

 rsvp INLIGHT BIBLE STUDIES

ALWAYS WITH YOU

WALKING & TALKING WITH GOD

BARBARA FULLER

PSALMS

Always with You

Walking and Talking with God

Written by Barbara Fuller

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FOREWORD

In every age and time, there are events that lead us to turn to God and ask questions of him. Whether believers or seekers, we sometimes wonder where God is, why he doesn't act; why our enemies seem to have so much free reign; why things are in such a mess. At the same time, we recognize that in turning to God, we are approaching a gracious divine being, who sees everything that happens, and who acts with perfect justice. It is because we can trust this divine being that we are able to turn to God and cast all our cares upon him. We can complain, shout, and groan deeply, knowing that he hears, he cares, and will act in his time and in his way – as he has always done in the past. Even when we don't understand what is happening in our lives, or see a way through, the Psalms remind us that God is good. His mercy endures forever. Nothing escapes God's notice, and he acts for the good of his people at just the right time.

As an author, a pastor, and a servant of Christ, nobody is better placed to lead us prayerfully through the Psalms than Barbara Fuller. As an alumna of Acadia Divinity College, her credentials could speak for themselves. Yet, beyond education, Barbara's experiences of life as a wife, a mother, a Christian leader, and theological thinker have exposed her to the heights and depths of human joy and sorrow. Like the psalmist, she knows what it is to be faced with enemies and to leave them in the hands of God. She knows what it is to have joy restored and to live in the trust of God's justice and love. She is a wise and trustworthy guide through this journey of vulnerability with God.

In this book you have the opportunity to be led into a deeper relationship with God. There is no better time than today to turn afresh to the Psalms and pray with them and through them as you bring your own failures, hopes, dreams, anger, and sorrows to the Lord of Hosts. The full range of powerful emotions is expressed in the Psalms. No matter what situations and challenges are dominating your life at present, you will find company, language, and a song in the Psalms. I pray this book will be a blessing to your life!

Anna Robbins, PhD

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BEGINNING WITH THE BIBLE

The Bible is a book that tells the story of who God is, what God has done, and how God has made it possible for us to have a relationship with our Creator.

Who is Jesus Christ? Jesus means “Saviour” and Christ means “Messiah” or “Anointed One.” Jesus is God who came to earth in human form. He proved he was God by living a perfect life, dying for the sins of all people and then rising from the dead.

The Old Testament was written long before the coming of Jesus. It begins with the story of creation and tells the history of Israel, God’s chosen people. God’s principles and truths are revealed to leaders and prophets. Through Israel God had a plan to bless all the peoples of the earth. The Old Testament contains 39 books written by numerous authors.

The New Testament tells the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also contains the account of early believers in Jesus, and how they spread the message and teachings of Jesus, which are still relevant today. The New Testament contains 27 books, also written by a variety of authors, many of whom were followers of Jesus during his years on earth.

Why should we read and study the Bible? The Bible was inspired by God and is filled with eternal truths and principles that are as relevant today as they were when they were written. By reading the Bible we learn who God is, who we are, and where our salvation is found. It shows how God intends us to live lives of wholeness, justice, peace and blessing. The Bible contains answers to many of life’s difficult questions, wisdom for living well, and hope for the future.

Where should I begin? If you are reading the Bible for the first time, a good place to begin is in the New Testament with one of the gospels, the story of Jesus Christ. Many start with the Gospel of John.

How do I look up a Bible verse? For convenience, the books of the Bible have been divided into chapters and verses. A Bible verse will be indicated with the name of the book, the chapter number and the verse number. For example, John 3:16 means that you will find the book of John, then look for chapter 3 and in that chapter you will look for verse 16.

Why are there different translations of the Bible? The Old Testament was originally written mostly in Hebrew and the New Testament was written in common Greek. Because translation is not an exact science and our use of language changes with time and according to culture, translators work to provide current versions of the Bible that will make sense to today's reader. Translations may also address various reading levels and competencies.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

RSVP Inlight Bible Studies are designed for small groups, but you will also enjoy working through them on your own. Each *Inlight* study provides opportunities for interesting discussions as well as suggestions for exploring the Bible further. Why not find a friend or gather a small group to share your experience of this Bible study?

