

Spc138 – Growing in The Holy Spirit – Part 3 Praying The Psalms  
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Open your Bibles. Title of the message, “Growing in The Holy Spirit – Part 3.” This is the final message and it is subtitled “Praying The Psalms.”

This impromptu mini-series started with our last message in the “One Year With Jesus” series. That message was called, “Don’t Go Without The Holy Spirit.” And after that message I wanted to take a week or so to really encourage you to understand and connect to the role of the Holy Spirit in your life and the power of the Holy Spirit in your life. And so we did “Growing in The Holy Spirit – Parts 1 & 2.” Therefore I thought it was best to title the last message in this mini-series “Growing in The Holy Spirit – Part 3.”

But, the subtitle is “Praying The Psalms” because that’s what we’re actually focused on today. I would really encourage you to listen to our “Fundamentals” series. (The first four messages cover the subject of the Holy Spirit.)

As we’ve talked about growing in the Holy Spirit we’ve made it clear that our being influenced and led and empowered by the Holy Spirit is always “according to God’s Word.”

The Holy Spirit is going to  
INFLUENCE you  
LEAD you  
EMPOWER you... *according to God’s Word.*

But here’s the problem. Most Christians never take the time to learn *how* the Holy Spirit does all these things – *according to God’s Word*. So, if we’re going to be growing in the Holy Spirit we must learn *how* the Holy Spirit influences, leads and empowers us – *according to God’s Word*.

Let’s pray. *Lord Jesus, please, reveal to us that going to church isn’t going to transform our lives. That being in a real, vital, living relationship with you will transform our lives. It’s you in us. It’s not us in church. It’s you in us that transforms our lives. And so Lord we pray that you would show us today –HOW. Give us the practical steps, at least an idea, of what we need to commit to in order to bring you into the center of our lives and allow you to supernaturally transform us. Lord show us those practical steps today, we pray, in your name Jesus, amen.*

Prayer is our communion with God. It is the outgrowth of our relationship with God. The primary purpose of prayer is *not* to get our will done in heaven, but to get God's will done *in us*.

Before the fall, Adam and Eve had full communion with God.

Sin destroyed that communion

Christ restored that communion

Prayer is practicing that communion

And praying *according to God's Word* may be the most powerful way we have to pray.

If we will learn to pray *according to God's Word*, honestly and in context, the Holy Spirit will align our hearts with the heart of God and the Holy Spirit will align our will with the will of God. And *that* is the most powerful thing we can do as Christians.

And God has put a massive prayer and worship book right in the center of the Bible in order to give us his Word to align our hearts and wills with his, *The Book of Psalms*. This is the book that is pure prayer and worship power.

For 3,000 years the Psalms have been the prayer book and songbook of God's people. The Book of Psalms exists to teach us *how to pray* and *how to worship*. The Psalms were the most quoted Old Testament book by Jesus, including quoting it in his last breaths on the cross. One of the early church fathers said, "***Other Scriptures speak to us, but the Psalms speak for us.***"

**One commentator said**

***We only pray well when we are Answering God in our prayer but we can only Answer God if we know what God is saying to us.***

The Psalms help us know what God is saying to us in every season and every emotion in life.

**Dr Tim Keller** – who is an extremely well-respected pastor and scholar of today - says of the Psalms,

***"The psalms are the divinely ordained way to learn devotion to our God. There is no other place where you have an entire course of theology in prayer form, and no other place where you have every possible heart condition represented, along with the way to process that situation before God. "***

I would strongly encourage you to learn *about* the Book of Psalms. I don't have time to do that *and* talk about how to pray the Psalms. So I would encourage you to “set yourself” to learn about the Book of Psalms on your own.

So, let's dive in to “Learning to Pray The Psalms.”

**[The handout used in the message is at the end of this transcription]**

As I thought about how I pray the Psalms I came up with a simple *seven step process*. And when it got to seven steps I thought I should probably give it to you in writing. And this is what I am going to go over.

It's not really seven steps. It's really **three preparation steps** and then **four reading/meditating steps**.

### **1) Make a time and place**

Make a time and a place to meet with the Lord in such a way that his Word and his Spirit will noticeably transform your life.

*THAT* is the goal – for us to be “noticeably transformed” by our “communing” with the Lord in his Word.

In Psalm 62 King David makes this commitment perfectly clear.

### **Psalm 62:1 (NLT)**

*I I wait quietly before God, for my victory comes from him.*

The ESV says, **Psalm 62:1** *For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.*

We've got to learn to wait quietly before God. We've got to learn what it means when God says in Psalm 46:10,

### **Psalm 46:10 (NLT)**

*10 “Be still, and know that I am God! . . .”*

This is about setting aside a time and a place on a regular basis where we can get alone with God and where we can get real with God.

A time where we experience a real relationship with the Lord

Meeting with him

Talking to him

Hearing from him *in his Word*

We have to start by making a time and place to get alone with God.

1) Make a time and place

2) **Ask God to fill you with his Spirit and speak to you in his Word**

God is ready to speak, but are you ready to listen? Take a moment to set your mind and heart on hearing God speak to you.

