



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

PSALMS 1-30

Week 1

Before You Begin Your Journey...

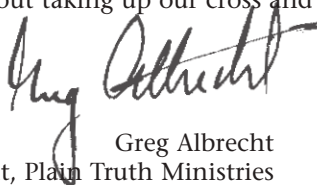
Welcome to the longest book in the Bible! But don't let the word "longest" discourage you. We have divided the book of Psalms into five volumes covering 30 chapters each. This volume covers Psalms 1-30, and subsequent volumes on the Psalms will be interspersed among our survey of the other books of the Bible.

Psalms is one of the most comforting books in the Bible, largely because its 150 chapters are bite-size chunks of real life. Psalms is a book about feelings and emotions, about actions and reactions. Psalms tells us about envy, jealousy, anger and hatred as well as about faith, trust, commitment and love. Psalms is about the life we all experience.

The Psalms were sung and used for worship in the Old Testament, and Christians continue to use them in the same way. Many of them are prayers to God and reveal the personal God and the intimate relationship of grace that he offers to us through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Psalms concentrates more on humans pouring out their hearts to God than it does on revealing direction and instruction from God.

The psalmists were people of emotion and courage, and people who did not hesitate to tell God what was on their minds. You will encounter frustration and anger as psalmists pour out their hearts to God, at times even calling for God to punish their enemies.

Psalms shows us that we do not need to try to hide our true feelings from God. It reminds us that there are painful and frustrating times that Christians experience. From Psalms, we learn that Christianity is not some pie-in-the-sky trip down a primrose path, but rather is all about taking up our cross and following Christ.



Greg Albrecht
President, Plain Truth Ministries

How to Use the CWR Bible Survey...

1—Read and study at your own pace. This is a devotional. It is designed to help you consider and ponder the great truths of God's written revelation. It is designed to help you worship and come to know God. If you get behind, you can always catch up.

2—We suggest you set aside a special time for the *CWR Bible Survey* every day. We recommend allowing 30-45 minutes, but even if you can only spare 15 minutes, try to make it part of your regular schedule.

3—You will need a good Bible. This might be an excellent time for you to consider purchasing a new Bible. Plain Truth Ministries recommends the *New King James Study Bible* published by Thomas Nelson and the *New International Version Study Bible* published by Zondervan.

4—Always read the assigned passage of the daily lesson in your Bible first. Each daily lesson builds upon the portion of the Bible being covered that day. You may want to begin by praying about what God has in store for you as you read, and then look at the questions and background information.

5—Consider the format of each daily lesson. Almost every daily lesson will include:

- **Opening Up to the Word** —a section designed to help you open your mind to the teaching God has inspired.

- **Digging Into the Word**—this section will encourage you to get your nose into the Bible and think deeply about what it says.

- **Living Out the Word**—here you will be challenged to consider the practical implications for your life. How does this passage help you live?

- **Window On the Word**—will offer key insights to help you more clearly understand the daily Bible passage.

6—After you finish the daily lesson, take some quiet time. You may simply think, look out the window, take a walk, or even get down on your knees. But use this time to let this daily lesson sink in. Ask God to show you what he wants you to understand from your reading and study.

7—Consider the *CWR Bible Survey* for small groups in which you may be involved. Tell your friends about it. If you are involved in a small group that meets for prayer and Bible study, introduce your group to it. Many are seeking an easy-to-read guide to help them understand the Bible and to help them know God. the *CWR Bible Survey* can do that!

8—Remember that while we may refer to the Bible as the word of God—the Eternal Word of God is noneother than Jesus, who inspired the Scriptures to be written by human instruments. Words on paper may tell us about him—but it is not the words that we worship—it is Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word.

