

God in the Psalms: The Supreme Ruler of the Universe

MAIN IDEAS

- God speaks with power and authority.
- God's Word creates with power.
- God rules with supreme authority over everyone and everything.
- Those who see God's greatness and worth respond with worship, praise, submission, and trust.

KEY VERSE

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.
—Psalm 90:2

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Psalm 29:3-5a, 7-8a, 9-10
- 2) Psalm 33:6-9, 9-15
- 3) Psalm 103:19
- 4) Psalm 33:16-17, 1-5, 18-22
- 5) Psalm 90:2

CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Storm 1-2 (1A-1B)
- Psalm 33:9-15—Slides 1-4 (1C-1F)
- Psalm 33:16-17 (1G)
- Overview for Parents (one per student)
- Parent Memo for Lesson 1 (one per student)
- Bible Study Guide (one per student)

OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- For Each Student:
 - › Blue and red colored pencils
 - › Optional: Pencil sharpener
 - › Optional: Short ruler
 - › Regular graphite pencil
- 2 pieces of bread and a slice of bologna or other lunch meat
- Optional: A short video of a spectacular storm and equipment to show it to the class (see Teacher Preparation)

TEACHER PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- Instructions are provided for marking Scripture text as your students learn some of the basics of inductive Bible study. These instructions assume the use of both colored and regular graphite pencils. If you have only regular graphite pencils, you will find alternate instructions in (parentheses).
- **Bible Study Guide**—Print this one-page guide for your students, and encourage them to use it as they study the Bible.
- **Storm Video**—A video of a storm in progress makes a much more powerful teaching illustration than static photos of a storm and/or its aftermath. If you are able to show a video, you can easily find video footage on the internet. Otherwise, the **Storm 1-2** visuals are provided as Curriculum Resources.
- Because this is the first lesson and there are often administrative concerns at the beginning of a study, the application time for this lesson is not lengthy.

MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

- 9 balloon (for Activity 1)

Large Group Lesson

OPTIONAL: STORM VIDEO



Introduction

(Display an **optional storm video**, or the **Storm 1-2** visuals. Ask the students to try to remember the biggest storm they were ever in or ever saw on film. If you have brief film footage of a spectacular storm, you may want to show it. Or, ask a student to describe the biggest storm he ever witnessed. Brainstorm a list of words associated with a big storm. [ferocious, fury, loud, crash, wind, strong, powerful, fear, awe, majestic, floods...])

- Storms, like all of nature, reflect God (Psalm 19:1-3; Romans 1:20).
- Storms are (in a way) the *voice of God* proclaiming who He is to us.

.....
(Read the following verses.)

Psalm 29:3-5a, 7-8a, 9-10—The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over many waters. ⁴The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. ⁵The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars... ⁷The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire. ⁸The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness... ⁹The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth and strips the forests bare, and in his temple all cry, "Glory!" ¹⁰The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever.

❓ *What words would you use to describe the voice of God?* [thunderous, powerful, majestic, authoritative]

- God is not silent. *Our God speaks!* And when He speaks, He speaks with power and authority.

(Ask students to turn to Lesson 1 in the **Student Notebook** and write on the first line in red capital (capital) letters the words: GOD SPEAKS.)

Let's look at what happens when God speaks.

(Have the students turn in their Bibles to Psalm 33:6-9, and ask a student to read the passage.)

Psalm 33:6-9—By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. ⁷He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses. ⁸Let all the earth fear the LORD;

let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! ⁹For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

- ❓ *What does this passage tell you about the Word of the Lord? [God’s Word created the world; God just spoke creation into existence]*
- ❓ *Do you know any other place in Scripture that would confirm that God spoke the world into existence? [Genesis 1—And God said, “Let there be…”]*

(Ask the students to write the word “GOD CREATES” in red capital (capital) letters in the top half of the first box on the Student Notebook page.)

- God’s Word is associated with *power*. He spoke and the world came into being. God’s Word *creates*.
- Hebrews 1:3 tells us that Jesus “upholds the universe”—sustains it, or keeps it running—by the “word of his power.”

(Direct the students to write the word “power” in red small (small) letters in the lower half of the box with the word “GOD CREATES.”)

Illustration.....

BREAD AND MEAT (Display the **bread and meat**.)

