



KINGDOM PSALMS

PART 4

Forty Daily Devotions
from Psalms 107-150
(Based on the NKJV)

Introduction

I am not certain how this collection of songs of praise and prayer came to be in the center of the Bible, but I am certain that praise and prayer are to be at the center of our personal relationship with God. As we read from this important book of the Bible, we will place a special prayer emphasis on the music ministry of our church. Praise and worship are vital to the ministry of any church and to the overall wholeness of any church body. Please join us as we praise and pray our way toward a closer walk with the Lord.

Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	Psalms 107:1-22	04/08/22
2	Psalms 107:23-43	04/09/22
3	Psalms 108	04/10/22
4	Psalms 109:1-15	04/11/22
5	Psalms 109:16-31	04/12/22
6	Psalms 110 & 111	04/13/22
7	Psalms 112 & 113	04/14/22
8	Psalms 114 & 115	04/15/22
9	Psalms 116 & 117	04/16/22
10	Psalms 118:1-14	04/17/22
11	Psalms 118:15-29	04/18/22
12	Psalms 119:1-16	04/19/22
13	Psalms 119:17-32	04/20/22
14	Psalms 119:33-48	04/21/22
15	Psalms 119:49-64	04/22/22
16	Psalms 119:65-80	04/23/22
17	Psalms 119:81-96	04/24/22
18	Psalms 119:97-112	04/25/22
19	Psalms 119:113-128	04/26/22
20	Psalms 119:129-144	04/27/22

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	Psalms 119:145-160	04/28/22
22	Psalms 119:161-176	04/29/22
23	Psalms 120 & 121	04/30/22
24	Psalms 122, 123, & 124	05/01/22
25	Psalms 125, 126, & 127	05/02/22
26	Psalms 128 & 129	05/03/22
27	Psalms 130 & 131	05/04/22
28	Psalms 132	05/05/22
29	Psalms 133, 134, & 135	05/06/22
30	Psalms 136	05/07/22
31	Psalms 137 & 138	05/08/22
32	Psalms 139	05/09/22
33	Psalms 140 & 141	05/10/22
34	Psalms 142 & 143	05/11/22
35	Psalms 144	05/12/22
36	Psalms 145	05/13/22
37	Psalms 146	05/14/22
38	Psalms 147	05/15/22
39	Psalms 148	05/16/22
40	Psalms 149 & 150	05/17/22

Day 1: Psalm 107:1-22

“Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!” (Psalm 107:8)

Unfailing Love

Today’s devotional begins with the first psalm in Book Five in the Hebrew Psalms. Our focus verse speaks of God’s “goodness” (NKJV) or “unfailing love” (NIV). Many believe that the experiences of God’s people that are referenced in this song relate specifically to the exile in Babylon. Others see some similarities with the sad stay in Egypt in this song. It is possible that the song is about the sufferings of God’s people in general and that it was written to allow each listener to relate to whatever experience that it recalled. The main reason for the psalm was to cause each person to remember that God had always shown His divine love and mercy to His people despite their surroundings, circumstances, or situations. In that case, we may all have some past or present experiences come to mind as we read these blessed words! Because of the reference to God’s “wonderful works” (NKJV) or “deeds” (NIV), many scholars believe this psalm to have been written by the same person who wrote Psalms 104-107. The themes of all these psalms seem to be the same. Verse 22 declares this to be a song of “rejoicing” (NKJV) or “joy” (NIV) that has been born from some very unpleasant and unhappy experiences.

Prayer Emphasis: **Be patient** through your trials and sufferings and **believe** that God is good – all the time! **Refuse** to become distracted by unfortunate events and circumstances. **Ask** yourself what it might be like to go through this experience without God’s unfailing love and then **praise** Him for His presence!

Day 2: Psalm 107:23-43

“Then they cry out to the LORD in their trouble, and He brings them out of their distresses.” (Psalm 107:28)

“They”

Our focus verse tells us that God’s people “cry out to the LORD in their trouble.” The Bible consistently reminds us that God’s people must be sure to turn to God alone as their source in times of trouble, trial, and affliction. As mentioned in yesterday’s devotional, the “they” in this psalm could be a specific reference to God’s people at some specific time in history, or it could be a general reference to God’s people for all time. If it is a specific reference to certain times and events of the past, then we should learn from these words and apply them to our lives because we are told that we are to learn from everything that has been written about the past experiences of God’s people (Romans 15:4). If it is a general reference to God’s dealings with His people, then we should take this “they” to mean today’s believers just as much as any other followers of God. Verses 8, 15, 21, and 31 are the same and seem to be the chorus of this song. Read them again and remind yourself that these are words well worth repeating. The phrase “children of men” (NKJV) seems to indicate that this song was written for the admonishment and instruction of those who first heard it, as well as for those who might hear it in generations to come.

Prayer Emphasis: **Personalize** the words of this psalm by reading it and saying the word “us” in place of “them” every time it refers to God’s people. Then, **read** it again and replace the “them” with “me.” It is time for God’s people to see the Bible as more than a history book and realize that we are the “they” that should be speaking of God’s wonderful works!

Day 3: Psalm 108

“Give us help from trouble, for the help of man is useless. Through God we will do valiantly, for it is He who shall tread down our enemies.” (Psalm 108:12-13)

The Secret to Our Success

I read our focus verse in 27 different translations and learned that 13 of them read “with God” while 11 of them read “through God”, and three of them read “in God.” Whichever word is used is of little importance because it is a word that was inserted by translators for understanding, and it is not translated from a specific Hebrew word. Because of the context of the statement, it would be easy for anyone to see that it is while we are “with” or “in” God that we experience victory “through” or “by” Him. However, the most literal translation of the Hebrew would be more like a plea to God to “do valiantly” and “tread down our enemies.” This psalm writer understood clearly that the only hope for victory rested in a right relationship with God. In verse 12, he stated that the “help” (NKJV) or “aid” (NIV) of man was “useless” (NKJV) or “worthless” (NIV). The first “help” or “aid” mentioned in that verse is about comfort or consolation while the second “help” is a different word entirely. It deals with salvation or deliverance. It is clear that God’s people are to understand that God alone is the secret to our success, and we should be sure to include Him in all our activities.

Prayer Emphasis: **Depend** only on God! **Trust** in Him completely! While it is good to have Christian friends and associates, **rely** only on God! When we remember this secret to success, we will soon find victory in all the seasons of our lives!

Day 4: Psalm 109:1-15

“They have also surrounded me with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause. In return for my love they are my accusers, but I give myself to prayer.” (Psalm 109:3-4)

A Man of Prayer

The opening verses of this psalm make it clear that David felt as though he was surrounded by enemies who were bringing false and hurtful accusations against him. In return for friendship, he was receiving accusations. In return for good, he was being repaid with evil. It is clear that this psalm was born in desperate times. However, in these desperate times, David made a definite decision. He stated that his decision was to “give myself to prayer” (NKJV) or to be “a man of prayer” (NIV). Even though he believed himself to be surrounded by enemies, David knew he had a Person to whom he could turn. The following verses may seem quite vindictive, but the most important thing to notice in them is that he is asking God to respond on his behalf, and he is not seeking to repay those who treated him wrongly. A good habit for every Christian would be to speak to God about everything and to speak to man about nothing before first speaking to God. There is nothing more painful than gossip, slander, and false accusations. Physical attacks bruise the body, but verbal attacks bruise the soul.

