

# Psalms

## Knowing the God of Praise



### Lesson 7 ..... *Songs of Thanksgiving*

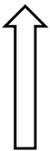
Level 1- Read through the Bible passage prayerfully. As God speaks to you through his word, respond back to him in prayer. What can you praise him and thank him for? What sin do these scriptures prompt you to confess? What do you need to ask God for? How do you need to yield to what God is saying in his word?

Level 2- Read and pray as in level one and do the numbered questions (that follow along with the Bible passage) in the study.

Level 3- Read and pray as in level one. Do the numbered questions as in level 2, as well as the Discussion questions and the Digging Deeper for more in depth study.

### **Day 1**

Songs of Thanksgiving are psalms that declare praise and thanksgiving to God usually for specific deliverance in a situation.<sup>1</sup>



*Father may your word settle deeply in my heart and fill me with praise and thanksgiving for all that you are and all that you have done.*

### **Read Psalm 30**

We find the background for this Psalm in 1 Chronicles 21-22. In chapter 21 we see sin and its dire consequences in David's life and in chapter 22 we hear of David's longing to build a house for the LORD. God's will, however, was for David, in his final days, to prepare for the temple and for his son Solomon to build it. This song was played at the dedication of the temple.

Scholar's Note: Extol means to praise lavishly or highly; to exalt; laud; eulogize.

1. David is praising God for lifting him up so his enemies can't rejoice over him, for answered prayer for healing, and for mercy in saving his soul. What has God drawn you up and away from? In what ways has God healed you, not just physically, but spiritually and emotionally? How has God shown you mercy?

a. Praise and thank him for these deliverances.

2. In verse 4, David calls the congregation to give thanks and praise to God. Put in your own words the reason for thanksgiving and praise found in verse 5.



Does your heart need to hear this truth right now? There is joy ahead. God is for you. If you belong to him, you have his favor. The trials and sorrow you are facing now won't last forever. The sin that you are struggling with, will one day be eradicated. No matter what your circumstances are right now, you are guaranteed better days to come.

*1 Peter 1:3-6 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.*

*So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. (NLT)*

Join with David and Peter in praising and thanking God for the joy to come.

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3. What misguided notion did David confess in verse 6?
  - a. What truth did he come to know in verse 7?
  - b. How can you guard against depending on yourself or finding your security in material and financial well-being?
  - c. Confess your tendency to independence from God and finding security in other things.
4. In verses 9-12 what does David see as his purpose in life?

### Picture and Ponder

"...just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: 'Isn't she lovely? Wasn't it glorious? Don't you think that magnificent?' The Psalmists in telling everyone to praise God are doing what all men

do when they speak of what they care about...I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. ...the delight is incomplete till it is expressed."<sup>2</sup>



1 Peter 2:9 says, *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

- ◆ How well are you doing at proclaiming God's excellencies?
  
- ◆ Write out verse 12 of our Psalm as your prayer.

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## **Day 2- Read Psalm 34**

David, God's chosen king, has been fleeing for his life from King Saul and ends up in the crosshairs of Achish, the Philistine king of Gath, also called Abimelech, meaning *my father is king*<sup>3</sup> (1 Samuel 21:10-15). This Psalm is a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God for his deliverance.

1. How does David's attitude in verse 1, even as he is running for his life, challenge you?
  - a. How does David's personal praise in the first 3 lines of the song, expand in the next 3 lines?

2. In verses 4 and 6 David testifies of his personal experience with God. In verses 5 and 7 what does David implore others to do so that they too can have his experience of God?

### For Discussion

Why is David's example of testifying of his own experience of God, a good strategy for witnessing to unbelievers? Who could you testify to of God's goodness and faithfulness to you?

3. This Psalm of thanksgiving could also be classified as an instructional psalm because of the wisdom teaching in verses 8-14. What are all the things David exhorts us to do in these verses?



How can you practice these things this week? For example: How will you seek the Lord? Where will you do good? How will you pursue peace?

4. Compare the wicked and the righteous in verses 15-21.

- a. How does verse 22 define who the righteous are?

### Digging Deeper

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

- What is the refuge that guarantees no condemnation that this Psalm is pointing to?