A sandwich usually consists of two pieces of bread and some kind of filling. The bread goes on the top and the bottom, and the filling goes in the middle.

(Demonstrate.)

We don’t put the two slices of bread together and the meat on top.

(Demonstrate.)

We put the meat in between the bread slices.

(Demonstrate.)

We SANDWICH it between the slices of bread.

In this psalm, we are going to look at a “sandwich” as well. We are going to look at the words and action of God as the two slices of bread, and the words and actions of man as the meat or filling between the slices.

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God in the Psalms: The Supreme Ruler of the Universe

PSALM 33:9-15
 For he looks and all came to him, he commanded, and it stood firm. ¹⁰The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. ¹¹The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations. ¹²Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage! ¹³The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; ¹⁴from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth; ¹⁵he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds.

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(Refer the students to Psalm 33:6-9 and 10-15 in the Student Notebook. Ask them to underline the comments about God’s Word in Psalm 33:9 and 11 in red (double underline). Then display the **Psalm 33:9-15—Slide 1** visual.

(Have the students underline the comments about man’s words in Psalm 33:10 in blue (single underline.) Then display the **Psalm 33:9-15—Slides 2** visual.)

Psalm 33:9-15—For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. ¹⁰The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. ¹¹The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations. ¹²**Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!** ¹³**The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man;** ¹⁴**from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth,** ¹⁵**he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds.**

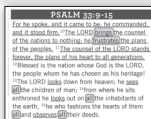
- ❓ *What do we see about God’s words and actions in verses 9 and 11?* [He speaks and it is accomplished; God’s words come to fulfillment; everything God plans happens—always, for all time; His words come with authority]
- ❓ *What do we see about the words and actions of man in verse 10?* [man’s words are not always carried out, they aren’t always trustworthy; his plans don’t always succeed]
- ❓ *What does this tell you about God?* [He is totally in charge of all things; He is unshakable, and He rules supreme; He is trustworthy]
- ❓ *What does man’s inability to fulfill his words and control his actions tell you about man?* [he is weak and insufficient]

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 For he looks and all came to him, he commanded, and it stood firm. ¹⁰The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. ¹¹The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations. ¹²Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage! ¹³The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; ¹⁴from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth; ¹⁵he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds.

(Ask the students to circle in red (circle) God’s actions in verse 10—“The LORD **brings** and he **frustrates**.” Then display the **Psalm 33:9-15—Slide 3** visual.)

- ❓ *What does verse 10 tell you about the relationship between God and man?* [God has sovereign control over man; man is completely subject to the work of God; God is more powerful than man, and man cannot withstand the power of God; God has authority over man]
- ❓ *After establishing the supreme rule of God over man and man’s utter dependence on God, why does the psalmist in Psalm 33:12, say: “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!”?* [if man cannot control his world but is totally subject to the control of a sovereign God, it is a really

good thing to be “on God’s side”—to belong to God and be under His care rather than under His judgment]



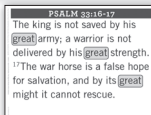
(Ask the students to underline in red (double underline) every reference to God’s vision in verses 13-15, and circle every reference to the word “all.” Then display the **Psalm 33:9-15—Slide 4** visual.)

Psalm 33:13-15—The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; ¹⁴from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, ¹⁵he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds.

- ❓ *What does the word “enthroned” tell you about God?* [He is a king; He sits on a throne and is in charge]
- ❓ *How far does God’s kingly authority extend?* [over all people and all things—no one and nothing escapes His notice or rule; everything/everyone is under God’s watchful eye]

(Ask the students to turn in their Bibles to Psalm 103:19, and have one of them read the verse.)

Psalm 103:19—The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.



(Have the students write “RULES” in red capital (capital) letters in the second box in the Student Notebook and the word “authority” in red small (small) letters under it. Then have them circle the word “great” in verses 16-17 as you display the **Psalm 33:16-17** visual.)

- ❓ *Why does the word “great” seem so absurd in verses 16-17?* [compared to God, the “great army,” “strength,” and “might” that man has at his command is so puny; it is like a silly joke to refer to anything as “great” in comparison to the power and authority of God]

(Read Psalm 33:16-17 with a sarcastic edge to the word “great.”)

