

A single pink rose on a stem is centered in the image. The rose is in full bloom, with many layers of petals. The stem is thin and brown. The background is a solid, deep blue color. The text is overlaid on the image in white, with a slight shadow effect.

# HEART CRY

slowing down in the psalms

study guide



## *Heart Cry: Slowing Down in the Psalms*

We will spend the next few weeks together *slowing down* in the Psalms. The Psalms are works of literature - poetic works of art. We want to slow down and encounter them not only by reading them and studying them, but also by considering how they move our hearts, and by allowing the psalmists to model for us how to worship God in times of distress, joy, grief, and remembrance.

Each week you will be directed to two psalms that have similar themes and tones. You will be asked to follow the **REAP method**, and also look at the **general sense**.

**Looking at the “general sense”** - approach it like looking at a painting!<sup>1</sup>

*Read it as a whole, out loud if possible.*

*Just notice things. Don't try to interpret yet. Just notice.*

*Who is speaking? What seem to be the circumstances around this psalm?*

*What would you say is the overall tone of this psalm? What emotion(s) does it express?*

*Does anything surprise you?*

*Go line by line and put this psalm in your own words. What is the psalmist saying with the metaphors and word choices he used?*

*How else could this be written? Why did he say it this way?*

### **The REAP Method:**

*(Not familiar with REAP? Listen to [Pastor Dave's message from May 30](#) for a thorough explanation!)*

**Read:** *What does this text say?*

*Read through the Psalm in its entirety several times.*

**Examine:** *What does this text mean?*

*Look for keywords or phrases*

*Look for words or ideas that are repeated*

*Who, what, when, where, why, how?*

*What metaphors or similes are used?*

**Apply:** *What is God asking me to do?*

*Is there a truth about God I need to believe?*

*Is there a truth about myself I need to understand?*

*Is there a sin I need to repent of?*

*Is there a command I need to obey?*

**Pray:** *Pray through the truths of this text*

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from [Enjoying the Bible: Literary Approaches to Loving the Scriptures](#), Matthew Mullins

## *Week One: True Confidence*

### **Psalm 46 Group Study**

Soak it in: [Psalm 46 \(Lord of Hosts\)](#) from Shane and Shane { [Psalm 121 from Kristyn Getty](#) }

“To be His is to be safe.” -C.H. Spurgeon

### **Video Notes:**

The Bible is a \_\_\_\_\_ work, containing a variety of different genres.

It’s “literariness” refers to how it is written. What it says is deeply tied to \_\_\_\_\_ it says it.

The Psalms are works of poetry, and poetry communicates \_\_\_\_\_, not just \_\_\_\_\_.

These two psalms, 46 and 121, are examples of **psalms of Confidence**<sup>2</sup>:

In this type of psalm, the psalmist typically:

- Asserts his \_\_\_\_\_ in God, though enemies or some other threat are present.
- States in various ways that he is able to be at \_\_\_\_\_ because God is with him.
- Uses striking \_\_\_\_\_ - God is often likened to be a refuge, shepherd, light, rock, help, etc.

### **General sense of Psalm 46**

Approach it as if you’re looking at a painting!

- *Read it as a whole, out loud if possible.*
- *Just notice things. Don’t try to interpret yet. Just notice. What do you see?*
- *Who is speaking? What seem to be the circumstances around this psalm?*
- *What would you say is the overall tone? What emotion(s) does it express?*
- *Does anything surprise you?*
- *Go line by line and put this psalm in your own words. What is the psalmist saying with the metaphors and word choices he used?*
- *How else could this be written? Why did he say it this way?*

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<sup>2</sup> [How to Read the Psalms](#), Tremper Longman III

**REAP** from Psalm 46

**Read:** *What does this text say?*

**Examine:** *What does this text mean?*

Look for keywords or phrases

Look for words or ideas that are repeated

Who, what, when, where, why, how?

What metaphors or similes are used?

**Apply:** *What is God asking me to do?*

Is there a truth about God I need to believe?

Is there a truth about myself I need to understand?

Is there a sin I need to repent of?

Is there a command I need to obey?

**Pray:** *Pray through the truths of this text*

Write out your own honest prayer in the model of these psalms. Express your true emotion, declare what you know to be true about God and His character.

## *Week Two: Worthy of Praise*

### **Psalm 19, Psalm 103**

Soak it in: [Psalm 19 from Jess Ray](#), [Psalm 103 from Jess Ray](#), [Psalm 103 from Michael Card](#)

*“The most valuable thing the psalms do for me is to express that same delight in God which made David dance.”* -C.S. Lewis, Reflections on the Psalms

Day 1: General sense of Psalm 19

Day 2: REAP from Psalm 19

Day 3: General sense of Psalm 103

Day 4: REAP from Psalm 103

Day 5: Reread both psalms.

*These psalms are hymns of praise!*

- These psalms call us to praise and give reasons why God is worthy of praise. What reasons do you see?
- Write out your own honest prayer in the model of these psalms. Express your true emotion, declare what you know to be true about God and His character. Tell God why He is worthy of praise!

### **Video Notes:**

One of the unique things about poetry is that it often takes \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in order for it to really open up for you what it *means*.

