



SOUTHLAND CHURCH

BOOK V OF
PSALMS

Psalms 107-150

18 Day Devotional



foundations
daily devotional

SOUTHLAND CHURCH

BOOK V OF
PSALMS

Psalms 107-150

18 Day Devotional

foundations
daily devotional

DAY 1**INTRODUCTION**

We will be reading through Book V of the Book of Psalms. In this section we find both the shortest chapter in the whole Bible, as well as the longest. We find teaching, history, testimony, and confession. As well we see the deepest passion of God's heart revealed: to be in close relationship with His people.

This compilation of songs is full of exuberant singing and praise and worship. In nearly every psalm the Lord is praised for who He is and His great and mighty works. It is not just about the works, though. As we move through the psalms we see the works are really about His heart. Everything the Lord does is to draw His people closer to Him.

A predominant theme of Book V is the Word of God. The psalmists love God's Word, whether it is written, sung or spoken, or revealed to the heart. Throughout this section God's Word is often called the Law, the Book, the Testimony, the Precepts, and other names. The reason for these other names is because of the purpose they are being used for. Sometimes the Word of God is used for repeating History to teach the next generation. Other times those same passages may be used for Testimony, which reveals the heart and glory of God.

We also see as we read through this Book how desperately the psalmists, and likewise we, need to hear the Voice of God speaking directly to our hearts. They wait on Him for encouragement, for peace, for direction and wisdom, for conviction and hope.

The heavy reliance on God's Word for right living, hope for the future, and all eternity is clear throughout this section of the Psalms. The examples of psalmists who wake up early to spend time in the Word, who spend time in the Word again before bed, who memorize it, love it, and sing it, will give us encouragement to deepen our love for God's Word and our commitment to ingesting it. As we grapple with God's sovereignty, His power and might, His tenderness, and His love, we will be drawn into His embrace through the words of these 44 psalms.

A challenge: Some have considered the Psalms boring, or repetitive, or redundant. As we go through these passages we must remember this is not a story, or narrative, or letter, as other books of the Bible are. These are songs made especially for our soul's benefit. There are most certainly sections repeated, and themes that seem redundantly similar. However, as we soak in these truths, not just skimming over them, our hearts will be transformed more and more to be worshippers of God.

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Ask the Lord to show you a picture of you today as a worshipper of God. Ask Him to reveal to you an area of growth He wants to work in you as you go through these 44 chapters of praise.
2. Reflect on your relationship with the Word of God. Do you love it? Do you memorize it? Do you meditate on it each day? Ask the Lord to grow your passion for His Word. Ask Him to give you a word, thought, or picture about how necessary the Word is for your daily living.
3. Rhema words (words the Holy Spirit speaks directly to your heart that grow your understanding of Scripture and your intimacy with the Lord) are necessary for each believer and evidenced throughout this book.
 - a. Ask the Lord to open your spiritual eyes and ears as you read through this book.

- b. Ask Him to give you joy and increased intimacy with Him as you learn to hear His voice even more clearly and to obey Him even more quickly and confidently.
- c. Ask Him to quicken your spirit to His conviction and encouragement, and to give you rhema words each day as you read through these passages.

BOOK V: Psalms 107-150**DAY 2**
 **READ:** Psalm 107

The theme of this chapter is the unfailing, enduring love of the Lord. The first verse starts with it and the last verse ends with it. It's because of His great love that He redeems people – all kinds of people who fall into one of four groups.

The first group is people in the desert (vs. 4-9). These are people who are hungry, thirsty and lost. They can't find their way on their own and have no place to call home. For those in the desert God offered food and drink and a place to settle. He led them to a place of safety and provision when they cried out to Him. To relate this to us, we could say these people simply haven't heard or don't know Jesus is the Bread of Life, the Living Water, and that He offers to be our Father and to dwell with us. God offered, and still does offer, exactly what they need.

The next group God redeemed from darkness and despair (vs. 10-16). God had subjected them to prison and labour for their rebellion. But He also rescued them! He burst through the iron bars, and pulled them from the dark, gloomy prison and slavery, broke their chains, then set them free! These are people who deliberately went against what they knew to be God's plan, and whose rebellion put them into spiritual slavery and bondage. They heard His voice and said NO. This represents those who were slaves to sin, living in darkness and gloom but God has broken through, smashed the prison doors, destroyed the shackles that bound them, and set them free from sin and certain death.

Then there is a group of people whose rebellion led them into sin, which caused them sickness and brought them close to death (vs. 17-22). For these He brought food and healing and life. People in this situation are those who perhaps don't thumb their noses at God in blatant rebellion, but who choose not to spend time with Him and make foolish (human) plans instead of connecting to Him. They are not **planning** to sin or walk away from God, they are just too foolish or lazy to stay connected, eating the very words of God and drinking in His wisdom. God knows they will spiritually starve, get sick, and die without Him. Perhaps they are even experiencing physical sickness now. God redeems these by offering Himself.

The final group the Psalmist mentions is the group who went about doing their work but who encountered tremendous difficulties which threatened to steal their purpose, their courage and their goals (vs. 23-32). There was no blatant sin or rebellion in their hearts. They were just putting one foot in front of the other when circumstances – *life* – hit them broadside. They were thrown for a loop and were losing hope. God changed the situations. He removed the hardship completely making it possible for them to see His love and He drew them into safety.

God's care is specific, compassionate, and appropriate. This demonstrates God's intimate knowledge of us. But it also displays His love, just like verses 1 and 43 tell us.

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Which group do you identify with the most? Ask the Lord to show you how He redeemed you as you read those verses again. Spend time thanking Him for your redemption.
2. Ask the Lord to reveal to you how He has cared for you this past week with compassion, and specific, detail-appropriate demonstrations of His knowledge of you and love for you. Thank Him for His love.
3. Ask the Lord to reveal to you how you can meet the needs of certain people around you. Ask for one or two names, and specific things He would like you to demonstrate His practical love to them through you. Write down what He says and make a commitment to obey.

DAY 3
 **READ:** Psalms 108-109

Psalm 108 is actually a combination of portions of two other psalms. Psalm 57:7-11 makes up the first five verses of this Psalm, and Psalm 60:5-12 make up the remaining portion. Considering the psalms are used as songs, the combination in this psalm of two other psalms would actually make this psalm a medley. Even today it is a common music style to combine two or more songs with similar themes or sounds.

The first five verses are words of praise and worship. The Psalmist, David, makes an interesting statement in verse 2. He says he will awaken the dawn. He will be up, singing and making music, even before the sun is up. This is quite a commitment!