If you are a group participant, the next page has an important note for you. The Daily Reflections each week will prepare you for the next Session. Each day's Psalm reading has a question and a prayer activity to enrich your personal devotion time.

After an icebreaker question to help launch you into discussion, each group session has seven sections:

Setting the Stage — A personal reflection or some background information will help you understand the passage you are considering.

Today's Scripture — We give you the Psalm for discussion here in the New Living Translation (unless otherwise indicated). References to it will be in bold print, for example, **Psalm 23:1**.

Our Questions to Discuss — It is helpful to read through the Scripture passage and questions before you meet, but the comments and questions will easily guide your group through the passage.

Worth Contemplating — A Bible verse is given for you to memorize or contemplate. Ask God to help you understand what it means and how he wants you to apply it.

Sharing My Heart with God — If prayer is new to you or you just don't know what words to say, we provide a simple prayer to use. You can let it be a starting place for your own words. Talk to God and know that he is listening to your heart's cry – no matter whose words you use.

Digging Deeper — For those keen to learn more, we give you suggestions to delve deeper into the Bible and explore resources, passages and activities.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

My Question for God — We all have questions. We give you space to write down the question that you aren't ready to share with your group. Bring it to God, who already knows your heart and loves you. You may also find it helpful to share your question with a trusted friend who can help you think it through, or help you bring it to God. Asking the question is a step of faith.

You will want to have a Bible on hand for extra readings. Because there are many contemporary translations, for the person new to the Bible I would recommend the New Living Translation, the New International Version or—if English is your second language—the Good News translation. You can also find verses easily online or you can download a Bible app to your mobile device.

TIPS FOR GROUP PARTICIPANTS

- This is your personal Bible study guide. Feel free to write in it, creating a journal of your experience in Scripture and with the group.
- Invite a friend to attend the study with you.
- Plan to set aside time each day to read the designated Psalm for the day and the question and prayer activity that accompanies it. These readings will also be referenced in the group discussions.
- Prepare for each session by reading through the material and considering the questions.
- Pray and ask God to help you and the other group members to grow and learn together.
- Participate in the discussion by sharing your thoughts, experiences and questions.
- Listen to those who share, expecting to learn from others.
- Try to stay on the topic, directed by the questions in the guide and the leading of your group facilitator.
- If you are someone who loves to talk in a group setting, hold back at times so that everyone has a chance to share.
- Ideas and comments shared in the group should be kept confidential.
- After the lesson, take some moments to consider “My Question for God.”
- If you leave the study eager to learn more, check out the “Digging Deeper” section.
- Finally, look for opportunities to discuss and apply the principles of your lesson in your daily life.

INTRODUCTION

When the disciples said to Jesus, “Teach us to pray,” he taught them the Lord’s Prayer. But where did Jesus learn to pray? The Book of Psalms is the prayer book of the Bible and these prayers would have been the prayers Jesus learned from childhood.

When I was a child my parents taught me a prayer to say before meals and another one for bedtime. But when I came to a spiritual crossroad of wanting to connect with God, I didn’t know how. “You just have to pray,” my friend said.

“But how do I do that?”

And so he led me in a prayer that I could repeat sincerely, inviting Jesus Christ to rule my heart and my life, confessing my sin and my need of a Saviour. When I went home that day, I had a new consciousness of God’s reality. I knew he was there, undeniably and lovingly present in my life. I still remember the fullness of my heart and my overflowing tears of joy and wonder. I threw myself on the floor and poured out my heart to this God who I finally understood knew me, forgave me, and loved me with an unflinching love.

Early in my Christian walk I discovered the prayers of another who loved God deeply and spoke with him daily and honestly. The psalms of David gave words that helped me formulate my own prayers. David showed me that praying honestly from my heart is OK with God. The psalms written by David and other psalmists showed me that it is right to express the truth of my soul in my conversation with God, full of passion, raw with emotion, and honest to the bone.

The Psalms help us to frame our prayers by giving examples of many different types of prayers. They can be used as launching pads for our own thoughts and words or you may discover them to be the very words that express what you can’t find words for. The beautiful songs and poems that are the Psalms remind us always that our lives are lived in the presence of God. With our prayers we are responding to the words and deeds of our Creator, Saviour and Redeemer; the loving Father who sent his Son to save us and who sends his Spirit to guide us.

