



A QUICK TRIP
THROUGH THE

*Psalm*s

**A Quick Trip
Through the
Psalms**

A Devotional

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A Quick Trip Through Psalms

July is typically a very busy month, but it is still important to read the Word of God daily. We will take a look at thirty-one psalms. You always have the option of studying deeper on your own, but this is meant to be a guide to help you get started. Please get your Bible out and read the entire psalm, as there is not always room to print every verse.

I hope you enjoy your encounter with the sweet Psalms of Israel.

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PSALM 1

Walk - Stand - Sit

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.

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.



If you walk with the ungodly, they will cause your progress with God to stop, and you will stand in the way of sinners coming to meet God. If you continue with your ungodly companions, you will not just stop making progress, but you will sit down and become scornful of those who are still walking with God.

To avoid this lack of progress, you must delight in the Word of God, meditate on it day and night, and make it the joy of your life, more necessary than natural food and water. First Peter 2:2 tells us to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." As you read and study, you will become deeply rooted in the things of God and flourish spiritually. You will bring forth fruit. In other words, you will produce the very things that you are dwelling on.

If you think on good things, you will become a better person. If you dwell on evil things, your life will produce evil actions. When you look in the Word of God, you will find the kind of person God wants you to be. Also, it will tell you how to become more like Jesus.

You will not be able to stand before God in judgment if you have not continued to walk in the way of righteousness. If you choose to sit with the scornful, the last verse says you will perish. But if you will keep walking in the light that God sheds on your pathway, you will be blessed of God, prosper in your soul, and sit with Him in heavenly places.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Think about a tree planted by "rivers of water." What would be different about that tree from one planted on the side of a mountain?
2. What is *chaff*, and what does the Bible say about it?

PSALM 13

Where Are You, Lord?



1 How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?

3 Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;

4 Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

5 But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

6 I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.

Have you ever felt forsaken, even by God? Well, you are not alone! Psalm 13 was written by David, who was said to be a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). Yet, he could see no way out of his trouble, and David had many troubles. Troubles come to all of us and sometimes seem as though they will never end, but David did the right thing; he turned to God and poured out his heart in prayer. We can tell God exactly how we feel.

David's enemy was probably a literal one. Our enemies are bad habits, troublesome thoughts, questionable motives, bad attitudes, sin, and the devil—things that are not tangible but still an enemy to our soul. David felt like he was losing the battle, that his enemy was exalted over him. That is not the time to just give up the fight and be overtaken. God wants us to fight a good fight of faith as it says in 1 Timothy 6:12, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

Our weapons against the enemy of our soul are trust in God and praise. God has shown us mercy when He saved our soul. We should look back occasionally and see where God has brought us from and where He has brought us to. Looking at the battles we have come through with victory will encourage us to press on through our present trouble. We can safely trust in His mercy. When we could do nothing to save ourselves, His mercy was all we needed. When we think on these things, it makes our heart rejoice. When we rejoice in our soul, it is only natural that our voice will raise in songs of praise to our God who delivered us from the clutches of the devil. Songs of praise will lift the soul and allow us to see beyond our present trial to a victorious end. The more we praise God, the more we find to praise Him for!

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. What is the definition of *mercy*? How has God shown mercy to you?
2. What song will you sing to the Lord? Why?

PSALM 16

My Good Inheritance



Michtam (Poem) of David

1 Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.

2 O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee;

3 But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.

4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.

5 The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.

6 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

7 I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

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

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

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.

It is always safe to trust the Lord! When we need protection, we can run to God, our rock, and our shelter. He is everything we need. Verses 2-3 compare our goodness with God's goodness and finds we cannot even come close to God's goodness, but our enjoyment comes from being with others who worship God. Verse 5 says the portion of our inheritance is "The LORD." God must mean more to us than anything we own or love, tangible and intangible. When we truly see how good God is to save us, keep us, guide us, and fulfill our every need, we can say with the psalmist, "I have a goodly heritage." What I have, through salvation, is pleasant, and I have no desire to give it up! I can be happy and rest in the hope that God can handle any difficulty I may have to face.

In verse 4 David briefly mentioned what will happen to those who seek another god. We may not pray to the goddess Diana or mythical characters, but we can put material things in the place of God and trust in our wealth or knowledge more than we trust in God. David said that "sorrows shall be multiplied," or our treasures will evaporate. We will find trouble and heartache when we do not allow God to guide us. But as we see in verse 11, when God has control of our life and we put our trust in Him, there is "fulness of joy" and "pleasures for evermore." You just cannot have a better life than that!

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. In verse 10 there is a quick reference to Christ ("thine Holy One"). How did Christ avoid corruption?
2. How can we have "fulness of joy"?

PSALM 17

A Prayer of David

3 Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.

6 I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.

7 Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them.

8 Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.



When we are right before God, we can come boldly to Him. We do not have to fear His judgment because we have experienced His mercy and forgiveness. Verse 3 says, "... thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing." It is a wonderful feeling to know that we are clear before God. We do not have to ask forgiveness every night because God wants us to live every day in the center of His will, free from sin. In ourselves this is not possible, but with God all things are possible (Mark 10:27)! He has commanded us in 1 Peter 1:15-16, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." The word *conversation* also means "behavior or conduct." It is not just what we say that needs to be holy but how we act and react. What we do, many times, speaks louder than what we say.

Verses 7-8 speak of God saving or protecting those who put their trust in Him and hide in the shadow of His wings. Just as a hen protects her chicks by gathering them under her wings, so we can be protected from the enemy of our soul by staying close to our Savior, tucked securely away from the predator. It is always safe to trust God. When situations look impossible to us, God already sees the way through them.

Verse 15 reminds us that we are created in the likeness of God. Genesis 1:26 says, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" The image of God is holiness. The likeness of God is our soul. We can look and act just like our Father in Heaven and be satisfied. Just as David prayed, when you pray, ask God to make you just like Him, holy and righteous, and to keep you as the apple of His eye, hidden under the shadow of His almighty wings. A song written by Mrs. H. A. Hendricks says, "*There is not a friend like Jesus; What a blessed thought to be Folded in His arms of power, Ever in eternity.*"

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. What does the word *feigned* mean? How is it used in verse 1?
2. Find, in the concordance, the Old Testament Scripture that was quoted in 1 Peter 1:16, "Be ye holy; for I am holy."

PSALM 19

Being Acceptable to God

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.



Some people let just anything fly out of their mouth! If we want to be acceptable to God, we will have to be very careful of what we say. Matthew 12:36-37 is Jesus speaking: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." We cannot make a one-time commitment to be careful of what we say and hope it will last a lifetime. We have to work every day to keep our words sweet and right. Idle words remind me of someone just babbling about nothing, gossiping of things that they should keep quiet about, or talking to be heard, not really having a message from the Lord or anything significant to say.

Meditation is something of a lost art. The old rocking chair and squeaky porch swings were great places to just sit and think, to muse about where your life was going. Today, it seems that we have to have a radio on, the cellphone busy, talking to two or three people at the same time, while playing on the computer or gaming system. God cannot get a word in edgewise! When God decided to destroy the world with a flood, in Genesis 6:5-6 we read: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." Verse 14 of our psalm says that our meditation should be acceptable to God. We have to work to keep evil thoughts out of our mind so the evil will not end up in our hearts. We need to remember that God sees the thoughts and intentions of our heart; there is nothing hidden from Him.

How can we be acceptable to the Lord? The word *acceptable* means "to be approved, to delight, to have favor, or to give pleasure." Our greatest purpose should not be to please our self or our fellowman but to please God. There are many Scriptures that tell us how to be acceptable to God. We will look at just a few. Romans 14:17 tells us that if we serve Christ in "righteousness, and peace, and joy," we are acceptable to God. According to 1 Timothy 2:1-3, it is pleasing for us to pray. To suffer patiently for doing good is mentioned in 1 Peter 2:20, and obeying your parents is mentioned in Colossians 3:20. There are many other Scriptures that will help you know how to please God in your everyday living. Today we need to focus on the words of our mouth and the meditations of our heart.

The end of our verse says, "... O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." If you are having trouble controlling your words or your thoughts, go to the Lord. He is your strength, and He will deliver you from your faults and bad habits because He is your redeemer.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Study verses 7-11. Make a list of each item and what the Scriptures say it is. Example: in verse 7 the "law" is "perfect" and the "testimony" is "sure."
2. Study "presumptuous sins," as mentioned in verse 13. What is an example of a presumptuous sin, and why is it so dangerous?
3. Find all the Scriptures in your concordance where the word *acceptable* is used.

PSALM 23

My Shepherd

1 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.



"The LORD is my shepherd." What a beautiful allegory! What comfort and consolation! It is no wonder that this is an all-time favorite psalm. The Lord, God Almighty, the creator of Heaven and earth, the giver and sustainer of life, the one who can move mountains and change circumstances, calm seas, and heal bodies, this is the Lord who is my personal Shepherd. In every verse of this psalm, the writer David makes the Lord a personal God. He wrote this: He leads me; He restores me; He is with me; He prepares for my needs; He anoints me; and He blesses me all over.