As we have already said in this mini-series, Jesus said in John 16:13,

**John 16:13–14 (NLT)**

*13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will (1) guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but (2) will tell you what he has heard . . .*

*14 He (3) will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me.*

Remember the **Holy Spirit's role** in our lives is to:

**Guide us into all truth** (which will always be in agreement with God's Word)

**Communicate God's Word to us**

**Bring Christ glory by communicating God's will to us.**

That is what Jesus said in John 16 and that is what the Holy Spirit will do for you today

This is a huge part of our life with Jesus Christ. This is the Holy Spirit's role and he does all these things in accordance with and primarily through God's Word. And so we've got to always approach prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to speak to us and to apply God's Word specifically to our lives. We've got to ask him to *fill us* and *make us ready* to hear from him.

1) Make a time and a place

2) Ask God to fill you with his Spirit and speak to you in his Word

3) **Use a Study Bible for context**

Briefly review Study Bible notes to set the context of the Psalm in your mind. Don't dig too deep, just get the context.

**Study Bibles** – Illustrated Study bible; Life Application Study Bible; Transformation Study Bible; ESV Study Bible; NLT Study Bible

**Phone App** – Faithlife Study Bible (sign up, it's good)

**Kindle for phone or tablet** – Life Application; ESV Study Bible; and NLT Study Bible – Kindle editions (cost)

You won't always have to do this – but it's important that you approach God's Word – including the Psalms – *in context*. This will keep you (hopefully) from mis-applying the Psalms.

When you get to what are called the *Imprecatory Psalms* it's very important that you read those “in context”.

*IMPRECATORY* means – *to call down a curse or judgment upon an enemy*. And there are some Psalms that do this very well, and it is true that God does indeed hate injustice.

AND if you will *use* your Study Bible when you get to those Psalms you'll understand that it's okay to feel what the Psalmist feels.

AND you'll understand that we have to get to the point of trusting God's sovereignty and God's judgment alone. Every emotion we feel is addressed in the Psalms. The Psalms are real and raw. They will help you pray back to God *all* the emotions you feel in this life.

AND they will help you “work through” all the emotions of this life. (*Including the desire to have God rain judgment down on someone you perceive as an enemy.*)

That's why it's important to have a Study Bible (or something) to refer to – before you start getting stuff wrong. And most of the Study Bibles will have a short one paragraph “overview” of the Psalm and that is generally enough to get you thinking in the right direction.

- 1) Make a time and a place
- 2) Ask God to fill you with his Spirit and speak to you in his Word
- 3) Use a Study Bible for context

#### **4) Read through the entire Psalm (or section)**

When you have an idea of the “big picture” (context) of the Psalm, read through it. Take note of the truths that apply to your life just as they did to the Psalmists.

Is the Psalmist: Grateful; Angry; Thankful; Fearful; Suffering; Rejoicing; Repentant, etc. Get an idea of what they are *feeling and what they are* experiencing, then put yourself in their shoes. Begin to apply what they are feeling to what you are experiencing.

On the first read – just get the big picture, making note of the *truths that apply* to your life.

### **5) Meditate on a verse (or a section) at a time**

Slow down. Chew on the key verses (mutter). Think deeper than the word on the page. Roll over in your mind the idea of the verse or section. Let it sink in.

The Hebrew word for MEDITATE is *HAGAH*. It means most literally “*to utter in a low sound*”.

And so we get the idea of “muttering”. It’s repeating something over to ourselves. To “chew on” or “roll over” an idea in our hearts.

But maybe the best definition for how this word is used in the Bible is, “*to think intently and at length*”.

Biblical meditation is *not* like Eastern mystical meditation. It’s *not* clearing your mind in order to reach perfect nothingness.

Biblical meditation means:

***“To think intently and at length”***

***“To talk in a low voice to ourselves & to God”***

***“To be completely occupied with a subject”***

It’s an intense focus and deep consideration of the subject before us.

The very first Psalm promises great blessings to those who will make the time and put in the effort to meditate on the Word of God.

### **Psalm 1:1–3 (NLT)**

***1 Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.***

***2 But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night.***

***3 They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.***

Psalm 1 is the introductory Psalm to the entire book and it start with one simple rule:

Do not delight in or meditate on the things of the world -

Instead *delight in and meditate* on the Law of the Lord.

And the rewards of a life of doing that are fruitfulness and true prosperity in all you do.

We’ve got to learn to talk to God *intently and at length* about the subject matter of the Psalm you are praying.

So after the three preparation steps...

- 4) Read through the Psalm (or section)
- 5) Meditate on a verse (or section) at a time

**6) Be sensitive to what the Holy Spirit is impressing on you**

“Listen” to what the Holy Spirit is pointing out to you. Ask God to reveal how these timeless truths specifically apply to your life today. Be honest and transparent with God.

**Hebrews 4:12–13 (NLT)**

*12 For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.*

*13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.*

Allow God’s Word to do *that* to you.

Not only “allow” it – but actively *look* for it – actively *listen* for it. You went into this asking God to fill you with his Spirit and speak to you in his Word in *Step #2*. Now, at this point, figure out *what it is* that God *is* speaking to you and don’t leave – don’t move – until you have heard from God.

