

The Book of Psalms



SEPTEMBER 2009 TEACHING PLANS

EMOTIONS ARE JUST PART OF BEING HUMAN. The beauty of the Book of Psalms is that as we experience the vast multitude of emotions life throws our way, we can easily find a psalmist who's been there. We all have similar struggles, joys, and hurts — people who lived thousands of years ago and those of us who are figuring things out today. Over the next few months, as we go deeper into the Book of Psalms, we'll discuss three different states of being: praising God, seeking His help in troubled times, and discovering His plan for our lives. As you study the Psalms, it is our prayer that God would begin to reveal to you the overall message of these passages: No matter which path you choose, God is the ultimate answer to life's many questions.

WHAT'S INSIDE ...

The goal of the *Collegiate* online features is to bring you a structured teaching plan with additional helps and relevant questions to equip you to lead a strong discussion-based lesson. Here's a breakdown of what's inside: *Getting Started* helps introduce the topic and get your students engaged in the lesson. *Need to Knows* highlights the main characters, historical context, and key verses of each lesson. *Explore the Bible* leads your students through the Scripture passages of the lesson, helping them understand the text, its historical and cultural context, and what it means to them today. *Apply to Life* gives you ideas for furthering the application of the Scripture, so students can take active steps to process what they're learning and how it impacts their lives. Be sure you also utilize the commentary provided (threadsmedia.com/collegiate) to help with your preparation and personal study of the lessons.

As always, we're here for you. Please send us your questions, thoughts, and suggestions. Let us know what we could do better and how these teaching plans could be even more relevant to your students and your ministry.

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WORTHY OF MY AFFECTION



THE DESIGNER OF ALL THIS BEAUTY

GETTING STARTED

Have the video, *Planet Earth*, or another nature video playing as students arrive.

- Describe a time when you remember being overwhelmed with nature.
- How does being in nature make you feel?
- What images from that experience stuck with you the most? Why?
- Why do you think God created the world to look the way it does?
- If you could ask God one question about creation, what would you ask?
- What do you feel about God and your relationship with Him when you experience nature?

DIG DEEPER

Refer to “Dig Deeper” on page 28 in the Fall issue of *Collegiate* magazine for a related quote and additional verses.

THIS WEEK YOU’LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK’S LESSON IS ON PAGE 28 OF THE FALL ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- *PLANET EARTH* OR ANOTHER NATURE VIDEO
- THE SONG “ALL CREATURES OF OUR GOD AND KING” BY DAVID CROWDER BAND, FROM THE ALBUM *CAN YOU HEAR US?*
- “HERE IS OUR KING” BY DAVID CROWDER BAND WITH COPIES OF THE LYRICS FOR THE GROUP.
- DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS *INSTRUCTION, TESTIMONY, PRECEPTS, COMMANDMENT, AND ORDINANCES*.
- PRINT PSALM 19:14 TO PASS OUT TO THE GROUP, IF YOU CHOOSE OPTION 1 IN “APPLY TO LIFE.”

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

To help young adults understand two ways God has revealed Himself and express to God a desire to please Him

FOCAL PASSAGES

PSALM 19:1-14

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the lesson on page 28 of *Collegiate* magazine.

1). SEE HIS GLORY (PSALM 19:1-6)

READ PSALM 19:1-6.

¹The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims the work of His hands. ²Day after day they pour out speech; night after night they communicate knowledge. ³There is no speech; there are no words; their voice is not heard. ⁴Their message has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the inhabited world.

In the heavens He has pitched a tent for the sun. ⁵It is like a groom coming from the bridal chamber; it rejoices like an athlete running a course. ⁶It rises from one end of the heavens and circles to their other end; nothing is hidden from its heat.

Have someone read “See His Glory” on page 28 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- What does the word “glory” mean?
- What are some other words or images you think of when you hear the word “glory”?
- What do these verses say creation does?

The creation that surrounds us reveals God to us. When we are surrounded by creation, it’s very difficult to focus on ourselves. We’re aware of our surroundings and it’s there that God reveals Himself to us. God chose to create a world that is a gift to us.

Play “Here Is Our King” by David Crowder Band. Pass out the lyrics and discuss them after the song. These words help us realize that the same powerful God who is at work in all of the magnificent creation around us is also speaking truth into our own lives.

- What did you hear in the lyrics?
- How can you be more aware of how God is speaking to you through His creation?

2). SEARCH HIS WORD (PSALM 19:7-11)

READ PSALM 19:7-11.