ALWAYS WITH YOU WALKING AND TALKING WITH GOD

Each week in our group discussion we will explore different types of psalms and how we can use them and learn from them and even pray them together. By engaging in the daily readings, personal questions and prayer activities, my hope is that you will grow in your own practice of walking and talking with God, who promises to be always with you.

SESSION 1 - INTRODUCING THE PSALMS IN GOD'S PRESENCE

God knows me.

ICEBREAKER

What is the most enjoyable thing you've done in the last week?

SETTING THE STAGE

Heart Prayers

I was at a meeting with a group of Bible study leaders, most of whom had recently led the study *The Life We Long For: Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John*. It was encouraging to hear how God was using the study of his Word in people's lives. During the meeting, a woman from Thailand spoke very passionately of the impact this study had in her life. As we spoke together afterwards, I asked her if there was one particular part of the study that had really spoken to her. With a nervous smile she opened the book and pointed to a page, tears in her eyes. The Scripture passages were included in the study and she was pointing at Psalm 23. "Thank you so much," she said, clutching the book to her heart. I quickly explained that it was not me that wrote Psalm 23, but it came directly from the Bible. Of course, she had never read the Bible before, so this was her first introduction to that beautiful psalm, which has comforted the hearts of millions over the centuries. I came away humbled, amused and amazed at how God's Word—and particularly the Psalms—speak to the deep places of the human heart. I think that is when I decided to write this study on the Psalms.

I remembered a time when I, too, was in a foreign land and the words of a psalm brought comfort and hope to me. I was a new missionary, attending an intensive one-month training course in Hungary with other new recruits. Our daily worship times, in which many of the worship songs were based on psalms, were inspiring. It is no accident that the Hebrew word

for psalms is *tehillim*, which means “songs of praise.” The Greek word used for psalms means “a song sung to the accompaniment of stringed instruments.” The musical and poetic aspects of these prayers known as psalms tend to touch the tender places of our souls. One of our first assignments as new missionaries was to memorize Psalm 139. As we learned it, we were often deeply conscious that we were also living it and praying it here “on the far side of the sea.” By the time we dispersed to our various field assignments, the words of Psalm 139 were ingrained in our minds and hearts, impacting our spiritual formation over the next years.

Primarily, this study is intended to help you learn to pray, using the Psalms. This introductory session introduces you to the Psalms in general, by using a specific psalm—Psalm 139—to show you some features and to help you grow in faith, understanding and communion with God.

Start by having one or several people read Psalm 139 out loud.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Psalm 139

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

- ¹ O LORD, you have examined my heart
and know everything about me.
- ² You know when I sit down or stand up.
You know my thoughts even when I'm far away.
- ³ You see me when I travel
and when I rest at home.
You know everything I do.
- ⁴ You know what I am going to say
even before I say it, LORD.
- ⁵ You go before me and follow me.
You place your hand of blessing on my head.
- ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too great for me to understand!

*7 I can never escape from your Spirit!
I can never get away from your presence!*

*8 If I go up to heaven, you are there;
if I go down to the grave, you are there.*

*9 If I ride the wings of the morning,
if I dwell by the farthest oceans,*

*10 even there your hand will guide me,
and your strength will support me.*

*11 I could ask the darkness to hide me
and the light around me to become night—*

12 but even in darkness I cannot hide from you.

To you the night shines as bright as day.

Darkness and light are the same to you.

*13 You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body
and knit me together in my mother's womb.*

*14 Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!
Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.*

*15 You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion,
as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.*

16 You saw me before I was born.

Every day of my life was recorded in your book.

Every moment was laid out

before a single day had passed.

17 How precious are your thoughts about me, O God.

They cannot be numbered!

*18 I can't even count them;
they outnumber the grains of sand!*

And when I wake up,

you are still with me!

19 O God, if only you would destroy the wicked!

Get out of my life, you murderers!

20 They blaspheme you;

your enemies misuse your name.

21 O LORD, shouldn't I hate those who hate you?

Shouldn't I despise those who oppose you?

22 Yes, I hate them with total hatred,

for your enemies are my enemies.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;

test me and know my anxious thoughts.

24 Point out anything in me that offends you,

and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

PRAYER ACTIVITY

For this introductory session only, we are going to start with a prayer activity, which will include time on your own and time interacting with a partner. Your group leader will tell you how much time is allotted for steps three and four. (Suggested time: 3-5 minutes each.)

