

FOCUS

PSALM 22:3

Living at the point of praise leads to rich discoveries. We see things differently when we give Christ his rightful place in our lives.

Remember a moment when God's creation overwhelmed you. Praise him!

*Psalm 23***The Shepherd's Psalm**

A psalm of David.

- ¹ The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.^a
- ² He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside still waters;
- ³ He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,^b
I fear no evil,
For
You are with me;
Your rod and your staff, they comfort me;
- ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil—my cup overflows.
- ⁶ Surely goodness and lovingkindness will pursue me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

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PSALM 23:1–6

There is hardly a more beautiful and poetic biblical passage than Psalm 23. It is so familiar to us, it would be easy to overlook the depth of what is communicated. Submerge yourself in these Scriptures using these steps:

View – Read the Scripture slowly and intentionally.

Value – Think of the faithful who have been comforted by these very words in the past three thousand years. Reflect on the meaning of each and every phrase.

Validate – Confirm the words of the psalmist by praying them back to God.

Vow – Commit to live in gratitude as expressed by these verses.

a Or "I cannot want."

b Or "the darkest valley" or "the deep ravine."

He Is the King of Glory

A psalm of David.

- ¹ The earth is the LORD's and all it contains;
The world *is the Lord's* and those who live on it,
² For he founded it upon the seas
And established it upon the rivers.
- ³ Who will ascend the mount of the LORD?
Who will stand in his holy place?
⁴ Those who have clean hands and a pure heart;
Those who do not lift up their souls to idols^a or swear deceitfully;
⁵ They will receive a blessing from the LORD, righteousness from the God of
their salvation.
- ⁶ Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O *God of Jacob*.
Selah
- ⁷ Lift up your heads, O you gates;
Be lifted up, you ancient doors,
That the King of glory may come in.
- ⁸ Who is this King of glory?
The LORD—strong and mighty.
The LORD—mighty in battle.
- ⁹ Lift up your heads, O you gates;
Lift them up, you ancient doors,
That the King of glory may come in.
- ¹⁰ Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of Armies,
He is the King of glory.
- Selah

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PSALM 24:1–6

The God who spoke the sky and sun into being also breathed the written Word. In both arenas, his Word in action sets off an echo. The heavens echo his power (the earth and all it contains). Biblical truths echo in people's lives (clean hands and a pure heart). What echoes of God's Word do others hear in you?

a Literally, "to what is false" or "to what is empty."

Psalm 25

A Prayer for Pardon

A psalm of David.

- ¹ To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul;^a
² O my God, I trust in you.
Do not let me be put to shame;
Do not let my enemies triumph over me.
³ Indeed, no one who waits on you will be put to shame,
But those who act treacherously without cause will be ashamed.
- ⁴ O LORD,
Show me your ways,
Teach me your paths,
⁵ Guide me in your truth, and
Teach me,
Because you are the God of my salvation
And I wait all day long for you.
- ⁶ Remember, O LORD, your compassion and your lovingkindness,
For they have existed forever.^b
⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
Remember me according to your lovingkindness,
For the sake of your goodness, O LORD.
- ⁸ The LORD is good and upright.
Therefore he
Teaches sinners about his ways,^c
⁹ Guides the humble in justice, and teaches the humble his way.
- ¹⁰ All the ways of the LORD reveal^d his lovingkindness and faithfulness^e to those who
keep his covenant and *do* what he says.^f
¹¹ O LORD, for your name's sake, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.
-
- ¹² Who are those who fear the LORD?
God will instruct them about the path^g that they should choose,
¹³ Their souls will dwell in goodness,^h and
Their descendants will inherit the land.
¹⁴ The counselⁱ of the LORD is with those who fear him,
And he makes his covenant known to them.
-

a "Lift up my soul": an idiom for "pray."

b Literally, "they are from of old."

c Or "in the way."

d Literally, "are."

e Or "and truth."

f Literally, "keep his covenant and his testimonies."

g Or "in the way."

h Or "in prosperity."

i Or "The friendship."

- 15 My eyes are always *looking* toward the LORD,
For he will free my feet from the traps of *my enemies*.
- 16 Turn to me and have mercy,
For I am lonely and afflicted;
17 The troubles of my heart are increasing.
Bring me out of my distresses,
- 18 Look upon my affliction and my trouble, and
Forgive all my sins.
- 19 Consider my enemies,
For there are many, and
They hate me violently.
- 20 Guard my soul and deliver me;
Do not let me be put to shame,
For I take refuge in you.
- 21 Let integrity and uprightness protect me,
For I wait on you.
- 22 O God, redeem Israel out of all its troubles.



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PSALM 25:12–13

Worship of God creates the basis for all learning in the Christian life. Worship is where we meet God, and he takes it from there. But how can we learn to worship rightly? The good news is that God teaches the humble his way. Solomon learned this from his father David.

The book of 2 Peter teaches, “His divine power has given us everything we need pertaining to life and godliness through knowing him who called us to his own glory and excellence” (2 Peter 1:3). Jesus himself explained this to the woman at the well: “Everyone who drinks this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks the water I will give them will never thirst again, for the water I give them will become in them a fountain of water springing up to eternal life” (John 4:13–14).

