



ontrack devotions

JULY

2023

PSALMS 1-75

MONTHLY PRAYER SHEET

“...The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” James 5:16

Reach out...

How I will do it...

How it went...

Other requests...

Answered

How it was answered...

## MONTHLY COMMITMENT SHEET

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

This sheet is designed to help you make personal commitments each month that will help you grow in your walk with God. Fill it out by determining

1. What will push you
2. What you think you can achieve

If you need help filling out your commitments, seek out someone you trust who can help you. Share your commitments with those who will help keep you accountable to your personal commitment.

### **Personal Devotions:**

How did I do with my commitment last month? \_\_\_\_\_

I will commit to read the OnTrack Bible passage and devotional thought \_\_\_\_\_ day(s) each week this month.

### **Church Attendance:**

How did I do last month with my attendance? \_\_\_\_\_

I will attend Youth/Growth Group \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) this month.

I will attend the Sunday AM service \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) this month.

I will attend the Sunday PM service \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) this month.

I will attend \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) this month.

I will attend \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) this month.

### **Scripture Memory:**

How did I do with Scripture memory last month? \_\_\_\_\_

I will memorize \_\_\_\_\_ key verse(s) from the daily OnTrack Devotions this month.

### **Outreach:**

How did I do last month with sharing Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

I will share Christ with \_\_\_\_\_ person/people this month.

I will serve my local church this month by \_\_\_\_\_

### **Other Activities:**

List any other opportunities such as events, prayer group, etc., that you will participate in this month. \_\_\_\_\_

According to today's reading, what characterizes a man who is happy? In this Psalm, we are given three characteristics of someone who is happy. First, he does not walk in the counsel of the wicked. This is defined as taking the principles or values of the unsaved and making them his own. Second, he does not stand in the way of sinners. This is defined as making his lifestyle and practice just like that of the unsaved world around him. Third, he does not sit in the seat of mockers. This is defined as hanging out with the unsaved because he is more comfortable around them, not because he is trying to reach them for Christ. We are taught, in these verses, that there is a progression that we must avoid. We begin this process by accepting what the unsaved think. As a result, we change how we act, and then hang out with them because we have become like them. Instead, we need to follow the principles and values from the Word of God. We need to live differently than the world and be comfortable around those who love and honor God. If the Word of God is our priority and the source for what we believe and how we live, we will be blessed. Are you?

SAY WHAT?

What is your primary source of influence that directs how you think?

SO WHAT?

How is what you believe impacting the way you act?

NOW WHAT?

What should change in order to have the Word of God become a greater influence in what you believe and how you live?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment should I make?

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 1-3





## PSALM 4

## ANGER

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

When you get really ticked off, how do you respond? If you have a problem with anger, as so many people today seem to have, you will find great help in today's reading. In Psalm 4:4, David gives practical advice on dealing with anger. He tells us that when our anger is justified, we must be careful not to sin. In other words, do not allow anger to control our lives, which will then lead to sin. Instead, David says to search our hearts and keep silent. We need to do a bit of self examination before we react. Know whether the root of your anger is your righteousness or your flesh. The key question to ask is "Why did that make me so angry?" We must be sure that we aren't angry because we did not get what we want or think we deserve. We must realize that we often sin when we only consider ourselves and not the needs of others. That's why it is so important to examine our hearts. When our anger is justified, we must rely on God to control the situation and allow Him to guide our responses, not our anger. Until you can do this, you ought to be silent. Are you struggling with anger this week? What is the reason for your anger? How can this passage help you?

**EXTRA READING**

PSALM 4-6

How do you respond when people mock you or accuse you of doing something wrong? Hopefully it is like David suggests in today's reading. To really get the heart of Psalm 7, you would need to go back and read the account in 2 Samuel 16. David was on his way out of Jerusalem, fleeing from his son who was going to take over his throne. While he was departing, a man named Shimei came from town and cursed David. He threw stones at him and the king's officials. Keep in mind that David's heart was already very heavy. His men wanted to kill Shimei for cursing the king and throwing stones, but David chose another direction. David saw this situation as from the Lord. It was a situation he needed to learn from. He did not defend himself, but trusted God with the situation and allowed Him to deal with it as He wanted. He cried out to God to be his shield and, in the midst of his suffering, gave thanks. From time to time, we all find ourselves in situations in which we feel the need to stand up and defend ourselves. We must never lose sight of the fact that God is at work. The attack might be His doing. So, examine and grow from it.