David commonly uses music to worship God and to communicate praise to the Lord. When David praises God he is reminded of God's great love for him. He is also reminded of God's faithfulness. Praise does that. It puts God's attributes on display and our perspective can change to align to Him.

Psalm 109 has four parts. The first part (vs. 1-5) is a prayer explaining what has happened to him. David is sharing his heart with God. God already knows, but David's relationship with God is strong in communication. He not only wants God to know, but wants to talk about it with God. The second part is a long (vs. 6-20) list of punishments David is asking God to mete out onto his enemy. The description we see of David's enemy is clear because he's asking God to ruin his enemy and everything he has and does. The third part (vs. 21-29) is a prayer outlining how David wants God to deal with himself. He describes his position as poor and needy. He calls out for God's help. The fifth and final part (vs. 30-31) is a prayer of praise once again.

David is clearly upset by the way he is being treated. He's been slandered, hated, attacked, lied to, and lied about. He offered friendship and was treated like an enemy. He could retaliate and get back at them with word swords of his own. With his expertise in war he could probably kill his enemy outright. Yet, he has another more powerful weapon. He says in verse 4, "*but I am a man of prayer*". Then he launches into *that* prayer. *That* prayer is the strongest weapon he has because he is calling on God Almighty to smite his enemy! Prayer positions both him and his enemy before God and gives Him entrance to the court of the only Judge who can really do something about the situation.

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. David, it seems, was up before dawn praising and worshipping God. Many people do their devotions in the morning, like David, but others struggle with morning and choose to do it at another time. When do you do your devotions? Why? Ask the Lord to speak to you about the time of day you do devotions. Perhaps He wants to challenge you to try a new time, or thank you for being faithful at the time(s) you are at now, or perhaps He'd like you to add an additional time. Let the Lord speak to you and encourage you about your time with Him.
2. David shares his heart with God. He is open and vulnerable with Him. Take a few moments now to share with God your deepest thoughts, worries and emotions. Journal this as a prayer or letter to God. When you have finished, ask the Lord to give you a word, thought or picture regarding how He feels about all you shared with Him.
3. David knew prayer was His best weapon. By telling his enemy he was a man of prayer he was saying, *My dad is bigger than your dad!* Do you have a firm belief in prayer as your best weapon? If so, take time to thank God for the faith to believe. If not, why not? Ask the Lord to speak to your understanding and heart about His ability to be your best weapon, best defense and best vindicator. Write down what He tells you.

DAY 4**READ:** Psalms 110-112

The powerful message of Psalm 110 is that there already is a King in place who will rule the world with justice and peace and love. He is not currently the political King in charge of the world, but one day He will be. This passage shows Jesus will reign forever (in this passage He is called the Lord). He will rule over His enemies and His reign will never end. We get a sense of how wonderful His reign will be in verse 3. People will eagerly and voluntarily offer themselves as servants and soldiers for Him. This demonstrates a love and honor for their King. If Jesus will be a King whose citizens will eagerly serve, He must be a person of great wisdom and love, a very special King. For anyone who wonders if Jesus will be a *good* King when He finally is the only authority, this passage puts all that fear to rest.

Psalm 111 confirms the greatness of God. The Psalmist is declaring the many reasons God should be praised. From big things (giving His people the inheritance of the nations) to the little things (providing food for those who fear Him) God takes care of His people and deserves to be praised.

The final verse says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Another way to say it would be that without the fear of the Lord one does not have wisdom. The fear of the Lord comes from acknowledging His power and realizing we are at His mercy.

Although Psalms 111 and 112 are not connected, the theme of fearing the Lord is present in both. Psalm 112 offers us a view of what life is like for those who fear the Lord. The description of the man who fears the Lord is one of confidence and generosity. It's like there is no room to fear anything else when the fear of the Lord consumes him. It's interesting to note how the fear of the Lord affected not just his spiritual life but every aspect of life. The person who fears the Lord cannot separate their life with God from everything else. They either fear Him in everything, or they don't fear Him at all. From the way money is handled, to the way justice is handled, and the response they give when they get bad news, it all depends on the fear of the Lord.

One specific characteristic repeated about the person who fears the Lord is the way they handle money. Verse 5 reveals that they are generous and lend freely. In verse 9 we learn

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Think for a moment about political leaders in our country and in the world. Ask Jesus to speak to you about what His reign on earth as King will be like. Ask Him to show you what kind of characteristics He has as King. Ask Him to reveal how you can revere Him as King even now, and in the days to come as we prepare for His return.
2. Ask the Lord to speak to you about how you handle money. Ask Him if you handle it according to the fear of the Lord and the wisdom that stems from it? Are you generous and do you share with those who need? If something needs to change ask Him to reveal what to change and how to change it. Thank Him for giving you wisdom with your finances.
3. Ask the Lord to reveal to you if you truly fear the Lord. Listen quietly to Him and write down what He says. Ask Him to show you what evidence in your life reveals your fear of the Lord, or your lack of fear in Him. Confess as necessary and thank Him for growing you in wisdom and in fear toward Him.

DAY 5**READ:** Psalms 113-115

Psalm 113 gives us not only the challenge to praise God, but also the reasons why praising Him makes sense. The Psalmist tells us about God's sovereignty over the earth. He sits above the heavens and earth, able to look down on them. This clearly speaks to us of His magnificent size and strength. Yet this awesome God reaches down into the dust of the earth to pick up the poor and needy and sets them gently with the princes. We can imagine His large fingers and hands gently reaching into a situation and carefully, carefully picking up someone fragile and delicately placing them in a new spot. We see His concern and care when His eyes fall on those who cannot bear children. He knows the inner longing and pain, and longs to bless her.

In Psalm 115 it is clarified that God is not the same as any other God. He cannot be compared. The gods of this world are created, and cannot hear or see. They don't walk and they don't speak or even make sounds. The Psalmist warns that those who make or serve these gods or idols will end up being just like them. They will be dead and powerless, just like these gods. We may not have solid gods of wood or metal (although some might) but we still have gods of our own making. Gods of money, power, fame, popularity, pleasure and entertainment, for example, are just a few of the gods we create. When we pursue them, love them, serve them, and give our money and time to them we will become just like them. Empty. Fickle. Weak.

The Lord, on the other hand, has the power to save and defend. Three times the Psalmist says, *'He is their help and shield.'* This is because our God is not dead or made up. He is the LORD. He is worth putting your trust and faith in. He pours out blessing and gives children to families.

