

Summer IN THE Psalms

Going Deeper: A Study in the Book of Psalms

 Bible Center



Prayer is a foundation of the Christian life. Yet, if we are honest, it can be a great area of struggle and dryness. The Psalms can reinvigorate our passion as God gives us words to speak. We learn how to go to our Father in weakness, desperation, anger, joy, and praise in the Psalms. We live the full scope of the human experience in the presence of God. He is ready, willing, and able to hear your concerns, fear, hurt, and pain.

The Psalms bring us into a chorus of worship, to our knees in desperation, and into a community that lives together in the presence of God. Read through the purpose and instructions on how to use this study. There is freedom in the amount of time, study, and depth you choose to give to this study.

Let's ask God to move in our hearts and in our church to establish a growing movement of prayer and praise!

Beside you in the throne room,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Graham". The script is fluid and cursive.

Mike Graham,
Pastor of Group Life

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Praying the Psalms

Growing our Prayer Lives, Using His Words

The Nature of the Psalms

“The book of Psalms has a unique place in the Christian Bible. One reason for its singular role, as noted by Athanasius...is that most of scripture speaks to us while the Psalms speak for us” (Anderson, ix).

“We recite this prayer of the Psalm in Him, and He recites it in us” (Peterson, 4).

The Psalms will keep us centered on God. Our needs, fears, sins, and struggles will be seen and communicated in light of his power, goodness, and presence.

The Psalms are “prayers that train us in prayer” (Peterson, 7).

The Results of Praying the Psalms

“God comes and speaks – his word catches us in sin, finds us in despair, invades us by grace. The Psalms are our answers” (Peterson 5). **The language of the Psalms become our prayer language.** They guide our hearts and words through each moment of our life.

“We don’t learn the Psalms until we are praying them” (Peterson, 12). We can pray the exact words of the Psalms, or we can paraphrase them into our own words **learning from God how to pray.**

We plunge deep into the Psalms and they plunge deep into us. The thoughts and feelings associated with our best and worst moments of our life can be found in these prayers. The Psalms guide us in how to respond to God. **Our lives become centered around our fellowship with the Father** as we seek him using the words he gave to us.

Purpose of this Study

The Psalms can be studied to increase our knowledge of God, our passion for his Word, to deepen our understanding of human struggles..., but this study will be focused primarily on **the role of the Psalms in teaching us how to pray.**

We seek to learn from the Psalms, pray through the Psalms, and grow in our intimacy with God and others through the journey. Praying through the psalms influences our words directed toward God and impacts our own hearts at the same time. “We recite this prayer of the Psalm in Him, and He recites it in us” (Peterson, 4).

Therefore, our desire is to not only read and understand a Psalm, but to relate our life, our story, and the state of our heart to the author’s and pray with them to God. “We will not be looking here primarily for ideas about God, or for direction in moral conduct. We will expect, rather, to find the experience of being human before God exposed and sharpened” (Peterson, 12). All of us have times of joy, sadness, thanksgiving, and even despair. The Psalms explore all of these emotions and give us an example of how to take our hearts (joyful, broken, or bleeding) before the Lord with openness, honesty, and hope.

“We don’t learn the Psalms until we are praying them” (Peterson, 12).

Common thoughts people have when they start praying the Psalms (Whitney, ch. 8).

- My mind doesn’t wander.
- My prayer was more about God and less about me.
- The time was too short.
- It seems like a real conversation with a real person.
- The psalm spoke directly to the life situation I am in right now,
- I thought more deeply about what the Bible says.
- I had greater assurance that I was praying God’s will.
- I prayed about things I normally don’t pray about.
- I prayed about the things I normally do pray about but in a new and different ways.

How to Use this *'Praying the Psalms'* Study

This study guide provides **multiple levels** of depth that you can use in your study of the Psalms and prayer. Pick from one of the options below. You can always try multiple options.

1. Each week read through the Psalm from this Sunday's sermon. Write down a couple of your thoughts, observations, or prayers on the ***Weekly Reflections*** page. An additional method from Donald Whitney is included for ongoing weekly reflections.

2. Read through multiple Psalms per week, pray as you feel led, write down thoughts in your Bible, and put a check next to it on your ***Psalm Checklist*** page.

3. Create Themes. As you read each psalm, take the time to create a simple, memorable theme for each. You can record your theme on your ***Personalized Psalm Themes*** page.

Through different times of your life (praise, despair, thankfulness, broken relationships, joy, fear...) you can quickly look through your themes to find a psalm that can bring you guidance, insight, and comfort into each moment.

4. Study each Psalm and pray through it. You will also have blank copies of the ***Psalm Observations*** page to fill out if you would like to go a little deeper with a psalm.

Seek to Understand

- list what you learn about the Lord
- create a brief outline of the psalm

Stay to Pray

- Understand the position of the author (circumstances, stated purpose and situation, expressed emotions...)
- Pick moments recent and distant that relate to the author.
- Pray through this psalm.

5. Biblical Study on Prayer – a larger Scripture-wide study of prayer is located in the back if you would like to study the topic on a broader level.