Prayer Emphasis: **Turn** all your painful experiences over to God and **trust** Him to deal with those who may have treated you wrongfully in the past or who may be treating you wrongfully in the present. When someone hurts you, try to **speak to God first** – and to God only, if possible – and you will always have the best Counsel as to what to do about those situations. **Believe** that we, as believers, can find power in prayer!

Day 5: Psalm 109:16-31

“I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yes, I will praise Him among the multitude. For He shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those who condemn him.” (Psalm 109:30-31)

Giving God the Glory

David is praying for victory in his time of persecution. He did not ask God to exempt him from trials, afflictions, and accusations, but He did ask God to see him through them. Verse 28 contains one of the greatest lessons that any believer could ever learn. Even while David was experiencing pain because some had decided to “curse” him, he was expecting a “blessing” to be pronounced upon him by God. Even amid enemy attacks, David made a personal commitment to “praise” (NKJV) or “extol” (NIV) the LORD. Notice the phrases “I will greatly praise” and “I will praise” in the focus verses. The word translated “praise” there is the word that means to boast or brag about God. This statement is yet another of the many “Vows of Praise” that are to be found in the Book of Psalms! Believers should be committed to praise regardless of the circumstances that confront them every day. We should all ask God to grow our faith and to always put a song in our heart. Remember the words of Ephesians 5:19 and be “speaking to one another is psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”

Prayer Emphasis: Commit yourself to praise regardless of the circumstances that might await you today. **Realize** that the God who has never forsaken you in the past is the God you are serving in the present! **Look** for an opportunity to encourage someone who may be experiencing challenging times right now.

Day 6: Psalms 110 & 111

“The works of the LORD are great...His work is honorable and glorious, and His righteousness endures forever. He has made His wonderful works to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and full of compassion.” (Psalm 111:2-4)

“Wonderful Works”

We often read about God’s “wonderful works” as we read our way through the Book of Psalms. The “wonderful works” (NKJV) or “wonders” (NIV) referenced in the focus verse today are the exact same “wonderful works” (NKJV) or “wonders” (NIV) mentioned no less than four times in Psalm 107 and that will be mentioned two more times in the remaining psalms. We have many reasons for considering God to be “gracious and full of compassion,” but we often overlook the reason that is stated in today’s focus verse. The word translated “remembered” in Psalm 111:4 is translated “memorial” in other places in the Old Testament. One of the reasons we are to consider God to be “gracious and full of compassion” is because of the many memorials He has provided for those of us who desire to follow Him today. These memorials serve to remind us of the many times He has done mighty things on behalf of His people in the past and to also remind us that He stands ready to do the same type of “wonderful works” among His people in the present. When we allow God’s grace and compassion to remind us of the many wonderful things that God can and will do for us, we will always find reasons to praise God with our “whole” (NKJV) or “all of” (NIV) our heart (Psalm 111:1).

Prayer Emphasis: Among the many things that you take time to **thank** God for today, be sure to include the God-given ability to establish memorials in your own heart and mind as one of them! **Visit** a few of those memorials today! **Choose** to be full of praise for God today!

Day 7: Psalms 112 & 113

“Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD! Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its going down the LORD’s name is to be praised.” (Psalm 113:1-3)

Praise: Always and in All Places

Psalms 111, 112, and 113 all begin with the command to “Praise the LORD!” In my New King James Version of the Bible there is an exclamation point after each one of those commands to “Praise the LORD!” The Hebrew word for “praise” in these opening statements is “halal” (pronounced haw-lal) and the word for LORD is “Yah.” When you put them together, you get the word “hallelujah.” So, these three psalms begin with a mighty “hallelujah” and a shout of praise to God. Even though these psalms are all anonymous, it is highly likely that all three of them were written by the same person. Psalm 113 begins and ends with this shout of “hallelujah” or “Praise the LORD!” (See v. 9). Our focus verses declare that the LORD is worthy of our praise “from this time forth and forevermore” and from “the rising of the sun to its going down”. In the NIV, verse 3 reads, “From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the LORD is to be praised.” So, what the psalmist is saying is that there is not a time or place where it would be inappropriate for God’s people to say, “Hallelujah!” or “Praise the LORD!”

Prayer Emphasis: Look for reasons to praise the LORD and you will surely find them! He is always worthy of our praise and in all places. **Review** today’s verses to see if you have some of the same reasons for praising God that the writer mentioned to the believers of his day.

Day 8: Psalms 114 & 115

“O Israel, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield.” (Psalm 115:9-11)

Our Help and Shield

We are commanded to “trust in the LORD” three times in Psalm 115:9-11 and then reminded three times that He is our “help and...shield.” It is always wise to pay careful attention to everything that God says – but it is wise to give special heed when He repeats Himself. There are at least two important lessons that we can learn from the statement that God is our help and shield. First, *there is a lesson about God’s provision.* The word translated “help” in our focus verse is the same word translated “meet” in Genesis 2:20 when God noted there was no “help meet” (companion/helper) for Adam. God met Adam’s need by providing Eve to be his helper and companion. This word translated “help” is found in the Psalms more often than all the other Old Testament books combined. It is obvious that one of the things that believers are to be doing is singing God’s praises for the many ways He helps us and meets our needs! Second, *there is a lesson about God’s protection.* The shield was the most useful defensive weapon available to soldiers during Biblical times. We would all do well to remember that God is the source for our provision as well as our protection.

Prayer Emphasis: Praise God for some of the ways He provides for and protects you. **Be specific** and **provide details.** We know that God already knows about it, but He still commands us to praise Him for His wonderful works. **Remember** that our praises are music to God’s ears.

Day 9: Psalms 116 & 117

“I love the LORD, because He has heard my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.” (Psalm 116:1-2)

More Hallelujahs!

We mentioned earlier that Psalms 111, 112, and 113 all *began* with the phrase, “Praise the LORD.” Now we see that Psalms 115, 116, and 117 all *end* with that phrase. If you recall, I explained on Day 7 that the phrase “Praise the LORD” comes from the combination of the words for “praise” (halal) and “Jehovah” (Jah). Combined, these words become “hallelujah.” Therefore, hallelujah literally means “Praise Jehovah!” or “Praise God!” This is something well worth the mention more than once. Some scholars refer to all the psalms that contain this phrase as the “Hallelujah Psalms.” Many scholars only include Psalms 113–118 and Psalms 146–150 in their list of the “Hallelujah Psalms.” We see the word “because” in both of our focus verses in the NKJV and in verse two in the NIV. (The NIV substitutes the word “for” in place of “because” in verse one. Look carefully at Psalm 116 and circle words like “for” and “because.” They are indicators of good reasons for believers to praise the LORD. Psalm 117 is the shortest psalm and the shortest chapter in the Bible. It begins and ends with a “hallelujah” and praises God specifically for His “merciful kindness” (NKJV) or “love” (NIV) and his enduring “truth” (NKJV) or “faithfulness” (NIV). Psalm 117:1 declares that all “peoples” should praise the LORD. This word literally includes all the “peoples” of the world. The New Testament repeats this truth in Romans 15:9-11 and specifically quotes Psalms 117:1 in Romans 15:11.