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Reflect on the many ways God has rescued you, helped you and reached into your situations. Spend time praising Him. If you find it helpful, try praising Him on your knees or by singing along to a few praise or worship songs out loud.
2. Ask the Lord if you have been serving or creating a god of your own making. Listen carefully, and if so, confess it as sin. Ask Him to show you the futility of that god, and to give you words, thoughts or pictures about His power, might and love so you can turn away from the god you have made / are making. If you have no other gods before Him, ask Him to keep your heart pure and your life fully and wholly devoted to Him.
3. What do you need shielding from today? Ask the Lord to be your help and shield. Ask for a word, thought or picture to help you fully grasp the depth and power of God's help and shielding for you today.

DAY 6**READ:** Psalms 116-118

Psalm 116 has a strong theme of death. First the Psalmist describes his situation. He feels like he is dying. He may in fact be sick and dying. We can't be sure what situation is causing this great deal of stress, but it was dire enough that he was sure he'd die without the help of the Lord. Next he talks about how the Lord saved his soul from death. He says he will walk about in the land of the living. This is actually referring to when he will walk in the presence of God in heaven, among the living who will never die. The death he's been saved from is both physical and spiritual.

Finally, he talks about God's perspective on death. He says the death of God's saints is precious to Him. This doesn't mean God is constantly on the lookout to kill off His people, though. By no means! It simply demonstrates God's heart. God's deepest longing is to be **with** us. This is what He told Moses in the desert. This longing began when He had to, because of His holiness, kick us out of the Garden of Eden. This is what He demonstrated on the Cross. When saints (Christians) die, this is precious to God because it means they will now be with Him forever more. To think of this longing God has to have us join Him in heaven, puts a whole new perspective on the death of loved ones, and on the times when our prayers for healing are not answered. It also demonstrates even more of God's patient, sacrificial love toward us when He does heal, and restore, and give extended life to us on earth when His heart's desire is to draw us close.

The repetition in this song is hard to miss. So many lines are repeated over and over, not just once or twice. This much repetition should make us sit up and pay attention. First: What is so important? Second: Why was once not enough?

The repeated phrases recount God's incredible goodness, faithfulness and trustworthiness. To say it once, it is possible to find a man who may come close. To say it twice separates God from humanity, raising Him to the level of deity. To say it three times is to say God has this quality above all other gods. This worship song lifts the Name of God above all other creation, people, gods and ideologies. God embodies the epitome of steadfastness, of trustworthiness, goodness and protection. Nothing and nobody can even come close as a rival.

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Reflect on your own death just for a few minutes, even if it is uncomfortable. Do you fear the process of death? Do you have security that even if and when you die the Lord will save your soul from eternal death? The Psalmist understands this, and so does God. Ask Him to give you a word, thought or picture about your salvation from death. If you have never become a Christian or received assurance of your salvation, ask the Lord to speak to you about that right now. Tell Jesus you want His forgiveness for your sin and commit to serve Him for the rest of your days, with Him as your boss. Thank Him for your salvation and the promise of heaven!
2. Ask Jesus to speak to you about how much He loves you and how desperately He wants to spend time with you. Ask Him to speak to you about His sacrifice to allow you to live on the earth when He so desperately wants to live and dwell together with you face to face. Ask the Holy Spirit to overwhelm you with His love as you think about the fact that Jesus longs for you. Spend time worshipping Him for His love.
3. God's goodness and steadfastness is above what we can even imagine. His power, more powerful. His love, even deeper. His protection, more secure. His goodness, perfect. Ask God to give you words and pictures as you journal a prayer of gratitude for His 'above all' character.

DAY 7**READ:** Psalm 119:1-48

Psalm 119 is the longest psalm in the Book of Psalms, and the longest chapter in the entire Bible. It comes just two chapters after the shortest chapter in the Bible (Psalm 117). This psalm is unlike any other psalm. As we look over it we see headings dividing the chapter into small sections. These headings are actually letters of the Hebrew language. In the original language the section would start with the letter that entitled the section. This helped young students memorize and study the contents of this psalm. It seems to be specifically written to teach history, law and the character of God. It has been said that Psalm 119 is not like a gold chain where each link is somehow connected to the one coming before it and after it. Rather, it is like a bucket of loose gold rings, unconnected to anything on either side of it. Each section, entitled with an Hebraic alphabet, is completely unrelated to the section before it and after it, and unrelated to any other section in the psalm. This could, in effect then, be 26 separate devotional days or topics, each with its own theme and relevancy.

The section from vs. 9-16 seems to be directed to a young man. However, the advice is applicable to each of us. To live a life of purity – purity in emotions, sexuality, speech, thought, and motivations – is a calling for every person, no matter age or station. The author of this psalm lays out the steps to a lifestyle of purity.

1. Seek the Lord and obey Him.
2. Read and memorized His Word.
3. Speak about God's Word and what He says.
4. Remember the faithfulness of God through testimony.
5. Learn and live according to the principles in the Law.

These steps of pursuing God help keep us on the path of purity in every area of life. When temptation arises, this plan of attack helps keep us on the straight and narrow.

Every other line in verses 25-32 directs us back to the Law, or the commandments of God. Regardless of the goal and purpose, the struggle or the situation, the answer is in the Word of God. This resonates with what we read in 2 Tim. 3:16-17, *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”* The first verse says he is lying in the dust, or clinging to the dust. What the psalmist is saying is that it is difficult for him not to live according to the flesh. We are made from dust, so clinging to the dust is his way of saying the way to be freed from that struggle of living in the flesh, is to be filled with the Word of God. What a fantastic challenge for us, to live our lives in light of God’s Word in every situation, especially to avoid sin and temptation.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. As you read through the passage selection, ask the Lord if there is a specific section He wants to use to speak to you specifically about your current situation. Reread that section. Ask Him to use His Words, both written and rhema, to speak to your heart with encouragement and instruction. Write down what He says and thank Him for His input in your life.
2. Ask the Lord what area of your life could use more purity. Ask Him to speak to you about another passage of Scripture (or a portion of Psalm 119) you can memorize to help you in your battle for purity. Ask the Lord to give you a Word of encouragement to live in purity today. Write out the passage of Scripture to memorize. Keep it with you all day and refer to it as you memorize.
3. In what area of life do you struggle with temptation? Confess any sin to the Lord. Ask Him how to infuse your life with more of His Word so you can be guarded and protected against this sin or temptation.