Psalm 33:16-17—The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. ¹⁷The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue.

- Man is so puny, weak, and powerless before an almighty God who rules over all!
- Everything that man would take confidence in is so insignificant compared to God.

God in the Psalms: The Supreme Ruler of the Universe

- This psalm shows the absolute powerful authority and rule of God, and how utterly absurd it is to trust in anything other than God alone.

(Ask the students to write the word “RESPONSE” in blue capital (capital) letters on the second line in the Student Notebook.)

- ❓ *When man has eyes to see the greatness of God and his own utter insufficiency, what do you think is the only response man can make?* [worship: praise—God is great, I am nothing, submission—God controls all, I control nothing, and trust—God is utterly dependable, I am completely undependable]

(Ask the students to write the word “WORSHIP” in blue capital (capital) letters, and “praise,” “submission,” and “trust” in blue small (small) letters in the last box.)

God’s power and supreme rule over all things should cause worship, submission, and trust in the person who has the eyes to see His greatness and worth. This is what happened in the heart of the psalmist.

(Read the following verses together as directed in the Student Notebook.)

All:

Psalm 33:1-3—Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright. ²Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings! ³Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

Teacher:

Psalm 33:4-5—For the word of the LORD is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. ⁵He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.

Teacher:

Psalm 33:18-19—Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, ¹⁹that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine.

All:

Psalm 33:20-22—Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. ²¹For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. ²²Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in you.

(Have a time of sentence prayers, in which the students and adult leaders praise God for His greatness and worth by starting with: “God you are great because...” They may use

ideas from Psalm 33 or other verses. End the prayer time with the following verse and thank God, for He is eternal and His rule is eternal.)

Psalm 90:2—Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Small Group Application

The following are some possible discussion topics.

- What is significant about the phrase “from everlasting to everlasting you are God”? What reassurances should this give you? What fears? What determines whether you mainly react in fear or with reassuring confidence?
- Think of some situations that could be coming up in your life this week. How could an awareness of God’s supreme rule in the world affect the way you think about this situation?
- What are some of the things you trust in or are tempted to trust in other than God? Make a list with your group in the Student Notebook. Talk about how “great” each of these items actually is, and why it is foolish to trust in this over trusting in God.
- Pray for each other. Pray specifically that you would see the greatness and worth of God and respond with worship: praise, submission, and trust.

Optional Activity

If time allows, you could do the following optional activity:

1. Pass out nine balloons and have the students blow them up, and tie the ends. Have the students throw the balloons into the air, with one student trying to keep all the balloons in the air once they have been released. When a balloon hits the floor, have another student make a try until you run out of time. Relate this to the magnificence of God in sustaining the entire universe at all times. Then, read the testimony to God’s greatness from “The Odd Planet” in the Student Notebook.

Send Home

- Overview for Parents (one per student)
- Parent Memo for Lesson 1 (one per student)



Photo courtesy of the NOAA National Weather Service
Photographer: Brent Koops



Photo courtesy of the U.S. Air Force
Photographer: Sgt. Roberta A. Thompson

PSALM 33:9-15

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¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!
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PSALM 33:16-17

The king is not saved by his
great army; a warrior is not
delivered by his great strength.
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for salvation, and by its great
might it cannot rescue.

God in the Psalms: The Supreme Ruler of the Universe

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Psalm 33:6-9—By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. ⁷He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses. ⁸Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! ⁹For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

Psalm 33:10-15—The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. ¹¹The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations. ¹²Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage! ¹³The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; ¹⁴from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, ¹⁵he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds.

**The LORD has established his throne in the heavens,
and his kingdom rules over all.—Psalm 103:19**

Psalm 33:16-17—The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. ¹⁷The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue.

Psalm 33:1-3—ALL: Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright. ²Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings! ³Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

Psalm 33:4-5—TEACHER: For the word of the LORD is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. ⁵He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.

Psalm 33:18-19—TEACHER: Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, ¹⁹that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine.

Psalm 33:20-22—ALL: Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. ²¹For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. ²²Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in you.

**Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and
the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.—Psalm 90:2**

God speaks with power and authority. **God sees** all men and particularly those who fear Him.

Man sees the greatness of God and the weakness of man. The righteous man speaks in praise to God.