The thought of having a shepherd who takes care of His sheep is so comforting. John 10:12-15 says: "But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." A good shepherd watches for the safety of the flock from physical harm as well as for their health.

Sheep need protection because they do not have any natural defenses. A lion and bear have teeth and claws, a chameleon changes colors to blend with its environment, a horse can kick and rear, but a sheep just bleats or calls for help. We, as Christians, are so much like sheep. If a sheep falls down, it needs help getting up. It has to be sheared to keep parasites from making it sick or discontented. Just to know there is someone watching out for our welfare brings peace to us.

We may not always understand the Shepherd's ways. He may lead us through some rocky places, but it will ultimately lead to the "table lands," the high, flat, well-watered plains. If we can just remember, He is worthy of our trust. From the beginning of the psalm to the end, we are reminded of the Shepherd's love and care for us. Why would we want to leave this flock? The way to stay in "the house of the Lord forever" is to obey the Shepherd and follow where He leads you!

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Look in your concordance for more Scriptures about shepherds. Write down the characteristics of good and bad shepherds.
2. How can a soul be restored as in verse 3?

PSALM 26

How to Stay Saved

1 Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide.

12 My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.

The end of verse 1 says that "I shall not slide." No one starts the Christian race with the intention of backsliding. But there are things that have to be done in order to stay saved. This psalm outlines them for us very beautifully. We know we do not stand in our own human strength, but it takes the power of God to keep us saved. Verse 11 says, "... redeem me, and be merciful unto me." God wants us to go to Heaven and will help us if we will put forth a little effort.

First of all, verse 1 says that "I have walked in ... integrity." Integrity is a strong moral standard, choosing to live a pure life. We have choices to make daily. When we desire to do right, God will help us. The next part of the verse says, "I have trusted ... in the LORD." In salvation we trust in God's mercy. In daily living we trust in God's grace. Grace is unmerited favor, but it is also the very strength of God. We trust that God is watching over us, so why cannot we trust Him to keep us? You can ALWAYS trust Jesus for every detail of your life.

Verse 3 tells us to keep God's love and kindness on our mind all the time. This will keep wrong thoughts and attitudes out of our mind. Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Next, we need to walk in truth. Not just know truth, not even just love truth, but walk in it. Put truth to work in your life. Live what is preached.

Then, in verses 4 and 5 we go to negative things. Do not hang around vain people. This does not mean people who are stuck on themselves, but the word *vain* means "evil or morally corrupt, spiritually useless," lying people. Look for friends who will lift you up spiritually and not tear you down. The same goes for dissemblers. They are sneaky people, ones who sow discord or gossip about others. Verse 5 mentions evil doers and the wicked. Choose your friends wisely, because they will affect you spiritually and maybe get you into trouble in other ways as well.

You need to praise God for what He has done for you. Never stop praising Him for salvation. You will find many blessings to praise Him for along your Christian way. Last but not least, love to go to church services. This is where you will get strength and encouragement and learn more about how to please God and stay saved.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Look up Scriptures that contain the word *grace*, and see how many talk about favor and how many talk about strength.
2. List eleven do's and don'ts to stay saved. Read and practice them weekly.
3. Find other Scriptures that tell you not to spend time with wicked people.



PSALM 27

Wait on God's Help

14 Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

This psalm tells us how good God is to us: He is our light, our salvation, and our strength. All the way through this psalm, the author writes about a personal relationship with God: how He delivers from enemies and how He hides us in troubled times. The psalm tells how God sets us on a solid place and gives us stability in our life. It goes on to say that God answers prayers, He helps us, He does not forsake us, He saves us, He takes us in as His very own children, and He delivers us. God is good to us. What a testimony!

The last verse tells us to "Wait on the LORD." The word *wait* means "to twist together, expectantly look, and patiently tarry." In life we have all waited for someone to come visit or to call us, and we have been disappointed. God will not let us down. We can watch with great expectations for His answer to our need; He will deliver us. The longer you live for God, the more experiences you can relate that will prove God can be trusted. Allow your life to get twisted into God's life. Ask yourself what would God think of your situation, how would God react, and what does God's Word say about your problem? Allow God to influence each decision in your life, great and small. For each thought and action, silently ask, "Would Jesus be pleased?"

Waiting is hard for most of us. If a job needs done, we want to get to it. If a problem needs solved, what can we do to fix it right away? We live in a day of instant gratification: microwaves give us a meal in minutes along with fast food restaurants. Computers and the internet give us information on any subject in seconds with just the click of a button or touching a screen. *Wait* is a word that we do not like, because it means we cannot have what we want immediately. *Waiting* means "to patiently tarry." Patience is a virtue not many possess these days. We want the answer to our prayers as fast as we can think them. However, God does not always work in minutes and hours; sometimes He takes years!

I am sure Joseph wanted to be delivered from the Egyptians as soon as he arrived in Egypt, but God had different ideas. Twenty-five years later, he was still in Egypt, but things were just as God planned. Waiting was hard for Joseph. He was sold as a slave, exalted to position, sentenced to prison, exalted to position, forgotten in jail, then made second in command to Pharaoh. God did not fail him, but he had to "Wait on the LORD."

We have a lot of "wants," and God said He would not withhold any good thing from us (Psalm 84:11). But it is up to us to patiently trust His judgment, expectantly look for His way, and entwine our will with His. That is where true blessings come from.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Read through this psalm, then underline all the things mentioned in the first paragraph, and apply them to your circumstances.
2. Find other Scriptures that use the phrase "be of good courage." What were the circumstances that prompted the use of it?



PSALM 29

The Beauty of Holiness

1 Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

11 The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.



In the Old Testament, there was no way for a person to be holy or sinless because Jesus had not yet come to bring salvation and redemption from sin. They had to go through forms and ceremonies that were types of salvation which was to come. One example is in Leviticus, Chapter 4. The animal had to be without blemish, just as Jesus was without sin. As the person laid his hands on the head of the animal as it was killed, signifying the transfer of his sin to the sacrifice, so our sins were laid on Jesus as He died on the Cross. The blood of the animal was applied in several places showing the sin was covered. So our sin is covered by faith in the blood of Jesus and "with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

The Hebrew word for *holiness* in this Scripture means "a sacred, dedicated, hallowed or consecrated place or thing, a sanctuary or a saint." Our Scripture could mean that we are to enter God's house, a consecrated place and give Him glory, honor, and praise. Hebrews 10:24-25 says, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." It is a good thing to go to church. We encourage each other, and God's presence strengthens us.

In the New Testament, holiness is transferred to a person. The Greek or New Testament word for *holy* means "physically and morally pure and blameless, religious, consecrated one or consecrated thing and saint." Today we not only go to a holy or consecrated place, but we ourselves can be consecrated to the worship of God. First Peter 1:15-16 says, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written [Leviticus 11:44], Be ye holy; for I am holy." There is beauty in a holy life and holy worship like nothing else in this world.

The word *worship* can be used as a noun or a verb. The noun *worship* means "to feel reverence and love for a deity." The verb *worship* means "to show reverence, honor, and love with religious acts or rites." As we give glory and strength and honor to God in worship, He in turn blesses His people with glory, strength, honor, and peace, as it says in verse 11. John 4:23-24 says: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Always worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Look up the names of the nations (Lebanon, Sirion, and Kadesh). Why were they mentioned in this Scripture?
2. How can you worship God in spirit and in truth?

PSALM 31

Trust

1 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.

5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.

11 I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.

12 I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.

14 But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God.

19 Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!



Trusting in the Lord gives you hope and a refuge to run to in time of trouble. When you trust someone, you have complete confidence in him or her. You do not sit around and worry, because it is out of your hands and in the hands of a competent person. That is how we can be with God. It is always safe to trust God. God not only sees and understands our needs, but He also has the power to fill our needs or change our situation.

David's life was full of problems, especially when he had to run from King Saul. You can read about this in 1 Samuel, starting in Chapter 16, and on through 2 Samuel. You will see how God delivered David when he trusted in Him. But whenever he trusted in his own wisdom, he would get into trouble. Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

God is worthy of our trust. He has proven His faithfulness from Bible times to the present moment. We can depend on Him. Businesses like to employ dependable, trustworthy people because it makes everything run much smoother. When we remember God is in control, we can relax and trust His wisdom instead of fretting and fussing and stressing about situations. We can put our confidence in God. Verse 5 says, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit." That was the confidence Jesus showed on the Cross (Luke 23:46). Jesus and the Father (God) were so close that there was no hesitation on Jesus' part to put everything into God's control. We should all strive to be that close to God and trust Him with every detail of our life. Verse 14 says, "... Thou art my God." He is not truly our God until we turn everything over to Him. He has to be in charge of every aspect of our life. Then we can say that "I trusted in thee, O LORD."

Verse 19 sums everything up when it says, "Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up" Another way to say He "laid up" is He has "treasures in the bank" just waiting to be poured out on anyone who will completely trust in Him. The last part of that verse says, "... before the sons of men!" We should never be ashamed or afraid to say, "I am trusting God" because Jesus never fails; you can count on Him.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. How does the statement in verse 5 show trust in God? Find where Jesus uttered these words in the New Testament, and think about His trust in God.
2. In verses 9-13 David described his troubles. What does verse 14 teach us about dealing with life's problems?

