

21 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING BOOKLET



# CLOSER

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## How to Use This Booklet

Over the next 21 days of prayer, we hope that the Lord will use this time in a significant way in your life. This is a time to clear out the distractions of life, focus your heart, and seek the Lord together as a church. This booklet contains a daily Psalm reading, reflection section, and a prayer for you to use during this 21-day period. Our hope in providing this booklet is that it will assist you in focusing your heart each day. Here are some ways to make the best use of your reading each day:

### READ

Each day will begin by reading a passage in Psalms. Above all else in this booklet, this is the most important part! Begin each day by hearing from the Word that God has spoken to us. The daily Psalm is directly connected for the daily “theme” that is the middle section.

### REFLECT

After reading each passage on your own, you will find a short reflection on what you have just read. Spend time going over each reflection and continue to think through what the Scripture is teaching you and how God wants to use that truth in your life.

### PRAY

Each day you will find a short personal prayer in response to the Scripture reading from that day. During this time of prayer, begin to pray over whatever the Lord may prompt in your heart each day.

COME CLOSE TO GOD  
AND GOD WILL COME  
CLOSE TO YOU.

JAMES 4:8



## Fasting Guide

Over these 21 Days of Prayer, many will find it important to fast during this intentional period. Below is a short guide for those considering fasting: What is Fasting? The goal of fasting is to draw near to God. Biblical fasting always has to do with eliminating distractions for a spiritual purpose. Fasting is a way to express our desire for God and our holy discontent in a fallen world. Remember, your fast should present a level of challenge, but it is very important to know your body and your options, and most importantly, to seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

## Scripture References for Fasting

*Matthew 6:16-18 • Matthew 9:14-15 • Luke 18:1-14*

## Types of Fasts

**COMPLETE FAST:** In this type of fast, you drink only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option.

**SELECTIVE FAST:** This type of fast involves removing certain elements from your diet. One example of a selective fast is the Daniel Fast, during which you remove meat, sweets, and bread from your diet and consume water and juice for fluids and fruits and vegetables for food.

**PARTIAL FAST:** This fast is called the “Jewish Fast” and involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon. This can correlate to specific times of the day, such as 6:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or from sunup to sundown.

**NON-FOOD FAST:** This fast is a great option if you do not have much experience fasting from food, have health issues that prevent you from fasting from food, or wish to refocus certain areas of your life that are out of balance. For example, you might stop using social media or watching television for the duration of the fast and then carefully bring that element back into your life in healthy doses after the fast.

## Read: Psalm 22:1-8

<sup>22</sup> To the choirmaster: according to The Doe of the Dawn. A Psalm of David. <sup>1</sup> My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? <sup>2</sup> O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. <sup>3</sup> Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. <sup>4</sup> In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. <sup>5</sup> To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame. <sup>6</sup> But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. <sup>7</sup> All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; <sup>8</sup> "He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"

**Content** Have you ever felt alone? Have the circumstances of this life weighed so heavy on you that you see no way forward? Have you ever felt like the whole world was against you? You have likely experienced some or all of these emotions at some point. You may be feeling them right now. But what are we to do when these feelings and emotions weigh heavily on us? We need to cry out to God; we need to lament.

What does it mean to lament? One author describes it this way, "Lament, meaning a crying out of the soul, creates a pathway between the Already and the Not Yet. Lament minds the gap between current hopelessness and coming hope. Lament anticipates new creation but also acknowledges the painful reality of now. Lament helps us hold onto God's goodness while battling evil's evil at the same time." Too often, we tell ourselves that we cannot feel what we feel because we have hope in Jesus. While our hope is in Jesus, we must not ignore the hurt and pain we feel in this life. It is okay to feel, to hurt, and to grieve, so we cry out to the only one who can help. Would it surprise you that almost half of the Psalms are psalms of lament? There is an entire book of the Bible titled Lamentations. God wants us to cry out to Him. What is stopping you?

It should bring some comfort to know that Jesus knows how we feel, not just because He is God and knows all things, but because He experienced the pain and anguish in this psalm. He quoted verse one while on the cross during His crucifixion (*Matt. 27:46*). Cry out to Him today! He knows your pain and cares deeply for you. Acknowledge your painful reality, but look forward to our coming hope in our Lord and Savior.

