

7-SESSION BIBLE STUDY

VIDEO
ACCESS
INCLUDED

AS FOR ME

A woman in a long, flowing blue dress stands on a rocky cliff overlooking the ocean. She is looking out at the sea with her hand to her forehead. The background shows a vast, hazy landscape with rolling hills and a clear sky.

LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE PSALMS

ADRIENNE CAMP



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AS FOR ME

LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE PSALMS

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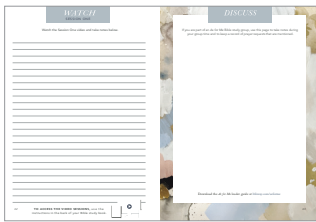
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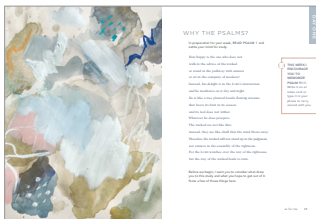
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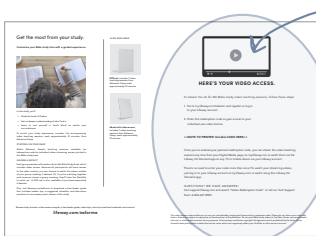
WHAT'S INSIDE



WATCH & DISCUSS Each session of *As for Me* begins with a teaching video from Adrienne. The Watch & Discuss pages provide you with a place to take notes from the video teachings and from your small group discussion time. You'll want to begin your study by watching the Session One video and taking notes on pages 14–15.



PERSONAL STUDY Each session of *As for Me* also includes five days of personal study. You'll learn about a category of the psalms and unpack what specific psalms teach about who God is and how you relate to Him.



VIDEO ACCESS With the purchase of this book, you have access to videos from Adrienne that provide insight to help you better understand and apply what you study. **You'll find detailed information on how to access the teaching videos on the card inserted in the back of your Bible study book.**

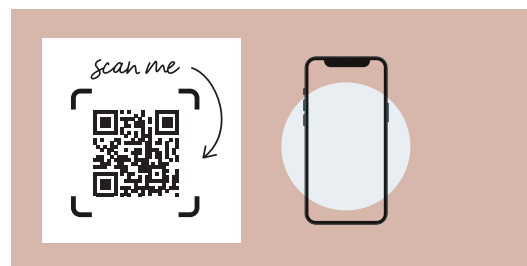


APPENDIX To add to your study, don't miss the information included in the Appendix. The Psalms Genres chart gives you a big-picture view of the categories of psalms and how much of the book each category encompasses. You'll also find a 6-week reading plan if you're interested in reading verse-by-verse through the book of Psalms alongside this study.

LEADING A GROUP? A free leader guide PDF is available for download at lifeway.com/asforme. The leader guide offers several tips and helps along with discussion guides for each week.

A NOTE ABOUT BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

This Bible study pulls from a variety of Bible translations, the primary one being the Christian Standard Bible (CSB). All other translations will be marked by their abbreviations. You can read from any of these translations and more at biblegateway.com or on a Bible app. The names of the Bible books will be abbreviated when referenced in parentheses in this study. For a complete list of book abbreviations, download the chart available at lifeway.com/asforme.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adrienne “Adie” Camp, a South African singer and songwriter, was the lead singer of the Christian rock band The Benjamin Gate before launching her solo career. She is married to fellow musician Jeremy Camp, whom she met on tour in 2002. They have been married since 2003 and have two daughters, Bella and Arie, and one son, Egan. Adrienne is deeply passionate about her marriage and her family. She homeschools her children as they often accompany Jeremy on tour.

She has authored two books—*Even Me*, an illustrated children’s book about her daughters’ adventurous trip to Uganda, and *In Unison*, which she coauthored with her husband, Jeremy, about navigating their marriage and relationship. So far, she has traveled to twenty different countries and is motivated by a desire to see people encounter God’s love all around the world.



INTRODUCTION

But as for me, I will wait and hope continually,
And will praise You yet more and more.

PSALM 71:14 (AMP)

Dearest sisters,

As you begin this study through Psalms, I wish I could step into your life and join you in your lounge with a soft, cozy blanket and a hot, freshly made cup of coffee or tea. I wish I could hear your thoughts, join in your Bible study, and learn from the different ways God speaks to you through His Word. While writing this study, I have been praying for you—for God to deepen your understanding of Him, for your love to grow more and more as you dig into these psalms with me, and for God to chisel away at the stuck modes and barren places in all our hearts that stop us from maturing and flourishing.

Years ago, I was in Psalms going through my Bible reading plan, and the phrase *as for me* kept catching my attention. Over and over again I noticed the psalmist saying, “As for me . . .”, “But as for me . . .” I’ve learned to take note of repetition in my walk with Jesus. In His patient teaching, He will often spotlight things for me repeatedly. So, I mulled it over in my heart. I noticed how the psalmists kept an incredible resolve, almost in holy defiance to the temptation to be drowned by their circumstances, take their eyes off God, and succumb to what the culture was demanding from them.