Background info on the book of Psalms

The Nature of the Psalms

Psalms is one of the most loved and read books in the Bible. It was written over the course of 1000 years. It functioned as Israel's worship book, like a hymnal of today. It is the largest book in the Bible. Psalms covers a multitude of life experiences and emotions. The book also gives the nation of Israel songs to sing during certain celebrations and festivals. Much like our Christian Christmas songs, there were psalms dedicated to different Jewish 'holidays' and ceremonies.

Psalms perhaps explores the scope of human emotion more than any other book in the Bible. This book teaches us how to express our love for God, how to pray, and how to worship. Every Christian will greatly benefit from spending time in the Psalms. Make it your habit to spend time in prayer and in journaling while study the Psalms. This study is designed to fit the needs of those who can only spend a little time in the Psalms or for those who want to wade into them and soak. The Psalms do not need to be read from beginning to end – use the information on 'Types of Psalms' to pick what you would like to read.

Remember the Psalms are poetry and use many poetic devices. Contrast, synonym, repetition, parallelism, and other poetic devices are used. The resources listed below will help the reader understand the type of poetry they are reading.

Authors

David is the author of 73 of the Psalms. He writes these Psalms during many different phases of his life – as a shepherd, as a king, as an adulterer. Asaph writes 12 psalms. Asaph is a priest who was in charge of the worship of the nation. The sons of Korah were a guild of singers and composers. Other psalms were written by Solomon, Moses, Heman, and Ethan.

Break-up of the Book

Psalms is broken up into 5 smaller books. These are divided up this way based upon date, authorship, and psalm content.

Book I	1-41
Book II	42-72
Book III	73-89
Book IV	90-106
Book V	107-150

References

- *The Treasury of David*, by Charles Spurgeon (a devotional puritan classic)
- *Psalms*, by Willem A. VanGemeren in the Expositor's Bible Commentary Series (a scholarly commentary that discusses the nature of poetry)
- *Psalms*, by Gerald H. Wilson in the NIV Application Commentary (friendly to all users)
- *Out of the Depths*, by Bernhard Anderson (in depth look at the nature of the Psalms)

Types of Psalms

It is important for us to know the kind of psalm we are reading in order to understand what the psalmist is trying to communicate. It is also helpful when picking which psalm to study. There are several ways to label the different types of psalms. Detailed labels have been chosen from *Out of the Depths*, by Bernhard Anderson. Some psalms (along with parts of particular psalms) will fall into multiple categories.

Narrative Praise (Storytelling) – To remember the work of God leads to praise to God. These psalms remind us to reminisce with prayers of praise on our lips.

- 78, 105, 106, 135, 136 (sections of 66, 71, 75, 77, 98, 107, 145)

Community laments – Together we plead for God's help, provision, and rescue.

- 12, 44, 58, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85, 90, 94, 123, 126, 129, 137 (89)

Individual laments – Prayers for God's deliverance from despair, enemies, turmoil, and pain. We learn how to express our need and weakness before God through these psalms. They serve as good examples of how we are to humble ourselves before God recognizing our sin and helplessness.

- 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 22, 25, 26, 28, 31, 35, 36, 39, 41, 42, 43, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 63, 64, 69, 70, 71, 77, 86, 88, 109, 120, 139, 140, 141, 142 (27, 40)

Psalms of Penitence – As believers we are forgiven sinners. We still constantly struggle with sin. We learn how to approach God in contrition and humility in these psalms. Even with full forgiveness, confession and repentance are a proper response to revealed sin.

- 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143

Community songs of Thanksgiving – These are examples of how we can praise and worship God. Many of these psalms are filled with worship and adoration. We can use these psalms to express our love and thankfulness to God.

- 65, 67, 75, 107, 124, 136

Individual songs of Thanksgiving – Examples of how we thank God for his personal involvement in our lives.

- 18, 21, 30, 32, 34, 92, 103, 108, 116, 118, 138 (40, 66)

Hymns to God, who Created (Redeemed) Israel – Examples of how we can praise God for his faithfulness to his people.

- 100, 111, 114, 149 (66)

Hymns to God, who Created the World – In wonder and awe we praise God as the Creator. Great psalms to use as prayers of praise!

- 8, 104, 148 (19, 95)

Hymns to the Creator and the Ruler of History – God’s sovereign hand is seen overall. He is to be worshiped for his transcendence over creation and his intimate involvement in the inter-workings of his world.

- 33, 103, 113, 117, 145, 146, 147

Covenant Renewal Liturgies – Israel’s sin is revealed and God call them back to faithfulness (similar to Joshua 24). These psalms can be used to inspire prayers for renewed faithfulness to God for any of God’s children.

- 50, 81

Enthronement Psalms – These hymns presuppose the centrality of Zion where Yhwh is magnified in the praises of the people.

- 29, 47, 93, 95-99

Psalms of the Davidic Covenant – These express an understanding of God’s relationship to the people including his historical deeds. A new beginning is seen in the raising up of David and Zion as the central sanctuary.