Prayer Emphasis: Say “hallelujah” in response to some appropriate comment made today and then **ask** the person, or persons, that you say it to if they know what it means. **Explain** the two words from which the word is derived and what the word means (“Praise the LORD!”).

Day 10: Psalm 118:1-14

“Let Israel now say, ‘His mercy endures forever.’ Let the house of Aaron now say, ‘His mercy endures forever.’ Let those who fear the LORD now say, ‘His mercy endures forever.’” (Psalm 118:2-4)

“His Mercy Endures Forever”

Psalm 118 is the last psalm included in the first set of “Hallelujah Psalms” and gives us one of the best reasons for anyone praising God. Our focus verses specifically mention that God is worthy of our praise because His “mercy” (NKJV) or “love” (NIV) endures forever. This phrase is found again in the last verse of the psalm. The word that is translated “forever” is also translated “everlasting,” “evermore,” or “always” in 83 other places in the Old Testament. In fact, this word is found in 138 verses in the psalms. The Book of Isaiah uses this word in the second highest number of verses at 45. The fact that God’s “mercy endures forever” is wonderful to contemplate. This is a wonderful statement. It is a wonderful statement about a *Person* – “His mercy endures forever.” It is a wonderful statement about a *passion* – “His mercy endures forever.” It is a wonderful statement about *perpetuity* – “His mercy endures forever.” Psalm 118 was sung at all the Jewish festivals, including Passover. That means this song was well known to all the Jews and they would have been singing this song at the time Jesus began his final week before His crucifixion. What a great song to have in mind as we think about the greatest act of love and mercy that has ever been shown to man.

Prayer Emphasis: Thank God for His wonderful love – and that it endures forever! **Know** that God loves you and He always will! **Read** Psalm 118:1 again and join the psalmist in giving thanks to the LORD!

Day 11: Psalm 118:15-29

“This was the LORD’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” (Psalm 118:23-24)

“This is the Day”

Our focus verse is one of the most often quoted verses in the Bible. However, many people do not realize that the “day” mentioned in this phrase is a reference to a very specific day in history. Yesterday, we learned that Psalm 118 was sung at the Passover Festival. It was a well-known song that was on the lips of the Jewish people on the day Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and heard the people shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” (See Matthew 21:9.) Compare Psalm 118:27 to Matthew 21:8 and you will see that the “branches” that the people cut from the trees were the “cords” (NKJV) or “boughs” (NIV) that people were bringing with them to lay before the altar. The word translated “cords” in the NKJV is translated “boughs” and “branches” in other places. There is no doubt that the Holy Spirit would point to the day that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and say, “This is the day the LORD has made!” Our response should be to “rejoice and be glad in it!” It is also interesting to note that Jesus quoted Psalm 118:22-23 during His final Passover Week (see Matthew 21:42).

Prayer Emphasis: Read Psalm 118:24 and visualize Jesus dying on the cross, then **realize** that “this” was the specific day that God had in mind when these words were written. It was no coincidence that the people were singing this song on the day that Jesus entered Jerusalem at the beginning of the Passover Week.

Day 12: Psalm 119:1-16

“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; O let me not wander from Your commandments.” (Psalm 119:9-10)

A Good Question

Psalm 119 is the longest psalm and the longest chapter in the Bible. It includes 22 sections of eight verses. Each section is marked by a letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Over the next 11 days, we will cover 16 verses of this psalm. As we read this psalm, you will recognize some of the most often quoted verses and phrases in the Bible. Today’s focus verse is one of those often-quoted verses. The psalmist asks, “How can a young man cleanse his way?” While the NKJV uses the word “cleanse” here, the NIV reads, “make his way pure.” The answer is clear. This noble goal is only accomplished when we “heed” (NKJV) or are “living” (NIV) in accordance with God’s Word. To do this meant to be on one’s guard, constantly heeding, observing, and preserving God’s commands. This Hebrew word is translated “watchman” eight times in the NKJV and is found in more verses in the book of Psalms than any other book of the Bible with almost one-third of those times being in Psalm 119. Over these same 11 days, we are going to see God emphasize that the best way to honor Him in our lives is to honor His Word. As a young man, I wrote a quote on the cover page of my Bible that I have never forgotten. I do not know who to credit for the quote, but I remember the quote well and have repeated it across America. Here it is: “What you do with the Bible determines what God can do with you!”

Prayer Emphasis: Read your Bible every day and **look** for ways to bring something that you have read into your daily conversations. Be creative. **Believe** that something that God may use you to say to someone may make an eternal difference in their life.

Day 13: Psalm 119:17-32

“Deal bountifully with Your servant, that I may live and keep Your word. Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law.” (Psalm 119:17-18)

A Noble Request

Many of us may remember singing the old hymn that said, “Open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth Thou hast for me.” This song, and the prayer of many Christians, was based on the words of Psalm 119:18, one of today’s focus verses. This noble request is followed by a listing of some of the reasons that motivated the writer to make it. One of those reasons included his feeling that he was like a “stranger” in the world (v. 19). As such, he just didn’t feel like he really fit in with this world’s system. All believers should feel that way because we are clearly commanded to “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2). The “wondrous” (NKJV) or “wonderful” (NIV) things this person desired to see in God’s Word comes from the same Hebrew word that has described the wonderful “works” or “deeds” we have discussed so many times in our devotionals from the Psalms. From this, we gain the understanding that one of the ways we can see God’s wonderful works is by reading about them in His Law.

Prayer Emphasis: Continue to read from God’s Word every day. **Ask** Him to show you some of the wonderful things that are contained therein. Let’s take a few moments and all **pray** this prayer together today: “Lord, open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your Word.”

Day 14: Psalm 119:33-48

“I will speak of Your testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed. And I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I love.” (Psalm 119:46-47)

Unashamed!

Take a few moments to look at today’s verses and then pray them to the Lord in your own words. For me, verse 33 would sound like this: “Lord, if you teach me or show me how to follow your Word, then I will keep it until the end of my life.” Verse 34 would sound something like, “Help me to understand what You are trying to tell me, and I will obey it with all of my heart.” Verse 35 might be one of my favorite things to say to God because it would be, “God, please show me, direct me, and help me to walk in the path that You have laid out for me in Your commands, and I will be the happiest man on the face of the earth!” Verses 41-46 describe some of the things that the psalmist promised to do if God would grant him the ability to fully understand His Word. Take a moment and circle the “I wills” that you read in these verses and then pay careful attention to the “I will” statement made in verse 46. This believer promised God that he would speak of God’s “testimonies” (NKJV) or “statutes” (NIV) to everyone that he met, including “kings.” He also promised God that he would not be ashamed to speak His Word – and that he would never be put to shame because he did not have enough personal understanding of it to share its promises with those that he met along life’s way. Look at verses 45-48 and note the words “walk,” “delight,” “lift up,” and “meditate.”

