

Hope Church South Haven October 19th, 2025

Psalm 63

Fruit/Habit # 1: live connected

Root-system – Jesus needs to be my theory of everything.

Trunk – non-negotiable values: transformational, relational, incarnational and missional.

Fruit – 9 habits that need to be visible in my life.

hab·it

A BEHAVIOR that your brain learns through repetition until it **becomes automatic**. Over time the behavior becomes part of your identity. *Something that is hard to give up.*

Over the past few weeks, I've had the PRIVILEGE of visiting several small groups at Hope Church. I asked **AI** for a non-offensive way to describe these groups without simply saying I hanged out with the older crowd. Here are some ideas that AI gave me:

- Vintage Edition.
- Retro Originals.
- Beta Testers of Life. Love this one!

The groups blessed me by their **depth of faith**. Their faith is real and sincere and authentic. They still have this **longing to know and understand** more of Jesus and God's Kingdom.

#goals

How does my faith compare with theirs?

Groups like **BARNA** and **Pew Research** have studied the depth of faith of Christians today.

- **13% of believers** are connected to a small group – prayer or bible study or shared hobbies.
- 44-46% of Americans **pray daily**. 80% prayed somewhere in the past week.
- **43% attended a church** – at least once a month.
- 3 in ten U.S. adults **read the Bible** at least once a week.
- **1 in 6 Americans** rank faith as their top priority in life.

Deeply worried. I believe the biggest danger to God's kingdom isn't ATHEISTS who say **there is no God**. The biggest danger isn't AGNOSTICS who don't know if **God exist or doesn't exist**. The biggest danger isn't **politics** or the **tension between democrats and republicans** or **even presidents**.

The biggest danger is people **claim to follow Jesus**:

- But you STRUGGLE to *see Jesus in how they live*.
- You STRUGGLE to *hear Jesus in what they say*.
- You STRUGGLE to *find Jesus in how they love others*.

For the past 20 years, there's ONE QUESTION I keep asking myself:

If I were the only follower of Jesus someone could meet, would they be able to say that they have met Jesus in and through me? Does my life show Jesus to people in a real, tangible way?

We are starting today with 1st habit of following Jesus – something that you do without thinking and it becomes part of your identity:

Live connected with God and people.

We are focusing today on our connecting with God. How can I keep my relationship with God strong and real and authentic?

You can open your Bibles at Psalm 63.

- David was the youngest son of Jesse. **Anointed by Samuel** to be the next king of Israel.

- After he killed Goliath, **king Saul tried to kill him**. He fled into the wilderness.
- **Years later David became king** and united all the tribes of Israel into ONE KINGDOM.
- But he had an affair and committed murder.
- His family life was a mess – one of his sons **raped his daughter**. *Another son killed the first son* to get revenge.
- And then his son Absalom revolted against him and tried to become king.
- David found himself **running again**. Hunted like an animal. Hiding from his own son.
Scared and deeply hurting – not just as a king, but as a father as well.
- While he was going through all of this, David **poured out his heart to God and wrote** this Psalm.

Verses 1-4:

You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.

I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.

Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.

I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.

Psalm 63:1-4 NIV

- The Psalm describe David's intense desire for the presence of God.

- He used the HEBREW word שׁוּחַר (*ashaghareka*) – which means to search for God with all your heart.
- David was **desperate to connect with God**. He wasn't just casually looking for cool moments with God. He had a sense of urgency – an inner drive – for connecting with God.
- When David looked back on his life, he realized that **every time he connected** with God it changed in some way or form.
- He discovered that God's steady, never-giving-up love called – **TON** (*ghesed*) – is **more important than anything else** in his life. More important than his own survival.
- That's why David *never stopped seeking God*. He *never stopped longing* for God. *He lived with an urgency* to be close to God.
- He kept WORSHIPPING. No matter where he was or what his circumstances were or what challenges he faced. Even when it felt like his life was falling apart.

Verses 5-8:

I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.

Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.

I cling to you; your right hand upholds me.

Psalm 63:5-8 NIV

- David used the HEBREW word **חלב** (*chelev*) to describe how satisfied he is.
- CHELEV is the word for **being fat**.
- Back in the Old Testament days, being a little heavier around the waist wasn't seen as a bad thing. Instead, it meant **you were blessed and had more than enough!** It's not an excuse for today...
- David is constantly seeking to connect with God – from the moment the sun comes up and all through the night.
- David's *gameplan is simple*: **stay close to God**. Stay in His shadow.
- **Psalm 63** reminds us that we can always trust God, because **we've seen Him work** before. God is always faithful. He **helps us**. He carries us. He **loves for us**. He keeps us safe.