⁷The instruction of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise. ⁸The precepts of the LORD are right, making the heart glad; the commandment of the LORD is radiant, making the eyes light up. ⁹The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are reliable and altogether righteous. ¹⁰They are more desirable than gold—than an abundance of pure gold; and sweeter than honey—than honey dripping from the comb. ¹¹In addition, Your servant is warned by them; there is great reward in keeping them.

Have someone read “Search His Word” on page 28 of *Collegiate* magazine.

It may seem like an illogical jump in Scripture to go from talking about creation to the laws. However, just as God is revealed in creation, God’s heart is revealed in His law.

As a group, define the following words: *instruction, testimony, precepts, commandment* and *ordinances*.

- What words are used to describe Scripture?
- How does God reveal Himself in Scripture?

Scripture reveals the nature of God and tells us how to have a relationship with Him.

- How should we respond to the glory of creation?

3). SEEK HIS HEART (PSALM 19:12-14)

READ PSALM 19:12-14.

¹²Who perceives his unintentional sins? Cleanse me from my hidden faults. ¹³Moreover, keep Your servant from willful sins; do not let them rule over me. Then I will be innocent, and cleansed from blatant rebellion. ¹⁴May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to You, LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

Have someone read “Seek His Heart” on page 29 of *Collegiate* magazine.

David has seen God’s glory in nature and has studied the laws in Scripture as a response. He’s also asking that God would search him and help to make his life right before God. He desired his thoughts and words to be pleasing to God.

- What are the areas of David’s life that he is asking for God to search and reveal?
- What are examples of “unintentional sins” we read about in verse 12?
- What are examples of “hidden faults” we read about in verse 12?
- What are examples of “blatant rebellion” we read about in verse 13?
- Are any of these worse than the others?

David’s response is to eradicate all areas of sin from his life. He’s so overwhelmed with God’s revelation in nature and in Scripture that he wants God to investigate and change every part of his life, opening his eyes to sins of which he may not even be aware.



THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 30 OF THE FALL ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONGS "WE NEED EACH OTHER" BY SANCTUS REAL, FROM THE ALBUM *WE NEED EACH OTHER*, AND "PRAYING A PRAYER" BY KYLE MATTHEWS TO PLAY FOR THE CLASS AS THEY ARRIVE.
- ARTICLES ABOUT INJUSTICE. FIND ARTICLES THAT SHOW INJUSTICE IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND AROUND THE WORLD. SOME ARTICLES MIGHT INCLUDE THOSE ABOUT IMPOVERISHED COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD, POLITICAL INJUSTICE SHOWN TO SOMEONE DURING A TRIAL, ECONOMIC DISCREPANCIES IN A COMMUNITY, OR EVEN AN AREA THAT IS UNDERGOING DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE OF A WEATHER TRAGEDY.
- ARTICLES OF CELEBRITIES WHO HAVE ENGAGED IN FIGHTING SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES.
- INDEX CARDS
- A STORY OF LOTTIE MOON FOUND ON *WIKIPEDIA.ORG*.

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

To help young adults learn why they can be confident that God ultimately will make right every wrong and decide how they will respond to injustice

FOCAL PASSAGES

PSALM 9:1-16

LIFE ... IS FAIR?

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "We Need Each Other" by Sanctus Real playing in the background as students arrive.

OPTION 1: Pass out the articles about celebrities who have engaged in fighting social justice issues, and then use the questions to discuss.

OPTION 2: Divide the group into smaller groups. Give them the articles about injustice and have them discuss in their smaller groups.

- What examples of injustice were found in your article?
- Is there any group that's responding positively?
- What should the Christian response be to this injustice?

Anyone who has experienced loss, betrayal, or injustice knows life is not fair. Most people have had some experience with life's unfairness. Injustice exists, but how do we deal with it as Christians?

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 30 in the Fall issue of *Collegiate* magazine for stats, related verses, and further study ideas.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the lesson on page 30 of *Collegiate* magazine.

1). HE IS IN CONTROL (PSALM 9:1-8)

READ PSALM 9:1-8.

¹I will thank the LORD with all my heart; I will declare all Your wonderful works. ²I will rejoice and boast about You; I will sing about Your name, Most High.

³When my enemies retreat, they stumble and perish before You. ⁴For You have upheld my just cause; You are seated on Your throne as a righteous judge. ⁵You have rebuked the nations: You have destroyed the wicked; You have erased their name forever and ever. ⁶The enemy has come to eternal ruin; You have uprooted the cities, and the very memory of them has perished.