•Abbreviations Used in *Experiencing the Word*—

Genesis	Ge	Nahum	Na
Exodus	Ex	Habakkuk	Hab
Leviticus	Lev	Zephaniah	Zep
Numbers	Nu	Haggai	Hag
Deuteronomy	Dt	Zechariah	Zec
Joshua	Jos	Malachi	Mal
Judges	Jdg	Matthew	Mt
Ruth	Ru	Mark	Mk
1 Samuel	1Sa	Luke	Lk
2 Samuel	2Sa	John	Jn
1 Kings	1Ki	Acts	Ac
2 Kings	2Ki	Romans	Ro
1 Chronicles	1Ch	1 Corinthians	1Co
2 Chronicles	2Ch	2 Corinthians	2Co
Ezra	Ezr	Galatians	Gal
Nehemiah	Ne	Ephesians	Eph
Esther	Est	Philippians	Php
Job	Job	Colossians	Col
Psalms	Ps	1 Thessalonians	1Th
Proverbs	Pr	2 Thessalonians	2Th
Ecclesiastes	Ecc	1 Timothy	1Ti
Song of Songs	SS	2 Timothy	2Ti
Isaiah	Isa	Titus	Tit
Jeremiah	Jer	Philemon	Phm
Lamentations	La	Hebrews	Heb
Ezekiel	Eze	James	Jas
Daniel	Da	1 Peter	1Pe
Hosea	Hos	2 Peter	2Pe
Joel	Joel	1 John	1Jn
Amos	Am	2 John	2Jn
Obadiah	Ob	3 John	3Jn
Jonah	Jnh	Jude	Jude
Micah	Mic	Revelation	Rev

PSALMS

The Hymnbook
of Israel
and the Church

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Printed in the United States of America.

Introduction to the Psalms

Most Scripture speaks God's Word *to* us, but the Psalms also speak *for* us. As poetic prayers and congregational hymns, expressing both Jewish hope and Christian fulfillment, the Psalms are unique and widely used. They are also quite susceptible to abuse and misapplication.

Authorship and date: Unlike a modern hymnal, where a definite author and date of a song's composition is noted, the Psalms provide little or no such information.

David's authorship of most of the *Psalter* (the entire collection of psalms) is a long-held Jewish and Christian tradition. But in fact not all the Psalms attribute their titles to David. Twelve are attributed to Asaph and his choir (Ps 50; 73–83); eleven to the "Sons of Korah," apparently a musical group (42–49; 84–85; 87–88); two to Solomon (72, 127); one to Moses (90); and one to Ethan (89). The Hebrew phrase "of David," meaning "belonging to David" could also mean "concerning," "for the use of" or "dedicated to" David. Elsewhere in Scripture, "David" was a collective noun that stood for the kings of his dynasty.

The psalms most probably authored by David are those with superscriptions, mostly taken from 1 and 2 Samuel, which indicate the occasion for composition. For example, Psalm 51 draws its superscription from the events of 2 Samuel 11–12. But even that shows signs of later editing, as some lines (Ps 51:18–19) call for rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem (destroyed in 586 B.C.).

Setting and purpose: The literary form of the Psalms was related to their function in Israel's worship. Musical notations in the superscriptions hint at a corporate worship setting, as does the frequently used word *selah*.

In some respects, Israel's Psalter functions like a modern hymnbook that organizes entries by their use in different stages of worship (adoration, confession, thanksgiving, communion, dedication, etc.), or by events in the church calendar (Christmas, Easter, etc.). Classified by type, the Psalms function in twelve

ways: as *laments*, *thanksgiving* psalms, hymns of *praise*, *royal* or *messianic* psalms, *enthronement* psalms, *penitential* psalms, *redemptive* psalms, songs of *ascent* or *pilgrimage*, songs of *Zion*, liturgies of *covenant renewal*, *instructional* or *wisdom* songs and songs of *trust*.

Distinctive features: Psalms are prayers in poetry. To understand poetry, one must apply the principles of *figurative language*. Rather than attempting to find meaning in individual words or lines, one must try to sense the author's mind, heart and soul. A psalm should be read and interpreted as a literary whole.

The Psalms contain more words *to* God or *about* God, than words *from* God *to* people. Psalms are not primary sources for building doctrinal standards or teaching moral behavior. Nor can they be read as one would a narrative or letter. However, the Psalms do assist us in the purpose for which they were written: in being honest with God about one's feelings and faith and in pondering his ways of dealing with people.