Prayer Emphasis: Seek out someone to speak to about God today. **Be intentional** in your personal walk and witness. **Find** a good reason to bring God up in a conversation and **tell** someone about some of the wonderful things that God has done for you.

Day 15: Psalm 119:49-64

“This is my comfort in my affliction, for Your word has given me life. The proud have me in great derision, yet I do not turn aside from Your law. I remembered Your judgments of old, O LORD, and have comforted myself.” (Psalm 119:50-52)

Comfort

The word translated “comfort” in verse 50 brings some wonderful thoughts to mind. It is a word that can mean “to breathe in deeply.” Therefore, in the vernacular of our day it might mean to “take a deep breath.” This word is also used to speak of comfort in several places in the Bible. It is the “comfort” that God gives the believer who walks through the valley of the shadow of death in Psalm 23:4. It is used to describe the “comfort” that may be offered to someone after the death of an infant child (2 Samuel 12:24) or of a teenage son (Genesis 37:35). It is the kind of “comfort” that Isaac needed after his mother died (Genesis 24:67). In Isaiah 66:13, this same word is used to explain to us how God desires to “comfort” us in the same gentle way that a mother would try to “comfort” her own child. The “comfort” that the writer of this psalm found in his own “affliction” (NKJV), or “suffering” (NIV), rested in the fact that he believed it was God and His Word that had “given” him life. Never forget the words of 2 Corinthians 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.” The word for “all” in that verse is the same as the word “whoever” in John 3:16. This means that, just like God can save anyone and everyone, He can comfort them in any and every way!

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that our physical injuries may demand special medical care, but our spiritual and emotional hurts can be comforted best by God’s Word. When we get our “feelings” hurt, we would do well to **remember** to open our Bibles and take a strong dose of God’s Word before we do anything else.

Day 16: Psalm 119:65-80

“It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes. The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver.” (Psalm 119:71-72)

“Good”

The word translated “good” in our focus verse is a word that means “beneficially good.” It is often translated “better” in the NKJV and various other translations. What the psalmist is trying to tell us is that it had often been to his personal benefit to suffer afflictions because those very afflictions helped to make him a better person, and, therefore, a better follower of God. One of the ways that affliction had been to his beneficial good is found in verse 67: “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word.” The NIV uses the word “obey” in place of the NKJV’s “keep” in that verse. Here is at least one way that the psalmist says that trouble helped him to be a better person. In his time of suffering, he learned that it is best not to stray from God and His commandments. How could he have such an attitude and opinion about affliction? Look carefully at the words of verse 68: “You are good, and do good; teach me Your statutes.” Verse 72 clearly states that money cannot buy the kind of things that can be learned by experiencing God’s faithfulness in our times of trouble.

Prayer Emphasis: Believe that there are times when bitter is better! **Read** Psalm 119:75 and know that God is always faithful to care for us, especially in our times of trial and affliction. **Seek** out someone who may be experiencing trials right now and use your personal testimony to help comfort them.

Day 17: Psalm 119:81-96

“I have seen the consummation of all perfection, but Your commandment is exceedingly broad.”
(Psalm 119:96)

Boundless

Our focus verse describes God’s Word as being “exceedingly broad” (NKJV) or “boundless” (NIV). However your Bible translates it, the first usage of this word is found in Genesis 34:21 when Jacob’s sons described their land as being “large enough” (NKJV) or having “plenty of room” (NIV) for them and their enemies as well. That is what the psalmist is concluding about God’s Word. He is stating that God’s Word is “boundless” and that there is room within its’ promises to meet and comfort every need of the believer. Although we do not know who wrote Psalm 119, we know that it was a person who could confidently declare that there is no limit to what God’s Word can do for those who put their “hope” therein (v. 81). In verse 82, we see that God’s “exceedingly broad” or “boundless” Word was the place where the psalm writer sought “comfort.” In verses 92-93 we see our writer finding strength to sustain him as the many afflictions of life came against him. What the Word of God did for them then, we can fully believe it will do for us now! For this reason, we should continue to *read* it (vs. 82 & 94), *remember* it (v. 93), and to always *review* it as we “consider” what it says (v. 95).

Prayer Emphasis: Review today’s verses and **circle or mark** the promises you see concerning God’s Word and then come to your own conclusions as to how important it is that we maintain a close, daily relationship with it. **Believe** that God’s Word is without limits when it comes to providing you with all that you need to live for God!

Day 18: Psalm 119:97-112

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:105)

I Love Your Law!

Because of its’ “exceedingly broad” and “boundless” ability to provide his every need, the psalmist proclaims his love for God’s Word and promises to meditate on it all day – every day! He realized that doing so would give him the provisions that he needed to walk without stumbling. In God’s Word, we can all find wisdom (v. 98) and understanding (v. 100). The path God has called us to walk is said to be well *loved* (v. 97), well-*lit* (v. 105), and *lasting* (v. 112). Because of these things, the path that is illuminated by God’s Word is one that should be preferred by all believers. Imagine how difficult life would be if we were left to walk in darkness! God’s Word provides a “lamp” for our feet and a “light” for our path. The “light” that God promises in our focus verse in none other than the “light” that He spoke into existence in Genesis 1:3-4. He there proclaimed that light to be “good.” Who could possibly disagree? The “lamp” is “for our feet.” This indicates that God’s Word is used to help us see how to live for God one step at a time. The word “light” helps us to understand how God can use His Word to show us how to live through anything that may lay ahead of us.

Prayer Emphasis: Meditate on Psalm 119:105 and **allow** God to reveal its truth to you today. **Realize** that God desires to show us the “big picture” but requires that we walk through this life one step at a time. **Ask** God to shed His light on your every step today. **Encourage** a fellow believer today by sharing our focus verse with them!

Day 19: Psalm 119:113-128

“Therefore I love Your commandments more than gold, yes, than fine gold! Therefore all Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right; I hate every false way.” (Psalm 119:127-128)

“Fine Gold”

Although it may not be obvious in our English versions of the Bible, those who read it from its original manuscripts could clearly see that the words translated “gold” in our focus verse are two different words entirely! The first word for “gold” is translated from a word that was used to describe gold in its natural state – like the crude ore that is first dug from the earth. However, the second “gold,” the one that is described as being “fine gold,” is translated from a word that is used to describe gold that had been refined or purified of all its imperfections. This phrase describes the value that the psalmist sees in maintaining a right relationship with God and His Word. The word that is translated “dross” in verse 119 is a Hebrew word that was used to describe the valueless waste that is melted away from the pure gold during the process of refining. We are to realize that meditation on God’s Word will help us to put away the kind of thinking that is found in people who live only in their natural state. When we live and dwell in the spiritual, we realize that life, for the believer, is better than just good. For the committed believer, we can rest assured that life with God is “fine!”

Prayer Emphasis: **Thank** God for His Word and **know** that He has given it to us for our good. **Share** something from it with someone that you meet today. Realize that we live in a world where people often miss the “fine gold” because they are so enamored with this world’s *fool’s* gold!

