

WHAT DOES IT
MEAN TO BE
human?

**5 Reflections in the Psalms to help us express and enjoy our relationship
with our Father.**

As human beings in Christ we can enjoy an intimate relationship with our heavenly father. We can enjoy being creatures created, loved & chosen by the creator of all things. The foundation of this relationship is the all-sufficient work of Christ, but it's a relationship of real honesty & intimacy and we grow to love him more and more.

Many of the Psalms are written by David as God's long promised King, and so they point forward to the Lord Jesus. It's often helpful to imagine how the Lord Jesus embodies these psalms as he perfectly fulfills all the psalms.

For us as readers, the Psalms offer us a real mixture of praising God for his King, and also crying out to the Lord in real dark times of being abandoned & forsaken. Even for us today, as those in Christ we can join in with the Psalmists through all the ups and down of life.

These notes are just starting to help us foster that communion & intimacy with God as we reflect on what we heard in our humanity series. They are not intended to be an in-depth study, but helping us to foster that honest relationship with the Lord. Here are 5 examples that may help you this week, but all of the Psalms are a wonderful place for us to keep delving into as we enjoy our relationship with the Lord.

Book Recommendation: In the Lord I take refuge by Dane C. Ortlund

Read Psalm 13

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

² How long must I take counsel in my soul
and have sorrow in my heart all the day?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

³ Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,

⁴ lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him",
lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

⁵ But I have trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

⁶ I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

Ponder

- What seems to be the experience of David? How does he feel about life and God? This is not an isolated incident for David, but it's shared by all God's children at times in our walk with the Lord.
- But where is David led to in this Psalm?
- If David can bank everything on God, even when on the brink of despair, how much more can we today? Dane Ortland says "*We see God's steadfast love in concrete terms, in the great climactic act of deliverance in the person of his own son*".

Prayer

- Thank the Lord that we have the opportunity to be honest with him through the words of the Psalms.
- You could use this Psalm to be honest with the Lord about your relationship with the Lord at the moment, or in the past.
- Ask the Lord to help you fight to turn from darkness to the light of God's steadfast love. Think about how much more we can do that now because of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Read Psalm 19

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
² Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.
³ There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.
⁴ Their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.
In them he has set a tent for the sun,
⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.
⁶ Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them,
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.
⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure,
making wise the simple;
⁸ the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure,
enlightening the eyes;
⁹ the fear of the Lord is clean,
enduring for ever;
the rules of the Lord are true,
and righteous altogether.
¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb.
¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
¹² Who can discern his errors?
Declare me innocent from hidden faults.
¹³ Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins;
let them not have dominion over me!
Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.
¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Ponder

- How has God not hidden himself from us? This Psalm shows us various ways the Lord has revealed himself to us.
- What is God revealing about himself? Do you find anything exciting, or surprising?
- How does this Psalm help you to appreciate what God has revealed about himself in the Lord Jesus?
- Perhaps you could think about how we've seen these attributes of Jesus in John's Gospel this year.

Pray

- Spend some time giving thanks for God's revelation of himself generally.
- Now spend some time giving thanks for God's revelation of himself to you personally.
- Ask the Lord to help you to value this revelation of himself more and more.

Read Psalm 32

A Maskil of David.

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

²Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

³For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

⁴For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. *Selah*

⁵I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not cover my iniquity;

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord",
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. *Selah*

⁶Therefore let everyone who is godly
offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;
surely in the rush of great waters,
they shall not reach him.

⁷You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance. *Selah*

⁸I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

⁹Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding,
which must be curbed with bit and bridle,
or it will not stay near you.

¹⁰Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord.

¹¹Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Ponder

- Where does happiness (blessing) seem to be found according to this Psalm? Why?
- David confesses his sin to the Lord, how does this change his relationship with the Lord?
- How could this Psalm help us to come back to the Lord, when we're tempted to hide from him?

Pray

- Ask the Lord to help you to have a heart that is quick to repent and not indulging in sin or being ashamed to come to the Lord in confession.
- Praise the Lord for his forgiveness in Christ,
- Praise him that it is now possible to be glad and rejoice in the Lord.

Read Psalm 42 & 43

To the choirmaster. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah.

As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.

² My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God?

³ My tears have been my food
day and night,
while they say to me all the day long,
“Where is your God?”

⁴ These things I remember,
as I pour out my soul:
how I would go with the throng
and lead them in procession to the house of God
with glad shouts and songs of praise,
a multitude keeping festival.

⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation ⁶ and my God.

My soul is cast down within me;
therefore I remember you
from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,
from Mount Mizar.

⁷ Deep calls to deep
at the roar of your waterfalls;
all your breakers and your waves
have gone over me.

⁸ By day the Lord commands his steadfast love,
and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.

⁹ I say to God, my rock:
“Why have you forgotten me?
Why do I go mourning
because of the oppression of the enemy?”

¹⁰ As with a deadly wound in my bones,
my adversaries taunt me,
while they say to me all the day long,
“Where is your God?”

¹¹ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.

Psalm 43

Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause
against an ungodly people,
from the deceitful and unjust man
deliver me!

² For you are the God in whom I take refuge;
why have you rejected me?

Why do I go about mourning
because of the oppression of the enemy?

³ Send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me;

let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling!

⁴ Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy,
and I will praise you with the lyre,
O God, my God.

⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.

Ponder

- How does the Psalmist feel in 42v1-10?
- In both Psalms, how does the Psalmist talk to himself?
- What does he come to find in the Lord?
- How do you think we can appreciate that so much more as those in Christ?

Pray

- Spend some time being honest with the Lord about the discouragements of life for you, and all those times that make you question “where is God?”
- Ask the Lord to help you hope in him, and praise him for his salvation.

Read Psalm 121

A Song of Ascents.

- ¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
- ² My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
- ³ He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
- ⁴ Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
- ⁵ The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade on your right hand.
- ⁶ The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.
- ⁷ The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
- ⁸ The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and for evermore.

Ponder

- What attributes of God do you find helpful and encouraging in this Psalm?
- Think about the idea of the Lord being our shade, how does that help our perspective on our journey to the New Jerusalem?
- How do you think we can have such confidence to keep his people, especially now that we live after the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Pray

- Spend some time thanking God for how this Psalm shows what God is like.
- Try to be honest with the Lord about how you find it hard to believe the truth of this Psalm, maybe bring to the Lord the troubles of today, and the anxieties of the future.
- Ask the Lord to help you to have confidence in who he is today.