Through the delays, disappointments, and honest, raw conversations with God, we see them struggle their way up their metaphorical mountains to reach the top for a breathtaking view of who God is and what He has for them. Instead of being swallowed up by the darkness of their emotions and circumstances, we see them persevere in grabbing hold of God’s unfailing love and faithfulness, and the exchange is well worth the journey.

As the psalmists poured their hearts out to God, we see them wrestle through various hardships with a reinforced commitment as if to say: *No matter what is going on around me, this is what I choose.*

As for me.

I believe we need this message in our lives today. When we look at the struggles in and around the church, we see that we have not been deeply rooted. Instead, we are often tossed about, and our lives are not filled with the evidence and freedom of the Spirit. When I see the hatred and craziness in our world, I hope our lives will look different. The

promise of Christ is our lives *should* look different. Love, grace, and mercy must be active in our hearts, touching the lives of those we encounter.

Jesus said a relationship with Him is like the pearl of great price (Matt. 13:45-46). It is worth selling everything you have to go after it. It far exceeds the value of everything else in life we will ever experience. As we dig to find the truth gems God has for us in Psalms and learn to apply them to our lives, we create room for the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, to change us. I'm confident He will.

In the coming days, we'll look at the songs sung for generations, for thousands of years. We'll see how the determined psalmists sought the Lord, often imperfectly, flawed at times, and definitely a little dysfunctional—which I can so relate to—but still fully resolved nevertheless.

I want that to be true of me, that no matter what's going on around me, my heart is fixed immovably on Jesus alone, and the work of the Spirit is evident in my life.

People take many different approaches to studying the book of Psalms. People also have a wide variety of contrasting thoughts and opinions—as there often are with church doctrines—which is understandable with a book written by multiple authors spanning five centuries.¹ For the purposes of our study, we will be taking a thematic approach, because I believe it is the most effective way I can encourage us to be more in awe of God. We will consider the main genres most psalms can be grouped into—thanksgiving, wisdom, royal and prophetic, lament, trust and imprecatory, and praise—and see what worshiping God can look like in all seasons and with many different words.

As you traverse with me through this beautiful book, let us look for ways to grow in a more intimate and experiential walk with the Lord. Let us thrive in a deeper understanding of who He is with tenacity and purpose to hold onto Him, no matter what happens around us. Let us commit our hearts to defy our secular culture and experience the fullness of life with Jesus as the affections of our hearts fully engage with His. People around us may be caught up in the hustle and bustle of this world, but let us allow the declaration of “as for me” to take root in our hearts.

With love always,

Adrienne

Let us
allow the
declaration
of “as
for me” to
take root
in our
hearts.

ABOUT PSALMS

Background on the book of Psalms

Author

David is mentioned in the titles of seventy-three psalms. Twelve psalms are ascribed to Asaph and eleven to “the sons of Korah.” Other named authors are Moses, Solomon, Heman, and Ethan. Fifty psalms are anonymous.

Date

The oldest psalm, Psalm 90, is that of Moses (1400s BC). The largest group was composed during the Davidic era (1010–970 BC). The final compilation probably occurred during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (458–430 BC). Psalm 137 may have been the last psalm composed.

Big Picture

The book of Psalms is part of a section of Old Testament books known as wisdom literature. Also included in this category are the books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. Psalms is a collection of Hebrew poems and songs that focus on humanity’s relationship with God and were recorded so they could be preserved as a part of Israel’s worship practices. God, the true and glorious King, is worthy of all praise, thanksgiving, and confidence—whatever the occasion in personal or community life.²

Types of Psalms

The psalms are traditionally categorized based on their main idea or writing style. Traditionally, these categories include thanksgiving, wisdom, lament, royal, trust, praise, prophecy, pilgrimage, imprecatory, and temple hymns. Many psalms fit into more than one of these categories.

As you work your way through your Bible study, you'll spend a week with each of the following types of psalms.

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving psalms describe a situation of distress and how God delivered the psalmist. These psalms show us our need to acknowledge God's work in our times of trouble and to witness to others what God has done for us.

Wisdom

Wisdom psalms probe life's mysteries to teach the congregation about itself and God.

Royal & Prophetic

Royal, or kingship, psalms detail the role of the human king in God's rule over His people. When these psalms are prophetic in nature, they point ahead to the Messiah, who would inaugurate God's kingdom and rule forever.

Lament

Psalms of lament cry out for help in a situation of distress or frustration. Psalmists protested their innocence or confessed their sins. Such psalms show prayer as an honest communication with God in life's worst situations.

Trust & Imprecatory

Psalms of trust are prayers or songs of praise that specifically highlight trust and confidence in the Lord for who He is and how He has worked among His people. Imprecatory psalms take trust in God a step further by calling on Him to carry out justice and bring judgment on one's enemies.

