

PSALMS 1-41

Bible Reading Schedule

6 Weeks

WEEK 1

For the next 41 days in a row, we will read a Psalm each day, if you choose to walk along with me. Also, I will be reading from the New Living Translation as I reflect on these inspiring worship songs.

DAY 1 – Psalm 1

In many ways, Psalm 1 sets the stage for an overarching theme in David's writings. There is the way of righteousness in communion with God, and there's the way of selfishness that mostly ignores the Lord. One path leads to spiritual prosperity and the other to destruction. What is the key to prosperity? You might think it is meditation, but that would be a secondary principle. The main thought is about "delight." Do you remember Psalm 37:4? "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." What does it mean to delight in the Lord? The phrase "day and night" is a clue. The 24/7 emphasis comes into play, plus the fullness of activities throughout the day, walking, standing, sitting, and sleeping, all affected by delightful thoughts about God and His Word. The formula for success, so to speak, is fairly simplistic but riveted on God and his truth. The result is a fruitful tree, which is meant as a symbol of a prosperous Christian life. If you would like to also contemplate a New Testament parallel, I think Galatians 6:7-10 fits very well. How are you responding to this introductory Psalm that encompasses the overall tone of the whole Book?

DAY 2 – Psalm 2

You probably have not read this Psalm very often, especially compared to Psalm 1. But this Psalm is exceptional and is regarded as a "royal psalm" which points to the kingship of David and his dynasty. That dynasty is messianic with Jesus being the fulfillment. The Apostle Paul refers to this Psalm in Acts 13:33. Also, Revelation 19:15 quotes verse 9 as the One who will rule with an iron scepter. This is truly inspiring to me, with clear references to the Anointed One being a descendant of David. At first, we think this speaks about Israel's kings, but the wording definitely transcends David's or Solomon's reigns. We understand the significance of Christ with

more clarity than the original readers, of course. But what we know of Jesus fits well and also gives us hope of his future reign over the nations. What aspects of this Psalm make a connection to who Jesus is and will be? How does this messianic psalm speak to you?

DAY 3 – Psalm 3

How often have you felt fearful and uncertain about what might happen until you turned to the Lord and received his assurance and no longer felt afraid? I can recall hundreds of times, literally, when seeking God in prayer, that I experience his shield around me. (V3) The context of this Psalm is described by David fleeing his son Absalom. You can review the specifics in 2 Samuel 15 to 18 as Absalom takes over the throne. After reading Psalm 2 yesterday, we might expect a smooth ride for David and his kingship. But that is obviously not so. It is hard to imagine the shame and remorse that David would feel about his son's rebellion. Still, David found comfort and strength in the Lord. Verse 5 is worth remembering: "I lay down and slept, yet I woke up in safety, for the Lord was watching over me." The message in this Psalm reminds us to focus our attention on the Lord, not on the circumstances. Even in the most dire of situations, God gave David rest and confidence. It reminds me of a memory verse from Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; lean not on your own understanding; acknowledge him in all your ways and he will direct your path."

DAY 4 – Psalm 4

Our journey through this first book of Psalms (#1-41) is especially exciting to me because some of the Psalms I have read more of than others. Like this Psalm, the message is so helpful, and yet I don't remember reading it, even though I am sure I have previously. The comparison of how the ungodly treat the author versus how God treats him is a reminder to focus on the goodness of God and who he is. God responds to our cry, "I need you!" The Lord brings relief and mercy. The Lord hears when I call. So, why hold on to anger or dwell on your disappointments; rather, offer sacrifices of worship, service, obedience, and prayer as you turn to the Lord and trust him. This kind of posture toward God will lead to joy, peace, and the assurance of safety. These truths are all presented in this often-overlooked Psalm. How does this Psalm speak to you?

DAY 5 – Psalm 5

There is no blessing for a life directed by sin and selfishness. As we learned from Psalm 1, do not associate yourselves with the way of the wicked. The Lord is opposed to those who do evil and rebel against him. But the one who appreciates God's unfailing love and is led on the right path

will find refuge and rejoicing in the Lord. Enemies of God are destined for destruction, but the one who follows the Lord will have joy because of God's protection and blessing. The Psalmist is inviting the reader to find life in the Lord and not in the lure of this world. John wrote these words in 1 John 2:15, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them." Verses 16 & 17 are also worth reading in 1 John 2. The world is fading away, but the one who does the will of God lives forever. David placed his allegiance and trust in God, who promises protection now and prosperity forever. What aspect of a godly life in this Psalm challenges, blesses you?