Day 20: Psalm 119:129-144

“The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.” (Psalm 119:130)

The “Entrance”

Our focus verse speaks of the “entrance” (NKJV) or the “unfolding” (NIV) of God’s Word. Although the Hebrew word that is translated thusly is found only in this one place in the Scriptures, its root word is found first in Genesis 7:11 where, during the days of Noah, “the windows of heaven were opened.” The word literally means an “opening,” “entrance,” or “doorway.” The image presented here is that of a believer walking through an “entrance” to God’s Word and then progressing on into it as the rest of it is opened or “unfolded” (NIV) before our eyes. When we have a right relationship with the Bible, we will have a better “understanding” (v. 130) of God’s will and the way that He would have us to live. Although the primary meaning of this word is “understanding” or “insight,” it is translated “prudent, discreet, wise, skillful, and cunning” in other places in the Bible. You may not believe that you are learning very much as you read God’s Word, but you can rest assured that He is “opening” it to you just as surely as he “opened” the windows of heaven in the days of Noah. So, dive in and allow God to “flood” your heart and soul with the great truths that await you in His Word!

Prayer Emphasis: **Believe** that God is using His Word to guide you into His ever-unfolding truth. **Refuse** to become discouraged because you do not fully understand everything that you read. **Continue** to be faithful to God’s Word and **trust** Him to make you a wiser and more skillful Christian as He expands your understanding of His will for your life. **Ask** someone if they have read their Bible today and **encourage** them to join us as we read from God’s Word daily.

Day 21: Psalm 119:145-160

“I rise before the dawning of the morning, and cry for help; I hope in Your word.” (Psalm 119:147)

“Hope”

It was exceedingly difficult to settle on a focus verse from today’s passage of Scripture! However, the words of verse 147 meant so much to me that I want to share with you some of the personal blessings that God provided to me as I meditated on them. God first used this verse to speak to me about *initiative*. The psalmist rose early in the morning to ensure that he would have time to spend with God and His Word. Allowing God’s Word to be one of the first things that we encounter every day will surely help us to keep Him first in our lives! God then used this verse to speak to me about *insight*. This believer chose to “cry” (NKJV) or to “cry out” (NIV) to God “for help.” The word translated “cry” here is found first, and most often, in the Book of Job. It is first used in the Scriptures to describe how Job cried out to God for insight and understanding as to why his suffering had come upon him. It is for this same kind of insight that our writer is praying in this psalm. Finally, God used this verse to speak to my heart about *instruction*. There is much to learn in this man finding his “hope” in God’s Word. The first time that this word translated “hope” is found in the Bible is in Genesis 8:12 where Noah “waited” in the ark an additional seven days before sending out a second dove to test and see if the waters of the flood had abated. It is our “hope” that can help us to patiently wait for God to work on our behalf.

Prayer Emphasis: Believe that God’s Word can give you the staying power that it takes to remain faithful through the darkest storm, even when God makes you wait! **Wait** on the Lord and **trust** Him completely. **Remember** that God is always working on our behalf and with our best interest in mind!

Day 22: Psalm 119:161-176

“I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure...Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.” (Psalm 119:162 & 165)

Great Peace

Our focus verses speak of “great treasure” and “great peace.” I know many people who would consider peace to be a great treasure! Psalm 119:165 has been one of my favorite verses since shortly after my salvation. I have often quoted it to myself and others when circumstances or situations have tempted me to become discouraged and disillusioned. The verse contains a great promise for all believers. The promise is that a right relationship with God’s Word will help prevent us from stumbling because of the deeds or words of others. This promise demands that we focus on what God says more than anything else. This great promise is about a great peace that only God can give. Since this word is translated “stumble” or “stumbling block” more than any other way in the NKJV and the NIV, we can understand that God wants us to know that it is His peace that will keep us from falling when the path grows dark and difficult. This promise of peace is God’s divine shock absorber that minimizes the bumps that we encounter in the road of life. This great peace, then, is a great provision for every believer. Where do we find such great peace? It is found in a “love” for the Word of God!

Prayer Emphasis: Take the time to memorize Psalm 119:165. If nothing else, write it out on a card and keep it with you. **Realize** that there are many things that may cause us to stumble, but this one promise from God’s Word provides us with the wisdom and insight to stay on our feet and keep walking for God’s glory!

Day 23: Psalms 120 & 121

“I will lift up my eyes to the hills – from whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” (Psalm 121:1-4)

“My Help”

Several words came to mind as I read the first verse of Psalm 121 today. The first word that came to my mind was *familiarity*. This is a verse that most believers are familiar with and one that we have heard often and probably even quoted to others. If this verse is not among your chosen memory or meditation verses, then I would encourage you to add it to your list now. A second word that came to my mind was *family*. That might seem odd to you at first, but I think you will see the connection when you read the first verse in which the Hebrew word translated “help” here is found in the Bible. It is first found in Genesis 2:20 when God decided to make a “helper” for Adam. We all know that the first helper was Eve, Adam’s wife. Thus, the word “help” relates to family. God wants us to know that we are part of His family and that He stands ready to help us in our times of need. Then, the word *faith* came to mind. Our help comes “from the LORD.” The name for Jehovah God is used seven times in these two psalms. Since seven is a number closely associated with perfection in the Bible, let’s allow these verses to be a perfect reminder to us to look to God for our every need!

Prayer Emphasis: **Believe** that God loves you and that you are His child! **Look to** and **for** Him in your times of trouble. **Know** that He never falls asleep on His watch, and He is always protecting you from the forces of evil.

Day 24: Psalms 122, 123, & 124

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: ‘May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, prosperity within your palaces.’ For the sake of my brethren and companions, I will now say, ‘Peace be within you.’ Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek your good.” (Psalm 122:6-9)

Why We Pray for Israel

You have probably heard both preachers and politicians proclaim that America should be an ally, or friend to Israel. Our focus verses today help us to better understand what it truly means to be the kind of friend that God wants us to be to others. The kind of friendship God is describing may best be defined by how we *pray*, what we *say*, and if we *stay*. We are commanded to “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem” (122:6). Lifting the names of our friends in prayer is one of the finest things that we could ever do for them. Then we are reminded that what we say to people can also be a source of great encouragement to them. Psalm 122:8 says, “For the sake of my brethren and companions, I will now say, ‘Peace be within you.’” In addition, our willingness to stay faithful to our friends and to seek only good for them is referenced in verse nine. God’s Word commands us to pray for Israel’s peace within its own borders and with the world. God’s Word also commands us to pray for Israel’s prosperity. The word translated “good” (NKJV) or “prosperity” (NIV) in verse nine means that we are to faithfully pray for God’s blessings on Israel.

Prayer Emphasis: **Pray** for the nation of Israel. I have heard many of America’s presidents ask or remind us to be faithful friends to God’s chosen people. Take some time to **obey** this especially important command today. Let this verse be a reminder to pray for others and to say encouraging things to our fellow believers.

Day 25: Psalms 125, 126, & 127

“The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad... He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”
(Psalm 126:3 & 6)

It's a Toss Up!