- 78, 89, 132

Royal Psalms – These psalms focus on the king as the central figure. Many Christological truths are found in these verses, as David is a foreshadowing of the coming Messiah.

- 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, (144)

Songs of Zion – These psalms focus on the city (a place of divine presence) as the central focus. New Testament believers can use these psalms to cast their minds eye to the new heaven and the new earth where we spend eternity in God’s presence.

- 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 121, 122

Songs of Trust – It is easy to be shaken living in a world of sin and suffering. Songs of trust give us examples of how we can pray and express confidence in God during times of confusion or pain.

- 11, 16, 23, 62, 63, 91, 121, 125, 131 (27)

Wisdom Psalms – These instruct the worshiper in the way of wisdom and righteousness. They give insight into determining God’s will and direction.

- 36, 37, 49, 73, 78, 112, 127, 128, 133

Torah Psalms – Each of these psalms center around the beauty and precious nature of God’s Word. To love God includes loving his Word, these psalms give us words to express this love to God in prayer and praise.

- 1, 19, 119

Weekly Reflections on the Psalms

from the preaching series

Week 1 – Psalm _____

How would you summarize the psalm?

What did you learn about God and your relationship with him from this psalm?

What did you learn about prayer?

Is there an area of your life or a time in your life where you can relate to the author's situation and the feelings expressed in this psalm?

Spend some time praying. Use the psalm to help you think of ways to express yourself to God. You can even simply pray through the psalm as though they are your own words.

Week 2 – Psalm _____

How would you summarize the psalm?

What did you learn about God and your relationship with him from this psalm?

What did you learn about prayer?

Is there an area of your life or a time in your life where you can relate to the author's situation and the feelings expressed in this psalm?

Spend some time praying. Use the psalm to help you think of ways to express yourself to God. You can even simply pray through the psalm as though they are your own words.

Week 3 – Psalm _____

How would you summarize the psalm?

What did you learn about God and your relationship with him from this psalm?

What did you learn about prayer?

Is there an area of your life or a time in your life where you can relate to the author's situation and the feelings expressed in this psalm?

Spend some time praying. Use the psalm to help you think of ways to express yourself to God. You can even simply pray through the psalm as though they are your own words.

Week 4 – Psalm _____

How would you summarize the psalm?

What did you learn about God and your relationship with him from this psalm?

What did you learn about prayer?

Is there an area of your life or a time in your life where you can relate to the author's situation and the feelings expressed in this psalm?

Spend some time praying. Use the psalm to help you think of ways to express yourself to God. You can even simply pray through the psalm as though they are your own words.

Week 5 – Psalm _____

How would you summarize the psalm?

What did you learn about God and your relationship with him from this psalm?

What did you learn about prayer?

Is there an area of your life or a time in your life where you can relate to the author's situation and the feelings expressed in this psalm?

Spend some time praying. Use the psalm to help you think of ways to express yourself to God. You can even simply pray through the psalm as though they are your own words.

Week 6 – Psalm _____

How would you summarize the psalm?

What did you learn about God and your relationship with him from this psalm?

What did you learn about prayer?

Is there an area of your life or a time in your life where you can relate to the author's situation and the feelings expressed in this psalm?

Spend some time praying. Use the psalm to help you think of ways to express yourself to God. You can even simply pray through the psalm as though they are your own words.

Week 7 – Psalm _____

How would you summarize the psalm?

What did you learn about God and your relationship with him from this psalm?

What did you learn about prayer?

Is there an area of your life or a time in your life where you can relate to the author's situation and the feelings expressed in this psalm?

Spend some time praying. Use the psalm to help you think of ways to express yourself to God. You can even simply pray through the psalm as though they are your own words.

Week 8 – Psalm _____

How would you summarize the psalm?

What did you learn about God and your relationship with him from this psalm?

What did you learn about prayer?

Is there an area of your life or a time in your life where you can relate to the author's situation and the feelings expressed in this psalm?

Spend some time praying. Use the psalm to help you think of ways to express yourself to God. You can even simply pray through the psalm as though they are your own words.

Week 9 – Psalm _____

How would you summarize the psalm?

What did you learn about God and your relationship with him from this psalm?

What did you learn about prayer?

Is there an area of your life or a time in your life where you can relate to the author's situation and the feelings expressed in this psalm?

Spend some time praying. Use the psalm to help you think of ways to express yourself to God. You can even simply pray through the psalm as though they are your own words.