DAY 8



READ: Psalm 119:49 – 104

In verses 65-72 we learn the psalmist went astray. Considering these teaching psalms were initially written for the young people, it makes complete sense for the psalmist to speak about his mistakes. It is often from the testimony of mistakes others have made that we learn to navigate similar territory without falling. He tells of going astray, but that affliction, or painful discipline, is the very thing that became his rescue. His attitude of thankfulness for discipline challenges us to evaluate how desperately we want to stay on the path. Would we be eager and thankful for affliction if we knew it would keep us in a right relationship with the Lord?

In the section entitled ‘Lamedh’ (vs. 89-96) God is praised for His sovereignty. His sovereignty is firmly connected to His faithfulness. Because the Lord is sovereign, He can be faithful through all generations. Nothing can stop Him, remove Him from the position, or remove His ability to be faithful. This is also why the Psalmist can say His Word is established forever. Unlike someone who can be faithful only while they live, God’s promises never end because He never ends. The word ‘precept’ literally means a principle or rule written by a legal authority. God is the legal authority. He has the right and ability to make the rules, set the time and agendas for events to take place. He has the final say.

Many times, especially in our culture, education is praised and even worshipped. We hire experts for everything, often assuming we can’t know the answer because we lack the specific training. However, the section entitled ‘Mem’ refutes that kind of thinking. The

truth is that God’s Word gives us wisdom, understanding and knowledge. We may even find ourselves with more wisdom, more answers, and more information than what older, more experienced people do, simply because we opened the Word of God and ingested it. This wisdom is not for bragging rights, however, but specifically to be used for keeping our feet on the straight and narrow path. Again, this passage can be confirmed with 2 Timothy 3:16-17. God’s Word really is good for training and teaching and correcting in righteousness.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Reflect on a time when the Lord has afflicted or disciplined you. Did you use that experience to allow God to bring you closer to Him? Ask the Lord to speak to you about your situation right now. Is there anything in your life He needs to discipline you for, or that you are being disciplined for? Ask the Lord to give you a soft and tender heart toward His discipline so you can learn quickly and return into His arms of safety and protection quickly.
2. Most of us have experienced the pain of broken promises. Ask the Lord to speak to your heart regarding His everlasting sovereignty and faithfulness, and His inability to break His promise. Thank Him for His never-ending reign and rule. Ask Him if His promise to you hinges on any action or attitude on your part. Listen carefully and prepare to obey immediately.
3. Think about a situation you are in right now in which you may need to make a decision or think through something difficult. Ask God to give you His wisdom through His Word and through His voice speaking to your heart. Write down what you hear. Confirm this with other godly counsel.

DAY 9



READ: Psalms 119:105-176

In verses 113-120 we see the motivation of the psalmist: He fears the Lord. He is constantly filling His mind with the Word of God, the Law. He is meditating on the scriptures and following them. He believes every word he reads and hears from the Lord. He understands the Lord’s power and strength and ability to punish those who disdain His ways. The Psalmist tells us God treats them like dross. (Dross is the junk that comes out of a fine metal like gold or silver when it is melted in the process of purification. The dross is all the impurities removed from the precious metal and then thrown out like garbage.) The Psalmist doesn’t want to be thrown out like garbage! That’s why he hangs on to the Words of the Lord for dear life!

The Psalmist cries out to God in verse 133 not to allow any sin to have dominion over him. When a sin has dominion over us, it has a domineering, lord-it-over-you type of control. This is different than a ‘slip-up’ kind of sin. When sin dominates our life it controls aspects of it, and we no longer live freely. Habitual sin, addictions, mind-altering substances or activities can have dominion. Often we find ourselves with this kind of situation when we have just slipped a little, and then a little more, always justifying and giving ourselves just a ‘little’ permission. Before we know it, a few minutes or one little sip or just a taste becomes a lifestyle dominated by that sin. The Psalmist does not want that to happen. His prayer is for God to keep him connected to Himself, to help him stay attached to His Law and Testimony. He knows the only way to live in true freedom is to be firmly rooted in God’s Word.

In the section entitled Qoph (vs. 145-152) we can be challenged by the Psalmist's pursuit of God. He rises early to read God's Word; he is up before the dawn. He also spends time in God's Word in the evening (vs. 148). His hope comes from meditating on God's promises. He is being persecuted yet finds hope and security in the testimony, or witness, he reads about and knows about from God's Word. This is both a hope and challenge for us today. When we are overcome with struggle, and possibly in days ahead when persecution and troubles come our way in increasing measure, we know we can have the hope and stamina to stay strong in the Lord by meditating on His Word all day long. To start and end our day with the Lord; for if we don't we may lose sight of His power and goodness, and then lose hope for ourselves.

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Do you truly believe the Lord will toss away (like dross) those who are wicked and do not fear the Lord? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you anything within you that believes you can 'get away with it' rather than fearing the Lord so greatly you abstain from that sin or activity. Ask Him to fill you with a greater and greater fear of the Lord to keep you from evil and on the path of righteousness.
2. Is there a sin in your life that currently has, or has the potential to have, dominion in your life? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer this question by searching your heart. The Lord promises He can set us free. Confess your sin to the Lord. Accept His forgiveness. Ask Him for a strategy of Bible reading and memorization that will help you live in freedom instead of bondage. Ask Him for additional steps to stay away from having your sin be in dominion over you.
3. When (what time of day and how often) do you do your devotions and spend time with the Lord? Ask God if there are any changes He'd like you to make. Ask Him to give you creative ways to keep Him involved in every hour of every day, and to keep Him the centre of every thought process. Journal His answer.

DAY 10

 **READ:** Psalms 120-125

In Psalm 120 we find a prayer for a pure tongue. The Psalmist asks the Lord to guard him from lying and deceitfulness. Lying is condemned in the ninth commandment. Yet, among all the commandments, it is rarely brought up in conversation like murder or adultery or taking the Lord's name in vain. We hate being lied to. It is degrading and humiliating to be caught lying. Yet purity of speech is one of the most difficult things to attain. The Psalmist includes deceitfulness in this prayer as well. It's not just about the actual words said, but also the tone, and the very careful choice of words used and omitted that give the listener a very different impression than what was said. The kind of lying and deceit the Psalmist is talking about, extends to the whole of communication. He is asking the Lord for words, and tone, and communication ability that is pure and holy. He is aware his tongue can be used as a weapon and chooses to hand over its power to God in submission.

Psalm 121 describes God as our protector. He is our help. But how exactly does God help us? We are reminded of God's position as Sovereign Creator. He made the heavens and the earth, therefore, there is nothing He doesn't have power over which He can use for our defense. Wow, the Creator who made the heavens and earth as our defender? Incredible! And He's always on duty. He never sleeps, He never takes His eyes off us. He covers us and makes us invisible to our enemies, even the sun and moon can't see us when God is our Protector.