When it came to selecting a focus verse for today's devotional, it was a toss-up between verses three and six of Psalm 126! Both are well-known verses to most believers. One speaks of what the LORD has done for us, and the other speaks of what the LORD desires that we do for others. Verse three cautions us to be mindful of the “great things” that God “has done” “for us” while verse six reminds us of what may be the greatest thing that we could do for those we encounter along life's way. One describes a person so blessed by God that their life is filled with great joy, while the other describes a person so burdened for others that they go forth weeping as they carry the seed of God's Word to a lost and dying world. In either case, the result is joy! God gives joy to those who recognize His blessings in their own lives, and He gives joy to those who reach out to introduce great blessings into the lives of others. Note how our “weeping” is turned to “rejoicing” (NKJV) or “songs of joy” (NIV) when we return from a walk that includes the sharing of God's Word with those we meet along the way!

Prayer Emphasis: Let's all **acknowledge** God's goodness today and **show our appreciation** for the many “great things” that He has done for us by sharing the precious seed of God's Word with others. **Make** a special effort to bring God and His Word up in a conversation with someone today.

Day 26: Psalms 128 & 129

“Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.” (Psalm 128:3-4)

A Family Matter

While the word “wife” in Psalm 128:3 gives some indication that these verses are directed mostly towards men, the words “every one” (NKJV) and “all” (NIV) in verse one allows a broader application when teaching the value of fearing the LORD and walking “in His ways.” The best thing that any man, or person, can do for their family, is to do what is best for God. When we fear the LORD, we are being constantly conscious of Him and the way that He would have us to live. To fear God means to always have an awareness of God in every situation. It simply means that we should live every day in the way we would live if we knew God was right there with us in every situation and circumstance. The best thing about that is we do not have to *imagine* that God is there, because He *is* there! When we develop that kind of God consciousness, then we will be the kind of person that can nurture our family in a godly way. The words “fruitful vine” and olive “plants” (NKJV) or “shoots” (NIV) should serve as a sober reminder of the great responsibility that is laid at the feet of the leader of a home. The person that we decide to *be* for God today will determine what our children may *become* tomorrow!

Prayer Emphasis: **Pray** for the men and parents of our church – and for the men of America. **Encourage** one of your Christian brothers today by letting them know that you have prayed for them and that you will continue to do so. Men, **speak** some nurturing, encouraging words to your wife today. Parents, **speak** some words of love and encouragement to your children.

Day 27: Psalms 130 & 131

“O Israel, hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption.”
(Psalm 130:7)

Our Paid in Full Redemption

Our focus verse reminds us that the promises to those who put their hope in the LORD are “abundant” (NKJV) or “full” (NIV). As a child, I often watched my mother begin to put things on lay-away beginning early in the year so that she and my father would have some special things to give to us at Christmas. My parents were great parents because they were great partners. While we were young, our dad earned the money while mom stayed home and managed it. As it drew closer to the end of the year, mom would begin to make those last payments that paid, in full, the balance that she owed on her various lay-away accounts. (Sometimes she paid for our Christmas in “greenbacks” (dollars) and sometimes she paid for it in “Green Stamps!”) Whatever manner of payment she used, the balance was eventually paid, in full, and the gift was hers to bring home and eventually give to her children. God’s greatest gift to us came in the form of His only begotten Son. He allowed Him to die on the cross in our place so that the payment of our debt (sin) could be marked “paid in full”, and the gift of salvation could be ours now and enjoyed throughout our lives. As I think about God’s precious gift of salvation, I am glad that God does not save us on the “lay-away” plan! Aren’t you?

Prayer Emphasis: Praise God for your salvation today! Thank Him for paying the full price for your salvation so that you could have His most precious gift now and not just in the hereafter. Remember that, at least for the believer, every day is Christmas Day!

Day 28: Psalm 132

“LORD, remember David and all his afflictions;” (Psalm 132:1)

“Afflictions”

There is a wonderful truth to be found in our focus verse today. The “afflictions” (NKJV) or “hardships” of David that are referenced here are not the typical trials and tribulations about which we read in other places in the Scriptures. As we read Psalm 132, we see that David’s “afflictions” were because he had a “house” with a comfortable “bed” (v. 3) in which to rest while there was no such “place for the LORD” or “a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob” (v. 5). The “afflictions” referenced here are ones that David imposed upon himself until he was able to complete his vision of building a house for God. His vow was to constantly remind himself that, while he had a home in which to live and a nice bed in which to sleep, God’s Ark of the Covenant was still sitting in a tent. What might have made matters worse was that the windows in David’s palace provided a full view of the tent in which the Ark sat. His vow was to not rest easy or sleep peacefully in his own house and bed until God’s house was completed. That meant that his vow was to not be at rest until he had fulfilled his promises to God. We would all do well to remember our promises to God and not rest easy until we have done our absolute best to fulfill them.

Prayer Emphasis: Pray for your church today and pray specifically that we will humbly find a way for our church to always bring honor and glory to God. Ask God to show you how you might be able to contribute to that great vision and live to see it become a reality.

Day 29: Psalms 133, 134, & 135

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1)

Unity

It might be easier to understand the statement that is made in our focus verse if we review the setting to which it refers. This is a psalm that was sung at the festivals when all the people came from their different homelands to Jerusalem to celebrate God’s special, holy days together. Thus, at least for a brief period, all the “brethren” were able to “dwell together” in one place. The word “dwell” references a temporary stay, usually in tents. (See Genesis 4:20 where Jabal was referred to as the “father of those who ‘dwell’ (NKJV) or ‘live’ (NIV) in tents.”) It was deemed “good” for God’s people to be in unity when they came together for the purpose of worshipping and serving Him. The word translated “good” there is also translated “better” in 72 other places in the NKJV and “best” in eight places. When God’s people learn to work and worship in unity, it is “pleasant” (or pleasing) in God’s eyes. To help us understand what is meant by the word “pleasant” here, God goes on to liken it to the refreshing fragrance of the “precious oil” that was used to anoint the High Priest (v. 2). Unity among His people is so pleasing to God that it is likened to the fresh, pleasant aroma of the oil that symbolized His presence and holiness.

Prayer Emphasis: **Desire** to please God and you will desire to have unity when we come together for worship. **Visualize** the oil running down Aaron’s head and all the way down to his feet and you will better visualize how God is pleased “from head to toe” when His children work and worship as one family.

Day 30: Psalm 136

“OH, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Oh, give thanks to the God of gods! For His mercy endures forever. Oh, give thanks to the LORD of lords! For His mercy endures forever.” (Psalm 136:1-3)

His Love Endures Forever!

I guess that I could have chosen any of the 26 verses from Psalm 136 as our focus verse today because every verse in this psalm contains the wonderful phrase, “For His mercy endures forever.” Some translations use words like “His love” or “His steadfast love” rather than mercy here, but most of them agree on the word “forever.” To help us understand what is meant by “forever,” the songwriter includes six verses that encourage us to see God’s love in His creative works, (vs. 4-9) and another six to encourage us to see God’s love in His deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt (vs. 10-15). He then devotes verse 16 to describing the love that was shown to Israel while in the desert before six more verses (vs. 17-22) are written to reveal God’s love that was shown to Israel during the conquest of Canaan. This song began at the creation story and served to remind Israel that God has loved them from the very first day of eternity. Nothing they had ever done changed the way that He loved them because He had committed to love them unconditionally. The same holds true for us. God has always loved us, and He always will. Nothing can separate (create a division) between us and the love of God. This psalm was possibly sung with one part of the congregation singing the first part of the verses while the remaining part of the congregation sang the response, “His mercy endures forever.”