SAY WHAT?

Why is it so hard for us to keep quiet or respond with restraint when we are being attacked?

SO WHAT?

What does our response to criticism or attacks reveal about our character?

NOW WHAT?

How can you use Psalm 7 to help you learn to respond as David did?

THEN WHAT?

In light of today's reading, what personal commitment should you make?

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 7-9

PSALM 11

HOPELESS

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

Have you ever felt totally hopeless about a situation? How did you handle those feelings when they came? Did you respond as David did in Psalm 11? David found himself in a difficult situation. When his counselors assessed the situation, they encouraged him to run. David did not focus on the hopelessness of the situation, but on his God. He reminded himself that God is still on the throne and therefore, is in control. David was confident that God would see his situation and deliver him. Although the outlook might have looked grim to others, David's preference was to leave it in God's hands. We, after viewing our situations, often become panic-stricken. If we don't see a way out, we are tempted to run away or fight against the situation. We must not lose sight of God when facing difficult circumstances. He is still on His throne and still in control. He knows what is going on in your life and will respond to your needs. He also sees those who seek to harm us. He will address their wickedness. Allow your faith in God to give you peace in the midst of difficult times. He will deliver you.

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 10-11

Out of the ten characteristics listed in Psalm 15, which one is the most difficult for you to live up to? It is an amazing list when you consider it is the characteristics of someone who will spend eternity with God. A guest of God is one who exhibits integrity, justice, and reliability in his dealings with people. Do you demonstrate these characteristics? He is also a person who does not speak negatively about others. He would choose to honor those who honor the Lord. Do you demonstrate these characteristics? He is one who follows through on what he commits to, even though he may miss something he desires to do. He is ready to give whatever he can to help a needy individual and expects nothing in return. Finally, he is loyal and cannot be bought. If he is a friend, you can count on him even if others try to move him away. Does your life demonstrate these characteristics? Remember that these are not characteristics we are striving to obtain, these are ones that are assumed to be part of the life of the believer. We should be known by our integrity, justice, and reliability. What are you known for? What does this list reveal about you?

SAY WHAT?

How do you measure up in these ten areas?

SO WHAT?

In what areas do you need to see improvement?

NOW WHAT?

What do you need to do to begin to see those changes made?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 12-15

## PSALM 17

## KEY TO HAPPINESS

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

What would make you really happy? What is the one thing you wish you had in order to be happy? A relationship? A better paying job? Being more popular? How close is your perspective on happiness to David's in Psalm 17? David wrote this Psalm to record his cries to God to come to his rescue. We can sense the intimate love relationship David had with God in this Psalm. When he was in trouble, it was to God he would turn. He closed this Psalm by revealing his source of true happiness. To David, happiness and contentment did not come from material possessions or human relationships. David knew that true happiness and contentment comes from loving God and doing what He wants you to do. We can only find true happiness when we make our relationship with God the most important thing in our lives. How well are you doing in this area? Do you put material possessions or human relationships above your walk with God? Do you make sure you talk to your friends but miss your time with God? You will only find true happiness when you make your relationship with God your priority. Does your life reflect that you believe this truth?

**EXTRA READING**

PSALM 16-17



Today, we read another Psalm which takes on even greater significance when you realize when it was written. David penned the words to this Psalm after God had delivered him from the hand of Saul (2 Samuel 22). This Psalm was written after Saul had died and David's kingdom was finally secure. It again reveals to us just how deep David's relationship with God went. In this Psalm, David referred to God as his rock, his fortress, his shield, his horn, and his stronghold. When David felt helpless, it was to God he ran. When David felt hopeless, it was to God he ran. David knew that while God would ultimately deliver him, He was still walking right with him when he was running from Saul. David knew that God would help him "through" his troubles even if He did not deliver him "from" his troubles. He was so committed to God and so dependent on God that it naturally flowed from his heart. As you read Psalms like this one, do they seem to reflect your feelings toward God? Do you see God as your source of strength? Do you know He is walking with you through your problems even when He has not taken them away?

