

Welcome to the study!

I am so excited to begin this study with all of you. The book of Psalms is my absolute favorite book of the Bible for so many reasons, primarily because it has been with me through every stage of my spiritual journey.

My first memory of reading the Bible was when I would read the Psalms aloud to my great grandmother. She loved to hear them and would always ask me to read them when I went to visit her. She, like so many others, understood the comfort that comes from reading through the Psalms.

But comfort isn't all we can get from the book of Psalms! This is one of the richest books in Scripture, filled with theology about God, prophetic words about Christ, and a multitude of calls to praise and thanksgiving.

The psalmists cover an array of human emotions, as well: sadness, joy, anger, confusion, loneliness, delight, fear, and more. Regardless of what we're going through, we can find a connection to it in the Psalms.

Throughout this study, we'll study the Psalms for a variety of purposes, but the one that will be most significant is the idea of learning to dwell with God in all circumstances. That is what I think the Psalms teach us to do better than any other book.

To do this, we'll dig into the Psalms deeply and learn how to glean the most out of them. We'll look at some of the original word meanings (don't worry - you won't need to know Greek or Hebrew!), we'll study several different types of psalms, and we'll work on applying their truths to our own lives.

In the first week, we'll focus on looking at the Psalms as a whole. We'll look at their structure, different types, authors, and purpose. This week will be more of an overview / introduction and you will not have specific homework to do. I do encourage you to read through the introductory materials that week, though.

Beginning in week two, though, we will be studying several Psalms a week. Each week will focus on a specific way to dwell with God. We will learn what they mean in their context, how we can apply them to our own lives, and then talk about how we can help others apply biblical truths from the Psalms to their lives, as well.

My prayer for us all is that we will be able to truly commune with God during this study and spend time dwelling with Him in His presence. Through that time, we will not only learn more about Him but will also become more like Him. As we become more Christlike, we will also seek ways to reach our community for Christ as well and help them along in their spiritual journeys, wherever they may be.

Thank you for joining in the study. I look forward to learning more with you!

