

PSALMS 42-72 Bible Reading Schedule

31 Days

Day 1 – Psalm 42

In spite of the turmoil in the author's heart, he still longs for the Lord as a deer pants for water. This worship leader, from the sons of Korah, is remembering closeness with the Lord in the house of God. Can you remember a recent time when you especially felt close to God? When troubles surround us, remember God's previous help and the assurance of his presence in your life which can carry you through the toughest of times. What do you want to say to the Lord that is honest and heartfelt?

Day 2 – Psalm 43

This is obviously a very short Psalm which allows us to slow down and meditate on one verse or one phrase. My phrase is "I will put my hope in God." What does hope mean to me? Hope is based on confidence in God's reliability and his promises. Why will this help me through troubled times? What does it mean to go to the altar of God (V4)?

Day 3 – Psalm 44

As short as yesterday's reading was, this Psalm stretches out for 26 verses. The sequence of this Psalm can be an example of praying with past victories by the hand of God (praise); to the focus on God himself (adoration); to the present situation with desperate prayers for help (ask); to the confession of sin (repentance); with final cries of lament needing the Lord to intervene! I think you will notice each of these themes in this chapter. Which theme are you most drawn to? Why?

Day 4 – Psalm 45

A God-blessed wedding and marriage are the backdrop for this Psalm. Where do you notice this emphasis? You will also notice the significance of the king and the ultimate focus on God himself. Even back then, marriage was the foundation of society so the love of marriage and the health of family would be evidence of God's care and favor. Why was marriage then and is now so important to society and to the people of God?

Day 5 – Psalm 46

We have reached a Psalm that has been recited as much as any. As the war began in Ukraine, this was a Psalm of hope and comfort to me and to others. "He makes wars cease..." (V9) Verse 1 has a similar sense to it with God being our refuge and strength during turbulent times. But verse 10 stands out as one worth memorizing, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations..." How might you experience God's stillness and peace more deeply?

Day 6 – Psalm 47

A major theme in this Psalm places God over all the world. I think verses 8 & 9 summarize the message best, “God reigns above the nations, sitting on his holy throne. The rulers of the world have gathered together (most likely speaking about the culmination of the age) with the people of the God of Abraham, for all the kings of the earth belong to God. He is highly honored everywhere (again pointing to God’s ultimate authority when he will reign forever). Anytime I see the emphasis on the “nations,” I am reminded that our God cares about the whole globe and all the people. I want to have a heart like his. Why does God love the whole world (John 3:16)?

Day 7 – Psalm 48

The first three verses of this Psalm are the familiar words of a worship song that I sang when I was first saved. I can sing the chorus even now. I loved singing that song because it announced God’s greatness and assured those who run to him that they will be safe in his presence. I also appreciate the words of verses 9 to 11 which affirm God’s righteousness, justice, and faithfulness, and inspire joy and confidence. It is a Psalm of assurance for me that reminds me of God’s stability and his ultimate control. What phrase about God stands out to you?

Day 8 – Psalm 49

I like to mark up my Bible. But there is not one mark in my Bible from this chapter. I don’t ever remember reading it even though I am sure I have. But one thing I noticed is how similar it was to the Book of Proverbs. For example, the last verse could have been in Proverbs, “People who have wealth but lack understanding are like the beasts that perish.” (V20) Do you see what I mean? The whole Psalm reminds us about the folly of riches and the reality of a temporary life based on worldly and selfish desires. With this as one’s focus, the promise is like dust in the wind. What statement would you say spoke wisdom to you? Why?

Day 9 – Psalm 50

Asaph was known to be one of David’s chief musicians. I think this Psalm addresses a common issue for believers. We take what is sacred for granted. The superficially religious people bring their sacrifices but they are only going through the motions. God knows what is real and what is pretend. We only honor God when our praises are genuine and our thankfulness is sincere. There are ideas and words in this Psalm that confront hypocrisy. The Bible uses this statement quite often, “You honor me with your lips but your hearts are far from me.” How do you respond to another Psalm that most of us are not very familiar with?