⁷But the LORD sits enthroned forever; He has established His throne for judgment. ⁸He judges the world with righteousness; He executes judgment on the peoples with fairness.

Have someone read “He Is in Control” on page 30 of *Collegiate* magazine.

In verse 2, “Most High” literally translates to *Elyon* which is a name for God expressing God’s transcendence and sovereignty. God’s transcendence and sovereignty is something we cannot begin to understand. David begins this psalm by praising God for ruling justly, helping his own causes.

- Has there been a time when you’ve felt God upheld justice for you or someone you know?
- How can we believe God works out justice without holding a mentality that “God is on our side”?

2). HE DOES NOT FORGET (PSALM 9:9-12)

READ PSALM 9:9-12.

⁹The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. ¹⁰Those who know Your name trust in You because You have not abandoned those who seek You, LORD.

¹¹Sing to the LORD, who dwells in Zion; proclaim His deeds among the peoples. ¹²For the One who seeks an accounting for bloodshed remembers them; He does not forget the cry of the afflicted.

Have someone read “He Does Not Forget” on page 30 of *Collegiate* magazine.

The “afflicted” in verse 12 are victims of oppression and injustice. God will require a reckoning for injustices committed against other people. He is aware of the afflictions of His people and acts on their behalf.

- What are some afflictions that plague our world?
- What would you say to someone who is suffering an injustice and questions where is God?
- What are injustices that you help to perpetuate, whether intentionally or unintentionally?
- How can you make a difference for the oppressed and those who experience injustices?

3). HE WILL RESCUE (PSALM 9:13-16)

READ PSALM 9:13-16.

¹³Be gracious to me, LORD; consider my affliction at the hands of those who hate me. Lift me up from the gates of death, ¹⁴so that I may declare all Your praises. I will rejoice in Your salvation within the gates of Daughter Zion.

¹⁵The nations have fallen into the pit they made; their foot is caught in the net they have concealed. ¹⁶The LORD has revealed Himself; He has executed justice, striking down the wicked by the work of their hands.

Have someone read “He Will Rescue” on page 31 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- From these Scriptures, is there anything more about God that you would say to someone suffering an injustice?
 - How can we know God is protecting us and will fulfill His promises to us?
 - How different would our lives look if we really believed that God will bring justice on our behalf?
 - What should your response be to these injustices based on your faith and relationship with God?
- Romans 8:28 says, “We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose.”
- What does it mean for you that God is on your side, working all things for good?
 - How does that change your relationship with Him?
 - How does that change the way you live your life?
 - Does deliverance always come in the ways that you want?
 - What does it mean for God to also be on the side of people who you may not like?



THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 32 OF THE FALL ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONGS "GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS" BY CHRIS RICE, FROM THE ALBUM *PEACE LIKE A RIVER* AND "GOD SPEAKING" BY MANDISA.
- A TV CLIP OR SONG THAT DEALS WITH UNFAITHFULNESS.
- CONSTRUCTION PAPER AND MARKERS FOR GROUP MEMBERS TO DRAW ON.
- COPIES OF A PAGE WITH THE WORDS "MY NEW COVENANT WITH GOD" AT THE TOP FOR EACH GROUP MEMBER.

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

To help young adults discover ways God demonstrates His faithfulness and express appreciation for specific ways God has been faithful to them

FOCAL PASSAGES

PSALM 105:7-11; PSALM 106:6-7,19-21,40-45

GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" by Chris Rice playing in the background as students arrive.

OPTION 1: Divide up into small groups as people arrive, and give each group a large piece of poster board or butcher paper. Ask half of the group to draw a real "fan." This "fan" could be a fan of a sports team, singer, actor, etc. Ask them to label their picture showing what makes this person a real fan. Ask the other group to draw a "fair-weather fan" and label them as well. Have the groups share their pictures and post them around the room.

Fair-weather fans have trouble standing by their teams/ idols when they're going through difficult times. When the team or the individual isn't giving the results the fan wants, the fan loses faith easily.

- Are there fair-weather fans of God?
- What makes them fair-weather fans?
- How do real fans of God live?

OPTION 2: Show a TV clip or play a song that deals with a relationship in which someone has been unfaithful.

- What does it feel like when someone is unfaithful in a relationship?
- Do you struggle to believe that God can be faithful when people are not?
- What would you say to someone who has been treated unfaithfully by someone and assumes God will do the same?