What we trust in or are tempted to trust in other than God:

The Odd Planet

by Larry Richards

Earth is not a large planet. Yet its size is exact and essential. If it were too small, Earth's weakened gravity could not hold either our air or water. And thinner air would provide no protection from the 20,000 or so meteorites that rush toward Earth daily. With thinner air, temperatures would drop, and life could not exist.

If earth were twice as large, the atmosphere would be pulled closer to its surface. Everything would weigh eight times as much, and that weight could crush most living things.

If Earth were twice as far from the sun, it would receive only one-fourth the amount of heat we now receive. Living things would freeze during winters twice as long as now. If Earth were half as far from the sun, its surface would get four times the heat and would become a burning desert.

If Earth did not have a large moon revolving around it, there would be no tides in the sea. Waters of the oceans might grow stagnant, unable to provide the oxygen that fish need to live.

Any of these changes would make life on Earth impossible. Our world had to be just the way it is, placed just where it is in the solar system to be in a zone of life.

—Excerpt from “The Odd Planet,” chapter 3 of *It Couldn't Just Happen* by Larry Richards. (Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing, 1989), 27.

*Our Great God of Magnificent Perfection
created the perfect environment for life on Earth.
He is a great King over all the Earth!*

To Discuss: What does the excerpt from “The Odd Planet” tell you about God? About His concern for man? What is your response to the thoughts in this excerpt? Read and pray through the psalm below.

Clap your hands, all peoples!

Shout to God with loud songs of joy!

**²For the LORD, the Most High, is to be feared,
a great king over all the earth.**

*³He subdued peoples under us,
and nations under our feet.*

*⁴He chose our heritage for us,
the pride of Jacob whom he loves. Selah*

*⁵God has gone up with a shout,
the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.*

*⁶Sing praises to God, sing praises!
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!*

**⁷For God is the King of all the earth;
sing praises with a psalm!**

**⁸God reigns over the nations;
God sits on his holy throne.**

*⁹The princes of the peoples gather
as the people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth belong to God;
he is highly exalted!*

—Psalm 47

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Pour Out Your Heart Before Him

The psalms were written by real people with real problems who discovered that the way to true soul satisfaction comes through pouring out their hearts before God, lifting their eyes to God, and opening their mouths in praise to Him. This is the foundation for *Pour Out Your Heart Before Him: A Study for Youth on Prayer and Praise in the Psalms*.

Your child will see how the psalmists resolved the emotions of their hearts as they looked to their covenant-keeping God. Time and again God showed Himself to be a trustworthy refuge, comfort, and deliverer. Sometimes God changed the psalmist's situation; more often, as the psalmist drew near to God, God changed his perspective and heart, replacing despair and fear with hope and trust. The character of God is shown. The great redemptive themes in the

psalms are highlighted, and your son or daughter will be exposed to some simple Bible study skills as he or she walks through various psalms, practicing some of these skills weekly in the Student Notebook.

Each lesson has an accompanying Parent Memo with the main ideas, key verse, and Scripture references from the lesson, as well as suggestions for psalms to read, prayers to pray, and things to look for together.

May your son or daughter see God as the covenant-keeping Shepherd of His people.

On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God. ⁸Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us... —Psalm 62:7-8

Scope and Sequence

Lesson 1: God in the Psalms: The Supreme Ruler of the Universe

Key Verse: Psalm 90:2

God, the Creator and Supreme Ruler of the universe, is worthy of praise and trust.

Lesson 2: God in the Psalms: *Yahweh*, the Covenant-Keeping God of Israel

Key Verse: Exodus 19:5

Though God reveals Himself to all people, He made a special covenant with Israel.

Lesson 3: Israel's Rebellion and Ours

Key Verses: Psalm 14:2-3

Like Israel, which rebelled against God, we have rebellious hearts and need rescue.

Lesson 4: The Messiah: Israel's Hope and Ours

Key Verse: Psalm 118:22

Israel's hope and ours is that God extends mercy to those who repent of their rebellion, and submit to and worship the Son.

Lesson 5: You Are My God

Key Verses: Psalm 139:23-24

God has intimate knowledge of each person and desires covenant relationship with individuals.