Outline: The Psalms are grouped unevenly into five books. Shown below is a general outline of the entire book, leaving several psalms uncategorized. In this volume, we will cover only the first 30 psalms—one per day. Remaining psalms will be covered in subsequent volumes.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Book I (Ps 1–41) | Psalm 1 —wisdom or instructional psalm, introduces entire Psalter.
Psalm 2 —royal psalm, introduces Messiah.
Psalms 3–41 —original Davidic collection. |
| Book II (Ps 42–72) | Psalms 42–49 —Korah musical group.
Psalms 51–72 —second Davidic collection. |
| Book III (Ps 73–89) | Psalms 73–83 —Asaph musical group.
Psalms 84, 85, 87, 88 —more of Korah's group. |
| Book IV (Ps 90–106) | Psalms 93, 95–99, 101 —enthronement hymns.
Psalms 100, 103–104 —hymns of praise.
Psalms 105–106 —redemptive psalms. |
| Book V (Ps 107–150) | Psalms 111–118, 146–150 —hallelujah psalms.
Psalm 119 —wisdom/instruction psalm.
Psalms 120–134 —songs of ascent or pilgrimage.
Psalms 138–145 —third Davidic collection.
Psalms 146–150 —more hallelujah psalms. |

*“He is like a tree planted by
streams of water, which yields
its fruit in season and whose
leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.”*

Psalm 1:3



Artwork by Ken Tunell—PTM

Like a Tree Planted by Water

DAY 1

Psalm 1:1-6

Is there a particular period in your life that is characterized by learning right from wrong?

(a) childhood, (b) college, (c) early marriage, (d) parenting years, (e) military, (f) work life, (g) retirement years.

1. Why are the righteous “blessed”?
2. What is the secret of their happiness? What do they like or delight in?
3. Notice verses 3-4. How is the blessed person like a tree? How is the wicked person like chaff?
4. How do their two fates compare?

1. How do you think the happiness of the righteous person in this psalm compares with your happiness? Have you ever made the mistake of equating righteousness with religiousness?

2. How do you picture your life right now? (a) in full bloom, (b) budding, (c) wilting, (d) dried up.

3. Who is your source of righteousness? As Jesus lives his life in us, his righteousness is the reason for our blessings and happiness.

Blessed (v. 1) describes the attitude or lifestyle of one who faithfully seeks the Lord's will and trusts God with the outcome. This theme introduces the entire Psalter and is expanded upon in Psalm 119, the wisdom or instructional psalm par excellence. For a NT version of this theme, see the Beatitudes of Mt 5:3-12.

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

DAY 2

Rebels Rage, Must Recognize Ruler

Psalm 2:1-12

OPENING
up to the Word

Who's the best boss you have known? What made him or her a "ruler" you would gladly serve?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. How and why do the nations in this psalm respond to the coronation of a new king (vs. 1-3)?
2. How and why does God respond in the Old Testament when people rebel against his appointed ruler or break his rules?
3. Read Acts 13:33, Hebrews 1:5 and 5:5. What insights do you get from these NT quotes of Psalm 2:7-9? What is the scope, hierarchy and power of the Lord's rule?
4. With the Lord on the throne, what difference should that make in our lives (10-12)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Are there human religious rulers in your life whom you see as "the Lord's anointed"? Are they, really? Or is Jesus the one true Anointed of God.
2. With the Lord on the throne of your life, what difference does that make?

WINDOW
on the Word

*This royal psalm was likely used to crown an Israelite king, but its language is more glorious than would have been used for any anointed ones in the Davidic monarchy. It therefore must point to the Anointed One who will rule God's kingdom. The English word **Messiah** derives from the Hebrew word for anointed one (v. 2), just as the English word "Christ" derives from the Greek word for "anointed one" (see Mt 1:17). The Lord's Anointed rules an empire whose nations decide to rebel, but must eventually recognize his rule.*

(Dis)Counting Enemies

DAY 3

Psalm 3:1-8

Do you count things to help you fall asleep? What? (a) sheep, (b) your foes, (c) your friends, (d) money, (e) the sounds of silence. How high do you count before falling asleep?