1. Group leader will give you a moment to choose a partner for step four.
2. Select one section of Psalm 139 to read on your own.
 - Verses 1-6 Verses 13-16 Verses 19-22
 - Verses 7-12 Verses 17-18 Verses 23-24
3. Meditate on the section you have chosen, considering the following questions:
 - a) What one word, phrase or verse speaks most clearly to you? Read that portion several times.
 - b) What feelings are expressed by the psalmist? How do those compare with feelings you have had in your relationship with God?
4. Share with your partner why you chose that section, what impacted you, and why.

During the course of this study, each day you will have a psalm to read, along with a question and a prayer activity for your personal reflection. We will all be enriched as we share with one another how God is speaking to us through these daily readings and reflections. Remember that what is shared in the group stays in the group.

OUR QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

As we explore the content of **Psalms 139**, we will also be introduced to the Psalms in general. It is helpful to consider the background, context, purpose, characteristics and different types of Psalms. These things will help us grow in understanding God's Word. However, our more important goal is to experience how God uses his Word to transform us from the inside out.

Songs of Praise

I have already mentioned that the Hebrew word for psalms is *tehillim*, which means 'songs of praise.' The first heading of this psalm is "For the choir director." Some Psalms also have a heading such as "to the tune of..." indicating that they were definitely intended to be sung. While we tend to think of the Psalms as very personal and something we might use in our personal devotions and prayers, for thousands of years, the Psalms have been used by God's people in their worship.

1. What do you notice about the use of the Psalms (songs of praise) in worship in the following verses from the Old Testament? When, how, and by whom were they used?



Then Hezekiah ordered that the burnt offering be placed on the altar. As the burnt offering was presented, songs of praise to the LORD were begun, accompanied by the trumpets and other instruments of David, the former king of Israel. ²⁸ The entire assembly worshiped the LORD as the singers sang and the trumpets blew, until all the burnt offerings

were finished. ²⁹ Then the king and everyone with him bowed down in worship. ³⁰ King Hezekiah and the officials ordered the Levites to praise the LORD with the psalms written by David and by Asaph the seer. So they offered joyous praise and bowed down in worship.

2 CHRONICLES 29:27-30

The word for psalms (*tehillim*) comes from the same root as the word *hallelujah*, which means “praise God!” Praise is the primary focus of the Psalms. Whatever the circumstance, God is to be praised. God is worthy of our praise. While the Psalms would have been written across hundreds of years, by many different writers, at some point someone compiled them into the Book of Psalms we have today. The Book of Psalms was divided into five books of different lengths. Each book ends with a call to praise God. For example, Psalm 106:48 is the last verse of Book 4 in the Psalms:

 *Praise the LORD, the God of Israel,
who lives from everlasting to everlasting!
Let all the people say, “Amen!”
Praise the LORD!*

PSALM 106:48

The final psalm, Psalm 150 is a grand finale, a great exhortation to praise the Lord.

While Psalm 139 does not have a specific call to praise God, it emphasizes that we live our lives in the presence and the view of God. It also shows very clearly how great God is.

2. What did you learn about God in this psalm? Why is he worthy of our praise?

The Life of David

The second heading on the Psalm says, "A psalm of David." The Book of Psalms is usually associated with King David of the Old Testament stories. Of the 150 Psalms, 72 are ascribed to David, which means they could have been written by David, for David, about David, or by any king of the house of David!

David, the youngest son in a family of brothers, started off as a shepherd boy. He served as a musician in King Saul's court, fell out of favour with the king, and spent years running and hiding in the Judean desert. Eventually he himself became king. He was a military hero and he was an adulterer. He betrayed a friend and he was betrayed by his own son. Yet he ended up as one of the greatest kings of Israel and the ancestor of the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Read **PSALM 139:1-6**

3. How do these verses serve as a mirror and show us realities of our own life?

The Psalms are not just pretty poems to please the ear, but they are prayers, laments, confessions, proclamations and statements of trust, all expressed in the down-and-dirty of real life. David is a person we can relate to with all his admirable qualities and imperfections, especially as we read the honest expression of his deepest emotions to God in the Psalms.