In Psalm 122:6 we are told to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Several times in the Bible we are told to pray for Israel, her people, or Jerusalem. The people of Israel are God's chosen people, even still. When we are instructed to pray for Jerusalem, we can be sure we are praying God's will. As a matter of fact, this directive comes with a blessing, that those who pray for Jerusalem will find themselves cared for and secure. Gen 12:3 lets us know God will bless those who bless the nation of Israel and whoever curses them, He will curse. This aligns perfectly with this directive in Psalm 122. After we've been told to pray, the Psalmist speaks to us about what to pray for:

- Peace within their boundaries;
- Prosperity for those who live there;
- Security for their government;
- For safe and peaceful relationships; and
- For the safety (and today the restoration) of God's holy temple in Jerusalem.

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Ask the Lord to speak to you about anything you have said or communicated in the last little while that was not pleasing to Him, or that was deceitful in any way. Confess your sin, then ask Him to put a guard on your lips and tongue so you will be aware of your tendency to dishonor Him before the words and tones slip out.
2. Reflect on the image of God as your protector. How does this make you feel? Considering this total and effective protection, how does this change how you feel about enduring difficult days ahead, perhaps even persecution? Spend time thanking the Lord for His faithful protection, and ask Him to show you how to walk confidently in that truth.
3. Spend some time praying for Israel today. Use the prayer points derived from the passage. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in additional prayer of blessing for them.

DAY 11

 **READ:** Psalms 126-131

For those of us who are exhausted, overworked, and tired of the rat race, Psalm 127:1-2 is our rescue. What a joy to remember that unless God directs the work, anything we do is a waste of time and resources. Too often we get caught up in the work, forgetting God doesn't need us to do the work, we are simply joining Him in what He is doing already. Unless of course we are off doing our own thing, outside of His plan and design. We go to bed exhausted, working ourselves to the bone, wondering if our rest will ever come. But this passage reminds us that God doesn't want this kind of life for us. He wants to bless us with sleep and rest. This passage raises some questions for us: Is the work we're doing given by Him or are we working in our own strength on our own project? Do we trust God enough to literally go to bed, get our rest, and sleep, believing God will be our Provider?

Psalm 127 also speaks to the blessing of children. This is very counter-cultural in a day and age when babies are aborted at alarming rates, gender selection abortions are on the rise, and children are neglected and abused at higher and higher percentages every year. Child trafficking is no longer a thing of the past, but a threat to our culture. Child sexual abuse is threatening to become a legally protected right. Our culture does not believe children are a blessing from the Lord, or a reward, or future guarantee of protection and care. Yet the Lord says they have much value. This passage does not say only healthy, or hard-working,

or specific gendered, children are a blessing. ALL children are a blessing from the Lord. This includes children born to happily married couples, to the young teenager, to the couple who is making terrible life choices. Every single child is created to be a blessing. Each of us, no matter our age today, was given as a blessing to this world. What a thought!

Psalms 130 and 131 both speak about waiting for, and being with, the Lord. In Psalm 130 the Psalmist is waiting. He is longing desperately for the presence of the Lord to be revealed within Him. He wants to hear God's voice, and feel His nearness. Like a night watchman who is waiting for morning, he wants God's nearness so intensely. In Psalm 131 the Psalmist says he is calm and quiet with the Lord like a baby who is finally again in his mother's arms. One can imagine the crying, struggling, temper-tantrumming toddler who is finally scooped up by his Mama and the crying and struggling ceases. There is rest. There is peace and security. It is this experience of God the Psalmist longs for, to be in God's presence and know God's comfort intimately.

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. What is your work/rest/family life like? Ask the Lord to reveal to you if you are running around working too much, or keeping yourself too busy with things that He is not asking of you. If you are, confess this as sin, and ask for forgiveness. Ask the Lord to reveal to you Himself as Provider, and the giver of your rest. If this is not your struggle, take a few minutes to pray for someone the Lord brings to mind who is in this position right now.
2. Ask the Lord if there is anything in the way you view children that is not in alignment with His truth that they are a blessing. Ask God to give you a passion for children that places value on them in a way that honours God, not by making them the centre of attention, but valuing their lives and contributions as God-given. Ask the Lord if there is any action you need to take to live counter-culturally in regards to caring for children as if they truly are a blessing. Journal and take action if necessary.
3. For the next few minutes, sit quietly listening for the Lord to speak to you and envelope you in His presence. Ask Him to speak to you about His love for you, or anything else He wants. Write down what He says. Hold onto it for future encouragement.

DAY 12

 **READ:** Psalms 132-135

Psalm 132 describes to us the history of David's passion for building a temple for the Lord. He loves the Lord so dearly, yet realizes there is no place for Him. He promised God He wouldn't sleep or rest until a place was found for the Lord to dwell. It was the Lord, we know from other Scripture passages, who took that passionate desire of David's and answered it. It was not David in the end who built the temple, but it was his own son. David spent much of his life amassing resources for the building of the temple. This passionate vow to do everything in his power to give the Lord a dwelling place was not just a stream of empty words, but passionate action. David meant what he said: He would make the Lord a home in his realm.

Psalm 133 is about relationships. Very specifically, it speaks about the beauty and joy received from friendships (even with families) that are free from strife and disunity. Those of us who have experienced relationships with unity understand how deeply this truth runs. Those of us who have rarely if ever experienced relationships without discord long for exactly this. Unity. Joy. Intimacy. According to this psalm it is like a blessing of anointing,

or the refreshing dew that falls on the mountains. Relationships with this kind of unity are truly a blessing from the Lord.

Psalm 135 is a history-telling of the many things God has done. The psalmists never tire of reciting the testimony of God. He has done so much for His people, it must be told and retold. Every time the story is retold the glory of God is revealed again. His might and power are praised and God is revered. These moments of celebrated history become the stepping stones toward faith for those who were not there to experience it, and give hope and courage to those who are losing faith. As with every retelling, the difference between the One True God and those made of wood and stone, clay and iron, are stark and real. Even the stories of old are reason enough to give God the glory and bless Him today.

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Reflect on your lifestyle or habit of spending time with the Lord. Do you fight for that time like David fought for a temple for God? Ask the Lord to speak to you about how tenacious you are about reserving time for Him each day. Ask Him to give you a passion to see Him dwell with you, walk with you all day long, like David had. Ask Him to grow what already exists into an even more desperate passion than it is today.
2. Ask the Lord to reveal to you if there are any relationships you are in right now that are not experiencing unity. If there is even a speck of disunity or discord, ask the Lord to speak directly to you about your part in that. Ask Him if there are any steps you need to take towards repentance or forgiveness. Make a commitment to do that as soon as possible. Pray blessing for the names God gives you. If the Lord declares you free and clear, thank Him for His powerful blessing of unified relationships.
3. Take a few moments to write out in your journal a list of things the Lord has done in your life, even if you have done this before. Thank Him again, and again, for all He has done.