“To fear the Lord leads to life; then one can sleep contented, untouched by evil” (Proverbs 19:23). Conversely, forgetting our place and usurping God’s place leads to death, to lack of rest, to never being satisfied. A heart that does not worship meets the day undersupplied, thirsty, lonely, unwise, and joyless. But, “The fear of the LORD is a life-giving stream” (Proverbs 14:27).

Psalm 26

A Call for Vindication

A psalm of David.

- ¹ Vindicate me, O LORD,
For I have walked in personal integrity;^a
I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.
- ² Examine me, O LORD;
Test me, try my heart and mind;^b
- ³ For
Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and
I walk in your truth.^c
- ⁴ I do not sit with deceitful persons,
Nor do I associate^d with hypocrites.
- ⁵ I hate the gatherings of those who do evil, and
I do not associate with the wicked.
- ⁶ I wash my hands in innocence, and
I go about your altar, O LORD,
- ⁷ To proclaim *your glory* with a voice of thanksgiving,
To tell of all your wondrous works.
- ⁸ O LORD,
I love your house, the place where your glory dwells.
- ⁹ Do not take away my soul with sinners or my life with bloodthirsty people
- ¹⁰ Whose hands *hold* wickedness,
Whose right hands are full of bribes.
- ¹¹ (But as for me, I walk in personal integrity.^e)
Redeem me and be gracious to me.
- ¹² My foot stands on level ground.
In the congregation^f I will bless the LORD.

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PSALM 26:8

There is a danger in religious formalities—they may replace spiritual worship. This happened to the religious leaders of Jesus' day. They knew every detail of the ceremonial forms of worship, but when the intended object of their worship stood before them, they did not recognize him. They had become so intent on the methods that they missed the truth. Outward forms of worship were intended to express true, inward worship. The danger is that they will disguise inward emptiness. The Holy Spirit is the guard against empty, surface religion.

a Literally, "in my integrity."

b Literally, "my kidneys and heart," Hebrew parallelism referring to the seat of the will and thoughts.

c Or "in your faithfulness."

d Literally, "sit." And verse 5.

e Literally, "in my integrity."

f Or "the great assembly."

The Lord Is My Light and My Salvation

A psalm of David.

- ¹ The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
² When evildoers come to devour my flesh, they—my adversaries, my foes—
will stumble and fall.
³ Though an army sets up camp against me, my heart will not fear.
Though war should rise against me, even in this I am still trusting.
- ⁴ One thing I ask of the LORD;
One thing I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life
To gaze upon the beauty of the LORD,
To seek him in his temple.
- ⁵ For in the day of trouble
He will hide me in his shelter;
He will hide me under his covering, his tent;
He will lift me up upon a rock.
- ⁶ Then
My head will be lifted up above my enemies all around me,
I will offer sacrifices in his tent with shouts of joy, and
I will sing—sing praises to the LORD.
- ⁷ O LORD,
Hear when I cry aloud,^a
Be gracious to me, and
Answer me.
- ⁸ When you said, “Seek my face,” my heart said, “LORD, I will seek your face.”
⁹ Do not hide your face from me;
Do not reject^b your servant in anger,
For you have *always* been my helper.
Do not leave me or abandon me, O God of my salvation.
- ¹⁰ Though my father and my mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.
- ¹¹ O LORD,
Teach me your way;
Lead me on a level path, because my enemies *lie in wait for me*;
- ¹² Do not abandon me to the desire of my enemies,
For false witnesses breathing violence have risen against me.
- ¹³ *Where would I be* if I did not believe I’d see the goodness of the LORD in the land
of the living?

a Literally, “cry with my voice.”

b Literally, “not stretch out against,” meaning to turn someone away.

¹⁴ Wait on the LORD,
Be strong,
Be strong-hearted, and
Wait on the LORD.

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PSALM 27:1–4

To fight fear, we feed faith. To weed out worry, we cultivate our intimate relationship with the God who loves us beyond reason. Only by knowing him and deepening our understanding of him will we have firm ground on which to stand when we face our enemies' lies and say, "Of whom shall I be afraid?"

Psalm 28

The Lord Is My Strength

A *psalm* of David.

- ¹ O LORD, my rock,
I am crying out to you;
Do not turn a deaf ear to me.^a
If you are silent, I will become like those who go down into the pit.
- ² Hear the sound of my appeals^b
When I cry to you,
When I lift up my hands toward your holy sanctuary.^c
- ³ Do not drag me away with the wicked, with the workers of iniquity,
Who speak peace to their neighbors when evil is in their hearts.
- ⁴ Repay them according to their deeds, *according to* the evil of their endeavors;
Repay them for the work of their hands;
Pay them back what they deserve,
- ⁵ Because they have no regard for your works, LORD, or the things you have made.^d

He will tear them down and not build them up *again*.