God is unchanging, but it's still easy for us to be unfaithful in our relationships with Him. When God doesn't seem to be answering prayers the way we want, it's easy to be fair-weather fans. God's faithfulness remains the same, even when we do not see it.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 32 in the Fall issue of *Collegiate* magazine for more stats, related verses, and further study ideas.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the lesson on page 32 of *Collegiate* magazine.

1). GOD IS FAITHFUL (PSALM 105:7-11)

READ PSALM 105:7-11.

⁷He is the LORD our God; His judgments govern the whole earth. ⁸He forever remembers His covenant, the promise He ordained for a thousand generations—⁹the covenant He made with Abraham, swore to Isaac, ¹⁰and confirmed to Jacob as a decree and to Israel as an everlasting covenant: ¹¹“I will give the land of Canaan to you as your inherited portion.”

Have someone read “God Is Faithful” on page 32 of *Collegiate* magazine.

Unfaithfulness is all around us. Friends are unfaithful to friends by telling secrets. Spouses are unfaithful to spouses by having affairs. Employees are unfaithful to their employers by embezzling company funds. Christians are unfaithful to God by sinning against Him. Even though we are unfaithful to God, He is always faithful to us.

In verse 8, the word *remembers* involves more than what happens in one’s head; it implies action. The word *covenant* that is used in these verses means “a deep commitment that’s promised or agreed upon.”

- What is the difference between remaining faithful in your thoughts and remaining faithful in actions?

Have the group make a list of how God has been faithful to them. Have the group present what they are comfortable sharing.

Play the song “God Speaking” by Mandisa.

- What words of the song stuck out to you?

- How could they be an encouragement to someone?
- How could you share the message of this song in your own words?

2). GOD’S PEOPLE ARE FORGETFUL (PSALM 106:6-7,19-21)

READ PSALM 106:6-7,19-21.

⁶Both we and our fathers have sinned; we have gone astray and have acted wickedly. ⁷Our fathers in Egypt did not grasp the significance of Your wonderful works or remember Your many acts of faithful love; instead, they rebelled by the sea—the Red Sea.

.....

¹⁹At Horeb they made a calf and worshiped the cast metal image. ²⁰They exchanged their glory for the image of a grass-eating ox. ²¹They forgot God their Savior, who did great things in Egypt.

Have someone read “God’s People are Forgetful” on page 32 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- What are the differences between these verses in Psalm 106 and those in Psalm 105?

Psalm 106 is a companion to Psalm 105. Psalm 105 relates Israel’s history from the perspective of God’s faithfulness. Psalm 106 relates a similar story from the perspective of Israel’s unfaithfulness. The psalmist here is recounting Israel’s past unfaithfulness to God and accusing them of forgetting Him.

- What are some of the ways Christians in today’s culture are unfaithful to God?

3). GOD’S MERCY IS AMAZING (PSALM 106:40-45)

READ PSALM 106:40-45.

⁴⁰Therefore the LORD’S anger burned against His people, and He abhorred His own inheritance. ⁴¹He handed them over to the nations; those who hated them ruled them. ⁴²Their enemies oppressed them, and they were subdued under their power. ⁴³He rescued them many times, but they continued to rebel deliberately and were beaten down by their sin.

⁴⁴When He heard their cry, He took note of their distress, ⁴⁵remembered His covenant with them, and relented according to the abundance of His faithful love.

Have someone read “God’s Mercy Is Amazing” on page 33 of *Collegiate* magazine.

The people in these verses “continued to rebel deliberately,” as compared to the previous section of verses. God allowed them to go through difficult times, always remembering His covenant with them. God’s mercy is amazing toward us. Even in our unfaithfulness, He remembers His covenant with us.

- What differences do you see between these people and those in the previous set of verses?
- What would it look like for someone today to “continue to rebel deliberately”?
- Why should we be faithful to God, even if He will always remember His covenant with us?



THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 34 OF THE FALL ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "STAY" BY LANAE' HALE, FROM THE ALBUM *LANAE' HALE EP*, TO PLAY FOR THE CLASS AS THEY ARRIVE.
- RESEARCH INFORMATION ABOUT POP CULTURE ICONS, INCLUDING SPORTS ICONS. CREATE A QUIZ WITH THE INFORMATION. USE INFORMATION THAT IS OBSCURE BUT GROUP MEMBERS WILL KNOW AND CAN SHOW HOW MUCH THEY KNOW ABOUT POP CULTURE.
- INDEX CARDS

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

To help young adults reflect on the greatness of God and contrast His greatness with all other objects of worship

FOCAL PASSAGES

PSALM 135:1-18

WORTHY OF MY AFFECTION

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Stay" by Lanae' Hale playing in the background as group members arrive.