Praise

Psalms of praise are hymns that lift the congregation's praise to God, describing God's greatness and majesty. In the hymn, worshipers invite one another to praise God and to provide reasons for such praise.³

SELAH

Before we begin our journey traversing the rich book of Psalms, I want to take a moment to explain the meaning of the word *Selah*, a word that occurs seventy-one times in this book of the Bible.⁴

Given that the composition of the book of Psalms spans more than five centuries, it's no wonder the meaning of this word has been debated by numerous scholars, each finding themselves at slightly different places and all with solid conviction.⁵ I was taught early on that *Selah* is a musical pause for us to consider the words that were just sung.

Some scholars believe it signifies a change in rhythm or melody and can give accompanying musicians the direction to break in with a loud crash of the cymbals or blaring of the trumpets to emphasize the moment, thereby marking a pause in singing and silencing the voice.⁶

My favorite interpretation of the word, however, is that *Selah* comes from the Hebrew word *calah*, which means “to hang” or “to measure.”⁷ In other words, to contemplate the value of what's being said. *Selah* is quite the opposite of the breakneck speed at which we're always running.

Selah.

Breathe. Pause. Ponder. Pray. Do what it takes to nourish your heart with truth from Psalms. Let these words of God work their way into the depths of your soul and let them be weighty to you. I encourage you to take your time, savor them, and read them slowly.

As you start each day, come with a desire to lean in close to the Lord, quiet your heart, and listen to Him.

But as for me, I will wait
and hope continually,
And will praise You yet
more and more.

Psalm 71:14 (AMP)





Session One

AS FOR ME

Hello, friend! What a gift it is for us to share this Bible study journey—to pore over Scripture together, let it sink deeply into our hearts, and invite the Spirit to shape who we are.

This week we begin our study with an overview of the book of Psalms and a verse-by-verse look at Psalm 1. I think it's important for you to know up front this is a slower pace than the rest of the sessions will be, but I want us to build a strong foundation for our study of Psalms.

Psalm 1 was intentionally chosen to begin the Psalms, which makes it the perfect place for us to begin, too. Its focus is on clearly contrasting the joy of

walking in right relationship with God to the regrettable life of those who walk in disobedience or defiance to Him.

Many scholars describe it as the “threshold” to the psalms and believe it sets the tone for everything that follows in the book. As we stand at the threshold of this special book of the Bible, may we, like the psalmist, be intentional in pursuing the ways of the Lord over the ways of the world.

Before you begin your personal study for the week, watch the video “Session One: As for Me” (9:08) and take notes on the following pages.



KEY PSALM YOU'LL FOCUS ON THIS WEEK

Psalm 1

DISCUSS

If you are part of an *As for Me* Bible study group, use this page to take notes during your group time and to keep a record of prayer requests that are mentioned.

Download the *As for Me* leader guide at lifeway.com/asforme



WHY THE PSALMS?

In preparation for your week, **READ PSALM 1** and settle your mind for study.

How happy is the one who does not
walk in the advice of the wicked
or stand in the pathway with sinners
or sit in the company of mockers!
Instead, his delight is in the LORD's instruction,
and he meditates on it day and night.

He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams
that bears its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.

Whatever he does prospers.

The wicked are not like this;
instead, they are like chaff that the wind blows away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand up in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.

Before we begin, I want you to consider what drew you to this study and what you hope to get out of it. Note a few of those things here.



**THIS WEEK
I ENCOURAGE
YOU TO
MEMORIZE
PSALM 91:1.**

Write it on an index card or save it to your phone to carry around with you.

FACE TO FACE

Have you ever wondered what Jesus's day-to-day life looked like? I have often wished I could be a fly on the wall of Jesus's world to see His expressions, hear the warmth of His voice, and melt into one of His hugs. I wonder what it was like to see firsthand His habits and quirks. Did He snort when He laughed? Did He act quieter and more reserved when He was tired? Was He a morning person or a night owl? What was the cadence of His voice when He taught and read Scripture? How exactly did He pray? Which words would He emphasize? Where did He pause in wonder?

The book of Psalms connects some of these dots for me. Jesus quoted from Psalms more than any other book in the Old Testament. It's safe to say He loved this book. It was woven into the fabric of His life and should be woven into ours.

Do you have a favorite psalm or a psalm that you recall helping you through a particular season in your life?

As we journey through Psalms, we will experience the authors' suffering, hurt, rejection, abandonment, deliverance, salvation, exaltation, victory, and great joy. It is a book full of every emotion imaginable, and at times it can be messy—just like life. Because Jesus often referenced this ancient book of poetry that is filled with such rawness and honesty, I know I have the freedom to be raw and transparent with Him, too.

UNINHIBITED COMMUNICATION

The book of Psalms gives us a beautiful road map of how to approach the Lord and communicate with Him, especially in prayer and worship. Through it, I've learned how to pour out the adoration of my heart to Jesus.