Praying through the Psalms

Day of the Month	Psalms of the Day
1	1, 31, 61, 91, 121
2	2, 32, 62, 92, 122
3	3, 33, 63, 93, 123
4	4, 34, 64, 94, 124
5	5, 35, 65, 95, 125
6	6, 36, 66, 96, 126
7	7, 37, 67, 97, 127
8	8, 38, 68, 98, 128
9	9, 39, 69, 99, 129
10	10, 40, 70, 100, 130
11	11, 41, 71, 101, 131
12	12, 42, 72, 102, 132
13	13, 43, 73, 103, 133
14	14, 44, 74, 104, 134
15	15, 45, 75, 105, 135
16	16, 46, 76, 106, 136
17	17, 47, 77, 107, 137
18	18, 48, 78, 108, 138
19	19, 49, 79, 109, 139
20	20, 50, 80, 110, 140
21	21, 51, 81, 111, 141
22	22, 52, 82, 112, 142
23	23, 53, 83, 113, 143
24	24, 54, 84, 114, 144
25	25, 55, 85, 115, 145
26	26, 56, 86, 116, 146
27	27, 57, 87, 117, 147
28	28, 58, 88, 118, 148
29	29, 59, 89, 119, 149
30	30, 60, 90, 120, 150

Glance through the options for each day and pick one to pray through.

This chart can be used daily, once a week, or any number of days during a month.

Pick the psalm that reflects your heart that day. Read, meditate, and pray.

Whitney, 91

Psalm Checklist

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 42 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 83 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 124 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 43 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 84 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 125 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 44 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 85 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 126 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 45 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 86 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 127 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 46 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 87 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 128 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 47 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 88 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 129 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 48 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 89 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 130 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 49 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 90 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 131 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 91 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 132 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 51 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 92 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 133 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 11 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 52 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 93 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 134 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 12 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 53 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 94 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 135 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 13 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 54 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 95 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 136 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 14 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 55 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 96 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 137 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 56 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 97 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 138 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 16 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 57 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 98 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 139 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 17 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 58 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 99 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 140 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 59 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 141 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 19 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 60 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 101 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 142 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 61 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 102 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 143 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 21 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 62 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 103 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 144 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 22 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 63 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 104 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 145 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 23 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 64 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 105 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 146 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 65 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 106 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 147 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 66 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 107 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 148 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 26 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 67 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 108 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 149 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 27 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 68 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 109 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 150 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 28 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 69 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 110 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 29 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 70 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 111 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 71 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 112 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 31 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 72 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 113 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 32 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 73 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 114 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 33 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 74 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 115 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 34 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 75 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 116 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 35 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 76 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 117 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 36 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 77 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 118 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 37 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 78 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 119 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 38 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 79 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 120 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 39 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 80 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 121 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 81 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 122 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 41 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 82 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 123 | |

Personalized Psalm Themes

Create and write out a theme that summarizes each Psalm. This will become a very helpful resource for you in the future as you spend a lifetime enjoying the Psalms. Make the themes both memorable and accurate in describing the contents of the Psalm.

Psalm 1

Psalm 2

Psalm 3

Psalm 4

Psalm 5

Psalm 6

Psalm 7

Psalm 8

Psalm 9

Psalm 10

Psalm 11

Psalm 12

Psalm 13

Psalm 14

Psalm 15

Psalm 16

Psalm 17

Psalm 18

Psalm 19

Psalm 20

Psalm 21

Psalm 22

Psalm 23

Psalm 24

Psalm 25

Psalm 26

Psalm 27

Psalm 28

Psalm 29

Psalm 30

Psalm 31

Psalm 32

Psalm 33

Psalm 34

Psalm 35

Psalm 36

Psalm 37

Psalm 38

Psalm 39

Psalm 40

Psalm 41

Psalm 42

Psalm 43

Psalm 44

Psalm 45

Psalm 46

Psalm 47

Psalm 48

Psalm 49

Psalm 50

Psalm 51

Psalm 52

Psalm 53

Psalm 54

Psalm 55

Psalm 56

Psalm 57

Psalm 58

Psalm 59

Psalm 60

Psalm 61

Psalm 62

Psalm 63

Psalm 64

Psalm 65

Psalm 66

Psalm 67

Psalm 68

Psalm 69

Psalm 70

Psalm 71

Psalm 72

Psalm 73

Psalm 74

Psalm 75

Psalm 76

Psalm 77

Psalm 78

Psalm 79

Psalm 80

Psalm 81

Psalm 82

Psalm 83

Psalm 84

Psalm 85

Psalm 86

Psalm 87

Psalm 88

Psalm 89

Psalm 90

Psalm 91

Psalm 92

Psalm 93

Psalm 94

Psalm 95

Psalm 96

Psalm 97

Psalm 98

Psalm 99

Psalm 100

Psalm 101

Psalm 102

Psalm 103

Psalm 104

Psalm 105

Psalm 106

Psalm 107

Psalm 108

Psalm 109

Psalm 110

Psalm 111

Psalm 112

Psalm 113

Psalm 114

Psalm 115

Psalm 116

Psalm 117

Psalm 118

Psalm 119

Psalm 120

Psalm 121

Psalm 122

Psalm 123

Psalm 124

Psalm 125

Psalm 126

Psalm 127

Psalm 128

Psalm 129

Psalm 130

Psalm 131

Psalm 132

Psalm 133

Psalm 134

Psalm 135

Psalm 136

Psalm 137

Psalm 138

Psalm 139

Psalm 140

Psalm 141

Psalm 142

Psalm 143

Psalm 144

Psalm 145

Psalm 146

Psalm 147

Psalm 148

Psalm 149

Psalm 150

Psalm _____

Overall Theme _____

Brief Outline of the Psalm

Type of Psalm _____

Context (Author and Situation)

Application: How can you relate to the author's situation and emotions? How can you apply this psalm to your prayer life?