Day 10 – Psalm 51

Quite frankly, I think we would do well to take two days on this Psalm. The message is so relevant and life-changing. We finally read a Psalm by David. Psalms 42 through 51 are written by other authors but this one speaks volumes as we also know the exact event David is addressing. If you need to review,

please read 2 Samuel 12:1-14. Do you remember Nathan the prophet saying, “You are that man!” (2 SAM 12:7) These 19 verses have shaped dozens of my sermons over the years. I recognize the power of this message pertaining to genuine restoration. Out of a broken spirit, David confesses and accepts responsibility for his sin. But the part I am drawn to is found in verses 13 to 17 as he commits himself to serve God from a humble place with wisdom knowing how much is at stake when we sin willfully. How are you responding to this Psalm?

Day 11 – Psalm 52

I think of how often I let people get under my skin. David is telling us that sinful, selfish people are prone to do devilish things. Speaking about the way worldly people live in verse 3, he writes, “You love evil more than good and lies more than truth.” They will be brought to justice but don’t let yourself get entangled by their deception. Rather, let the message of verses 8 & 9 sink in. David says, “ I am like a thriving tree... I will trust, praise, and again trust the Lord.” The godly will find their security in the Lord. How might God be speaking to you through this Psalm?

Day 12 – Psalm 53

I notice the words of Romans 3 in this chapter. You can see it for yourself in Romans 3:10-18. This Psalm is meant for meditation. It is not surprising then, that it is shorter than most. Meditation is contemplation. It literally means to “chew on.” This is a perfect Psalm to throttle it back. The phrase that I was meditating on is found in verse 6, “When God restores his people...” It is not “if God,” but “when God” restores. In what ways are you praying for God’s restoration for yourself or for someone you love? In your meditation, what caught your eye? How so?

Day 13 – Psalm 54

As I read this Psalm, my mind connects with a familiar promise in the New Testament that the Apostle Paul shared in 2 Corinthians 1:8-11 when he despaired even for life. But God delivered him and his companions. I know from the story in 1 Samuel that David’s life was in jeopardy as King Saul wanted to kill him. This is a Psalm associated with those days from 1 Samuel 23:19-20. Verse 4 is a statement of faith, “But God is my helper. The Lord keeps me alive!” Again, this is a short Psalm so I have given you two extra Scripture references to go along with this Psalm. Verse 7 reminds me how often David begins with an honest lament in his prayers but concludes with words like this, “For you (God) have rescued me from my troubles and helped me to triumph over my enemies.” God is faithful; he has been faithful to me. How about you?

Day 14 – Psalm 55

I would like to point out that verses 12 to 14 have been thought of as messianic because they coincide with Judas’s betrayal of Jesus. It helps us remember how hurtful the betrayal would have been for Jesus since Judas walked with him for three years. David had to feel that way with his son, Absalom’s rebellion which seems to be the backdrop for this Psalm. The verse that ultimately got my attention was 22 which sounds a lot like 1 Peter 5:7 as David writes, “Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you.” Do not

be anxious for anything, instead pray... are familiar words from Philippians 4:6. David had lots to pray about during the devastating takeover by his son, Absalom (2 Samuel 15 to 17). This is an example of what was on David's mind and how he prayed. What statement especially stood out to you? Why?

Day 15 – Psalm 56

Each of these last few Psalms seems to be connected to very intense situations in David's life when, in fact, his life is in jeopardy. During COVID many people felt fearful, for sure. There was a verse in this Psalm that I repeated and others did so as well. After David sets the stage with the intensity of his circumstances in verses 1 & 2, he writes, "But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you." It is his default response when he is afraid. Isn't that helpful!? For example, the moment I feel fear is the opportunity to trust God. I tried to practice that during the intensity of COVID and it really helped me. In 1 Samuel 21:10-15, you can read the story that motivates David's words in this Psalm. David had lots of reasons to be afraid. But his foundation of faith allowed him to trust God no matter what. His example is very helpful to me. There are several similar verses in this Psalm that point to trusting God and not being afraid. What practical insight are you gleaning from Psalm 56?

