

JOURNAL QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHTFUL REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

Each week you will have the opportunity to reflect on the spiritual lessons of the Psalms and apply them in concrete ways (prayer and testimony). These questions will build on responsible methods of study that focus on 3 transformative movements: (1) **Recognition**: What is honestly going on in our hearts and lives, (2) **Redirection**: Opening ourselves up to the correction of the Spirit, and (3) **Reorientation**: Choosing the path we will follow as we learn how to build our lives around God-centered principles. Each Journal entry will include a prayer based on the Psalms that either addresses (1) a specific situation in your life, or (2) exercises a deeper intercessory role on behalf of others.

WEEK 1: THE WORSHIPING COMMUNITY BEFORE GOD

Short Answers

1. Which portions of the Scripture do you like to read? Why? Explain your thinking briefly.

I LOVE READING SOME OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE STORIES THAT ARE TOLD, BUT I ALSO LOVE READING THE NEW TESTAMENT AND HOW JESUS COMES TO LIFE IN IT. BUT HONESTLY, JESUS COMES TO LIFE THROUGHOUT ALL THE BIBLE.

2. Have you avoided reading the Psalms or some parts of them in the past? What was your hesitancy with them (for example, were they difficult to understand, were they uncomfortable for some reason, do you not like poetry, etc.)? Explain briefly.

- a. I HAVE NEVER FOUND THE PSALMS TO BE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND OR UNCOMFORTABLE. I DO LIKE THEM, IN THESE TIMES I STAND ON PSALMS 91 DAILY.

3. Which of the characteristic of our world (anxiety and scarcity, greed, self-sufficiency, denial, despair, amnesia, lack of norms) has caused you the most struggle in your faith walk? Explain.

- A. Greed has caused me the worst struggle in my walk of faith. Not today, but in the past. There was a time I felt I had to keep up the Joneses and it caused me a lot of trouble. Today I am free of that but for many years it certainly was a problem.

4. Which of the characteristics of the counter-world of the Psalms (trustful faithfulness, abundance, trustful dependence, abrasive truth telling, hope, lively remembering, or following God's will and purposes) do you need to develop more fully in your life? Explain what you think is lacking.

- a. I guess trustful dependence on the Lord would be to develop more fully in my life. I am slowing learning to dependent on God, but I still like to do things myself when I know I should be depending on God to do it.

5. Identify which values of technology or social media have unknowingly found its way into your life. In what way is the biblical perspective a corrective for you?
 - A. Many times when I am stressed I will pull out my tablet and play games on it instead of pulling out the bible on the same table and reading the word. I have been convicted of that several times and are working on making a change.

6. Do you find your life tilted more toward monologue or dialogue? What made you draw that conclusion?
 - A. I am more tilted toward dialogue. I always find myself among my friends or co-workers talking about something and trying to come up with a solution to solve a problem.

Prayer (either for yourself or someone else): Write out a prayer that invites God into a concern raised from our topics and build moments of listening as you practice being present before God.

Lord I know trusting you and being full dependent on you is an area that I struggle in. I ask you Father to teach me in your glorious ways how to become dependent on you in everything I do. Show me Lord that your ways are always much better than my ways. With your patience Holy Spirit, teach when I tend to try to do something myself, with your gentleness turn me the other way. I want to be trained to wake up every morning and ask you Lord what are the best steps for today? Show me how to do that Holy Spirit, guide me, direct me and teach me daily.

Revelation 1:6 praises Christ because “He has made us a **kingdom and priests** (not a kingdom of priests) for God His Father.” As priests, we have a responsibility to discern God’s will as expressed through Scripture, to help others approach God through Christ, to pronounce blessing, etc. Intercessory prayer is one way to express this priesthood.