Kelly Cooper

OVERVIEW

1

INTRODUCTION TO THE PSALMS STUDY

2

SITUATING OURSELVES TO DWELL WITH GOD

3

DWELLING ON GOD'S WISDOM

4

DWELLING ON GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

5

DWELLING ON GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

OVERVIEW

6

DWELLING ON GOD'S GLORY

7

DWELLING WITH GOD IN PRAYER

8

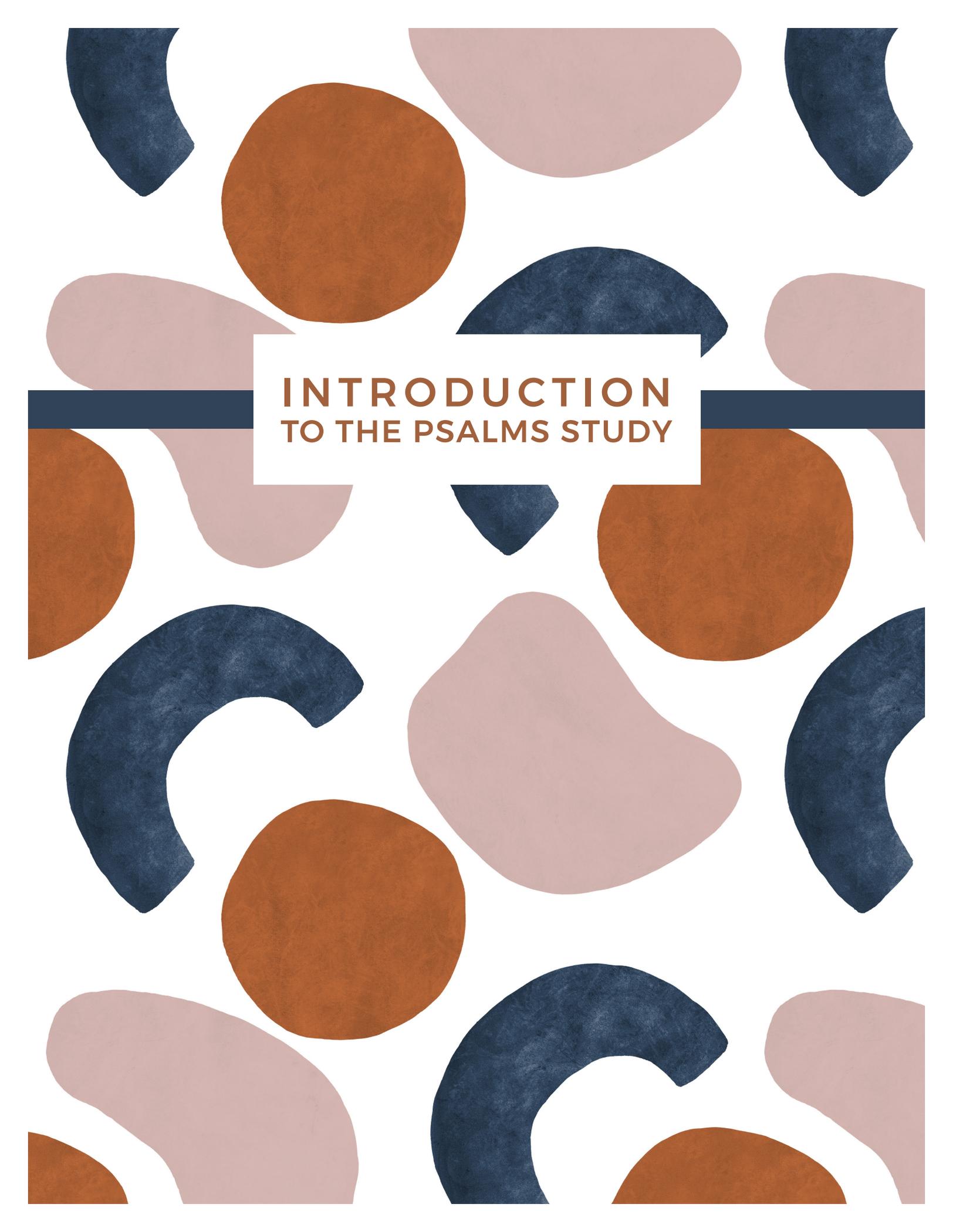
DWELLING WITH GOD IN WORSHIP

9

DWELLING WITH GOD IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

10

DWELLING WITH GOD AS OUR SOURCE OF PEACE

The background features a repeating pattern of organic, watercolor-style shapes in three colors: a deep navy blue, a warm terracotta brown, and a soft, dusty rose pink. These shapes are scattered across the white background, creating a textured and artistic feel. A central white rectangular box contains the title text.

**INTRODUCTION
TO THE PSALMS STUDY**

About This Study

What will we study?

In this 10-week study, we will study a selection of Psalms. The theme of the study is “Dwell,” meaning “to live in” and “to think about and talk about continually.” Our goal is to genuinely set up our habitation with God as we glean the riches from His Word. To do this, we will seek to bring to mind God’s Word regularly and to speak them to ourselves and others, as well.

How will we study?

The goal is to go through the 10 weeks together as a group. So, ideally, you will be in either an in-person or virtual small group and will spend time discussing what we’re learning together. Here’s what the set up will look like:

- 1: Watch the teaching video.
- 2: Discuss the video teaching in small groups.
- 3: Do your weekly reading and Bible study.

Levels of Study:

Just like with anything else, the more you put in, the more you get out. So, we recommend that you give all you have to this study. But we also know that life gets hectic! So, even if you can’t do everything in a given week, at least try to do something. Here are the “levels” of involvement.

- 1: Attending weekly sessions either in person or virtually.
- 2: Level 1 + Doing weekly homework.
- 3: Level 2 + Listening to weekly playlist.
- 4: Level 3 + Memorizing weekly Scriptures.

Getting Started

Overview of the Week

This week, we will look at the Psalms as a whole and get to know a little more about the different types and authors as well as the overall structure.

How Do I Prepare?

This week, there is no specific homework for you to do. I do encourage you, however, to read through this introductory material to get a better idea of the Psalms as a whole. Begin seeking God's face and asking Him what He wants you to learn from this study and how He would like you to approach it.

Prayer of the Week:

In the space below, write out a prayer to the LORD, asking Him to help you as you aim to learn more about Him and know Him relationally more and more. Ask Him to develop a love for His Word in your heart and a desire to follow His ways. Use Psalm 119:111-112 as a guide to write your prayer.

About the Psalms

What are the Psalms?

The Book of Psalms, also called the Psalter, is the Hebrew book of poetry found in the Old Testament. This book, which is literally translated “praises” is the songbook and prayer book of the Bible.

Why study the Psalms?

The Psalms is my favorite book of the Bible, and I am not alone in this by a long shot. The Psalter is loved by many because it appeals to us on multiple intellectual and emotional levels. Plus, it is dripping with theological richness.

C. S. Lewis, St. Augustine, Martin Luther, and countless other heroes of the faith all love the book of Psalms and commend its greatness and richness.

“The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God that made David dance” (C. S. Lewis in *Reflections on the Psalms*).

Reasons To Love the Psalms:

- They are universal: they speak to a plethora of areas of the human experience.
- They heighten our worship: the Psalms can say what we want to say but struggle to find the words for.
- They are aesthetically pleasing: written in poetic form, these prayers and songs are pleasing to the ear and enlightening to both the heart and mind.

Nine Types of Psalms

As we study through the book, one thing we will note are the various types of Psalms. Most often, these are characterized into 9 different types.

1. Laments. Laments make up more than one third of the Psalter. These selections show the Psalmists bringing a troubling situation before the Lord and asking for His help. Sample laments include Ps 12, 44, and 90.
2. Hymns of Praise. Sample praises include Ps 135, 145, and 150.
3. Hymns of Thanksgiving. Sample Thanksgiving psalms include 100, 107, and 118.
4. Hymns Celebrating God's Law. These include Ps 112 and 136.
5. Wisdom Psalms, including Ps 1, 8, and 15.
6. Songs of Confidence. These encourage worshippers to trust God during difficult times.
7. Royal Psalms. Royal Psalms show the monarch as the vehicle of blessing for God's people. Royal psalms include Ps 93, 97, and 99.
8. Historical Psalms, including Ps 78, 105, and 106.
9. Prophetic Hymns. These include Ps 2, 16, and 22.

*This categorical breakdown was modified from the ESV Study Bible's discussion of the 9 types of Psalms.

Structure of the Psalms

The Psalter is broken up into five different books, most likely paying homage to the five books of the Law.