Lesson 6: A Story on Three Levels

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 10:11

Psalms was not only Israel's worship and prayer book, but it was also written for us today who need a relationship with *Yahweh* through the Messiah.

Lesson 7: Pour Out Your Heart: Honesty

Key Verses: Psalm 62:7-8

God's children can express their feelings and thoughts to Him with complete honesty.

Lesson 8: Pour Out Your Heart: Praying the Psalms

Key Verse: Psalm 95:1

The psalms give words of praise and prayer to God and demonstrate how we should approach Him.

Lesson 9: Lift Up Your Eyes: See God

Key Verses: Psalm 121:1-2

After pouring out their hearts to God, God's children need to lift up their eyes to see who God is and what He has promised His children.

Scope and Sequence continued

- Lesson 10: Open Your Mouth: Praise God** *Key Verse: Psalm 40:10*
 God gives grace to His children, which enables them to praise Him even in difficulties.
-
- Lesson 11: From Longing to Satisfaction** *Key Verse: Psalm 63:1*
 Only the living God can bring true, lasting, life-giving satisfaction.
-
- Lesson 12: From Worry to Peace** *Key Verse: Psalm 46:10a*
 Peace and relief from worry come through trusting God and enjoying His comforting presence.
-
- Lesson 13: From Fear to Trust** *Key Verses: Psalm 56:3-4*
 Fear is defeated by trusting in the triune God, realizing that He is “for me.”
-
- Lesson 14: From Depression to Comfort** *Key Verses: Psalm 77:11-12 or Psalm 77:13-14*
 Remembering the character and work of God can lift the gloom of self-focus and relieve the emotional and spiritual tunnel vision that can lead to depression.
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- Lesson 15: From Despair to Hope** *Key Verse: Psalm 130:5*
 Confidence in God’s continued mercy and promise of deliverance turns despair to hope.
-
- Lesson 16: From Distress to Deliverance** *Key Verse: Psalm 18:2*
 God will never forsake His children but will deliver them with power.
-
- Lesson 17: From Weariness to Praise** *Key Verses: Psalm 92:1-2*
 Perseverance in praising God comes through confidence in God’s faithfulness in the future, which is based on His faithfulness in the past.
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- Lesson 18: From Brokenness to Forgiveness** *Key Verses: Psalm 32:1-2*
 God is eager to extend the blessing of forgiveness, which comes through true confession; yet He will not be patient forever.
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- Lesson 19: From Envy to Contentment** *Key Verses: Psalm 73:25-26*
 Envy of the wicked is wrong thinking, but right thinking takes the long-term view, seeing the end of a matter and eternity.
-
- Lesson 20: From Anger to Justice** *Key Verses: Psalm 9:7-8*
 God is a righteous judge, judging injustice and evil.
-
- Lesson 21: God Himself Is Judge** *Key Verse: Psalm 50:23*
 God judges hypocrisy but saves those who honor and trust Him.
-
- Lesson 22: Do Not Harden Your Heart** *Key Verses: Psalm 25:4-5*
 God invites us to worship and submit to Him and warns us that those who harden their hearts will experience painful consequences.
-
- Lesson 23: The Righteous Will Never Be Moved** *Key Verse: Psalm 112:1*
 God is abundantly generous and promises to bless those who fear Him and delight in His commandments.
-
- Lesson 24: Praise from One Generation to the Next** *Key Verse: Psalm 78:1*
 God commands one generation to teach His faithful works to the next generation, that there might be a people of genuine faith in each generation.
-
- Lesson 25: Bless the LORD—Part 1** *Key Verses: Psalm 103:1-2*
 We bless God by showing Him our appreciation for His kindness, the greatest of which is sending Jesus to rescue sinners.
-
- Lesson 26: Bless the LORD—Part 2** *Key Verses: Psalm 103:13-14*
 All creation should bless God as King, especially His children to whom He shows great compassion and to whom He extends His favor.
-
- Lesson 27: Your Testimonies Are My Delight** *Key Verse: Psalm 119:24*
 God’s Word is precious to those whose blind eyes have been opened and hard hearts softened.
-
- Lesson 28: The LORD Is My Shepherd** *Key Verse: Psalm 23:1*
 We can have a personal and trusting relationship with God through Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

God in the Psalms: The Supreme Ruler of the Universe

MAIN IDEAS

- > God speaks with power and authority.
- > God's Word creates with power.
- > God rules with supreme authority over everyone and everything.
- > Those who see God's greatness and worth respond with worship, praise, submission, and trust.