Prayer Emphasis: **Thank** God for loving us so completely, and **praise** Him for loving us unconditionally. **Practice** loving others in that same way today.

Day 31: Psalms 137 & 138

“Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch out Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand will save me.” (Psalm 138:7)

Right is “Right”

In Psalm 138:7, David spoke of walking in times of trouble and of his need to be saved from the hands of his enemies. Yet, verse eight reveals that David remained confident that God could, and would, “perfect” (NKJV) or “fulfill” (NIV) His divine plan for his life. You will notice the word “hand” two times in verse seven. David declares that God would stretch out His “hand” against his enemies while saving him with his “right hand.” In the English language, we often see two words that look or even sound alike, and yet have two different meanings entirely. (See the title of this devotional for an example.) The two references to a “hand” in our focus verse look and sound the same to us, but they were two quite different words in the Hebrew language. The second “hand” mentioned in that verse comes from a Hebrew word that means “the right hand,” or the “hand of power and authority.” In this instance, God used one “hand” to hold back the sinners (David’s enemies) and the other (the “right hand”) to hold up the saint. God’s “right hand,” the hand that represents God’s power and authority, is always with God’s people.

Prayer Emphasis: Today’s focus verse reminded me of the words of Christ in Matthew 25:34: “Then the King will say to those on His *right hand*, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’” For now, and in the hereafter, when it comes to where you stand with God, **remember**, right is “right.”

Day 32: Psalm 139

“You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it.” (Psalm 139:5-6)

More Hands

Although it is not our focus verse, Psalm 139:10 mentions the two “hands” that we discussed in yesterday’s devotional. Note again how one Hebrew word is translated simply “hand” while the other literally meant the “right hand.” If the Bible is at all confusing (notice that I said “if”) the confusion is not because of the divine hand that wrote it but because of the human hands that translated it. As if all this talk about the word “hand” wasn’t enough, we find a third Hebrew word translated “hand” in verse five! The original word used in that phrase was a word that described a certain part of the hand. It described the “hollow” or “palm” of the hand. To help you better understand how this word was used in other places, you can look at Numbers 7 where, in that one chapter alone, you will find this word translated “spoon” 16 times in several translations of the Bible. It is translated “bowls” in the NKJV and “dish” in the NIV. In Genesis 32 many translations use this word to describe the “hollow” of Jacob’s thigh and in Exodus 33 to describe the part of God’s hand that was used to cover Moses when He hid him in the cleft of the rock. So, in today’s verse, the “palm” of His hand was what God used to keep David on the right track and going in the right direction. In Isaiah 49:16, God told the prophet to remind Israel that He had “inscribed” (engraved) their names “on the palms” of His “hands.”

Prayer Emphasis: **Read** John 20:24-29 and imagine how Thomas felt after he examined the pierced “hands” of Jesus. **Thank** God for the offering of His Son so that we could be saved – and kept safe – by the work of His “hands.” **Live** as if you are in “good hands” today!

Day 33: Psalms 140 & 141

“Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips. Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works...” (Psalm 141:3-4a)

An Important Prayer

The first two verses of Psalm 141 include several words that clearly reveal the theme of this song. Verse one finds the writer lifting his “cry” (NKJV) or “call” (NIV) to the LORD while his “voice” and “prayer” are also mentioned in those verses. Because of this, we understand that the prayer found in our focus verse (Psalm 141:3) is about his personal prayer life. The word that is translated “guard” in that verse is a Hebrew word that is found only here in this verse. However, the root word is often used in the Old Testament, beginning in Genesis 2:15 where God placed Adam in the garden to dress and to “keep” it. So, what David was praying was that the LORD would watch over his prayers and plant only the right words in his heart and mind while he was praying. If God was going to “keep” the garden of David’s prayers, it meant that He was going to sow some right thoughts into David’s prayers. David’s request, “Do not incline my heart to any evil thing” (v. 4) is a strong indication that David also wanted God to weed out the wrong thoughts that might influence his prayers negatively. When I read this verse, I was immediately reminded of the unnamed disciple’s request found in Luke 11:1, “Lord, teach *us* to pray.”

Prayer Emphasis: Review Psalm 141 and note the various parts of the human body that are mentioned. **Remind** yourself that prayer is a time when we pour out our hearts to God and it affects every part of our lives – spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

Day 34: Psalms 142 & 143

“I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands. I spread out my hands to You; my soul longs for You like a thirsty land.” (Psalm 143:5-6)

Three Very Important Things

In Psalm 143:5, David stated three particularly important things that he did during his personal prayer time. In the NKJV, each one of these things is preceded with the personal pronoun, “I.” He said, “*I remember,*” “*I meditate,*” and “*I muse.*” (The word translated “muse” in the NKJV is translated “consider” in the NIV and some other translations.) Although similar, each one of these actions describes something different. The word “remember” means to “call to mind.” In Genesis, this word is used to describe how God “remembered” Noah and His promises made to Abraham and Rachel. Therefore, when we honor our promises, we are doing something that is very God-like. “Meditate” is a word that means to roll something over and over in your mind. This word is found in the Psalms more than any other book of the Bible. To “muse” (NKJV) or “consider” (NIV) is “to talk something out.” So, three important things to do while praying would be to *remember* the promises that have been made by and to God, *rehearse* them by rolling them over and over in your heart and mind, and then to *relate* them to God by talking about them with Him. If we would use this formula when we pray, we would be more certain to pray in accordance with God’s will.

Prayer Emphasis: Prepare your heart for prayer by recalling Bible promises and passages that deal with the matter at hand. **Review** God’s promises, rolling them over and over in your heart and mind. Then, **speak** to God about the things that are pressing on your soul.

Day 35: Psalm 144

*“Happy are the people who are in such a state; happy are the people whose God is the LORD!”
(Psalm 144:15)*

The Key to Happiness

In verse 15 David concludes this psalm with a statement about “happy” (NKJV) or “blessed” (NIV) people. In fact, David mentions how “happy” or “blessed” God’s people are twice in the same verse. How did David choose to describe a “happy” or “blessed” person? He described them as people “whose God is the LORD!” The word “God” there is translated from Elohim (the Creator God) and the word LORD is from Jehovah (the Saving God.) Thus, the key to happiness, or the life that is blessed, is found in knowing God in two ways. First, *we know Him as our Creator*. In this, we mean that we know that our *physical* life is a gift, or creation, of God. However, our knowledge of God is not limited to that one realm. Those of us who have been born again know that our *spiritual* life is a creation, or gift, of God to us as well. Therefore, *we also know Him as our Savior*. It is one thing to be alive and another thing entirely to have eternal life! When our lives are surrendered to the LORD, we are in a place where we can allow everything that God is and has to strengthen and sustain us.