Book 1: Psalm 1-41

Book 2: Psalm 42-72

Book 3: Psalm 73-89

Book 4: Psalm 90-106

Book 5: Psalm 107-150

The Psalms Lead Us to Praise!

Each book of the Psalms ends with a Doxology, or song of praise to God. And there's an important reason for this: the Psalms were written to stir our hearts towards God and to ultimately lead us into worship.

Here's the Doxology from the end of the first book, found in Psalm 41:13:

"Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen."

Prayer

Take a moment, and ask God to guide your heart into a spirit of awe and worship as we take on this study together.

The PERCH Bible Study Method

As we study through the Scriptures together, we will use the acronym of PERCH to guide us.

What is PERCH?

The English word “perch” is a verb used to describe the act when a bird sits and rests on a branch, wire, or other small item. When birds do this, they latch on tightly to the branch and are able to sit comfortably without falling off. Birds who are able to perch are known as passerines, or songbirds. When the birds are flying and making sounds, their sounds are more like calls, but when they perch, their sounds become sweet melodies.

This Bible Study Method is called “perch” for three reasons. One, it reminds us that in order to truly study the Bible, we must stop and be still. Birds perch when they stop flying around and intend to rest or sing. When we study the Bible, it is important to take the time to stop what we are doing, minimize distractions, and focus on God’s Word.

Two, it reminds us that when we study the Bible, we can only truly do so if we are connected to Jesus, the true Vine (“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5, ESV)). Everything in Scripture points to the Triune God. We need to keep this in mind as we read.

Third, it reminds us that a primary purpose for studying the Bible is to turn what we are studying into praise for God. Just as a perching bird sits on a branch or wire and sings songs, so should we as believers sing songs of praise to God after spending time in His Word.

The PERCH Bible Study Method is an acrostic that is useful for helping us to remember how we should go about studying the Bible. It is not a perfect method, nor is it the only good method.

However, it should be useful to use as a guide when reading to help us better understand God's message to us. Below, you will see the 5 steps involved in this method as well as an explanation of what each step entails.

P :: Pray
E :: Examine
R :: Reflect
C :: Change
H :: Help

Pray. Ask God, through His Holy Spirit, to open your mind and heart to understand His Word. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you Truth through God's Word, to reveal sin in your life, to reveal God's character to you, and to grow you in Christ.

Examine. Read the entire passage in full (this may be a section, chapter, or book). Remember the author, audience, and purpose of the book as you read. This will help to reveal the true meaning of the text. Keep in mind the overall idea of Scripture as you read. Prayerfully ask the following questions as you read and meditate on the passage: What does this passage teach about God? What does this passage teach that we must obey? How does this passage connect to the gospel?

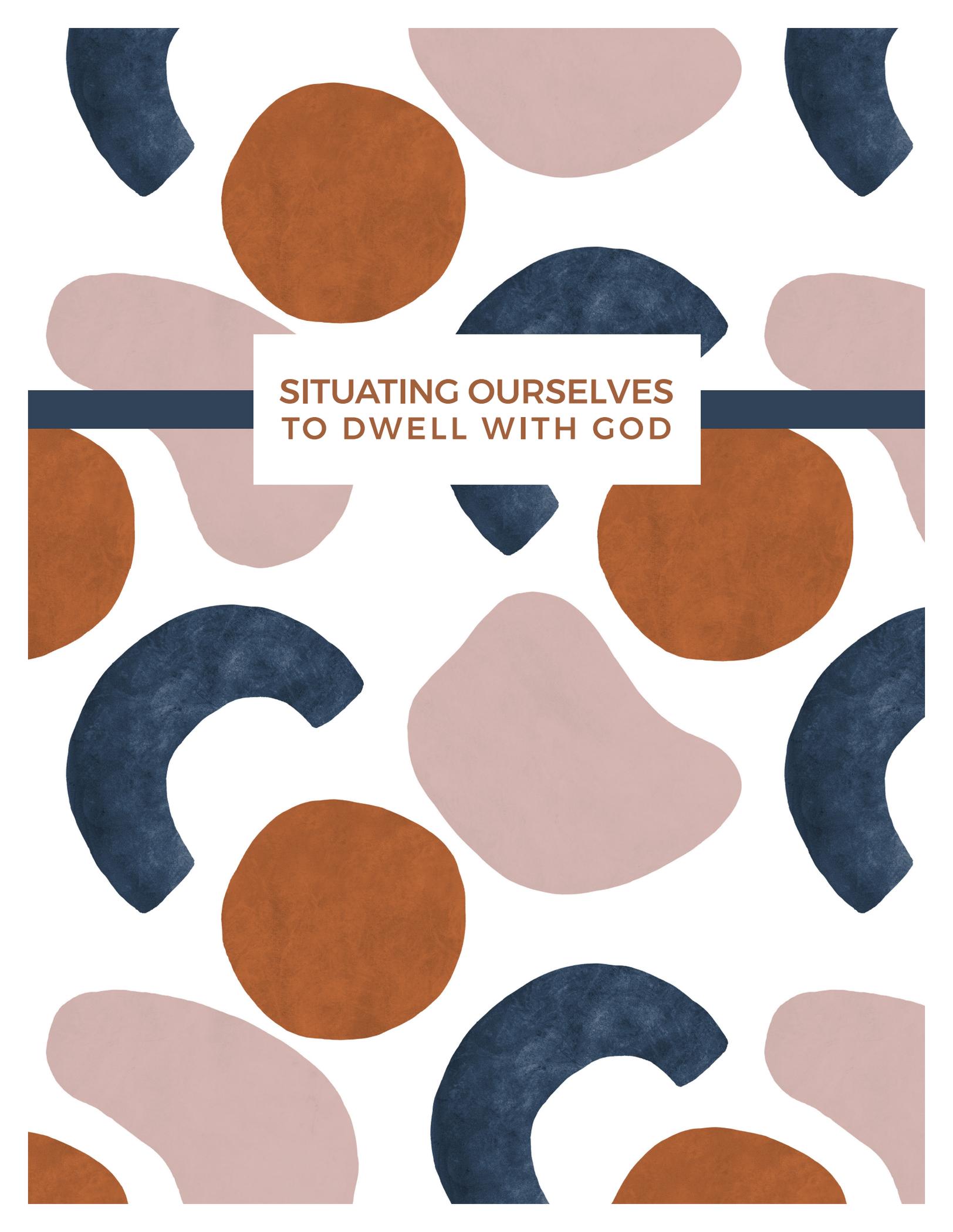
Reflect. Mull the Scriptures over in your mind. Think about what you learned in the "Examine" stage, and reflect on what God is teaching you.