We are a celebrity-obsessed culture. News media is filled with stories of what celebrities were seen wearing, their most recent public outbursts, and who they're in relationships with. Many people are obsessed with the lives of celebrities, even though they often make no substantive contribution to society. In this psalm, we're confronted with the greatness of God. God alone is great and worthy of our praise.

OPTION 1: As group members enter, give them the pop culture questionnaire that you've compiled. Allow them to speak their opinions and the facts they know about the people. Go over the answers to the quiz.

OPTION 2: If possible, have people come to this session dressed as their favorite famous person. Prepare them to play a quick game, where they give facts about their favorite famous person and have the group guess who they are.

- How did you do on the quiz?
- Who are the people with whom you are most obsessed?
- What would you do if you ever met them in person?
- How would your life be different if you met them?

Our world is obsessed with fame, fortune, and beauty. These people and others like them are our new models of greatness. We can become obsessed with them to the point that we almost worship them. The Christian faith is about having a personal relationship with God, the God who created the universe, yet we often don't get nearly as excited about Him.

- In your life, how often are you as excited about God as you are about the latest celebrity gossip or sports stats?
- Do you know more about God or the latest celebrity or sports icon?

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 34 in the Fall issue of *Collegiate* magazine for further study ideas.



EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the lesson on page 34 of *Collegiate* magazine.

1). OUR GOD IS GOOD (PSALM 135:1-4)

READ PSALM 135:1-4.

¹Hallelujah! Praise the name of the LORD. Give praise, you servants of the LORD ²who stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God. ³Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing praise to His name, for it is delightful. ⁴For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel as His treasured possession.

Have someone read “Our God Is Good” on page 34 of *Collegiate* magazine.

The word “LORD” appears in capital letters. There is not a clear translation of this word in the original Hebrew, because they had such reverence for God that they would not even say or write His name.

- What are our current attitudes about God?
- What are our current attitudes about God’s goodness?
- How would we speak differently if we really believed in God’s goodness?
- How would we live differently if we really believed in God’s goodness?

2). GOD IS ABOVE ALL (PSALM 135:5-12)

READ PSALM 135:5-12.

⁵For I know that the LORD is great; our Lord is greater than all gods. ⁶The LORD does whatever He pleases in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all the depths. ⁷He causes the clouds to rise from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning for the rain and brings the wind from His storehouses.

⁸He struck down the firstborn of Egypt, both people and animals. ⁹He sent signs and wonders against you, Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his officials. ¹⁰He struck down many nations and slaughtered mighty kings: ¹¹Sihon king of the Amorites, Og king of Bashan, and all the kings of Canaan. ¹²He gave their land as an inheritance, an inheritance to His people Israel.

Have someone read “God Is above All” on page 34 of *Collegiate* magazine.

This can be a difficult passage of Scripture to read. We move from talking of God’s goodness to reading about the kings and nations, even children that God allowed to be killed or die. This psalm was probably read as a praise offering to God during worship. Its purpose is to put God above all other powers on the earth.

- What are the world’s standards of who is the most powerful and important?
- What are our Christian standards of who is the most powerful and important?
- Which of these do we most often live by in our daily lives?
- What difference would it make if we used the same standards?
- How would our lives and the world look different?

3). DESERVING AWE (PSALM 135:13-18)

READ PSALM 135:13-18.

¹³LORD, Your name endures forever, Your reputation, LORD, through all generations. ¹⁴For the LORD will judge His people and have compassion on His servants.

¹⁵The idols of the nations are of silver and gold, made by human hands. ¹⁶They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. ¹⁷They have ears, but cannot hear; indeed, there is no breath in their mouths. ¹⁸Those who make them are just like them, as are all who trust in them.

Have someone read “Deserving Awe” on page 35 of *Collegiate* magazine.

This psalm is taken from the same time period that we read from last week in Psalm 105 and 106. This text is a continuation on the emphasis of God’s power and goodness.

- What will happen to the things our culture worships?
- What does it mean to be in awe of something or someone?
- What have you learned over the last few weeks about God that proves He deserves our awe?
- How can you remind yourself in your day to day life that God deserves your awe?
- What changes would you make in your life if you lived like you were really in awe of God?