KEY VERSE

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.—Psalm 90:2

SCRIPTURE

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1) Psalm 29:3-5a, 7-8a, 9-10 | 3) Psalm 90:2 |
| 2) Psalm 33:1-22 | 4) Psalm 103:19 |

SOME PSALMS TO READ TOGETHER THIS WEEK

- > Psalm 33
- > Psalm 104
- > Psalm 50:1-12
- > Psalm 96:1-13
- > Psalm 147
- > Psalm 47

TO PRAY TOGETHER THIS WEEK

Pray that you will see God's greatness and worth this week, and that your heart would be moved to respond in worship.

TO LOOK FOR TOGETHER THIS WEEK

Look for evidences of God's supreme rule in this world and in your life.

Thoughts and Observations

PSALM 104

Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, you are very great!

You are clothed with splendor and majesty, ²covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent. ³He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters;

he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind;

⁴he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire.

⁵He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved.

⁶You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.

⁷At your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight.

⁸The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them.

⁹You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.

¹⁰You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills;

¹¹they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

¹²Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell; they sing among the branches.

¹³From your lofty abode you water the mountains;

the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.

¹⁴You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth ¹⁵and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart.

¹⁶The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.

¹⁷In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees.

¹⁸The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers.

¹⁹He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting.

²⁰You make darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep about.

²¹The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.

²²When the sun rises, they steal away and lie down in their dens.

²³Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening.

²⁴**O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all;**

the earth is full of your creatures.

²⁵Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great.

²⁶There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it.

²⁷These all look to you, to give them their food in due season.

²⁸When you give it to them, they gather it up;

when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

²⁹When you hide your face, they are dismayed;

when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

³⁰When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.

³¹May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works,

³²who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke!

³³I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

³⁴May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD.

³⁵Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more!

Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD!

Pour Out Your Heart: Praying the Psalms

MAIN IDEAS

- The psalms can take our feelings and put them into words for us.
- We join the people of God in praise and prayer when we sing and pray the psalms.
- We are to approach God in prayer and worship thoughtfully, taking the time to fellowship with Him.
- We are to approach God through Jesus.
- We are to approach God in purity.
- We are to approach God seeking Him, rather than what He can give or do for us.

KEY VERSE

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!— Psalm 95:1

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Psalm 95:1-3
- 2) Psalm 85:4-7
- 3) Psalm 24:1-6, 7-10
- 4) (Psalm 66:1-7)

CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Psalm 24:1-6—Slides 1-2 (8A-8B)
- Parent Memo for Lesson 8 (one per student)

OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Whiteboard and markers
- For Each Student:
 - › Regular graphite pencil
 - › Red and blue colored pencils

TEACHER PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.

MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

- Paper to use if you plan a choral reading of Psalm 100 (for Activity 1)

Large Group Lesson

Introduction

What is your favorite Christmas carol? Why?

❓ *Why do we sing Christmas carols?* [it is tradition; they remind us of Christmas; because Christmas is a joyful time, we want to sing; they express the true meaning of Christmas]

.....

- Probably the best reason to sing them, is that they put words to what we feel in our hearts.
- Many times we feel something, but we don't quite know how to express it. But then someone else says something and we think, "Yes! That's just how I feel."
- The psalms can do this for us. They can take our feelings and put them into words for us. (Ask students to turn Lesson 8 in the **Student Notebook**, and fill in the blanks—FEELINGS, WORDS.)
- The psalms were meant to be sung by the people of God; and just like joining in singing a Christmas carol with others can increase our joy, the invitation by the psalmists to join them in their joyful praise not only gives expression to our feelings, but can even increase them.
- We join the people of God in praise and prayer when we sing and pray the psalms.

(Ask the students to turn to Psalm 95. Read together with enthusiasm verses 1-3.)

Psalm 95:1-3—Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! ²Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! ³For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

❓ *What strong words in this psalm help us express praise to God?* [joyful noise; rock of our salvation; great King]

- Praying the words of this psalm helps us express praise to God.
- There is a lot of meaning in these verses. They express joyfulness and thankfulness. They show that God is big and powerful.
- When we pray this psalm, we are joining in the praise experience of generations of God's people. For thousands of years, God's people have been praising God with these words.

