

HONEST to GOD

praying through the Psalms

Name:

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

WINTER 2020



wentzville
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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RESOURCES:

- *Prayer Coach* by James L. Nicodem
- *Praying the Psalms* by Elmer L. Town

LETTER FROM KEITH

“What do I say to God?”

“How am I supposed to pray?”

“I can’t put into words how I feel or what I’m going through?”

Perhaps you’ve had these thoughts or maybe even shared what you were thinking with a close friend. I think we’ve all been there...not knowing how or what to pray. Especially when life throws us a curve and we weren’t ready for it...how can we be honest to God with what we are going through? The Psalms give us the heart, the words, and the expressions to say to God no matter what is happening in our lives. They cover the spectrum of every human emotion and I believe they were given to us so we could know how to pray.

Praying through the Psalms is a habit or spiritual discipline that will change the way you converse with God each and every day. And don’t worry, this isn’t some new fangled way of praying; the practice of praying through the Psalms has been around for centuries!

2020 is the year for focusing our own spiritual walk and growth with Jesus and I can’t think of a better way to do that than by growing in our prayer life. Having learned this practice years ago, I can tell you that praying through the Psalms refreshes my prayers, guiding and directing them with the language of scripture. Using your Bible, this booklet, and something to write with, you have everything you need to create a life-giving habit of prayer. What a great way to ignite a passion for Jesus and to start a new year!

Blessings,

Keith Comp

Senior Minister

PRAYER GUIDE TO THE PSALMS:

When you are GRATEFUL	1, 70, 81, 106, 116, 118, 124, 127, 145
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A prayer for FORGIVENESS	32, 31, 66, 80, 85, 88, 107, 130
A prayer to BLESS others	33, 36, 137
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A prayer for HOPE when you are discouraged	43, 102
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A prayer for RESTORATION	51, 80, 102, 107, 116, 130, 137
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Prayer Guide is from *Praying the Psalms* by Elmer L. Town

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

The purpose of this guide is to ignite a passion for the Bible in your daily life. God's Word is living, active, and useful for our lives...but so few Christians actually engage in it daily. We want to provide you with a resource that you can use on your own and with your Life Group to ignite and sustain this passion. We want to make God's Word our way.

SERMON NOTES:

Bring this workbook to church each Sunday. As you listen to the sermon, make a note when you hear something that surprises you, intrigues you, bothers you, challenges you, or encourages you.

CONNECT QUESTIONS:

These questions will help you and your group members become more comfortable with talking and sharing with each other. Not only will you learn more about one-another, the questions will help to steer the discussion in the direction of the topic.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION:

These questions are the "meat" of the discussion and will point back to the sermon each week. Feel free to read and answer these questions before your group meets. They will also help you dig deeper into the Scriptures during your group discussions.

CHANGE QUESTIONS:

At the end of Jesus' most famous sermon, he says that if you do not put his words into practice then you are a fool [Matthew 7:24-27]. Life transformation is the ultimate goal of a follower of Christ. Feel free to answer these questions out-loud when your leader reads them or you can quietly reflect and write a response in your workbook.

PRAY FOR ONE-ANOTHER:

Please focus this time on *your own personal* praises and requests instead of listing all of the bad things that happened to someone you know. We challenge you to get "deep" with one-another relationally, which means becoming a little bit vulnerable as you are honest with one-another.

PRAY FOR THE MISSIONS OF THE WEEK:

WCC supports many wonderful missionaries and organizations all over the world. We are committed to support them with our finances as well as our prayers and encouragement. Ask God to work in their lives and through their ministries to ignite a passion for Jesus in others.

DAILY DEVOTION:

Be consistent, honest, and intentional with this time and you will not regret it. The whole point of this workbook is to make the sermons and Scriptures stick with you in your daily walk with Christ. Digging in to God's Word and applying it to your daily life is perhaps the best way to solidify His truth into your heart and your life.