### SAY WHAT?

What trial are you now facing that is a source of discouragement to you?

### SO WHAT?

What have you done so far to try to find rest for your soul?

### NOW WHAT?

How can you use this Psalm to help you when you face difficult situations?

### THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 18

## PSALM 19

## OUR BIBLE

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

In Psalm 19, we find six characteristics about the Bible. Did you see them? Number them in your Bible. First, David says that the Bible is perfect. This means it is complete, entire, and without blemish. Second, he says it is trustworthy. This means it is sure, certain, and able to be trusted. Third, he says it is right. This means it is just, fair, straight, and never wrong. Fourth, he says it is radiant. Which means it is clean, clear, and choice. There is nothing hidden or evil in it. Fifth, he says it is pure. Meaning it is moral and clean, with no hidden agendas. Sixth, he says it is sure. This means it is assured, established, faithful, and true. Notice also what it produces. It revives the soul. It makes foolish people wise. It gives joy to the heart. It gives sight to your eyes. It endures forever. It produces righteousness in our lives. What an amazing book! Nothing else in our world can claim these characteristics or provide in our lives what the Bible can. It is for this reason we should never go a day without reading it. No matter what I am facing, I must go to God's Word to find what I need. Is it your priority? Does your behavior reveal you agree with David?

**EXTRA READING**  
PSALM 19-21

Have you ever felt as desperate as David was in Psalm 22? He was obviously feeling very low. He tried to talk to God but felt as though God was far away. Notice the sarcasm in verse 8. By the end of this Psalm, however, his mood completely changed. Why? A close examination of the middle of this Psalm reveals that David came to God when he was emotionally spent and began to recount all He had done. He poured out his heart to God and admitted his total dependence on Him. Then, in verse 22, he began praising the Lord for all He had done in his life. David reminded himself that God has not despised or disdained those who are afflicted. He has not hidden Himself from them but has come to their rescue. God will provide for them. David needed to take his eyes off his own problems and focus on God. As he began to praise God for all He had done, his heart became lighter. When you feel overwhelmed, desperate, and as though God is nowhere to be found, take some time to praise Him for what He has already done for you. Praise will bring peace.

SAY WHAT?

Why is it so easy, in the midst of trials, to lose sight of what God has done?

SO WHAT?

Why is praise so important to God?

NOW WHAT?

List some things God has done in your life that you can praise Him for.

THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment should you make in light of this passage?

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 22-24



## PSALM 26

## INTIMACY

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

What impact does our sin have on our lives? Does committing sin mean that we are no longer saved? Psalm 26 is an example of the consequences of sin in the life of the believer. David called out to God and God answered his cry. David came before God with confidence. He trusted in God and did not waver. He made every effort to walk in the truth of God. He was careful whom he allowed to influence his life. He worked hard to let others know of the greatness of God. He was diligent in his witness. He was someone who loved to be in God's house. David felt close to God and knew he could reach out to Him because his life was right. Sin does not take away our salvation, but it certainly impacts our relationship with God. When we are not walking with God, we feel as if we are far away. It is not that God cannot hear us or that He has removed Himself from our lives. Maybe the distance you feel from God is due to sin in your life. It may be time to closely examine your life. What level of intimacy are you enjoying with God today? He is close to those who seek Him. Did you seek Him in the Word and in prayer today?

**EXTRA READING**  
PSALM 25-26

If you could spend time with anyone you wanted, who would you pick? Would you pick who David did here in Psalm 27? David began this Psalm by expressing his praise and adoration for God. He wrote that evil may come his way, but his heart will trust in the Lord. Then, in verse 4, he revealed the true motivation of his heart. He said that if there was only one thing that could be granted from God it would be to dwell in the House of the Lord. Why? So he could gaze upon His beauty and be able to seek Him in His temple. To David, being with the Father was greater than anything else he could imagine. He just longed to be able to be with God and to enjoy His fellowship. His heart was filled with love and adoration for the God who had given him so much. Is that how you feel about God? If you asked for one thing, would it be what David asked for? We often place other priorities above our relationship with God. The thing we usually want most in life is not more time with God, but money, a relationship, success, etc. Other things come into our lives and push God out. Are you allowing that to happen to you? What would it take to become more like David in this area?