**Prayer** Lord, remind me of your words. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "*The Lord is my portion,*" says my soul, "*therefore I will hope in him.*" *The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. (Lam. 3:22-26)*



## Read: Psalm 22:9-18

<sup>9</sup> Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. <sup>10</sup> On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God. <sup>11</sup> Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help. <sup>12</sup> Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; <sup>13</sup> they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. <sup>14</sup> I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; <sup>15</sup> my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. <sup>16</sup> For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet— <sup>17</sup> I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; <sup>18</sup> they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

**Content** What do you look to when the enemy has you surrounded? When you feel that all hope is lost, where do you find hope? Too often, we look for hope in the things of this world, but hope can only be found in our Savior, Jesus Christ. Our hope and salvation have been present as far back as our conception in the womb. We were at our most vulnerable in our infancy, yet God has been with us, protecting and preserving us since the beginning. But what is the hope that He offers us?

David's lament in this Psalm foreshadows what Jesus would endure through the cross on our behalf. David is not describing persecution; he is describing an execution. Through Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, His burial, resurrection, and ascension, we are made new through His victory over death, hell, and the grave. Our hope is that one day He will return and make all things new and restore order to chaos.

*"His suffering is our salvation. His suffering is our hope."* - Paul David Tripp

**Prayer:** Lord, help me remember. Help me remember what you have done for me. Help me not forget that you promised never to leave or forsake me. Help me remember that you care for me and watch over me.

## Read: Psalm 22:19-26

*<sup>19</sup> But you, O Lord, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid! <sup>20</sup> Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog! <sup>21</sup> Save me from the mouth of the lion! You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen! <sup>22</sup> I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you: <sup>23</sup> You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! <sup>24</sup> For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him. <sup>25</sup> From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will perform before those who fear him. <sup>26</sup> The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord! May your hearts live forever!*

**Content** When do you celebrate a victory? Do you celebrate before or after the victory? If you're like me, you would say, "I celebrate after the win, not before!" Our culture tells us there is no reason to celebrate until you get what you want. We have all heard the saying, "Don't count your chickens until the eggs are hatched!" There are many reasons why it might make sense to hold off on the celebration until you see the outcome. Often, we do this to mitigate disappointment, but this passage shows us a different perspective when crying out to God for help. Notice that David begins to worship God for his deliverance before he is delivered. He recounts a past rescue and celebrates in anticipation of what God will do this time. The worship we offer to God is owed to Him, not because of what He will do for us, but because he is God. Our worship is not contingent on our circumstances but on the person and presence of our God. He never promised that we would never experience hardship, but He promised He would be right there with us through it all. That, my friends, is reason enough to worship!

**Prayer** <sup>1</sup> *It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High;* <sup>2</sup> *to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night,* <sup>3</sup> *to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.* <sup>4</sup> *For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy.* <sup>5</sup> *How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep!* <sup>6</sup> *The stupid man cannot know; the fool cannot understand this:* <sup>7</sup> *that though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever;* <sup>8</sup> *but you, O Lord, are on high forever.* <sup>9</sup> *For behold, your enemies, O Lord, for behold, your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered.* <sup>10</sup> *But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; you have poured over me fresh oil.* <sup>11</sup> *My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants.* <sup>12</sup> *The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.* <sup>13</sup> *They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God.* <sup>14</sup> *They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green,* <sup>15</sup> *to declare that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.*



## Read: Psalm 22:27-31

*<sup>27</sup> All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. <sup>28</sup> For kingship belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations. <sup>29</sup> All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive. <sup>30</sup> Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; <sup>31</sup> they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.*

## Content

All of the earth will worship the Lord. All nations will stand before God with voices lifted in worship. Can you picture this in your mind? Can you hear all the voices singing together? David reminds us in this psalm that King Jesus is our rescuer and is sitting on the throne of heaven, ruling over all the nations. As this psalm ends, we see generations will serve the Lord and tell the next generation of His faithfulness. We are a part of this! We are believers because someone, at some point in our lives, shared Jesus with us. Today we can proclaim the righteousness of God to people who do not know Him. Today we can be a part of worshiping God with all the earth! Do not wait for eternity to take this step. Make today the day you share how God has changed your life.