DAY 13

 **READ:** Psalm 136-138

Psalm 137 is a story. It's a story of pain, agony and deep loss. The people of Israel, under judgment of God, were captured over a period of time by King Nebuchadnezzar, and taken as captives into Babylon. At first it was just a few, and then a few more, and so on until all the Jews had rebelled against the Lord and all of them were taken into captivity. King Nebuchadnezzar was no sweet heart! He was known to be a cruel and wicked king. The Jews had been warned about this, but had disregarded God's message and so ended up living God's judgment. This psalm reveals a little story of the journey the Jews took as they were herded from their own land to Babylon – a foreign land.

According to this psalm, and other historical documents, the Babylonian guards brought the Jews over into Babylon, and as the psalm says, when they crossed the river into their land asked the Jews to sing their songs. Because the Levites always sang songs, as people entered the city of the Jews they would hear singing. So it was a poignant punishment to bring that singing into the city of Babylon. Yet we see the pain and struggle the Jews went through even deciding if they should sing. They wondered if it was sacrilegious or blasphemous to sing to the Lord as they entered their punishment. The psalm says they hung up their instruments on trees, as if to say no.

Yet, as a people, it is the singing of their songs that bring them back to their senses. They begin to use the songs to remind themselves of the Lord so they won't forget. And as they

sing they are reminded of the prophecy that not only came to them of their judgment, but also the ultimate judgment that would one day soon face Babylon. Their songs of remembrance, and history, and the glory of God became their hope. What began as a spiteful and disdainful command of an evil king, became their saving hope.

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Do you sing? Many people love to sing, while others never sing. Throughout the psalms (which are actually songs) we see songs being used as tools the Lord has used to equip His people with faith, hope, courage, and joy. Ask the Lord to give you His view of your singing. Ask Him if there is a song He would like you to sing to Him right now. You can sing along with a recording or just sing a song from your heart. Bless the Lord with your song, and allow Him to bless you. Make a commitment to sing together with the people of God next Sunday in church, in order to join in the powerful throng of praise.
2. It must have felt awful to be singing praises to God of His mighty deeds and powerful acts of rescue as you are being led in chains into captivity. Ask the Lord to show you how singing, and reciting His deeds of kindness, mercy and protection over you in the midst of your current most difficult circumstance can be the very thing He requires. Ask Him to show you why and how to always give Him glory, even when the situation seems dire.
3. Ask the Lord to give you the names of some songs He wants you to learn to sing by heart (memorized) so that you can be encouraged in times of deep discouragement and pain. Make a point to sing those songs often! Singing is one of the ways God puts His truth deep into our hearts and minds.

DAY 14

 **READ:** Psalms 139-140

Psalm 139 clearly explains there is nowhere we can go from God's presence. There is no hiding place. Nothing we do can ever be hidden. Even if no other person ever learns of it, God knows the entirety of it. On one hand this is a desperately frightening truth. To know our perfect, holy, and jealous God knows everything, including every sin, is overwhelming. Even the sins I have committed involuntarily or have completely forgotten or never known about, are fully known to God. We cannot hide a thing.

On the other hand, this truth is deeply refreshing. There is no point in attempting to 'look good' before God. We can never look better or worse because He already sees it all. All our sin, all that has been done to us, all the things we're ashamed of – God knows each one intricately. And He still loves us. This truth can set us free when we realize God offers forgiveness from absolutely everything. He never requires us to hide. He never is shocked with our confession. He knows.

This psalm also speaks of God's very detailed and painstaking creation of each person. He knitted us together in our mother's womb. Knitting is a hand art. It means the very thread of our being passed through His gigantic hands of love. Every cell, every curve and crevice was formed by the touch of His fingers. When the DNA and genetic code was placed in our bodies, no matter how imperfect it may seem today, it was done with love and for His good purpose. He not only created our bodies, but planned our days. He looked forward into the lives we would live and knew it all. He could match our days with the bodies and vice versa. He created us as a complete package: our purpose and plan perfectly matched with His Creation. We are no accident.

This is why, as we see in the final two verses of the psalm, we can confidently ask God to speak to us about what's hidden inside. He knows. He knows which way we were created to go and live and do. He knows where we are doing that well, and where we're not. He knows our motives and our attitudes. He knows our sin and our righteousness. Because His love for us is so great, and evidenced so clearly in our very bodies, we can be confident He would gladly, and yet gently, reveal to us those things not in line with His will so we can change it by His grace. He is truly a magnificent God, and we His wonderful creation.

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Ask the Lord to reveal to your heart if there is anything you are trying to hide from Him. Do you have a closed off area of your heart? Ask Him to give you words, thoughts, or pictures of how much He sees, especially of that hidden part even if it seems painful at first, and how much He loves you anyway. Confess those things you've been afraid to even think about. Admit the fears you don't dare breathe aloud about. Bask in His love. Take time to pour out your heart to Him of those things you may not normally talk to Him about. Let Him speak to you of His overwhelming love.
2. Thank God for how He created you. Ask Him to speak to you about the health issues, and complaints you have had about your body. Ask Him to speak truth to you about them, giving you His perspective. Thank Him for being so deliberate in how He created you with the body you have and the purpose He made you for.
3. Ask God to reveal something about yourself that even you don't know, or to expose sin you are unaware of. Listen carefully, let Him explain through words, thoughts and pictures. Confess sin, if that's what He reveals. Give thanks for how intricately and thoroughly He knows you.

DAY 15

 **READ:** Psalms 141-143

Psalm 141:5 is a prayer to God for correction. The Psalmist has been lied to and mistreated by evildoers. He knows they have nothing good to offer him. So he asks the Lord to give him correction through righteous or godly people. He understands that correction coming from a righteous person will give him guidance to draw near to God in humility. Sin will be exposed so he can confess it. His errant ways can be realigned with the ways of God. He speaks about being hit in the head as if it was a kindness. It is not that he really wants to be hit, or that he has a weird idea of kindness. He understands the purpose of the rebuke of a godly person is for his long-term growth and prosperity. To be corrected by someone who is living in line with God's will is better than to live separate from God in sin, along with the wicked. For this reason, he welcomes rebuke and instruction.