SAY WHAT?

What priorities have people allowed to be the "one thing" in their lives?

SO WHAT?

How can you determine where God ranks on your priority list?

NOW WHAT?

What needs to change so that being with God is the priority of your life?

THEN WHAT?

What commitment should you make in light of what this passage says?

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 27-28



## PSALM 30

## SOURCE OF HAPPINESS

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

What is it that rocks your world? What does it take to bring you down or cause you to become desperate? Would losing a dream rock your world? Would losing a relationship do it? According to Psalm 30, what rocked David's world was not a surface circumstance, but his relationship with God. His security was not based on his talents or his friends. It was based on God. When David was close to Him, he felt secure. When sadness entered into his life, he knew that God would grant him peace and lift his heart in the morning. In David's world, everything seemed to revolve around God. David knew that his wailing would not become joy because he got what he wanted or because his friends were faithful, but because God would turn his wailing to joy. Too often, we allow friendships, possessions, or accomplishments to govern our joy and happiness. Like David, our security needs to be connected to our relationship with God, not anything else. He alone is the source of real happiness.

**EXTRA READING**  
PSALM 29-30

Psalms 32, which was written after Psalm 51, is a great passage of Scripture to explain how we ought to deal with sin in our lives. David reveals what he has learned from his own life, and how we should be sharing what we have learned with others. First, David shared how wonderful it is when we confess our sin to God. God is waiting with open arms to forgive us and, when we go to Him, His forgiveness will fill us with joy. When David refused to confess his sin, his life was full of pain. In fact, his refusal to deal with his sin led to physical consequences in his life. In time, however, he came to God and God forgave him. David closed this Psalm by admonishing us to heed his example and confess any sin that might be present in our lives. He cautions us not to stubbornly hold on to our sin and refuse to confess it to God. When we do, we invite the judgment of God into our lives. Is there sin in your life that you are holding on to? Could there be sin you are refusing to confess and make right? Why live under the wrath of God when you can live in His forgiveness. We will never have joy without confession. Do you need to get started today?

SAY WHAT?

Why is it so difficult to admit our sin?

SO WHAT?

What consequences have you had to endure when you have refused to deal with your sin?

NOW WHAT?

How can you use today's reading to motivate you to confess the sin in your life?

THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment should you make in light of this passage?

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 31-32

## PSALM 33

## WORSHIP

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

There is considerable debate in Christianity today about worship. While people may disagree on how it ought to be done, the fact that we should worship is agreed upon. Psalm 33 makes that clear. Every child of God ought to worship Him. Our lives ought to reflect our desire to rejoice in who God is and what He has done in our lives. We tend to sit on our hands and nod our heads or say amen. We should long to express our love and praise to God. Do you take time to worship your God? When was the last time your heart was overwhelmed with gratitude and love for the Creator? When was the last time you shouted or sang out in praise for what God has done in your life? Verses 4 and following give us reasons why we ought to worship the Lord. Why not take some time today to think of your own reasons and make a list of why you should worship and praise God? Make a goal for today to see what God has done and is doing just for you. Write a Psalm or play music that helps you express to God how you feel about Him. "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!"

**EXTRA READING**  
PSALM 33-34

How do you respond when people have a desire to harm you? How do you respond when people make accusations against you that are not true? How do you respond when people mock you and want to see you fail? Do you follow the example David gives to us in Psalm 35? David was facing an attack, probably by a foreign nation. In fact, the passage seems to indicate that he was about to be attacked by a nation with which he had made a treaty. Beyond the threat of the attack, King David was being accused of things he did not do. David's reputation was affected. His enemies mocked him as they awaited his demise. What was David's response to this crisis? He sought God's protection and His deliverance. Again, we see that David did not take matters into his own hands or defend himself. He asked God to examine the situation and bring about His justice. He was confident in God's plan. We often work hard to protect and defend ourselves when we are attacked personally. When mocked, we often want to hurt the mockers in return. We need to give the battle to God and let Him fight for us. Who better to fight than God!

