

SCRIPTUREDEPTH STUDY PACKS

# Praying the Psalms: A 12-Session Journey Through Israel's Prayer Book

*A 12-week tour of the Psalms — praise, lament, confession, trust, and thanksgiving — that teaches your group to pray them.*

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12-Week Study · Leader's Guide · Free Sample (Week 1)

This is a free sample containing the introduction and week 1 of 12. Get the full leader's guide and participant worksheets at [scripturedepth.com/studies/praying-the-psalms](http://scripturedepth.com/studies/praying-the-psalms).

## WELCOME

# A Word for the Leader

Welcome to 'Praying the Psalms: A 12-Session Journey Through Israel's Prayer Book.' This study is designed to guide your group into a deeper understanding and experience of the Psalms, the ancient hymnal of God's people. The Psalms have been a source of comfort, challenge, and inspiration for countless believers through the ages. They teach us how to pray with honesty, passion, and faith, reflecting the full range of human emotions and experiences.

This study is for anyone who desires to connect more deeply with God through prayer and Scripture. Whether your group is new to the Psalms or has studied them before, these sessions will offer fresh insights and practical applications. Each week focuses on a different theme found in the Psalms, from praise and thanksgiving to lament and trust, helping participants see how these ancient songs speak into our lives today.

As a leader, your role is to create a welcoming environment where participants feel free to explore, question, and share. You don't need to be a Bible expert; your primary task is to facilitate discussion and encourage each person to engage with the material and with God. We pray that this journey through the Psalms will enrich your group's prayer life and draw you closer to the heart of God.

## How to Use This Study

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Each week of this study follows a simple rhythm designed to help your group engage with the Psalms thoughtfully and prayerfully. Begin with a brief teaching segment that introduces the week's theme and offers context for the selected Psalm. This is followed by a time of reading and reflecting on the Scripture passage together, allowing God's Word to speak into your hearts.

After the teaching and Scripture reading, move into a time of discussion. Use the provided questions to guide your conversation, encouraging participants to share their thoughts and insights. This is an opportunity for everyone to learn from one another and to see how the Psalms resonate with each person's life and faith journey.

Conclude each session with a worksheet activity that invites participants to apply what they've learned in a practical way. This might involve writing a personal prayer inspired by the Psalm or meditating on a particular verse throughout the week. The goal is to help each person internalize the truths of Scripture and incorporate them into their daily prayer life.

We suggest allowing 60-90 minutes for each session to ensure ample time for teaching, discussion, and reflection. Feel free to adapt the material to suit your group's needs and dynamics. As a purchaser of this study, you are welcome to print unlimited copies for your group, ensuring everyone has the resources they need to participate fully. May this journey through the Psalms be a blessing to you and your group.

# The Two Ways

WEEK 1 OF 12

Focus: Psalm 1

*“Blessed is the man who doesn’t walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand on the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in Yahweh’s law. On his law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree planted by the streams of water, that produces its fruit in its season, whose leaf also does not wither. Whatever he does shall prosper. The wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For Yahweh knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish.”*

**Psalm 1:1-6**

*“Enter in by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter in by it. How narrow is the gate, and restricted is the way that leads to life! Few are those who find it.”*

**Matthew 7:13-14**

*“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success.”*

**Joshua 1:8**

## Teaching

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Psalm 1 opens the Psalter by presenting a vivid contrast between two ways of living: the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked. This psalm sets the tone for the entire collection of Psalms, emphasizing the importance of choosing a life aligned with God's will. The righteous person is described as one who delights in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. This imagery suggests a deep, ongoing engagement with God's Word, not just a casual reading. The psalmist uses the metaphor of a tree planted by streams of water to illustrate the stability and fruitfulness that comes from such a life. This tree is not just surviving but thriving, bearing fruit in its season and with leaves that do not wither, symbolizing a life that is both productive and enduring.

In contrast, the wicked are likened to chaff that the wind drives away. Chaff is the light, worthless husk separated from grain during threshing, easily blown away by the wind. This imagery highlights the instability and lack of substance in the life of the wicked. Their way is transient and ultimately leads to destruction. The psalmist warns that the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor will they have a place among the righteous. This stark contrast serves as a sobering reminder of the consequences of our choices and the paths we choose to follow. The psalmist's use of agricultural imagery helps us understand the natural outcome of a life disconnected from God.

The psalmist emphasizes the importance of delighting in God's law, which refers to the teachings and instructions found in Scripture. This delight is not merely an intellectual appreciation but a deep-seated joy and satisfaction in God's Word. Meditating on the law implies a continuous, thoughtful engagement, allowing it to shape and guide our thoughts and actions. This practice is not meant to be burdensome but rather a source of life and nourishment, much like the streams of water that sustain the tree. The righteous person's life is characterized by a deep-rooted connection to God, resulting in stability, growth, and fruitfulness.