PSALM 32

Salvation



A Psalm of David, Maschil.

1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

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

First of all, notice the introduction to this psalm: "A Psalm of David, Maschil." Maschil means it is a didactic or instructive poem. David was using poetry to teach us the way of salvation long before it was really available! The next word we should learn is found at the end of verses 4, 5, and 7; it is the word *Selah*. This word means "to pause or stop and calmly think this over." The psalmist wanted us to stop reading and think seriously about what he was telling us. We know that King David lived many years before Christ came and brought salvation to the world. So in these Scriptures David was prophesying of things he would not see in his lifetime.

Verse 1 introduces the subject of salvation and forgiveness. In David's day, sin could only be ceremonially cleansed, and remembrance was made of it once a year. In the Gospel Day, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Verses 3-4 tell of the condition of a sinner: no peace, inside is roaring and drought, and God's hand is heavy. In other words, the burden of sin is hard to carry, and conviction weighs on the mind. Conviction and condemnation for sin come before salvation. The guilt of sin is hard to deal with.

In Acts 9:5 we read about the time when Paul came under the heavy hand of conviction. It says: "And he [Paul] said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." When the Spirit of God begins to speak to your heart about the sins you have committed, yield to it, and ask as Paul did in verse 6, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Verse 5 of our psalm tells us you must acknowledge your sin. Do not blame someone or something else, but be honest and humbly admit you are wrong. We cannot hide anything from God, but our humanity makes it hard for us to own all of our sins. To find the joy of real salvation, you **MUST** acknowledge your sin and confess it, not to man but to God. Convince Him you are sorry you have hurt and sinned against Him, and express your desire to be free from the guilt of it. Verse 6 reminds us there is an accepted time to be saved (Isaiah 55:6-7), not when you choose but when God speaks to your heart.

Confessing sin is only part of the package. We must also be ready and willing to forsake sin. We cannot forsake sin in our own strength, but our job is to be sick of it and **WILLING** to forsake. We read in Proverbs 28:13, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." In our day you can invite the Holy Spirit to dwell in your heart. He will guide you into all truth (John 16:13). He will teach you the things you need to know how to live a holy life (1 Corinthians 2:10). He will show you how to trust in the Lord, and He will pour out mercy on you. Verse 11 tells what happens when you are saved. You will be glad you did it. You will rejoice and shout for joy. I have never met a person who was sorry they got saved. Although, some have said they were sorry they did not do it sooner.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Read Paul's conversion in Acts, Chapter 9, and see if you can find the steps we discuss in this lesson.
2. Find Scriptures that tell when the accepted or acceptable time is. Look up words such as *called*, *answer*, or *answered*.

PSALM 34

The Fear of the Lord

When David changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away.

11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.



Our psalm is from an experience David had when he was running from King Saul. He went to Gath in hopes of hiding. The king's name was Achish. The title of the psalm, however, says he was before Abimelech, which means "father of the king," or possibly the last name of the king. Before he left Israel, David went to the temple and asked for some food and Goliath's sword because he left in a hurry and was unarmed. He was discovered by the citizens of Gath who remembered what he had done to Goliath; so they took him to the king. He was afraid when Saul was chasing him, but now he was REALLY scared! Fear is a very real emotion and can cause you to fail to trust God. On the other hand, the fear of the Lord will cause you to be careful not to offend the Lord. David tells us in verse 11, "... I will teach you the fear of the LORD." In verses 13-14 he listed things we will do if we fear, or have great respect for, the power of God.

First, we will keep our tongue from evil. Our tongue can offend and cause someone to lose out with God. Psalm 141:3 tells us to ask God to keep the door of our lips. Our lips will either bless or curse, but not both. Our tongue can lie and promote falsities. Because we fear the Lord, we keep our tongue dedicated to praising God and under His control. Next, David tells us if we fear the Lord, we will keep our lips from speaking guile. Do not allow deceit or slander or promises you cannot or will not keep escape from your lips. Be known as someone who always tells the truth so that God can trust you with any task He needs done.

Next, the psalmist says to depart from evil. It is not enough to repent and say you are sorry for past wrongs, but you must stop doing wrong. In our own strength we cannot do this, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can turn from everything we know displeases God. Then you will not only depart from evil, but you will begin doing well. The Holy Spirit will impress you to give to the poor, take groceries or a meal to someone in need, lend a helping hand, send a note of encouragement, visit and pray for the sick, testify to an individual or in the congregation, sing a song, help the pastor, teach a Sunday school class, visit the prison, or a thousand other good deeds done in the name of Christ.

Last, seek and pursue peace. When you seek something, you look diligently; when you pursue, you chase after it. Peace is that state of being at rest within. When you know God has control of your situation, you can be at peace. When anything disturbs that peace, you diligently pursue it until you overtake it. This also goes for our human relationships. Do not allow attitudes or problems to disrupt the peace you have with your fellowman.

Verse 12 asks the question, Who desires a good long life? The answer is, everyone. The fear of the Lord produces a good life. It is worth the effort. You can read the same advice in the New Testament in 1 Peter 3:10.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Read the account of David before Achish in 1 Samuel 21:10-15.
2. Psalm 56 was written about the same situation. Are there similarities between the two psalms?

PSALM 37

The Spiritual "To Do" List

1 Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

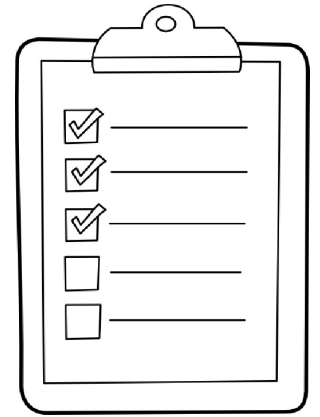
5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

27 Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.

37 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.



Here is a wonderful list of things God wants His children to do. We make lists when we have a lot of things to accomplish, so we will not forget any important detail. It is good to rehearse this list often to be sure we are making progress.

First, we are instructed to trust in the Lord. This means to be confident that the Lord will guide us in the right way and rest secure in the knowledge that He has everything under control. Then it adds, do good. In other words, allow God to show you a need in the world around you, then set to work in filling that need. Verse 1 tells us to "Fret not." The best way to keep from worry is to stay busy. When we see the burdens others carry, ours will seem much smaller. The end of verse 3 tells us by trusting and doing good, we will dwell in Canaan land, or in God's blessed place, and we will be fed with spiritual food that will keep us healthy. Verse 27 wraps up this thought again by telling us to depart from evil, do good, and dwell forevermore.

Verse 4 says to delight in the Lord. When we get saved, our greatest desire is to please the Lord and do His will. The rest of the verse says that He will give us the desires of our heart. When our delight is pleasing God, the desires of our heart will be in agreement with God's will. God will be glad to grant the request of a pure heart.

Verse 5 says to commit our way to the Lord. Here the word *commit* means to roll or cast the cares of your life on the Lord, knowing that He can handle every problem. Romans 8:28 tells us that "all things work together for good to them that love God." That does not mean we will not have hard places to go through, but God will work out the details so that you can still be blessed when the trial is over. Consider Job. We can commit our life to His wisdom.

The next item on our "to do" list is found in verse 7: rest and wait. This may be the most difficult! When we see sinners going on their way with what looks like little trouble, when we are constantly being attacked by the devil, or when we see a situation that we feel we can handle ourselves, waiting for God to intervene is hard. God says: "Shh, be quiet! I will take care of this." Sometimes God has lessons for us to learn by waiting. Possibly our motives need to be checked. Is it to prove us right and another wrong? How can our character be improved? Do we need more patience or compassion? In Romans 12:19 God says that vengeance is His to administer in His time, not ours. Resting implies that we can relax, because God is going to handle the problem.

Next we have to deal with anger and wrath (verse 8). Anger means to be stirred up about a situation or against a person for wrongdoing. Wrath is more heated anger, such as, fury or rage. Our Scripture tells us to

cease from anger. In other words, stop getting all upset about things and get as far away from wrath as possible! A Christian should allow God to control his passions and keep him calm when everyone else is out of control. The last part of the verse could be written, "Do not even think about doing such things."

Then in verse 37, we are told to observe the perfect and upright man. When you see a person who is living godly, watch how they handle problems and copy their ways. Consider how you can implement their wisdom. Respect their judgment. God's "to do" list will require time and energy, but it will be worth it.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Compare what happens to the wicked and what happens to the righteous in this psalm.
2. Study verses 23 and 24. Find other Scriptures that talk about falling or failing and how God will help you if you fall.

PSALM 40

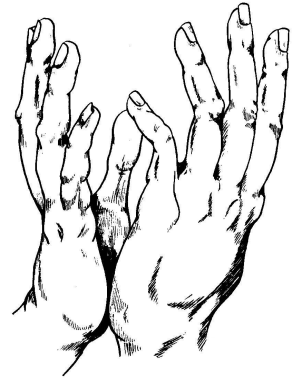
Up and Out!