The words in this book remind me of Hannah praying when she was desperate from her barrenness and crying out for God to fill her womb with life (1 Sam. 1). Or David dancing with joyful abandonment before the Lord, completely unashamed and unmoved by what people thought about him (2 Sam. 6). Or the words that may have streamed from the mouth of the woman who used her tear-soaked hair to wipe the feet of Jesus in overwhelming love and gratitude for who He is and the relief and freedom she found in Him (Luke 7).

Perhaps their words sounded something like this....

I sought You LORD, and You answered me;
You delivered me from all my fears.
I look to You, and I am radiant;
my face will never again be covered with shame.
I have tasted and seen that You are good;
I am blessed because I have taken refuge in You.
How great are Your works, LORD,
how profound Your thoughts!
Who has forgiven all my sins
and healed all my diseases,
You redeemed my life from the pit
and crowned me with love and compassion,
You satisfy my desires with good things.
For You created my inmost being;
You knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
My frame was not hidden from You
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in Your book
before one of them came to be.
How precious to me are Your thoughts, God!
How vast is the sum of them!

(SNIPPETS OF PSALMS 34; 92; 103; 139, PARAPHRASED)

These rich “psalms offer us a way of joining in a chorus of praise and prayer that has been going on for millennia and across all cultures.”¹ I love these words from biblical scholar and author N. T. Wright who envisions:

. . . an entire world in which Jewish people were singing and praying the Psalms day by day and month by month, allowing them to mold their character, to shape their worldview, to frame their reading of the rest of scripture, and (not least) to fuel and resource the active lives they were leading and the burning hopes that kept them trusting their God, the world’s creator, even when everything seemed bleak and barren.²

We need this renewal of hope and intimacy in the body of Christ today. And not just for the church at large, but also in the depths of our own hearts. God’s love is infinite, and His well of life will never run dry. So, whether you’re new to life in Christ or you’ve tasted and seen for years, let’s keep pressing in for more of who He is.

What are some ways you can (or already do) use the psalms for direction in your life?

I genuinely love to indulge in the psalms. They are like water for my thirsty soul and dessert for my heart. Sometimes I memorize portions of them; sometimes I read them and reread them. I love to pray paraphrased versions of them and sing them in song. The book of Psalms is unique to any other book in Scripture, as it traverses through a variety of human experiences and emotions and proves to us that no matter what we experience, God is present with us when we call on Him. He listens to us, cares about us, walks with us, encamps around us, covers us, strengthens us, and most importantly, reigns above us and our circumstances.

Consider how many different people wrote the psalms over centuries of time. There are at least seven named authors, as well as fifty psalms that were written anonymously.³ Yet the style is largely the same—honesty and transparency before the Lord paired with praise and adoration of Him.

The psalms typically fall into one or more of these categories:

WISDOM	Instructive for godly living
ROYAL	Describing the coming messianic rule of Christ
LAMENT	A cry to God for divine deliverance
IMPRECATORY	Asking for judgment upon the psalmist's adversaries
THANKSGIVING	Expressing profound gratitude for God's blessings
PILGRIMAGE	Festive psalms that fostered celebration and praise as they traveled to Jerusalem for their annual feasts
ENTHRONEMENT OR PRAISE	Describing the majesty of God over His creation
TRUST	Reminding us of our need to put our hope and trust in the Lord and His ways

We'll be covering portions of most of these types of psalms in this study. Put a star next to the type(s) you're most curious to learn more about.

OFFERINGS OF PRAISE

LOOK UP **EPHESIANS 5:19** and write it in the space provided.

What does this verse suggest we use to speak to one another?

My husband, Jeremy, and I are both musicians, so we are often asked if we sing to each other. But I have to chuckle when I envision all of us serenading each other on a daily basis. As much as music does flow in our home, I believe Ephesians 5:19 is less about serenading one another and is more about how these spiritual songs (whether sung or spoken) connect our hearts to one another as we pursue the Lord. It's about finding God in the midst of each of our circumstances and grabbing the hand of our friends to do the same.

Today, I pray we will experience the fullness of what God has for us and none of us will get left behind in our journeys of growing in Him.

Spend a few minutes in prayer. Ask the Lord to open the eyes of your heart to understand and know Him more deeply through His Word.



IN STEP

READ PSALM 1:1 (slowly and out loud if you can).

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers.

PSALM 1:1 (NIV)

Psalm 1 is one of my favorite psalms. It was the first passage of Scripture I memorized as a little girl. I grew up near the beach in beautiful South Africa, and I would often go for walks on the beach with my family and our dogs. I loved playing a game with other people's footprints in the sand. I would try to step precisely where they had stepped, and the bigger the print, the longer the stride I would have to take. I remember walking behind my dad because his footsteps were so much bigger than mine. As I would step in his prints, they would generously engulf mine. I swung my arms as high as I could to stride widely and walk exactly where he did. And the higher I swung them, the bigger I imagined my stride to be as I stepped into the rhythm of each of his footsteps. I felt so free, so strong, and so big.

In the same childlike way I looked ahead at the steps of my earthly dad, I want to walk in step with Jesus—in His rhythm and His flow. I want to do whatever it takes to keep in step with Him. But often I feel like I'm more in step with the world than I am with my Savior.