Descriptions of God:

Prayed through this Psalm

On the back of this page, you can write out a prayer reflecting this psalm in your own words.

Psalm _____

Overall Theme _____

Brief Outline of the Psalm

Type of Psalm _____

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Psalm _____

Overall Theme _____

Brief Outline of the Psalm

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Context (Author and Situation)

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A Biblical Study of Prayer

Some of you enter this study with excitement and others with dread. Prayer can be the most delightful and uplifting experience of the day or for others a lonely fight, struggling to sense God's presence.

The Struggle – can you relate?

We read that God has promised to answer our prayers. Yet, often I don't receive what I had requested. Did God not hear me correctly? Does He not want me to be happy? Over time we can grow cynical and faith turns to doubt.

We are told that prayer is a great time to connect with the Lord and enjoy him. But, I often feel like I am praying to the ceiling. Prayer reminds me of the distance I feel in my relationship with God. In shame, I don't share this experience with friends who speak with fondness of prayer. What is wrong with me? Does God not want to spend time with me?

I have achieved the family and income I have desired. What need do I have to pray? I have set up my life to be independent, why express needs that I do not feel that I have?

Every time I try to pray, I get distracted. I can't keep my mind in one place. Somehow, I am trying to pray for a missionary family, but I keep thinking about my grocery list. Perhaps I am not as spiritual as everyone thinks I am.

God knows what I have done. He knows my thoughts, fears, desires, and past failures. Why would he want to spend time with me? I already have enough guilt, why talk to a God who knows all of my problems and failures?

***Unintentionally, we slowly slide into doubt, cynicism, guilt, and hopelessness
and we simply stop praying.***

Where are you in your prayer life?

Sailing – living the Christian life with the wind at your back. God is real to your heart and you often feel his love. Life is hard, but the winds push you forward.

Rowing – prayer and the Christian life feels more like duty than delight. God's presence feels faint, but you diligently press on (wondering why things feel off or wrong). Pleasure may be sought in things outside of your Christian life.

Drifting – you are experiencing some of the conditions of the rower (spiritual dryness and distance from God), but the paddles have been put back in the boat. The Bible is placed on the shelf and prayers dry up. Life takes us down the stream, farther and farther away from our first love. Often cynicism can rise in our spirit as we question if God really hears us.

Sinking – forward motion in the Christian life is gone. Numbness and hardness take over. Your faith and identity in Christ no longer guide your decisions or perceptions. Spiritual despair fills the boat. Shame is added to cynicism as we stop praying so that we no longer feel the sting of seemingly unheard and unanswered prayers (points adapted from Keller, 258).

Which if these descriptions best describe your prayer life?

What are your hopes for your relationship with God?

No one sails forever! Everyone has times when they pick up the oars. God's means of grace – the Bible, prayer, Christian friends, and the church can help create a current for guidance and assistance. Disconnection from these will lead to that lonely paddle upstream.

There is hope! No matter where you are and how you feel. Your '*abba*' Father knows, cares, and wants you to drink deeply at his well. Our prayer life is designed to feel like a dinner with your closest friends. May this study help you grow in your relationship with God and cultivate your prayer life.

Prerequisites to Prayer (Psalm 1 & 2 point to these prereqs)

1. The Work of Christ - We must have an accurate view and understanding of our relationship with God to grow and flourish in our prayer life.

Romans 3:21-22 – What is the basis for our right standing (righteousness) before God?

Is there anything that can change our standing before the Father (**Romans 8:31-39**)?

What lies do we often believe that cause us to think that we are not fully accepted and desired before our Father?

John 1:12 - What kind of access does a child have to their parent? What is the response of a loving parent when they see their child running to them (**Romans 8:15**)?

How does this image and reality help us understand our prayer life?

Hebrews 4:15-16 – Why is it important for us to know that we have a sympathizer? How are we to approach the throne?

Hebrews 10:19-22 – How does it make you feel to know that the Creator God of the universe desires for you to “draw near”?

The enemy, our own hearts, and others around us often express, believe, and teach inconsistencies and lies against the truths taught above about our relationship with God. What are some of these inconsistencies and lies?

What happens to our prayer life if we begin to believe them?

“Jesus lost his relationship with the Father so that we could have a relationship with God as Father. Jesus was forgotten so that we could be remembered forever – from everlasting to everlasting. Jesus Christ bore all the eternal punishment that our sins deserve. **That is the cost of prayer.** Jesus paid the price so God could be our father” (Keller, 80).

2. The Word of God – God begins the conversation with us through His Word. The Word teaches us our greatest needs, His will, and how to pray. To interact with God’s Word is to interact with God himself (Keller, 54, 55, 62). Psalm 1, the intro to a book of prayers, is not about prayer, but about the need to start with meditation on God’s Word for guidance.