Verses 9-11:

Those who want to kill me will be destroyed; they will go down to the depths of the earth.

They will be given over to the sword and become food for jackals.

But the king will rejoice in God; all who swear by God will glory in him, while the mouths of liars
will be silenced.

Psalm 63:9-11 NIV

- David reminds us that God is the one who levels the playing field. He's the **great equalizer**. We DON'T have to fight our own battles or get back at those who hurt us.
- **God will deal with our enemies in His own time.**
- Psalm 63 reminds us that if we stick close to God, we'll **find joy and peace and contentment**.
- Psalm 63 reminds us that if we **stay loyal to God**, everyone will one day see that God was with us.
- David warns us that people who walk away from God will have to face the consequences of their decisions.

Psalm 63 is David's way of telling us to **intentionally connect with God**. To remember that God is not a side hustle. God is not just a means to an end. In a world where everything wants to make God irrelevant – **technology, busy programs, money**. David challenges us that God needs to be MY EVERYTHING. I need to **FIGHT** that God remains my 1st passion.

What does Psalm 63 mean for the **1st habit** to live connected?

Living connected with God will always be challenging.

Life is busy. **Distractions** are everywhere. Work isn't fun. **Paying taxes** even less. We face real issues daily that demand our attention right now. [now...now-now...just now]

It all **started back with Adam and Eve**. Because of their EPIC FAILURE, the world is under a curse. And we still struggle today with those consequences.

To the woman he said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam he said..."Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life...By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Genesis 3:16-19 NIV

This life isn't supposed to be easy. This world and our enemy make it tough. That's why, just like David, we need to make a **real effort to connect with God**. No matter what we're facing. Whether it's hard times or good times. We should keep seeking God and **wanting more of Him**.

Cultivate a habit to connect with God.

- David didn't wait to feel better. He didn't wait for his circumstances to change.
- He chose to **seek God even when his life was hard**.
- **PSALM 63** challenges us that in those moments of struggle and emptiness, we need to *intentionally connect with God*.
- Not just doing the right religious activities out of habit.
- But because we want to connect with God.
- Because we know we are absolutely lost without Him. That everything falls apart without Him. That I have no hope and no peace and no direction without Him.
- Reach out to God first, **before you run to people**.
- Reach out to God first **before you post about it on social media**.
- Reach out to God first **before hiding away in all the distractions**.

Here's what I'm saying: Ask and you'll get; Seek and you'll find; Knock and the door will open.

Luke 11:9 The MESSAGE

- Jesus uses 3 VERBS – **ask** and **seek** and **knock**.:
 - ⇒ Jesus promises that when we ask — **God will answer**.
 - ⇒ Jesus promises that when we seek — **we will find Him**.

⇒ Jesus promises that when we knock – **God will open.**

- **Psalm 63** challenges us today that we need to make God the number one priority in our lives again.

How can we connect intentionally with God in our crazy lives?

By remembering the times when God showed up in our lives.

- Just like David, we need to reflect on the times where we've **experienced God's presence and power.**
- Write those moments down. Keep a journal of when God gave you **joy and hope and strength.** Share stories with other people!
- **Focusing on God's faithfulness** helps us trust that He is real and will be faithful again.
- STEPHAN JOUBERT – *walking backwards into the future.*

What will happen to us when we turn to God?

We'll find a life that's full of contentment and rest and worship.

- David talks about feeling safe and satisfied "in the shadow of God's wings". Even when he's wide awake at night or feeling anxious.

- **PSALM 63** shows us that when we choose to worship – rather than getting caught up in all the problems and distractions of life – we'll **find real peace and satisfaction and lasting joy**.
- TRUE HAPPINESS comes *from being close to God*.

We need to connect with God. Intentionally.

Here's the game plan – John Grooters shared a couple of weeks ago about reading through the Gospel of Mark:

- Starting tomorrow and going until November 23rd.
- We're doing a 5-week challenge. Just **4 days a week**.
- We're going to read through the Gospel of Mark.

This idea is called the '**Power of 4.**' Studies shows that people who read the Bible at least four times a week **grow stronger in their faith** and see *more positive changes in their lives* than those who read it less often.

Christians who read or listen to or think about the Bible four or more times a week are:

- SIGNIFICANTLY less likely to engage in harmful behaviors such as **excessive drinking** (62% less), **viewing pornography** (59% less), **sex outside marriage** (59% less), and **lashing out in anger** (31% less).
- Less likely to *gossip and lie*.
- FAR MORE LIKELY to **share faith** and disciple others and **memorize Scripture** and support the church financially.
- MUCH LESS LIKELY to **struggle** with spiritual stagnation or loneliness or bitterness or forgiving of others.