



Personal Bible Study Program 2007

Psalms

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:16

To help you get the most out of bible talks on Sunday we have designed a daily bible reading program that will help you to read and apply each bible passage during the week before the bible talk. This can be a supplement to your existing bible reading program if you already have one.

We hope that you will make the most of this Bible reading program by setting aside the time to “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly”.

How to use the readings:

- Print the studies out double-sided and staple the pages as a booklet
- Set aside time
- Pray for understanding
- Read the passage
- Answer the questions
- Meditate on what you learn
- Apply what you learn
- Pray in response

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**Please note that we are open to feedback on how to improve this resource.
Please email your comments to office@bpc.org.au**

Welcome to the Psalms, the songbook of God’s people

Over the coming weeks the sermons are going to look at eight deliberately selected Psalms to introduce you to the Psalms and encourage you to make reading and singing the Psalms a central part of your relating to our God. The eight Psalms have been chosen to introduce you to the variety there is amongst the Psalms, reflecting in that variety the various aspects of a believers experience of trusting God while living in this world.

Psalms 1 and 2 function as an introduction to the whole Book of Psalms. They set out the foundations for our relationship with God, the core of the world view of the Psalms. Psalm 1 declares that the Lord’s way is true, Psalm 2 that the Lord’s King rules. Together they say that the way of life, the path of blessedness is trusting the Lord by taking refuge in His King and walking in His way.

Following these we turn to Psalm 103, a model of praise to the LORD [see also Pss. 92, 113]; Psalms 42-43, a lament, an expression of the grief of a believing heart feeling at a distance from God [Pss. 3, 7, 13, 17]; Psalm 34, a song of praise for deliverance received [Pss. 30, 32, 18]; Psalm 106, a song that remembers God’s dealings with His people in the past to encourage trusting obedience in the present [Pss. 78, 105, 135, 136]; Psalm 73, a wisdom Psalm, helping us to apply to our hearts what we know to be true of God and His world when faced with the perplexing puzzles of our existence [Pss. 37, 45]; and finally Ps.95 which proclaims that the LORD is King and models how we need to respond to His reign [Pss. 29, 47, 93, 96-99].

The Book of Psalms is unique in Scripture because it is nearly all expressed in the first person, as ‘I’ or ‘we’. It is a style that immediately includes the reader or singer in the Psalmist’s experience, and the reader or singer’s experience in the words of the Psalm. The Psalms engage with us communally – this is the shared experience of believers; and they engage us wholly. “They arouse our emotions, direct our wills and stimulate our imaginations.” {Tremper Longman}

As Dr Harman has written: “The Book of Psalms speaks to us. The Book of Psalms speaks for us.” The hope is that you will experience both these aspects as you study these Psalms; that they will teach you about our God, His covenant, His law, His King and how we relate to Him. But more, that you will find in the Psalms the expression of the thoughts and feelings of your own heart, that you will be moved to sing and pray the Psalms as your own praise and prayer to God. To that end don’t confine yourself to only the Psalm set down for the week. Read the other Psalms referred to in the studies. Try and get yourself into the habit of reading a Psalm a day in addition to your other bible reading. The Psalms are for Christians. They speak of Jesus [e.g. Luke 24:25-27, 44-46], are fulfilled in Jesus [consider the use of Psalm 2, 16 and 110 in the New Testament. “The Psalms are quoted more often than any other book in the New Testament.”], and they become ours as we are in Him by faith.

“The Psalter is the book of all saints; and everyone, in whatever situation he may be, finds in that situation psalms and words that fit his case, that suit him as if they were put there just for his sake, so that he could not put it better himself, or find or wish for anything better. This also serves well another purpose. When these words please a man and fit his case, he becomes sure that he is in the communion of saints, and that it has gone with all the saints as it goes with him since they all sing with him one little song. It is especially so if he can speak these words to God, as they have done; this can only be done in faith, for the words [of the saints] have no flavour to godless man.”
Martin Luther, Preface to the Psalter.

Psalm 1

for bible talk on 24 Jun



Set aside time to read the section this week. If you are using these for group discussion please make sure that you have read the section prior to the study.