OPENING
up to the Word

Read 2 Samuel 15:13-30, in addition to the above passage.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. When was David at prayer?
2. Where did David place his confidence and why?
3. Why was David not scared off by his foes? (a) he was a fighter, (b) he ran fast, (c) he went back to sleep, (d) one plus God always equals a majority.

1. Is there a time of day when you regularly pray? Do you pray out of duty, ritual or simply because you feel the need to talk with God?

LIVING
out the Word

2. When a crisis comes and you're angry or anxious, where do you go for help?

*Kings in ancient Israel commonly served as protectors or metaphorically as **shields**, for their people. That God the King serves as a shield is frequently asserted by his people, especially in the Psalms.*

WINDOW
on the Word

DAY 4

Blessed Assurance!

Psalms 4:1-8

OPENING
up to the Word

Do you follow a bedtime routine? Is prayer part of it?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. On what basis did David make his plea for relief and mercy? What was his relationship with God like? (a) demanding child, (b) intimate lover, (c) entitled servant, (d) trusting friend, (e) desperate stranger.

2. What mood swings come through this psalm of lament and trust?

3. What did David ask God for?

4. Note the liturgical instructions in the psalm title. What mood music do you hear during the various movements in this song of trust? (a) concert of commitment, (b) lullaby of love, (c) symphony of service, (d) orchestra of obedience.

LIVING
out the Word

1. David trusted God for a “Yes.” Are you counting on God for blessed assurance? (a) in everything you ask, (b) in some things, (c) not much, (d) not at all.

2. What safety or security concerns make you anxious, even angry? In that regard, what will you ask God for?

WINDOW
on the Word

*The occasion for this psalm was some **national calamity**, perhaps a drought or famine (v. 7), from which Israel sought relief (v. 1).*

PSALMS 1 – 30 AT A GLANCE

Psalm	Author	Summary
1	Anonymous	A faithful life contrasted with a faithless life.
2	David	Celebrating the coronation of a king, symbolic of Christ.
3	David	Written while fleeing Absalom. Trust in God for protection.
4	David	God will listen when we call. We can trust him for protection.
5	David	God is able to defend us against the lies of our enemies.
6	David	God is able to deliver us in times of trouble.
7	David	A cry for justice. Written when Cush the Benjamite was slandering David.
8	David	God the great Creator cares for humanity.
9	David	God hears our cries for help. Written after victory over the Philistines.
10	Anonymous	Why do evil people prosper? God defends the oppressed.
11	David	God's rulership brings stability in times of turmoil.
12	David	Arrogant and deceitful people contrasted with faithfulness of God.
13	David	A cry for relief from despair.
14	David	It is foolish not to believe in God.
15	David	Only the righteous may enter God's presence.
16	David	The joy of walking with God.
17	David	A cry for justice; a need for God. Written under persecution by Saul.
18	David	Thanksgiving for deliverance from Saul and other enemies.
19	David	God's creation declares his greatness.
20	David	A plea for victory in battle, possibly connected with events in 2 Samuel 10.
21	David	A prayer of thanksgiving for victory in battle.
22	David	From despair of rejection by God and people to the joy of God's victory.
23	David	God as a shepherd comforts and leads his sheep.
24	David	Welcoming the omnipotent Lord into his glorious kingdom.
25	David	A plea for forgiveness, protection and guidance.
26	David	An affirmation of loyalty to God, possibly written during Absalom's rebellion.
27	David	The Lord is our savior and our future hope.
28	David	A plea for help in the face of evil.
29	David	The creation shows God's power. We can rely on his strength.
30	David	Thanksgiving for deliverance; the Lord is always faithful.

