

“This world has beauty and delight as well as brokenness and pain. As joy and sorrow mingle together, we long for words to express both our cries for deliverance and our songs of rejoicing. Dane Ortlund’s new devotional, *In the Lord I Take Refuge*, invites us to commune with God through the words of the Psalms. These encouraging daily reflections will guide your prayers, refresh your heart, and strengthen your soul as you walk with God in the ups and downs of life.”

Melissa Kruger, Director of Women’s Initiatives, The Gospel Coalition; author, *Growing Together*

“This devotional book beautifully reminds us that we need no better devotional material than the Psalms themselves. Dane Ortlund is pointing the way, serving as a wise and restrained guide to help us enter and join the prayers and praises of the psalter. He never fails to point us to Christ, the Savior who shines through the Psalms from beginning to end.”

Kathleen Nielson, author; speaker; Senior Adviser, The Gospel Coalition

“This is a book to keep by your bed, to begin or end each day feeding on these words God has given to us to pray and sing back to him. Dane’s brief insights into each psalm help us to bridge the gap between the psalmist’s time and our own, between his battles, questions, joys, desires, and laments and our own, leading us to love and worship.”

Nancy Guthrie, Bible teacher; author, *Even Better than Eden*

“Here it is! A devotional book based on the Bible’s own devotional book. It is an idea so obvious we may have missed it because—unlike our spiritual forefathers, who often read through the book of Psalms every week—we have allowed ourselves to be obsessed with the short term and the quick fix and to become devoted to the latest thing. But now the author whose *Gentle and Lowly* has helped so many to see Christ more clearly takes us gently by the hand to Jesus’s own devotional manual, the prayer book he loved, and the blueprint for his own life and ministry, and leads us to him all over again, day after day. Thank you, Dane Ortlund, for more treasure!”

Sinclair B. Ferguson, Chancellor’s Professor of Systematic Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary; Teaching Fellow, Ligonier Ministries

“A book like this is hard to find: not a commentary on the Psalms but a brief model, from a trusted voice, on how to meditate on them. Come to be fed by Dane’s meditations and learn how to meditate for yourself; to take a word or phrase in context and linger over it to obtain food, in Christ, for your soul; and to enrich and deepen your own communion with Christ in the Bible’s songbook. Take up and feed.”

David Mathis, Executive Editor and Senior Teacher, Desiring God; Pastor, Cities Church, Saint Paul, Minnesota; author, *Habits of Grace*

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150 Daily Devotions through the Psalms

Dane Ortlund

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INTRODUCTION

The Psalms are unlike any other portion of Scripture. This is the one book of the Bible written to God. We are taught in many other places in Scripture how to pray. Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:5–15). Paul tells us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). But the Psalms are themselves prayers.

In this way the Psalms are uniquely suited to foster communion with God. The Psalms give voice to our hearts. The wide range of human feeling is here given concrete expression. We are given language to address God with thanks and praise, but also with our feelings of desolation or despair or overwhelming guilt because of our sin.

And through it all we see the Savior walking through the Psalms. He is the one who embodies and fulfills all that we find in this book. He gives us supreme reason to give thanks and praise to God (Ps. 107:1). He is the one who experienced true desolation and despair, enduring separation from God so that his people never will (Ps. 22:1–2). Jesus rinses us clean through his atoning work and assures us that he has wiped away all the guilt of our sin.

These profound and precious truths have led to the creation of *In the Lord I Take Refuge*. The purpose of this book is to foster communion with God amid all the ups and downs of daily life in this fallen world. The devotional content is meant to facilitate fellowship with God in the words of the Psalms. The devotionals are therefore intended not to replace deep engagement with the Psalms but rather to help the reader move deeply into this book of the Bible—and thereby to move deeply into communion with the triune God. Whether one reads through this volume straight

through, day by day, or instead opens it in a less programmatic manner, the devotionals will consistently draw the reader's eye back to the words of the Psalms themselves, leading to reflection and prayer.

May you find consolation and comfort, assurance and grace, and indeed the very Savior himself as you ponder God and his presence in your life through *In the Lord I Take Refuge*.

BOOK ONE

PSALM 1

- 1 Blessed is the man
 who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
 nor stands in the way of sinners,
 nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
- 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
 and on his law he meditates day and night.
- 3 He is like a tree
 planted by streams of water
 that yields its fruit in its season,
 and its leaf does not wither.
 In all that he does, he prospers.
- 4 The wicked are not so,
 but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
 nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
- 6 for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
 but the way of the wicked will perish.



The first psalm serves as the gateway to the entire book of Psalms, stressing that those who would worship God genuinely must embrace his Law (or Torah)—that is, his covenant instruction founded on his redeeming grace. This psalm addresses topics found also in the Bible’s wisdom literature and makes them

the subject of song. When we joyfully sing this psalm, its values become ours. We are changed.

In a sustained contrast, Psalm 1 reminds us that in the end there are only two ways to live. And whatever else happens in our lives today, the crucial, bottom-line question is: which of the two ways described in this psalm will we embrace? Beneath the never-ending list of “to do’s” clamoring for our attention lies the fundamental choice to receive instruction and influence either from God or from fools. Will we listen to the voice of life or to the voices of death? Will we breathe in God’s life-giving instruction, sinking deep roots (v. 3), or will we breathe in the empty instruction of those who “will not stand in the judgment” (v. 5)? Will the trials still to come in our lives prove us to be deep-rooted trees, incapable of being blown over, or will they show us to be chaff, blown away by the slightest breeze?

Happily, this psalm and its two ways to live are not a choice between stoic obedience or gleeful disobedience. The first word of the psalm makes clear that true, solid happiness—what the Bible calls “blessedness”—is found in God and his Word. Verse 2 reiterates—“His *delight* is in the law of the LORD.” Nothing can compare with the blessedness—the fruitfulness, the flourishing, the prospering, the delightfulness, of a life saturated with the Word of God.

Walk with God. Soak in his Word. Take his yoke upon you (cf. Matt. 11:29). You will be blessed—truly happy, with a happiness the winds of trial cannot blow away.

PSALM 2

- 1 Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,
- 3 “Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us.”
- 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.
- 5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,
- 6 “As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill.”
- 7 I will tell of the decree:
The LORD said to me, “You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.
- 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.
- 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”
- 10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.
- 11 Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the Son,

lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.



When we as the people of God sing Psalm 2, we remind ourselves of how God made David and his descendants to be kings, tasked with carrying out God's redemptive purposes in the world. In the face of overwhelming opposition, this psalm exults in the promises made to the Davidic king at his coronation. With its prospect of a worldwide rule for the house of David, this psalm also looks to the future, when David's ultimate heir, the Messiah, would indeed accomplish this.

With the coming of the Messiah, this psalm's triumphant portrait of the Davidic throne takes on heightened significance and finds its ultimate meaning. Believers today are the heirs of this psalm, and its promises come to rest on the worldwide church and its faith in the true and final Davidic heir, Jesus. Those who take refuge in him have found the only truly safe place in this broken world. Those who persist in resisting God and his rule, even if they are powerful "rulers of the earth," will be finally defied and justly destroyed.

Despite whatever tumults rock our lives today, David's greatest son, Jesus himself, has been installed as the ruler of the world. One day this kingship will break open in universal acknowledgment and the universal execution of perfect justice. For now, we can go forth in the glad assurance that in Jesus we will one day leave behind forever the futility of the present. Every injustice in our lives will be undone.

Take heart. We are on the right side.