I love how the New International Version (NIV) words Psalm 1:1, "Blessed is the one who does not walk *in step* with the wicked" (emphasis mine).



Fun fact: I added Psalm 1 as a rap at the end of a rock song called “Rush” by The Benjamin Gate. As with everything now, you can find it on YouTube if you’re curious!

We hear the word *blessed* a lot in our culture and in our churches. Write your own definition for *blessed* and then look up a dictionary definition and write that below your own.

Blessed gives me the idea of happiness—a healthy, fruitful, and beautiful life. One Bible dictionary defines it as “the religious joy people experience from being certain of salvation and thus of membership in the kingdom of God.”⁴ In other words, being *blessed* is a quality that flows from something deep within us that is not dependent on our circumstances for well-being but rather on the very nature of God and being aligned and connected to Him.

READ EPHESIANS 1:3-8. What stands out to you from these verses? What do they add to your understanding of Psalm 1:1?

I honestly feel overwhelmed when I read these words of Scripture. I’m blown away at the generosity of God, His nature, and His heart toward us, especially when I can be so slow to respond and so passive in how I pursue Him at times. He chose us to be His very own! The apostle Paul, who wrote those words in Ephesians, promised us that God will enrich our lives with every spiritual blessing (all those things he mentioned in Eph. 1) as we walk in step with Him and not with the world.

LOOK AT PSALM 1:1 again (in your Bible or on p. 23) and circle the three action words.

I love taking notes in my Bible, and I love to circle the action words. I want my theology—what I believe about God—to be practical and evident in how I live, so I take note when I see calls to action.

Walk. Stand. Sit.

Forward movement, then a pause, then a complete stop. This is a warning to us, and the progression is evident. The psalmist described a pattern of wandering and habitual sin that is familiar to all of us; I know it is to me. Rarely does a person move suddenly from being joyously committed to Jesus to joining in with those who are separated from God. Instead, our straying is a gradual walk down the wrong path and ends up taking a more permanent residence in our hearts. Just as there are shades of gray between black and white, attitudes in our hearts solidify if they are left unchecked.

Take a moment to ask yourself these questions:

What thoughts and themes frame your day?	
Is there a slowness in your heart to respond to the promptings of God?	
Whose counsel are you listening to?	

The path the righteous person (the follower of God) takes should be different from the path of the wicked (those who do not have a relationship with God). Have you ever run a three-legged race? You know, the game where you tie one of your legs to the leg of your race partner? If you want to have any hope of winning, you have to practice taking steps together. You have to find a rhythm, almost like a dance—otherwise, it’s an absolute disaster. Whom you surround yourself with matters. Where you choose to walk, stand, or sit will have life-shaping consequences and determine your destination.

LOOK UP THE FOLLOWING VERSES and write them down in the space provided.

<p>PSALM 1:2</p>	
<p>PSALM 16:11</p>	
<p>PSALM 119:1-2</p>	

What do you learn about the person following the “right” path from these verses and Psalm 1:1? What does she do? What does she not do?

When you survey your life, what path are you on? Think about the different facets of your day-to-day life: friends, time management, relationships with others, relationship or connectedness to God, financial decisions, your thoughts, your words, and your knee-jerk reactions. Which path do they more closely resemble?

We’ll see this more clearly in the coming days, but know this: The promise in Psalm 1 is that as we walk in the ways of God, we will not be dry, not fainting, not wanting; we will be happy, blessed, and prosperous in God’s eyes. Let’s purpose in our hearts to look to Him.

**Those who look to him are radiant with joy;
their faces will never be ashamed.**

PSALM 34:5

Take a moment to quiet your heart before the Lord and commit yourself to walk in step with Him today or even this hour. Ask Him to show you where there have been influences that are not beneficial to your relationship with Him or where you have been standing or even sitting in the ways of the world.

CONTINUE TO MEMORIZE PSALM 91:1. You can use the free printable available at lifeway.com/asforme and display it somewhere so you’ll see it often.



HUNGRY AND HOPEFUL

But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.

PSALM 1:2 (ESV)

I was nineteen when I first left South Africa, and believe it or not, the primary means of communicating with my parents was snail mail. Good ol' handwritten letters. I toured constantly and was barely ever home, so all the letters sent to me went to my record label. Anytime we were in town from tour, I rushed over to see if there was anything from back home. Thankfully, things have changed quite a bit in twenty years! I'm still on the opposite side of the world from most of my family, but we have WhatsApp® and FaceTime® to keep us connected on a regular basis.

For my fortieth birthday, Jeremy, our kids, and I took a thirty-five-hour trip back “home” to South Africa and showed up on my parents’ doorstep—a complete and utter surprise. To my absolute joy and according to plan, my parents were stunned and speechless. It was fantastic! I can't tell you enough how I ate up every ounce of my time with them for those few weeks I was home. No amount of technology replaces spending time with someone in real life.

