



MODERN PROBLEMS ANCIENT SOLUTIONS

LESSONS FROM THE PSALMS & PROVERBS

LIFE GROUPS | LEADERS GUIDE

October 19-25, 2025 | Fall Week 4

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome everyone to this week's leadership guide! You should by now have noticed that we've concluded our 75th Anniversary Series and have returned to the “**Modern Problems / Ancient Solutions**” series, where we'll be until Advent begins at the end of November.

1. YOUR FOURTH MEETING:

- You should now be fully settled into the patterns of your Life Group meetings and gatherings for the season!
- Something to start considering as this season carries on, is to consider those in your group who at this early stage, are exhibiting natural leadership tendencies. We always are looking for our next leaders – both as hosts and as facilitators – who can in the coming season start up new groups. So, pay attention to how your members interact and how they help guide conversation and care for each other. There will come a time later on in the semester where we'll be asking for these recommendations.

2. SERVE PROJECTS:

- If you haven't booked a service project just yet, know that there is still time! Check out the list online. As well, if you've made plans, let us know – we'd love to see and hear where everyone is connecting and serving.

3. PICTURES:

- We love seeing what you're all up to! Take pictures of your meeting spaces, your group gathered around the kitchen counter with their snacks and drinks, and your group out having fun, and serving together – then share them with Pastor Adam – via email or text.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

LEADER NOTE: These are the lowest risk questions and are great ways to get everyone in your group talking – from those who love sharing stories, to those who feel a little uncomfortable in this new space. Low risk questions have their way of breaking the ice and getting everyone a little more comfortable sharing. It also gives a chance for everyone to share in an easy, approachable way.

1. What was the best part of your last week? Why?

LEADER NOTE: Part of developing a good rhythm of life is reflecting upon our experiences – and while it's in our first nature to bring up the negative, and draw out the hard moments, we need to teach ourselves

to look for the good things, and to acknowledge them for what they are, and to celebrate them! If as leaders, you're willing, you can follow up and ask, "*what was the hardest part of your week?*" – but only if you feel your group is ready to go there.

2. If you weren't in your current career, what would you choose?

LEADER NOTE: On the surface, this question won't hit everyone the same – as some of your members are students, some are retired – so be flexible with how everyone answers. A student might pick a different area of study; a retiree might reflect on different paths not taken.

QUICK REVIEW

LEADER NOTE: These following two questions aim to have your group reflect upon Sunday's message. The first question will always be the same, and the second one is provided from our teaching pastor from the service.

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

LEADER NOTE: Leaders, "*lead by example*" in your own use of these resources. Ahead of Sunday services, be sure to grab a guide in the lobby, fill it out during the message, scratch down extra thoughts and notes you might have, and bring it with you to your Life Group meetings.

2. This weekend, Pastor Adam talked about David's response to his own wounds, that he will praise God, trust God, and seek God. Which do you find the easiest, or hardest, in your own circumstances?

LEADER NOTE: David's tri-fold posture is certainly helpful for us to see, and to put into practice as we experience and navigate life. While it would be best for all of us to consider the challenge of working on all three areas, each factor will hit differently, as they require different places, and even differing levels of awareness, in our woundedness.

SCRIPTURE REVIEW

LEADER NOTE: Reading scripture together is one of the most important practices in our Life Groups, so never shirk away from reading the following passage, always making time to interact with the Word of God and its message for us. As leaders, you can read the passage yourselves, invite others to read the whole text, or go around the room from paragraph to paragraph. Over time, as you lead, you'll see what works best. Always say "*thank-you*" to those who read out loud – it's not everyone's favourite thing to do.

These questions that follow, will be the same throughout the semester. And if you're familiar with the "*Triad Questions*" from over the years, these are changed up a bit – simplified, and with slightly different emphases.

READ Psalm 34

1. How does this passage highlight God's presence in our world?

2. What does this passage say about our broken human condition?

3. How does this passage call me to make change in my life?

Another option with these questions, is to even more simply ask, once you've read the passage together, as in a general way, "*What strikes us about this passage?*"

DIGGING DEEPER

LEADERS NOTE: These discussion questions generally start simple and gradually become deeper and more complex. This progression follows natural discussion patterns, but as leaders, you know your group best. Use this guide flexibly; it is not necessary to cover every question. Focus on ensuring everyone is heard and has the opportunity to contribute and ask their questions.

1. READ Psalm 34:1-4. David writes this Psalm after "*pretending to be insane*" before Abimelech (1 Samuel 21:10-15). What emotions are going through David when writing this praise to God?

LEADER NOTE: This is a fascinating account in scriptures, it's one that we really might not expect to encounter, especially in the life of David. However, it has been preserved for us and paints a picture of just how fearful he was over his life, while on the run from both King Saul, and the Philistines. It appears as though the Philistines are caught off guard by David showing up and are circling – especially as he yields Goliath's sword. But as they grab a hold of him, he sees that his only escape is insanity – and his ruse works! He flees. And once again he's on the run.

