

Walking in Prayer: Old Testament

Lesson 6: Prayers of David

A Psalm writing workshop

Part I: Psalms of Praise and Thanksgiving

Vocabulary:

service	victory	harp	gold
to appoint	theme	string	honey / honeycomb
to reign	perspective	rope	to warn
harshness	to create (n. creation)	flood	fortress
to discipline	nature	to grab	to shake (adj. shaken)
compassion	to set up	to preserve	to enrich
to replace	to crush	to slip	abundantly
actual	weight	to refine	stream
intimate	refuge	silver	grain
to fall apart	earnest (adv. earnestly)	burden	
crown (v. to crown)	to thirst	abundance	
vengeance	to long for	wise	
continually	to cling	precious	

Discussion:

In Lesson 5, we saw God's power work through Gideon and Hannah's weaknesses, and we learned the role that signs and vows can have in prayer.

Share one way that your life or relationship with God was impacted from the last lesson. In what ways do you still want to grow?

In this study, we will examine the prayers of David through the Psalms he wrote and learn how to write Psalms of our own that we can pray over and over again, just like David did.

The Prayers of David

During Samuel's **service** as judge, the Israelites reject God as their ruler, and they ask Samuel to **appoint** a king to rule over them so that their country will look like the other surrounding countries.¹ The Lord tells Samuel to appoint a king named Saul to **reign** over the Israelites in the same way that other kings are reigning over their nations: with **harshness** and cruelty. In this way, the Lord **disciplines** his people. Yet the Lord has **compassion** for his children and **replaces** Saul with a man whose heart is humble and devoted to the Lord: David. At the time David is appointed king, he is just a young shepherd boy. Over the years, however, David grows into a mighty king, faithful to God and faithful to the people of Israel. The books of I and II Samuel and the beginning of I Kings tell of David's life. The special book Psalms contains David's **actual** prayers, songs, and prophecies that record David's **intimate** relationship with his heavenly Father.

¹ I Samuel 8:1-7.

The book of Psalms records David's worship to God, his praises, and his words of thanksgiving. We see how David expresses his emotions: joy, peace, sadness, and anguish, as well as his personal concerns and problems. He confesses his sins and seeks God's forgiveness. He reminds himself of God's goodness and faithfulness, when the world around him is **falling apart**.

As King of Israel, David is often fighting battles or protecting his **crown**. In his prayers, he speaks often about his enemies and cries out to God for justice and **vengeance**. He reminds himself **continually** of God's **victories** and miracles, his honor and glory. In the Old Testament, this **theme** of God's justice and vengeance is common. In the New Testament, however, we see Jesus speak about love and mercy toward our enemies. While the theme of God's justice and vengeance continues throughout the Old and New Testaments, Jesus makes a way for all men to receive God's love and mercy through his sacrifice on the cross. For this reason, Jesus teaches us to love and pray for our enemies to win them to Jesus as their Lord and Savior. As we read the Psalms, it is important that we understand that David is writing from the Old Testament **perspective** of justice and vengeance. Yet, when we write our Psalms, we should remember the heart of Jesus: to love and forgive the people who have hurt us.

Psalms of Praise

Psalm 8 – ¹ Lord our Master, your name is the most wonderful name in all the earth!... ³ I look at the heavens, which you made with your hands. I see the moon and stars, which you **created**. ⁴ But why is man important to you? Why do you take care of human beings? ⁵ You have made them a little lower than the angels and **crowned** them with glory and honor. (ICB)

What is David praying about?

What parts of **nature** do you admire the most? On a prayer card, write your own words of praise for God's **creation**.

Psalm 9 – ⁷ The Lord **set up** his throne to bring justice, and he will rule forever. ⁸ He judges everyone on earth fairly. He judges all nations honestly. ⁹ Many people are suffering—**crushed** by the **weight** of their troubles. But the Lord is a **refuge** for them, a safe place they can run... ¹⁰ Lord, those who know your name come to you for protection. And when they come, you do not leave them without help. (ERV)

Here we see David describing how he sees God as a judge and a refuge in times of trouble. How do you see God as a judge or refuge? On a prayer card, write a short prayer that expresses your thoughts.

Psalm 63 – ¹ You, God, are my God, **earnestly** I seek you; I **thirst** for you, my whole being **longs for** you, in a [dry] land where there is no water... ³ Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. ⁴ I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name, I will lift up my hands... ⁶ On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the [hours] of the night... ⁸ I **cling** to you; your right hand [protects] me. (NIV)

How does David feel about God? What does it inspire him to do?

On a prayer card, write a short prayer that expresses your feelings about God. What do your feelings for God inspire you to do? Add that to your prayer as well.

Psalms 33 – ¹ Sing for joy in the Lord, you who are right with him. It is right for the pure in heart to praise him. ² Give thanks to the Lord with harps. Sing praises to him with a harp of ten strings. ³ Sing to him a new song; play well with loud sounds of joy. (NLF)

Here we see David singing to God. What are your favorite songs about God that you could sing during your times of prayer? If you are able, write your own song.

Psalms of Thanksgiving

Psalms 18 – ³ I called to the Lord for help, and he saved me from my enemies! He is worthy of my praise! ⁴ Death had its ropes wrapped around me. A deadly flood was carrying me away... ⁶ In my trouble I called to the Lord; I cried to my God for help... ¹⁶ He reached down from above and grabbed me; he pulled me from the deep water... ¹⁹ He was pleased with me, so he rescued me. He took me to a safe place. (ERV)

What is David praying about in this Psalm? What is happening to him? What does God do for him?

In what ways has God saved or protected you? On a prayer card, write your own words of thanks to God for this protection. Take time to pray over any troubles you are facing now.

Psalms 66 – ⁸ Praise our God, all peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; ⁹ he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. ¹⁰ For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver. ¹¹ You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. ¹² ...We went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance... ¹⁶ Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. (NIV)

What was David experiencing before this prayer? What has happened since that time?

On a card, write about a time when God tested you and then rescued you from suffering. Give thanks to God in your own words for how he worked in your life.

Psalms 19 – ⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect; it gives us new life. The [commandments] of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple ... ¹⁰ They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. ¹¹ By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

Here we see David praising God for his holy Word. Write your own prayer about how you feel about God's Word.

Psalms 62 – ¹ Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him. ² Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress. I will never be shaken... ⁵ Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him... ⁷ My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge.

What does it mean to find rest, strength, and hope in God alone? Write a prayer about these things.

What does it mean to find salvation in God alone? Write a prayer about how you feel about your salvation. If you do not know if you are saved, then ask the Lord to show you the way!

Psalm 65 –⁹You care for the land and water it; you **enrich it abundantly**. The **streams** of God are filled with water to provide the people with **grain**...

David also thanks God for what he has provided. How has God provided for you? Write a prayer of thanks for these things.

This Week:

1. Make sure that you have your Psalms written in a place where you use them during your times of prayer (i.e. on cards, in a special journal, etc.). Cards are helpful because you can take them with you on prayer walks!
2. Commit a time regularly to pray through the Psalms you wrote.