Prayer Emphasis: Rejoice in the fact that you know that you have eternal life! **Praise** God for your salvation and for the joy that it brings. **Share** your salvation experience with someone today and see if God doesn’t make you feel “blessed” or “happy!”

Day 36: Psalm 145

“One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.” (Psalm 145:4)

Something to Talk About

Depending on what translation you read, Psalm 145 may be titled, “A Praise of David, “A Psalm of Praise” or “David’s Psalm of Praise.” This is the only psalm that bears this title, and it is the beginning of what is considered to be the “doxology” of the Book of Psalms. The word praise will be very prominent in these final psalms – occurring 46 times in the final 80 verses of this book. This psalm begins with David saying that he will exalt and praise God “every day” and “forever and ever” (vs. 1-2). He states that one generation shall speak to another about the mighty things that God has done in their lives. The word translated “mighty acts” is a different word than the one translated “wonderful works” and “wonders” that we have spoken of so many times thus far. The word used here is a word that speaks of the “might,” “strength,” or “power” of God. A good example of how this word is used in the Bible is found in Deuteronomy 3:24 where the question is asked, “What god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds?” In that verse, the “works” speaks of what God can do and “might” describes how God does it. Take a moment and review this psalm to see some of the things that David believed people should be talking about. If we tried to work all these complimentary phrases into our conversations about God, we would soon learn that it would take all day, every day, to tell of God’s goodness to us.

Prayer Emphasis: Review verses 4 through 11 and try to **find** at least ten attributes of God that David suggested people talk about. Make every effort to **work** some of these things into your conversations today. **Spend** some time bragging on God today! **Encourage** someone who may be discouraged. **Realize** that every believer truly has something to talk about!

Day 37: Psalm 146

“Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul! While I live I will praise the LORD; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.” (Psalm 146:1-2)

The Ultimate Vow of Praise

In this psalm our unknown psalmist vows, “While I live I will praise the LORD; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.” In the NIV, this verse is translated, “I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.” Those two phrases may seem repetitious to us today, but they meant two different things to those who heard them then. The important thing to note is that this person made a vow of praise to God by promising to “praise the LORD” while he lived and to continue to “sing praises” to God until the day that his life on this earth was over. The first part of this vow is a quantitative phrase while the second is a qualitative one. In other words, this person vowed to praise God as long as he lived (quantitative) and with every bit of the life that he had within him (qualitative). Look closely at these verses and you will see that he is vowing to praise God as his creator, sustainer, provider, and protector. Perhaps this person realized that he needed to praise God as long as he lived and with all his being because he was absolutely convinced that God was worthy of such a commitment. The happiest believers are not simply happy because they praise God. They are happy because they fully understand why God deserves such praise!

Prayer Emphasis: Praise God *privately* and *publicly* today. By that, I mean tell Him how much you love Him and then tell someone else how much you love God. **Seek** to praise God with every fiber of your being, not just today, but in every day for the rest of your life! He alone is worthy.

Day 38: Psalm 147

“Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.” (Psalm 147:1)

Hallelujah!

All the psalms between 146 and 150 begin and end with the phrase, “Praise the LORD!” As we discussed in two earlier devotions, the Hebrew words that make up this phrase literally mean, “Hallelujah!” The phrase “Praise the LORD” comes from a combination of two Hebrew words that together are basically pronounced “hallelujah.” The first part of the word, the “praise” part, comes from the Hebrew word “halel.” The last part of that phrase comes from a Hebrew word that is a shortened form of the name “Jehovah.” So, when we say, “Praise the Lord” we are saying “Hallelujah” or “Praise Jehovah.” In Psalm 147:1, both the NKJV and the NIV agree that it is “good” and “pleasant” to sing praises to our God. In that one phrase, two very definite statements are being made. First, the phrase states that it is good for us to praise God. The word translated “good” in our focus verse is the word that means the “beneficial good” that we have talked about in previous devotionals. It is the kind of “good” that really means “good *for us*.” The word translated “pleasant” is a word that means “delightful” or “agreeable.” So, to praise the LORD is to do something that is *good* for us and that is *pleasing* to God! This word “pleasant” comes from the same word that is translated “sweet” in 2 Samuel 23:1 where the NKJV describes David as, “the sweet psalmist of Israel.”

Prayer Emphasis: Spread some praise around today. It will be good for you and good for all who hear you doing it. **Remember** that, most important of all, it will be a pleasant, or sweet, sound in the ears of God. **Remind** yourself of some of the reasons why He is worthy of your praise.

Day 39: Psalm 148

“Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.” (Psalm 148:2-4)

Join the Heavenly Choir

Psalm 148 includes a call for every created thing to praise the LORD. Verses 1-6 speak of the praise that is due God from all created things in the heavens. This includes the angels, heavenly hosts, and the planets and stars. Verses 7-12 speak of the praise that is due the LORD from the earth. The sea creatures and the seas themselves are commanded to praise the LORD. The lightning, hail, snow, clouds, and stormy winds are to praise the LORD and add some percussion to the song by doing so. Even the mountains, hills, and all creatures great and small are to join this heavenly chorus. Finally, human beings, in all places and positions in life, are to join the chorus and sing praises to the LORD. Every part of God’s creation is assigned a part in this wonderful song to God. Kings, princes, and rulers are to sing. Male and females are to sing. The young and the old are to sing. Even the children were invited to join the choir and sing praises to the LORD. So, all creatures and creation are to sing praises to God because His name is to be exalted above all things – whether in heaven or earth.

Prayer Emphasis: **Pray** specifically for our music ministry today. **Ask** God to continue to bless this ministry and to use it to include as many people as possible in the business of singing praise to our God. **Pray** for our children and for our current volunteers who work in the children’s ministry of our church. **Consider** volunteering to work with our music or children’s ministries in the extremely near future – like now!

Day 40: Psalms 149 & 150

“Praise Him with loud cymbals; praise Him with clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!” (Psalm 150:5-6)

Cymbals!

Some have heard me tell of my elementary school years when the music teacher would visit my class with all her little musical instruments. There were so many interesting things in her box and all of them were fun to play. However, I most remember the pair of little cymbals that she brought with her and my desire to get my hands on them! When the instruments were distributed, I was never – not even once – handed that little pair of cymbals! The NKJV describes them as “loud” and “clashing” cymbals. The one statement that may be most correct about cymbals is that they can be clearly heard as they do their part in leading the praise that is due our God. When cymbals are played correctly, they provide accent and clearly compliment the efforts of the other players in the band. When they are played incorrectly, they create nothing but noise. Perhaps that is why Paul stated that, without love, our message is like the clashing of cymbals. A message that is loud, but not loving, may lead to more confusion than conversions. Pray that we will all do our part – fulfill our role – and complete the great choir and orchestra of praise that God is trying to build at our church. When done in the right spirit and at the right time, our praise can blend in with what others are doing and our God can be honored.

Prayer Emphasis: **Thank** God for the role that He has given you in the ministry of the church and play it to the best of your ability while remaining in harmony with the rest of the band! Thank you for reading with us. Contact us at gary@seminolebc.com or 850-562-8069 if we can minister to you in any way.