❓ Can you think of other praise songs you sing that are meaningful to you? Tell us about one of these songs and how it makes you feel. Why do you like it? [answers will vary]

The psalms also give expression to other kinds of prayers for us.

(Ask a student to read Psalm 85:4-7.)

Psalm 85:4-7—Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us! ⁵Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? ⁶Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? ⁷Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation.

❓ *What is the tone of this psalm? What feelings are being expressed by the psalmist?* [despair, frustration, sorrow]

- Sometimes the psalms help us to put our feelings into words and to know how to bring those feelings to God. They show us how to pray, as well as how to praise. (Student Notebook: PRAY, PRAISE.)
- Praying the psalms can encourage our faith, as we see that other believers have had similar emotions and God has been faithful to them.
- The psalmists were thoughtful in their expressions of prayer. They did not just pray without thinking, rushing through their prayers.
- The psalmists took their time with their prayers, meditating on what they wanted to pray.
- So the psalmists spent much time with God as they gave expression to their thoughts.

Illustration.....

❓ *What are parallel lines?* [two lines running in the same direction always at equal distance from each other]

WHITEBOARD AND
MARKERS

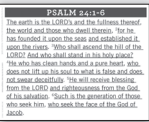
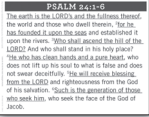
(Ask a student to draw parallel lines on the **whiteboard**.)

- The writers of the psalms sometimes wrote their songs and prayers with **parallel** ideas.
- Parallel ideas are ideas that are related to each other. One idea can MATCH the other idea—they are the same; one idea can CONTRAST the other idea—they are different; or one idea can ADD TO the other idea. (Student Notebook: MATCH, CONTRAST, ADD TO.)

Pour Out Your Heart: Praying the Psalms

Let's look at how David prayed in Psalm 24 to see what we can learn about prayer and about how to approach God.

(Direct students to Psalm 24 in the Student Notebook where they should underline each idea in blue (single line), and then underline the repetition of the idea in red (double line). Then, display the **Psalm 24:1-6—Slide 1** and **Slide 2** visuals.)



Psalm 24:1-6—The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, ²for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. ³Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? ⁴He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. ⁵He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. ⁶Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

? *What is an advantage of stating an idea, and then restating it either as the same idea, a contrasting idea, or adding to the meaning of the idea? [it makes you think about what you are saying; it makes you meditate on your thoughts; it makes you take your time when you pray; it helps you clarify your thoughts; it gives a stronger expression of your thought]*

(Ask students to fill out the first way to approach God on the first line in the Student Notebook: THOUGHTFULLY—TAKING OUR TIME.)

- We will never know God well if we do not spend time with Him. If we rush through reading the Word, worshipping Him, and praying, we will not develop a close relationship with Him. Just like human relationships take time in order for us to know each other well, it takes time for us to know God well.
- ?** *Psalm 24 asks a question two ways and then answers it. What can you learn about how to approach God from this question and answer? [we must approach God with clean hands and a pure heart; our actions (hands), and our motives and desires (heart) must be right; we must approach God through Christ and His purifying work]*
 - When we approach God in prayer or in worship, our actions, words, and heart attitude must be pure. In other words, the only way we can stand before a holy God is through trusting in God and in His provision of Christ alone to make us clean—confessing and forsaking our sin.

(Ask students to write IN PURITY on the second line.)

? *In a roundabout way, David gives us another qualification for approaching God in verse 6. How does he tell us to approach God in verse 6? [seeking God; expectantly and unselfishly]*

- When we come to God in worship or in prayer, we should be seeking Him. We don't come looking for our own selfish self-interests, but to know Him better, to love Him, and to adore Him. We come to Him to know Him better, not just to give Him a list of our requests to fulfill.

(Ask students to write SEEKING GOD on the third line.)

- The reward for seeking God is God Himself, His presence. The one who truly seeks God, finds God. The one who desires to be with God finds joy in God's presence, and the more time he spends with God, the more like God he becomes.
- Psalm 24 refers to a triumphal entry into Jerusalem—perhaps when David returned with the ark of the covenant. This victorious entrance to Jerusalem is accompanied by joyful singing.