Mike Cosper, Rhythms of Grace - “As important as doctrine is... God knows we need our \_\_\_\_\_ to be captured by truth... So God doesn’t merely present the gospel to us in a contract. He gives us a wonderfully creative book in the Bible and invites us to engage with our imagination.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Enjoying the Bible: Literary Approaches to Loving the Scriptures, Matthew Mullins

This week's Psalms, 19 and 103, are examples of **psalms of praise**.

In this type of psalm, the psalmist typically:

1. Begins with a call to \_\_\_\_\_, or assertion of intent to worship
2. Continues by expanding on the \_\_\_\_\_ why God should be praised - and this is the most significant part of the psalm. These are not abstract, but specific ways God has entered into the lives of His people, corporately and individually. Usually transitions with "for..." or "because..."
3. Include, and sometimes conclude, with further calls to praise

## *Week Three: Worship through Lament*

### **Psalm 42, Psalm 77**

Soak it in: [Psalm 42](#) from Getty Music, [Lament](#) from Fellowship Worship

*“Thy promise is my only plea - with this I venture nigh. Thou callest burdened souls to Thee, and such, O Lord, am I.” - John Newton*

Day 1: General sense of Psalm 42

Day 2: REAP from Psalm 42

Day 3: General sense of Psalm 77

Day 4: REAP from Psalm 77

Day 5: Reread both psalms.

*These psalms are hymns of lament.*

- What reasons are given for why the psalmist is lamenting?  
*Is he troubled by his own thoughts and actions?*  
*Is he complaining about the actions of others?*  
*Is he frustrated with God Himself?*
- Our modern Christian culture is often uncomfortable with lament, sometimes equating faith in God with stoic resignation. Have you ever wrestled with the place of mourning in the Christian life?
- How do we see the psalmist acknowledge both the brokenness of the world and the goodness of God at the same time? How does the psalmist express faith and call his own heart to deeper belief through these laments?
- Write out your own honest prayer in the model of these psalms. Express your true emotion, call yourself to belief even in times of grief, declare what you know to be true about God and His character.

*“Lord, these psalms teach that we can bring you our anger, fear, and despair and lay them before you unfiltered. You understand. Yet as I do so I pray you will make yourself real to my heart so that, like a morning fog, these things can be burned away by the light of your presence. Amen.”*

-Tim Keller, [The Songs of Jesus](#)

**Video notes:**

Trusting God does not mean \_\_\_\_\_ that this world is not deeply and badly broken.

Pastor Glenn Packiam<sup>4</sup> offers this explanation and helpful distinction between lament and complaint-

***“... a complaint is an \_\_\_\_\_ against God that maligns His character, but a lament is an \_\_\_\_\_ to God based on confidence in His character.”***

Structure of laments - *rarely do all appear together, but a number will appear in each lament*

1. Plea to God for \_\_\_\_\_
2. Crying out against injustice
3. Confession of sin or an assertion of being unjustly blamed
4. Prayer for \_\_\_\_\_ against enemies
5. \_\_\_\_\_ in God's response
6. Hymn or blessing

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ntwrightonline.org/five-things-to-know-about-lament/>



## *Week Four: Remembrance*

### **Psalm 78, Psalm 105**

Soak it in: [Psalm 78 from Hope Creative](#), [Psalm 105:1-3 from Seeds Family Worship](#)

*“He who is ready to believe the goodness of God will always see fresh goodness to believe in, and he who is willing to declare the works of God will never be silent for a lack of wonders to declare.” -C.H. Spurgeon*

Day 1: General sense of Psalm 78 - *because these psalms are lengthy, don't get too bogged down in a line-by-line paraphrase. Look at sections or natural chunks of thought.*

Day 2: General sense of Psalm 105 - *again, look at sections/ natural chunks of thought*

Day 3: Choose *either* Psalm 78 or Psalm 105 (or even a section of one!) and REAP

Day 4: Reread the psalm you chose yesterday.

*These psalms are songs of remembrance, recounting God's faithfulness (and often Israel's unfaithfulness), calling the next generation to praise and trust Him.*

- What Old Testament events are referred to? (Use cross references in your Bible or look at study tools such as BibleGateway.com or BibleStudyTools.net to discover what is being referenced.)
- Read the original accounts of at least two of these events referred to. Does reading the referenced account along with this psalm give you deeper understanding of one or the other?

Day 5: Worship through remembrance

- Reflect: What stories of God's past faithfulness have been formative in building your faith? These could be from biographies, testimonies of other believers, stories from parents or grandparents.
- Looking back on your life, how do you see God's faithfulness through your unfaithfulness?
  - Spend time in honest prayer expressing this to the Lord
  - Write out a story that you would be willing to share with others in your group.

**Video notes:**

\_\_\_\_\_ is a vital part of a walk of faith.

God actively uses the past to prepare us to trust Him in our \_\_\_\_\_ and in our \_\_\_\_\_.

These types of psalms:

- Have no specific \_\_\_\_\_
- Frequently make reference to the great redemptive acts of God in the past
- Often cite the the \_\_\_\_\_ (the paradigm salvation event of the OT) and the establishment of the \_\_\_\_\_ dynasty
- Historical events are recounted so that Israel might praise the Lord

Look for: *What mighty acts of God are recounted? Read the original stories.*