- ⁶ Blessed be the LORD,
Because he has heard my cry for mercy.
- ⁷ The LORD is my strength and my shield;
My heart trusts him, and he helps me.^e
My heart exults greatly, thanking him with songs.
- ⁸ The LORD is the strength of his people,^f the saving refuge of his anointed.

a Literally, "be deaf to me."

b Literally, "my supplications."

c Or "your Most Holy Place," the innermost room of the tabernacle, where God dwelled.

d Literally, "or the works of his hands."

e Literally, "and I am helped."

f Literally, "is their strength."

⁹ Lord,
Save your people;
Bless your inheritance;
Be their shepherd and carry them forever.

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PSALM 28:6–9

Often in the midst of revival, people are reunited with God. After words of despair, the psalmist appears to engage in a revival of sorts. On some days even the most faithful child of God needs reviving and restoring. Leaders are not immune to this. Do you need revival? Ask God for it.

Psalms 29

The Voice of the Lord

A psalm of David.

- ¹ Ascribe to the LORD, O you heavenly beings,
Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength;
² Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.
- ³ The voice of the LORD
Is over the waters.
The God of glory thunders;
The LORD is over many waters.
- ⁴ The voice of the LORD
Is powerful,
Is full of majesty, and
⁵ Breaks the cedars.
The LORD shatters the cedars of Lebanon;
⁶ He makes *the cedars of Lebanon appear to leap* like a calf;^a
Even Mount Hermon^b *seems to leap* like a young wild ox.^c
- ⁷ The voice of the LORD
Strikes with flames of fire and
⁸ Shakes the wilderness.
The LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.^d
- ⁹ The voice of the LORD
Terrifies^e the deer and
Strips the forest bare.
In his temple everyone cries, “Glory!”

a This line and the next refer to God's power as the trees are tossed about, creating a scene that from a distance looks like animals leaping.

b Literally, “Sirion.”

c “Young wild ox”: The Hebrew is uncertain.

d “Kadesh”: a location southwest of the Dead Sea.

e The Hebrew word *chuwł* means to writhe in pain and thus is often interpreted as “to give birth.” The emphasis here is on the awesome power of the Lord, so we render it as “Terrifies.”

- ¹⁰ The LORD sits enthroned over the floodwaters;
The LORD sits enthroned as King forever.
¹¹ The LORD gives strength to his people;
The LORD blesses his people with peace.

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PSALM 29:1

Father,

Before the sun peeks over the horizon, I will praise you. With a purposed heart, I will praise you. In painful and difficult moments, I will praise you. In spite of what I see and feel, I will praise you. Before I close my eyes, I will praise you. I declare your glory all day long. I will worship you in the splendor of holiness forever.

Psalm 30

Thanksgiving for Restoration

A psalm of David.

A song for the dedication of the temple.

- ¹ LORD, I will exalt you,
For you have lifted me up and have not allowed my foes to rejoice over me.
- ² LORD my God, I cried to you for help and you healed me.
- ³ LORD, you have brought my soul up from Sheol, kept me alive that I should not go down to the pit.
- ⁴ O saints of his,
Sing praises to the LORD;
Praise his holy name.
- ⁵ For his anger lasts *only* a moment, but his favor lasts for a lifetime;
Weeping may last for a night, but joy comes with the morning.
- ⁶ When I was prospering, I said, "I will never be shaken."
- ⁷ By your favor, LORD, you made my mountain stand firm;
Then you hid your face, and I was dismayed.
- ⁸ So
I cried out to you, LORD;
I pleaded with you, the Lord, *saying*,
- ⁹ "What do you profit from my death^a if I go down to the pit?
Will the dust praise you or proclaim your truth?^b
- ¹⁰ Hear me, LORD, and have mercy upon me;
O LORD, be my helper."

^a Literally, "profit in my blood."

^b Or "your faithfulness."

¹¹ *Then*

You turned my mourning into dancing;
You took off my sackcloth and clothed^a me with gladness,
¹² Such that my soul sings praises to you and cannot be silent.

O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever!

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PSALM 30:1–12

Quite often, you need to get alone with God and recount all the great things he has done for you. Maybe it was a time of grief he saw you through. You weren't sure why you were going through it at the time. But he has since used that experience, so you could help someone else.

Maybe you gave in to a temptation and God lifted you from the pit and set your feet once again on solid ground. Maybe you're battling addiction, trying to get through just one more day. Look to the Savior and praise him for the strength to win the battle one more time. Sing praises to him and don't be silent. Praise him for the good times and the bad he has seen you through.

Psalms 31

A Prayer of Trust in God

A psalm of David.

To the music director.

¹ LORD, I take refuge in you.

Let me never be put to shame;
Deliver me in your righteousness;

² Listen^b to me;

Rescue me quickly;
Be my strong rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me.

³ You are my rock and my fortress;

Therefore, for your name's sake,

Lead me;

Guide me;

⁴ Pull me out of the net they have secretly laid for me,

For you are my refuge.

⁵ Into your hands I commit my spirit,

For you have redeemed me,^c O LORD, faithful God.

⁶ I hate those who pay regard to worthless idols,

But I trust in the LORD.

⁷ I will be glad and rejoice in your lovingkindness,

For you

a Literally, "you loosened my sackcloth and girded."

b Literally, "Incline your ear."

c Or "you redeem me."