DAY 6 – Psalm 6

Let me remind you that I am planning to read a Psalm a day for the next 36 days, with our focus on Psalms 1 to 41. I am obviously inviting you to join me. This Psalm is understood as a lament. David is downcast, feeling grief and anguish. He is openly expressing his remorse to the Lord, which reminds me that God invites us to share our honest emotions and thoughts with him. The situation is so troubling that David is concerned about dying. As is often the case with David, after expressing such raw emotions, he turns his attention toward God with a new confidence in verses 8-10. "The Lord has heard my plea; the Lord will answer my prayer." When Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, he felt sorrow and intense anguish. (Matthew 26:38) His prayer to the Father was very honest with the words, "may this cup be taken from me." But, like David, Jesus relinquished his sorrow and fear to the Father with the words, "Not as I will, but as you will." The transforming power of prayer is alive in Psalm 6 and in the Garden, and I believe could be at work in you as you commit yourself to honest, deep, sincere prayer to the Father. What do you learn about prayer from David's Psalm?

DAY 7 – Psalm 7

Here's another Psalm that I don't remember reading recently, so that means I don't ever remember reading it even though I have. David speaks of his innocence, asking for justice, "For you look deep within the mind and heart..." (V9). With his openness to scrutiny, David moves to speak out to all who are godly. If there is sin in one's life, repent. "If a person does not repent..." the Lord will settle the issue. All in all, David ends this Psalm with a similar ring of thanksgiving and praise. David begins with a pledge of innocence and appeals to God's justice. God is King who saves those whose hearts are true and right. He is an honest judge and can be nothing less. As always, David is concerned about the evidence of evil all around him and asks God to keep him safe and lead him in the righteous way. If you were to focus on one verse in this Psalm, what would it be and how might God use it in your life?

WEEK 2

The Psalms stimulate my prayers. I think praying through the Psalms is a very meaningful practice. I definitely think you could begin this week by praying Psalm 8...

DAY 8 – Psalm 8

It isn't unusual for a Psalm to begin and end with the same words. That's true in this Psalm, of course. I especially like the wording, "How majestic is your name in all the earth." David is comparing us to the majesty of creation and the enormity of all God has made. To think that God is mindful of us is one thing, but for the Lord to give us such a significant role in his creation sends us back to the original design God had in mind with Adam and Eve. The creation story in Genesis 1 & 2 is indeed special. The Psalmist points to the beginning, which reveals his love for mankind and the natural response of praise from those he created. Praying this Psalm causes me to appreciate God the creator and also the marvel of his divine purpose for those (me) who acknowledge him. There are many touch points for us in this Psalm, which one(s) are you identifying with and why?

DAY 9 – Psalm 9

Recently, the prayer group I attend read through this Psalm. One result was to pray for the arrogant rulers of our world; there are many of them. The last two verses in this Psalm say, "Arise. O Lord! Do not let mere mortals defy you! Judge the nations (and their arrogant rulers)! Make them tremble in fear, O Lord. Let the nations know they are merely human." The greatness of God and his reign are emphasized in this Psalm, which is a good reminder that God is Sovereign and those who deny him will come under judgment. Verse 7 seems like the overarching theme of this Psalm: "But the Lord reigns forever, executing judgment from his throne." God is harsh with the arrogant, but on the other hand, he is a shelter for the oppressed and cares for the needy, which is mentioned 3 or 4 times in this Psalm. This Psalm definitely tells us a lot about our God. What are you noticing? How might you incorporate some of this Psalm in a prayer of appreciation and intercession today?

DAY 10 – Psalm 10

This Psalm confronts the wicked with their selfish and destructive ways. The Lord knows and will not let injustice go unpunished. But tucked away in this heavy Psalm, the author assures us of God's concern for the poor and needy. The ending of a Psalm usually speaks to the people seeking God. Verse 17 gets at the underlying theme of God's care for the helpless: "Lord, you

know the hopes of the helpless. Surely you will hear their cries and comfort them.” Along with the confidence that this Psalm brings to the oppressed, it also speaks candidly about God’s outcome for the wicked. They will be held responsible for their deeds, and he will punish evildoers. So often, the ungodly believe that they will get away with their abuse, greed, and lies. But we can know that God will make all things right and prevail with justice, which means that the Lord will avenge the avenger. Even though this is a heavy Psalm to me, it does also emphasize to the reader that God understands and will care for the needs of the needy.

DAY 11 – Psalm 11

This short Psalm reads like the evening news with chaos and violence. “The foundations of law and order have collapsed. What can the righteous do?” (V3) Remember, “the Lord still rules the heavens...” (V4) Be assured that our God is a God of justice and his ways will prevail. There is a phrase in verse 5 that says God hates those who love violence. I want to make sense of that statement in light of the fact that I know God loves all people that he created. It reminds me of the statement in God’s Word that says, “For I hate divorce!” in Malachi 2:16. God hates violence in verse 5 of our reading. We understand that God hates the sinful things we do and yet still loves people. The result of violence is very harmful to those who receive it. David is very honest about the depravity of our world in this Psalm but encourages us to love justice and open our eyes to the presence of God in a dark world. How does this Psalm speak to our modern lives? How does it speak to you?

DAY 12 – Psalm 12

This Psalm seems similar to yesterday's with the prevalence of evil that concerns David in both Psalms. The details of evil focus on the words that the ungodly use with flattering lips, boastful tongues, and a lying generation. What we say is important and reminds me of what James (NT) said in chapter 3 about the use of our words. The Lord’s promise in verse 5 is the highlight for me from this chapter: “I have seen violence done to the helpless, and I have heard the groans of the poor. Now I will rise up to rescue them, as they have longed for me to do.” Verse 6 tells us that we can rely on God’s promises. The idea that the Lord’s words are pure is to contrast his purity with the corruption of evildoers. We can be sure of the Lord’s concern for the oppressed even when the wicked seemingly go unpunished. God knows and will carry the godly with protection and preservation. David witnessed the increase in sin and deceit in his day, but always pointed back to the assurance that God’s ways would prevail.

DAY 13 – Psalm 13

This Psalm models for me honesty in prayer with God. I think it is so illuminating that David shares his heavy heart with God, even as it is mixed with some anger. But he is not alone in honest prayers. Jesus clearly expresses anguish and sorrow in the Garden and deep turmoil on the cross as he feels abandoned by God. Of course, we concentrate on David's reversal in verses 5 & 6 as he prays a prayer of trust to the Lord. But it took 4 verses of honest and intense prayer, as David vented to the Lord, before softening his heart toward God. This Psalm is my reminder that God is big enough to hear my travail. In fact, I think he invites it because he already knows what is going on in my heart. Confession means to "agree," which makes confessional prayers the invitation to pray what God already knows but loves to hear it, and then also works in our hearts through it. Is there anything that continues to surface in your heart and mind that you would do well to share with God in prayer? Also, I want you to recognize that David prays in such a way as to maintain his respect for God without being defiant before God. Crass prayers and unwholesome language are not a redemptive way to pray through a problem or frustration. Does that make sense? What honest prayer is God waiting for you to pray?

DAY 14 – Psalm 14

I have to admit that I am not as familiar with the Psalms that we read this week, except for 8 & 13. The other Psalms, like this one, do not feel like a prayer to me. I know David set them to music, and they were a part of the worship book of the Jews. David really struggled with enemies. I guess that goes with the territory of being a king and a warrior. The first verse suggests that the fool whispers in his/her heart, "There is no God." The height of foolishness is to ignore and then reject the truth that God is real and that he is great. Without God's influence in a person's life, there's no telling what corruption will take hold in a human being. Also, the first three verses coincide with Romans 3:10-12, which confronts mankind with the reality that no one is righteous apart from God. Romans 3:18 reads, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." I think that statement summarizes David's perspective. I also am drawn to the sentence, "When the Lord restores his people..." (V7). It is not "if" but "when" God chooses to move on behalf of his people. The Lord is mindful of what we are facing and will help us in our time of need!

WEEK 3

This week is about David and his insights for worship. We read about David's huge concern for his enemies last week, but this week the Psalms focus on deeper issues of worship and connection to the Lord. Psalm 16, 18, 19, and 21 are some of my favorite inspirational psalms in the whole book. Psalm 18:1-2 is one of my most repeated words in prayer from David, "I love you, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer..."

DAY 15 – Psalm 15

What should we do with such a short Psalm? This Psalm obviously contrasts the lifestyle of the godly with the actions of fools (Ps 14). David's questions in this psalm invite us to examine ourselves. The prayer of examination is actually a very important aspect of prayer. This is when we honestly approach God, who knows everything. Nothing is hidden from him. Confession means agreement, and when we are honest with God, we are also realizing he already knows all our inner thoughts and selfish motives. This short prayer is an invitation to look inside and share a prayer of confession. Where are you on shaky ground? What might be simmering under the surface that could pull you down? Richard Foster's book on Prayer (title) has a complete chapter on the Prayer of Examen. The basic idea is inviting the Lord to join you in a search for what I might tend to hide. "In the examen of conscience (our soul) we are inviting the Lord to search our hearts to the depth. Far from being dreadful, this is a scrutiny of love." (pg. 29) Today could be an ideal moment to pursue a prayer of examen.

DAY 16 – Psalm 16

How many times have I read this Psalm? Too many times to count, really! There are so many nuggets of truth woven into these words from David that I easily come back to this Psalm as it helps me pray with confidence and strengthens my commitment to the Lord. Which phrase are you appreciating? Which verses stand out to you? Verse 2 is such a positive prayer of praise to God, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing." I have also often prayed verse 5, "Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure." With that prayer, I am saying that I am content with God's provision in my life. It is actually very abundant, and I praise him for it because it comes from his hand. Peter's sermon on Pentecost in Acts 2 quotes this Psalm, "For you will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your 'holy one' to rot in the grave." (V10) Peter says that this verse from David was about the Messiah who is Jesus, the risen One. But verse 11 is my favorite with the promise of God's presence even now, before living in heaven, which leads to joy, being filled with joy. Those words are so reassuring and also point to the eternal pleasures God has planned for his children. Can you think of a Psalm that

has more promises to enjoy and more truth to pray? Take some time to let it in! What else do you notice that might be a word from God to you?

DAY 17 – Psalm 17

I appreciate the heartfelt prayers of David. He is not saying he is sinless, but his intentions are right. He invites the Lord to probe, maybe because he is waiting on God's answer and wants to know if anything in his life is getting in the way. Could sin or selfishness get in the way? If so, scrutinize me again so that my steps stay on God's path. I resonate with David's prayer in verses 1-8 but his intensity regarding his enemies does not match my experience. I have had people who disliked me or ignored me, but a true enemy has not confronted me (except maybe in sports, which is a very shallow idea). The phrase in verse 8 stirs up my prayers for protection and closeness to God, "Hide me in the shadow of your wings." David holds to the sincerity of his faith in God and is sure that the Lord will reveal himself, "I will see you face to face and be satisfied." (V15) Do you have the same confidence that David did, who said, "I am praying to you because I know you will answer, O God." (V6) The prayer of faith from those sincere in heart will be heard by God and he will show us unfailing love.

DAY 18 – Psalm 18

We have arrived at the longest Psalm so far in our journey through the first Book of Psalms (1-41). In fact, Psalm 18 has 50 verses, which makes it the longest in this section. I love the first part, which is just three verses (VV1-3). These words have colored my prayers many times. Recently, I went through verses 28-36 with my prayer group. It fashioned our prayers to God, who has everything we need. But the theme in Psalm 18 could be summarized as salvation. Notice verses 17, 19, 20, 43, & 48. David expresses his lament to God and humbly asks God to save him. The Lord rescues David in his time of need. The rescue of God is a theme in many different Psalms, too many to mention in this short summary. But Psalms could be described as "God graciously rescues his needy servants and answers their prayers." The God of salvation has shown his heart of compassion to save time and again in the Psalms, leading up to the revelation of his Son, Jesus the Messiah. Most would define the life and mission of Jesus with the words of Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." What is your overall impression of Psalm 18, and which verse or two especially caught your eye?

DAY 19 – Psalm 19

How's that for an inspiring and insightful Psalm? This is definitely one of my favorites. In fact, theology has used terms like general revelation and special revelation. The creation reveals the

Lord in a more general way, and the Word of God reveals the Lord in much more specific ways. Both of these tell us so much about God that we can take steps to know him personally. A close connection with God is unique to our faith, as Christians, because the culmination of God's revelation is seen in his Son, and through him we have access to the Living God. The Apostle Paul said that God's creation was so compelling that ignoring his handiwork made all people accountable to God. "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse." (Romans 1:20) I would suggest that creation is the mirror of God, causing people to look into their own souls and investigate who this creator God is. This leads to His Word and His Son. The conclusion of Psalm 19 begs us to examine ourselves so that we realize our need before God and repent. If I had to pick one Psalm that people must read, it would not be Psalm 23, but it would be this one. How might God be speaking to you through this Psalm?

DAY 20 – Psalm 20

This is an interesting Psalm because it isn't necessarily a prayer but more of a benediction, it seems to me. Every verse from 1 to 5 begins with "May." David wants the people to experience God's blessing and intervention. Mostly, these are hopeful words from David about what God can do: "May he grant your heart's desires and make all your plans succeed." (V4) David is confident because he has seen the Lord do these kinds of things in his own life. "Now I know that the Lord rescues his anointed king..." (V6). I am drawn to the power of blessing others. As a father, more than anything, I wanted to bless my children. I especially appreciate the first five verses because they give me an example of how to bless those closest to me and also how to bless the church. David mentions answered prayer, safety and strength from God, the hope to succeed, filled with joy, and experience God's victory. These gifts from God are truly a blessing to be received from his hand. This is another Psalm that I have only read infrequently, but I appreciate the importance of blessing others. How might you bless those who are closest to you and those you see today?

DAY 21 – Psalm 21

To me, this is a prayer of gratitude as David is counting his blessings. David has every reason to trust in the Lord's unfailing love (V7). It is because of the Lord's goodness and strong right hand that David has been victorious. He obviously gives all credit to the Lord. I think this Psalm is a great example of the kind of prayers that please the Lord. When only 1 in 10 of the lepers who were healed in Luke 17 returns to thank Jesus, you get the idea that thankfulness is important to our Savior. Well, David exemplifies a posture of appreciation for what the Lord has done for

him. Because of what God has done previously, David also expresses assurance of God's continued care and protection over his life in verses 8 to 12. Because of David's testimony of God's goodness, he invites everyone to rise up and praise the Lord in the final verse of the Psalm. What might you pray in gratitude to the Lord? Maybe David's ideas will stir up your prayer of appreciation.

WEEK 4

I can't think of a more exciting week in Psalms than this coming week. Truly, these are landmark worship songs written by David. I am sure you will resonate with his words and how he addresses the Lord. Obviously, the most well-known Psalm is in this group. But, for me, Psalm 27 is near the top of inspiration and meaning. I hope you look forward to this week as much as I do, and let me know if you agree that these are some of the best and most meaningful Psalms that David created.

DAY 22 – Psalm 22

This Psalm is sometimes referred to as the Psalm of Suffering. The psalmist suffers unjustly, but at no point does he seek revenge; he asks God to rescue him, which he is confident the Lord will do. We know that Jesus spoke the words of verse 1 from the cross in Matthew 27:46. Plus, several other verses in the Psalm have been connected to the suffering of Jesus during his final hours (Verses 6-8, 14-18). Specifically, verse 16 says that “they pierce my hands and feet,” which is very interesting since Jesus was crucified, but crucifixion wasn't even a “thing” when David wrote these words. I have always thought this Psalm was so powerful, but only recently did I think about the last section of this Psalm. The praise and promises of these last few verses seem connected to what the suffering servant went through in the first half of the Psalm. Because Jesus suffered and died (plus rose again), all the nations will bow down and worship as it says in Philippians 2:9-11. “The whole earth will acknowledge the Lord and return to him. All the families of the nations will bow down before him.” (V27) I find this Psalm so inspiring as a complete revelation of God's plan through his Messiah. How do you respond to these prophetic words of David?

DAY 23 – Psalm 23

This is obviously the most well-known Psalm in the book. In some ways, that is incredible because it is six short verses and takes 40 seconds to read through. On the other hand, many pastors, like Tyler, have taken 6 to 8 Sundays to preach a series on the Psalm. Why do you think it is such a cherished Psalm? It seems to me that many make verse 4 the most significant message, with God walking beside us as we pass through dark valleys. Everyone can relate to the struggles and challenges of life. But for me, I am drawn to verse 5 with the Lord blessing me in spite of the opposition I face in life. I think verses 4 & 5 go together. My tendency is to think that all my problems must go away for me to feel good, but he blesses me even though the world is a harsh place. In fact, my greatest witness might be appreciating the goodness of God even though I go through hard things, like facing enemies. On my journey through life, I can

have peace and assurance that the Lord is watching over me and leading me so that one day I will enter his forever house as his child. As I read through this Psalm again, it is actually easy to see why this Psalm is so special to so many.

DAY 24 – Psalm 24

This short Psalm means a lot to me. I remember reading the first two verses of this Psalm as a younger believer and realizing that everything belongs to God. My money, my possessions, my talents, my family, and my very life. This might have been well understood by most, but the way this impacted me nudged me toward humility, generosity, and the realization that my life was not my own. The second theme has to do with God's presence. Was there anything in my life that was keeping me from experiencing God's presence? Well, first of all, secret sins were no secret to God. That would definitely get in the way. It reminds me of the "Beatitudes" found in Matthew 5, where we read that "the pure in heart will see God." Was my heart pure before the Lord? These questions that David raises in verse 3 are meant for me to examine myself. Those who are pure in heart commit themselves fully to the Lord, as evidenced by the strength of character, transparency, and selflessness. The last four verses are a response of longing and worship to approach the King of glory as he steps into his rightful place of honor in the church and in my life.

DAY 25 – Psalm 25

There are a number of touch points for me in this Psalm. How about you? What are your first impressions? Verses 4 & 5 have often been my prayer for guidance and to know God's ways. David shares the key to following the Lord at the end of verse 5, "All day long I put my hope in you (Lord)." Hope is a strong word that means to trust the Lord's will and have courage even in the face of disappointments. This kind of response to God places me in the right frame of mind to hear God's voice and to be sensitive to his guidance. Jesus promised this kind of guidance through the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-15). In verses 9 & 10, David again gives us assurance that the Lord will guide us if we remain humble, recognizing our need for God's help: "He leads the humble in doing right and teaching them his way." I think this Psalm is filled with wisdom. What wise message do you receive from this Psalm? The key to spiritual success for David is closeness with the Lord. Obviously, that is still true today. How would you assess your closeness to God?

DAY 26 – Psalm 26

First of all, I don't think David is suggesting he is sinless, which would be a sin in and of itself. Rather, he is sincere, and others so often live with pretense and even hypocrisy. Plus, he knows

that he needs the mercy of God (V11) to have any chance of being washed clean (V6). Mercy means to receive God's love and forgiveness even though we don't deserve it. Verse 3 is especially important for us, "For I am always aware of your unfailing love..." The recognition of God's love continuously will have a sustaining effect on our lives. So often the Bible directs us to focus on God's love, as John wrote in 1 John 4:7-21, "We love because he first loved us." This certainty of being loved made a huge difference in David's life. We know he was far from perfect, and yet his heart remained steadfast in the Lord. Because of his trust in God's unfailing love, he says in verse 12 to conclude this Psalm, "Now I stand on solid ground, and I will publicly praise the Lord." How sure are you of the Lord's unfailing love?

DAY 27 – Psalm 27

How's that for an amazingly uplifting Psalm?! I often say this Psalm is one of my favorites, which is absolutely true, especially with David's words as he begins and concludes. Verses 1 and 13-14 are very special and are recited in my prayers quite often. But there are also other verses that really get my attention, like verses 4, 8, & 11!!! I guess the emphasis on longing for the Lord's presence resonates with me. I frequently feel that way. David wants the Lord's instruction, timing, and presence in his life. Obviously, the idea of waiting on the Lord is very strong as David concludes with this theme. I once heard this statement, "Patience is a virtue, waiting is a drag." But the definition of faith supports the need for waiting patiently. In the moment, things can be difficult, but God promises a secure future. "I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." (V13, NIV) These words fortify my faith as I believe them with certainty. I could camp on this Psalm, day after day, and not get bored. How has God spoken to you through it?

DAY 28 – Psalm 28

This Psalm is another Psalm of David that I don't remember reading, even though I have. There's nothing that stands out to me in particular. I like David's example of praying to the Lord first, whenever he is in need. I am sure this pleased the Lord. How do you think the Lord felt about David praying these words? "For if you are silent, I might as well give up and die." Those words seem a bit depressing, but they also acknowledge that David did not want to proceed without the Lord's help and presence. From verse 6 to the close, David expresses words of faith. Verse 7 is my favorite, and I felt led to repeat those words to the Lord even as I am reading through this Psalm. NLT – "The Lord is my strength and shield. I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving." Gratitude is so important as I worship God. What verse or phrase are you thinking about? I hope this Psalm inspires you to pray. It did that for me.

WEEK 5

We are reading David again this week, which is always inspiring. These psalms tend to be a bit longer, with such meaningful statements hidden in almost every psalm. There's no doubt you will benefit from and be drawn to the Lord this week as David continues to teach us how to worship and how to pray.

DAY 29 – Psalm 29

There's no doubt that this psalm elevates the Lord and his greatness. My favorite line is "Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness." Holiness separates God's character from man's character. The only holiness we have is the holiness that God gives through our relationship with him in Jesus. Holiness means to be set apart, which points to the change that God makes in us, and we do nothing to accomplish this except to live into a holy life. That phrase makes God special, and that's why I worship him. The remaining verses highlight him as the creator and his continuous activity in our world through the power of his presence in thunder, the animal kingdom, the mighty mountains, and the beauty all around us. But the last verse means the most to me because he is the author of strength and peace. Obviously, he is big enough and caring enough to help us, and what better way than to strengthen us and bless us with peace. I am sure you feel the same. This is how God works for those who worship him.

DAY 30 – Psalm 30

David always seems so ready to thank the Lord for answered prayer. The first three verses are a response to the goodness of God and his deliverance for David. Then, David acknowledges that some days are difficult and that he may go to bed discouraged; however, the Lord renews his hope as he sleeps through the night (V5). There's no doubt that David faced death more than once, but the Lord rescued him. God's involvement in David's life would bring joy instead of mourning and praise instead of silence. God's favor toward David helped him overcome disappointment and even despair, so David closes with this pledge, "I will give thanks to you (God) forever." (V12) The message I receive from this Psalm is the invitation to turn to God in prayer as my first response instead of counting on myself or other people to make me feel good. I would suggest that this Psalm is a summary of how David lived his life. What does this Psalm teach you?

DAY 31 – Psalm 31

I find David's example of worship and prayer to be a constant reflection of how deep prayer can become in my life. There are several examples of adoration to God like, "You are my rock and my fortress." (V3) "How great is the goodness you have stored up for those who fear you." (V19) But David is also very honest with confession, "Sin has drained my strength; I am wasting away from within." (V10) Thanksgiving is also included in his prayer, "I will be glad and rejoice in your unfailing love, for you have seen my troubles, and you care about the anguish of my soul." (V7) However, his prayer has a fullness to it with supplication which means asking God for help, "My future is in your hands. Rescue me from those who hunt me down relentlessly." (V15) A pattern of prayer that has long been suggested points to the acronym ACTS. (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication) So often, David's prayers reflect the many possibilities to be included in our prayers. It is not only a pleasure to read Psalms, but it is also instructive to our prayer life.

DAY 32 – Psalm 32

This is a "go to" psalm highlighting the importance of confession and the gift of forgiveness. I think David's honesty about the weight of sin that remains secret or hidden is an especially significant truth to admit. "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away... your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer." (Verses 3 & 4, NIV) The tendency to try to hide goes way back to the Garden of Eden, when Adam & Eve tried to hide from God after they had sinned. Because of the gracious nature of God, he is quick to forgive anyone who is sincerely honest about their sins. I think the contrast between hiding from God and him becoming our hiding place (V7) is fascinating. Plus, the Lord wants to guide us on the right path so we will be free not to sin. (V8) Genuine repentance from sin leads to spiritual change and transformation in our lives. Godly repentance is pleasing to the Lord because he knows how prone we are to stumble, but when we acknowledge our sin, like David did (V5), and turn to him, he will lead us "along the best pathway for your life." (V8) Isn't this a rich Psalm for us to practice day to day!? How might God be speaking to you through this insightful prayer and worship song of David?

DAY 33 – Psalm 33

I appreciate this Psalm as it elevates the greatness of God. He is worthy of our praise, and his Word is always true. He created all things, and his plans stand firm. The image of God on his throne (V14) also fits the theme of this Psalm. Human strength and ingenuity pale in comparison to the God who sees all and knows all. Our response can match the words of verses 20-22: "We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. Let your unfailing love surround us, Lord, for our hope is in you

alone." I am inspired by this prayer, and I share with the Lord right now in a personal way. Our trust, commitment, joy, and hope are found in the Lord. I think there are many connect points in this Psalm, like "For the word of the Lord holds true, and we can trust everything he does." (V4) I meditate on this verse and sense God's anchor of assurance in my life.

DAY 34 – Psalm 34

One of the interesting aspects of this Psalm is the caption that suggests David wrote this when he pretended to be insane. Besides this introductory reference, there is nothing in the Psalm that specifically refers to this event recorded in 1 Samuel 21:10-15. But verse 6 says, "In my desperation I prayed, and the Lord listened; he saved me and defends all who fear him." This statement fits with the predicament that David faced with King Achish. The personal nature of David's words in verses 1-7 gets my attention. I am drawn to how David relates to the Lord. "I will boast **only** in the Lord; let all who are helpless take heart." (V2) Why? With God on our side, we can be assured of his protection and presence. In some ways, verses 8-14 sound a lot like Proverbs. These are considered words of wisdom. That too is true of David; he was very wise. What aspect of wisdom in these verses are you noticing? Plus, the Lord has a compassionate heart for those in need. The one who recognizes their need before God will be rescued. In the Gospel of John, the writer quotes verse 20 in John 19:36, noting that the soldiers did not break the legs of Jesus on the cross to prove he was dead. As always, the reading of David's psalms assists me in praying to the Lord and helps me to know what and how to pray. What does David teach us about prayer in this Psalm?

DAY 35 – Psalm 35

These words are the words of a warrior. We all know that David was a warrior, so much so that God would not let him build the Temple. In **1 Chronicles 22:8**, God tells David, "You have shed much blood and have fought many wars. You are not to build a house for my Name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in my sight." This Psalm has David pleading to God for his help against his enemies. The battles have worn David out, and he is tired, as verse 17 says, "How long, O Lord, will you look on and do nothing? Rescue me from their fierce attacks. Protect my life from these lions." He is asking for justice since the wicked have no regard for the Lord. This is a longer Psalm, but the theme is consistent from start to finish. If you will help me, "Then I will proclaim your justice, and I will praise you all day long." (V28). We can relate to needing God's help in times of trouble, but David was on the battlefield time and again, which is something we know little of. What might be God's message to you from this Psalm?

WEEK 6

I didn't realize that the first book of Psalms comes from David's writings. It reminds me of how many enemies David had as a warrior and King, but also it reveals his incredible heart for God and how skilled he was at writing songs of worship and prayer. This week, Psalm 37 & 40 stand out as some of my favorites. I find it so uplifting to begin my day by reading a Psalm and praying it back to the Lord.

DAY 36 – Psalm 36

As I read verses 5 & 6, I could hear the worship melody of "Third Day's" song with those words. As David often does, he contrasts the folly and evil of a world without faith in the Lord with knowing God and living for him. This theme of life with or without God was introduced in the very first psalm we read (#1). David begins the Book of Psalms with the way of a scoffer compared to someone who delights in the law of the Lord. David elevates the Lord with words like this, "For you are a fountain of life, the light by which we see." (V9) I find the words of verses 5 to 10 especially rich, and I easily incorporate them into my prayers this morning. How are you responding to this Psalm? Which worship phrases are special to you?

DAY 37 – Psalm 37

The first seven verses of this Psalm are memorable for me and serve as a helpful outline of trust, delight, and commitment in the Lord. The rest of the Psalm reminds me of Proverbs. In fact, this Psalm is known as a wisdom psalm. The alternating contrast between the godly and the wicked emphasizes the futility of folly, like we often read from Solomon in Proverbs. I am sure there is more than one verse from 8 through 40 that gets your attention. Pick one and think about what it tells you about God, about life, and about yourself. But for me, I can't take my eyes off of verses 3 to 7. Each bullet has significance in my life. I want to grow in trust and live consistently in step with God. (V3) Delighting in the Lord is so crucial to my prayers being answered. It means I want what God wants, and this leads to praying in line with God's will. (V4) Committing my way to the Lord is synonymous with submitting to him, which means to put him first in everything. (V5) And verse 7, NLT speaks to my current journey as a follower of Christ the most, "Be still in the presence of the Lord, and wait patiently for him to act!" These are soul-shaping verses for me. How might God be speaking to you through them?

DAY 38 – Psalm 38

This Psalm reminds me of Psalm 32 when David has remorse over his sins and rejoices because of God's forgiveness. There is depth to David's prayers in this Psalm. He prays honestly to the Lord and realizes that his anguish is associated with his sin. I appreciate so many statements from David, like, "I am exhausted and completely crushed. My groans come from an anguished heart." (V8) "You know what I long for, Lord." (V9). David desires a restored relationship with God. "For I am waiting for you, O Lord. You must answer me..." (V15) The Psalm reveals David's honest process of coming to grips with the spiritual burden he is carrying. The culmination of his prayer comes in verse 18, "But I confess my sins, I am deeply sorry for what I have done." Like us, David wonders if the guilt of his sin would lead the Lord to turn his back on David. "Do not abandon me, O Lord." (V21) I find this Psalm deep and meaningful as it gives me insights for prayer and pursuing the Lord in spite of guilt. David's life was rather intense, and his passion for the Lord rose above his pain and disappointment. I can see evidence of David's heart for God in this Psalm, which was previously not a familiar psalm in my memory. What do these words teach you about honest prayer?

DAY 39 – Psalm 39

This is an amazing psalm, in my opinion. His concerns are deep and heartfelt. He is giving us insights into his personal discouragement. Verses 1-3 tell of his difficulty with holding in his anguish. His inner thoughts are consumed with the brevity of life in verses 4-6. This emphasis is surprising to me. Of course, life is short. But David's frustration over that fact sounds a lot like Solomon in Ecclesiastes, doesn't it?! The Lord is the hope and reason for his life, and he seems to realize that God is disciplining him for his sin and wrong thinking. (Verses 9-11) Also, some of his words remind me of Job and his confusion. I can't tell you how intriguing this Psalm is to me and how deep David's thoughts and emotions are as he writes this prayer. I have not noticed this kind of posture from David to this degree. I thought of him as a person accepting of God's purpose and plan with more faith and openness that God always knows best. But the thing I always appreciate about David is his honesty, and I think God takes pleasure in that because the Lord already knows what David is thinking and feeling. The Lord delights in this kind of confession. What confession might you want to make to the Lord? He already knows!

DAY 40 – Psalm 40

I especially appreciate verses 1 to 5, beginning with waiting on the Lord and testifying of God's answer to the Psalmist's prayer. Standing on a solid rock is advantageous since I am prone to slipping. David announces God's greatness, as well as assuring the reader that God blesses the one who trusts in the Lord. This beginning section is full of meaning. I also notice David's commitment to the Lord, which is worth noting and following his example: "I desire to do your

will, my God; your law is within my heart.” (V8) Plus, the goodness of God must be shared... “I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help.” (V10) I think of an overflowing cup that spills out for people to see. This is evident in the words of David in this verse. The final verse (V17) highlights David’s humility with a posture of complete dependence. “Apart from Me you can do nothing,” as Jesus said in John 15:5. There are many stop points in this Psalm. Which ones are you noticing? Why is this particular sentence or verse you have chosen compelling to you?

DAY 41 – Psalm 41

Each of these unfamiliar psalms gives us insight into the depth of David. He felt things strongly. His confession in verses 1-4 leads to a repeated theme about his enemies. Then, a conclusion of faith and assurance toward the Lord, which is often the pattern of David’s songs. But something unique pops up in verse 9 when David acknowledges the betrayal of someone close to him. A close friend “has turned against me.” Enemy warriors are one thing, but a friend breaking fellowship and trust is devastating. However, David holds to the mercy of God (V10) and expresses his confidence in God’s close presence in his life. God being close is always enough. What stood out to you in this more obscure Psalm?