(Ask the students to read together, with the boys reading the statements and the girls reading the questions.)

Psalm 24:7-10—Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. ⁸Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle! ⁹Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. ¹⁰Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory!

Can you feel the joy and excitement David felt in these words? He knows God as the King of glory! He knows God as victorious in battle—the LORD of hosts. David wants to know His God, and he wants us to know His God.

In the psalms, we find all human emotions honestly expressed before God. Reading, singing, and praying the words of the psalms can stir our hearts if we know God and truly want to seek Him.

Small Group Application

The following are some possible discussion topics.

- *What is one of your favorite psalms? Why do you like this psalm so much?*
- *Have you ever prayed a psalm? If so, what was helpful about using the psalm to help you pray?*
- *Is it hard for you to take time in prayer? Why or why not? What does this tell you? Do you think you seek God, or do you tend to seek what God can do for you or give you? Why is this such a problem for us? What can you do to change this?*
- *Do you ever write out your prayers? Why would this be helpful?*

Pour Out Your Heart: Praying the Psalms

- End your time by praying Psalm 66:1-7. (This psalm can be a springboard for your prayer.)

Optional Activities

If time allows, you could do the following optional activities:

1. Practice different ways of reading Psalm 100 as a choral reading. For example: You may want to read it with a leader and the group echoing each line; or you could have two groups taking alternate lines; or you may write a line to mirror or contrast, or add to the first line, and then read your new psalm (e.g., Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Sing to God, all nations of peoples!)
2. Then complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 8.

Send Home

- Parent Memo for Lesson 8 (one per student)

PSALM 24:1-6

The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein, ²for he
has founded it upon the seas and established it
upon the rivers. ³Who shall ascend the hill of the
LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?

⁴He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who
does not lift up his soul to what is false and does
not swear deceitfully. ⁵He will receive blessing
from the LORD and righteousness from the God
of his salvation. ⁶Such is the generation of those
who seek him, who seek the face of the God of
Jacob.

PSALM 24:1-6

The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, ²for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. ³Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?

⁴He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. ⁵He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. ⁶Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

Pour Out Your Heart: Praying the Psalms

The psalms can take our _____ and put them into _____.

The psalms show us how to _____ and how to _____.

Parallel Ideas

One idea can _____ the other idea.

One idea can _____ the other idea.

One idea can _____ the other idea.

Psalm 24:1-6—

The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,

²for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

³Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?

⁴He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.

⁵He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

⁶Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

HOW TO APPROACH GOD:

Psalm 24:7-10—

Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

⁸Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!

⁹Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

¹⁰Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory! Selah

Just like the words of the psalms encourage our faith, we can encourage others with our words.

Below each letter, write a symbol (e.g., A = ★). Then write a short message of encouragement using your code. After you write your coded message, swap books with someone else and decode each other's messages, writing the decoded message in the box.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Your Message:

Decoded Message:

Pour Out Your Heart: Praying the Psalms

MAIN IDEAS

- > The psalms can take our feelings and put them into words for us.
- > We join the people of God in praise and prayer when we sing and pray the psalms.
- > We are to approach God in prayer and worship thoughtfully, taking the time to fellowship with Him.
- > We are to approach God through Jesus.
- > We are to approach God in purity.
- > We are to approach God seeking Him, rather than what He can give or do for us.

KEY VERSE

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!—Psalm 95:1

SCRIPTURE

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1) Psalm 24:1-10 | 3) Psalm 85:4-7 |
| 2) Psalm 66:1-7 | 4) Psalm 95:1-3 |

SOME PSALMS TO READ TOGETHER THIS WEEK

- > Psalm 24
- > Psalm 66
- > Psalm 85

TO PRAY TOGETHER THIS WEEK

Pray some of the psalms this week. Try to use them as a starting point for your own thoughts.

TO LOOK FOR TOGETHER THIS WEEK

Note the content of your prayers. How much do they reflect God's heart and a desire to know Him better, and how much do they reflect your own self-centered desires?

Thoughts and Observations

The psalms were Israel's song book and prayer book.
They were meant to be sung by a group of people.
Write the words to a favorite worship song or hymn below.
Then turn this song into a prayer.

