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# Psalms

Psalm 3:1-8

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In this study of Psalm 3, we're reminded that even in our darkest moments, God remains our shield and strength. The story of David fleeing from his son Absalom teaches us that seasons of lament aren't signs of weak faith, but opportunities to grow closer to God. We're encouraged to bring our raw emotions before the Lord, just as David did.

The psalm shows us that no matter how dire our circumstances may seem, we can declare 'But God' and find comfort in His unwavering presence. This message challenges us to examine where we find our glory and to lift our voices in prayer, unashamed. It's a powerful reminder that if God is for us, who can be against us? As we face our own trials, may we, like David, trust in God's sustaining power and find peace in His plan.

5-Day Devotional and Small Group Guide

# Day 1: Finding Strength in God’s Presence

Reading: Psalm 3:1-8

# Devotional: In times of trouble, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and alone. David faced a dire situation with his own son leading a rebellion against him. Yet, in the midst of this crisis, David found strength by turning to God. He declared, "But you, Lord, are a shield around me" (Psalm 3:3). When we face our own struggles, whether with family, work, or personal challenges, we can find comfort in knowing that God is our protector and source of strength. Take a moment to reflect on a current difficulty in your life. How might viewing God as your shield change your perspective? Today, practice turning your worries into prayers, trusting that God hears you and is working on your behalf.

# Day 2: The Power of Honest Prayer

Reading: Philippians 4:6-7

# Devotional: David's psalms are remarkable for their raw honesty. He didn't hide his emotions from God but poured out his heart in both lament and praise. In Philippians, Paul encourages us to bring everything to God in prayer. This isn't about formality or using the right words – it's about open, honest communication with our Heavenly Father. When we do this, we're promised a peace that surpasses understanding. Today, try praying aloud, expressing your true feelings to God without holding back. What does it feel like to be completely honest with God? Remember, He already knows your heart, but He desires this intimate communication with you.

# Day 3: Gods Love in the Midst of Failure

Reading: Romans 8:31-39

Devotional: David's life was marked by both great faith and significant failures. Yet God's love for him remained steadfast. Romans 8 reminds us that nothing can separate us from God's love – not our past mistakes, not our current struggles, not even the actions of others against us. This unconditional love is the foundation of our salvation and hope. Reflect on areas where you feel unworthy or unloved. How does God's unwavering love challenge these feelings? Today, write down three ways you've experienced God's love, even when you felt you didn't deserve it.

# Day 4: Waiting on the Lord

Reading: Isaiah 40:28-31

# Devotional: In difficult times, we often want immediate solutions. However, the Bible frequently speaks of the importance of waiting on the Lord. Isaiah promises renewed strength to those who wait on God. This isn't passive waiting, but active trust and expectation. David had to wait for God's timing in dealing with Absalom's rebellion, trusting in God's plan even when the situation seemed dire. What are you currently waiting on God for? How can you actively trust Him in this waiting period? Today, practice patience in a small way (perhaps in traffic or a long line) as a reminder to wait on God's timing in bigger matters.

# Day 5: Finding Joy in Trials

Reading: James 1:2-4

Devotional: James presents a counterintuitive idea – that we should consider trials as joy. This doesn't mean we enjoy suffering, but that we recognize God's work in us through difficulties. David's psalms often transition from lament to praise, showing this principle in action. Our trials can produce perseverance, maturity, and a deeper faith. Think about a past difficulty that ultimately led to growth. How did God work through that situation? Today, if you're facing a challenge, try to identify one potential positive outcome or lesson. Thank God in advance for how He will use this trial to shape you.

# Small Group Guide: Jesus Prays for Himself

## Key Takeaways:

1. Expressing lament to God is not a sign of weak faith, but an opportunity to grow closer to Him.
2. Even in our darkest moments, we can declare "But God" and find hope.
3. God is our shield and the one who lifts our head, even when circumstances seem dire.
4. Crying out to God audibly can be powerful and transformative.
5. God's love for us and our loved ones surpasses even our deepest affections.

## Discussion Questions:

1. David faced betrayal by his own son. Have you ever experienced betrayal by someone close to you? How did you respond, and how does David's example challenge or encourage you?
2. The sermon mentions the power of saying "But God" in difficult situations. Can you share a time when you experienced a "But God" moment in your life?
3. How do you typically express your emotions to God during trials? Do you find it easy or difficult to be honest with Him about your feelings?
4. Brody emphasized the importance of crying out to God audibly. How might praying aloud change your prayer life?
5. Discuss the concept of biblical loyalty as presented in the sermon. How can we balance loyalty with the need to address wrongdoing in those we care about?
6. How does the knowledge that God loves your loved ones even more than you do impact your prayers and concerns for them?

## Practical Applications:

1. **Prayer**: This week, try praying aloud to God, especially when dealing with difficult emotions or situations.
2. **Reflection:** Identify one area in your life where you may have a particular relationship or situation, write a lament psalm of your own, expressing your honest feelings to God.
3. **Identify:** For those with children or loved ones who have strayed from faith, commit to praying for them daily, trusting in God's love and timing.
4. **Accountability:** Do you truly see Gods Word as important? Do you hunger for truth? Today, would you be more closely aligned with the righteous or unrighteous? Why?
5. **Thankfulness:** Make a list of ways God has been faithful to you in the past. Use this as a reminder when facing challenges.
6. **Service:** Look for opportunities to demonstrate grace and truth in your interactions with others, following Jesus' example.

## Further Discussion Questions:

How can we find strength and comfort in God during times of personal crisis or betrayal, as David did in Psalm 3?

In what ways might our own experiences of sorrow or lament actually deepen our faith rather than indicate a lack of it?

How can we balance honesty about our emotions with trust in God's sovereignty when facing difficult circumstances?

What lessons can we learn from David's response to Absalom's rebellion about dealing with family conflicts or betrayals?

How might viewing God as our 'shield' and the one who 'lifts our head' change our perspective on life's challenges?

In what ways can we cultivate a heart that seeks God's will, even when we've made mistakes or face opposition?

How can we support and pray for those who have 'prodigal' family members while maintaining hope in God's love and plan?

What does it mean to find our 'glory' in God rather than in worldly accomplishments or possessions?

How can we develop the confidence to face our 'ten thousands' of opponents when we know God is on our side?

In what ways can we learn to 'count it all joy' during trials, as James 1 suggests, while still acknowledging our pain?

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