Change. Prayerfully ask God how you can apply this passage to your life. Prayerfully consider what changes you need to make in your actions or beliefs in order to make the application of this passage to your life possible.

Help. Prayerfully consider how you can help others using this passage. How can you share it with them? How can you spread the Truth of this passage to both believers and non-believers?

Questions for Group Discussion or Journaling

1. Briefly share your name and what was your favorite book or story as a child and why.
2. Do you have a favorite psalm? Why is it your favorite? (This question might be more easily answered at the end of our 10 weeks!)
3. Share your thoughts/comments on the way George Mueller lived by faith. In what ways do you see evidence of God being at work around you/going before you?
4. How do you spend your quiet time? What are your expectations for that time? How do you feel God is meeting you in that time?
5. How do you see a study of the Psalms drawing you closer to the Lord? What do you see as the outcome at the end of our 10 weeks in your spiritual life?
6. What are your biggest take-away points from this lesson?
7. What questions or comments do you have?

The background features a repeating pattern of organic, hand-drawn shapes in three colors: a deep navy blue, a warm terracotta brown, and a soft, dusty rose pink. The shapes are scattered across the white background, creating a textured, artistic feel. A central white rectangular box contains the title text.

**SITUATING OURSELVES
TO DWELL WITH GOD**

Getting Started

Overview of the Week:

This week, we will take a closer look at Psalm 1 and 2 before reading Psalm 84. Our theme this week is “Situating Ourselves to Dwell with God.” We will discuss what it means to be in a place to meet with God and why dwelling and spending time with God is crucial to our walk with Him and our daily lives.

How Do I Prepare?

On days 1, we will look at Psalm 1 and 2 together. On day 2, we will read Psalm 1 closely and on day 3, we’ll read Psalm 2 closely. On day 4, we will look at Psalm 84, which is a beautiful hymn of praise to the Lord that reflects on how wonderful it is to dwell with God. At the end of the week’s lessons (day 5), you’ll find a section where we will use the PERCH questions to analyze the week’s readings. I will give you some sample answers based on the first part of Psalm 84, and then you can also practice doing this on your own.

Memory Verse of the Week:

“For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly” (Ps 84:10-11, ESV). On the next page, write out your memory verses. If you’re the more creative type, try doing a “Scripture doodle.” These are great because they take longer to write, giving us more time to meditate on His Word.

Prayer of the Week:

Below, write out a prayer to the LORD, asking Him to help you as you aim to learn more about Him and know Him relationally more and more. Ask Him to develop a love for His Word in your heart and a desire to follow His ways. Use Psalm 119:111-112 as a guide to write your prayer.

Songs of the Week:

“Better Is One Day,” Shane and Shane, “I Need Thee Every Hour,” Fernando Ortega “Thy Mercy, My God,” Indelible Grace, “I Surrender,” Hillsong, “Always,” Kristian Stanfill

Playlist link: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3BEh5j9yeffglo4EbmVRqW>

Week Two Memory Verse:

Week Two Prayer:

Day One: Situating Ourselves to Dwell with God (Ps 1 and 2)

1. Pray

Before we dig into the Scriptures, let's begin by asking the Lord to lead us in the study of His Word.

2. Examine

Now, let's dig into Psalm 1 and 2! These psalms serve as an introduction to the entire Psalter. As we examine it, we'll start with the context and then look at some of the stylistic features that help to point out feature the author is seeking to point out. The first thing to do when digging into a text is to read the entire section first and look for big themes / ideas. So, today, we'll focus on the overview of Psalms 1 and 2 together. Go ahead and read each of these psalms in their entirety before moving on.

Psalm 1: The Way of the Righteous and the Wicked

Blessed 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;
² but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
³ He 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.

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

Psalm 2: The Reign of the LORD's Anointed

¹ Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
² The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,
³ "Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us."

⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.
⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,
⁶ "As for me, I have set my King on Zion,
my holy hill."

