

SIT
WITH
ME

AN INVITATION TO
MEET WITH JESUS
IN GOD'S WORD



A FAITHPATH RESOURCE



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PRAYING GOD'S WORD

WEEK THREE

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PRAYING GOD'S WORD

My wife and I love roller coasters. At one point in our idealistic early years of marriage, we aspired to ride every roller coaster in the United States as a couple. That would have been quite an accomplishment and feat. I told you it was idealistic.

I think what we both love about coasters is the thrill of speed combined with the powerful transformation that happens in almost everyone that rides. You know what I mean - that confidence in the waiting line that slowly morphs into fear and regret as the car clicks up the large hill and you question all of your life choices. The last click releases the chain of cars and you hold on for about 60 seconds of thrill, at the end of which your regret has disappeared and been gladly replaced by wonder, adrenaline and a conniving attempt to keep your seat for an immediate second ride.

I love hearing the verbal shouts, begging requests and loud prayers from the riders on the way up. Suddenly most people in the car are theists, calling out to God for rescue. It is a voluntary ride but at that moment, the coaster is transformed into a prayer service. I also love that you cannot get off at this point. You are secure, forced to accept the connection between the movement and the emotions. One feeds the other. The other is made exciting by the one.

Many understand reading God's Word as an altogether separate practice from prayer. This is a misunderstanding. Like in a roller coaster, with movement and emotion, you cannot separate the reading from the praying of God's Word. You are strapped in for both. In fact, one of the most powerful ways to read and study Scripture is to pray it. And one of the most potent and attentive ways to pray is to pray God's Word. This is a key way to harness the movement of God's Word and move with God in it.

This is perhaps most clearly seen in the famous prayer that Jesus prayed. With almost all Christian denominations praying the Lord's Prayer, it is a central part of Christian worship and likely has been since the disciples of Jesus and the first church. Have you ever worked through this ancient prayer as a personal prayer from you to God?

*Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed (or Holy) be Your name,
Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Yours is in the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

- Matthew 6:9-13

Donald Whitney, in his short book *Praying the Bible* shares the following responses of people who have explored this practice.⁴ "My prayer was more about God and less about me." "It seemed like a real conversation with a real Person." "I had greater assurance that I was praying God's will." "I thought more deeply about what the Bible says." "The Psalm spoke directly to the life situation I am in right now."

You will find written prayers in almost every single book of the Bible. God's Word was intended to be used in this way. It pleases God to pray His Word. It also shines a new light on His Word, opening up truth and application that other reading or studying methods may not.

To pray the Scripture you will build on what you have learned already. As you read slowly and intentionally, pause after each verse or phrase and turn it into a prayer. Over time, this will become more natural and almost immediate.

Consider **Philippians 4:6-7**. *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

Paul's commanded response to the anxieties of life is prayer. In response, the peace of God comes rushing in to guard your heart and mind. This is revealed to you in the Word of God, which is meant to be applied in real prayer, in real time.

Found almost exactly in the center of your Bible, the book of Psalms is unique to the rest of Scripture for several reasons. First, the Psalms are prayers. Second, they are songs. They were originally sung and were written to be sung. They are worship songs. Third, they are written to God. All of Scripture is inspired by God and revealed to us for our transformation, but whereas most of the Bible is written from God, to us, the Psalms are largely written to God.

Think about that. God is inviting us to speak to Him and He is teaching us how. Since God is the ultimate author of Scripture, as the Holy Spirit of God inspired human authors, then praying the Psalms is truly praying the words of God, back to God. They use His language, His vocabulary and share His sentiments.

As such, the Psalms will be our primary texts this week in our study. I pray they become regular "go-to" stops for you as you learn to sit with God consistently. Personally, I have studied and prayed my way through the Book of Psalms nearly continuously for many years as a pastor. I cannot begin to describe the joy I have found there. I do not know what I would have done without them.

WEEK THREE

PRAYING GOD'S WORD

MEMORY VERSE

“Make me to know Your ways,
O LORD; teach me Your paths. Lead
me in Your truth and teach me, for
You are the God of my salvation.”

- Psalm 25:4-5

Commit this scripture to memory. This is a powerful way to constantly engage God's Word and write it on your heart.

Consider writing it on a post-it or note-card and putting it in a prominent place like your bathroom mirror or car dashboard. Work on it each day. This simple practice reminds you to dwell on God's Word constantly.