Day 1 Read the whole Psalm

1. Who are blessed? What is it to be blessed?
2. The blessed person is described first in terms of what he or she avoids and has nothing to do with. Take some time to think about the 'counsel of the wicked' or the behaviour of sinners that you are exposed to and which seeks to influence your thinking and action.
3. How well are you resisting its influence?

Day 2 [Additional: Read Psalm 19]

The blessed person is also described positively Ps. 1 v.2.

1. Do you delight in God's law [torah here stands for all of God's instruction]? What is so special about it? [Cf. Ps. 19:7-11]
2. What is it to 'meditate' on God's law [instruction]? Would this describe your practice? What changes do you need to make, if any, to make this part of your daily living?

Day 3 [Additional: Read Psalm 119:1-56]

1. What is the contrast presented here between both the character and the outcome of the righteous and wicked?
2. Does the New Testament support this contrast? Read Matthew 7:13-27
3. Why is there such a great contrast in outcomes?
4. How can we avoid sharing in the fate of the wicked?

Day 4 [Additional: Read Psalm 119:57-128]

1. Ps. 1:3. "Whatever he does prospers." Does this always appear to be the case? Cf. Ps. 6:1-7, 13:1-4, 38.
2. What is the evidence that Jesus delighted in God's law? [Consider Mt. 4:1-11, Luke 4:16-18, references to Scripture during the last Supper through to the death of Jesus, Lk. 24:25-28, 44-47]
3. How did v.3, and all of Psalm 1, work out in the life of Jesus, the righteous man?

Day 5 [Additional: Read Psalm 119:129-176]

1. What are the links between Psalm 1 and Psalm 2? What are the two elements of being blessed?
2. Why does the Book of Psalms, which is a carefully arranged and edited collection [Note the division into five books Pss. 1-41, 42-77, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150], start with these Psalms? What do they tell us of the world view of Psalms?
3. How has Jesus' coming vindicated the faith of the Psalmist?

Notes for prayer and application



Please use this section to make notes, reflections, prayer points in both personal and group use.

Psalm 2

for bible talk on 1 Jul



Set aside time to read the section this week. If you are using these for group discussion please make sure that you have read the section prior to the study.

Day 1 (Read Psalm 2)

1. What is your impression of this Psalm? Is it confronting or comforting? Are there any words or ideas that shock you?
2. This Psalm presents two ways to live. What are they and what characterizes each? What is the result of each?
3. Which way do you live?

Day 2 (Read Psalm 2 and 2 Samuel 7:1-17)

Psalm 2 was probably recited by the ancient Jews during the coronation ceremonies of their Kings. The King of Israel was seen as appointed by God to rule over God's people.

1. List all the promises made to King David and his son in 2 Samuel 7:1-17. See how many you can match up with the promises made to the King in Psalm 2.
2. Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13. What does this tell us about the purpose of anointing?
3. Read 1 Kings 11:9-13 and 2 Kings 24:18-20. Do you think any of the Kings of Israel lived up to the expectations of the Anointed One in Psalm 2? Do you think anyone has?

Day 3 (Read Psalm 2)

Read Luke 1:26-33. List all the promises made about Jesus and compare them with the promises made to the Anointed One in Psalm 2.

Read Acts 4:25-27, Acts 13:32-33. How did the Apostles view Jesus?

How do we know that Jesus is the ruler spoken of in Psalm 2? Read Acts 17:31

Day 4 (Read Psalm 2)

If you reject God's Anointed One, who else are you rejecting? (Luke 10:16)

What does verse 12 tell us about the way to be saved?

How do you take refuge in God? Have you done this? (Romans 5:6-11)

Day 5 (Read Psalm 2)

Do you know anyone who rejects Jesus? What will happen to them?

What do those who reject Jesus need to do? How can you help?

Pray for the people you know who reject Jesus.

Notes for prayer and application



Please use this section to make notes, reflections, prayer points in both personal and group use.

Suggested launch question for group bible study:

In what ways do we see countries and people rebelling against God in 2007?



Day 1. Read the whole Psalm

1. What kind of psalm is this? Look at the opening and closing lines.
2. Does it relate to David's personal life issues or more general themes?
3. Make a list of the things David praises God for. Are you able to praise God for those things? Set it as a task this week to give praise to God.

