



SINKING ROOTS
AND BEARING FRUIT
DIGGING DEEPER INTO THE PSALMS

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Sinking Roots and Bearing Fruit: Digging Deeper into the Psalms

Sinking roots and bearing fruit...these words sum up the goal of this study!

Rather than simply skimming along the surface, we want to learn to sink our roots down deeply into the soil of God's Word and draw nourishment from this Book He has graciously written for us. We want to learn to ask good questions and give careful attention to a text. And we want to learn to linger in a given passage and incline our ear to hear what God has to say to us about who He is, who we are, and how He would have us live as followers of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Although all Scripture is God-breathed and deserving of our focus, in this study we will be delving into the Psalms, a book of the Bible that is well known and well loved, but not often well studied. Each week, we will work through a set of 15 questions designed to help us contemplate and draw insight from one of these poetic passages. Our goal in this process is not merely to gain academic information, but to obtain life-giving food that will help bring about the transformation God is committed to accomplishing within us.

Written over the course of a thousand years and penned by the hands of several human authors, the book of Psalms is made up of 150 poems and prayers written to or about God. This hymn book of the Bible gives us glimpse after glimpse of God's greatness, moving us to praise Him for His perfections. Its passages bid us to taste and see that the LORD is good, leaving our hearts hungry for more of Him. The words of the Psalms echo the deepest longings of our souls and supply us with language to present our own prayers and petitions to God.

Though written long before Jesus walked upon this earth, the Psalms point to His promised arrival and testify to the ministry He would one day perform. Many of the prayers offered up on the pages of this book find their ultimate fulfillment in our Savior.

As we study this portion of God's Word, we are sure to discover a wellspring of riches...so if you're ready...let's begin sinking roots, bearing fruit, and digging deeper into the Psalms!

*Sinking Roots and Bearing Fruit:
Digging Deeper into the Psalms*

<i>Week of Sept 13th</i>	<i>Psalms 1 (p.7)</i>
<i>Week of Sept 20th</i>	<i>Psalms 16 (p.12)</i>
<i>Week of Sept 27th</i>	<i>Psalms 19 (p.17.)</i>
<i>Week of Oct 4th</i>	<i>Psalms 32 (p.23)</i>
<i>Week of Oct 11th</i>	<i>Psalms 42 (p.29)</i>
<i>Week of Oct 18th</i>	<i>Psalms 62 (p.35)</i>
<i>Week of Oct 25th</i>	<i>Psalms 95 (p.41)</i>
<i>Week of Nov 1st</i>	<i>Psalms 138 (p.47)</i>
<i>Week of Nov 8th</i>	<i>Psalms 143 (p.52)</i>
<i>Week of Nov 15th</i>	<i>Psalms 146 (p.58)</i>

SCRIPTURE STUDY SKILLS

INFORMATION

Before diving in and studying a passage of Scripture, it is first good to step back and gather a bit of background information. This helps to keep the passage you are considering in its correct context. A good place to begin (where possible) is to note the **AUTHOR** (Who was the human writer of this passage?), the **AUDIENCE** (Who was this intended for?) and the **AIM** (What was the author's main reason for writing?).

SUMMARIZATION – (Q. 1)

After reading the passage several times, in a sentence or two, use your own words to sum up what the author is saying in the portion of Scripture you are studying. Summarizing helps you to focus on the text and better understand what the author is communicating.

OBSERVATION – (Q's 2–6)

Observation involves digging deeper into the passage at hand, taking time to reflect and ponder and notice details that might not stand out at first glance. During the observation process, more insight is gained into the meaning of the text and the implications it has for everyday life. Observation helps us to slow down and see beneath the surface, and is a means of gaining nourishment for the soul.

INVESTIGATION – (Q's 7–9)

Investigation takes the time to go beyond the given passage. If observation is going deeper, then investigation is going wider – using cross-references or a concordance to consider other places in the Bible that address similar topics; using dictionaries (English, Greek, or Hebrew) to look up word meanings; and using study Bibles, commentaries, or other Bible translations to gain greater understanding into anything that seems unclear or confusing (See p.6 for a list of some helpful study resources).

APPLICATION – (Q's 10–13)

Application is where observing transitions to obeying. The goal of application is not to create a list of rules to govern our behavior or to generate a “to-do” or a “to-don't” list, but rather, to consider what it looks like to apply the truths of this passage in everyday life. This part of the study process considers how the passage applies to our thoughts, our desires and our actions as followers of Christ. Application asks the question, “God, by your grace, how would you have me walk in this truth?”