1 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.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me.



To wait is hard; to wait patiently is harder! To persevere or continue in prayer when we feel unworthy of any answer is the hardest. If we are to gain salvation, we must convince God we are sorry for the sins we acknowledge, so sorry we never want to do them again. When He believes us, that is when He leans over the banister of Heaven to listen to every word we say.

When God sees a contrite, or broken, and humbled heart, a soul that is sick of sin, then He goes to work to bring that soul up from the horrible pit. Some words often used to describe the pit of sin are: dreadful, terrible, shocking, hideous, horror on all sides, dungeon, uproar, destruction, tumult, prison, and a pit of noise where there is no hope of rescue. That tells of the life of sin very plainly. Why would anyone want to stay in such a condition any longer than they absolutely had to? But that is not all; it is also miry clay. In the bottom of this horrible pit is sticky, slippery mud where there is no solid place to stand. Have you ever stepped in mud, and when you tried to take another step, it held your shoe fast? That is what sin is like. You take one easy step into it, and you get stuck. You find it is desperately hard to get out. Sin will cling to you like mud on your shoes until you are worn out trying to trudge through it.

Once you have gotten God's attention from your pit of sin, He will bring you up from the mud and out of the pit. He does not dangle you over the pit, just waiting for you to make a mistake and fall back in, but He will set your feet on the rock, Christ Jesus. The Lord will establish your goings. Through His Word He will guide you in a plain path, one that is well marked. Through the preaching of the Word, He will teach you how to live with your fellowman, how to react to situations of life, and how to live a holy life, so you can enter Heaven.

Verse 3 says the Lord will put a new song in your mouth. A mouth that used to curse God and slander other people will now be filled with praise to God. Praise will cause others to desire salvation also. Have you ever heard someone talk about a good restaurant and praise their food and service? It makes people want to try it. When we talk enthusiastically about what God has done for us, it will make others interested as well. The rest of the verse says, "... many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD."

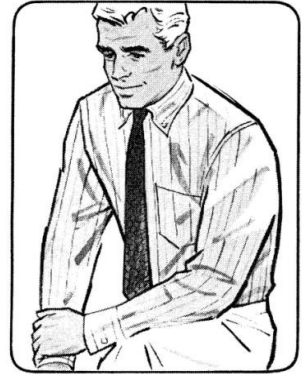
Verse 7 says, "... Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me." When you come to God for salvation from sin, He will write your name in the Lamb's Book of Life (meaning life in Christ), which will be opened at the Final Judgment and will be your means of entrance into eternal life, or Heaven. Be sure your name is written there!

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Study verse 10, and think about how you witness to "the great congregation," or in other words, your world.
2. Study verse 17, and find other Scriptures that talk about being *poor* and *needy*. David was king of Israel. Why would he call himself poor and needy?

PSALM 42

How to Handle Adversity



1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

3 My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?

5 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.

10 As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?

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 is another of King David's instructive psalms. It seems to have been written when he was in exile from Jerusalem because of Absalom's plot to take the kingdom from him. How can you describe the feeling you have in your heart for God? David was trying to express his great love for God. Think of an animal that has not been able to find water for days or weeks, as in a drought, and is braying for someone to help. This shows us an intense desire that is desperate to be filled. David's soul was like the hart that needed water; he was in desperate need of God's presence.

To get the full picture, you should read 2 Samuel, starting in Chapter 15. David was distressed that the son he loved so dearly would try to overthrow him. He was driven from the palace of luxury to camping out without the necessities of life. Verses 3 and 10 let us know that he was feeling pressure from those around him who would say: "Where is your God? If He exists, He has forsaken you." The devil still uses these kinds of thoughts today. In disasters you hear people say, "If God is such a loving God, why would He allow good people to suffer?" When everything goes wrong, the devil is right in your ear, saying things like, "God does not love you" or "You must not be saved or this would not have happened." Just remember that the devil is a liar. Good people do suffer adversity, and it makes them better. Children of God go through severe trials, and God loves them more for standing true. God loves us just as He loved His own Son who died for lost mankind.

But David knew how to encourage himself. Verses 5 and 8 tell us how to handle adversity. First, keep your hope and trust in God. It is always safe to trust God. Next, begin to thank and praise God for what He has already done for you. When we think of the things we have overcome in the past, it is easier to believe God can fix our current problems. Look for positive things, such as, "This could be so much worse if it had happened another way." Remember how much God loves you. He gave His only Son to die for your sins. Begin to sing songs of encouragement. Songs will stick with you when everything else fails. Verse 5 says to praise Him just because He is looking on your distress. Last but not least, pray. When we open our heart in honesty before God and tell Him how discouraged we are (read verses 6 and 9) and how impossible our situation seems, we move God who moves obstacles. Contrast verse 11 with verse 5. His countenance encourages us and gives health to our countenance. Adversity is no problem for God.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Read of Absalom's uprising and end in 2 Samuel, Chapters 15-18.
2. Think about how you can better handle your adversity.

PSALM 46

Be Still and Know That I Am God

- 1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
 2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
 3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah
 4 There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.
 6 The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.
 8 Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.
 10 Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*

**be
still
and
know**

Verse 1 tells us God is our refuge, strength, and help in trouble. What a comfort to know there is a safe place where we can go when the devil is battling with us. We do not have to be afraid. Fear is a terrible thing, and it will keep you from accomplishing the things God wants you to do.

Verse 8 instructs us to look at God's power in nature. Think about how terrifying these situations would be to us. Verse 2 says, "... though the earth be removed, and ... the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea [mud slides]." Verse 3 talks about "the waters thereof roar and be troubled [floods, tidal waves, or tsunamis], ... the mountains shake with the swelling thereof [earthquakes or volcanoes]." Verse 6 says, "The heathen raged [think of terrorism and the fear it tries to incite], the kingdoms were moved [wars and political unrest]: he uttered his voice, the earth melted [volcanoes]." Now, reconsider verses 1 and 2 again.

Verse 4 talks about a river. Think about a literal river, which is an important source for food (such as fish) and the wildlife that comes to the water to drink. It supports transportation and trade. Trees, which are needed to build dwellings, grow near the water. It supplies drinking water for humans and animals. Likewise, all that is needed to sustain our spiritual life is carried to us in the city of God by His streams of living water.

Verse 10 says, "Be still" It is very hard in such a noisy world to find a place to just BE QUIET! Do not be influenced by the media, your own thoughts, or the devil's talk. Just listen for God's voice. Stop fretting and trying to work things out in your own mind; stop trying to figure out how God is going to work. Allow God's "still waters," His calming grace, to flow over your troubled soul.

"Know that I am God." The world today does not know if God is a God of love or judgment, a beautiful father or a hateful tyrant, a creator or just a bystander. What others tell you about Him is good, but try Him and know Him for yourself. You must talk to Him, listen to Him, obey Him, trust Him, read about Him, spend time with Him—be best friends. Do not just know *about* Him, but know that He *is* God, your creator and your savior.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. What is a refuge, and what does the Bible say about them?
2. What is the city of God?

PSALM 48

Zion!



1 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.

13 Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.

To begin we need to understand what Mount Zion is. It is a literal mountain in Jerusalem. What makes it so special? It was a fort on the mountain that the Jebusites thought to be too strong for David to conquer, but he took it and called it the City of David (2 Samuel 5:6-9). The Ark of the Covenant was taken to the City of David (2 Samuel 6:12-16). The ark is a symbol of God's presence. The City of David was eventually called Jerusalem, where God said He would put His name (2 Kings 21:4). Isaiah 2:2-3 tells us the Lord's house is "in the top of the mountains" (or above all man-made religions) and out of it "shall go the law" of God. Psalm 9:11 tells us that God dwells in Zion. The righteous and holy are there. There is joy and gladness with those who live there.

In the New Testament it is spelled Sion, and is symbolic of the church that is built by God (Hebrews 11:10). In Hebrews 12:22 it is called the heavenly Jerusalem, or New Jerusalem, which is Christ's bride (Revelation 21:2). Zion is the Church of God.

In verse 1 we find there is praise for God. When we realize that God has brought us from a sinful life and that He has brought us to Mount Zion, the place where He dwells, and that He has put His holiness in our hearts and lives, there will be praise!

Verse 2 says it is a beautiful place. Literally, in the Old Testament, Mount Zion was impressively fortified, and the palaces and other structures were well situated in a beautiful array. The church, when you truly see it, is even more beautiful than the most ornate structures we can imagine. When God chooses to adorn anything, it is gorgeous! Think of how intricate a snowflake is and how each one is different. Think of the sunsets you have seen that leave you staring until it is completely gone. God is the creator of beauty and when He adorns His bride (the church, as in Revelation 21:2), He makes the most beautiful thing we can think of! Verse 2 goes on to speak of "the joy of the whole earth." Salvation brings joy to all who have it. It is not just for one person or one time, but it is for the whole earth or whosoever will come to Mount Zion, the Church of God.