SAY WHAT?

In what ways are you personally attacked?

SO WHAT?

In what ways do you get falsely accused?

NOW WHAT?

In what ways do people mock you?

THEN WHAT?

How can you use this Psalm to help you respond correctly when facing this kind of persecution?

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 35-36

## PSALM 37:1-13

## CHOICES

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

Someone once said, "Life is not determined by what you want, but by the choices that you make." In life there are really only two choices. We can either choose to please God with our lives or we can choose to please ourselves. The implications of both of those choices are the opposite of what one may think. The motivation for making decisions based on pleasing oneself is usually personal happiness. In reality, when we make life about pleasing ourselves, we cannot find the happiness we are looking for. According to verse 4 of the Psalm for today, we see that when we make the choice to please God in everything we do, God responds by giving us the desires of our hearts. We find real satisfaction and joy when we make decisions in our lives based on pleasing God. It is hard to comprehend that we find happiness only when we are not seeking it. Happiness is the product of living our lives to please the Lord. It can't be bought or achieved. It is a gracious gift from the Lord. What is motivating the choices you are making? Are you seeking to please God in all you do, or are your choices about what pleases you?

**EXTRA READING**

PSALM 37



Have you ever had someone apologize to you in a way that made you to feel as though he didn't understand what he had done wrong or didn't care that he did something to hurt you? The words "I'm sorry" were spoken, but they lacked sincerity. Have you ever wondered if God feels that way about your confessions? In Psalm 38, we read the words of a man who seemed to be completely broken over his sin. In the first 8 verses, he addresses the burden his sin has caused in his life. It is obvious that he was carrying terrible guilt and had a heavy heart. He lamented his loneliness, a consequence of sin. Sin does cause one to feel totally alone in the world. All of these emotions led to open and honest confession. His brokenness and despair brought true confession. We often try to minimize our sin. We seem to have lost the ability to recognize sin for what it is and what it does. Like David, we need to be honest about sin and work to make it right. Sin is a violation of God's standard. It hurts others and most importantly, it hurts God. Do you have a casual attitude about sin? Do you need to take it more seriously?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 38-39

## PSALM 40

## SLAVERY

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

What did David mean by "my ears You have opened" in verse 6 of Psalm 40? Was he literally asking God to pierce his ear? To fully understand what David had in mind, we need to refresh our memories about Old Testament law. In Exodus 21, a servant was to serve his master for six years. At the end of that time, the master was to give the servant his freedom. If the servant loved his master and wanted to remain with him, he would have his ear pierced. The servant was declaring before judges that he voluntarily wished to remain a slave with his master for life. He would then be taken to a door post and have his ear pierced to signify his choice. David selected that analogy to proclaim his voluntary slavery to God. David realized that God was not interested in external worship, but in his heart. God wants obedience, not conformity. David was willing to do whatever God desired of him. Does this attitude describe your commitment to God? Are you willing to be His slave for life? Are there any signs of this kind of commitment in your daily living? What needs to change in your life so there are signs?

**EXTRA READING**

PSALM 40-41

How would you describe your desire for God? When you miss reading your Bible, how do you feel? Is church something you can't wait to attend, or something you can easily skip? In Psalm 42, we read about someone who has been exiled to the far north of Palestine and was unable to return to the Temple. These Psalms reveal to us the depth of his longing to be near his God and to worship Him. It is hard to understand the strong desire the author had for God because we do not thirst like he did. It is obvious that he was longing to be with God. As a deer pants for water in drought, so he longed for God. He wanted to be with God's people and worship together in God's house. He wept with sorrow that he was unable to be there. He felt powerless in the face of opposition because he had not been with God's people. Does this sound like your life? People today seem to have such a casual attitude toward the Bible and being with God's people in church. Devotions often take a back seat to other activities in our lives. Church loses its place to sports, games, or trips to the beach. Would Psalm 42 describe your feelings? Use today's questions to help you evaluate yourself.

**SAY WHAT?**

List common reasons for skipping reading your Bible and church attendance?

**SO WHAT?**

Why do we so easily allow time with God and church attendance to fall to the bottom of our list of priorities?