## Prayer

Lord, only You are worthy to be praised. Only You can sit on the throne of this world and of my heart. Thank you for the breath you have given me. Help me to use this breath, my life, my testimony to tell others of your goodness. Give me eyes to see opportunities to share who You are and the strength to proclaim it to the next generation boldly. Holy Spirit, fill me to overflow, so my words speak truth and love. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.



## Read: Psalm 23

*A Psalm of David.<sup>1</sup> The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.<sup>3</sup> He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

## Content

Do you need a reminder today that whatever the circumstance is, you are not facing it alone? Hear the ways that our Good Shepherd meets us in our trials. Our Good Shepherd provides peaceful, safe places to sustain us. Our Good Shepherd leads us by walking with us through the dark valleys of our lives. Our Good Shepherd protects and comforts us in the middle of our most challenging circumstances. The Good Shepherd provides all we need, interrupting the plans of our enemy. The Good Shepherd gives blessings that overflow into our lives. Are you in the middle of a dark valley right now? Look for your Good Shepherd. He is waiting to guide you through it. As you follow Him, be encouraged because goodness and mercy will come behind you, hemming you in from behind. And when this journey is over, the Good Shepherd's path ends with eternity with Him. So, be encouraged that the Good Shepherd is with you wherever you are, moving on your behalf even now.

## Prayer

Lord, the difficulties of this world can seem overwhelming, and the struggles feel too big. Help me to see You are here with me. Help me to seek Your face in the darkness so you can lead me to the light. Thank You that Your Word says you restore my soul. I love you, Lord. Holy Spirit, fill me to overflow, so my words speak truth and love. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

## Read: Psalm 24:1-6

*A Psalm of David. <sup>1</sup> The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, <sup>2</sup> for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. <sup>3</sup> Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? <sup>4</sup> He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. <sup>5</sup> He will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation. <sup>6</sup> Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah*

**Content** Have you ever stood on a beach, looked out over a valley, walked through a forest, and become overwhelmed by creation? To think that the creator God, who helps me through every moment of my day, and gives me breath in my lungs, created all of this, and it belongs to Him. Our verses for today begin with a reminder of who God is as the creator and owner of all. Even just this thought should adjust how we care for the world and the people around us. They do not belong to us; they are His. David goes on to ask who can go before God. The answer is clear, the One with a clean heart and clean hands, who is truthful in all ways. As we look at ourselves, we know immediately we do not qualify to go before God. My heart is not pure; I know the thoughts and struggles I deal with. My hands and my actions toward the outside world are often colored with selfishness and pride.

We know we can never stand before God on our own, but because of the incredible gift of Jesus, we don't have to. We have a place before God, not because we can earn it with right living, but because Jesus did. He had the purest of hearts, filled with love and obedience to the Father. He had the purest of hands, loving and serving a world that hated Him. He was the embodiment of Truth on this earth. His sacrifice created a place for us before God. We can enter the presence of God and receive the blessing of God because of the sacrifice of Christ. Don't rush past this truth. Take a few minutes and sit quietly, absorbing who Jesus is and what His gift of salvation means for today, tomorrow, and all eternity.

**Prayer:** Jesus, thank you for standing in my place. Thank you for wearing my sins, experiencing my shame and guilt, and exchanging my ashes for beauty at the cross. Please help me live knowing that your victory has given me all I need for today. Help me remember that I am a recipient of God's blessing and salvation. Help me to seek Your face daily, not just Your hands, not just Your blessings. Help me to know You more. Thank you for the beautiful creation that is always pointing back to you. It is in Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## Read: Psalm 24:7-10

*<sup>7</sup> Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. <sup>8</sup> Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle! <sup>9</sup> Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. <sup>10</sup> Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory! Selah*

## Content - The King Is Here

In the ancient world, gates and doors protected the entrance to the city. It is difficult to protect a city from all the things that could come in to destroy it. It's exhausting being constantly vigilant for incoming threats. In comparison, we guard our lives against everything that goes against us. As we get tired of constantly defending ourselves from what potentially could take us down, the psalmist reminds us of who the King of the city is and the promised victory that is in Him. Therefore, we can lift our heads and open our doors to our mighty God. Because in God, we find strength and glory that ensures our safety. So we can rest now, for there is nothing to fear when the King is here.