There are many beautiful analogies in this psalm, such as God is our refuge. The church is our place to hide from the enemy of our soul. The church is established forever, as in Matthew 16:18. It is God's church, and He dwells in the midst of His temple. Judgment comes from His temple. This keeps the church pure.

Old Testament Jerusalem was destroyed, and Jesus said He would leave it desolate (Matthew 23:38). However, the New Jerusalem, the church, is as beautiful as ever. Verses 12-13 tell us to walk around her and look at her palaces and bulwarks. We need to search out her laws, judgments, and customs. These are her palaces. Her bulwarks, or fortified walls, and watchtowers are the promises of God that cannot fail. Hebrews 12:22-24 will sum this lesson up for us: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the

firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. "

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Look up all the Scriptures that talk about Zion (Sion).
2. What do verses 12 and 13 mean, and what are we to tell the next generation?

PSALM 50

What God Desires

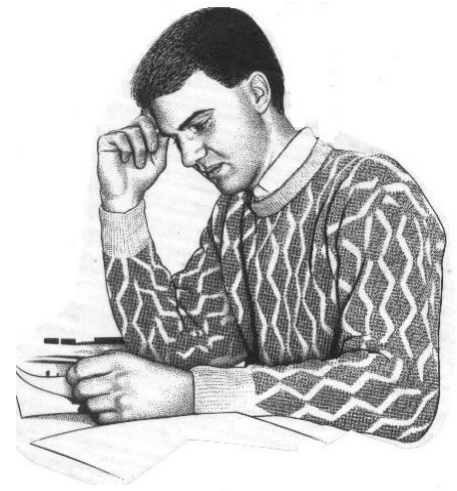
12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.

14 Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

22 Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.

23 Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.



Many of the psalms were written by King David, but this one is believed to have been written by Asaph, a prophet and poet. He reminds us in this psalm that God will bless and help those who will serve Him, and those who forget God and ignore His way will have His wrath to contend with.

Verses 9-15 are written to God's people, as stated in verses 5 and 7. The animals mentioned were used in the Old Testament as sacrifices. God is letting us know that sacrifice is not what He is looking for. Psalm 40:6 tells us the same thing. Verse 12 in this psalm states very plainly, "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee." He does not need our sacrifices, but what He is looking for is stated in verse 14, which reads, "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High." What God is really looking for is a people who will yield their will to His, glorify Him as their Lord and Savior, and praise Him for His wonderful works (Psalm 107). Verse 14 tells us to give God thanksgiving and pay our vows. Thanksgiving is an offering of gratitude from the heart.

Everything we do to and for God must come from our heart, or it is merely ceremony without meaning. It also tells us to pay our vows to God. A vow is a promise. When we get saved, we promise God we will live for Him and allow His will in our lives. Then in verse 15, we are told what God will do in return for this heartfelt devotion: "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee." You just cannot out give God. We praise Him for deliverance from sin, and He delivers us from trouble. We praise Him for the good life, and He gives us more abundant life!

Then, we go on to verses 16-22, and everything changes. In verse 16 those who lead in religious worship, or "declare my statutes," are most guilty. God is against all sinners, but when you teach others to disobey God's laws, He is more stern in His judgment. Those who hate instruction and cast God's Word behind them are sinners. They disregard, or pay no attention to, the Word of God. We must be careful not to say, "That is just the preacher's opinion," when in reality he is preaching from the Bible, God's Word. God not only judges actions but attitudes and what you stand for. Verses 18-20 talk about seeing wrong and doing nothing about it, consenting to evil, and using their words for evil and slander.

In verse 21 God says that you think you are getting by with wrongdoing. Have you ever heard someone say, "Oh, God understands why I am doing this"? He certainly does, but that does not mean He condones it! Verses 21 and 22 contain very strong warnings, stating: "... I will reprove thee ... Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

Verse 23 sums up the whole psalm: true praise from a thankful heart glorifies God, and our daily conduct,

which comes from a great desire to please God, will bring us to an understanding of God's divine plan for our life.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. In this psalm, what pleases God and what displeases Him?
2. Can you find other Scriptures that describe what God is pleased and displeased with?

PSALM 51

So, You Sinned

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.



This is the psalm David wrote after he had sinned with Bathsheba. We must remember that God hates all sin, but He loves the sinner. Sin has to be dealt with. Justice requires the death of the sinner, but mercy sent Jesus Christ to take our place and be the sacrifice for sin. This psalm guides us through the steps to salvation.

First of all, in verse 3 David acknowledged that he had sinned. He did not try to blame Bathsheba or anyone else but said it was his transgression, or his sin. In verse 4 he realized it was against God. All sin is against God and gives Him the right to cast us into hell. Until we acknowledge our guilt before God, we cannot be saved. That is why David cried out for mercy and loving-kindness.

In David's day, Christ had not given Himself as a sacrifice for forgiveness from sin, but by faith David asked for cleansing from his sin. He had to be reminded yearly that his sin was ceremonially rolled ahead to the time of Christ's coming. Today, we can have the blessing of our heart being cleansed, washed thoroughly, and a conscience void of offense (Acts 24:16).

A holy God cannot dwell where sin is, and David desired the sweet communion he had enjoyed from his youth when he was in the fields with the sheep, alone with God. We all know that sin cannot be cleansed with soap and water or even with regret or sorrow of heart. It takes the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse us from all sin (1 John 1:7). David was referring in verse 7 to the ceremonial cleansing with herbs like hyssop, but his desire was to have the sin completely blotted out. You and I can enjoy that blessing today because of Christ's death on the Cross. We can have our sins completely washed away so that we will not face them on Judgment Day. It is true that sin leaves scars, and there are consequences to be dealt with. However, when you have the Spirit of God to help you, it is so much easier than without Him. Verse 17 tells us what God is looking for: "a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart." If we could bring a sacrifice or do some good work and get forgiveness from our sins, Christ would not have had to die. Nothing but the blood of Jesus can cleanse your heart from sin.

Verse 10 leads us to the next step: "Create in me a clean heart" and "renew a right spirit." After we repent and confess our sins, we need to ask God to send His Spirit to dwell in our hearts so that we can have the power to live a holy life. Verse 12 asks for a restoration of joy. When you find real salvation, you will find real joy. It is not a surface happiness that comes and goes with the thrills and trials of life, but a deep settled peace that nothing can disturb.

Verses 12 and 13 show us the joy that comes from having our sins washed away and the praise it will cause in a clean heart. We will automatically talk to others about it. God desires witnesses to His wonderful work of salvation.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Read the account of David's sin in 2 Samuel, Chapters 11 and 12.
2. Use a dictionary or concordance to look up the words *purge* and *purged*, then read verses 9 and 14 to find out what David desired. Also, use a concordance to find out how *hyssop* was used in the Old Testament.

PSALM 61

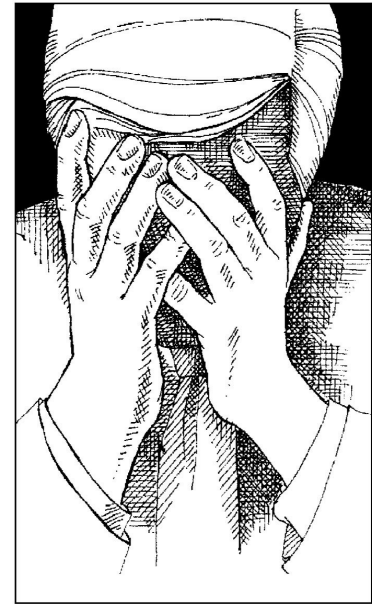
When My Heart Is Overwhelmed

2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

3 For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.

4 I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

5 For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.



When you are overwhelmed, you feel like you are drowning in your problems. Isaiah 59:19 tells us the enemy will come in like a flood. I am glad that no matter where we are, at the end of the earth, or the end of our endurance, God will hear us. We cannot get so far away that He cannot hear our cry for help. Our desire should be as the psalmist David's, "Lead me to the rock." That rock, that safe place, is Jesus. When we are overwhelmed, He is still in control of every situation. That rock is higher than what we can attain in our own selves. It takes faith in Christ to lift us up above our troubles. David said, "Lead me." When we cannot see around us, ahead of us, or above us, we need the Holy Spirit to guide us to the help we desire.

Verse 3 shows us that the presence of God had sheltered David more than once in his life, and he had confidence that if he could just get to that hiding place, he would be safe from the enemies that threatened to destroy him. We also can use past blessings to encourage us in our present situations. When we count our blessings, all the times God answered our prayer, all the impossible things He worked out, it will strengthen us to hold fast to His promises and wait for His deliverance again.

Next David declared, "I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever." The common Jew could only go into the courts of the tabernacle, and no one was permitted to take up residence there except the priests. When Christ died, the veil of the tabernacle was torn in half, opening the way that we could enter into the presence of God. When we find a place of peace and safety, we do not want to leave it. When we find the Church of God, we find that abiding place, just as David wished for.