Day 2. Pray the Psalm

Psalms are useful as private worship as well as public worship. Take the time today to simply pray each line. Repeat it several times and annotate your own prayer in your own words. The hymn "Praise my soul, the King of heaven" by H.F. Lyte was inspired by this psalm. Sing a hymn or song of praise to God. (silently perhaps if your voice is like mine!!)

Day 3. Remember His benefits

1. Why do you think the forgiveness of sin should rank as first (of benefits from God)?
2. Is it easy to forget God's blessing in forgiveness? Think of Hezekiah who received God's healing (2 Chron 32:24-26).
3. The easy life in the promised land could lead people away from God through pride (Deut 8:12-14). How then should we live?
4. There are several verses about forgiveness. Look carefully at vv.9, 10, 12. As far as East is from West God removes our sin? How far is that?
5. Think of the picture of the eagle soaring, Read Isaiah 40:30-31

Day 4. Our responsibility

1. David recalls the Exodus and making of the covenant. This is the heart of all OT religion (vv.17,18).
2. What does God offer to His people? (vv.4, 8, 11, 17)
3. What is our response to God? (vv.11, 13, 17, 18)
4. How do you understand the phrase "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." (Prov 1:7)

Day 5. Read and pray through Psalm 104 which is the companion to 103. A hymn to the Creator.

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The Lament of the Depressed, but not Hopeless.

Introduction: These are really one psalm joined by several repeated phrases. In fact it is a poem with three stanzas, each ending with the same refrain. Psalm 42/43 also marks the beginning of what is regarded as the second subsection or 'Book' of Psalms It is also one of the psalms of the "Sons of Korah" - a Levitical family entrusted with the temple music.

Day 1 42:1-4 Thirsting for God

Read Both Psalms together.

The Psalmist expresses a deep longing for God which is expressed as being as intense as the thirst of a deer that is being hunted. Have you ever been through a spiritually dry patch? Does this kind of longing only happen in times of crisis?

Day 2 42:5,6 Downcast But Not Despairing.

In all his troubles, the Psalmist returns to one thought: Why is it right to put my hope in God in the midst of distressing circumstances.? What is your answer to this question? (see Rom.8:31-39). The Psalmist is suffering from a reactive depression – the word used here is 'downcast'. What strategy does he use to shake off the depression?

Day 3 42:7-11: Drowning in Troubles

1. The Psalmist once again describes his experience as being overwhelmed by God: a *feeling* akin to being swept along over a waterfall. Have you ever felt this way?
2. What evidence is there that Jesus was recalling the Psalms when his life was being 'swept away' on the cross? (see Matt.27:46, and Psalm 22). What *feeling* is Jesus giving voice to here?
3. What does this teach us about our liberty to express our feelings to God in prayer?

Day 4 43:1&2 The oppression of deceitful and ungodly men

This lament is in the form of a prayer describing a sense of being rejected by God. This may or may not be objectively true, but the point is that this is how it *feels*. Prayer sometimes requires that we say it as it feels. Do you think that God accepts this kind of prayer?

Day 5 43:3-5 The 'light' of God

The antidote for confusion, and feelings of rejection is to recall, as the Psalmist does, that only the "light" and "truth" of God can push aside the darkness that would overwhelm us. In practical terms, For the Christian, who is our "light and truth"? (John 1; & John 14:6)



Please use this section to make notes, reflections, prayer points in both personal and group use.

Psalm 34

for bible talk on 22 Jul



Day 1

Read all Psalm 34

Is the tone of this psalm one of despair, praise, worship, other? List the verses that support your view

Day 2

1. Who wrote this Psalm? Why did he write it?
2. Who or what is the focus?
3. Read the context 1 Sam 21:8-15
 - Note: In the superscription for this psalm, the event has “Abimelech” rather than “Achish” – Abimelech may have been a traditional throne name or title for Philistine kings; see Gen 20;21:22-34;26)
 - Note: David is scared of the king Achish because Goliath was from Gath (1 Sam 17:4) and David is now carrying Goliath’s sword (1 Sam 21:9)
4. In David’s fear – what does he do to escape?
5. Who does David attribute his deliverance to in Psalm 34?
6. How do you respond in situations of fear?