**NOW WHAT?**

What changes do you need to make to be able to say what the writer of this Psalm says?

**THEN WHAT?**

What personal commitment should you make in light of what this passage says?

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 42-44

## PSALM 46

## FEAR

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

How secure do you feel in your relationship with God? Could you say what the writer of Psalm 46 did in verses 1-3? The author began with a great truth. He then looked at the truth and allowed it to impact his life. The truth is that God is our refuge. He is our ever-present help in time of trouble. But how should that practically impact how I live my life? If it is true, how does it change how I live? The answers to those questions are found in the next few verses. Since God is our refuge, we have nothing to fear. If God, who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere at once, is my refuge and ever-present help, what should I fear? To illustrate how secure we should feel, the writer made some analogies. Even though the earth gives way or the flood waters roar, we have nothing to fear. Though cancer is found or my parents divorce, there is nothing to fear. Though my dad lost his job or enraged schoolmates shot my friends, there is nothing to fear. The reality of nothing to fear is determined by how you view God. If He is your refuge and strength, in spite of the pain, you will not fear. So what does your level of fear reveal to you about your view of God?

**EXTRA READING**

PSALM 45-47

As you read Psalm 49, did you notice any difference between it and the previous ones you have read so far this month? It is different in that it is a Psalm of wisdom. It was written to instruct men rather than praise God. It contains important truth for us. In verse 8, the Psalmist states that we can do nothing to purchase additional days for our lives. God has given us a certain number of days and we can do nothing to extend them. Another point clearly made is that, unlike the unsaved, the believer has hope for a better life in the future with God. This present life is all an unbeliever has. All joy and happiness must be found right now in the present because there is no hope beyond the grave. While this life may not be as bad as it could get, it is certainly as good as it gets for the unsaved. They will die and leave this world for hell and face the consequences of their sin forever. How sad to have nothing better than this life to look forward to. We must, as Christians, take every opportunity to let others know that there can be hope beyond the grave. The unsaved may presently feel secure and happy, but their doom is soon and sure. What will you do to help them see the reality of this Psalm?

SAY WHAT?

Name some people you know who only have this life to look forward to.

SO WHAT?

How can you begin building a deeper relationship with them?

NOW WHAT?

What opportunities has God provided for you to share with them that there is hope in the future with a relationship with God?

THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment should you make in light of what this passage teaches?

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 48-49



## PSALM 51

## TRUE REPENTANCE

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

How can you tell if and when someone is truly sorry for his sin? You can use Psalm 51 as a guide. This Psalm was written after David had been confronted by Nathan about his sin with Bathsheba. It was written before Psalm 32, which we previously read. It is an excellent example to follow on how to deal with sin. First, David went to God to plead for forgiveness. His only desire was to be right with God. His actions were not motivated by trying to undo the damage or smooth things over. He wanted to restore his relationship with God. Second, he confessed his guilt. He did not blame anyone but himself. There are no excuses or blame shifting in this Psalm. Third, he prayed for pardon and restoration. He wanted to be restored to his place with God. He desired to be clean again and have the joy of his salvation given back to him. Fourth, he committed himself to helping others avoid the mistakes he made. He wanted everyone to know what God did for him. Is this how you respond to the sin in your life? If you comprehend your failure and your relationship to God is your greatest priority, your response will be like David's.

**EXTRA READING**  
PSALM 50-51

Psalm 52 is another Psalm that takes on more significance when you understand its historical context. This Psalm was written during the events described in 1 Samuel 21 & 22. In these two chapters we read the account of David's deception to Ahimelech. David lied to the Priest about why he was there and Ahimelech gave him food and the sword of Goliath. Saul's head shepherd overheard what happened and told King Saul. As a result, Saul sent for Ahimelech and murdered him for helping David. In his grief, David penned the words of this Psalm. It contrasts the wicked and the righteous. In it, he reminded himself of the judgment that the wicked will face. He closed the Psalm by recounting what awaits those who are righteous. In the midst of this tragedy, David was determined to trust in the Lord. God will triumph. He alone is in control. When facing a helpless situation, David placed his hope in Him. When it seems as if the wicked are winning and the righteous are weak, remember what God has said. The wicked will perish and the righteous will prosper.