The end of verse 4 says, "I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah." Or using the definitions of these words, it would say, "I will flee for protection to your overspreading feathers." The word *selah* is like a rest in music, a pause, a time to stop and think things over. Feathers do not seem like a very secure place to hide, but consider the chicken that hides her brood under her feathers. There they are safe, even at the expense of the hen's life. Christ has proven that we can trust in Him and we can run to Him for every need in our life. He not only hears but answers our prayers.

Verse 5 talks about the vows we make to God. A vow is a promise. Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 points out that it is better not to make a promise at all than to make one and not keep it. You know how you feel when someone breaks a promise to you. God requires that you keep your word. When we make statements so lightly, such as, "If God will just get me out of this jam, I will do this or that," remember that God is listening. Be careful little mouth what you say!

The last part of verse 5 talks about the inheritance of those who fear God. There are stability and safety, power and deliverance, as well as stories of faithful men and women that give us hope for our own problems.

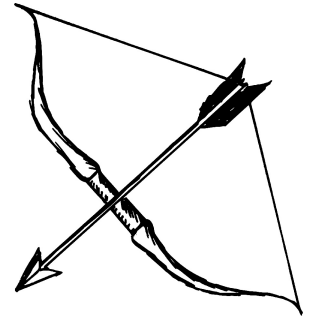
There are all of God's promises that are a wealth greater than all the riches of this world. What a heritage we have; pass it on.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Find other Scriptures that talk about paying your vows.
2. Look up the word *rock* in the New Testament.

PSALM 64

Sharp Words



1 Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.

3 Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:

4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.

7 But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.

10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.

"Sticks and stones may break my bones but words" ... hurt the worst! You can say with your mouth, "I do not care what people say about me," but in your heart you care. We all want people to think well of us. We want to be accepted. Somewhere in life someone is going to spread a rumor, disagree, or just plain dislike you and say so loud and clear. When you are a Christian, you can expect differences. First Peter 4:12 reads like this, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." Trials are part of the Christian life. I have heard the saying many times, "If you do not stand for something, you will fall for anything." When you stand up for right, the devil will see to it that some sharp arrows are shot at you.

David had many enemies who tried to discredit his influence, but when God is for you, Romans 8:31 asks the question, "Who can be against us?" Bitter words can certainly hurt our feelings and discourage us, but they do not have to knock us out of fellowship with God. What we have to be careful of is that we do not try to defend ourselves and shoot our own bitter words right back at the enemy. It may be true that we do not have to allow people to walk on us; still we cannot answer back in a wrong spirit, or we are just as guilty as they are. Psalm 19:14 reminds us to let the words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart be acceptable in God's sight. When we try to fight our own battles, we usually make things worse instead of better. We must remember Proverbs 15:1, which says, "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." It is easy to just let our fleshly feelings go and defend ourselves, but that is not what God expects of us. We are to stay humble and allow God to work through us. We may be able to show some soul a better way to live and to win that soul for Christ, but if we lash out with our tongue, we may kill all hope of them being saved.

With today's technology, we can spout our feelings on the internet and not even realize the world is reading it and judging the church by our actions. We must be careful how we answer difficult questions and accusations because God is also reading our post! Influence can take years to build but only seconds to destroy.

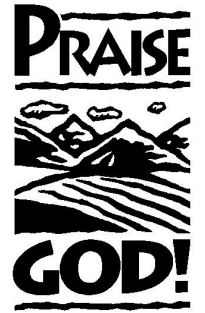
Verse 7 uses my favorite phrase: "But God" The devil can throw all kinds of trials at us, but when God steps in, everything changes. The very things that the enemy was using on David became their destruction. It says the enemy shoots at us, but verse 7 says they shall be wounded. God is our protection and defense. Verse 10 reminds us we can trust in the Lord. We do not have to be defeated by the devil's arrows.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Find more Scriptures that use the phrase "But God."
2. Look up other Scriptures that use the word *tongue*. Make a list of all the things the tongue can do—good or bad.

PSALM 66

Praise!



1 Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:

13 I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows,

14 Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.

15 I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.

16 Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

17 I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.

18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

19 But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

20 Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

Let us start at verses 16-20, and then go back to verse 1. This psalm tells why we should praise God. David recounts several specific times when God delivered Israel. Verse 16 says, "... I will declare what he hath done for my soul." We need to tell others what God has done for our soul, not some deep doctrinal truth or great philosophical thought but the personal deliverance you have received. David said, "I cried [or I prayed] unto him." Verse 19 says that He attended to my prayer. Just to know God hears our prayers is comforting.

Verse 18 says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart [that is, if I love it, indulge in it, and hold on to it as if it were of value and hate to let it go], the Lord will not hear me." God will not stay where sin is. When Jesus bore our sins on the Cross, God turned His face from His only Son because a holy God will not look on unrighteousness. Verse 19 goes on to say, but God DID hear me! What a wonderful blessing to know our sin is gone and God hears our prayer. That should generate praise in our hearts. Verse 20 is David's way of praising God. Are we really as thankful as we should be for God's presence in our lives? Our payment for answered prayers is thanksgiving.

When we are in trouble, it is so easy to plead with God and promise many things. It is another thing to keep those promises. We read in Ecclesiastes 5:5, "Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." Promises are not taken very seriously today, but God still expects us to keep our word. If you tell God you will praise Him, do not just forget it when your dilemma is over. The devil is always on hand to tell you a situation just worked itself out or God did not really have anything to do with a good outcome. Remember, the devil is the father of lies. If we do not get the answer to prayer that we want, the devil is quick to say, "God does not answer prayer anymore." Maybe it is because you did not pay the vow, or keep the promise you made before. It is good and honorable to keep your promises to people, but it is imperative that you keep your promises to God. You will meet them at the judgment!

If the only thing God ever did for you was save your soul, you need to give Him the best sacrifice you can afford. In the Old Testament it was rams, bulls, and goats that were sacrificed. Today we need to listen to the Holy Spirit and bring what He needs—praise, honor, glory, and a life of devotion to God and His work. Public and private praise are equally important. Public praise helps others to see God in His glory and encourages them to seek Him.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. What has God done for your soul? (Read verse 16.)
2. Look up the word *vows*, and see what God thinks about them.

PSALM 73

Understanding the End of the Matter



A Psalm of Asaph.

1 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 I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.

13 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.

17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

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.

Have you ever watched someone who is not saved and thought: "How lucky they are. They can go here or there and have fun and be popular. They do not have the restrictions I have. It is all fun and games"? Have you been discouraged and felt as though God was not answering your prayers? Do you feel as if your life is going nowhere? Do you look at young people who do not go to church and feel that they are having a lot more fun than you? They have parties, friends, fun, girl or boy friends, and freedom, while you are just struggling along, trying to be good and do right. Asaph, David's choir director, almost backslid while watching sinners who were seemingly enjoying life.

Verses 3-6 remind us that pride is like a chain tying you to sin and a worldly life. We MUST guard our heart. People today can speak against God and the church without any reverence or respect and think God is incapable of doing anything about it. Sometimes even God's people ask: "Is God still in control? Does He care what people are saying? Why are the wicked prospering and the righteous suffering? Is God watching all this?" In verses 13-16 Asaph told us he felt like he had lived for God in vain; it just was not worth the effort! Sometimes it is easy to have a self-pity party: "Poor me! I just cannot have any fun and live for God."

Verse 17 changes everything! In essence, it says that "I went to church." When you are discouraged, do not stop going to church, because that is where you will see things in a true light. The devil will blind you to reality and fill your mind with false ideas that can only be changed by the Word and Spirit of God. We look at the present situation, but God sees the whole picture. He sees the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). Verses 17-20 show us what God sees and knows. Sinners are in slippery places and will end in destruction. It only takes an instant for life to change and terrors to take hold on a sinner's life. The people who mock God discover there are problems in life they cannot handle alone, and when God fights against you, you cannot win.

Verses 21-27 help us to realize where our thoughts could have taken us and just how foolish it is to leave God's protection. Look at the wrecked lives on every side and be thankful for God's loving-kindness and tender mercies, even when we do not think He is watching us.

Do not allow the devil to convince you it is better in the world. Only heartache and sorrow are there. It is good to draw near to God, and it is ALWAYS safe to trust Him. When you get discouraged, try telling others what God has done for you. It will chase the devil far away!

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Is there something you wish you could do that a Christian would never do?
2. Think about how it would affect your spirituality and what the end of doing it would be.

PSALM 84

I Love to Go to Church!

To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

1 How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!

2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

3 Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God.

6 Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.

10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

12 O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.



This song was to be accompanied with a Gittith, or a harp. I can imagine a young David sitting on the lonely hillside with the sheep, harp in hand and thinking about going to the temple to worship and the sweet feeling of being in the presence of God.

We can get so used to going to church that it means little or nothing to us and sometimes is considered a bother. We need to get a fresh desire for God's presence! David said it was "amiable," or a well-loved time, to be in the presence of God. Psalm 122:1 says, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD." Being in church services is not so much about seeing your friends or being in a beautiful building, but it is about being in the presence of God Almighty. It is about feeling His Spirit moving on your heart and blessing your soul.