⁷ I will tell of the decree:
The LORD said to me, "You are my Son;
today I have begotten you."
⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your
heritage, and the ends of the earth your
possession.
⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.
¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry,
and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him. (ESV)

The Context:

The book of Psalms is a collection of poetry written over several centuries. The earliest psalm (Ps 90) was written around 1400 BC by Moses, and the latest one was likely written close to 400 BC. David wrote more psalms than any other person, which is why he is thought of as being the primary author of the psalms. While we can't know for sure all of the psalms he wrote, scholars do undoubtedly attribute Psalms 1-41 to David as well as several others.

So, this means that both Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 were written by David. David, however, did not put the collection of the book itself together. This unknown editor (or editors) chose to place Psalm 1 and 2 at the beginning of the book for a reason: they are an introduction to the book as a whole and serve to demonstrate how best to situate ourselves so that we can glean the most out of the remainder of the book.

Many Bible commentators argue that Psalm 1 and 2 are meant to be read together due to their similar themes and also due to a literary feature known as an *inclusio* that is seen when reading the two together.

An *inclusio* is a literary device that frames a section of text with repeated language or themes. When the psalms were written, punctuation and formatting were not in use yet, so they had to use various other literary devices to show where sections began and ended. One such device is the *inclusio*.

Psalm 1 begins with the line, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked . . .” and Psalm 2 ends with the line, “Blessed are all who take refuge in him” (ESV). Not only does this inclusio with the idea of being “blessed” show us that this is meant to be read together as a section, but it also shows us that a key point in the passage is that of blessing.

Since this word “blessed” is a significant one in the passage, this is one of the words I recommend doing a word study on to know more about it. A concordance is a great tool to use for this type of study! See the “Bible Study Tools” section in the back of this book to learn more about how to use those.

Here, the word “blessed” comes from the Hebrew word, “*esher*,” which mean “happy” or “content.” James Montgomery Boice gives further explanation of the word, saying, “Blessed means supremely happy or fulfilled.

In fact, in Hebrew the word is actually a plural, which denotes either a multiplicity of blessings or an intensification of them.”

So what does this tell us? This tells us that as we dig into these chapters and the entirety of the book of Psalms, we are going to have more and more access to the blessings that God wants to bestow to His children, meaning that we should be growing in our happiness and contentment as we dig deeper into His Word. This is reason enough for me to keep going. How about you?

Your Turn to Dig In

1. After you've read through both Psalm 1 and Psalm 2, list some of the repeated words and ideas you see in the texts.
2. What do you notice about the man in Psalm 1 who is planted by streams of water? How often does he meditate on God's law? How does he emotionally feel towards it? How often does he prosper in life?
3. Several commentators, including St. Augustine, believe this righteous man represents Christ Himself, for who else could so perfectly live by God's law? What aspects of Christ do you see in this righteous man in Psalm 1?
4. Many scholars also interpret the King in Psalm 2 to be Christ the Messiah, as well. So, here we see another connection between these two psalms. What are some clues that Psalm 2's King is a reference to Christ?

5. What do you think the main idea of Psalm 1 is? Write out the main idea but also explain where you see this coming from in the Scripture (use exact words from the Scriptures themselves as you give your answer).

6. What do you think the main idea of Psalm 2 is? Where do you see this in the text?

7. Are there any parts of the text that you find confusing or don't understand? List those below.

3. What do you most want to get out of this study of the Psalms?

4. What do you think the Lord is teaching you already from beginning to study Psalm 1 and 2?

Day Two: A Closer Look at Psalm 1

1. Pray

Before we dig into the Scriptures, let's begin by asking the Lord to lead us in the study of His Word.

2. Examine

Now, let's take a closer look at Psalm 1. As always, it's good to start by reading an entire passage or section at a time when reading Scripture. So go ahead and read Psalm 1 again.

Blessed 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;
² but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.

³ He 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.

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

The Context:

While we don't have specific information on the background of this psalm, we do know that this psalm was purposefully placed at the beginning of the Psalter. It, along with Psalm 2, serves as an introduction to the entire book, and this is important to keep in mind as we read through this psalm and glean its meaning and purpose.

Psalm 1 is clearly broken into two separate sections. In verses 1-3, we see a description of a righteous man who is blessed by God whereas in verses 4-6, we see a description of the wicked man who is not blessed and who perishes in the end. This contrast between the two sections shows us that the primary theme of the Psalm is the difference between the righteous (those who follow the ways of the Lord) and the wicked (those who follow their own paths).

As mentioned in yesterday's lesson, Psalm 1 begins with an inclusio that is closed when we read the end of Psalm 2. This inclusio gives us direction regarding the purpose of the psalm being focused around understanding the blessings of God. In addition, we learned yesterday that the man in Psalm 1 is likely representative of Christ, who is our perfect example of righteousness and is the only One who ever lived a perfect, sinless life. Because of Him, believers have the ability to be counted as righteous before God and, thereby, have access to the blessings of God as mentioned throughout Scripture.

This psalm is set at the beginning of the Psalter for a reason: it teaches that in order to truly reap the benefits of the Psalms as a whole, we must first receive the greatest blessing God has to give: access to Himself through Jesus Christ. So I encourage you, before you move forward in this study, to reflect on your own relationship with Christ. If you are a committed follower of Christ, stop and thank God for drawing you to Himself and for adopting you into His family and giving you access to His kingdom. If you are not yet a committed follower of Christ, ask God to reveal Himself to you as we study the Psalms together.

