

Christopher Ash
with Alison Mitchell

Psalms

Singing with Jesus



 7-Session Bible Study

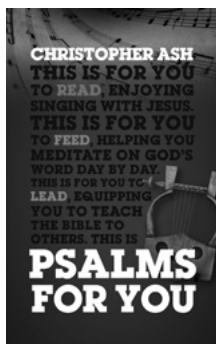
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Psalms For You

These studies are adapted from *Psalms For You*. If you are reading *Psalms For You* alongside this Good Book Guide, here is how the studies in this booklet link to the chapters of *Psalms For You*:

Study One > Ch 1	Study Five > Ch 10
Study Two > Ch 3a	Study Six > Ch 11
Study Three > Ch 3b	Study Seven > Ch 16
Study Four > Ch 5	

Find out more about *Psalms For You* at:
www.thegoodbook.com/for-you

Psalms: Singing with Jesus

A Good Book Guide

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Introduction

One of the Bible writers described God's word as "a lamp for my feet, a light on my path" (Psalm 119:105, NIV). God gave us the Bible to tell us about who he is and what he wants for us. He speaks through it by his Spirit and lights our way through life.

That means that we need to look carefully at the Bible and uncover its meaning—but we also need to apply what we've discovered to our lives.

Good Book Guides are designed to help you do just that. The sessions in this book are interactive and easy to lead. They're perfect for use in groups or for personal study.

Let's take a look at what is included in each session.

Talkabout: Every session starts with an ice-breaker question, designed to get people talking around a subject that links to the Bible study.

Investigate: These questions help you explore what the passage is about.

Apply: These questions are designed to get you thinking practically: what does this Bible teaching mean for you and your church?

Explore More: These optional sections help you to go deeper or to explore another part of the Bible which connects with the main passage.

Getting Personal: These sections are a chance for personal reflection. Some groups may feel comfortable discussing these, but you may prefer to look at them quietly as individuals instead—or leave them out.

Pray: Here, you're invited to pray in the light of the truths and challenges you've seen in the study.

Each session is also designed to be easily split into two! Watch out for the **Apply** section that comes halfway through, and stop there if you haven't got time to do the whole thing in one go.

In the back of the book, you'll find a **Leader's Guide**, which provides helpful notes on every question, along with everything else that group leaders need in order to facilitate a great session and help the group uncover the riches of God's light-giving word.

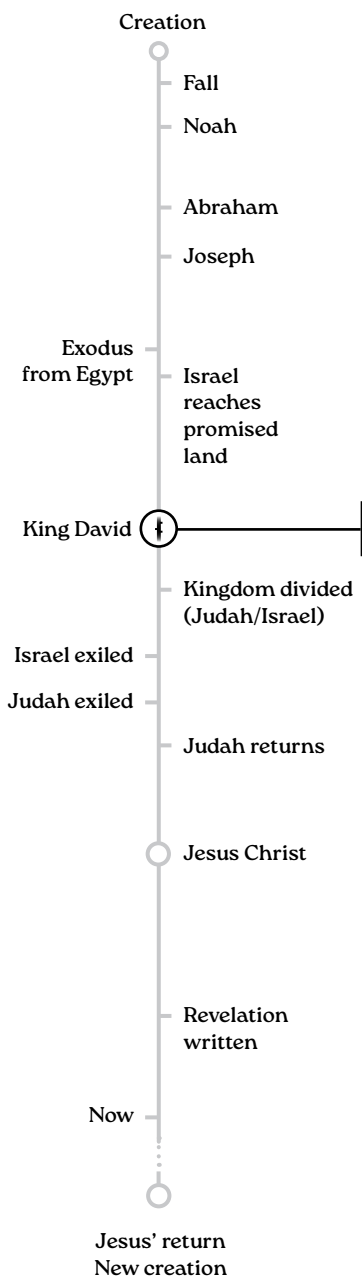
Why Study Psalms?

I want to invite you to come with me on an introductory tour of the five books of Psalms (the Psalter), to learn to pray. For this is exactly what the Psalms are in the Bible to do—to teach you and me to pray and to praise in perfect harmony with what God wants. The Psalms give a window into how Jesus learned to pray, in his fully human life; and they are how the people of Jesus are to pray as the Spirit of Jesus leads us.