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Week 1 - Confess

WEEK 1 - CONFESS

CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. If you have children, what are some “tells” that let you know they are hiding something?
2. What are some things you did as a child that you have not confessed to your parents?
3. When was a time you had to confess to someone as an adult? How did it make you feel afterward?

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. Read Isaiah 59:1-3. How can unconfessed sin be an obstacle to genuine prayer and communication with God? How can it affect our relationships with others?
2. Have someone summarize the story of David and Bathsheba [2 Samuel 10-12]. How does knowing the back-story of David and Bathsheba help to understand Psalm 51?
3. Read Psalm 51:1-6, including the heading. How does this heartfelt prayer begin? How does this posture of confession pave the way for a healthy prayer life?

4. David did not initially acknowledge and confess his sin [2 Samuel 12:1-14]. What are some obstacles people may have with confessing their sins to God? Others?
5. Read Psalm 32:1-5. How does unconfessed sin affect us [vs. 3-4]? How does confession affect us [vs. 1-2]?
6. Read Psalm 51:7-12. What words or phrases stand out to you? How do these give you encouragement to confess your sins to God?
7. Read Psalm 51:13-17. What should our response be to all of the great things you just listed in the question above?

CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. If God is already fully aware of our sin, why do you think He still wants us to confess to Him? Why is this difficult for us?
2. Do you struggle to believe that God can fully and completely forgive your sin and remove your guilt? Why?
3. What do you need to confess to God today? What is keeping you from doing it?

PRAY FOR ONE-ANOTHER

[Spend some time praying with your Life Group. When asking for requests, try to keep the focus on personal praises/requests that relate to people in the group.]

PRAY FOR THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

High Hill Christian Camp

High Hill Christian Camp and Retreat Center's goal is to offer a fun, Christian atmosphere in a modern camp setting surrounded by God's wilderness — all designed so that children will leave with a closer relationship with Jesus. Check out their website, highhillcamp.org, to see when you, your family, or children can attend the women's retreat, family camp, or one of the summer weeks. Registration begins January 6th.

DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 1-3]

DAY 1:

Read Psalm 32

- ▶ What does this psalm say about sin, confession, and forgiveness?

- ▶ What sins and immoral behavior came to your mind when you read this psalm?

- ▶ How does this psalm end? Pray to God with confession and seek forgiveness. Now read verse 11 again and do this!

DAY 2:

Read Psalm 51

- ▶ What does this psalm say about sin, confession, and forgiveness? What sins and immoral behavior came to your mind when you read this psalm?

- ▶ What do verses 7-12 say God gives us through confession and forgiveness?

- ▶ According to verses 13-17, what should our response be to God’s forgiveness? Pray to Him and ask for this today.

DAY 3:

Read Psalm 85

- ▶ What does this psalm say about sin, confession, and forgiveness?

- ▶ What sins and immoral behavior came to your mind when you read this psalm?

- ▶ What is said about righteousness in this psalm? Pray to our righteous God for this to come into your heart and your life.

DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 4-6]

DAY 4:

Read Psalm 88

- ▶ What does this psalm say about sin, confession, and forgiveness?

- ▶ What sins and immoral behavior came to your mind when you read this psalm?

- ▶ When have you felt like this because of sin? Pray for God to restore you and your spirit through forgiveness and grace in Jesus Christ.

DAY 5:

Read Psalm 107

- ▶ What does this psalm say about sin, confession, and forgiveness?

- ▶ What sins and immoral behavior came to your mind when you read this psalm?

- ▶ How does God treat the righteous vs. the wicked? As one who has been redeemed, tell God your story like in verse 2.

DAY 6:

Read Psalm 130

- ▶ What does this psalm say about sin, confession, and forgiveness?

- ▶ What sins and immoral behavior came to your mind when you read this psalm?

- ▶ How does this psalm speak about Jesus? Speak with God about what Jesus, our redeemer, means to you.

