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# Psalms

Psalm 4:1-8

Marc Ortega

In our exploration of Psalm 4, we discover the profound truth of righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. This psalm, a prayer of David, reminds us that our righteousness comes not from our own actions, but through our faith in God. We're challenged to examine our hearts and consider: are we truly living as righteous people, or merely going through religious motions?

The psalm encourages us to call upon God with confidence, knowing He hears the prayers of the righteous. As we reflect on this, we're invited to deepen our relationship with God, moving beyond surface-level faith to a place of genuine trust and reliance on Him. This message is particularly relevant in our modern world, where we often struggle with feelings of unworthiness or doubt. By embracing the righteousness that comes through faith, we can approach God with boldness and find peace in His presence.

5-Day Devotional and Small Group Guide

# Day 1: Embracing God’s Righteousness

Reading: Romans 3:21-26

# Devotional: As we reflect on Marc’s message about righteousness, we're reminded that our own efforts can never make us righteous before God. Yet, through faith in Jesus Christ, we receive the gift of God's righteousness. Today, meditate on the incredible love and grace of God that allows us to stand before Him, not in our own merit, but clothed in Christ's perfection. How does this truth change your perspective on your daily struggles and shortcomings? Take time to thank God for His unmerited favor and ask Him to help you live in the freedom of His righteousness.

# Day 2: Set Apart for God’s Purpose

Reading: 2 Timothy 2:20-21

# Devotional: The sermon highlighted the concept of being "set apart" for God's use. Just as fine china is reserved for special occasions, God desires to use us for His noble purposes. Consider the areas of your life where you might be holding back from full surrender to God. Are there habits, attitudes, or relationships that are hindering you from being fully available to God? Pray for the courage to let go of anything that's keeping you from being a vessel of honor in God's house. Ask the Holy Spirit to cleanse you and make you ready for whatever God has planned for your life.

# Day 3: Godliness Through God’s Grace

Reading: Titus 2:11-14

Devotional: We learned that godliness is not achieved through our own willpower, but through God's grace working in us. As you read today's passage, reflect on how God's grace has been evident in your life. How has it not only saved you but also been teaching you to live a godly life? Take note of areas where you've seen growth and areas where you still struggle. Instead of being discouraged by your shortcomings, ask God to help you rely more fully on His grace to transform you. Remember, godliness is a journey, not a destination.

# Day 4: Righteous Anger and Trust in God

Reading: Ephesians 4:26-27

# Devotional: Marc’s "slushy scenario" illustrated the challenge of being angry without sinning. Today's reading gives us practical advice on this topic. When you face situations that provoke anger, how quickly do you turn to God? Practice pausing before reacting, using that moment to silently pray for God's wisdom and peace. Consider a recent situation where you responded in anger. How might the outcome have been different if you had trusted God to handle the situation? Ask God to help you develop the habit of bringing your anger to Him first, trusting in His justice and timing.

# Day 5: The Power of Forgiveness

Reading: Colossians 3:12-14

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: The Safety of the Faithful

## Key Takeaways:

1. True righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ, not our own works.
2. We should examine what we consume and meditate on, focusing on things that are pure, lovely, and praiseworthy.
3. Godliness is a process that involves God's grace, knowing Christ, spiritual discipline, and the work of the Holy Spirit.
4. We can be angry without sinning by trusting God to handle situations rather than taking matters into our own hands.

## Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you most from the sermon? Why?
2. The speaker mentioned feeling unworthy to have his prayers heard by God. Have you ever felt this way? How does understanding righteousness through faith in Christ change our approach to prayer?
3. Reflect on Philippians 4:8. What types of media or content do you consume regularly? How might adjusting this impact your spiritual life?
4. The sermon outlined six aspects of godliness. Which of these do you find most challenging in your own life? Why?
5. How do you typically respond when you're angry? What might it look like to "be angry and do not sin" in practical terms?
6. The speaker shared a personal scenario about responding to someone harming his child. How can we balance protecting those we love with responding in a godly manner?

## Practical Applications:

1. **Media Audit:** Take a week to track the content you consume (social media, TV, music, etc.). Reflect on how it aligns with Philippians 4:8. Make one change based on your findings.
2. **Prayer Journal**: Start a prayer journal, recording your prayers and how you see God answering them. This can help build confidence in approaching God.
3. **Anger Management:** The next time you feel angry, practice pausing and praying before responding. Write down what you learn from this experience.
4. **Godliness Growth:** Choose one aspect of godliness mentioned in the sermon (e.g., spiritual discipline, knowing Christ better) and create a specific plan to grow in that area over the next month.
5. **Forgiveness Exercise:** Reflect on a situation where you were wronged. Practice releasing that situation to God in prayer, asking Him to handle it rather than seeking your own justice.

## Further Discussion Questions:

How does understanding the concept of righteousness through faith in Jesus, rather than our own works, change our approach to spiritual growth?

In what ways might we be turning God's glory to shame in our daily lives without realizing it?

How can we cultivate a heart that truly seeks after worthwhile things and truth, rather than worthlessness and falsehood?

What does it mean to be 'set apart' as a Christian in today's world, and how can we live this out practically?

How can we develop a deeper trust in God's justice when faced with situations that provoke anger or a desire for revenge?

In what ways might our current spiritual 'soil' be hindering growth, and how can we cultivate more fertile ground for God's word?

How does the process of becoming godly, as outlined in the sermon, challenge or encourage you in your spiritual journey?

What role does the Holy Spirit play in our pursuit of godliness, and how can we be more intentional about relying on His power?

How might our lives change if we truly believed and acted on the idea that we are 'free in Christ' rather than bound by religious rules?

In what areas of your life do you need to trust God's timing and intervention rather than taking matters into your own hands?

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