Day 3

1. How is David acting like a madman trusting God for deliverance?
2. Jesus says in Matthew 10:16 “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” How do you apply this to your life?
3. David is in a desperate situation. How do you act in desperate situations? Share about this in your group (if applicable)

Day 4

1. In what ways have you experienced God’s salvation?
2. How are your responses like/unlike the way David responds?

Note: He wrote the Psalm..also

vs 1-3 Thanksgiving

vs 4-7 Recollection

vs 8-10 Proclamation

vs 9-15 Teaching

Etc..

3. How does seeing David’s response to God’s salvation help you understand Paul’s instruction in Eph 5:20, Phil 6:4, 1 Thess 5:18?

Day 5

1. Who is the righteous in this passage? (note v.20 is quoted in NT toward Jesus)
2. Do you proclaim your experience of salvation in the way David does? How?
3. Do you have such confidence in God and his promises that you can recommend to others “Taste and see the Lord is Good”?
4. How does the experience of Jesus tell us this Psalm is wholly true?

Other Questions

1. What do you do about the generalisations of this passage? (Does a Christian ever starve to death?)
2. How does Psalm 42 fit together with Psalm 34? How can you experience Both?

Notes for prayer and application



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Day 1. Read Psalm 105

The background of the pair of psalms, 105 and 106 is seen in the bringing the Ark of the Covenant into the city of Jerusalem. Ps 105:1-16, Ps 96 largely Ps 106:47-48 are quoted in 1 Chron 16. To understand Ps 106 we need to read it together with 105. These are two contrasting strands of the history of the covenant. The acts of God in creating the nation of Israel. God who is faithful to his Word - Ps 105. The acts of people who sin, disobey and do all in their power to frustrate the work of God – PS 106.

Day 2. Read Psalm 106

1. Go through the Psalm and see the different sins the people committed. Briefly note what each one involved (Derek Kidner's list below):
 - Unbelief. (vv.7-12)
 - Discontent (vv.13-15)
 - Jealousy (vv.16-18)
 - Idolatry (vv.19-23)
 - Cowardice (vv.24-27)
 - Apostasy (vv.28-31)
 - Provocation (vv.32-33)
 - Paganization (vv.34-39)
2. How is the introduction (vv.1-5) in such contrast to the rest of the psalm? How is the Psalmist caught up in the history of his people?

Day 3

1. How does God judge the people? (vv.40-46)
2. What is the psalmist prayer? (v.47) Why does he include himself?
3. On what basis is the praise to God made? (v.48) Note this is a fitting end to the psalm and the end of Book 4. A doxology to the praise of God. What is the character of God that stands out? (vv.43-46)

Day 4

1. Look at the role of Moses. What does he do for the people? (v.23) How can we step into the role of Moses?
2. Take some time to intercede today for the people and nation.
3. Note Moses sin is still emphasised. He is imperfect just as we are. (v.33) Look at the role of Phinehas (v.30) What did he do? (This might surprise you. Num 25)
4. How did God bless the action of Phinehas? (v.31)
5. Look at the blessing as it is conveyed to us in Christ (Rom 4:3, 23-25 Gen 15:6) Note: We are followers of Abraham's faith and not Phinehas's zeal! Because we already have a perfect atonement made in Christ. How should the Christian take warning from this? (Heb 3:12, 17-19 4:1-3)



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Read through the whole of Psalm 73

You'll note that this Psalm and others (73-83, 50) have been authored by Asaph. Asaph was a choirmaster of David, descendant of Gershon, son of Levi (1 Chron 6:39; 15:17, 2 Chron 5:12).

Day 1 “Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure”

Focussing on verses 1-12, the Psalmist acknowledges God’s goodness to the pure in heart (v.1) but then speaks of envy for the prosperity of the wicked.

1. Have you ever found yourself envying the wicked, those who seem to be carefree and arrogant yet hate God? In what ways?
2. Reading verses 13-16, the Psalmist tried to do the right thing but suffered for it. Reflect on this : “Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people while allowing good things to happen to bad people?”