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Week 2 - Honor

WEEK 2 - HONOR

CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. What are some subjects or conversation you can talk about with someone for hours?
2. What are some facts or stats you can recite which others may not know about? Share some of these with the group.
3. When was a time you were not given the respect or honor you thought you deserved?

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. Do you find it easy or difficult to say things to God or about God for an extended period of time? Why or why not?
2. Go around the room and share a name, description, or praise about God that starts with each letter of the alphabet. It can be a phrase or a single word.
3. The Bible gives over 900 unique names, titles, and descriptions for God. Why do you think it is difficult for us to think about just a few?

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CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. What do your prayers typically look like? Do you give God honor and praise each and every day?
2. How can you learn more about God's attributes this week so your prayers can be filled with worship and honor?
3. When can you set aside some time this week to simply talk with God and tell Him how amazing He is to you?

PRAY FOR ONE-ANOTHER

[Spend some time praying with your Life Group. When asking for requests, try to keep the focus on personal praises/requests that relate to people in the group.]

PRAY FOR THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

Shiloh Christian Children's Ranch

Located in Kahoka and Clarence, MO, Shiloh is a safe haven for abused and neglected children, and includes six homes for children, two relief homes, and an onsite school. shilohranch.org

DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 1-3]

DAY 1:

Read Psalm 8

- ▶ How and why is God honored and praised in this psalm?

- ▶ What names, titles, and descriptions of God are given?

- ▶ Spend time praying, honoring, and worshipping God with the words of this psalm and the thoughts that come to your mind.

DAY 2:

Read Psalm 16

- ▶ How and why is God honored and praised in this psalm?

- ▶ What names, titles, and descriptions of God are given?

- ▶ Spend time praying, honoring, and worshipping God with the words of this psalm and the thoughts that come to your mind.

DAY 3:

Read Psalm 68

- ▶ How and why is God honored and praised in this psalm?

- ▶ What names, titles, and descriptions of God are given?

- ▶ Spend time praying, honoring, and worshipping God with the words of this psalm and the thoughts that come to your mind.

DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 4-6]

DAY 4:

Read Psalm 93

- ▶ How and why is God honored and praised in this psalm?

- ▶ What names, titles, and descriptions of God are given?

- ▶ Spend time praying, honoring, and worshipping God with the words of this psalm and the thoughts that come to your mind.

DAY 5:

Read Psalm 95

- ▶ How and why is God honored and praised in this psalm?

- ▶ What names, titles, and descriptions of God are given?

- ▶ Spend time praying, honoring, and worshipping God with the words of this psalm and the thoughts that come to your mind.

DAY 6:

Read Psalms 148-150

- ▶ How and why is God honored and praised in this psalm?

- ▶ What names, titles, and descriptions of God are given?

- ▶ Spend time praying, honoring, and worshipping God with the words of this psalm and the thoughts that come to your mind.

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Week 3 - Ask

WEEK 3 - ASK

CONNECT QUESTIONS

- 1. What is the most outlandish thing you have ever asked someone for? Did you get it?**
- 2. When has persistent asking worked out for you? For someone else?**
- 3. When you pray, do you find yourself asking for extravagant things or ‘small’ things? What are some of the things you typically ask God for?**

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

- 1. What are some big and specific things you have asked God to give you or do for you in the past? Would your life be better or worse if He gave them to you?**
- 2. Read Matthew 7:7-11. How many times is the word “ask” used? How would you summarize what Jesus said in these verses?**
- 3. How does the illustration with a father and a child represent how God feels about our requests to Him?**

4. What are the three commands Jesus gives in verse 7? Why do you think he gives all three commands instead of just telling us to ask? Do we have a part to play in this?
5. It has been said that our requests to God should be specific, consistent, and persistent. What do each of these mean for our prayer life?
6. Read James 4:1-3. What are two reasons we do not have what we want? What might be some other reasons?
7. Read Psalm 37:3-4. Before God grants us the desires of our hearts, what does He desire from us? What may happen to our desires once we do the things God wants us to do?
8. What are some universal things we can always ask God for when we do not know what to specifically pray for?

CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. What are some specific prayers and requests that you need to bring to God this week?
2. Are your motives usually pure when you ask God for things? What needs to change?
3. After you ask, what do you need to seek and find to take an active part in your request being answered the way you want?

PRAY FOR ONE-ANOTHER

[Spend some time praying with your Life Group. When asking for requests, try to keep the focus on personal praises/requests that relate to people in the group.]

PRAY FOR THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

Team Expansion: Allen & Cherry Messimer – Taiwan

The Messimers have served as missionaries in Taiwan since 2004. Their mission is to evangelize, disciple, and provide training so every believer can use his or her gifts in a simple church ministry. This also means every church can start new, indigenous churches. Over 90% of Taiwanese people still worship idols. teamexpansion.org We have a team going to Taiwan July 2-14, 2020. Please be in prayer as the team prepares to go and if you are interested in being on this mission team and going to Taiwan, contact Randy Diebel at randy@wentzvillecc.org

DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 1-3]

DAY 1:

Read Psalm 6

- ▶ What is asked of God in this psalm? When have you had similar requests and emotions?

- ▶ What are the personal requests you want to make to God today? What physical/spiritual requests do you want to make on behalf of others today?

- ▶ Spend time today asking God for the desires of your heart with passion, persistence, and patience.

DAY 2:

Read Psalm 17

- ▶ What is asked of God in this psalm? When have you had similar requests and emotions?

- ▶ What are the personal requests you want to make to God today? What physical/spiritual requests do you want to make on behalf of others today?

- ▶ Spend time today asking God for the desires of your heart with passion, persistence, and patience.

DAY 3:

Read Psalm 20

- ▶ What is asked of God in this psalm? When have you had similar requests and emotions?

- ▶ What are the personal requests you want to make to God today? What physical/spiritual requests do you want to make on behalf of others today?

- ▶ Spend time today asking God for the desires of your heart with passion, persistence, and patience.

DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 4-6]

DAY 4:

Read Psalm 69

- ▶ What is asked of God in this psalm? When have you had similar requests and emotions?

- ▶ What are the personal requests you want to make to God today? What physical/spiritual requests do you want to make on behalf of others today?

- ▶ Spend time today asking God for the desires of your heart with passion, persistence, and patience.

DAY 5:

Read Psalm 71

- ▶ What is asked of God in this psalm? When have you had similar requests and emotions?

- ▶ What are the personal requests you want to make to God today? What physical/spiritual requests do you want to make on behalf of others today?

- ▶ Spend time today asking God for the desires of your heart with passion, persistence, and patience.

DAY 6:

Read Psalm 102

- ▶ What is asked of God in this psalm? When have you had similar requests and emotions?

- ▶ What are the personal requests you want to make to God today? What physical/spiritual requests do you want to make on behalf of others today?

- ▶ Spend time today asking God for the desires of your heart with passion, persistence, and patience.

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Week 4 - Thank

WEEK 4 - THANK

CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. When is it difficult for you to say “thank you” to someone? When is it easy?
2. What are some things you regularly do that often goes without recognition or thanks from others?
3. When has something bad in your life actually turned into a good thing you were thankful for?

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. Read Psalm 136. Have one person read the first part of each verse and then have the entire group say “His love endures forever” together each time. Why do you think the writer repeats this each time?
2. What do you see in verses 1-9 which describe things we should be thankful for today?
3. What specific events from the history of Israel do you see in verses 10-22? Why is it important to remember God’s faithfulness in the past?

4. What kind of attitude is NOT found in this heartfelt prayer to God? What kind of attitude do you see?
5. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. What are the three commands we are given? Why do you think it is God's will for us to do these?
6. Why do you think it is so important for us to express our thankfulness to God in all circumstances?
7. Read Philippians 4:4-7. Briefly describe "Thank You Therapy" in your own words and what it has to do with these verses.

CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. Go around the room and say something you are thankful for that starts with each letter of the alphabet. It can be a phrase or a single word.
2. How have you seen God's faithful love in your life? How should that affect your prayers of thankfulness?
3. What are some practical ways you can remember to thank God for His past, present, and future blessings in your life?

PRAY FOR ONE-ANOTHER

[Spend some time praying with your Life Group. When asking for requests, try to keep the focus on personal praises/requests that relate to people in the group.]

PRAY FOR THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

Haitian Island Ministries

Steve & Terry Smith, WCC members

This organization operates medical programs providing free vitamins, medicine, and medical care and feeding programs which provide a daily meal for thousands of Haitian children each month. They also build schools and churches in some of the most remote areas of Haiti. Their medical program has served hundreds of thousands of Haitians. haitianislandministries.org

DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 1-3]

DAY 1:

Read Psalm 18

- ▶ Why is the writer of this psalm thankful? How does he express his thankfulness?

- ▶ What is a specific way you can show your gratitude to God and others today?

- ▶ Spend time thanking God for specific things He has blessed you with. Praise Him!

DAY 2:

Read Psalm 66

- ▶ Why is the writer of this psalm thankful? How does he express his thankfulness?

- ▶ What is a specific way you can show your gratitude to God and others today?

- ▶ Spend time thanking God for specific things He has blessed you with. Praise Him!

DAY 3:

Read Psalm 100

- ▶ Why is the writer of this psalm thankful? How does he express his thankfulness?

- ▶ What is a specific way you can show your gratitude to God and others today?

- ▶ Spend time thanking God for specific things He has blessed you with. Praise Him!

DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 4-6]

DAY 4:

Read Psalm 107

- ▶ Why is the writer of this psalm thankful? How does he express his thankfulness?

- ▶ What is a specific way you can show your gratitude to God and others today?

- ▶ Spend time thanking God for specific things He has blessed you with. Praise Him!

DAY 5:

Read Psalm 116

- ▶ Why is the writer of this psalm thankful? How does he express his thankfulness?

- ▶ What is a specific way you can show your gratitude to God and others today?

- ▶ Spend time thanking God for specific things He has blessed you with. Praise Him!

DAY 6:

Read Psalm 136

- ▶ Why is the writer of this psalm thankful? How does he express his thankfulness?

- ▶ What is a specific way you can show your gratitude to God and others today?

- ▶ Spend time thanking God for specific things He has blessed you with. Praise Him!

WRITE YOUR OWN CHAT PRAYER:

CONFESS

When we confess to God, we offer our sins at His feet and ask for forgiveness. We acknowledge that we have sinned against Him and only the blood of Jesus can pay our price. This portion of your prayers should be about restoring a broken relationship because of your sin. Focus on God's forgiveness and the specific ways you have sinned against Him.

1 John 1:9 [NIV]

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

HONOR

When we honor God, we give Him the praise and worship that He is worthy of. We acknowledge that He is the Creator of the universe and yet loves us and wants a relationship with us. This portion of your prayers should be about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit...not you or others. Focus on God's character and the attributes of God that Scripture tells us about.

Psalms 150:1-2 [NIV]

¹Hallelujah! Praise God in His sanctuary. Praise Him in His mighty heavens. ²Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him for His excellent greatness.

ASK

When we ask of God, we do so with persistence, passion, and patience. We acknowledge that God has the power and authority to grant us anything we ask of Him. This portion of your prayers should be about aligning the desires of your heart with the will of God. Focus on God's ability to give us anything we want and His desire to provide what we need.

Hebrews 4:16 [NIV]


Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

THANK

When we thank God, we realize and recognize the countless blessings that He gives to us. We acknowledge that God is the sustainer of the universe and the giver of life. This portion of your prayers should be about your gratitude for how God has blessed you in countless ways. Focus on God's blessings in your life and how His grace has given us everything we need.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 [NIV]

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray continually, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.



PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

1 Thessalonians 5:17