The Word teaches us about the God to whom we pray and God uses his Word to give us instruction and examples of how to address him.

“Turn the Bible into prayer”

(M’Cheyne quoted in Whitney, 37).

The Bible itself can be our teacher. We open it and use it to converse with God. Its words guide our thoughts, hearts, and words, directing us to the Lord. It is a bottomless well of wisdom that allows us to drink deeply of the Lord guiding our prayer-filled times with him.

“Open the Bible, start reading it, and pause at every verse and turn it into a prayer”

(John Piper quoted in Whitney, 33).

Method: “To pray the Bible, you simply go through the passage line by line, talking to God about whatever comes to mind as you read the text. How easy that is? Anyone can do it” (Whitney, 33).

The book of Psalms is a great place to start. It gives us examples of prayer from the highest heights and the darkest pits. Psalm 1 puts the reader at the feet of God with the Word opened and prepared to first hear from God before addressing God. We are called to meditate on God’s Word as our first step. It is our light post as we enter the cave of prayer.

Read **Psalm 1** – What do you learn about the Word of God?

How must this affect our prayer life? What happens when we do not center our prayer life around the Word?

“God’s word is living, and so it infuses our prayers with life and vitality. God’s word is also active, injecting energy and power into our prayer”

(Joni Eareckson Tada, quoted in Whitney, 43).

“Prayer is continuing a conversation that God has started through his Word and his grace, which eventually becomes a full encounter with him”

(Keller, 48).

God's Promise

What do we learn from each verse?

John 16:24 –

Prayer “changed from musical clamor to beautiful music once the Father’s hands grasped the little child’s hands” (Bounds, 17). In his name, references our need for God to take us by the hand, and guide us down the road of prayer. It is not a stamp making God bend to our wills.

Matthew 21:22 –

“Prayers are tools that God uses to work his will in our bodies and souls. Prayers are tools that we use to collaborate in his work with us” (Peterson, 2).

"Prayer does not change God, but it changes him who prays." - Soren Kierkegaard

Conditions for Answered Prayer

What condition is given in each verse?

Matthew 7:7-8 –

1 John 3:21-22 –

According to 1 John 3:19-20 – why should our hearts not condemn us?

John 15:7 –

“Faith that makes prayers strong gives it patience to with on God” (Bounds, 26).

1 John 5:14-15 –

“If we will make use of prayer, not to wrest from God advantages for ourselves or our dear ones, or to escape from tribulations and difficulties, but to call down upon ourselves and others those things which will glorify the name of God then we shall see the strongest boldest promises of the Bible about prayer fulfilled also in our weak, little prayer life. Then we shall see such answers to prayer as we had never thought possible” (O’Hallsbey, 127).

How do we put God's glory first in our prayer requests? Are there times that hardship and trial may actually bring God glory in our life?

James 1:5-6 –

How does Matthew 6:33-34 fit into this discussion? What do we learn about praying according to God's will in these verses?

"Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition." - Mother Teresa

Viewing Prayer and Prayer Requests in Light of Our Relationship with God

Prayer is like spending time with friends and family at the dinner table. Relaxed, open-ended, fun, and intentional. Remembering the nature of our relationship with God will help us see how God views us, our prayers, and the best way to answer our prayers.

- **Jesus is our Older Brother** – He knows what you are going through because he has gone before us and have experienced our struggles and pain (Heb
- **He is our Father** – He cares, wants the best for us, seeks our spiritual maturity
- **Our Closest Friend** – He knows everything about us, inside and out, the good and the bad (Psalm 139).
- **Our Teacher** – He knows the lessons we need to learn. He understands our process of growth and where we need encouragement, redirection, and a new point of view.
- **Our Coach** – We have been placed on mission. He pushes us out of our comfort zone and presents challenges that will strengthen us and prepare us for action.
- **The Lord of All - Sovereign** – He is in control of every detail
- **Loving** – He wants what is truly best for us
- **All-wise** – He knows what is truly best for us
- **Patient** – He sees the long game and how to get there

Based on our relationship with Him, how would He respond to a request that would not be best for us? Or not best at this moment? Or not actually meeting our greatest need?

Our greatest need is spiritual growth. Often God will answer our prayers in such a way as to challenge us and grow us spiritually. He always hears, He always answers in way that represents all of the aspects of his relationship with us.

Hindrances to Prayer

James 4:3 –

"Let no one profess to trust in God, and yet lay up for future wants, otherwise the Lord will first send him to the hoard he has amassed, before He can answer the prayer for more." - George Muller

Psalm 66:18 –

How often should our prayers sound like Psalm 51?

Prayer Works!

How do we see prayer work in each verse?

2 Corinthians 1:10-11 –

Philippians 1:19 –

Philemon 22 –

God's Response to Prayer

Ephesians 3:20 – How can God respond to our requests?

Matthew 7:9-11 – How do you think God would respond to a request for something He knew would be bad for you?

What if He knew the answer would be better at another time?

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 – What happened to Paul?

How did he respond?