David desired to live in the presence of God, around the altar as the swallow that builds her nest there. We can enjoy what David longed for. We can have the presence of God with us every day, wherever we go. We are blessed, and yet we can take it all for granted.

Verse 6 talks about the "valley of Baca," a place in Palestine, meaning "the valley of weeping." There are times of sorrow and sadness even in faithful Christians' lives, but this Scripture lets us know that today's trials are just filling up the pools of blessings for tomorrow. God will strengthen us through the hard times and make us better Christians. He does not just leave us to struggle alone but watches over us and hears our prayers.

When the psalmist talked about being a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord (verse 10), he was letting us know he would be happy to be just at the threshold, not even able to enter into the house of God. In the Old Testament, they could only go a little way into the temple, and only the high priest could be in the actual presence of God—and then it was only at certain times of the year. If David was delighted to be just at the door, what should we feel to be in the very presence of God? When we compare the peace of the house of God with the drama, contention, and discontent of the world, it is no wonder verse 10 says that one day with God is better than 1,000 days without Him.

The Word of God is full of promises and blessings to those who live uprightly. In verses 11-12 we find the

promise of good things and God's blessings on those who trust in Him. The next time you go to church, try to imagine how excited David would be to be able to sit in the presence of God.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Find other Scriptures that talk about God being our shield. What does this mean to us?
2. What does it mean to "walk uprightly," as spoken of in verse 11?

PSALM 91

The Secret Place

1 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.

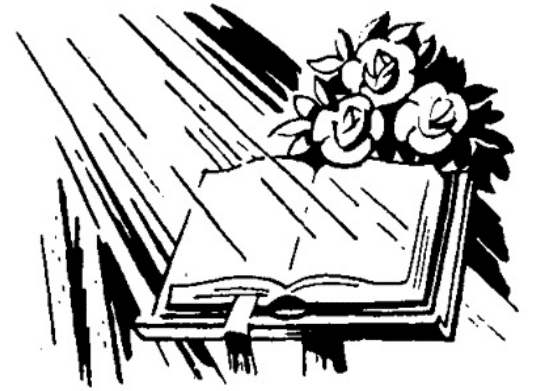
3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

9 Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation.



So where is this secret place? Verse 2 tells us it is in "the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress." Verse 1 lets us know that those who make the Lord their dwelling place will be safe in the secret place. This secret place is not somewhere you slip in and out of, but it is a dwelling place, the place you call home, the place you can sit and curl up and talk to Jesus for as long as you like. Verse 4 says it is under His wings.

I have always loved the analogy of a hen gathering her chicks under her wings to protect them from every dangerous situation. Wind and rain cannot reach those baby chicks, and the mother hen will die before she allows harm to come to them. Feathers do not seem like such a strong defense, but a chick is close to the warmth and protection of its mother, hidden away from the crafty eye of the enemy. Dwelling in the shadow of the Almighty is a close relationship, but being under His wing is even closer.

The psalmist listed several enemies of our soul: the snare of the fowler, noisome pestilence, terror by night, the arrow by day, the pestilence that walks in the dark, and the destruction at noonday; but none of these can hurt you while you are abiding in the Lord. There will be troubles and trials in life, but God will point out the snares and make you aware of the "noisome [which means a sickening stench] pestilence." The dark is light to Him, and He will guide you around destruction. He is a refuge, a place to run and hide, a fortress, a place to take a stand, a shield (a large piece of equipment used for defense), and buckler (a small, lightweight shield used in hand-to-hand combat, used for offense and defense).

And who can go to this secret place? Verse 2 tells us it is those who trust in God. Verse 9 shows us we must make our habitation with God. We cannot trust Him sometimes and forget about Him when it is not convenient. We must determine in our hearts that we will love, serve, and worship Him, and allow Him to guide our life. Then we can enter the secret place and be safe.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. List all the blessings of being with the Almighty.
2. Does this psalm tell us there are guardian angels? Are there other Scriptures that talk about guardian angels? Look up the word *angels*. What does the word *angel* mean? Look up the meaning in *Strong's Concordance* to see how it is used in each Scripture.

PSALM 100

A Psalm of Praise

1 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.



When we encourage someone to make a joyful noise, we are generally telling them to sing to the Lord and not worry about perfection. In our Scripture, it means to make a loud noise or shout! Make it a shout of triumph, animated praise. When we have the Creator of the universe in our hearts, we are triumphant over sin. When your team wins a game, you do not just nod your head and say quietly, "Oh, that was nice." You shout and show your excitement. Why should we have less enthusiasm about our salvation? This was not just for the Jew, but for all—you and I are included!

The word *serve* in verse 2 can mean either "to work for someone," "to be a bond slave to someone," or "to worship." All of these definitions can be used here. It is not a hard task to give service to the One who takes such good care of us and treats us with loving-kindness. We gladly give ourselves to do whatever He bids us. Worship is about our heart reaching out and touching God's heart with our deepest admiration. It is not a hard thing to serve God. Matthew 11:30 says, "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

The rest of verse 2 tells us to "come before his presence with singing." This is a way to express our joy. When you are happy, it is natural to sing bubbly songs. God does not want His people to be pressed down and sorrowful all the time. Isaiah 61:3 says, "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" With those kinds of blessings, why should we be sad?

The Lord is good. It would be hard to serve a master who was uncaring or cruel. But our Lord loved us when we were ugly inside and hard to get along with. Even in the hard times, we can know that God is good. His mercy is everlasting. This does not mean you can ignore His commandments and He will just let you do whatever you want. It does mean He will work with you and help you to become the best person you can be. His truth endures to all generations. That includes you and me! Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." We can count on Him. Make a joyful noise to the Lord today!

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Read Isaiah, Chapter 61. Can you find anything in that chapter to praise God for?
2. Think about verse 3. What difference will it make if we acknowledge God as our Lord? What is the advantage of being a sheep in God's pasture?

PSALM 103

Why Should We Praise the Lord?

1 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

David was praising the Lord in this psalm. Praise must come from the heart and be 100 percent genuine to be acceptable to God. David was crying out from the depths of his soul in thankfulness to the God who had blessed him.

Sometimes the devil tells us we have nothing to be thankful for and we should just be quiet because we have unsolved problems. God deserves our praise. David gave us a list of reasons to praise God, even in the hard times. He started out by saying, forget not ALL His benefits. We need to take time to count our blessings, not just at Thanksgiving but especially when the devil is trying to press us down or accuse us. Praise will drive the devil away. It seems we always start our list with the material things, but David went much deeper. There are many in our world who do not have material goods, but they are still blessed!

First, we should be thankful for our salvation. God did not just forgive some of our sins; He forgave them all. We should be thankful God does not hold them over our head and bring them up to make us feel bad. Verse 12 lets us know how far away our sins are. If you start traveling west and continue for a lifetime, you will never discover the distance between the East and the West. The sins we ask God to forgive are gone forever. WOW!

Next, David said that God will heal all our diseases. The devil likes to disturb our faith and try to convince us God no longer heals. He will point out situations to make us doubt, but God has not changed. It was said long ago, "God will pull us through if we can stand the pulling!" There are many different reasons why some do not get healed, but do not let that stop you from asking and trusting Him to heal your body, soul, mind, or spirit. He is still the Healer.

Many people graduate with a bright future and with everything going for them. Then they destroy their opportunities with violent acts, drugs, or sexual promiscuity. It always makes us sad to see such wasted lives. If we will live by God's plan for our life, He will keep us from such destruction. That is not to say God cannot buy back or redeem someone who has made a mess of their life, but it is always best to avoid such scars and disappointments.

There is not room to list all His blessings because they continue day by day, but a few more are His loving-kindness and tender mercy. He gives us good things and renews us daily. He is a friend who is closer than any brother. Bless the Lord, O my soul!

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Make a list of the spiritual blessings you have to be thankful for.
2. Read verses 10 and 11 and think about how different your life would have been if God had rewarded you according to your sins.

What
ARE...You
Thankful
for?

PSALM 119

An Acrostic Poem

11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

64 The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes.

67 Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.

71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

LAMED.

89 For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.

MEM.

97 O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

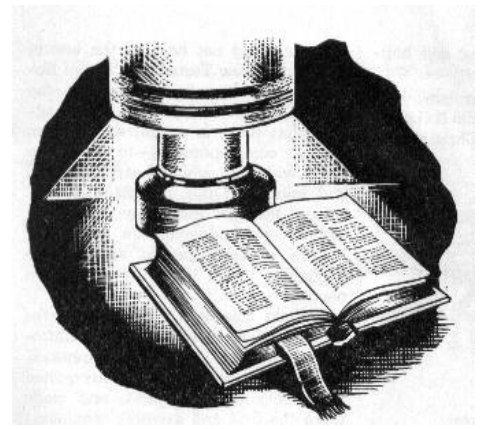
103 How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

NUN.

105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

130 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.



An acrostic poem is a poem in which the first letter of each line or paragraph spells out a word, message, or the alphabet. It is sometimes used to aid memory retrieval. David obviously knew about it and wrote eight lines for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This is the longest of the psalms, but do not let it scare you. Break it down by sections, and see what David was trying to help us remember.