**Prayer** Thank you, God, that you are the King of Kings. There is no one stronger than you. Help me to rest in your mighty victory, knowing I am safe with you always. (Spend some time listing all the ways you have seen God's strength to help you rest in who He is)





WEEK BREAK

1 WEEK  
DOWN

## Read: Psalm 25:1-7

*<sup>1</sup>To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. <sup>2</sup>O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. <sup>3</sup>Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. <sup>4</sup>Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. <sup>5</sup>Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long. <sup>6</sup>Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. <sup>7</sup>Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Lord!*

## Content - A Desperate Plea

This psalm is a desperate plea to God. In it, we see acknowledgments of trust, salvation, and mercy in remembering who God is and requests for wisdom, truth, and to be spared shame. The themes of God's goodness and a desire to know Him more drive at the heart of these verses. The basis of these things comes from the assuredness of the salvation that God offers. In God, we find absolute truth, without shame, delivered by God's gracious love and goodness. All of this is fully expressed in and through Jesus Christ. We desperately need Him to experience his goodness in our life.

## Prayer

God, thank you for saving me through Jesus, and may I trust you more and more every day. Please help me remain desperate to know more of your truth. Remind me to rest in your goodness instead of shame. (Confess and surrender any lies, sin, or guilt that you have been holding on to in exchange for God's truth, forgiveness, and love)

## Read: Psalm 25:8-14

<sup>8</sup> Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.  
<sup>9</sup> He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.<sup>10</sup>  
All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.<sup>11</sup> For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great.<sup>12</sup> Who is the man who fears the Lord? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.<sup>13</sup> His soul shall abide in well-being, and his offspring shall inherit the land.<sup>14</sup> The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.

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To follow God, we must know we can trust Him. He has given us everything we need to know He is trustworthy. He is the only one truly worthy of our trust. His trustworthiness is what is meant by “good and upright” in verse 8. Everything that precedes this verse hinges on it as the psalmist talks about paths and how we go in life. Because of God’s ability to be trusted, we can follow Him explicitly in everything. Jesus refers to himself as “the way” *John 14:6*. It is through His life that we see how life is meant to look and can experience it ourselves. When we follow Jesus’ way to life, we become known historically as followers of “the way”. It is a path full of God’s love and faithfulness.

## Prayer

Lord, thank you for Jesus showing me the way to experience your love. Please help me to follow Jesus in everything I do and reveal anything that needs to change. May your love and faithfulness be apparent to those you put in my path as I share the way, the truth, and the life of Jesus with them.



## Read: Psalm 25:15-22

<sup>15</sup> My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for he will pluck my feet out of the net. <sup>16</sup> Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. <sup>17</sup> The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. <sup>18</sup> Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins. <sup>19</sup> Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me. <sup>20</sup> Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me! Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you. <sup>21</sup> May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you. <sup>22</sup> Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

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David faced troubles yet had a firm trust in the Lord and confidence in the character and promises of God. He cried out for protection and deliverance as he waited on God. Rather than becoming self-focused, we see the humility of David as he acknowledged that his sin was a hindrance to his prayers and sought forgiveness. He models an unwavering faith in the Lord - not shaken by circumstances.

We will all encounter times of distress, affliction, sorrow, despair, and loneliness in our lives. You may be in a season like that now, and the pain is overwhelming. This pain does not mean God is not near. Do not turn away from Him. Follow David's example and respond with knowledge and confidence in the Lord's path, trusting in God and His leading. We can cry out to Him, laying ourselves bare before him. Whatever life throws at you, look to God. Cry out to Him in your distress for protection and deliverance. He is near and gracious and good.

## Prayer

Thank you for turning your face to me and redeeming me. Help me stay focused on You when I face trouble. Guard my soul and deliver me as I take refuge in You. I wait for you, Lord, preserve and protect me.

## Read: Psalm 26:1-5

*<sup>1</sup> Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity, and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. <sup>2</sup> Prove me, O Lord, and try me; test my heart and my mind. <sup>3</sup> For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in your faithfulness. <sup>4</sup> I do not sit with men of falsehood, nor do I consort with hypocrites. <sup>5</sup> I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked.*

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We see David here in this Psalm, crying out to God to save him while claiming his integrity and trust in the Lord. He believed he lived with integrity, walked in faithfulness, trusted in God, and didn't participate in the sin of others, but David was facing injustice. He needed saving. In humility, David recognized that he was capable of sin and weakness and asked the Lord to examine his mind and heart, the core of who he was. David wanted God to reveal and teach him, and he had confidence that God would answer his prayer and save him.

