



Psalms

Lesson 3: Longing for God

Within all human beings, there is a deep desire to know God. Being in relationship with Him is what we were created for. In this lesson, we'll hear that desire expressed by the psalmists, who longed to be near God, to gain strength from Him, and to dwell in His presence. For them, that meant journeying to God's residence on the earth—the tabernacle (sometimes called tent) or the temple, which later replaced the tabernacle. As you read these psalms, allow the images of the writers' physical journeys to correspond to and direct your spiritual journey to experience God and the Lord Jesus Christ more deeply. Just a reminder that Scripture quotations are from the ESV Bible (the Holy Bible, English Standard Version) unless otherwise noted. You can access this translation for free at www.esv.org.

Psalms 23

Previous Lesson Review

Personalize the truth. David may have been tempted to “flee like a bird” (Ps. 11:1), but he chose to trust the Lord instead. What are your go-to coping mechanisms in times of stress or fear? You may not literally flee, but what do you find yourself instinctively doing instead of choosing to trust God? Jot down a few of these things. Then ask the Lord to help you turn to Him first, in trust, rather than fleeing or trying to create your own refuge.

Occupy my body and mind with other things. Eating, drinking, movies, games.

Psalms to Deepen Our Trust - Write God's Word for the week: Psalm 91:2.

I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

29. These six psalms contain beautiful declarations of trust in the Lord. Which stood out to you as most meaningful, and why?

Following His path of righteousness. Hiking analogy.

Day 1

Write God's Word for the week: Psalm 84:2. - My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.

My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. Ps. 84:2

Psalm 23—The Lord as Provider and Protector 1. In Psalm 23:1-4, David wrote of God as his shepherd. a. How did the shepherd provide? b. How did the shepherd protect? c. For personal thought: Which of the images David used is most significant to you, and why?

- a) provided green pastures and still waters.
- b) leads me in paths of righteousness. He is with me; His rod and staff comfort me.
- c) the green pastures and still waters, because it is so peaceful.

2. Read John 10:11-15. a. What did Jesus call Himself in this passage? b. How did He describe the shepherd's relationship with the sheep? c. Read Romans 5:8. How did Jesus lay down His life?

- a) The good shepherd.
- b) He knows His own, and His own know Him and he will lay down his life for his sheep.
- c) He died for us while we were still sinners.

3. From Psalm 23:5, a. what aspects of the Lord's character do you see portrayed? b. what significance would there be to a banquet hosted in the presence of enemies?

- a) He takes care of us in the presence of our enemies.
- b) A lot of protection would be required?

4. What high aspiration of David's do you see at the end of this psalm?

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

5. Does this psalm, with its metaphors, stir any longing in you? If so, please explain.

I long to dwell in the house of the Lord!!

Day 2

Write God's Word for the week: Psalm 84:2.

Psalm 27—The Lord as Light and Salvation - 6. Like all of us, David sometimes felt afraid. What do you see in this psalm about the way he got through his fear?

7. David said there was only "one thing" he asked for. In your own words, what did he want?

8. Despite his appeal for this one thing, David went on to request several other things from God, according to Psalm 27:7-12. What did he ask for?

9. Amid these requests, how do you know that David was thinking about obedience to God?

10. This psalm ends with an exhortation to “wait for the Lord!” What do the following verses promise to those who wait on God? a. Isaiah 30:18, b. Isaiah 40:31, c. Lamentations 3:25

Day 3

Write God’s Word for the week: Psalm 84:2.

My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. Ps. 84:2

Psalms 42–43—Prayer from a Downcast Soul - Note: These two psalms read as one long poem with a similar theme and refrain. 11. From Psalms 42:10 and 43:1, what was happening in the life of the psalmist that prompted him to write this psalm?

Depression? Thinks that God has forgotten him? Mourning because of the oppression of the enemy. Enemies asking, "Where is your God?".

12. How would you describe the writer’s state of mind, and what passages do you base your assessment on?

Depressed 42:5 Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me. Stressed.

13. In what ways do you find the psalmist yearning for God in these two chapters?

42:1 As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you O God.

14. What advice did the psalmist give himself in Psalms 42:5 and 42:11 and 43:5?

All 3 verses: "Hope in God; for I shall again praise Him."

15. When Jesus was in distress, He made a similar statement about the condition of His soul. a. What did He say in Matthew 26:38-39? b. What action did He take as a result? (See Matt . 26:50-54; 27:41-44, 50.) c. For personal thought: When your soul is sorrowful or downcast, what could you do to follow Jesus's example?

- a) My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.
- b) Did the will of his father.

Day 4

Write God's Word for the week: Psalm 84:2.

My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. Ps. 84:2

Psalms 61; 84—Better Than 1,000 Days Elsewhere - 16. From Psalm 61:1-4, what condition was David in and what did he long for?

His heart was faint. He longed for God to hear his cry and protect him.

17. What indication do you find in Psalm 61 that David wasn't praying only for himself?

Ps. 61:6 Prolong the life of the king;
may his years endure to all generations!

18. How is longing for God expressed in Psalm 84:1-4?

David longs to be in the presence of the Lord. Like the birds find safe places.

19. Psalm 84:5-7 describes travelers making their way to God's house in Zion, or Jerusalem. a. "Valley of Baca" is also translated as "Valley of Weeping." With this in mind, what did the psalmist seem to be communicating about the journey toward God's presence? b. How were these travelers encouraged in the Valley of Baca? c. For personal thought: Have you experienced any valleys of weeping on your journey to God? If so, how did you find your "springs"?

- a) It is not necessarily an easy journey?
- b) They would find springs and the rain would cover them.
- c)

20. What encouragement can the upright—those who seek to follow God—take from Psalm 84:10-12?

A day with God is better than a thousand days anywhere else. He will bestow favor and honor to the righteous. He is a sun and shield. He withholds no good thing from the righteous. Those who trust in God will be blessed.

Day 5

Write God's Word for the week: Psalm 84:2.

My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.

Selected Passages—Moving toward God - 21. Review Psalms 23:6; 27:4-5; 42:4; 43:3-4; and 84:2. Where did the Israelites turn when they longed for the presence of the Lord?

They turned to the house (Ps. 23:6, 27:4, 42:4), holy hill/dwelling (Ps. 43:3), altar (Ps. 43:4), courts (Ps. 84:2) of the Lord.

22. What do the following verses tell you about where God now makes His earthly home? a. John 14:23, b. Ephesians 2:13-22

With us; within us;

23. What promises do the following Scriptures make to those who seek God? a. Jeremiah 29:12-13, b. Matthew 7:7

a) If we call upon God, he will hear us. If we seek Him with all of our heart, then we shall find Him.

b) If we ask, it will be given. If we seek, we will find. If we knock, it will be opened for us.

24. Apply the truth: The Israelites sought God's presence by going to His earthly home, the tabernacle and later the temple. If they wanted to be in God's presence, they headed for Jerusalem. What could you do today when you long for God's presence? What might your pilgrimage to experience God look like in practice?

He is already within us, so we simply need to pray and converse with Him. Still ourselves and listen and pray to him.

Day 6 (Class Notes)

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