

# PSALMS

## A Worship Discussion Guide for Individuals, Groups & Families For the week of August 6, 2023

Read the Bible passage aloud in your group meeting. This is a worship discussion guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for your meeting, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

### Warm Up

- Share about a time when you struggled with envy.

### Psalm 73

*A Psalm of Asaph.*

### *It is Good to be Near God*

- <sup>1</sup> Truly God is good to Israel,  
to those who are pure in heart.
- <sup>2</sup> But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled,  
my steps had nearly slipped.
- <sup>3</sup> For I was envious of the arrogant  
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
- <sup>4</sup> For they have no pangs until death;  
their bodies are fat and sleek.
- <sup>5</sup> They are not in trouble as others are;  
they are not stricken like the rest of mankind.
- <sup>6</sup> Therefore pride is their necklace;  
violence covers them as a garment.
- <sup>7</sup> Their eyes swell out through fatness;  
their hearts overflow with follies.
- <sup>8</sup> They scoff and speak with malice;  
loftily they threaten oppression.
- <sup>9</sup> They set their mouths against the heavens,  
and their tongue struts through the earth.
- <sup>10</sup> Therefore his people turn back to them,  
and find no fault in them.
- <sup>11</sup> And they say, "How can God know?  
Is there knowledge in the Most High?"
- <sup>12</sup> Behold, these are the wicked;  
always at ease, they increase in riches.
- <sup>13</sup> All in vain have I kept my heart clean  
and washed my hands in innocence.
- <sup>14</sup> For all the day long I have been stricken  
and rebuked every morning.
- <sup>15</sup> If I had said, "I will speak thus,"  
I would have betrayed the generation of your children.
- <sup>16</sup> But when I thought how to understand this,  
it seemed to me a wearisome task,
- <sup>17</sup> until I went into the sanctuary of God;  
then I discerned their end.

- <sup>18</sup> Truly you set them in slippery places;  
you make them fall to ruin.
- <sup>19</sup> How they are destroyed in a moment,  
swept away utterly by terrors!
- <sup>20</sup> Like a dream when one awakes,  
O Lord, when you rouse yourself, you despise  
them as phantoms.
- <sup>21</sup> When my soul was embittered,  
when I was pricked in heart,
- <sup>22</sup> I was brutish and ignorant;  
I was like a beast toward you.
- <sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, I am continually with you;  
you hold my right hand.
- <sup>24</sup> You guide me with your counsel,  
and afterward you will receive me to glory.
- <sup>25</sup> Whom have I in heaven but you?  
And there is nothing on earth that I desire  
besides you.
- <sup>26</sup> My flesh and my heart may fail,  
but God is the strength of my heart and  
my portion forever.
- <sup>27</sup> For behold, those who are far from you shall  
perish;  
you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful  
to you.
- <sup>28</sup> But for me it is good to be near God;  
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,  
that I may tell of all your works.

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***The Psalmist, Asaph was a descendant of the priest, Levi ([1 Chronicles 6:39](#)). David named him the leader of choral worship ([1 Chronicles 16:4-5](#)). He used cymbals when the Ark returned to Jerusalem following King David's defeat of the Philistines ([1 Chronicles 15:17-19](#)). Psalms 50 and 73-83 ascribed to Asaph, or his descendants.***

- After Asaph first statement in verse 1, he expresses his own personal struggle. What made him almost lose his foothold? (2-3)
- What thoughts capture Asaph in vv.4-12? Do you ever have thoughts like this? When do they fill your imagination?
- Asaph makes sweeping statements. How confident does he feel about his perspective?
- In vv.13-14, we see Asaph's evaluation of his life. How does it look by comparison?
- Consider the phrase "in vain" (13). How does it capture many of our own doubts and fears about God, about our lives, and obedience?
- Have you ever entertained any "surely in vain I have \_\_\_\_" thoughts? In what way?
- In vv.15-17, the Psalmist has enough humility and wisdom to do two things in the midst of his struggle. What are they?
- In vv.17-26, what does Asaph suddenly see about the destiny of the wicked? About himself? About the Lord?
- How does this encourage you to move toward the Lord in grief and bitterness (22)?
- Psalm 73 ultimately points us to Jesus Christ. Jesus was the Man of Sorrow, and very well acquainted with human grief. He was tempted as we are, yet without sin. He became poor for our sakes, setting His glory aside for the span of a human life. How does the truth that Jesus knows our full temptation to envy strengthen you in your lack and loss today?
- Does this Psalm raise any questions for you that you would like to ask the group and bring to the Lord in prayer?
- Read the Psalm together again, and use it as a guide for a time of prayer.

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Questions? Contact Pastor Kevin Greene,  
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