The contrast between the righteous and the wicked in Psalm 1 highlights the consequences of our choices. The righteous are blessed, experiencing a life of stability and fruitfulness, while the wicked face instability and ultimate destruction. This theme of two ways is echoed throughout Scripture, reminding us of the importance of choosing the path that leads to life. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, speaks of the narrow and wide gates, emphasizing the importance of choosing the narrow path that leads to life (Matthew 7:13-14). The psalm encourages us to examine our lives and consider which path we are on.

Psalm 1 invites us to reflect on our relationship with God's Word. Do we delight in it and allow it to shape our lives, or do we treat it as an obligation or afterthought? The psalmist suggests that true happiness and fulfillment come from a life rooted in God's Word. This is not about legalistic adherence to rules but a joyful, life-giving relationship with God through His Word. As we meditate on Scripture, we open ourselves to the transformative work of the Holy Spirit, who helps us grow in wisdom and understanding. This process leads to a life that bears fruit and brings glory to God.

The imagery of the tree planted by streams of water is a powerful reminder of the importance of being rooted in God's Word. Just as a tree needs a constant supply of water to thrive, we need a continuous connection to God through His Word to grow and bear fruit. This connection provides the nourishment and strength we need to withstand the challenges and trials of life. The psalmist assures us that those who delight in God's law will prosper in all they do. This prosperity is not necessarily material wealth but a deep sense of well-being and fulfillment that comes from living in alignment with God's purposes.

The psalmist's depiction of the wicked as chaff highlights the futility of a life disconnected from God. Chaff is easily blown away by the wind, symbolizing the lack of stability and substance in the life of the wicked. This imagery serves as a warning against pursuing a life that is focused on temporary, worldly pursuits. The psalmist reminds us that the wicked will not stand in the judgment, emphasizing the ultimate consequences of a life lived

apart from God. This is a call to examine our priorities and ensure that our lives are built on the solid foundation of God's Word.

Psalm 1 concludes with a reminder that the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction. This assurance of God's watchful care provides comfort and encouragement to those who choose to follow Him. The psalmist's words remind us that our choices have eternal significance and that God is actively involved in the lives of those who seek Him. This is an invitation to trust in God's guidance and provision, knowing that He is faithful to lead us on the path of righteousness.

As we begin this journey through the Psalms, Psalm 1 challenges us to consider the foundation of our lives. Are we like the tree planted by streams of water, deeply rooted in God's Word, or are we like the chaff, easily blown away by the winds of life? This psalm invites us to cultivate a life of meditation and delight in God's Word, allowing it to shape our thoughts, actions, and relationships. As we do so, we can experience the blessing and stability that comes from a life aligned with God's purposes.

Psalm 1 serves as an introduction to the entire Psalter, setting the stage for the rich tapestry of prayers, praises, and laments that follow. This psalm invites us to embark on a journey of deepening our relationship with God through His Word. As we meditate on the Psalms in the coming weeks, may we be open to the transformative work of the Holy Spirit, allowing God's Word to take root in our hearts and bear fruit in our lives. Let us commit to walking the path of the righteous, delighting in God's law, and trusting in His faithful care.

## Living It Out

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This week, take time to intentionally meditate on Psalm 1. Consider setting aside a few moments each day to read and reflect on the passage. As you do, ask God to reveal areas of your life where you may be more like chaff than a tree planted by streams of water. Consider how you can cultivate a deeper delight in God's Word. Perhaps this means establishing a regular time for Bible reading or finding a Scripture memory partner. Reflect on what it means to be blessed and how this aligns with your current life choices.

Seek to identify one practical way you can root yourself more deeply in God's Word. This might involve joining a Bible study group, using a devotional guide, or simply committing to read a chapter of the Bible each day. As you engage with Scripture, invite the Holy Spirit to guide and teach you. Pray for the strength to choose the path of the righteous and for the courage to turn away from influences that lead you astray. Remember that God is faithful to watch over the way of the righteous and will provide the nourishment and strength you need.

## Discussion Questions

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1. What does it mean to delight in the law of the Lord, and how can we cultivate this delight in our daily lives?

2. In what ways does the image of a tree planted by streams of water resonate with you? How does this imagery inspire your spiritual growth?
3. How do the contrasting images of the tree and the chaff challenge your understanding of stability and fruitfulness in your life?
4. What are some practical steps you can take to meditate on God's Word more consistently?
5. How does the assurance that the Lord watches over the way of the righteous provide comfort and encouragement in your current circumstances?
6. What influences in your life might be leading you toward the path of the wicked, and how can you address these influences?
7. How can our group support one another in choosing the path of the righteous and delighting in God's Word?

#### **LEADER NOTES**

Begin the session by reading Psalm 1 aloud, allowing the imagery to resonate with the group. Encourage participants to share initial thoughts and feelings about the passage.

Facilitate a discussion on the two ways presented in the psalm, focusing on the contrast between the righteous and the wicked. Encourage participants to reflect on their own lives and consider which path they are on.

Be sensitive to participants who may struggle with the idea of judgment or the consequences of their choices. Remind them of God's grace and the invitation to choose the path of life. Encourage honesty and vulnerability in sharing personal reflections.