While back with my parents, I found myself delighting in everything. I was like a little kid again, digging in my mom's pantry and her closet, sitting at my daddy's feet and devouring his words, paging through old photographs and newspaper clippings of things from my childhood, visiting all my favorite places, and eating all my favorite foods. I couldn't get enough. I took massive pleasure in reminiscing over the sights and sounds of the things dearest to me—all my African childhood adventures and memories.

I imagine when the psalmist talked about delighting in God, it was something like what I experienced going back to South Africa. I was overwhelmed by joy reliving all my favorite things and taking Jeremy and my children along with me. I want to approach God that way, too. I want to take delight and pleasure in all He has for me. To approach Him with childhood wonder and innocence, with a heart of remembrance and gratitude for all He has done.

As we grow in our delight for the Lord and long to be in His presence, we concern ourselves with His ways and thoughts. When we meditate on God's Word, we mentally chew on it and think about how it connects to our everyday lives and how it rules our actions. We take Jesus with us wherever we go—day and night.

READ PSALM 1:2 AGAIN. The psalmist talked about delighting in the Lord's instruction and meditating "day and night."

Look up the word *delight* in a dictionary or thesaurus and write the definition here.

Now, write a paraphrase of Psalm 1:2, using that definition of *delight* to help.

It's safe to say our delight often comes from gratitude and remembrance. Perhaps your life is complex, and you don't feel like you have much to be thankful for right now. That's OK. But never forget the access God has given you to simply sit with Him. No adverse situation can take His love away. Start at the beginning; remember what God has done (His creation, His salvation, His redemption) and what He has promised (you are secure in Him forever, and He will return to make everything right); align your emotions to the truth in His Word. You'll see this theme of *delighting* surfaces over and over again as we move through the psalms.



What is a way you have found yourself taking great pleasure in the Lord lately? If nothing comes to mind, recall a memory you have of feeling this way.

You are not stranded on the other side of the world from your heavenly Father. Instead, through Jesus's death and resurrection and through the presence of the Holy Spirit, you have been given constant access to come boldly into His presence. *Nothing* separates you from His love. (Read Rom. 8 if you don't believe me.)

READ THESE SCRIPTURE PASSAGES, which give us examples of how we should treat God's instructions to us:

Nothing separates you from God's love.

I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways. I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word.

PSALM 119:15-16 (NLT)

Take hold of instruction; actively seek it, grip it firmly and do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life.

PROVERBS 4:13 (AMP)

HIGHLIGHT or underline the words and phrases in the verses above that describe the relationship God wants you to have with His Word.

To meditate and delight in the law of the Lord is to pore over it, absorb it, not forget it, and cling to it firmly until it forms who you are.

I have an old-school letter board propped up in our kitchen. It has the chores listed for the week, as well as a little saying of some

kind. One day I wrote, “Stay hungry,” as a tongue-in-cheek response to my growing kids, who seemingly always are. More importantly, I wanted the reminder to never stop hungering after the things of the Lord. Sometimes we become so familiar with His presence and His promises that we neglect to make Him an active part of our lives or to allow the Holy Spirit to shape who we are. As Tim Keller writes in his devotional on the book of Psalms, “When we meditate, we work the truth down until it affects the heart.”⁵

How can you “stay hungry” on any given day?

I know for me, the cultivating of a hungry heart happens through ongoing prayer, worship, and frequent Bible reading. When I have these rhythms in my life, I’m quicker to recognize God being before all things and holding all things together (see Col. 1:17). I’m more starved for His work in my life, more desperate for His voice, and long for His wisdom. I know I need His Spirit to purify mine and help me walk in His power and not in my flesh, and I’m convinced He will never run out of resources to pour into my heart and help me pay attention to deeper things.

You will ask me, “Are you satisfied? Have you got all you want?” God forbid! With the deepest feeling of my soul, I can say I am satisfied with Jesus now; but there is also the consciousness of how much fuller the revelation can be of the exceeding abundance of His grace.⁶

ANDREW MURRAY

We have a longing in our hearts for more. We are here because we want to grow. We read God’s Word and attend Bible studies because we recognize the need for something significant in our lives, and we desire a deeper walk with Jesus.

So, let’s approach today hungry and hopeful for the change that comes from delighting in the Word of God.

Pray with me:

Lord, I desire for You to change me. I know You have promised to fill me when I hunger and thirst for righteousness. Help me delight myself in You and Your promises and not let them go. Revive my heart and be new to me, please Jesus. Amen.



DEEPLY ROOTED

For a few years, our family lived in Palm Desert, and I now know there is nothing quite like experiencing summers in the desert. Days sometimes get up to 120°F/50°C degrees! Living in the desert through desperately dry and scorching summers showed me the need for a reliable water source. Dehydration happens quickly, so you have to be intentional about drinking lots of water and making sure anything in your yard has some too. No matter how hot and dry the day was, though, the trees and flowers that had an adequate supply of water always had an abundance of color and blossoms. The citrus fruit was some of the best I have ever tasted.

