

Psalms of Ascents Series: “Songs for the Road” Meeting Guide

Date: July 7th & 8th

Pray

Apart from God, we can do nothing. Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion. Throughout your time together, continue asking God for help.

Discuss

Read Scripture

Read Psalm 123, 124 and 125 together. (Recommend choosing 1-2 Psalms for your CG discussion)

Bible Study

The bulk of your time will be spent discussing God’s Word together.

Remember:

- Walk through the Bible study together using the HEAR method and talk about what stuck out most to you in the passage.
- Make sure you move discussion to the application section of your study.
- Affections, beliefs, and practices: Make sure to apply the passage to all of your life.

Pray

- Take time to pray for one another and ask for His grace to apply His Word to our daily lives as pilgrims traveling to our true home.

Psalm 123 (ESV)

¹To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens!

²Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maidservant to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he has mercy upon us.

³Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt.

⁴Our soul has had more than enough of the scorn of those who are at ease, of the contempt of the proud.

Open:

- When life seems to be conspiring against you, where or what do you typically turn to for comfort? Why?

Study:

- 1) This song starts off very similarly to Psalm 121. What is the similarity? How is it different? What’s significant about the difference?

- 2) In verse 1, the psalmist refers to God as “you who are enthroned in heaven.” How does that description add to the psalmist’s plea? What does it tell us about his posture before the Lord?

James Boice calls Psalm 123 “a psalm for the eyes.” He notes that the word “eyes” occurs four times in verses 1 and 2. Each usage is accompanied by one of two phrases: “lift up” (once) or “look up” (three times). Like the author of Hebrews who exhorts us to “fix our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2),” the psalmist acknowledges that our gaze reflects the desires of our hearts.

Charles Spurgeon warns, “We must use our eyes with resolution, for they will not go upward to the Lord of themselves, but they incline to look downward, or inwards, or anywhere but to the Lord.”

- 3) Consider the following list of words that Spurgeon uses to describe how we as servants of God should look to our master. Which ones characterize how you look to God? Which ones would you like to grow in?

Reverently
Continuously
Submissively

Obediently
Expectantly
Imploringly

Attentively
Singly

- 4) Verses 3 and 4 describe the psalmist’s motivation. What is he wanting from the Lord? Why? What are others doing to the psalm writer and how does this make him feel? Can you relate to his struggle?

Consider the following quote by Eugene Peterson:

“Too often we think of religion as far-off, mysteriously run bureaucracy to which we apply for assistance when we feel the need. We go to a local branch office and direct the clerk (sometimes called a pastor) to fill out our order for God. Then we go home and wait for God to be delivered to us according to the specifications that we have set down.”

Apply:

- 5) Have you been ridiculed for your faith in Jesus? How does this make you feel? How do you think other believers who are under intense persecution for their faith in Jesus feel? How can/should we pray for them?

- 6) What is your view of God and how does it compare with the psalmist? What comparison does he make between man and God? What comparison is there between you and God?
- 7) From your answer to the above question, where does this comparison between you and God lead you? Are you convinced that God is for you? If so, why? If not, why not?
- 8) Given your current circumstances, what would total dependence upon God look like? Are there ways that we can pray for you to trust and depend on Him more for grace and help daily?

PRAY:

- Ask God for help to believe and trust that He is truly the only one “enthroned in Heaven and is for you even in the midst of trials.
- Ask God to help us share and live out the hope we have in Him with others.
- Take time to pray for other Believers who are experiencing daily ongoing persecution for their faith in Jesus.

Psalm 124 (ESV)

¹*If it has not been the LORD who was on our side—let Israel now say—*

²*if it had not been the LORD who was on our side when people rose up against us,*

³*then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their anger was kindled against us;*

⁴*then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us;*

⁵*then over us would have gone the raging waters.*

⁶*Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as prey to their teeth!*

⁷*We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped!*

⁸*Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.*

Open:

- If you are an Eagles fan, can you describe the feelings you had when they won the Super Bowl over the heavily favored New England Patriots? What made the victory sweeter to you?

Study:

- 1) Take some time list the repetition in this psalm. What does the psalmist want Israel to say (see verses 1-2a)? Why is this repetition significant?
- 2) List out the “disasters” that the psalmist uses in this song. What does each “disaster” inevitably lead to? Why would this have been a comfort to God’s people then? Why is it a comfort to God’s people now?

- 3) In verses 2b – 5, what seems to be the psalmists great concern? What could have been Israel’s fate?
- 4) From verses 2b – 5, what New Testament story did Jesus share that is similar to this?
- 5) List how God blessed and preserved Israel from verses 6-8. Describe what the dangers that Israel was kept from? What is verse 8 restating and why?

Apply:

- 6) Read Romans 8:1, 37-39 together. What do these verses mean to you and why? How does this free you to live for Jesus without fear?
- 7) Spend some time praising God for His protection, ongoing care and preservation over your life. (Take time to share some specifics with one another)

PRAY:

- Ask God for eyes to see His ongoing care for you and His people even in the midst of various trials.
- Take time to rehearse why we know that God will bring all His children safely home.

Psalm 125 (ESV)

¹*Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.*

²*As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people, from this time forth and forevermore.*

³*For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest on the land allotted to the righteous, lest the righteous stretch out their hands to do wrong.*

⁴*Do good, O LORD, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts!*

⁵*But those who turn aside to their crooked ways the LORD will lead away with evildoers! Peace be upon Israel!*

Open:

- What is your favorite song and why? (okay, maybe your top 3 - 😊)

Study:

- 1) How does the psalmist describe the Lord and those who trust in Him?
- 2) What is the state of those who trust in Him (vs. 1b)? What is the duration of the Lord’s protection for His children (vs. 2b)?
- 3) What is a “scepter” and what does it represent (see vs. 3)? What is God’s promise for the righteous? What will the righteous do and not do concerning wrong doing?

- 4) Take time to consider what is produced in God's pilgrims as they encounter trials and various temptations? (See Romans 5:3-4, James 1:12-18, James 1:2-4, Colossians 1:11)
- 5) What is the psalmist asking God to do (see vs. 4)? What does he mean by "those who are good"? What "good" do you believe the psalmist wants God to do?
- 6) What are the ways of the unrighteous? What will be their fate (see vs. 5)? Are there ways in which you are tempted to adopt the ways of the unrighteous (especially in times of trial or when you believe you've been treated unjustly)?

Apply:

- 7) What are you trusting in today for salvation? Is it the good you do or in the power and sovereign care of the Lord as you place complete trust in His only Son, Jesus?

PRAY:

- Ask God for help to trust Him more.
- Ask God for power to live in ways that are good and pleasing to Him.
- Ask God for opportunities to share your hope for preservation with others.