SAY WHAT?

In what ways does it seem like the wicked are gaining the upper hand in your world?

SO WHAT?

When you feel this way, what promises has God given that you can remind yourself of?

NOW WHAT?

How can you use this Psalm to help you when you are discouraged?

THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment can you make in light of this passage?

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 52-54



## PSALM 55

## BETRAYAL

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

Have you ever had someone you considered a close friend insult you or gossip about you? This happens as frequently now as it did in David's life. Psalm 55 records David's feelings when it happened to him. The occasion for this Psalm was the betrayal of a close friend. Whatever he did hurt David deeply. We can see how great his pain was from what he says in verses 12-14. We also see that he went back and forth between hope and despair. When one is attacked by enemies, it is painful but expected. But when it comes from an intimate friend whom you trust, it is devastating. Where did David find comfort in the midst of his despair? According to verse 22, he found hope and strength in his relationship with God. He learned to cast his cares on the Lord. He was confident in God's ability to sustain him. David knew that even those he was closest to could desert him, but God would never fail him. What is going on in your relationships today? Do you need to be reminded of God's care? Have you found yourself despairing over those you thought were friends? If so, cast your burden upon the Lord, knowing that He will never let you down.

**EXTRA READING**  
PSALM 55-56



Imagine what it would be like to run for your life because your former employer was trying to kill you. Imagine taking the time in the midst of that crisis to write psalms of praise. Psalm 57 was written by David while on the run from Saul. It is filled with words of confidence in God. His perspective of God was incredible in light of the situation he was in. There seemed to be no end in sight, no resolution to the conflict. The point he wanted to make was that his security and hope was not found in the walls of the cave he was hiding in, or in the ability of his men to protect him from Saul's revenge. His hope and his refuge were found in God. In verse 1, he described himself as resting in the shadow of His wings. In verse 2, he displayed his remaining confidence in God and the fact that His will for David would be accomplished, regardless of his present circumstance. That statement is amazing considering God already told him that he would be the king and Saul was in hot pursuit. When everything around you seems to contradict what you believe to be God's will, keep your hope and confidence in God and His plans.

SAY WHAT?

Although you may never run for your life like David did, what circumstances or hostility might you encounter?

SO WHAT?

When those times come, how can you place your hope and confidence in the Lord?

NOW WHAT?

How can you use today's reading to help you keep your focus on God's plan?

THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment should you make in light of this passage?

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 57-59



## PSALM 61

## DISCOURAGEMENT

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

From time to time, we all find ourselves discouraged. When that happens, Psalm 61 provides us with a great example of how to get refocused and back on track. First, David began this Psalm by praying for strength. Likewise, when we are discouraged, we need to express to God how we feel and cry out for His help. Second, David made his request to God for help based on who God is and what He has promised. So often, in the midst of a discouraging time in life, we forget what God has already done. We don't take the time to look at His promises. Finally, David takes time to praise the Lord and recommit himself to His service. David knew he needed to get his eyes off of his problems and back on God's provision. How many times had God already delivered him from danger? Beyond that, in verse 8, he reminded himself that it was time to get back to work and not feel sorry for himself. When we get discouraged, we need to follow this pattern for ourselves. Seek strength from God, remind yourself of who He is and what He has done, and then, get back to work. Which one of those steps do you need to take today?

**EXTRA READING**  
PSALM 60-63

Today, we read another great praise psalm, Psalm 66. It is an example of how David lived in an awareness of God's greatness. He loved to express praise to God. We don't seem to have the kind of thankful heart that he did. We feel free to go to God with problems, but not usually for praise. Focus on what God has done for you. Use today's questions to help you. Write out to God your own psalm including how you feel about Him and how thankful you are for His blessings. It is probably time you did, and He will find delight in hearing it.

**SAY WHAT?**

Father, I want to thank You for providing for me .....

**SO WHAT?**

When I think of Your attributes I am most thankful for .....

**NOW WHAT?**

You have been faithful to me over the years by .....

**THEN WHAT?**

In light of who You are and what You have done, I commit to.....