This Psalm testifies to the truth that we all know—even those who follow God face many trials (v.19). But we are also assured that God is near to us in our afflictions and will deliver us (v.18). This is why David says, *I will bless the LORD at all times, his praise shall continually be in my mouth* (v.1).

- ◆ Paul echoes this thought in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 *...give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.* Practice this today. In all circumstances.

### **Day 3- Read Psalm 107**

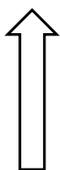
This Psalm celebrates the return of Israel from exile. The stories told in it are four different ways of depicting Israel's plight and rescue. Yet it also tells four stories of human predicaments and divine intervention in which we are to see ourselves.<sup>4</sup>

1. Write out the last verse of this Psalm, verse 43.

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*Lord, help my heart not to respond shallowly to "what you have done in depth"<sup>5</sup>. Help me to see myself as desperately in need of rescue and You, my Rescuer. I thank you and praise you for your love for me that never stops.*

2. What is evoking thanksgiving from the Psalmist according to verse 1-3?

### Picture and Ponder

“Although [this Psalm] celebrates providential deliverances, and therefore may be sung by any man whose life has been preserved in time of danger; yet under cover of this, it mainly magnifies the Lord for spiritual blessings, of which temporal favours are but types and shadows.”<sup>6</sup>

3. What is one of God’s wondrous works stated in verses 9?

- a. Verse 16 tells another of God’s wondrous works. How would you put this in spiritual terms?



Verse 20 teaches us an important truth—God’s word brings healing. Not physical healing (although God can certainly heal us physically with just a word), but the truths in God’s word can bring spiritual and emotional healing to our brokenness and wounds. *He sent out his word and healed them.* Thank God that he gave us his precious words of truth to speak to our greatest needs!

- ◆ Where do you need healing? Turn to God’s word, preach its’ truths to your heart until you believe it deep down. (If you need to, ask for help in finding scriptures that speak to your need and how to apply them, and enlist a trusted sister in Christ to pray for God to bring healing to you through his word.)

4. What refrain is repeated in verses 6, 13,19, and 28?

a. In light of these stories, how does this impact you?



Where do you see yourself in these stories? Were you lost and wandering? Rebellious and imprisoned? Suffering foolishly because of sin? Or tossed about in a chaotic storm? Or maybe you are there now. All you have to do is cry out to God and he will deliver you. *God's steadfast love endures forever. O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good! (v.1)* Do that now.

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### Day 4- Read Psalm 118

Psalm 118 is the fifth and final Psalm “of the ‘Egyptian Hallel’ (hallel means praise) sung to celebrate the Passover.”<sup>7</sup> Passover commemorates God’s great deliverance of his people out of Egypt and slavery.

1. Go to **Biblegateway.com** and type in Psalm 118:1. Then click on Psalm 118:1 in all English translations (this is posted right under the verse). What are all the ways that *steadfast love (hesed* in Hebrew) is translated?

a. Which of these translations of *hesed* resonates with you and why?

## Picture and Ponder

“Some people wonder where they can find grace in the Old Testament, not realizing that the word *hesed* encompasses this and so much more—a long-suffering love that extends kindness to the underserving and intervenes on their behalf.”<sup>8</sup>



We have looked at God’s steadfast love before, but it is worth repeating, and the Psalmist is not shy about repeating it over and over. God’s steadfast love is his defining characteristic as he interacts with his people. It is his covenant love. When we come to see how great God is and how worthy of all our praise and worship, we also realize how short we fall of giving him the praise he deserves; this realization then, makes his steadfast love for us shine ever brighter.

- ◆ Spend some time contemplating God’s steadfast love for you, and then thanking him and praising him for it.
- ◆ What thoughts about God’s steadfast love did your pondering result in?

2. Write out the first line of verse 6 and of verse 7. In what circumstances do you need to hear and believe this?

3. Verses 8 and 9 repeat another truth. How would you finish this phrase in your own words? It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to...



In verse 17 the Psalmist says that he will live and *recount the deeds of the LORD*. *Oh give thanks to the LORD for he is good! (V.1)* How has God shown his goodness to you? Recount the deeds of the LORD in your life, thanking him in prayer.