*“Give ear to my words,
O Lord, consider
my sighing. Listen to
my cry for help, my
King and my God, for
to you I pray.”*

Psalm 5:1-2



Words of Life and Death

DAY 5

Psalms 5:1-12

What has been your most recent urgent plea to God? Has he answered you in the way you expect?

1. What paired words or phrases are associated with prayer (vs. 1-3)? With evil (vs. 4-6)? With righteousness (vs. 7-8, 11-12)? With the open grave (vs. 9-10)?
2. Why was David talking to God? Out of fear or love? Out of selfishness or concern for others? For mercy or justice? Out of a daily habit or whenever he felt like it?
3. What weapons were David's enemies using on him?
4. How did the psalmist wish God dealt with sinners (vs. 4-6, 10)?
5. Where and when is God present with his people?

1. David started his morning with prayer. Is that your practice or do you favor another time? Is prayer a religious routine for you or is it heartfelt conversation with God?
2. When would you like for God to answer your prayers? How do you feel when your answer doesn't come in the way you expect it?
3. When you pray, what are you most concerned about? (a) wickedness, (b) thankfulness, (c) confession, (d) things to do, (e) things you need, (f) avenging your enemies.
4. Where and when do you draw near to God?

*Scattered among the many songs of lament, you will find **curse**s, as in verse 10. This prayer for someone's downfall makes Christians cringe, as we are taught to turn the other cheek and season all our speech with grace. However, this accusation and cry to redress a wrong is consistent with the Christian ethic of leaving justice for God to carry out within the courts of law (Dt 25:1-3).*

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

Praying Through Pain

Psalm 6:1-10

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you suffered an injury, accident or loss recently that brought you to prayer?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Suppose you were David's doctor. Was David really sick or was he faking it to get away from his enemies who were after him?
2. In his suffering, what was David's attitude toward God?
3. How do you account for the abruptly upbeat conclusion (vs. 8-10)?