David's example is foundational for us. There will be times of injustice, pain, and persecution for the believer in Jesus Christ. All around us, we see tragedies that have us crying out to God. Even today, your heart may be breaking. Like David, we can keep our eyes fixed on God's steadfast love, confident that he will save us.

## Prayer

Almighty God, our hearts break at the injustice we see in our lives and the world around us. Help us to remember to draw near to you, our Father, who sees all and faithfully cares for his children. Search us, that we may walk in integrity and humility before you.

## Read: Psalm 26:6-12

<sup>6</sup> I wash my hands in innocence and go around your altar, O Lord,  
<sup>7</sup> proclaiming thanksgiving aloud, and telling all your wondrous deeds.

<sup>8</sup> O Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells. <sup>9</sup> Do not sweep my soul away with sinners, nor my life with bloodthirsty men, <sup>10</sup> in whose hands are evil devices, and whose right hands are full of bribes.

<sup>11</sup> But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me. <sup>12</sup> My foot stands on level ground; in the great assembly I will bless the Lord.

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In a continuation of *Psalm 26*, we see the psalmist pronouncing the challenges and hardships around him. For David, a right walk with God was more than obedience and avoiding evil. Here we see him choosing genuine worship of the Lord, praising His deeds, and proclaiming thanksgiving aloud. All of these acts happened in the place of public worship, at the altar of the Lord. David loved the tabernacle because it represented the house of God; it was the place of God's glory. David possessed a deep love for God and His presence.

We see David drawing toward the gathering of God's people, not away, in his time of distress. And while we now have access to God through the Holy Spirit, do we embody the same attitude of David? Do we love the Church, the gathering of God's people, so much that we run towards the body rather than away when times get hard? When the ground around us shakes and threatens to give way, may we find level ground and sure footing in the presence of the Lord among His people.

## Prayer

Thank you, Lord, that I have access to you through Your Holy Spirit. Help me to see you today as I go about my day. Tune my heart to Your Presence and help me to walk in peace and confidence. Grow your love in me for the gathering of your people.



## Read: Psalm 27:1-6

*<sup>1</sup> The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? <sup>2</sup> When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. <sup>3</sup> Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. <sup>4</sup> One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. <sup>5</sup> For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock. <sup>6</sup> And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord.*

## Content

In this Psalm, David uses strong language and imagery to describe his trust in the Lord as he faces extreme adversity. While we may not meet the same enemies, armies, and attacks as David, we do face our own battles. In these six verses, David makes some strong points about God's character that we need to note. First, he describes God as his life's light, salvation, and stronghold. Despite all he faced, David chose not to be crippled by fear but placed his absolute confidence in the one who gives and secures life. He also points out that safety is indeed found in God's presence. He desired to commune with God and worship in His presence. John Piper wrote, "communion with God is not merely *learning about* God but enjoying *fellowship with* God in the truth he reveals about himself." David wraps up verse six with an audible demonstration of his faith in God amid his battles. He writes, "I will sing and make melody to the Lord." The question for us today is will we do the same?

## Prayer

Pray for the Lord to give you faith and trust in Him no matter what you face today. Pray for power to overcome any fear or anxiety you may be experiencing. Pray your heart fills with joy as you spend time with the Lord today. Thank Him for the joy of your salvation.

## Read: Psalm 27:7-14

*<sup>7</sup> Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! <sup>8</sup> You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek." <sup>9</sup> Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation! <sup>10</sup> For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in. <sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. <sup>12</sup> Give me not up to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence. <sup>13</sup> I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living! <sup>14</sup> Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!*

## Content

David continues crying out to God as he spends time in His presence. Despite all he faced in the past and the present, he remains persistent. He never gives up! Whether the battle was self-inflicted due to his sin or attacks from God's enemies, David never lost trust in the God of his salvation. At the end of this Psalm, David says to wait, take courage, and wait for the Lord! Why? Because God never fails! He always comes through and would come through again. Here is one promise David probably knew very well. "It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed." (*Deut. 31:8*)

## Prayer

Pray that God would give you faith to trust His promises despite how you feel. Pray this promise found in Deuteronomy and insert "me" in place of "you." Thank Him for His promises – be as specific as you can.