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 64-66



## PSALM 68

## CELEBRATE

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

To put Psalm 68 into its historical context, you need to go back and reread 2 Samuel 6. This Psalm was probably written for David's procession with the Ark from the house of Obed-Edom to Jerusalem. It reveals David's deep love for God and his desire to have the Ark back where it belonged. It also reveals the kind of person David was. We can read into the depths of his soul in joy and in sorrow throughout the Psalms. In verse 3, he writes to not only rejoice and be glad, but be happy and joyful. He also tells us that God is a father to the fatherless and a defender of widows. In other words, he knows what their needs are and gives personal attention to meeting them. He closed this Psalm by referring to the great majesty of his God. He encourages us, in the last few verses, to participate in praising the Lord. We need to celebrate God. Sometimes reflecting on who God is and celebrating Him goes beyond singing a few songs in church and praying a short prayer of thanksgiving. We need to find ways to celebrate God. "Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth, sing praise to the Lord." David knew how to worship. Do you?

**EXTRA READING**  
PSALM 67-68

How do you respond when faced with a problem or when you find yourself in trouble? Do you have a close friend that you always tell? Do you go spend time alone in your room? David's first reaction to trouble was to run to God. David described in Psalm 71 his total dependence on God. In verse 1, he began by referring to the Lord as his refuge. In verse 3, he writes that the Lord is the Rock to which he always goes when he is in need. He also realized that God is all powerful and only needs to give the command and David would be safe. Notice in verses 5-9 that he was not just learning to depend on God but had for years. From childhood and youth, to old age, he grew in his dependence on God. He did not rely on his position as king. He did not rely on his strength. He did not rely on his intellect. David relied on God. It was to Him he went when he found himself in trouble. He sought His help and comfort. Can you say the same thing? Examine your response to trouble. It will reveal to you whether you are depending on yourself or trusting in God. Could it be time to stop depending on your resources? Use today's questions to help you get started.

SAY WHAT?

When facing trouble, where do you turn first?

SO WHAT?

Why don't you always go to God first when facing trouble?

NOW WHAT?

In what ways can you replace trust in self with trust in God as your refuge?

THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment should you make in light of this passage?

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 69-71

## PSALM 72

## LEADERSHIP

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

If you became a national leader and you could make one request of God, what would it be? Would you want to be a popular leader? Would you want to be able to judge people justly? Would you ask to be a leader who protected those who could not protect themselves? Would you ask to be a leader for a long period of time? Would you want to be a leader who brought prosperity to the whole nation, and whose decisions prospered the righteous? Would you want to be someone who saw your leadership and influence grow greater with each passing year? Would you want to be a leader who defended his people from evil and harm? If that is the kind of person you would want to be, your request would be the same one that Solomon made in Psalm 72. He asked God to give him His justice and His righteousness so that all these other things we just mentioned would be part of his leadership. He knew that effective leadership must begin with character. Many people want to be leaders, but few are willing to do what it takes to become a leader. You must seek to be godly before you can lead.

**EXTRA READING**

PSALM 72-73

Do you ever feel like the wicked always win? Does it seem as if those who dishonor God come out on top? Have you ever wondered if serving God was worth it? In Psalm 74, Asaph felt like some of you do. He looked at the world and it appeared as though the righteous were not winning. It seemed to him as if God had forgotten about the people He claimed to love and protect. The temple was burned to the ground with no judgment of God on the men who burned it. With arrogance and pride, they destroyed and defiled God's dwelling, and He remained silent. He examined his world for a sign of God's hand or an indication He still cared, and finds none. Then in verse 12 and following, he reminds himself of God's character. He knows that although God hasn't appeared to respond, He will. He recounts in this Psalm what God has already done to prove His power and faithfulness. When it seems as if we are losing ground, and the unrighteous have the upper hand, remember God is in control. Living righteously and impacting the world for God's kingdom will establish us as the victors. Remember, we are going to win!

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING  
PSALM 74-75



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HEBREWS 6:19-20





THE HEAVENS PROCLAIM  
THE GLORY OF GOD.  
THE SKIES DISPLAY HIS  
CRAFTSMANSHIP.

PSALM 19:1 (NLT)

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