

Soul Care | *Spiritual Basics for Hungry People* Week 5 – The Psalms



Psalm 1 (NIV)

- [1] Blessed is the man
 who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
or stand in the way of sinners
 or sit in the seat of mockers.
- [2] But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
 and on his law he meditates day and night.
- [3] He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
 which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.
 Whatever he does prospers.
- [4] Not so the wicked!
 They are like chaff
 that the wind blows away.
- [5] Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
 nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
- [6] For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
 but the way of the wicked will perish.

Joy Will Come to You (Psalm 1)

by Brian Moss. © 2005 Parson John Publishing (ASCAP). ARR. UBP. CCLI#058484.
Recorded on *Prayerbook, No. 1* by Brian Moss (available on iTunes)

*Joy will come to you in the word, the way
hold it in the night and live it in the day
Like a tree beside the running living blue
water into life, this joy will come to you*

*Walk away from sin, hate has many eyes
mocking what is good, their house is built on lies*

*Joy will come to you in the word, the way
hold it in the night and live it in the day
Like a tree beside the running living blue
water into life, this joy will come to you
Joy will come to you*

VALUE OF THE PSALMS

Study and Meditation come together beautifully in the Psalms

We recite this prayer of the Psalm in Him, and He recites it in us. (Augustine in Enarratio in Psalm 85)

Teaches

About God

His works and deeds
His character and nature

About us

Our life needs
Depression and Sorrow
Enemies and Difficulties
Failures and Sins
Our heart hungers
Thirst for God
Overflowing praise

How to pray

There is a difference between praying to an unknown God whom we hope to discover in our praying, and praying to a known God, revealed through Israel and in Jesus Christ, who speaks our language. In the first we indulge our appetite for religious fulfillment; in the second we practice obedient faith. The first is a lot more fun; the second is a lot more important. What is essential in prayer is not that we learn to express ourselves, but that we learn to answer God. The Psalms show us how to answer.
(Peterson, p. 6)

Brings us and God together

SOME WAYS TO READ:

- Cover to cover—it's not that long.
- In a month by reading 5 chapters a day—read the chapter that is the same number as today's date. Then add 30 to that number and read that psalm. Do it again 3 more times. For example on the 1st of the month you'll read chapters 1, 31, 61, 91 and 121 and on the 30th you'll finish by reading chapters 30, 60, 90, 120 and 150.
- In a year—perhaps within a set reading plan such as that provided by the Moravian Church in North America at www.moravian.org/daily_texts.
- Using 8 verse segments of Psalm 119 as a call to reading—and then read a portion of the Psalms.
- Slowly—savoring each thought and image and word.
- Studying—with commentary and study notes in hand.
- Meditating—with *lectio divina* as the path.
- Praying—speaking the words back to God as your own.
- Liturgically—by using a Book of Hours or Daily Prayer

TOOLS FOR STUDYING

(The purpose is to help us observe more closely what is in the text)

Parallelism

Synonymous—repetition of same thought in a different way

Psalm 69:6 (NIV)

*May those who hope in you
not be disgraced because of me,
O Lord, the Lord Almighty;
may those who seek you
not be put to shame because of me,
O God of Israel.*

Antithetic—using opposite terms to say the same thought

Psalm 1:6 (NIV)

*For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.*

Synthetic—second member advances or heightens in some way the thought of the first

Psalm 14:1 (NIV)

*The fool says in his heart,
"There is no God."
They are corrupt, their deeds are vile;
there is no one who does good.*

Chiasm—X (Greek letter Chi) shaped parallel relationships

Psalm 1:2 (NIV)

*But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.*

Also see Psalm 1:6 above

Understanding Psalm Categories

RESOURCES

Alter, Robert. *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary*. W. W. Norton & Company: New York, 2007.

Blaising, Craig A., Carmen S. Hardin, eds. *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament VII: Psalms 1-50*. Inter-Varsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois, 2008.

Bullock, C. Hassell. *Encountering the Book of Psalms*. Baker Academic: Grand Rapids, MI, 2001.

Kidner, Derek. *Psalms 1-72: An Introduction & Commentary*. Inter-Varsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois, 1973.

Kidner, Derek. *Psalms 73-150: An Introduction & Commentary*. Inter-Varsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois, 1973.

Longman, Tremper III. *How to Read the Psalms*. Inter-Varsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois, 1988.

Peterson, Eugene H. *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer*. HarperOne: New York, 1989.

Psalms, a CD of music inspired by the Psalms from Sovereign Grace Music. (Note that we sing *Glorious and Mighty, The Lord Is* and *Blessed Is the One* from this recording.)