Day 16 – Psalm 57

I think it is helpful to imagine hiding in a cave and singing these words. I actually had the privilege of exploring the caves of En Gedi. The caves were perched above a canyon so that when Saul made his way into the cave (1 Samuel 24), he would have been very vulnerable. But David spared his life. A promise in verse 1 has helped me hang on to the Lord in times of trouble. "I will hide (in a cave) beneath the shadow of your wings until the danger passes by." We can trust in the protection of our God. Verses 10 & 11 remind me of a song we used to sing often: "Your love, Oh Lord, reaches to the heavens, Your faithfulness stretches to the sky, Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, Your justice flows like the ocean's tide." How has this Psalm spoken to you?

Day 17 – Psalm 58

A longing for justice is a familiar theme in today's world. The oppression of wicked, arrogant leaders can be found around the globe. But our God is just, "surely there is a God who judges justly here on earth." (V11) There may be injustice in our world but one day God will make it all right. What stands out to you about the injustice in mankind? What do you learn from this Psalm about the justice of God?

Day 18 – Psalm 59

The subtitle for this Psalm reveals that the backdrop of these words comes from the story in 1 Samuel 19:11-18. I am sure David felt powerless compared to the power and authority of Saul as King. This is the focus of his prayer. Verses 9 & 10 reflect the faith of David as a young man, maybe no more than 18 or 19 years old. Again, verses 16 & 17 are words that I have prayed in difficult times. God's power, unfailing love, refuge, safety, strength, etc. all describe the character of God and our assurance that he will always be with us and help us. How might you pray to God with these verses in mind? I am quite sure your life

has never been threatened like David's was, so these words will surely be strong enough for you to have confidence that God will take care of you. Amen!?

Day 19 – Psalm 60

This Psalm basically has two parts; the discipline of the Lord and a cry for God's help. I think the summary is found in this statement from verse 1, "You have been angry with us; now restore us to your favor." There's no question that God's discipline is real. We read about it in Proverbs (3:11-12) and the author of Hebrews makes it a major theme in 12:5-11. The father heart of God loves us too much to stand by without expressing his tough love. Earthly fathers do the same out of love. I appreciate David's insight with these words: "Oh, please help us against our enemies, for all human help is useless." (V11) When I am struggling, who do I turn to first? David's example helps us to see what is true for a man whose heart is for the Lord.

Day 20 – Psalm 61

Again, these words remind me of a worship song I have sung in church over the years (especially verses 1 to 4). This Psalm begins a theme repeated in the next two Psalms as well. I love these Psalms because they fill my heart with worship and help me pray with deeper meaning. Don't you appreciate these familiar words, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I!?" (V2) I often pray the acronym PRAY = pause, rejoice, ask, and yield. Verse 8, the last verse in this worshipful prayer, represents yield/surrender. "Then I will sing praises to your name forever as I fulfill my vows each day." Let me remind you about the importance of surrender as you dedicate each day of your life (one by one) to the Lord.

Day 21 – Psalm 62

It has been suggested that the theme of this Psalm would be "trust in the Lord." Clearly, verse 8 directs God's people to trust him. But what other phrases point to trust as well? I connect "waiting quietly" and trust because the Lord is my hope (V5). Twice David refers to God as a rock, salvation, and fortress that will not be shaken. The strength and stability of God assure us that we can trust him because of his unfailing love for us. (V12) Again, I am inspired to worship God as I meditate on these words. This is another Psalm that is prayerful, and hopeful and gives me great assurance that God will prevail. Another relevant thought comes from verse 10, "And if your wealth increases, don't make it the center of your life." (NLT) The warning regarding riches fills the Bible and is a common pitfall for people. We are familiar with wealth and base our lives on our bank accounts too often. This is the opposite of trusting in God. What did you learn about prayer, worship, and priorities from this Psalm?

Day 22 – Psalm 63

I remember this Psalm because, at a very impressionable season in my life, I prepared a sermon on this chapter. It was my first preaching class in 1983 and each student was assigned 3 different Scriptures to study, outline, and write a sermon message for each one. Ever since then, Psalm 63 has been a favorite as it was one of the three assigned to me. I am not saying I got an "A" on the sermon but the theme of this Psalm really impacted me and helped shape my heart for worship. The first 8 verses are some of the

most powerful words for personal worship in all the Bible. Throughout, David is speaking for himself to God personally. Did you notice that? The pronouns “I” and “you” are used multiple times. It is ready for you and me to pray these words and enjoy a deeper connection to the Lord because of it. I want you to do just that. Pray verses 1 to 8 slowly with sincerity. How does that touch your heart?

Day 23 – Psalm 64

You might have expected another powerful worship Psalm like yesterday, but the variety of these psalms continues with a Psalm of lament. Sometimes David will cry out to God in sadness and deep need but always closing the Psalm with hope. This Psalm also begins on a heavy note that can seem discouraging but then there’s David’s trust in God’s justice. (Verses 7-9) My point is that David is honest about human disappointment and pain but he always redirects his thoughts to God’s strength and ability to take care of his life. In Psalm, he is honest about the tension he feels with so many enemies against him. But by the end, he is identifying himself as a godly person trusting in the Lord. “The godly will rejoice in the Lord and find shelter in him.” (V10) How might you be feeling some tension in your life? What would it look like to release it to God?

Day 24 – Psalm 65

This particular Psalm is ready-made for worship and praise. David recalls so many reasons we have to praise God. I bet if you took the time to list them, they would easily outnumber the number of verses in this Psalm. I think I can divide this Psalm in two, with character traits of God to appreciate in verses 1 - 6, and then the wonder of God’s created order in verses 7 - 12. He answers prayer, forgives sins, gives us hope, and displays his mighty power in the first half. But beginning in verse 7, which is approximately the midpoint, the focus is on all that God has created how it is fashioned to reflect God’s hand, and how nature cooperates in harmony. The Lord is maintaining the wonder of it all. Psalm 19:1 says, “The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship.” Creation speaks in a way that reveals God’s beauty and power. How does the theme of creation inspire you? What else in this Psalm stirred your heart?

Day 25 – Psalm 66

No particular author is assigned to this Psalm. Some might suggest that makes this Psalm less important. But after reading the Psalm, I find many points of identification. I especially feel that way after reading verses 16 to 20. These words felt so right that I quickly recited them to myself. It is the call to testify of God’s grace, answers to prayers, and continuous love of God for me. The importance of confession stands out to me as well. Without confession, my lifeline with the Lord can be jeopardized. Harboring sin hurts me and it weakens my connection to Christ. David wrote about this in Psalm 32, that refusal to confess one’s sin causes internal turmoil and a spiritual heaviness that can evaporate our souls like water in the summer heat (Verses 3 & 4). Verse 5 of Psalm 32 says it all, “Finally, I confessed my sins to you (God)... And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.” The theme of confession and freedom grabbed my attention in verses 18 & 19 from our reading for today. What grabbed your attention?

Day 26 – Psalm 67

Obviously, this is a very short Psalm but that doesn't make it less important. In fact, I think that this is an especially significant Psalm because it is unique and focuses on a theme that is too often overlooked. The word "world" or "nations" is used 8 times in seven verses. It was 40 years ago that I took a mission class in seminary and the professor began the class by reading Psalm 67. The Jewish people might have approached life with exclusivity, but God never intended it that way. His heart of love was/is for the whole world and all the "people" (nations) groups on earth. What does this Psalm reveal about God's heart for the world? Do you notice the similarity between God's message to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 and these words from the anonymous author of this Psalm? Our God cares about the whole world; how does this Psalm inspire you; include you; convict you?

Day 27 – Psalm 68

David's prayer highlights God's victorious rule tracing God's triumphant march from Sinai to Jerusalem. God rescued the nation of Israel from Egypt, guided it through the wilderness, brought it into the Promised Land, and established his kingdom in doing so. God is caring and victorious, with an unchanging nature. We have hope and much rejoicing at the prospect of God's promised dominion over all mankind. David uses poetry to portray how God has worked in the past and will continue to be the same God now and forever. What should we do since we have a God like this? "Tell everyone about God's power..." (V34) What stands out to you from this "longest" Psalm? Actually, tomorrow our Psalm reading will be one verse longer.

Day 28 – Psalm 69

There's no question that this Psalm is a lament. Several Psalms fall into this category. From start to finish, David is pouring out his heart to the Lord. This is a strong example of praying honestly to God instead of fighting back or taking revenge. David was seldom a vengeful person. One story has David so angry at Nabal (1 Samuel 25) that he is determined to kill him. Thank God Nabal's wife, Abigail, intervened and David came to his senses. Think of all the times that David could have avenged King Saul, but he didn't. When his son, Absalom rebelled, he did not retaliate. But David was known to pour out his heart to God, which is such a powerful example for us. He did not hold it in so that it might explode at any moment. No, he let it out to God who could handle it and help him, right? Which phrase or verse stood out to you in this Psalm? I was interested in the words of verse 21 which are highlighted by John in his Gospel record (John 19:28-29). Plus, verse 3 reminds me that waiting on the Lord might be painful rather than prayerful. "I am exhausted from crying for help; my throat is parched. My eyes are swollen with weeping, waiting for my God to help me." But this too is a reflection of faith that God will intervene at just the right time. How much am I willing to endure because I want to remain faithful to God?

Day 29 – Psalm 70

This Psalm continues David's urgency. His prayers are prayers of pleading with God. But I notice a godly pattern in David's life. I remember it from Psalm 13 and his cry of remorse and sadness. But he ends that Psalm with words of trust and praise. If you choose to read Psalm 13 also, I think you will notice the similarity. Both Psalms have five verses with an emphasis on praise after a cry of despair. "But may all

who search (seek after) for you be filled with joy and gladness in you. May those who love your salvation repeatedly shout, 'God is great.'" Often our prayers are filled with requests for ourselves or others, and we forget to thank God for what he has done and to worship him for who he is. But not David; his lasting legacy of faith is to be completely honest with God but also to love and worship God even when life is difficult. How does his example challenge you?

Day 30 – Psalm 71

This is a fairly positive Psalm for being a lament. It is thought of that way because the author identifies his enemies and prays for God's punishment on them. The author clearly says that he is old(er). He mentions it in verses 9 & 18. The Book Psalms has been thought of as the Worship Hymnal of the Hebrews. Verse 22 says, "Then I will praise you with music on the harp, because you are faithful to your promises, O my God. I will sing praises to you with a lyre, O Holy One of Israel." The history of music begins all the way back to Genesis 4:21. "His brother's name was Jubal, the first of all to play the harp and the flute." But the emphasis of singing together with others in the temple, for example, is tied to David many years later. David played instruments and even made instruments (2 Samuel 7:6). Corporate worship seems to originate with David with many of the Psalms being written by him, of course. I appreciate Psalm 71 because the author continues to recognize the blessing of God as well as his power. I imagine that these words were sung by Israelites as they prayed to God and worshiped him. How does this Psalm impress you?

Day 31 – Psalm 72

Obviously, this is our last reading for this month and in Psalms, at least for now. The subtitle tells us that this Psalm is written by Solomon. The only other Psalm attributed to Solomon is 127 which is a beautiful Psalm about the blessing of family. The constant reference to the King seems to affirm the connection to Solomon. He had contact with the Queen of Sheba and his enormous reign when Israel prospered and the borders stretched far and wide. "May he reign from sea to sea, and from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth." (V8) But since I appreciate the power of a benediction, I am mostly drawn to verses 18 & 19 which might be categorized as a doxology. "Praise the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does such wonderful things. Praise his glorious name forever! Let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen!" This is a magnificent way to conclude Book Two of Psalms, don't you think? Solomon attributes most of these Psalms to David in verse 20, which is mostly true because well over half of the Psalms we read were written by David. David also was the one who put people in charge of worship which means he had his stamp of approval on all of these Psalms. David will still be noticed in the rest of the Book but not nearly as much. Congratulations! You have read through a significant part of Psalms. How have you benefitted?