EXALTATION – (Q. 14)

This is arguably the highest goal of studying Scripture – to discover praiseworthy truths about God in His Word and then use those truths as fuel for worship. We want to glorify God by proclaiming His greatness through the truths revealed in the passage at hand.

MEDITATION – (Q. 15)

Meditation is when you choose a particular verse or thought from the passage to ponder and pray over outside the Bible study time. As you dwell on this truth throughout your day(s), you gain food for your own soul, as well as nourishment to share with those God places in your path.

CONVERSATION

This is not a separate category, but from start to finish, as you study a passage of Scripture, have an ongoing conversation with God. Ask Him to give you understanding. Ask Him to give you a greater hunger and love for His Word. Ask Him what it looks like, in your current life circumstances, to embrace and apply what He is saying. Thank Him for His Spirit, who gives you the strength to obey. And pray the truths of this passage over others in your life, asking God to minister to them and to help them genuinely know Him, love Him, and walk in relationship with Him.

SCRIPTURE STUDY RESOURCES

A HUMBLE, HUNGRY HEART AND THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT –

Although not technically “resources,” the two most important things to possess when you open up the Word of God are a teachable spirit that desires to discover and delight in the truth of who God is and a dependence on the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to be our Helper in understanding and applying His Word.

STUDY BIBLE – A study Bible provides introductions and key information related to each book of the Bible, as well as notes and cross-references to help in understanding the passages.

The ESV Study Bible and the *CSB Tony Evans Study Bible* are two good options.

CONCORDANCE – A concordance provides a list of the words in the Bible along with references to tell where they occur. This is a helpful tool if you want to do a word study or a topical study. For example, you could look up the word “wisdom” and see all of the places it is mentioned in Scripture. Many Bibles have a short concordance in the back.

Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance provides an additional benefit by allowing you to look up the original Greek or Hebrew meaning of the word.

APPS AND WEBSITES

The Bible Project (bibleproject.com) – a free site that contains illustrated videos that provide overviews of different books of the Bible and of various biblical themes. It is a great resource for visual learners.

You Version Bible App – a free app that offers different Bible translations, reading plans, and devotional material.

Dwell – A Scripture listening app that allows you to hear the Bible being read (with several voices to choose from) as well as explore different stories and passages.

Bible Hub (biblehub.com) – This site provides a number of study tools including commentaries, dictionaries, and sermons.

COMMENTARIES – These are books written to help explain and give insight into the books of the Bible. Although commentaries can be highly beneficial, they should be used with caution, remembering that they are written by imperfect people.

Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible is one that many people through the years have found nourishment from.

Psalm 1

¹Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
²but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.

³He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.

⁴The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
⁶for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

(Scripture reference)

(What would you title this passage?)

SUMMARIZATION

1 – In a sentence or two, how would you sum up the main message conveyed in this passage?

OBSERVATION

2 – What words or phrases stand out to you? (Look for those that are repeated, that are descriptive, or that simply catch your attention.)

3 – Does the writer use any imagery, illustrations, or figurative language to communicate truth? If so, how?

4 – As you read through this passage, list any commands to obey, warnings to heed, promises to embrace, or wise counsel to follow.

5 – What does this passage tell you about yourself or about people in general?

6 – What does God reveal about Himself in this passage? How might this truth (or truths!) strengthen your relationship with Him?

INVESTIGATION

7 – Choose one word from the text (or more if you'd like) and look up its meaning to help gain greater insight into what the passage is communicating. (You could use an English dictionary or you could use a Hebrew or Greek dictionary.)

8 – Find at least one other place in the Bible that addresses a truth contained in this passage. (Using cross-references or a concordance is helpful here.)

9 – Is there anything in this passage that seems confusing or unclear? If so, write it below, and then use a study Bible, a commentary, or a different Bible translation to help gain greater understanding.

APPLICATION

10 – As you consider this portion of God’s Word, what is one way you have seen God (or are currently seeing God) work in your life to make you more like His Son? (Think in terms of your thoughts, your desires, and your actions.)

11 – As you dwell in this text, is there a burden the Holy Spirit is leading you to release, a struggle He is leading you to surrender, or a sin He is leading you to confess?

12 – Is there a practical step of obedience God is prompting you to take based on this passage?