Don’t stop meditating and listening until you know what the Holy Spirit is “pointing out” to you; until you know specifically how the Holy Spirit want to apply these verses to your life, today.

And now, finally, you are ready to:

**7) Pray through the Psalm**

Now you won’t be just repeating the words. The Holy Spirit has now impressed on you how this Psalm applies to your life. So allow the Psalm (or section) to guide your prayer and communion with God.

This takes some practice. But what you are praying is the *subject* of the words not *just* the words themselves. You may *use* the same words but your heart is responding to the subject the Holy Spirit has impressed on you *through this Psalm*.

Now – you are in a real conversation with God.

Now – you are in real communion with God.

Now – the prayer book ordained by God has become *your* prayer book.

And all the power of the Living Word of God lit alive by the power of the Holy Spirit is in the process of *transforming* your life.

## **2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV)**

***18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.***

This is what praying the Psalms should do to us.

*And as we learn to pray the Psalms we will naturally begin to pray whatever scripture we are meditating on.*

And I absolutely promise you learning to pray according to God's Word will *radically and permanently change* your life.

Let's pray. *Lord, that's what we want. Lord we came to you because we recognized our need to be saved, to be transformed. We came to you, Lord, because we recognized we were sinners separated from your presence by our sin and helpless and hopeless without you.*

And if you're here today and that is you today, recognize your place. That in your sin, Ephesians says you are already dead. You are the walking dead. You're already dead in your sin and your trespasses. But Jesus Christ died to make you alive to God. And so, right now you can leave "dead" and enter "alive". If that's you today, pray something like this.

*Lord Jesus, I don't understand most of this but I understand today I am lost without you. I'm separated from you by my sin and your wrath is coming justly. And so Lord, I pray you would forgive me. Forgive me of my sin. Save me from the wrath that my sin is due. And unite me in a real relationship with you. I surrender my own life to you today. Jesus, come into my life. Fill my life. Save me and transform me. I commit to follow you from this day forward. Please fill me with your Spirit to enable me to do that. And draw me into a real relationship with you. In your name, Jesus, amen.*

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**Handout Used in the Sunday Message:**



## Praying The Psalms – Calvary Chapel Nuevo

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Phone App – Faithlife Study Bible (sign-up, it's good),  
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### **4) Read Through The Psalm (or section)**

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Listen to what The Holy Spirit is pointing out to you. Ask God to reveal how these timeless truths specifically apply to your life today. Be honest and transparent with God.

### **7) Pray Through the Psalm**

Now you won't be just repeating the words. The Holy Spirit has now impressed on you how this Psalm applies to your life. So allow the Psalm (or section) to guide your prayer and communion with God.

## **PRAYER GUIDE TO THE PSALMS**

*Elmer Towns - Praying the Psalms*

When you are grateful 1, 70, 81, 106, 116, 118, 124, 127, 145

When you are thankful 1, 8, 18, 30, 37, 45, 48, 53, 59, 63, 65, 66, 78, 81, 87, 89, 98, 100, 104, 105, 106, 111

Imprecatory prayers 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 21, 44, 52, 54, 55, 58, 69, 74, 75, 79, 83, 109, 110, 129, 140

When you face an enemy 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, 44, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57

For God to listen to you 6, 28, 35, 69, 71, 77, 123

About creation 8, 19, 28, 93, 94, 103, 104

For protection from danger 13, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31, 34, 35, 37, 40, 44, 46, 56, 57, 58, 60, 62

Those who deny God 14

For assurance 15, 20, 26

When facing death 49, 50, 90, 91

About the resurrection and Kingdom 16, 46, 49, 50, 67, 72, 76, 82, 83, 85, 89, 90, 97, 132

For wisdom 19, 126

For guidance 23, 25, 39, 40, 126

For intimacy with God 27, 42, 46, 84, 131

When you desire to be in God's sanctuary 27, 84

For God to reveal Himself to you 29, 42, 131

For forgiveness 32, 51, 66, 80, 85, 88, 107, 130

To bless others 33, 36, 137

When suffering 38, 41

For healing 6, 41

Hope when discouraged/depressed 16-18, 23, 42, 43, 102, 27, 34, 88, 143

For those in authority over you 45, 61

To glorify God 47, 57, 63, 73, 76, 93, 95, 96, 98, 104, 113, 128, 134, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150

About Jerusalem 48, 65, 84, 87, 89, 122, 126

To receive God's blessing 49, 65, 90, 92, 101, 115, 120, 123, 125, 126, 127, 133, 147

For restoration 51, 80, 102, 107, 116, 130, 137

Rejoicing 9, 16, 28, 63, 97, 100, 115

Thanksgiving for God's sovereignty 99, 105, 106, 111, 113, 114, 118, 121, 136, 139, 145, 146, 147, 148

For the Word of God 19, 119, 135

Thanksgiving 112, 113, 116, 135, 139, 145, 148, 149, 150

When you are facing an enemy 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 64, 68, 69, 75, 86, 91, 94, 95, 108, 120, 138, 141, 142, 143, 144