In Psalm 142 the Psalmist is again weak, worn out and in trouble. He says in verse 3 his spirit is fainting within him. He can hardly carry on. Yet God, he tells us, knows the way to go. God can see the enemies hiding, about to ambush him. God can see the traps set for him. He would trust in people and perhaps friends or allies, but there are none left so he must trust the Lord. It is the best thing after all, because God sees what is hidden and can direct his path safely through.

Psalm 143 is the prayer of a desperate man. He is at his wits' end and needs to hear from God. He sits and recounts the things God has done, willing himself to remember stories of God's power, might and salvation. He says his spirit is failing. He needs his very soul to be refreshed. This is why he longs for the voice of the Lord. He needs to hear from God

Himself how much he is loved, as well as the direction he should go. He needs wisdom and relationship. This characteristic of God is confirmed in James 1:5: we can and should ask God for wisdom because He gives generously to all who ask.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Reflect on your past experiences of being corrected by godly people. Even if they “smacked you in the face” did you accept it as a gift of kindness like the Psalmist? Ask the Lord to bring to mind words of godly people who bravely spoke correction into your life. Ask Him to reveal to you from His perspective how loving and kind those words were, even if they hurt. Ask God to grow your heart to long for righteousness so much that you would eagerly ask for correction of godly people. Thank Him for those who have and ask Him to continue gently correcting you and purifying you.
2. God knows what lies ahead. That’s why the Psalmist waited to hear from Him. What kind of decision or plans or questions about the future do you have? Ask the Lord to speak to you regarding which way to go. Journal the words, thoughts or pictures He gives you. Ask Him to grow your confidence in the truth that He sees all the traps and ambushes, mountains and valleys, and wants to direct your path safely through.
3. Spend a few minutes recounting specific things God has done for you in the past 2-3 days. Thank Him for His direct involvement in your life. Ask Him to refresh your soul for today with words of love while you respond with words of praise and thanks.

DAY 16



READ: Psalm 144-145

The last paragraph of Psalm 144 is a prayer of blessing. It is a request to God for prosperity and abundance in every area. Specifically David asks the Lord for sons who will be like strong, grown-up plants even while they are still young. He asks for daughters who will be strong, wise and beautiful enough to be national leaders. He requests abundant food, and also profitable business ventures. He is bold and brazen in his request for blessings. Often, we are afraid to ask for blessings. We feel it is prideful or somehow we don’t deserve blessing so we don’t ask. Some have a hidden belief that blessing must be a surprise from God, an unexpected gift. We may believe that because it is impolite to ask a friend to give you gifts, it is also impolite to ask God to give us gifts. Yet David doesn’t hold back a bit! It is obvious to Him God blesses those who fear Him and whom He chooses to bless. David understands God’s immense love for him and counts on it.

Psalm 145 is a song of praise. God is revered from generation to generation. It is poignant to note the Psalmist is reminding us of the command to tell the stories of what God has done, to share with the next generation all the mighty acts and deeds of the Lord. This passing on of God’s wonders from one generation to the next is a serious undertaking and must not be taken lightly because this is the very way God can and will be glorified throughout the ages.

This chapter also speaks of God’s kindness. His kindness is beautiful, and draws all people to Himself. This is consistent with what we read in Romans 2:4, which says God kindness leads people to repentance. He is not a heavy-handed God who wills us to fall flat on our face and fail over and over before He’ll finally lower Himself to pick us up. No! Not at all! He is a God who stoops, and reaches, lifts and carries, gives and protects, listens and blesses because of His kindness. Anyone who has ever experienced the genuine kindness of another understands the draw there is to the kind person. This is the stance God takes with us, to overwhelm us with His kindness.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Take a few moments to think through what your genuine heart desires are for yourself, your family, your career, etc. Journal and pray a prayer requesting those very things as a blessing from God. Remember we are not guaranteed to receive everything we ask for, but we can be assured God will listen and give us those things He knows will be for our benefit. James 4:2 says we don’t have because we don’t ask. The Lord is giving you permission to ask!
2. Write down things you know God has done for your parents and grandparents, or other extended family in generations past. Ask the Lord to reveal His hand at work even if they were not serving God. Ask Him to give you spiritual eyes to see and the ability to remember those things as part of His blessing toward you. Make a point to journal at least one or two things today that God has done for you. Share this with someone in your family or extended family to ensure they see God as currently active and living and participating in the lives of people.
3. Reread Psalm 145 and while you do write down all the things this psalm points to as acts of Kindness from God. Put a star beside those acts of kindness you have personally experienced. Spend time thanking Him for His kindness and enjoying His presence.

DAY 17



READ: Psalm 146-147

Psalm 146 challenges us not to put our trust in princes. We may think we don’t do that. Our culture typically has a negative opinion about politics and politicians. So we might be tempted to think this is not relevant to us. However, our culture is quick to beg for income tax receipts, tax shelters, government hand-outs, free or cheap medical care, and financial help when disaster strikes. We may not love our politicians (princes) yet we live in a culture that places its trust in them. It is easier for many to trust the government to provide for their basic needs than it is to trust the Lord. We place our trust in princes as well when we look to them to protect our rights instead of to the Lord. This psalm reminds us there is no hope, no salvation, in man. Governments, politicians and entire regimes will come to an end. There is no guarantee unless our trust is in God alone who will never end and never fail us.

Psalm 147 begins with a gentle reminder: It is good to praise the Lord and to sing praise is fitting. This is such a simple truth, yet also profound in its reaches and effects. To say it is fitting means praise is continually a good and profitable thing to do. It is never out of place. When we are brokenhearted praise brings us back to a place of hope when we praise God. When we are enjoying blessing and prosperity praise gives our soul voice. When we are weary praise gives us courage to press on. When we are old it gives us hope for future generations. When we are young it gives us joy to join God’s plan. Praise is always fitting.

Much of Psalm 147 talks about the control God has over weather and other physical elements. God controls all of the climate, producing and placing clouds, and making it rain. He plants grass and trees and feeds the animals with His produce. He places the stars in the heavens and makes the sky beautiful. One would think that with all the power and creativity He displays for us day after day it would bring Him pleasure. Why would He do it if it doesn’t bring Him pleasure? We learn in this psalm He creates all this for us for one simple reason: He takes pleasure in those who fear Him. The power of strong animals, the beauty of creation, the way He cares for every little detail is all done to woo us to Himself. He displays His power so we might fear Him. He creates the details so we might be in awe

of Him. He does all this so we would turn to Him, fear Him and be in a tender and loving relationship with Him. He loves us so much.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Ask the Lord if there is anything, even tiny, in which you have placed your trust in the government (princes) instead of in Him. Is the government system your 'back-up plan' or do you truly trust the Lord to meet your every need? Only the Lord knows the hidden spots of your heart so ask Him to reveal that to you. Ask Him to open your eyes to see the frailty of government systems and the steadfast enduring provision and protection of God.
2. Spend some time praising God. Write down some things you can praise God for. Consider turning on some music and singing a song of praise to Him. Remember: Praise is always fitting!
3. Reflect on God's kindness toward you. Ask Him to reveal the things He is doing in your life right now to woo you with His kindness. Worship Him for His tenderness toward you. Ask Him to speak to you about His love for you.