Imagine the world we live in is the hot desert summer, and our trials are the scorching heat. How do we root ourselves deeply and keep our souls hydrated? Take some time to write down your thoughts or draw a picture.

READ PSALM 1:3 AND JEREMIAH 17:7-8

He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

PSALM 1:3

⁷The person who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence indeed is the LORD, is blessed.

⁸He will be like a tree planted by water: it sends its roots out toward a stream, it doesn't fear when heat comes, and its foliage remains green. It will not worry in a year of drought or cease producing fruit.

JEREMIAH 17:7-8

Jeremiah 17:7a. Circle the promises you notice in these two passages of Scripture and compare them to each other.

NOW, LOOK UP ISAIAH 50:7 and write it here.



God shaped
the disciples'
hearts and
minds as
they committed
themselves
wholly
to Him.

Isaiah 50:7 reminds me of the determination and unwavering passion of Jesus to persist in the excruciating task of the crucifixion that was set before Him. Luke wrote in his Gospel, “When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he [Jesus] *set his face* to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51, ESV, emphasis mine). Jesus knew what Jerusalem held for Him—the pain and agony of the death on the cross, the punishment He took on for sinful humanity. Still, He never faltered while being humiliated and persecuted to the point of death. He kept you and me and our eternal relationship with Him in His mind the entire time.

We clearly see Jesus’s steadfastness and commitment to His mission and call throughout Scripture. We also see a similar resolution and fervent desire in the disciples’ lives after the Holy Spirit filled them (Acts 2 and following). They were completely sold out to Jesus and the good news of the gospel, no matter what it cost them. They so delighted themselves in God, and He shaped their hearts and minds as they committed themselves wholly to Him. Like we saw in Psalm 1:3 and Jeremiah 17:7-8, being deeply rooted in God makes the fruit of His work abundantly evident in our lives.

My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.

PSALM 57:7 (KJV)

In your own words, what does it mean to have your heart “fixed” as the psalmist wrote in Psalm 57:7? Look up this verse in a few other Bible translations to help you answer. (Biblehub.com is a great tool to compare translations.)

Depending on what translation you’re reading, the Hebrew verb *kun* in Psalm 57:7 may be translated as *fixed, steadfast, confident, ready, committed, prepared, determined, or faithful*. This frame of

heart and mind doesn't happen by accident; it's active, intentional, and repetitive. It gives us the same word picture of the deeply rooted tree in Psalm 1:3.

Often our inconsistencies and shallowness cause us to wither and be unfruitful, and we miss out on what God desires for us. Our true mission on earth is to flourish by being satisfied with Him—knowing Him and making Him known.

By “flourish” I don't mean that every day goes according to our plan. I don't mean that we have a rocking social media account with tons of followers and people finally see the value of what we bring to society or appreciate us for who we are. Nothing that is me-centered will cause me to be fruitful.

What's vital to our lives is that we love Jesus, we are strengthened and filled with the Spirit, and we are obedient to the will of the Father. Our eyes are set like flint-rock on the only One who saves us and makes us whole. In a demanding world that pulls at us in a million different directions, I long to be steadfast, with character in my life that endures.

Psalm 16:8 adds to our understanding of what it looks like to be deeply rooted in Jesus:

I have set the LORD always before me: Because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

PSALM 16:8 (KJV)

How can you practice setting the Lord before you and letting Him guide you? What might it look like for you to do that today?

What do you find pulls your attention away from the things of the Lord? What do you need to do to get back to walking in step with Him?

Even though it is so easy to get caught up in the commotion of life—our worries, busyness, responsibilities, or sense of self-importance—let’s lock eyes with the Father and lean into Him. Let’s listen for His whispers and trust when He says, “You’re going to be OK.”

My great object is to lead you to love him who so loved you that he set his face like a flint in his determination to save you. O ye redeemed ones, on whose behalf this strong resolve was made—ye who have been bought by the precious blood of this steadfast, resolute Redeemer, come and think awhile of him, that your hearts may burn within you, and that your faces may be set like flints to live and die for him who lived and died for you!⁷

CHARLES SPURGEON

Spend some time in prayer and ask God to show you if there are any snares or hindrances in your life that continually distract or shift your eyes off Jesus. Ask Him to renew your love for Him today.

HE KNOWS OUR WAY

The wicked are not like this; instead, they are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand up in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.

PSALM 1:4-6

Look up the word *chaff* in the dictionary and write the definition here.

With that definition in mind, why do you think the psalmist chose this imagery to describe “the wicked,” the person who lives separated from God? What might characterize a person who is “like chaff”?

Literal *chaff* refers to the husks of corn or chopped straw, hay, or seeds that are separated from the good part of the harvest. For a person to be like chaff, it means her life lacks substance and conviction, and she is easily carried away by the influences and temptations around her. It is the opposite of being deeply rooted in the Lord as we considered yesterday. And like verse 5 mentions, the end result is that person will not be rooted in Jesus when He returns. The picture in these verses

makes it clear that God's ways are so much better than the ways of the world, and we can trust Him—even though it's hard at times.