As you thoroughly study Psalm 1, note the distinct differences between the righteous and the wicked. Their description as well as what will happen to them are in perfect contrast to one another. Hebrew writers would often use sharp contrast in their poetry to draw attention to the main idea of a text. Pay attention to key words that will help you understand the text more fully. A few significant words to look for in this passage are blessed, delight, meditates, and planted.

Your Turn to Dig In

1. Read Psalm 1:1 again. Note the three verbs in this sentence: walks, stands, and sits. What do you notice about the progression of these verbs, and why do you think it is worded this way?
2. What sort of activities does a righteous man not participate in, according to Psalm 1? Why do you think these are the activities listed? Why not list actions such as lying, stealing, and killing instead?
3. Verse 2 shows us the positive actions of the righteous man. Rather than being involved in mockery and scoffing, he instead delights in and meditates upon the Word of God. This is a key verse not only for this psalm but for the entire Psalter. How does this action of delighting in God's Word and meditating upon it help prevent the unrighteous actions mentioned in verse 1?

4. The word meditate is an important one to know. The picture that the original meaning of this word gives is that of a cow chewing its cud. When a cow eats grass, it chews on it, digests it, regurgitates, and chews some more. Then, it repeats the process several times until the grass is fully digested. We must do the same when reading Scripture. How is meditating on God's Word different from merely reading it or merely hearing it taught or preached?

5. Read verse 3. Note that an active verb is used here: planted. In order for something to be planted, there must be someone to plant it. Planting is not accidental; it is a purposeful act that is often done by a gardener or farmer who carefully chooses the location based on lighting, soil type, and water availability. Why do you think this verb is used here? With the understanding that Christ may be the "righteous man" in this verse, what does this word teach us about God and His plan?

6. Like many other poems, imagery in the psalms can have more than one meaning. While this man can represent Christ, he can also represent a righteous person (righteous due to being a committed Christ follower who is righteous due to Christ's blood but who also strives to live according to God's Word). What are the benefits this righteous man receives for living according to God's Word?

Day Three: A Closer Look at Psalm 2

1. Pray

Before we dig into the Scriptures, let's begin by asking the Lord to lead us in the study of His Word.

2. Examine

Now, let's take a closer look at Psalm 2. Read the psalm fully.

Why do the nations rage
and the people plot in vain?

² The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,

³ "Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us."

⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.

⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,

⁶ "As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill."

⁷ I will tell of the decree:
The LORD said to me, "You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.

⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.

⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of earth.

¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.

¹² Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him. (ESV)

The Context:

As mentioned previously, Psalm 2 is the second half of the introduction to the psalter. It accompanies Psalm 1 to do this. This psalm, also written by King David, is known as both a royal psalm. Note that not all psalms written by David are royal psalms; in fact, most are not. The reason this one is categorized as such is because it emphasizes “God’s promise to David that he would have an eternal kingdom” since the Messiah would come through his line (ESV.org). Naturally, this royal psalm also points to the Messiah, the true fulfillment of the blessing promised to come through David’s line.

In the same manner that the righteous man in Psalm 1 represents not only the righteous who are made so by Christ’s righteousness but also Christ himself, the king in Psalm 2 represents Israel’s earthly king as well as the fulfillment of the Davidic line: Jesus Christ.

This psalm calls to mind a time when Gentile nations desired to wage war against Israel and overtake her. The surrounding nations had kings long before Israel, and many were known for their mighty armies. And many commentators believe that this psalm is written regarding the time when David had newly been crowned king and had just recently taken on leading Israel’s army. At that time (mentioned in 2 Samuel 5), the Jebusites had occupied Jerusalem, and David, just after being crowned king, led the Israeli army to overtake them. Followed by that encounter, the Philistine army made an advance towards Israel in an attempt to bring down David. David called on the Lord and asked if he should lead the Israeli army into battle against the Philistines. God told David, “Go up, for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand” (2 Sam 5:19, ESV). God granted David and Israel a victory over the Philistines in that battle, as well.

David is doing what he does in so many of his psalms: he is reminding himself of God's faithfulness to him in the past. Here, he is reminding himself as well as the people of Israel that God is more powerful and mighty than any foe who could ever come against them.

This psalm is meant to be an encouragement to David himself, the people of Israel, and also to modern-day believers. Just as the Israelites who witnessed God's power and might as he kept his promise to David, the anointed king, can receive encouragement and draw up strength and courage by remembering God's act, so can modern-day believers. There are a few reasons for this:

1) The same God who was mighty enough to overcome these armies for David and the Israelites is still just as powerful and committed to His kingdom. 2) Even more so, since this psalm points not only to what happened with David and the Israelites but also to the coming Messiah (who has now come!!) it speaks to us on an even deeper level. God promised to bless all people through Abraham via the Abrahamic covenant. David, who is of Abraham's line, also receives this promise. Both of these covenants are fulfilled through the coming of Jesus, who is of the line of David. We see an even greater fulfilling of God's promises to David in this instance because God not only fulfills His promise to save David in the "right now" from the enemies conspiring against him, but he also ultimately fulfills His promise to bring Messiah into the world to overcome sin and death once and for all.

So, as you read this psalm, make note of both levels: 1) how God helps David historically during the battles against his earthly enemies; and 2) how God sends Christ the Messiah to defeat our ultimate enemies of sin and death. Note how we can see God's glorious attributes throughout the psalm: His power, might, strength, faithfulness, and more. I pray that as you study this psalm, your faith in God grows and you are able to trust Him with your day to day needs as well. But most importantly, I hope you are able to trust Him with the utmost of needs: your salvation through Jesus Christ.