DAY 18



READ: Psalm 148-150

The final three chapters in the Book of Psalms are all about praise. Each chapter recalls the mighty things of God. Each one invites all of creation to join in the worship. These are songs one could imagine an entire congregation, or even nation, singing to God for all He has done.

Psalm 148 is the invitation to praise. Every single thing that exists is invited to praise the Lord. From the stars and the angels in the heavens, to the beasts of the field and even insects on the ground, everything is invited to join in the praise. The Psalmist lists so many things, not because he is trying to be specific, but rather to make it clear nothing and nobody should be left out. The Lord is to be praised by ALL His creation!

Psalm 149 is praise in the midst of battle. *"Let the high praises of God be in their throats and two-edged swords in their hands"*. (vs. 6) Although it is not **only** praise that affects success in battle, it is certainly part of it. Any warrior who comes charging with a sword in his hand and a song of praise on his lips is a warrior to fear. He himself is fearless because he knows why he fights, whom he fights, and whom he fights for. He is prepared, equipped and ready to be victorious. His mind is set on one thing: bringing glory to God in all he does.

Psalm 150 wraps up the entire Book of Psalms with a hearty instruction to praise God in song. All that has breath should praise the Lord! So many instruments are named in this psalm, again revealing to us how magnificent and excellent should be our praise. When an orchestra of this magnitude gathers it is practiced and rehearsed. The notes are prepared and the lyrics memorized. This corporate song of praise, loud in dynamic and exuberant in performance, touches the heart of God. He welcomes this praise as it reveals His glory in all the earth.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Luke 19:40 says if we don't praise the Lord the rocks will cry out. Spend some time praising God for all He is. Try to praise Him for His character and who He is rather than only the things He has done for you.
2. Ask the Lord to show you how praising Him in the midst of a current battle you are in (perhaps a battle against temptation, or anger, unforgiveness, a habitual sin, health issues, or any other battle) can change the way the battle plays out. Ask the Lord to give you stamina and joy in Him as you praise Him to victory. Take a few minutes to praise God for the victory He wants to give you.
3. Take a few minutes to look back through your journal and see what God has done. Write down two or three areas of growth you have experienced. Praise Him and thank Him for the way He is leading and growing you.

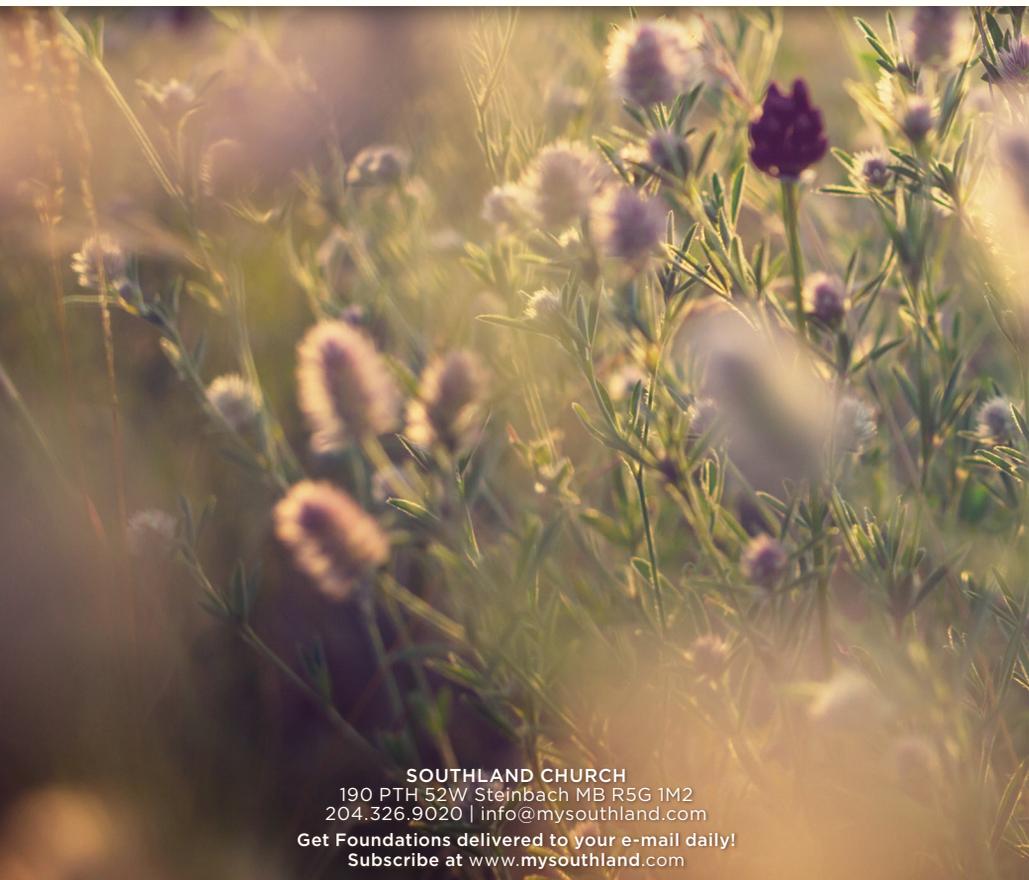


Book V of Psalms *Psalms 107-150*

Throughout Book V of the Psalms, God reveals Himself not only as powerful and sovereign, but also tender, gentle and desperately longing for relationship with us. He is our protector, provider, and friend. He knows every intricate detail of who we are and what we've done, yet still goes to great lengths to make it possible to be in intimate relationships with us. Even in His discipline, it is always done with great depth of love. This is the perfect devotional if you want to feel understood, pursued and loved by God.

Psalm 145:3 (ESV)

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable."



SOUTHLAND CHURCH

190 PTH 52W Steinbach MB R5G 1M2
204.326.9020 | info@mysouthland.com

Get Foundations delivered to your e-mail daily!
Subscribe at www.mysouthland.com