13 – How does this passage lead you to pray for yourself and for others?

EXALTATION

14 – How can you use the truths from this passage as a means to offer personal praise and thanksgiving to God? (You can write it, you can speak it, you can shout it, you can sing it...but by all means...give Him praise!)

MEDITATION

15 – Choose one thought that God impressed on you from this portion of Scripture that would be beneficial to keep pondering and praying over throughout the next several days. Write it out in a brief sentence that will be easy to remember so that you can continue to draw nourishment from it as you meditate on it.

Psalm 16

A Miktam of David

¹Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

²I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord;
I have no good apart from you."

³As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones,
in whom is all my delight.

⁴The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out
or take their names on my lips.

⁵The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.

⁶The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

⁷I bless the LORD who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.

⁸I have set the LORD always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure.

¹⁰For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,
or let your holy one see corruption.

¹¹You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

(Scripture reference)

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Psalm 19

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David

¹The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

²Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.

³There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.

⁴Their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.

In them he has set a tent for the sun,
⁵which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.

⁶Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them,
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

⁷The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul;

the testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple;

⁸the precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is pure,
enlightening the eyes;

⁹the fear of the LORD is clean,
enduring forever;

the rules of the LORD are true,
and righteous altogether.

¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.

¹² Who can discern his errors?

Declare me innocent from hidden faults.

¹³ Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins;
let them not have dominion over me!

Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

(Scripture reference)

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Psalm 32

A Maskil of David

¹Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

²Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

³For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

⁴For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. *Selah*

⁵I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not cover my iniquity;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. *Selah*

⁶Therefore let everyone who is godly
offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;
surely in the rush of great waters,
they shall not reach him.

⁷You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance. *Selah*

⁸I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

⁹Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding,
which must be curbed with bit and bridle,
or it will not stay near you.

¹⁰ Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD.

¹¹ Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

(Scripture reference)

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Psalm 42

To the choirmaster. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah

¹As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.

²My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God?

³My tears have been my food
day and night,

while they say to me all the day long,

“Where is your God?”

⁴These things I remember,
as I pour out my soul:

how I would go with the throng

and lead them in procession to the house of God

with glad shouts and songs of praise,

a multitude keeping festival.

⁵Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,

my salvation ⁶and my God.

My soul is cast down within me;

therefore I remember you

from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,

from Mount Mizar.

⁷ Deep calls to deep
at the roar of your waterfalls;
all your breakers and your waves
have gone over me.

⁸ By day the LORD commands his steadfast love,
and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.

⁹ I say to God, my rock:
“Why have you forgotten me?
Why do I go mourning
because of the oppression of the enemy?”

¹⁰ As with a deadly wound in my bones,
my adversaries taunt me,
while they say to me all the day long,
“Where is your God?”

¹¹ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
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Psalm 62

To the choirmaster: according to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David

¹For God alone my soul waits in silence;
from him comes my salvation.

²He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.

³How long will all of you attack a man
to batter him,

like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?

⁴They only plan to thrust him down from his high position.

They take pleasure in falsehood.

They bless with their mouths,

but inwardly they curse. *Selah*

⁵For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence,
for my hope is from him.

⁶He only is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

⁷On God rests my salvation and my glory;
my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

⁸Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before him;

God is a refuge for us. *Selah*

⁹Those of low estate are but a breath;
those of high estate are a delusion;

in the balances they go up;

they are together lighter than a breath.

¹⁰ Put no trust in extortion;
set no vain hopes on robbery;
if riches increase, set not your heart on them.

¹¹ Once God has spoken;
twice have I heard this:
that power belongs to God,
¹² and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love.
For you will render to a man
according to his work.

(Scripture reference)

(What would you title this passage?)

SUMMARIZATION

1 – In a sentence or two, how would you sum up the main message conveyed in this passage?

OBSERVATION

2 – What words or phrases stand out to you? (Look for those that are repeated, that are descriptive, or that simply catch your attention.)

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Psalm 95

¹ Oh come, let us sing to the LORD;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

² Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

³ For the LORD is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.

⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.

⁵ The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.

⁶ Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

⁷ For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.

Today, if you hear his voice,

⁸ do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,
as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,

⁹ when your fathers put me to the test
and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.

¹⁰ For forty years I loathed that generation
and said, "They are a people who go astray in their heart,
and they have not known my ways."

¹¹ Therefore I swore in my wrath,
“They shall not enter my rest.”