WEEK BREAK

2 WEEKS  
DOWN



## Read: Psalm 28

**A Psalm of David.** <sup>1</sup> To you, O Lord, I call; my rock, be not deaf to me, lest, if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit. <sup>2</sup> Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help, when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary. <sup>3</sup> Do not drag me off with the wicked, with the workers of evil, who speak peace with their neighbors while evil is in their hearts. <sup>4</sup> Give to them according to their work and according to the evil of their deeds; give to them according to the work of their hands; render them their due reward. <sup>5</sup> Because they do not regard the works of the Lord or the work of his hands, he will tear them down and build them up no more. <sup>6</sup> Blessed be the Lord! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. <sup>7</sup> The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him. <sup>8</sup> The Lord is the strength of his people; he is the saving refuge of his anointed. <sup>9</sup> Oh, save your people and bless your heritage! Be their shepherd and carry them forever.

## Content

It's probably an understatement to say that David is committed to speaking openly, honestly, and consistently to the Lord. This Psalm sounds a lot like Psalm 27. However, one particular distinction stands out. This time we find him crying out for mercy. David asks God not to consider him as those whose hearts are evil yet speak peace with their neighbors. He is pointing out the significance of actions and the heart. We know David was, without a doubt, guilty of sin, like everyone on the planet. However, we see that his deeds were not from a heart far from God. Listen to how the Scriptures describe him. *"And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.'"* (Acts 13:22) David had placed his faith and trust in God and sought to live a life of obedience to His will. No, he was not perfect, but he was saved, secure, and rested in the strength, protection, and provision of the Lord. He sought not only to obey the Lord but to know Him intimately. We must ask ourselves if our hearts line up with our actions. Is God seated on the throne of our hearts?

## Prayer

Pray that God would give you the strength to obey from a heart of obedience, not an obligation. Ask God to remove them if there are hard places in your heart. If God is not seated on the throne of your heart, ask Him to dethrone whatever is taking His place. Thank Him for His Grace and Mercy as He provides all you need to do the above.

## Read: Psalm 29

**A Psalm of David.** <sup>1</sup> Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. <sup>2</sup> Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness. <sup>3</sup> The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over many waters. <sup>4</sup> The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. <sup>5</sup> The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. <sup>6</sup> He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox. <sup>7</sup> The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire. <sup>8</sup> The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. <sup>9</sup> The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth and strips the forests bare, and in his temple all cry, "Glory!" <sup>10</sup> The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever. <sup>11</sup> May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!

## Content

Who is like the Lord our God? Whose voice is as powerful as His? Who can have power over all things and all Creation that even the thunder praises Him? Only God.

It can be so easy to get lost in the mundane of everyday life. We read our Bibles, go to church on Sunday mornings, and pray before meals or perhaps before sleep at night. These things all too quickly become a habit, things we do without much thought or intention behind them. How often do we do these things while forgetting why we do them? How often do we forget the wonder and majesty of our God? How often do we forget all that He is capable of doing? This passage reminds us to step back from the busyness and noise and sit in the presence of God. To sit and remember his perfect and unchanging character and be in awe of his incredible and unmatched power. A call to center our lives on Christ and who He is.

This psalm closes with a promise that the Lord will give his people strength and peace. This promise gives us hope that no matter what we face in life, whether a broken relationship, a health crisis, financial difficulties, the loss of a loved one, addiction, depression, or anxiety, God is sustaining us with his strength and peace. He holds every piece of our life in his hands. Nothing that we face is a surprise to Him. His goodness is over every aspect of our lives.

## Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for being so wonderful and mighty. Thank you for the perfect love, peace, and patience you offer me daily. You are worthy of our praise and adoration. Help me not get lost in habits and routines but instead be constantly reminded of your majesty and adoration.