Sire, James W. *Learning to Pray Through the Psalms*. Inter-Varsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois, 2005.

Wesselschmidt, Quentin R., ed. *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament VIII: Psalms 51-150*. Inter-Varsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois, 2007.



Psalm Categories...

LAMENTS (most common, very true to life)

Address to God (2nd person with descriptions, preliminary cry for help or petition)

Complaint (the lament)

Trust (confession of trust—rarely absent—sometimes so strong as to be a Psalm of Confidence)

Petition (expresses request, sometimes very intimate, comes on very strong)

Vow of Praise (to give thanksgiving when God has answered)

SONGS OF THANKSGIVING

Announcement of Intent to Give Thanks (usually includes address to God)

Recounting of Psalmist's Experience (major element, involves a mini-lament with 3 elements)

Need

Petition

Deliverance

Conclusion (contains an exhortation of praise or a description of the fulfillment of vows)

HYMNS

Call to Worship (often addressed to congregation in the imperative, at time to Psalmist's own soul)

Praise (or motive for praise, often begins with *for* or *because* followed by God's acts or attributes)

Recapitulation (may be introduction of motives or inference to be drawn from items of praise or just a simple Hallelujah)

ROYAL PSALMS (you'll know it when you see it!)

WISDOM PSALMS (formal structure such as sayings that are proverbial, numerical or blessed or perhaps an acrostic; didactic intent, wisdom motifs)

DIDACTIC PSALMS (perhaps historical or prophetic exhortation)



Psalm of Lament...

Psalm 54 (NIV)

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A maskil of David. When the Ziphites had gone to Saul and said, "Is not David hiding among us?"

A	[1] Save me, O God, by your name; vindicate me by your might. [2] Hear my prayer, O God; listen to the words of my mouth.
C	[3] Strangers are attacking me; ruthless men seek my life — men without regard for God. Selah
T	[4] Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me.
P	[5] Let evil recoil on those who slander me; in your faithfulness destroy them.
V	[6] I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you; I will praise your name, O Lord, for it is good. [7] For he has delivered me from all my troubles, and my eyes have looked in triumph on my foes.



Psalm of Lament...

Psalm 56 (NIV)

For the director of music. To the tune of "A Dove on Distant Oaks." Of David. A miktam. When the Philistines had seized him in Gath.

A/C	[1] Be merciful to me, O God, for men hotly pursue me; all day long they press their attack. [2] My slanderers pursue me all day long; many are attacking me in their pride.
T	[3] When I am afraid, I will trust in you. [4] In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?
C	[5] All day long they twist my words; they are always plotting to harm me. [6] They conspire, they lurk, they watch my steps, eager to take my life.
P	[7] On no account let them escape; in your anger, O God, bring down the nations. [8] Record my lament; list my tears on your scroll— are they not in your record?
T	[9] Then my enemies will turn back when I call for help. By this I will know that God is for me. [10] In God, whose word I praise, in the Lord, whose word I praise— [11] in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?
V	[12] I am under vows to you, O God; I will present my thank offerings to you. [13] For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.



Hymn...

Psalm 113 (NIV)

C	<p>[1] Praise the Lord. Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord.</p> <p>[2] Let the name of the Lord be praised, both now and forevermore.</p> <p>[3] From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised.</p>
P (attributes)	<p>[4] The Lord is exalted over all the nations, his glory above the heavens.</p> <p>[5] Who is like the Lord our God, the One who sits enthroned on high,</p> <p>[6] who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth?</p>
P (acts)	<p>[7] He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; [8] he seats them with princes, with the princes of their people.</p> <p>[9] He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children.</p>
R	Praise the Lord.



Psalm of Thanksgiving...

Psalm 30 (NIV)

A psalm. A song. For the dedication of the temple. Of David.

A	[1] I will exalt you, O Lord,
RD	for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me.
RP	[2] O Lord my God, I called to you for help
RD	and you healed me. [3] O Lord, you brought me up from the grave; you spared me from going down into the pit.
C	[4] Sing to the Lord, you saints of his; praise his holy name. [5] For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.
RN	[6] When I felt secure, I said, "I will never be shaken." [7] O Lord, when you favored me, you made my mountain stand firm; but when you hid your face, I was dismayed.
RP	[8] To you, O Lord, I called; to the Lord I cried for mercy: [9] "What gain is there in my destruction, in my going down into the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness? [10] Hear, O Lord, and be merciful to me; O Lord, be my help."
RD	[11] You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, [12] that my heart may sing to you and not be silent.
C	O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever.