

# Responding with Praise

A study from the Book of Psalms – Section V

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These study guides have been designed to assist you in the “Three R’s of your own Bible study – reading, receiving, and responding. You are welcome to print out the whole series. If you wish to print out only one lesson at a time, choose that option from your printer. Each lesson is one page in length on regular notebook paper – 8 1/2 x 11.

Please feel free to use these materials for your own personal use or with a small group, remembering to give credit where credit is due.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Lesson 1

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**“Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness,  
and for His wonderful works to the children of men!”**

Psalm 107: 8, 15, 21, and 31

When your circumstances are out of control, when the unexpected happens, when you are experiencing the results of your own poor choices, there is really only one thing to do. There's only one place to go. There's only one person who can help. Actually it is often in the difficult times of life, when we frantically call out to God for His help, that we discover His mercy, His goodness, and His faithful and patient love for us. What's keeping you from calling out to Him?

## **READ – Psalm 107 –**

Read this Psalm every day and in as many translations as you can.  
Copy it down in your own handwriting.

## **REFLECT**

The Circumstances – Who do you think might have written this song and why?

The Psalm – Summarize each section and then give this poem a title.

- 1 – 3
- 4 – 9
- 10 – 16
- 17 – 22
- 23 – 32
- 22 – 28
- 39 – 42
- 43

## The Content

1. There are 4 different scenarios of people who cry out to God for help. Try to re-write each one, describing a group of people experiencing those difficulties today.
2. Now, finish each story. How did God respond to these people who cried out to Him?
3. Sometimes it is easy to feel like the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer, but verses 33 – 43 indicate that in reality it is exactly the opposite. How do you explain these verses? How does your experience confirm these truths?

## The Principles of Faith Proclaimed

1. What does this Psalm teach you about Jehovah-God, the LORD?
2. What is the importance of “giving thanks to the LORD”?

## **RESPOND**

Thanksgiving- “silent and private expression of thanks to God for His mercy and goodness”.

Praise – “the vocal and public expression and response to God’s mercy, faithfulness & love”.

And I Will Praise Him, Ronald Allen

Remembering some of the times in your own personal journey when God “heard your cry and met your needs” is a very important thing to do. Take time to make a written list of them and then thank the LORD for His marvelous love and His miracle mercy to you. Would you be willing to share some words of praise with someone else – a family member, a friend, or at Bible Study?

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Lesson 2

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**Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.**

Psalm 118: 1 and 29

Hallelujah! It simply means “praise – Jehovah” or Praise the LORD! It expresses very joyful excitement or boasting. In the time of Christ, children often carried little parchment scrolls on which Psalm 113 – 118 were written – *the Hallel*. At the feast of the Passover and at other feasts these were the Psalms that were always recited because they retell the story of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt and God’s faithfulness to them. No doubt Jesus and His disciples repeated these Psalms just before He was betrayed. When you need some help in expressing your praise to the LORD, try these Psalms. And once in a while during your day simply say “Hallelujah! Praise the name of the LORD!”

## **READ – Psalms 113 – 118 and Psalm 136 -**

You really need to read these Psalms out loud and several times this week.  
Get comfortable with all of them.

## **REFLECT**

The Circumstances – No one knows who wrote these Psalms, but surely they were an inspired gift to the Israelites and to all who want to celebrate their God.

The Psalm – Summarize each Psalm. Try to give each one a title that is meaningful to you.

Psalm 113  
Psalm 114  
Psalm 115  
Psalm 116  
Psalm 117  
Psalm 118  
Psalm 136

The Content – Psalm 118:8 is the middle verse of the Bible, with 31,174 verses on each side of it.  
Why not start your study with this verse and think about its importance?

1. As you read these Psalms, write out some of the verses that stand out to you.
2. On what attributes of God do these Psalms focus? What seems to be emphasized?
3. What was accomplished by using these Psalms in public gatherings throughout the year?  
Do you think we could learn anything from these traditions?
4. What do you find interesting about Psalm 117 – the shortest Psalm? Why was it written?

## The Principles of Faith Proclaimed

1. God’s Mercy – how many times is it used or illustrated in these 7 Psalms.  
What is His mercy?
2. How does Ephesians 2: 4 – 10 expand your ideas about God’s mercy?

## **RESPOND**

Have you experienced God’s mercy? When? How? Then, using Psalm 136 (or any of the other Psalms in this group) as a pattern, write your own Psalm of Thanksgiving. If you share it with someone, it will become a Psalm of Praise and God’s name will be glorified. Are you willing to try? God is waiting to hear from you.

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Lesson 3

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**I long for Your salvation, O LORD, and Your law is my delight.  
Let my soul live, and it shall praise You; and let Your judgments help me.**

Psalm 119: 174 – 175

The Law - *the Torah* - which God graciously gave through Moses was never designed to be a means of salvation or a legalistic burden to the people of Israel. It was given to a nation that was already in a covenantal relationship with God and was meant to be a great blessing because through it they could learn how to live as God's holy people. The law itself is celebrated in this lengthy Psalm, but even more the God Who mercifully has pointed out the right path to follow is exulted. Will you join the Psalmist in saying, "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law" – Psalm 119: 18

## READ – PSALM 119 –

This is an acrostic Psalm – each one of the 22 stanzas begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet and has 8 eight lines in it. So – make a reading plan for yourself for this week.

## REFLECT

The Circumstances- What kind of person might have written this song/poem?

The Psalm– Try to summarize each of the 22 stanzas. How do they expand on the central theme?

### The Content

1. Make of list of the 7 synonyms for "the law". Is there a difference between them?
2. Two emotions are repeated in Psalm 119 – delight and love of the law of the LORD. Find as many verses as you can which emphasize these feelings of the Psalmist.
3. Why does the Psalmist value the word of God so highly?
4. Is there a verse in this entire Psalm that does not refer to God by name or through the use of a pronoun (You, Your)? What does this suggest to you?
5. How would you summarize the passion, the heart's desire, expressed in this Psalm?

### The Principles of Faith Proclaimed –

What are the benefits of "keeping God's law"? What are the risks of ignoring it?

## RESPOND

1. A – B – C – D - Try writing an acrostic of some kind about God's Word – adjectives, a poem, a song, a prayer.
2. "If you have the Word in your mouth only, it shall be taken from you.  
If you have it in your book only, you shall miss it when you need it most.  
If you lay it up in your heart, no enemy shall ever be able to take it from you, and you shall find it a comfortable treasure in your time of need." William Cowper

Talk with the author of THE WORD about your feelings and the desires of your heart?  
He is the One who forgives, heals, restores, enables, and upholds – through His Word.



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Lesson 5

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**Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me, and know my anxious thoughts.  
See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.**

Psalm 139: 23 – 24

Language is often inadequate to describe who God really is. But there are some words that help. The problem is that when we use those words, which can be used only when some one is talking about God, we have to stop and define them in understandable terms. For example, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence are very descriptive and impressive words. With picturesque and personal words, David writes of these three attributes of God in Psalm 139. Somehow he is able to describe an Almighty God in terms that make Him so accessible to each of us. How can anyone resist bowing down before this kind of a God?

**READ – PSALM 139** – This is a Psalm about you and your God. Read it morning, noon, and night!

## REFLECT

The Circumstances – David, the poet, wrote these words for the musician. When and why?

The Psalm – Four sections with 6 verses each. Summarize and title each one.

- 1 – 6
- 7 - 12
- 13 – 18
- 19 – 24

## The Content

1. Do you ever feel like there no one who really knows and understands you?  
How well does God know and understand you? Find your clues in this Psalm.
2. Do you ever feel like you're a mistake? That God forgot some qualities when He created you? How does this song dispel those notions?
3. Do you ever want to play "Hide and Seek" with God? There might be a variety of reasons for this desire? You might want to be the one who is hiding and wishing that God would come looking for you and calling your name OR you might feel like you are the one that is looking for Him and can not find Him any where. What does this Psalm have to say about either or both of these scenarios. Have you experienced both of them? When?
4. What does the paragraph about the wicked contribute to this poem?

## The Principles of Faith Proclaimed –

How would you explain the truths which are in this Psalm about God to a child?

**RESPOND-** Do you want to pray the prayer that concludes this Psalm? Talk to God about it.

Search me – Investigate my life

Know my heart – Find out everything about me

Test me – Cross-examine me

Know my anxious thoughts – Get a clear picture of what I'm about

See if there is any offensive way in me – Find out what I've done wrong

Lead me in the way everlasting – Guide me on the road to eternal life

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Lesson 6

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**“Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised and His greatness is unsearchable.”**

Psalm 145: 3

Usually we “praise God for all that is past, and trust Him for all that is to come”; but we can easily change that around and say, “We trust God for all that is past, and praise Him for all that is to come”. What is the difference in the meaning of these two ideas? There’s one letter missing in this acrostic song, the letter “N”. At present our praise is always incomplete, but someday in heaven it will be total and complete. Jewish rabbis taught their people that “if you pray this psalm from the heart three times a day, you will prepare yourself for the world to come”. Let’s get ready!

**READ – PSALM 145** – Three times a day. Write it. Read it. Start memorizing it.

## REFLECT

The Circumstances – David felt deeply grateful to His God. Think of some of the reasons that he could write such amazing expressions of praise.

### The Psalm

- 1 – 3
- 4 - 7
- 8 – 9
- 10 – 13
- 14 – 16
- 17 – 21

### The Content

1. Make a list of all the “I will” statements and re-write them in your own words.
2. Make a list of all the attributes of the LORD that are in this song of wisdom and praise. Are there some that are missing that you might like to include?
3. One generation to another is the theme of verses 4 – 7 – in the family, in the church, and everywhere. How do you think our culture encourages or discourages this?

The Principles of Faith Proclaimed – In a world of hopelessness and violence, of sickness and difficulties of all kinds, it is faith in a great and redeeming God that can make all of the difference. Take a look at what YOU really believe about YOUR God. Are you disappointed or discouraged, confused or concerned, weak or disabled? God can handle your complaints and your questions and will come to you no matter how you are feeling. Take Him at His word.

## RESPOND –

Here’s your chance to express you own words of praise.

Try modeling your psalm after Psalm 145 using your own format and phrases. Make it your own so that it is honest and fits the circumstances and emotions of your life this week.