Above are some of the more commonly quoted verses from this psalm. The central theme is David's love of God's Word, or law. He was persecuted because he lived a righteous life and followed God's divine plan. We also will find those who feel we are unnecessarily strict. David made it very clear that regardless of what others did or said, he was going to follow God's law. We also have to be determined not to take an easier way just because it is popular. Living for God is not usually the easy way. It may cost us some friendships and put us out of some social circles; but as David told us, it is well worth any persecution that might come our way. God's Word is our road map, or GPS, that will get us to Heaven!

Verse 11 says that God's Word will keep us from sin. Verse 89 shows us the stability of God's Word. In a world where everything is changing, we can rest on God's Word because it NEVER changes. Verse 103 says that it is sweet. Verse 105 tells us it is a lamp and a light, a guide in a dark world. Verses 67 and 71 are interesting. We never feel that troubles and trials are good, but David pointed out these trying times are when we find comfort and help in God's Word. These times make us better Christians and more reliant on Him.

When we study and meditate on God's Word, we will see His great mercy to us. It will teach us the way to live here so we can live with the Lord hereafter. Verse 97 says David meditated all day long on the law of God. We know as a king, he had many things to fill his mind, just as we do today. We need to use our time wisely and make sure every decision is compared to God's law to keep us on the straight and narrow way. As we study, God will give us light (which is understanding of why He requires certain things). It is true that living and loving God's Word, or law, brings great peace. Verse 165 goes on to say that "nothing shall offend them." This means nothing shall cause them to fall or ruin them. God honors those who honor Him.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Write your own A-B-C poem of praise.
2. Write a summary or one thought that stands out to you from each eight-verse section in this psalm.

A - B - C Praises

Amazing grace is what I've found
Because He set me free
Christ has died that I might live
Desire like Him to be

Each day I walk, He's by my side
Father, I'm so glad You are my guide
Grant me, Lord, I'd be like You
Having compassion through and through

Indifference help me always shake
Jesus, always Your way to take
Keep me so I will be true
Love my enemies, just like You

Marvelous are Your wonderful works
No one can this deny
Open your storehouse up on high
Power to shower on us as the years go by

Quicken me by Your Spirit's dealing
Resurrect my soul
Spiritual food I'm always craving
Truth to me You are revealing

Understanding let me gain
Venture out for You
Waking souls out of Satan's domain
X-ing sinners from the devil's role

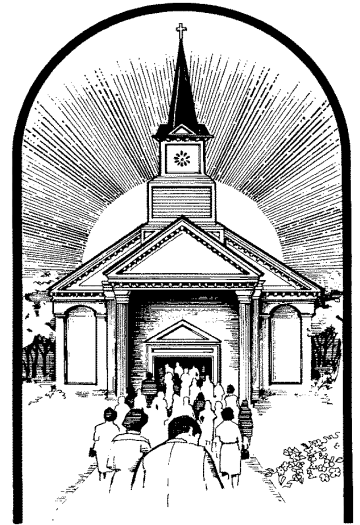
Yours I am and will always be
Zealously winning souls for Thee

By Joyce Corder
3-12-04
Inspired by Psalm 119

PSALM 121

A Song of Degrees

- 1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
 2 My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.
 3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.
 4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.
 5 The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.
 6 The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.
 7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.
 8 The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.



This is called "A Song of degrees." The definition is "a climactic progression or things that come up." It is used in Psalms 120 through 134. It is possible these were songs that were sung by the Jews as they ascended up the mountain to the temple at feast times. They were short, easily memorized songs and prepared their hearts for worship (*ChristianAnswers.net*).

How many times have we counted on friends or family to help us with a particular need only to have them let us down? That is just how life is. Sometimes people cannot fit us into their schedule or supply our needs, but God is always watching and caring for us. That does not mean that we are entitled to whatever we want! He expects us to do our best and go as far as we can go. Sometimes it will seem as if He did not help at all, but He has a master plan that everything fits into perfectly.

This song reminds us how big God is and how He is able to help and keep us from evil. He is the maker of Heaven and earth. If we will just dwell on that thought, we will know whatever resources we need are available. He never dozes off or falls asleep but is watching out for us day and night. There is not another friend who can do that. As humans we have to sleep, so we cannot provide that level of protection. Our heart should swell up in praise for a God who has so much compassion and concern for us.

As the Jews walked and sang, they were preparing their hearts to worship God in the temple at Jerusalem. We also should prepare our heart for worship by remembering God's ever watchful eye on us, His protection over us, His keeping power, and His deliverance from evil. When we come into church, it is good to greet one another, but our main purpose is to worship God, not to see our friends. Our heart needs to reach out to God in acceptable worship and praise. When we fill our mind with thoughts of God's goodness, our praise will reach God and bring honor to Him and response from Him. When His presence fills our temple (1 Corinthians 6:19), it will spill over onto other saints, the discouraged, and the lost. God will be glorified, and we will be strengthened. First Chronicles 16:29 tells us, "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. "

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Read Deuteronomy 16:16 to find out what feasts the Jews kept.
2. Look at the other psalms called *A Song of Degrees*, and list the main topic of each song.

PSALM 139

God Knows Me

1 O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.

2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

23 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.



There are times in our life when we feel like no one understands us. This psalm reminds us that God knows all about us. He knows what causes us to sit down and stand up. He knows what we are thinking and why those thoughts are in our minds. He knows what we say and what we meant to say. He has known us in the past, and He can look ahead to our future. This is hard for us to remember. The devil likes to make us believe we are all alone in our trial, but God is there and already knows what is going on and how it is going to be resolved.

David does not write this psalm by saying God knows the whole world or God knows all about you. This is a personal psalm. It says, "Thou hast searched ME" What can be more personal than our thoughts? We do not want people reading our mind because that is where our true feelings lie hidden. We should not tell someone their outfit is unbecoming, even though the thought may go through our mind. Remember, God judges our thoughts. Is it just a fact you file away, or is it a malicious, hateful feeling you will use to hurt that person when you get the chance?

David points out there is no place to hide from God. Some think they will move to a new city or a new congregation and start over, but they always take themselves along. You have to face yourself, see yourself as God sees you. The ocean cannot cover you; the darkness cannot hide you. God already knows who you are, where you are, and what you have done. So, it is best to acknowledge any wrongdoing and get it straightened out.

God understands us because He made us. Verse 14 tells us we are "fearfully and wonderfully made." Verse 16 goes on to say, "... in thy book all my members were written ..." (even when they were not completely formed). Those who say it is okay to abort a baby because it is just a blob of cells need to read their Bible. God knows us from conception, and He has everything written down. God values life, and we should too.

In verse 1 David said God had searched him. In verse 23 he asks God to search him and to know him. He wanted God to show him any wrong ways, deeds, or thoughts so that he could be pure before God. Adam and Eve hid from God because they did not want Him to look into their hearts. A child of God desires God's inspection so he or she can be more like Him in thought, word, and deed because God already knows.

To study deeper, consider the following:

1. Count the number of times David used the words *me*, *my*, and *I* in this psalm. Is this psalm just between David and God, or can we insert our name and make it personal between us and God?

PSALM 150

Praise YE the Lord!

1 Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.

2 Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.

3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.

4 Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.

5 Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.

6 Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

This could have been a song that the Levites used to put them in the right frame of mind for the jobs they did in the temple worship. It is good for us as well to stir up our mind as we enter into worship whether in church or in our private devotions.

First of all, the psalm specifically says, "Praise YE." In other words, you praise the Lord. Do not wait on someone else to praise God and then you join in. Praise should be in every Christian's heart. To give praise to God should be as natural as breathing. Next, let us think about the word *praise*. When someone praises us for an accomplishment, they are commending us or celebrating our work or boasting about how well we performed. The same goes for praising God. We can boast or rave about the wonderful things He has done for us. We celebrate and glory in His marvelous power. This is one place we will not have to worry about over exaggerating His goodness. We can be proud of our awesome God and wonderful Savior. When we praise God, others can see magnificence all around Him.

We should always praise God in His sanctuary, our place of public worship. This is where we encourage ourselves and each other. Many times there are people who are burdened down with the cares of life or discouraged, and praise will help them lift up their head and look to the One who is in control of life. Praise brings a smile. When one person begins to praise God, it ignites praise in another heart as well. In other words, it is contagious! The sanctuary is often called God's house. It should bring praise to our lips to realize we can enter into God's house. We have been invited to be His guests. Just to be in His presence is an honor many have not found.

Next, we praise God "in the firmament of his power." Where would that be? The firmament expresses the expanse of the sky. It reaches as far as we can see, and we know it goes beyond that as well. How far can His power reach? Ephesians 3:17-21 gives us a little glimpse. Verses 20-21 say: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." God's love, goodness, and power are universal. It reaches out to the whole world, so that we can say, as in verse 6, "Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD."

If you have a voice or an instrument, be sure you use it to praise the Lord. Praise YE the Lord!



To study deeper, consider the following:

1. What do you have to be thankful for today?
2. Have you thanked God for His church or for His mighty acts? List the things you would consider to be the greatness of God.