In verse 6, we read “the LORD watches over the way of the righteous.” I am deeply comforted by the Lord watching over my way, but I realize that might not be a fun thought for some. It might sound intimidating or off-putting to think about God seeing everything you do. But when I remember how much God loves me and is for me, it's a relief to have Him see and know everything.

What about you? Are you more comforted or bothered by the thought of the Lord always watching over you?

Why should this thought be a comfort for the Christian, regardless of what He sees when He watches us?

I don't think we will ever fully comprehend God's love for us. Once we were considered “the wicked,” but instead of our lives being blown away like chaff (not needed, leftovers, forgotten, unremembered), Jesus has written our names in the book of life to be remembered forever, and He gives us citizenship—a home—in heaven.

I think about times when I have been wronged, and it's my word against the other person. I may never have the chance to give my defense, and I may never be able to convince others of what really happened, but I can rest in the fact that God sees me. He watches over my ways, and I can breathe a sigh of relief because of that. God is not some far-off “big man upstairs.” He is not a silent deity. His nature is one of relationship and love. He pursues us and is intimately and intricately involved in each of our lives. We are not at any point forgotten or uncared for by the Lord.

Take a moment to meditate on these verses and take them with you through the day. Pick one of them and write it on a piece of paper or a sticky note and put it somewhere you will see it often, or take a picture of it to keep on your phone.

JOB 23:10-11	Yet he knows the way I have taken; when he has tested me, I will emerge as pure gold. My feet have followed in his tracks; I have kept to his way and not turned aside (CSB).
PSALM 139:6	It is the most amazing feeling to know how deeply You know me, inside and out; the realization of it is so great that I cannot comprehend it (VOICE).
ISAIAH 49:16a	See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands (NLT).
JOHN 10:14	I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me (CSB).

NOW, LOOK UP THE FOLLOWING VERSES and write them in the space provided.

PSALM 56:8	MATTHEW 10:30

What do you learn about God's heart for you from these verses?

When my daughter was younger, she asked me if it was true that God actually sees her. As hard as it is for us to understand, God exists outside of time, space, and matter. He is not limited by the same barriers and boundaries we are. He can love us collectively and individually, all the time. So yes, He knows her, and you and me, deeply and personally.

The closest example I can think of to help me wrap my mind around this is my relationship with my children. I existed before them and became acquainted with each of them during pregnancy before they were even born. My pregnancies, birth experiences, and growing relationships have differed with all three of them. Yet even years before they were familiar with their own idiosyncrasies and personalities, I knew them.

My son recently had a curious little scowl on his face. I asked him what was wrong, and he flatly denied anything bothering him. I gave him a little space, and after some time passed, I approached him with what I thought was wrong. He was shocked to know I pinpointed precisely what he was thinking. He said, "How did you know?" It was easy for me; I'd been with him since day one. I'd watched his mannerisms and his personality develop over his entire life. The same is true for my daughters. I'm not claiming to know everything about my kids, but if I can understand these intricate details about my children's hearts, how much more does the all-knowing, infinitely wise God of the universe know about His creation?

It has always blown me away that Jesus knew Peter would deny Him, Judas would betray Him, and He would be abandoned by His closest friends in His darkest hour (Matt. 26). And yet He still chose them. So often, I can feel guilt over how I've ignored or maybe even abandoned Jesus. Perhaps I neglect Him in my thoughts or do not prayerfully consult Him when I make decisions. Perhaps, I try to be in the driver's seat too often. I flashback to my kids as toddlers insisting fiercely on their independence. "NO! I do it!"

I think we can all relate to times we've tried to take things into our own hands, perhaps to fix our messes, instead of inviting God into every space and detail of our lives. Yet, I'm so comforted by the Scriptures and by the character of God that His faithfulness will never leave us, despite our shortcomings.

READ PSALM 1 AGAIN and take a moment to sit quietly before the Lord. Write down any prayers, thoughts, or key insights you've learned from this week's study.

As we've seen this week, Psalm 1 sets a notable tone for the entire study of the book of Psalms. There are two different paths we can choose to walk. We see the evidence of the destructive practices of the person who picks man's ways, contrasted with the peace, satisfaction, and deliverance for those who walk day in and day out with God. Only one path makes sense, and from the rest of the psalms, we gain a glimpse into what life looks like for the person who daily chooses to pursue the Lord.

Father, please forgive me for trying to do things on my own. I thank You for Your faithfulness. Thank You for making a way for me to have a deep, fruitful, and meaningful life. Help me seek You above all things and delight myself in You constantly. Despite what goes on around me or regardless of how our culture acts, help me not be found standing, walking, or sitting in the ways of the world, but rather help the meditation of my heart to be on You alone. I know looking to You for what I need is the only way to be fully satisfied. Amen.

I hope you're enjoying memorizing Psalm 91. Review verse 1. Practice writing it down from memory.