Your Turn to Dig In

1. David begins this psalm by asking a rhetorical question: “Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?” What is your answer to this question? Why do you think nations (or people in general) fight against God or the people of God?
2. Read verse 4, and note God’s response. Why do you think David specifies that God’s response to the nations plotting against God or God’s anointed king is laughter? What does this teach us about God’s character?
3. God’s response to those who attempt to come against Him or His people is to laugh in derision (verse 4), which is like scoffing at them. Why is this an appropriate response for God when the wicked are looked down upon for scoffing in Psalm 1?

4. Verses 7-9 show King David speaking of the promise God made to him on the day of his coronation (See Samuel 7). God promises David a successful kingship not only for him but for his offspring. He goes even further, though, and promises that one of his offspring will have an eternal throne. We know this is a prophecy of the Messiah to come. How does this passage show us more about the sovereignty of God? the faithfulness of God?

5. In the psalm's final stanza, David includes a warning to the kings of the world to serve God with fear and to rejoice with trembling. This aligns with a similar verse in Proverbs: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (9:10, ESV). Why is it right and good to fear God if He is good and faithful?

6. The psalm ends with the statement, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him" (Ps 2:12, ESV). In the ancient Middle Eastern world, it was common for subjects to kiss a dignitary to show respect and honor to him. Here, the psalmist is reminding the readers/hearers that the king (both the earthly king as well as the Messiah King) is God's anointed, who is to be honored and respected, but who is also to protect and serve God's people as well. What does this teach us about submission to God's earthly authorities? What does this teach us about submission to Christ himself?

Reflection and Application

Psalm 2 is a psalm that teaches us that God is powerful, faithful, and worthy. He keeps his promises, even those that span thousands of years. These promises often take centuries and millennia to come to fruition, as in the case of the promised Messiah. But they are always worth the wait, and they have never, not once, been thwarted. Not by man, not by kingdoms, not by Satan himself. There is none who can stand against the One, True God.

David is full of trust in this passage. This may be because he had recently witnessed God fulfilling His promise to give David victory over his enemies, or it may be that David was recalling this instance at a later point in his life. Regardless, David is reflecting back on the goodness and faithfulness of God, and this results in not only a strengthening of David's own faith but also a call to those around him to turn and obey God. We should act similarly to David in the way that he doesn't forget about what God has done for him in the past but instead reflects upon it and allows that to strengthen his faith.

We, too, need to reflect on what God has done in our lives and allow that to deepen our trust in Him. In addition, just as David extended his personal faith out to others, we must do the same. When we have opportunity (or better yet, when we make opportunities), it is imperative that we share with others about who God is and what he has done for us. But we must also share the full truth of God with those around us, including the warnings about his wrath that comes against those who refuse to submit to Him. The full gospel is becoming less and less known by people in our society today, largely because people are afraid of offending one another. We don't want to share the wrath side of God with people because we want Him to be seen as only loving and good. But God is more than just one thing. His being is multifaceted, and His glory is unfathomable. He is not only loving but is also just, and with that justice comes wrath against those who do not follow in His way. So I encourage you, and I challenge you (along with myself) not to be afraid to share the full truths of Scripture with those around you. The most loving thing we could possibly do for those around us would be to present them with the full truth of who God is and with the full truth about eternity.

My prayer for us as we apply Psalm 2 to our lives is that we would love and adore God for who He is, that we would praise Him for his goodness and faithfulness, that we would grow in our trust of Him regardless of the circumstances, and that we would learn to point others toward the greatest gift he could ever give: the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Day Four: Psalm 84

1. Pray

Before we dig into the Scriptures, let's begin by asking the Lord to lead us in the study of His Word.

2. Examine

Now, let's take a closer look at Psalm 84.

How lovely is your dwelling place,
O LORD of hosts!

² My soul longs, yes, faints
for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and flesh sing for joy
to the living God.

³ Even the sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young,
at your altars, O LORD of hosts,
my King and my God.

⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in your house,
ever singing your praise! Selah

⁵ Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

⁶ As they go through the Valley of Baca
they make it a place of springs;
the early rain also covers it with pools.

⁷ They go from strength to strength;
each one appears before God in Zion.

⁸ O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;
give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah

⁹ Behold our shield, O God;
look on the face of your anointed!

¹⁰ For a day in your courts is better
than a thousand elsewhere.

I would rather be a doorkeeper in
the house of my God
than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

¹¹ For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
the LORD bestows favor and honor.

No good thing does he withhold
from those who walk uprightly.

¹² O LORD of hosts,
blessed is the one who trusts in you! (ESV)

The Context:

Psalm 84 is not directly attributed to a human author. Its style is quite similar to that of Psalm 42, so many attribute it David. The psalm is written “for” the sons of Korah. These are descendants of Korah, mentioned in the book of Numbers. These men were of the clan of Levi, which was the priestly line. Their father, Korah, was consumed with fire by God for aligning himself rebelliously against Moses. His descendants still remained in the line of Levi, and the prophet Samuel is actually a descendent of Korah as well. Some of the other descendants ended up being temple musicians.

It is likely that whoever wrote this psalm, whether it be David or another writer, likely spent a considerable time in God’s dwelling place of the Old Testament, at times the Tabernacle and at times the temple, as evidenced by their desire to have this played and sung by the temple musicians.