The emotions going through his heart and soul must range from complete and utter fear for his life, to extreme gratitude that the Lord used these literally crazy events, to provide him a path to safety. The latter here, is the perspective that Psalm 34 is written.

- This Psalm is an acrostic poem, meaning that the verses all begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Why do you think David used this format? What might it teach us about our worship of God?

LEADER NOTE: There are a few (and possibly more!) key reasons for this acrostic format in Hebraic Poetry. (1) Aid for memorization (2) teaching tool to show the completeness of God's attention to His people, (3) to relay the completeness of God's attention to all of His creation. Remember that the culture in the Old Testament times was largely an oral culture. While reading and writing were important tools for preserving tradition and stories, people primarily gathered together in homes and in circles to relay and repeat these traditions and stories to each other – and to their children.

And while they used these methods to help themselves retain the themes of the traditions and stories, they also were pointed to the order of creation – that everything that the Lord has done, has happened in good, proper, and orderly ways – highlighting that God is not a God of chaos, but of order and systems. Which emphasizes to modern Christians the same, that in God's design, there is order, and structure. So too, our worship of Him reflects the same mentality, where we're intentional about our worship, and we put time and detail into it. That we reflect back to God the gifts He has given us in the best way possible that honors Him, rather than flippantly offering Him our seconds, or simple considerations when they come to mind.

ADDITIONAL QUESTION:

- **REVIEW Psalm 119.** This Psalm is a fantastic example of an acrostic poem. Scan the first verses of each of the lettered sections of the longest Psalm and see if you pick up the same themes that you just discussed about David's crafting of Psalm 34?

LEADER NOTE: So many of the first lines throughout sections of Psalm 119 reflect the same order and chaos taming nature of God and are set up in way to have the reader see God first, and themselves second.

2. READ Psalm 34:11-14. How might David's advice in this passage help us respond to those who are brokenhearted or crushed in spirit?

LEADER NOTE: David's advice and encouragement in these verses, while practical in nature, they point to a deeper reality, and a greater assurance of God's direction in our lives. David first says that we must listen – which is a posture of learning, and recognition that we don't know everything, and that we might not have all the solutions in front us. David then talks about growing in the fear of the Lord – which again, places us in the proper order in our relationship with Him, that He is God, and that we are not. David goes on to talk about those who desire to live long lives (vs 12), and that the longevity they will experience will be rooted first in avoiding evil – not talking it, not living it, not pursuing it – but seeking first, God's peace.

Those who are brokenhearted, or crushed in their spirits, usually have a pattern of swirling in their own thoughts and in their own words – a cycle that is abundantly difficult to resolve on ones own terms. Helping that person understand David's advice in these verses, is often the first step towards healing.

- **READ Galatians 6:1-10, Hebrews 4:14-16.** What wisdom from these passages inform how we are to respond to others in pain?

LEADER NOTE: Paul, writing to the Galatians encourages the same thing that David is doing with his cave buddies – those who were misfits and rejects. Paul says to those who are “*spiritual*” – those who are stronger in faith, those who have a greater assurance and confidence – that they are to come to those who are feeling weaker, and to listen and speak gently and patiently with those are burdened. He even expresses that these responses fulfil Christ's commands.

The author of Hebrews, takes it a step further from Paul, saying that we are to pursue our “*Great High Priest*” – who is Jesus, who understands and has journeyed through all the same things that we have experienced here on this earth, and we're to find our way to Him to receive His grace.

When you then combine these two principles, you get the understanding that those who are strong in their faith are to guide the weaker to Jesus, who understands all hardships and offers grace and mercy to those in need.

ADDITIONAL QUESTION:

- **READ John 14:26, Romans 8:26.** Jesus compares the Holy Spirit to a “*helper*” or “*counsellor*” or “*advocate*.” And Paul writes that He is a helper. How does the Spirit do that? How do we experience the Holy Spirit in these ways?

LEADER NOTE: The Holy Spirit is an amazing person of the Trinity, who functions in the most special ways to help guide all God's people to Himself, and to His truth. Jesus in John 14, gives two great examples of how the Spirit does His work. Jesus says, “*He will teach you all things.*” As we listen to sermons, as we read scriptures, and reflect in song the goodness of God – the Spirit works in our minds and hearts to link together Godly truths and helpful ideas to express those truths to each other. Jesus also says that the Spirit will “*bring to your remembrance all that I have said.*” Which, simply stated, the

Spirit will help you with memory recall. As humans hear and learn something, the memory is logged in deep recesses of memory, sometimes easily forgotten – but the Holy Spirit works in our minds to bring back to the forefront of our memories just what is needed to be said or considered at just the right time. So, we experience the Spirit working in these ways by thinking of the right things to say to those who are hurting, recalling passages that are encouraging, or linking personal stories that are edifying.

3. READ Psalm 34:17-20. Think of a time when you felt sorrow, grief, heartache, disappointment, or deep woundedness. What do we learn about God’s response to our wounds?

LEADER NOTE: In these six verses there is an abundance of the Lord’s activity and direction in our lives. Once again, David tells us that the “*Lord hears.*” A truth we so often forget, and don’t fully realise, that whenever we cry out – out loud, or even in our hearts – that the Lord hears and receives all these groanings. And He doesn’t just receive them as information, but as David points out, the Lord “*delivers*” His people from their angst. While that deliverance might not be everything that we might expect it to be, the Lord will do what He will do, for good of those who follow Him. Which is all an example of how the “*Lord is near.*” If we’re really honest with ourselves, we might admit that often God feels farther away – at a distance, at arm’s length from us – just out of reach. However, while that might be true in our feelings, it’s actually quite untrue in reality, as David emphasizes God’s in nearness in our troubles.

Then again, David highlights that the “*Lord delivers*” His people but then goes on to say that the “*Lord redeems*” them too! Not only does He provide a path to peace, but He makes the wrongs in our lives, right. He makes the darkness, light. He turns the frowns upside down. He comforts, He loves, He guides – all of His servants, and His forgiveness is for them all – He doesn’t hold a grudge, or count our troubles against us.

- **READ Proverbs 14:10, 21, 31, Psalm 139:1-6.** These passages speak to the inner nature of human experience, both pain and joy, and our need to experience compassion and grace when walking with others. What words or phrases stand out to you in these verses, regarding your own experience?

LEADER NOTE: It is one thing to receive the promises of God’s nearness in this Psalm in personal ways, it’s a whole other thing to recognize God’s call upon our lives to live as extensions of His nearness and provision to all our neighbors. We often talk about how God has placed people in our lives to share life with – but consider just how the Lord might have placed a particular person in your path, in order for them to feel God’s nearness, while they struggle with being wounded? While Jesus is the answer, and the Holy Spirit will be the one to guide – people will experience those very real aspects of God – through His people.

These three verses from the Proverbs, point us to our neighbors – urging us to know them, and be “*generous*” in our lives before them – with our time, with our talents, and too – with our treasure.

Psalm 139 is another very special and pointed Psalm that speaks to God’s knowledge of our human condition, and once again, while it’s read in a very personal way, we can also receive the challenge of it, in that our neighbors read it in the same way – and we’re to help them experience God’s attention.

TAKING IT HOME

READ Psalm 34:8-10, 2 Corinthians 1:3-7. Christ is our instructor and model for how we are to respond to others who are deeply wounded. Recall a moment when you were deeply wounded. Who were those who were able to provide you comfort in that time? What did they do that was so comforting? What should you do for others?

LEADER NOTE: Leaders, this question seeks to draw out deeply personal matters – some of your members may shirk away from contributing in a few different ways. Perhaps they'll sit in silence and consider in their own hearts their response. Perhaps they might share in general terms their experiences, keeping the details private. Perhaps there are others who will be completely open books, and share all the details. Know that all scenarios are fine – for those who are quiet, invite them directly to share if they are willing. It's ok if they're not. For those who share anything at all – say *“thank-you for sharing.”*

As well, notice that in this question there are a series of questions, perhaps be intentional about asking the questions one at a time, rather than lumping them all together, and inviting responses to all of them all at once. Consider leading this question like this:

Open it with, *“take a moment to recall a moment of hurt.”*

After a moment of silent thoughts, ask the first question, *“who were those who provided you comfort?”*

Allow for some answers and discussion, but then press the topic a little further, *“what was so comforting about that?”*

Then, after allowing again for a time of reflection and thought there, ask the final question, *“how can we be that for others?”*

In that last question, we might need to be all reminded that while scripture has been preserved for us as individuals, we are also to take what we've learned and have experienced and share it with those whom the Lord has placed in our lives.

After all, that is the mission of the Lord. That is the mission of the church – and is ours here at Gateway – to *“help people to love and serve Jesus.”*

PERSONAL REFLECTION

LEADER NOTE: This following question is completely optional and is intended for the participants' personal reflection. But do feel free to explore using the question within your groups meeting.

READ Psalm 23. This Psalm is perhaps one of the most recognized portions of Scripture in the whole Bible and is so because of the comfort and assurances it communicates. If you have already read it, read it again – but this time, slower. Pause between each phrase. Take in the words, as if you were reading it for the first time. As you finish, which phrase stands out the most? Why is that? What might be going on in your life right now that this phrase might speak God's comfort and peace to?