While the Psalms are born out of very real, personal experiences, the other side of the coin is that they describe situations and responses and expressions that are common to people throughout time and all over the world. In fact, we don't need to know anything about David or if or when he wrote a particular psalm in order for it to be rich in meaning and profound in enabling us to come into the presence of God.

Poems and Prayers

One of the unique qualities of psalms is that they are written in poetic form. When you pick up a book of poems you don't expect a story with a plot and main characters. Poetry uses word pictures or imagery to stimulate the imagination; using rhymes or structure to draw the reader to look at things differently. Poetry calls for a more reflective reading strategy in which you take time to unpack the images and explore the emotions. Hebrew poetry uses various forms of repetition, saying the same thing twice in different words.

Read **PSALM 139:7-12**

4. Where do you see phrases repeated in these verses? How does this impact you emotionally?

Read **PSALM 139:13-18**

5. What images are portrayed by the words in these verses? What new understanding do you gain from these word pictures?

The other dimension of the Psalms that is different than most books of the Bible is that the majority of them are actual prayers. Prayer is how we communicate with God and in the Psalms we are given a variety of examples of prayer.

Read **PSALM 139:19-22**

6. What is the difference between sharing our thoughts of hatred and anger with another person and sharing those thoughts and feelings with God?

Some would suggest that such verses shouldn't be in the Holy Bible, but the fact that they are shows us that God welcomes our honest prayers. By submitting our genuine feelings to the Lord, we invite him to make the change needed in our hearts so that we are able to walk in obedience to his Word. We will explore these things further in the lessons on psalms of lament.

Every psalm is written with a consciousness of the presence and activity of God in the life of the psalmist or, in the case of the laments, sometimes with a sense of God's absence—but always an awareness of God. As we read these very personal and yet universal expressions of faith, we grow in our understanding of how to pray.

John Calvin suggests that the Psalms are a mirror of the soul. Eugene Peterson refers to that idea here:

We use the Psalms to present ourselves before God as honestly and thoroughly as we are able. A mirror shows us the shape of our nose and the curve of our chin, things we otherwise know only through the reports of others. The Psalms show us the shape of our souls and the curve of our sin, realities deep within us, hidden and obscured, for which we need focus and names.¹

As we read and pray the Psalms, they help us to articulate our own feelings and to ask whether we are moving towards or away from God.

Read **PSALM 139:23-24**

¹ Eugene H. Peterson, *Psalms* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 5.

7. What desire is expressed here by the psalmist? How does this prayer tie in with the illustration of the mirror?

The poetry helps us to recognize our own humanity and the prayer helps us to recognize our need to interact with God.

Types of Psalms

In each lesson of this study we will be reflecting on a different genre or type of psalm. While classifying the psalm types is not an exact science, for our purposes I am following the twelve categories outlined by Donald Griggs in his book, *Praying and Teaching the Psalms*.² At the beginning of each week's daily readings there will be a description of the psalm type that is being explored. All psalms for that week will belong to that category. Here are the twelve main categories:

Praise & Thanksgiving (including **Creation Psalms**)

Wisdom Psalms (including **Torah Psalms**)

Individual Psalms of Lament

Community Psalms of Lament

Salvation History Psalms (including **Liturgical Psalms**)

Psalms of Trust

Others – Other types of Psalms not included in this Bible study:

Psalms of the Lord as King – These focus on God as King and Sovereign of his people.

Hymns of Zion – Zion refers to God's dwelling place: Jerusalem or the people of God.

Royal Psalms – Various events in the life of the earthly king of Israel are celebrated in song.

8. If you are familiar with the Psalms, which one is your favourite?

² Donald L. Griggs, *Praying and Teaching the Psalms* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1984), 64-71.

Jesus in the Psalms

After he had risen from the dead, Jesus said to his disciples:



“When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.”⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

LUKE 24:44-45

Throughout our study we may notice prophetic references to Christ. The Messianic psalms, as they are called, point to the coming of the Promised One of God. Dietrich Bonhoeffer emphasizes that we encounter Christ in the Psalms and pray the Psalms with Christ, who is the goal of our prayers: “But not only is Jesus Christ the goal of our prayer; he himself also accompanies us in our prayer. . . . We walk with the praying Christ before the throne of God.”³

9. When you think of Jesus praying with you, how does it make you feel?

Bonhoeffer’s words challenge me to look for Jesus in each psalm and to connect the Psalms to the Lord’s Prayer taught to us by Christ, who walks with us through all of life, even and especially to the throne of grace.



Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.¹⁶ Let us then approach God’s throne of

³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1970), 49, 37.

grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

HEBREWS 4:14-16 (NIV)

WORTH CONTEMPLATING



*Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
Point out anything in me that offends you,
and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*

PSALM 139:23, 24

SHARING MY HEART WITH GOD

Oh Lord, it's sometimes a fearful thing to realize how well you know me. I am comforted, though, by the assurance of your love and your presence with me always. Thank you that you don't leave me on my own. Help me to be attentive to your word and to respond to you with an honest and open heart. Teach me to pray, so that I may know you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DIGGING DEEPER

Read 1 Chronicles 15:16; 25:6-8 to learn more about music as part of the worship in Israel.

Explore the life of David in any or all of these portions of the Old Testament:

- 1 Samuel 16-31
- 1 Kings 1:1-2:12
- 2 Samuel
- 1 Chronicles 11-29

Listen to one of the many beautiful songs based on the Psalms. 'O God, you search me and you know me' is based on Psalm 139 and can be found on YouTube.

MY QUESTION FOR GOD

We have covered a lot of ground in this introduction and will be unpacking things as we go forward. As you reflect on all that you have read and we have discussed, what one question do you have for God? Use this space to write it down and listen and watch for God's answer.

THE GOD WE PRAISE

DAILY REFLECTIONS

Each group discussion will be preceded by daily readings of the Psalms in the genre for that session. Take your time reading through the psalm each day. Because psalms are a form of poetry, they are meant to be read slowly, reflecting on the words and thoughts expressed. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you through the words. Then take some moments to consider the question and use the prayer activity in your personal prayer time.

Week One: Psalms of Praise

These are psalms that express praise or call on people to praise God. They give reasons for thanksgiving or describe why God is worthy of our praise. There are about 30 psalms that fit this category.

The psalms of praise and thanksgiving help us to lift our eyes to the One who created all things, who sustains life on earth, who knows us, loves us, cares for and provides for us. The typical structure of a psalm of praise is: an introduction or call to praise, followed by a portion that outlines the reasons for praise and thanksgiving, and then an ending that reaffirms the call to praise God. Reasons for praise might include the general works of God, a specific situation of distress and God's deliverance, or a recognition of who God is and of his reign. Also included are the creation psalms, which specifically focus on praising God as our Creator.

Day One

PSALM 8

Question:

One writer said that we learn about God from nature and from Scripture. What does Psalm 8 teach you about God? What is one thing you learn about God from creation?

Prayer Activity:

In what way does experiencing the creation help you to put things in perspective? Take time today to get outside and consider the work of God's fingers.

Day Two

PSALM 92

Question:

To whom does the psalmist proclaim God's love in the morning and his faithfulness in the evening? How might doing that affect the course of our days and the attitude of our hearts?

Prayer Activity:

Take time to sing, play (if you play a musical instrument), or listen to a praise or worship song as you begin your time of prayer with God. What will you thank him for today?

Day Three

PSALM 96

Question:

According to the psalmist, why is God worthy of praise? Find at least three ways mentioned in the psalm that we can worship God.

Prayer Activity:

What amazing thing has God done (either generally or specifically in your life) that you could tell someone about (verse 3)? Who do you know that might need encouragement? How might you share that with them today?

Day Four

PSALM 116

Question:

What reason does the psalmist give for praising God? In what ways does he respond to God's salvation? Hint: Look for the I wills.

Prayer Activity:

Choose a phrase or verse from the psalm that speaks to your heart. Write it down and then continue writing a sentence or two of your own prayer, prompted by the words of the psalmist.

Day Five

PSALM 117

Question:

Who is being called to praise the Lord? What does God deserve?

Prayer Activity:

Think of anyone you know who is from a different nation or ethnic group than your own. Take some time to pray for them to experience the unfailing love and faithfulness of God.

Day Six

PSALM 103

Question:

What do you learn about God's character?

Prayer Activity:

Take time to read through Psalm 103 several times, slowly and prayerfully. Choose a phrase that resonates in your heart and meditate on it throughout the day. Turn it over in your mind and ponder what God is saying to you.