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## Digging Deeper

Verse 25 in the original language begins with *Hosanna*. Verse 26, *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD*. And verse 27, *Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar*. Read the verses below and describe how these verses in Psalms point to Jesus.

1 Corinthians 5:7b *Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed for us.* (NLT)

Matthew 21:9 *And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!'*

## Day 5- Read Psalm 138

Psalm 138 begins the last grouping of Psalms by King David. We saw at the very beginning of the book, in Psalm 2, God's covenant with David, his anointed king. "Given that the terrible events of the exile [in Babylon] have intervened to bring the Davidic line to a close (or so it seems), it is natural to suppose that this group functions as a reaffirmation, right near the end of the Psalter, that the promises with which it began are still believed, and still trustworthy."<sup>9</sup>

1. How does David exhibit both boldness and humility in verses 1 and 2?

## For Discussion

What effect do you think it would have if we rang out with praise for God as we encounter the false gods/idols of our culture? What would that look like?

## Picture and Ponder

"Praising and singing are our armour against the idolatries of heresy, our comfort under the depression caused by insolent attacks upon the truth, and our weapons for defending the gospel. Faith when displayed in cheerful courage, has about it a sacred contagion: others learn to believe in the Most High when they see his servant "Calm 'mid the bewildering cry, Confident of victory."<sup>10</sup>

Scholar's Note: The word *name* in the Bible "often referred to a person's reputation, authority, or identity within a community, rather than to the verbal label that was attached to them."<sup>11</sup>

2. What does it mean to give thanks to God's name (v.2)?
  - a. Why is it good that God has exalted his name and his word above all things?
  
3. When David called to the LORD, how did God answer according to verse 3?
  - a. Why do you think God sometimes changes us instead of the circumstances?

## Digging Deeper

Romans 1:21-22 *For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise they became fools.*

- Why is giving thanks to God so important?



Verses 4-5 tell of a time in the future when God’s glory will compel every ruler to acknowledge God in praise and thanks. How does Revelation reveal how much further the praise of God will extend?

*Revelation 5:13 And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”*

This is the culmination we are heading to! The more we practice this now the greater our capacity will be for enjoying worship for eternity.

Write out the last verse of this Psalm joining your heart with David’s in confirming this life-giving truth.

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Then pray through this Psalm giving thanks to God!



If your heart is so inclined, read the last five chapters of the book of Psalms 146-150. It is the Hallelujah Chorus— each Psalm beginning and ending with *praise the LORD!* (*Praise the LORD* in Hebrew is *hallelujah*). What a fitting grand finale to the book of Psalms!

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<sup>1</sup> Russel, Walt. *Playing With Fire*, p. 142. NavPres 2000

<sup>2</sup> Lewis, C.S. *Reflections on the Psalms*. 1958

<sup>3</sup> Ash, Christopher. *Teaching Psalms Vol 2: From text to Message*. P.84. Christian Focus 2018

<sup>4</sup> Kidner, Derek. *Kidner Classic Commentaries. Psalm 73-150*. P.418. InterVarsity Press 1975

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Spurgeon, Charles H.. *The Treasury of David: Charles Spurgeon Commentary on Psalms (with Active Table of Contents) [Illustrated]* . Niche Edition. Kindle Edition.

<sup>7</sup> Kidner, Derek. *Kidner Classic Commentaries. Psalm 73-150*. P.447. InterVarsity Press 1975

<sup>8</sup> Tverberg, Lois. *Reading the Bible with Rabbi Jesus: How a Jewish Perspective Can Transform Your Understanding*. (Kindle Locations 3243-3245). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

<sup>9</sup> Ash, Christopher. *Teaching Psalms Vol 2: From text to Message*. P.269. Christian Focus 2018

<sup>10</sup> Spurgeon, Charles H.. *The Treasury of David: Charles Spurgeon Commentary on Psalms (with Active Table of Contents) [Illustrated]* . Niche Edition. Kindle Edition.

<sup>11</sup> Tverberg, Lois. *Reading the Bible with Rabbi Jesus: How a Jewish Perspective Can Transform Your Understanding*. (Kindle Locations 3243-3245). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

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