How did God respond?

What do we learn about answered prayer from these verses?

"Prayer makes a godly man, and puts within him the mind of Christ, the mind of humility, of self-surrender, of service, of pity, and of prayer. If we really pray, we will become more like God, or else we will quit praying." - E.M. Bounds

Often, God answers our prayers by changing our heart, desires, and wants. Can you think of any examples of this in your own life?

When do we Pray?

1 Thessalonians 5:17 –

"The Christian life is not a constant high. I have my moments of deep discouragement. I have to go to God in prayer with tears in my eyes, and say, 'O God, forgive me,' or 'Help me.'" - Billy Graham

Our mood should not affect if we pray, but what we pray. Are there times in your life (moods, situations, or circumstances) that cause you to pray more than other times?

What would help you to learn to pray more in the other times of your life?

Philippians 4:5-6 – Where is the Lord?

What is the wrong way to respond to a tough situation?

How should we respond?

What does God promise?

"Rather than set aside daily time for prayer, I pray constantly and spontaneously about everything I encounter on a daily basis. When someone shares something with me, I'll often simply say, 'let's pray about this right now.'" - Thomas Kinkade

Commands from the Lord

What do we learn from each verse? What is He commanding us to do in each verse?

Romans 12:12 –

Colossians 4:2 –

1 Thessalonians 5:17 –

Ephesians 6:18 –

It is easy to think of prayer as simply a one on one experience with God. Prayer is also to be experienced in community, with our brothers and sisters before the throne. “Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4:16). The Psalms are also an example, “The praying people, whose prayers are the Psalms, prayed as a worshiping community. All the psalms are prayers in community... Prayer is not a private exercise, but a family convocation” (Peterson, 18).

Jesus' Example

What can we learn from each verse? What is happening in Jesus' ministry during each verse?

Luke 6:12 –

Mark 1:35 –

Prayer can be a community experience as we together enter into the throne room (Hebrews 4:16). Here we also see Jesus demonstrating our need to simply get time alone with the Father. Why do you suppose Jesus made this a priority?

What do we learn about Jesus' relationship with the Father from these passages? How would each verse relate to his prayer life?

- John 5:19 –
- John 5:30 –
- John 8:28 –
- John 15:5 –
- Matthew 4:1-4 –

Matthew 11:25-26 – We are reminded in this passage that the kingdom of God is not for the wise and learned, it for those with child-like wonder and faith. As children, we are dependent on our Father.

“We, like adults, try to fix ourselves up. In contrast, Jesus wants us to come to him like little children just as we are” (Miller, 19). How do children approach their parents?

Persistent, distracted, randomly, crying out in pain, boldly, dependently... How would this thought change the way you approach God in prayer?

How does a parent respond to their child?

Lovingly, gracefully, with patience, with our best in mind, with a desire to grow us, with the whole picture in mind, understanding our true needs... How does this understanding of the Lord change the way you approach Him? How does this reality shape your understanding of how God uses prayer to shape our life?

“The very things we try to get rid of – our weariness, our distractedness, our messiness – are what get us in the front door! That’s how the gospel works. That’s how prayer works” (Miller, 21).

“Bring your real self to Jesus” (Miller, 21). In light of the previous thoughts and quotes, what does Miller mean by this statement?

How would your prayer life change if you believed this statement?

Matthew 6:9-13 –

How does Jesus begin this prayer? What does this teach us about our priorities in prayer?

What role does confession play in this prayer?

What requests and supplications are made in this prayer? What does this teach us about our greatest priorities in life?

How do we see Jesus' priorities in Matthew 6:33-34 demonstrated in his prayer? What happens when we no longer consider our basic needs as our greatest needs? What can happen if we get caught up in the 'American Dream'?

What do we learn from Paul in Philippians 4:11-13 about our view of possessions and wants?

Matthew 26:36-42 –

Paul's Example

What do we learn about prayer (both priorities and content of prayer) from each verse?

Romans 1:8-10 –

2 Timothy 1:3 –

2 Thessalonians 3:1 –

Colossians 4:3-4 –

Ephesians 6:19-20 –

How do we see prayer and the gospel linked together in some of these verses?

Who is Paul typically praying for in these prayers? Is this similar to the content of our prayers?

Additional Biblical Prayers

What is requested in each verse? What can adopt into your prayer life from each verse?

Matthew 9:35-39 –

How does Jesus link prayer and mission together?

1 Thessalonians 3:10-13 –

Colossians 1:9-10 –

Philippians 1:9-11 –

Ephesians 1:17-18 –

Ephesians 3:17-20 –

James 1:5 –

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 –

Philemon 6 –

1 John 1:9 –

This verse is for believers. What role does confession and repentance play in the ongoing life of the believer? Why would a forgiven saint continue to live a life of confession and repentance?

Hebrews 13:20-21 –

We have much to learn **from the Psalms** on prayer. “They were prayed by people who understood that God had everything to do with them. God, not their feelings, was the center. God, not their souls, was the issue. God, not the meaning of life, was critical” (Peterson, 14).