Day 2 “Till I entered the sanctuary of God”

Read verses 17-20.

1. What is the turning point for the Psalmist? What is it about his reflection on God that has brought this significant change?
2. Why does he no longer envy the wicked?
3. In your own Christian life what has brought about significant turning points?

Day 3 “But as for me, it is good to be near God”

Read verses 21-28

1. How would you describe the Psalmist’ relationship with God by the end of the Psalm?
2. The Psalmist used to think that being pure before God should bring prosperity. What is it that the Psalmist values now?
3. Write down things that you envy in the lives of others. How does this compare with what you have in God? (see next column)

Day 4 “Blessed are the pure in heart”

Jesus said: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (Mt 5:8) which sounds very much like verse 1 of Ps 73.

1. At times it is hard to keep a pure heart, but how do verses 21-26 encourage us?
2. When we feel discouraged and envious in your heart like the Psalmist did, what great promise do we have in Christ? (See Romans 8:35-39)

Day 5 “Whom have I in heaven but you?”

1. The Psalmist makes this wonderful rhetorical statement in verse 25. What is it about heaven that you look forward to?
2. How does the Psalmist’s anticipation of heaven (v.25) help him to live now?
3. Read 1 Peter 1:3-7, how does our anticipation of heaven help us to live now?



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See day 3 question 3:

Things I envy about others	What I have in God

- **Suggested launch question:** Have there been times in your life when you’ve wondered this – “Why does God allow good things to happen to bad people while allowing bad things to happen to good people”. Share a time when you felt this.



Introduction: Psalm 95 was associated with the New Year festival, where the covenant was renewed and "...God was celebrated as Creator, King, & Judge."¹

Day 1

Read the whole of Psalm 95

Why is worship due to God from all creation? See how many reasons you can find in the psalm. List the various ways that this worship should find expression.

Day 2 95:1-2 Shout for Joy!

We Presbyterians are often accused of being dull in our worship. There is no doubt that the Psalms encourage joyous, exuberant praise worship. If the Psalmist says "Shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation...", then what should our response be? More Colin Buchanan songs? More shouting and leaping?

Day 3 95:3-6 It's God's World!

1. What implications do the words of verse 3 have for other world religions?
2. If it is really true that the whole earth and the seas are "his", what implications does this have for our attitude to the earth's resources?
3. Is there a Christian worldview that encompasses the environment? How does Paul address this question in Romans 8:18-25?

Day 4 95:7-8 How Teachable Are You?

1. What would be some indications that we are hardening or have hardened our hearts against God? What were the indications shown by the Israelites in the desert? (Read Exodus 17:7 Deut 33:8; Heb. 3:7-19)
2. What is the condition of your heart towards God at present? Is there any resentment or anger? What are you going to do about it?

Day 5 95:9- 11 Heart Condition

1. What is the rest that we hope to enter? (Hebrews 4:1-3)
2. Here in verse 10, God says that he sees the condition of our hearts towards him, and in the preceding verses he warns us not to harden our hearts. It is obvious that Christianity (and Judaism) is a religion of the heart as much as the brain. How do we maintain an openness to live obediently? (see Psalm 1!)



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¹ Ed. A.M.Stibbs *Search The Scriptures* IVP:Leicester 1983; p.410

Suggested Reading Plan for Psalms

Week 1	Psalms 1-7	Week 22	Psalms 132-138
Week 2	Psalms 8-14	Week 23	Psalms 139-144
Week 3	Psalms 15-21	Week 24	Psalms 145-150
Week 4	Psalms 22-28	Week 25	Catch up
Week 5	Psalms 29-35		
Week 6	Psalms 36-42		
Week 7	Psalms 43-49		
Week 8	Psalms 50-56		
Week 9	Psalms 57-63		
Week 10	Psalms 64-70		
Week 11	Psalms 71-77		
Week 12	CATCH UP		
Week 13	Psalms 78-83		
Week 14	Psalms 84-90		
Week 15	Psalms 91-97		
Week 16	Psalms 98-104		
Week 17	Psalms 105-111		
Week 18	Psalms 112-118		
Week 19	Psalms 119		
Week 20	Psalms 120-125		
Week 21	Psalms 126-131		