In the Psalms we learn to pray corporately, with the church of Christ in every age. We learn to pray Christocentrically, with our prayers led by Jesus Christ, by whose Spirit we pray them. And we learn to pray empathetically, as we identify with the wider church and focus less on our individualistic (and often introspective) concerns. Learning to sing and pray the Psalms will be a challenging affair, an unsettling experience, and yet a discipline that transforms us into the image of God's Son, the Lord Jesus, whose own prayer life was shaped by these wonderful poems.

The Psalms are God's chosen way to engage our thinking and our feelings in a way that is passionate, thoughtful, true and authentic. They show us how to express our varied feelings; but, more than that, they reorder our disordered affections so that we feel deeper desires for what we ought to desire, more urgent aversion to that from which we need to flee, and a greater longing for the honour of God in the health of Christ's church. The Psalms form within us a richer palette of rightly directed emotions. It is not so much that the Psalms resonate with us as that they shape us so that we most deeply resonate with the God-given yearnings they so movingly express.

In many parts of the Christian church today the Psalms are the neglected treasure; many churches are like a poverty-stricken house with incalculable riches forgotten, neglected, moth-eaten and dusty in the attic. So come with me and let us bring the Psalms out and revel in the wonder they offer: a fullness and richness of relationship with God undreamt of by so many of us half-starved Christians.



King David 1040–970 BC

Of the 150 songs in the book of Psalms, 73 were written by King David. We include three of these in this Good Book Guide, along with one psalm by Moses, and others that are either unnamed or written by a group known simply as the “sons of Korah”.

1

Blessed Is the One

Psalms 1 and 2


Talkabout

1. What comes to your mind when you think about the book of Psalms?
How do you feel about studying some psalms together?

- Do you have any favourite psalms? If so, which ones and why?

Investigate

Psalms 1 and 2 are like two grand pillars, one on each side of the entrance gate into the five books of Psalms. They introduce Book 1 and head up the whole Psalter.

 **Read Psalm 1:1-6**

DICTIONARY

Blessed (v 1): happy; given good things by God.

Chaff (v 4): husks of wheat.

Righteous (v 5): right with God.

LORD (v 6): the covenant name for God.

2. What does the blessed one not do (v 1)?

- In contrast, what positively defines the blessed person (v 2)?
- And what picture of blessedness are we given in verse 3?

3. Why will those who “stand” in verse 1 “not stand” in verse 5?

- What is the deep reason why both the blessings and warnings in this psalm are true (v 6)?

4. Who is the one person who truly fits the description of Psalm 1 and deserves to inherit this blessing? How do they match this description?

Apply

5. What would it take for you to show more and more the marks of this blessed person?

- What will it look like this week to turn from the pressures of a sinful world and instead delight in the law of God?

Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

The life of Jesus, recorded for us in the Gospels, shows us that he was wholeheartedly committed to the belief that blessing is truly found only in a delightful obedience to the law of his Father. Take time to pause and meditate on the wonder of this.

Investigate

 Read Psalm 2:1-12

DICTIONARY

Anointed (v 2): chosen by God.

Decree (v 7): command.

Zion (v 6): Jerusalem.

6. What are people plotting, and why is it “in vain” (v 1)?

7. What do we learn about “the LORD” in this psalm?

8. What do we learn about God’s anointed king in verses 6-9?

- How, therefore, should we respond to him?

Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

The effect upon us, by the Spirit of Christ, of singing Psalm 2 is:

- to subdue our proud desires for autonomy (v 1-3).
- to persuade us more deeply that Jesus really is Lord (v 4-6) and nothing can change that (v 7-9).
- to move us to bow the knee to him now, in this age, before it is too late (v 10-12).

How will you respond personally to each of these three points?

Turn your answers into prayer.

9. Psalm 1 starts with a promise of blessing; Psalm 2 ends with one.

How would you sum up in one sentence, from these psalms, how to be blessed?

Explore More | OPTIONAL

Jesus Christ lived the righteousness of Psalm 1 and inherited the promises of Psalm 2. In the following verses, how does Jesus match Psalm 2?

- Acts 4:25-26 and Revelation 11:18
 - Matthew 3:17 and 17:5
 - Hebrews 1:2
 - Revelation 12:5 and 19:15
-

Apply

10. How might you use these two psalms to shape your conversations this week...

- with someone who has rejected Jesus?
- with a Christian who is struggling with sin?
- with a Christian who is facing persecution for their faith?

Pray

Jesus Christ, the righteous one, the King in David's line, is precisely the righteous King that these psalms so beautifully and powerfully portray.

Blessing is poured upon him by the Father. Blessing is to be found in him and in him alone.

Spend some time thanking and praising Jesus, the righteous King.