



THE PSALMS AS SONG

READING THE PSALMS

INTRODUCTION

We are formed by the songs we sing and the words we recite or read repeatedly. In scripture, the psalms are the songs of Jesus, the poems he read, and the songs he sang. Allow yourself to be formed by the psalms: grab a Bible, a pen, and a notebook or journal and spend time reading, understanding, and praying God's Word.

In this study, you will...

- READ to build familiarity.
- ask QUESTIONS to engage our minds
- see ORDER to understand the meaning
- look towards CHRIST because all Scripture points towards Christ
- APPLY, so we are not just hearers of the word but doers
- DAILY PRAY the Psalm so we may learn to listen to God's word

Each week choose a different Psalm to meditate on.

DAY 1

Read Repetitively

Repetitive reading helps us to get familiar with the Psalm. *If you've ever read a book more than once, watched a movie more than once, or listened to the same song multiple times, you know that you sometimes catch something the second time around that you missed the first time. The song, movie, or book, through repetition, can become a part of you. You quote the movie, sing the song, imagine scenes from the book even when you aren't purposely thinking about it. Let's read Scripture repetitively. And when we do, let's allow it to sink in, to become familiar to us, and "catch" more of it.*

READ. Read the Psalm at least three times. You can read it in different Bible versions, read it aloud, or listen to it.

WRITE. Write a few (or all) of the verses in your own words. This helps to slow down your reading

so you can really understand what is being said.

PRAY. Look back through the Psalm. What do you learn about God? What attributes of God are written about in this Psalm? Write those (or underline them in

blue) and spend some time praying PRAISING God for those attributes. Ask God to give you understanding as you continue to meditate on this Psalm for the rest of the week.

DAY 2

Ask Questions

Asking questions of Scripture helps us engage with God's word. *When you are in a conversation with a friend, asking questions is an excellent way to listen. Questions help us to understand. So let's read Scripture today and think of questions we have, words we don't understand, and what parts don't make sense to us.*

READ. Read the Psalm. While you are reading, note any words, phrases, or verses that you have

questions about. Note any questions you have about any of the metaphors (or comparisons)

used in the Psalm.

WRITE. Write down two or more of the questions you have. Lookup unknown words in a dictionary and write the definitions. Look to Study Bibles and Commentaries to answer

questions. Write those answers.

Spend some time in prayer **THANKING** God for what He has done for His people. Thank God for the specific things He has done in our church and in your life.

PRAY. Look back at the Psalm. Are there any verses in the Psalm that state what God has done or will do? Write those verses down (or underline them in orange.)

DAY 3

See Order

Seeing the order in a Psalm can help us to more fully understand its meaning. For example, when you read a challenging book, looking at the table of contents can help you get a better idea of the book's main point. When listening to a song, you can better understand the theme or the song when you hear the chorus repeated over and over again. As we read the psalms, we can remember that they are poetry and have a structure that helps us understand them.

READ. Read the Psalm. This time, note any repetitive words, phrases, or ideas. Reread it and mark where you think one section (or topic) begins and ends. These sections could be where the author changes the topic or approaches the topic differently.

WRITE. Write a listing of the sections you saw in the Psalm. List out any repeated words, phrases, or ideas. Review what you have written and write a sentence of what you think the main point of the Psalm is.

in this Psalm? Write those promises down (or underline them in green.) What promises of God do you need to remember today? Spend some time praying and reminding yourself of God's **PROMISES** to us. Pray and ask for God to act on your behalf and on behalf of others.

PRAY. Look back through the Psalm. What are God's promises

DAY 4

Apply

God calls us to be doers of the word, not just hearers (James 1:22-25). Part of meditating on Scripture is taking action. Whether that is action with our minds (believing new truths), action with our hearts (confessing, repenting, praising), or action with our bodies (speaking differently, deeds), through his Spirit, we do what God calls us to in His word.

READ. Read the Psalm. This time look for commands to obey or truths to believe.

Psalm that you need to believe? Look back to what you wrote as the overall meaning of this Psalm. What action or belief does that call you to?

Psalm. If there are truths you haven't been believing or commands you haven't been obeying, spend time **CONFESSING** your sin to God, remembering that you have a merciful God who forgives your sin.

WRITE. Write the commands and truths you noted. Based on these commands, is there anything you need to repent of? Any actions that you need to take? Look at the truths. Are there truths in this

PRAY. Look back at the Psalm or what you just wrote. Note the verses (or underline them in red) of the commands or truths in this

DAY 5

Look to Christ

All Scripture points towards Christ. As we read the Psalm, we should reflect on its connection to Christ. As Jesus shows us in Luke 24:44, all Scripture points to him. For us to better understand the meaning of the Psalm, we should gain an understanding of how the Psalm relates to Christ.

READ. Read the Psalm. As you read it, reflect on the

understanding that the Psalms were the prayer book of the

Israelites, implying that they were also the prayer book of

Jesus.

WRITE. Write down some of your reflections on this Psalm as a prayer of Jesus. Write your answers to the following questions:

- Are there descriptions of God in this Psalm that are descriptive of Christ?
- How does this Psalm describe the proper response of humans to specific circumstances? (Knowing that Jesus always responds perfectly – how is this a description of Christ)?
- Are there any concepts in this Psalm that relate to Christ as King (the one who

reigns)? As Prophet (the one who proclaims God’s word, calls us to repentance, and proclaims our forgiveness)? As Priest (the sacrifice for our sin)?

PRAY. Today, reread this PSALM as a prayer to God. If helpful, write the Psalm in your own words as a prayer.

Resources for Reading & Studying the Psalms

Devotional

- [The Songs of Jesus by Tim Keller](#)

How to Read the Psalms Videos (The Bible Project)

- [The Psalms: Overview](#)
- [How to Read the Bible: Poetry](#)
- [How to Read the Bible: Metaphor in Biblical Poetry](#)
- [How to Read the Bible: Psalms](#)

Commentaries

- [ESV Study Bible](#)
- [How to Read the Psalms by Tremper Longman](#)
- [The Messiah and the Psalms by Richard P. Belcher](#)