(Scripture reference)

(What would you title this passage?)

SUMMARIZATION

1 – In a sentence or two, how would you sum up the main message conveyed in this passage?

OBSERVATION

2 – What words or phrases stand out to you? (Look for those that are repeated, that are descriptive, or that simply catch your attention.)

3 – Does the writer use any imagery, illustrations, or figurative language to communicate truth? If so, how?

4 – As you read through this passage, list any commands to obey, warnings to heed, promises to embrace, or wise counsel to follow.

5 – What does this passage tell you about yourself or about people in general?

6 – What does God reveal about Himself in this passage? How might this truth (or truths!) strengthen your relationship with Him?

INVESTIGATION

7 – Choose one word from the text (or more if you'd like) and look up its meaning to help gain greater insight into what the passage is communicating. (You could use an English dictionary or you could use a Hebrew or Greek dictionary.)

8 – Find at least one other place in the Bible that addresses a truth contained in this passage. (Using cross-references or a concordance is helpful here.)

9 – Is there anything in this passage that seems confusing or unclear? If so, write it below, and then use a study Bible, a commentary, or a different Bible translation to help gain greater understanding.

APPLICATION

10 – As you consider this portion of God’s Word, what is one way you have seen God (or are currently seeing God) work in your life to make you more like His Son? (Think in terms of your thoughts, your desires, and your actions.)

11 – As you dwell in this text, is there a burden the Holy Spirit is leading you to release, a struggle He is leading you to surrender, or a sin He is leading you to confess?

12 – Is there a practical step of obedience God is prompting you to take based on this passage?

13 – How does this passage lead you to pray for yourself and for others?

EXALTATION

14 – How can you use the truths from this passage as a means to offer personal praise and thanksgiving to God? (You can write it, you can speak it, you can shout it, you can sing it...but by all means...give Him praise!)

MEDITATION

15 – Choose one thought that God impressed on you from this portion of Scripture that would be beneficial to keep pondering and praying over throughout the next several days. Write it out in a brief sentence that will be easy to remember so that you can continue to draw nourishment from it as you meditate on it.

Psalm 138
Of David

¹I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;
²I bow down toward your holy temple
and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your
faithfulness,
for you have exalted above all things
your name and your word.
³On the day I called, you answered me;
my strength of soul you increased.
⁴All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, O LORD,
for they have heard the words of your mouth,
⁵and they shall sing of the ways of the LORD,
for great is the glory of the LORD.
⁶For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly,
but the haughty he knows from afar.
⁷Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve my life;
you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies,
and your right hand delivers me.
⁸The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands.

(Scripture reference)

(What would you title this passage?)

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Psalm 143
A Psalm of David

¹Hear my prayer, O LORD;
give ear to my pleas for mercy!
In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!

²Enter not into judgment with your servant,
for no one living is righteous before you.

³For the enemy has pursued my soul;
he has crushed my life to the ground;
he has made me sit in darkness like those long dead.

⁴Therefore my spirit faints within me;
my heart within me is appalled.

⁵I remember the days of old;
I meditate on all that you have done;
I ponder the work of your hands.

⁶I stretch out my hands to you;
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. *Selah*

⁷Answer me quickly, O LORD!
My spirit fails!
Hide not your face from me,
lest I be like those who go down to the pit.

⁸Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love,
for in you I trust.
Make me know the way I should go,
for to you I lift up my soul.

⁹ Deliver me from my enemies, O LORD!

I have fled to you for refuge.

¹⁰ Teach me to do your will,

for you are my God!

Let your good Spirit lead me

on level ground!

¹¹ For your name's sake, O LORD, preserve my life!

In your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble!

¹² And in your steadfast love you will cut off my enemies,

and you will destroy all the adversaries of my soul,

for I am your servant.

(Scripture reference)

(What would you title this passage?)

SUMMARIZATION

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OBSERVATION

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Psalm 146

¹Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

²I will praise the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

³Put not your trust in princes,
in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.
⁴When his breath departs, he returns to the earth;
on that very day his plans perish.

⁵Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD his God,

⁶who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them,
who keeps faith forever;

⁷who executes justice for the oppressed,
who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free;

⁸the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.

⁹The LORD watches over the sojourners;
he upholds the widow and the fatherless,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

¹⁰The LORD will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Praise the LORD!

(Scripture reference)

(What would you title this passage?)

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OBSERVATION

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