## Read: Psalm 30:1-5

**A Psalm of David.** *A song at the dedication of the temple.* <sup>1</sup> I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up and have not let my foes rejoice over me. <sup>2</sup> O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me. <sup>3</sup> O Lord, you have brought up my soul from Sheol; you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit. <sup>4</sup> Sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name. <sup>5</sup> For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

## Content

Even in challenging or difficult seasons, we can reach out to God for help. We might feel this way if we struggle at school to have community and fit in. Or maybe our marriage is in shambles, and there seems to be no hope on the horizon. Or perhaps a family member or close friend struggles with addiction, depression, or anxiety. In any case, the battle to do life has a way of exhausting us. We end up weary, empty, and alone.

David reminds us that we can praise God because He is faithful to answer when we call. It isn't so much in the eloquence of the words we use but in the fact that we stop, acknowledge our need for Him, and simply cry out for help. As a daughter or son of God, He will be forever faithful to hear and respond to our cry; we must simply ask. Even on the darkest nights, when emotions run high and we do not think we can bear one more moment, our God is near. His love for us is fierce and faithful.

## Prayer

Father, we thank you that you are near no matter what life throws our way. You desire to answer our cry for help and show up in ways we could never think or imagine. We thank you that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in each of us. This supernatural power allows us to choose a different response when fear and doubt settle in our hearts. Thank you for the new joy we have every morning.



## Read: Psalm 30:6-12

<sup>6</sup> As for me, I said in my prosperity, "I shall never be moved." <sup>7</sup> By your favor, O Lord, you made my mountain stand strong; you hid your face; I was dismayed. <sup>8</sup> To you, O Lord, I cry, and to the Lord I plead for mercy: <sup>9</sup> "What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?" <sup>10</sup> Hear, O Lord, and be merciful to me! O Lord, be my helper!" <sup>11</sup> You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, <sup>12</sup> that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!

## Content

When life is going our way and running smoothly, we can tend to rely on our strength and wisdom. We feel confident and secure in what is to come, but inevitably, a shift will come. A change in our circumstances or a relationship reveals that all is not well in our deepest, most inner self. So then, we find our hearts turning from our strength and wisdom to God's strength and wisdom.

David writes here that when we return our hearts to Him and call out, He will meet us in our struggle and pain. God can transform and breathe new life into the circumstances that have made us feel as if we cannot breathe. While nothing in our world might change, God works within us to calm the inner storm, remind us of His truth, and allow His joy to flow through us again.

## Prayer

God, help me to rely on your strength and wisdom daily. Do not let my circumstances sway my dependence on you. May I seek your face in all things. I thank God you can calm any inner turmoil that might arise in me today. Our hearts are full of gratitude for your unending love for us.

## Read: Psalm 31:1-8

*<sup>31</sup> To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. <sup>1</sup> In you, O Lord, do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me! <sup>2</sup> Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily! Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me! <sup>3</sup> For you are my rock and my fortress; and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me; <sup>4</sup> you take me out of the net they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge. <sup>5</sup> Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God. <sup>6</sup> I hate those who pay regard to worthless idols, but I trust in the Lord. <sup>7</sup> I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction; you have known the distress of my soul, <sup>8</sup> and you have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy; you have set my feet in a broad place.*

**Content** In this Psalm, we see David cry out to God to be his refuge. The word “refuge” means to be provided safety and shelter from pursuit, danger, or trouble. This seeking would be a harsh reality that David often faced in times of war and military conquest. Although we might not deal with soldiers trying to kill us, we still face trouble in many different ways. In these times of crisis and difficulty, we can run to many things to find our refuge. David’s prayer reminds us why we should run to Christ before anything else. He is “a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me!” God is our rock and our Savior. He is steadfast, unwavering, and the only One who can save us regardless of the things we face. We are often tempted to look to temporary measures to find an escape or comfort, but they will quickly pass and ultimately leave us with restless hearts and without peace. Only God can give us what we need most, Himself. This psalm gives us a beautiful picture of a God who is not far off but promises to “lead” and “guide” amid our struggles.

In recognition of this, David prays, “Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me....” What we see from David should inspire us to do the same thing. Full surrender. David shows that he is surrendering the deepest parts of His life to God, and we should do the same. Sometimes it can be tempting to straddle the fence between followers of Christ and citizens of the world. We can surrender parts of our lives to God while holding on to things we aren’t ready to put at the feet of Jesus. Today, God invites us to take refuge in Him and promises His complete comfort and peace when we let go of everything and trust Him.