The psalmist begins this hymn by commenting upon the loveliness of God’s dwelling place. During the time this psalm was likely written, God’s dwelling place on earth would have been the Tabernacle. Although God is omnipresent, meaning He literally is everywhere at all times, His special presence was made known to the Israelites (and Gentiles, too!) through the Tabernacle.

This psalmist calls those who are able to dwell in the house of God blessed, referring specifically to the priests and Levites, who are able to be fully devoted to the things of the Lord on a daily basis. The psalmist yearns to be like these individuals because they have the privilege of being near to God’s special presence on a daily, regular basis, more than any other.

The psalmist then repeats over and over how good it is to be in the house of the Lord, giving various examples of why dwelling with God is beautiful.

Reflection and Application

While Old Testament saints had to travel to the Tabernacle to experience the earthly presence of the Lord, modern believers, thanks to the precious blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ, are able to experience God's dwelling place within our own hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In this way, we have the opportunity to dwell with God at any time. So often, though, I find myself neglecting the opportunity to truly dwell with God. Because He's always available, I find myself continually putting off setting myself before His presence and instead make myself busy with menial tasks or daily activities.

My prayer is that I (all of us!) will call to mind the beauty of the Lord and truly seek His face daily, taking advantage of the wonderful opportunity I have to truly dwell with God every single day, at any time, in any place. Here, when I see the psalmist writing about how blessed the Levites are to be in God's special presence in the Tabernacle day in and day out.

I wonder how blessed he would count us modern day believers who have God's Holy Spirit living within us. Far too often, I forget how blessed I am to be able to call upon the God of the universe at any time and to be able to know Him truly and fully, without the need for sacrificial offerings, rituals, or a priest's intervention. All of that has been done for me by Christ Himself.

Day Five: Week Two Debrief & PERCH Study

This week's theme has been "situating ourselves to dwell with God." I hope that you have been able to see just how beautiful God's dwelling place is through our study of Psalm 84, and my prayer is that by focusing on the beauty and goodness of God, our desire to be close to Him will increase more and more.

As we studied Psalm 1 and 2, I hope that you saw that dwelling in God isn't something that just happens naturally. It is something that comes as a result of purposefully being planted near streams of God's living water. As Jesus teaches in John 15, we must be attached to the vine if we want to grow. If we are not attached to the vine, we can do nothing.

The first step in being attached to the vine is fully committing our lives to Christ. We must understand that we are sinners separated from God, in need of a Savior. We must believe and accept Christ's sacrifice on the cross as being all that we need to pay for our sins and recognize that there is no amount of good works that could make us righteous before God. Then, in an act of spiritual worship, we must lovingly offer our lives up to God and commit to living according to His plan rather than our own.

But being attached to the vine and being in close communion to God doesn't come with just a one-time commitment. We must daily offer ourselves up to God if we want to truly dwell with Him day in and day out. We must spend focused time in prayer talking with Him and in His Word listening to Him speak to us. To grow in our relationship with Christ, we must nurture the relationship and allow God to nourish our souls through the process. Will there be days, even weeks or months, when we feel far from God or when we don't have the desire to dwell with Him? Probably. We'll see as the psalmists experience dry seasons such as these. But we'll also see how they continue to cry out to God and how they seek His face until they are back in communion with Him.

So, take a moment and determine where you are in your spiritual journey. Have you ever connected to the vine? Or do you need to make that commitment for the first time? Did you commit to following Christ but have fallen astray? Are you in a dry season where you just don't feel like you're really dwelling with and communing with God? Or are you in a season where you are dwelling closely with God and soaking up His Word? My prayer is that this study will help us all as we glean more and more from God's Word, repent of sins we need to repent of, learn more about God, spend time praising and thanking Him for who He is and what He's done, and genuinely commune with Him. And as we grow in Christ, we can also help others know Him better as well.

Change: Prayerfully ask God how you can apply this passage to your life. Prayerfully consider what changes you need to make in your actions or beliefs in order to make the application of this passage to your life. Write these below.

Help: Prayerfully consider how you can help others using this passage. How can you share it with them? How can you spread the Truth of this passage to both believers and non-believers?

Sample Answers to Study Questions

To help you learn how to go through the PERCH study, I've given a few sample answers to the study questions. Your answers will likely vary from these

What does this passage teach about God?

It teaches He is “the living God” (v. 2). It also teaches that His dwelling place is beautiful.

What does this passage teach that we must obey?

This passage implies that we are to long to be with God and to desire to praise Him with a joyful heart.

How does this passage connect to the gospel?

In order for us to have access to God's dwelling place and full access to God Himself, we must be in communion with Him. This means that first we must have initially committed our lives to following Him and, thereby, be a follower of Christ. Secondly, as believers, we often lose that close communion with God due to sin in our lives. So, to be close to Him, we need to repent of any known sin and seek His face.

Change: Prayerfully ask God how you can apply this passage to your life. Prayerfully consider what changes you need to make in your actions or beliefs in order to make the application of this passage to your life.

These answers will vary. I encourage you to discuss them in your small groups.

Help: Prayerfully consider how you can help others using this passage. How can you share it with them? How can you spread the Truth of this passage to both believers and non-believers?

These answers will vary. I encourage you to discuss them in your small groups.

