for blessed are all they that wait for Him. He is worth waiting for. The waiting itself is beneficial to us: it tries faith, exercises patience, trains submission, and endears the blessing when it comes. The Lord's people have always been a waiting people."*

We are now emerging through a season of waiting on the Lord at Richland Creek Community Church. We can see how God has proven to be faithful, compassionate, and loving to His children and how He has drawn us into a deeper relationship with Him through our confident expectation of great hope.

**Questions to Consider:** Do I surrender to God's timeline in all areas of my life as I wait? Do I trust, seek and pray with confident expectation, abiding in His sovereignty and goodness?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Philippians 4:6-7. Lord, Your Word tells me to be anxious for nothing and to bring my requests to you. Help me to abide in Your truth and to wait patiently. Proverbs 16:9. Father, help me to recognize that you are over everything and even in the waiting, You never stop working.

# DAY 30

## **Staff Structure & Ministry Alignment Team**

***Key Scripture:** Isaiah 43:18-19, Do not call to mind the former things, Or ponder things of the past. Behold, I will do something new; now it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert.*

Richland Creek Community Church has experienced many transitions this last year and a half, including weathering COVID. When change and transitions occur, we may be tempted to long for "the way things used to be," but we must trust that God has a new or different plan for our church family and that His timing is always perfect. Our Ministry Alignment Team has worked faithfully and diligently towards creating a new ministry and staff structure for our church that will best position us for the future.

We are reminded of Isaiah 43:18-19. The focus of this passage is to not think so hard on the past that we forget God is always at work, building something new in the future. Many of us have lovely memories of ministry and fellowship together, and we can and should be grateful for that. However, we should not ponder the past until we are not ready and excited for what God wants to do at Richland Creek in the future.

### **Questions to Consider:**

Am I spending too much time pondering how the church used to be that it is leading me to sadness or discontentment? Am I praying with excitement for how God will use our church in the future?

### **Prayer Prompts:**

- Praise the Lord for the Alignment Team and how they have sought God's will and wisdom throughout this process!
- Pray that these decisions will bring God the most glory, even if not necessarily the most straightforward path forward.
- Father, please help us to ponder the truths of Isaiah 43:18-19 as we prepare our hearts and minds to embrace changes that will take place as You make "something new" here at Richland Creek.

# Thank You

We praise the Lord for all those who contributed to make this prayer guide possible. We are so grateful for the faithful servants who have dedicated their time and talents to writing this prayer guide.

To God Be the Glory!

## **This Month's Writers:**

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## ***1 Thessalonians 5:12-13***

*But we ask you, brothers and sisters, to recognize those who diligently labor among you and are in leadership over you in the Lord, and give you instruction, and that you regard them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.*