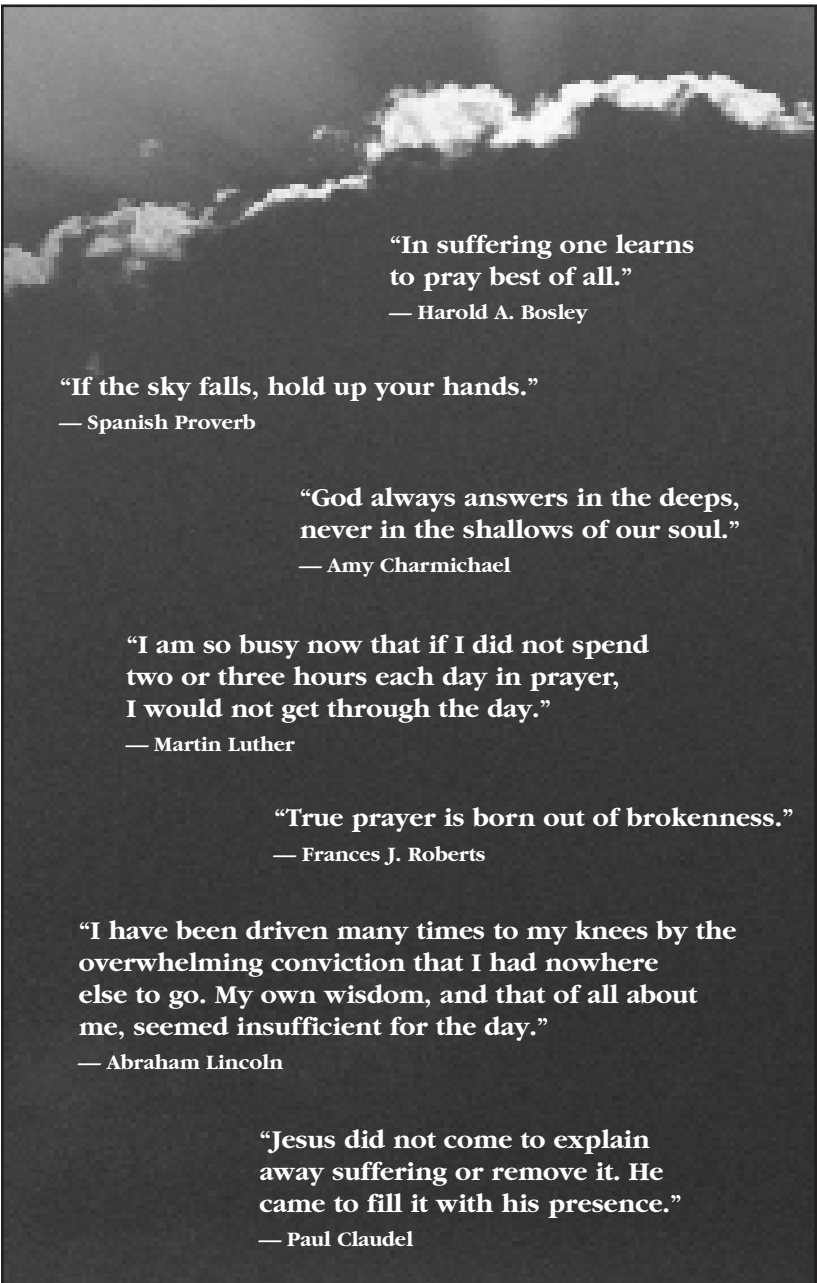
LIVING
out the Word

1. How do you react toward God and others when you're hurting or feeling down? Is prayer your first or last resort?
2. Do you leave tough matters in God's hands or are you likely to take matters into your own hands?

WINDOW
on the Word

*This is a typical **lament**, with five elements: an address to God (v. 1); a complaint about God's rebuke, discipline and delay ("how long?"); a confession of trust ("because of your unfailing love"); a petition for mercy, healing and salvation (vs. 2-5); words of assurance and vow of praise (vs. 8-10).*

PRAYING THROUGH TOUGH TIMES



**“In suffering one learns
to pray best of all.”**

— Harold A. Bosley

“If the sky falls, hold up your hands.”

— Spanish Proverb

**“God always answers in the deeps,
never in the shallows of our soul.”**

— Amy Charmichael

**“I am so busy now that if I did not spend
two or three hours each day in prayer,
I would not get through the day.”**

— Martin Luther

“True prayer is born out of brokenness.”

— Frances J. Roberts

**“I have been driven many times to my knees by the
overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere
else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about
me, seemed insufficient for the day.”**

— Abraham Lincoln

**“Jesus did not come to explain
away suffering or remove it. He
came to fill it with his presence.”**

— Paul Claudel

*“O Lord my
God, I take
refuge in you;
save and
deliver me
from all who
pursue me, or
they will tear
me like a lion”*

Psalm 7:1-2



Artwork by Ken Tunell

Crime Doesn't Pay

DAY 7

Psalm 7:1-17

Do you believe “crime does not pay”? Did you learn that lesson second-hand or personally?

1. Why were David’s enemies after him again? Was he guilty or innocent of wrongdoing?
2. How did David handle the conflict? What did he expect God to do and why?
3. What does this psalm say about God the righteous judge? When does God judge—every day or at the end of the line? Who does God judge and why?
4. David expected the Lord to do right by him, his enemies and righteous people. What was that right thing that God would do?
5. Someone named Cush was trying to murder David, yet he still could thank and praise the Lord! How could that be? Did David know something we don’t know?

1. Is it okay for a Christian to have enemies? What kind? Who would they be in your case?
2. When you have enemies, what do you do? (a) worry, (b) tell yourself how rotten your enemies are, (c) ask the Lord to take over, (d) try to fix it yourself (e) love them.
3. What do you expect God to do about those enemies?

The righteous (v. 9). *One of several terms that referred to God’s people (as opposed to “the wicked”). The term does not imply that David was totally free of sin (v. 8). In this case, David is innocent of what his enemy has charged. David has given his enemy no provocation to attack (vs. 3-5) and is reminding God—the truly righteous judge—of his covenant duty to protect. That the enemy is faceless renders this psalm, and others like it, so meaningful to so many people.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word