Psalm 119:3-37 –

What connection do we see between prayer and the Word of God?

Psalm 86:11 –

Psalm 63:1-3 –

Psalm 32:5 –

Psalm 27:4 –

Psalm 67 – What are the 3 things requested in verse 1?

According to verses 2-3, why were these things requested?

What is the perspective of the psalmist as he prays?

What needs to be our perspective? How does this relate to the words and life of Christ?

"To get nations back on their feet, we must first get down on our knees." - Billy Graham

The Need to Persevere

What do we learn from each verse?

Luke 18:1-8 –

Luke 11:5-9 –

Psalm 40:1 –

“Prayer is not only an action in solitude, it is a community discipline. Nothing tends more to cement the hearts of Christians than praying together. Never do they love one another so well as when they witness the outpouring of each other’s hearts in prayer.” Charles Finney

How can you help your church (or small group) to engage in more prayer together?

How to Use the Prayer Chart

The heart of this chart is to improve and organize your prayer life.

You can fill up as much of this chart as you would like. You can use the same chart for weeks, or change it up frequently. It simply helps you to organize the most important people, things, and events in your life to make sure you are lifting all of these things up in prayer.

Notice it starts with some verses or a Psalm in order to start your time in-line with God's heart and desires.

Located after the Prayer Chart, is a page discussing the difference between broken / humble people and unbroken / prideful people. This is a great tool to help you determine areas where you need to continue to grow.

At the bottom, there is a place to write in an accountability partner. This chart usually works best when others join you in committing to their own prayer charts.

Prayer Accountability Chart

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Verse or Psalm							
Personal Area of Growth							
Family							
Friends							
Personal							
Ministry, Church							
Events							
Other							

Accountability Partner _____

Prayer Accountability Chart

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Verse or Psalm							
Personal Area of Growth							
Family							
Friends							
Personal							
Ministry, Church							
Events							
Other							

Accountability Partner _____

Proud, Unbroken People

1. Focus on the failures of others.
2. Are self-righteous; have a critical, fault-finding spirit; look at own life/faults with a telescope but others with a microscope.
3. Look down on others.
4. Are independent; have a self-sufficient spirit.
5. Maintain control; must have their way.
6. Have to prove that they are right.
7. Claim rights.
8. Have a demanding spirit.
9. Are self-protective of time, rights, reputation.
10. Desire to be served.
11. Desire to be a success.
12. Desire for self-advancement.
13. Are driven to be recognized and appreciated.
14. Are wounded when others are promoted and they are overlooked.
15. Think "the ministry is privileged to have me!"
16. Think of what they can do for God.
17. Feel confident in how much they know.
18. Are self-conscious.
19. Keep people at arm's length.
20. Are quick to blame others.
21. Are unapproachable.
22. Are defensive when criticized.
23. Are concerned with being respectable.
24. Are concerned about what others think.
25. Work to maintain image and protect reputation.
26. Find it difficult to share their spiritual needs with others.
27. Want to be sure no one finds out about their sin.
28. Have a hard time saying, "I was wrong. Please forgive me?"
29. Deal in generalities when confessing sin.
30. Are concerned about the consequences of their sin.
31. Are remorseful for being caught.
32. Wait for the other party to come and ask for forgiveness in a conflict.
33. Compare themselves with others and feel deserving of honor.
34. Are blind to their true heart condition.
35. Don't think they have anything of which to repent.
36. Don't think they need revival (think everybody else does).

Broken People

1. Are overwhelmed with their own spiritual need.
2. Are compassionate; have a forgiving spirit; look for best in others.
3. Esteem all others better than self.
4. Have dependent spirits; recognize others' needs.
5. Surrender control.
6. Are willing to yield the right to be right.
7. Yield rights.
8. Have a giving spirit.
9. Are self-denying.
10. Are motivated to serve others.
11. Desire to be faithful to make others a success.
12. Desire to promote others.
13. Have a sense of unworthiness; are thrilled to be used at all; are eager for others to get the credit.
14. Rejoice when others are lifted up.
15. Think "I don't deserve to serve in this ministry."
16. Know that they have nothing to offer God.
17. Are humbled by how much they have to learn.
18. Have no concern with self at all.
19. Risk getting close to others; are willing to take the risks of loving intimately.
20. Accept personal responsibility; can see where they were wrong.
21. Are easy to be entreated.
22. Receive criticism with a humble, open heart.
23. Are concerned with being real.
24. Know all that matters is what God knows.
25. Die to own reputation.
26. Are willing to be transparent to others.
27. Are willing to be exposed; know once broken, there's nothing to lose.
28. Are quick to admit fault and to seek forgiveness.
29. Deal in specifics.
30. Are grieved over the root of their sin.
31. Are repentant over sin and forsake it.
32. Take the initiative to be reconciled; gets there first.
33. Compare themselves with the holiness of God and feel desperate for mercy.
34. Walk in the light.
35. Have a continual heart-attitude toward repentance.
36. Continually sense their need for a fresh encounter with the filling of the Holy Spirit.

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