

Praying the Psalms

Zoom Bible Study | Lesson Two

September 19, 2023

Praying the Psalms of Praise

Psalms 90 is the oldest of the psalms and Moses is the first composer of sacred hymnody.

Notice how Psalm 90 uses similar phrases to some of the Davidic psalms:

Moses's Psalm 90

Lord, you have been our dwelling place
throughout all generations.

² Before the mountains were born
or you brought forth the whole world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are
God.

¹³ **Relent**, Lord! How long will it be?
Have compassion on your servants.

¹⁴ Satisfy us in the morning with **your
unfailing love**, that we may sing for joy and
be glad all our days.

David's Psalms

Psalm 103:17: But from **everlasting to
everlasting** the Lord's love is with those who
fear him, and his righteousness with their
children's children—

Psalm 41:13: Praise be to the Lord, the God of
Israel, **from everlasting to everlasting**.
Amen and Amen.

Psalm 7:12: If he does not **relent**, he will
sharpen his sword; he will bend and string
his bow.

Psalm 143:8 Let the morning bring me word
of **your unfailing love**, for I have put my trust
in you.

Psalm 36:7: How priceless is **your unfailing
love**, O God!

Psalm 6:4: Turn, Lord, and deliver me; save
me because of **your unfailing love**.

Psalm 51:1: Have mercy on me, O God,
according to **your unfailing love**; according
to your great compassion blot out my
transgressions.

No doubt these psalms were passed down from generation to generation.

Praising God for His Personal Care

Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?

² My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

³ He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;

⁴ indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

⁵ The Lord watches over you—
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;

⁶ the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.

⁷ The Lord will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;

⁸ the Lord will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

This is one of the psalms of ascent—psalms that the people prayed when climbing the southern steps to the Temple. There is little doubt that Jesus would have climbed these stairs on his trips to the Temple.



This Psalm focuses on how God is there for us, all the time, when we're in trouble, when we're traveling, when we face harm or missteps.

How often do you think about this wonderful truth, that God is always available to you whenever and wherever you need him? He never takes his eyes off of you—never! He never slumbers or sleeps.

Q: Who do you go to first when you need help?

Spiritual Stumbling/"Foot Slipping"

The Psalmist says, "He will not let your foot slip." Psalm 94:18 repeats this truth: "*When I said, 'My foot is slipping,' your unfailing love, Lord, supported me.*"

We think of a stumble as a mis-step when you're walking that usually doesn't cause you to fall. But stumbling has consequences.



Some examples of “spiritual stumbling”

- Self-deception is a stumbling block and a very real trap. It can blind us to the true cause of problems and impede our ability to perceive situations accurately. Justification, rationalization, lying, blaming others, and failing to take ownership of our actions are just a few symptoms of self-deception.
- Comparing yourself to others.
- Wrong or harmful relationships.

Q: What are other examples of “spiritual stumbling”?

The Bible has a lot to say about stumbling.

Psalm 37:23-24:

The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand.

Q: Describe a day when you are delighting in the Lord.



Falling has much greater consequences, as a rule. It can take you out of operation for periods of time. It can cause body damage and pain that can endure for a long time, even without end. And, of course, it can and does sometimes lead to death.

Proverbs 4:11 – 16:

I instruct you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. ¹² When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble. Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life. ¹⁴ Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evildoers. ¹⁵ Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way. ¹⁶ For they cannot rest until they do evil; they are robbed of sleep till they make someone stumble.

What are you doing in your life to walk in wisdom? Are you “holding on to” what you know to be true?

The enemy of your soul, that wicked enemy, is looking for the smallest opening in your life and mine to get back in there.

Time and again the New Testament Scriptures exhort Christians to stand—to keep their foot from stumbling.

Galatians 5:1:

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Philippians 4:1:

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

2 Thessalonians 2:15:

So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

James 5:8:

You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.

Satan will do his best to cause you to stumble, to just catch you off-guard and make you slip up. Has that happened to you lately?

The strongest teaching about avoiding stumbling comes from Jesus:

Matthew 5:29 – 30:

If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Q: What do you think Jesus meant?

“I choose the pain of discipline over the pain of regret.”

Q: What do you need to put out of your life so that you won't stumble?

Paul told the Ephesians to be prepared for stumbling so to avoid it:

Ephesians 6:11:

Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

If/when you are facing an unknown future, not sure what path to take, not confident that you are in the right place, Psalm 121 is for you. Read it every day. Pray it every day.

Praising God for His Care and Forgiveness**Psalm 103** *(selected verses)*

Praise the Lord, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
² Praise the Lord, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
³ who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
⁴ who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

⁸ The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.
⁹ He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
¹³ As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;
¹⁴ for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.

David says “forget not all his benefits.” What are the benefits David lists?

Psalm 40:1 – 3

I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry.² He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.³ He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him.

Q: Which benefits have you been forgetting lately?

How do you forget something on purpose?

- What triggers wrong memories? Learn to avoid them.
- Replace wrong memories with good ones.
- Live in today, not yesterday or tomorrow.

The good news is God has compassion on us. Aren't you glad that God does NOT give you what you deserve!



You've been crowned with love and compassion. Is your crown falling off? Do you need to straighten your crown and remember that God has crowned you?

Psalm 103 is there to help you cope with and be set free from your past, from bad memories, from regret and discouragement. Use it; pray it; read it often.

Praising God for His Creativity in You

Psalm 139:1 – 6; 13 - 16

You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me.

²You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

³You discern my going out and my lying
down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

⁴Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely.

⁵You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.

⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for
me, too lofty for me to attain.

¹³For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's
womb.

¹⁴I praise you because I am fearfully and
wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

¹⁵My 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.

¹⁶Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were
written in your book
before one of them came to be.

Q: What is there about the way God has created you that you don't like; that you wish you could change?

Closing

Psalm 116:12 – 14:

What shall I return to the Lord

for all his goodness to me?

¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the Lord

¹⁴ I will fulfill my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people.

How can you payback the Lord?

Acts 17:25:

And he (God) is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.

This week be intentional to pray and praise God based on these Psalms we've looked at today.

- Praise God for his personal care: He never takes his eyes off you. He watches over you night and day because he never sleeps.
- Praise God that he keeps you from falling, even when you stumble.
- Praise God for his forgiveness; that he remembers your sin against you no more. That he does not give you what you deserve, but instead gives you mercy and peace.
- Praise God for his creativity in you.