**Prayer** Thank you for being a loving Father that gives eternal shelter to your children. Please help me see things I might be running to find comfort and peace only you can provide. Through your Spirit, give me the power to surrender everything in my life to you, knowing that you want what is best for me.



## Read: Psalm 31: 9-18

<sup>9</sup> Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief; my soul and my body also. <sup>10</sup> For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away. <sup>11</sup> Because of all my adversaries I have become a reproach, especially to my neighbors, and an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me. <sup>12</sup> I have been forgotten like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel. <sup>13</sup> For I hear the whispering of many— terror on every side!— as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life. <sup>14</sup> But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, “You are my God.” <sup>15</sup> My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors! <sup>16</sup> Make your face shine on your servant; save me in your steadfast love! <sup>17</sup> O Lord, let me not be put to shame, for I call upon you; let the wicked be put to shame; let them go silently to Sheol. <sup>18</sup> Let the lying lips be mute, which speak insolently against the righteous in pride and contempt.

**Content** One thing that makes the book of Psalms so powerful is the accurate reflection of the human experience. To be human is to experience the mountaintops as well as the valleys. In this psalm, we see David on a mountaintop celebrating his trust and resolve to find comfort in God. Then picking up in verse 9, we see David stuck in the valley, lamenting the oppression that he finds himself in. From his enemies to his neighbors, they despise and reject him as they plan to take David’s life. We might have never felt this acute aggression from our community, but we all wrestled with opposition and rejection, even from the people we thought loved us. The temptation can be to build walls and harbor frustration and anger toward individuals who have harmed us. However, God calls us to respond differently. A way that gives freedom from the chains that anger and resentment can put on our hearts and mind. David does not simply dwell on his situation; he trusts God. David states, “my times are in your hand.” He knows that God is sovereign and controls all things in this world. This recognition of God’s character results in David trusting in God that he will deliver and protect him from the people that oppose him. Knowing and trusting in God can give us the same confidence it gave David. Is there anger or resentment in your heart? Today, God wants to provide the same freedom and confidence He gave David.

**Prayer** Lord, please bring to mind anyone who I might feel is an enemy. Would you free me from the frustration, anger, and resentment I might be feeling toward these people? I am thankful that your love and grace were poured out on me when I did not deserve it. Help me do the same to those people who oppose. And in all things, help me trust and surrender everything to you, knowing that you and you alone bring everyone under your perfect justice and judgment. Thank you for who you are.



## Read: Psalm 31:19-24

<sup>19</sup> Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind! <sup>20</sup> In the cover of your presence you hide them from the plots of men; you store them in your shelter from the strife of tongues. <sup>21</sup> Blessed be the Lord, for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me when I was in a besieged city. <sup>22</sup> I had said in my alarm, "I am cut off from your sight." But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cried to you for help. <sup>23</sup> Love the Lord, all you his saints! The Lord preserves the faithful but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride. <sup>24</sup> Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord!

## Content

As we near the end of the 31st psalm, we can see a vital pattern that exists in the entire book of Psalms, a pattern of praise. Yesterday we saw David dealing with oppression and rejection from all the people surrounding him. He lamented that many people despised him and even wanted to take his life, but David did not despair. He worshipped. We should follow David's example. It can be easy to focus on the difficult seasons and situations that arise in our lives and fail to recognize the God who was faithful to bring us through. David cries out to God, saying, "*Blessed be the Lord, for He has wondrously shown His steadfast love for me.*" This is not just true of David, but it is true for all of us. Whether God changed your circumstance in times of suffering or helped you through, the truth is He never left. And He never will. So, like David, even in times of suffering and pain, our God promises to "not leave you or forsake you" so that we never have to "fear or be dismayed." No matter what you might be facing today: a strained relationship, challenging job, struggles in marriage, financial hardship, a diagnosis, or even facing death, be encouraged by the reality that we have a steadfast God who will never leave us. The hope that gives us should drive us to respond like David, to worship God as King.

## Prayer

God, I thank you that you will never leave us regardless of what we face in our lives. Help me not to give into anxiety, fear, and doubt but help me find courage in your presence and your love. Help my life be an act of worship in response to what you have done. In the middle of my trials and suffering, remind me that you are in control and deserve all my honor and praise.



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