INSIGHTS

THE PSALMS

Consider praying through these Psalms in particular situations or times of specific need:

Psalm 1 - A prayer for personal spiritual growth

Psalm 4 - A prayer after a really bad day

Psalm 6 - A prayer for times of stress and anxiety

Psalm 8 - A worshipful prayer celebrating God as Creator

Psalm 9 - A prayer of thanksgiving

Psalm 13 - A prayer for trust in God in the midst of great pain

Psalm 16 - A prayer of worship and a prayer for help

Psalm 23 - A prayer for peace, faith and nearness to God

Psalm 25 - A prayer for guidance and truth

Psalm 27 - A prayer against fear

Psalm 28 - Asking God for an answer to your prayers

Psalm 32 - A prayer of confession

Psalm 37 - A prayer of hope in the midst of personal attack

Psalm 43 - A request for help and hope

Psalm 51 - A prayer of confession and brokenness

Psalm 59 - A prayer for deliverance from enemies

Psalm 62 - A prayer of desperation and hope in God

Psalm 63 - A very personal prayer of worship

Psalm 66 - A prayer of worship and joy

Psalm 70 - A prayer in times of great pressure or trouble

Psalm 78 - A prayer to remember all God has done

Psalm 86 - A needy prayer of trust in God

Psalm 90 - A powerful prayer of worship to God

Psalm 103 - A prayer of praise for God's rich mercies

Psalm 116 - A prayer of thanksgiving

Psalm 136 - A celebration of God's grace

Psalm 139 - A praise prayer of God's power

Psalm 143 - A prayer for guidance

Psalm 150 - A song prayer of worship

WEEK THREE / DAY ONE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

"Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your Word."

Read **Psalm 23**.

Now read it through again, translating every phrase into a personal prayer. Start by praying for yourself. Take time to linger and think about each phrase, each line, each verse before moving to the next.

Write your prayer in your journal or below.

WEEK THREE / DAY TWO

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

"Make me walk in the path of Your word, for that is where my happiness is found."

Read **Ephesians 3:14-21**.

This is one of the most sublime examples of prayer in the New Testament. Read it through slowly several times and then translate the prayer into your life. Pray it over yourself first. Then choose another individual to pray it over. Consider praying it for an unbeliever.

What do you notice about what Paul prays for? Identify the main action words and subjects.

WEEK THREE / DAY THREE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"The unfolding of Your word gives light.
Let your Word be a lamp to my feet, a
light to my path."*

Read **Psalm 27**.

Read it once before slowing down and translating each verse into a prayer.

Read it again and pray for someone else.

Record your prayers in your journal.

WEEK THREE / DAY FOUR

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Your Word, O God, revives me.
It comforts me in all of my troubles."*

Read **John 17:1-26**.

This is one of Jesus' most magnificent prayers, prayed just hours before He was betrayed, captured, beaten and killed.

Pay close attention to what Jesus says and the requests He makes to His Father.

Read it again, slow down and pray the same things for you, your family, your church family and others.

BE FREE

If at any point you fall behind in your daily readings, do not give way to guilt, despair or resignation. Never let yesterday's failure keep you from the beauty God wants to reveal today. His mercies are ever new. His grace is abundant. Just skip ahead and jump right back in. God wants to speak to you right now.

WEEK THREE / DAY FIVE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

"You are my hiding place and shield, O God. I wait for Your word. Sustain me according to Your word, that I may live."

Read **Psalm 13**.

This is another prayer of King David. Notice how David moves in this prayer. Where does he begin? What does he express? What questions does he ask? Where does he end?

David says some hard things in this prayer.

Read it again.

Come alongside these words and translate them into your own prayer life. Record your thoughts in your journal.

WEEK THREE / DAY SIX

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

"Establish my footsteps in Your word, and do not let sin have any dominion over me."

Read **Psalm 103**.

This is one of the most beautiful Psalms in the book. Consider what it says about you and about God.

Reflect this psalm back to God in a prayer of worship and joy. Thank Him repeatedly for the things mentioned in this psalm. Let it create for you a private moment of worship and joy in God.

COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

Share with your group how you engaged the reading and study this week. Did you sit with Jesus regularly?

How did this study help you explore God's Word more deeply and inspire you to sit with Jesus more consistently?

In Psalm 23, what does it mean to you that the Lord is your Shepherd?

What are some ways God cares for His sheep?
How has God tenderly cared for you?

Share a time when you experienced God's presence, peace, and provision.

In Paul's day, people usually stood to pray. In Ephesians 3:14, Paul "bows his knees." What does Paul's posture indicate about his heart? Discuss some helpful postures you take, or can take, while praying.

What three things does David ask of the Lord in Psalm 27:4?
How would these apply to your life right now?

What do you see about Jesus' prayer life from John 17?

What is the journey of Psalm 13?
Where does David begin and where does he end?

What are the five benefits in Psalm 103:2-5?
Why would the psalmist urge us to not forget these benefits?

What characteristics of God are listed in Psalm 103:8-10?
For which of these benefits are you most grateful?

How can a person who does not feel like praising God do it from their heart?

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