

“Wisdom...For Our Panting Souls”

Wisdom Literature – Psalms

July 20, 2025

*...This is why Christians often find them [Wisdom Books] to be their favorite part of the Old Testament; these books are more accessible. They don't require you to know a lot about the history of Israel and God's work with his people to understand them. They are written to individuals in their individual experiences... The Psalms are filled with the love and liveliness of an individual relationship with God... **Mark Dever**, "The Message of the Old Testament", p. 468*

The book of Psalms is unique in the “Wisdom Literature” ...

It has plenty of different authors...

Its writings cover hundreds of years...

The Psalms have distinctive styles to them!

Songs, poems, and prayers of praise, lament, thanksgiving, and wisdom...

“That ‘feels’ real” Book

- Offer both raw emotion and truth

*Poetry and singing exist because God made us with emotions, not just thoughts. **John Piper** “Spiritual Depression in the Psalms”*

- Not checking our brains OR our hearts at the door

*The simplest description of the five books of Psalms is that they were inspired prayers-and-praise books of Israel. They are revelations of truth, not abstractly, but in the terms of human experience. The truth revealed is wrought into the emotions, desires, and sufferings of the people of God by the circumstances through which they pass...Sometimes they are elated, at other times depressed, but they are always honest with themselves. **Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones** “Spiritual Depression – Its Causes and Cure” pg. 9*

The Psalmist's Pendulum

Psalm 8:1-4,9 O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. 2 Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. 3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? 9 O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Song of Praise! David's heart posture is in awe of God Himself and His creation. He's humbled by the fact that the God who created the glories of the heavens and the earth would entrust it to our care! He gives God the respect and reverence He deserves.

Fast forward 5 psalms...

Psalm 13:1-4 How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? 2 How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? 3 Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, 4 lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him,” lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

Psalm 42:3-5,7,9-11 3 My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, “Where is your God?” 4 These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival. 5 Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? 7 Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me. 9 I say to God, my rock: “Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?” 10 As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me all the day long, “Where is your God?” 11 Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?

Is this the same guy? “Wait... didn’t you just say God is good?” One Psalm is full of joy and praise, and the next sounds like a total breakdown. It’s like the writers are on an emotional rollercoaster —

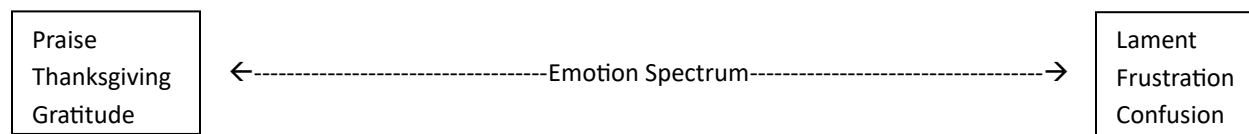
- The Psalms don’t record much life experience has gone into their writings...

[Psalms Chart]

Isn’t this us all the time though! Every day, every week...We’re praising God one moment then wanting to question Him in the next...

...Maybe I need to read more of the Psalms...

Concept of Emotions



INSIGHT: *It’s OK to ask God why!*

Numbers 11:11,16 Moses said to the Lord, “Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? 16 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you.

Habakkuk 1:2-6 O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? 3 Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. 4 So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted. 5 “Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told. 6 For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own.

Matthew 27:46 ...“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” **Psalm 62:8** “...pour your heart out...”

- How you ask is a big deal!
- Don’t be blindly optimistic (a robot...)
 - Abraham & Isaac

INSIGHT: *It’s OK to not have all the pieces!*

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

*It’s not wrong to want relief and to pray for it. It is sometimes right to pray for the defeat of enemies. But more important than any of that is God himself. When we think and feel with God in the Psalms, this is the main result: we come to love God, and we want to see God and be with God and be satisfied in admiring and exulting in God. **John Piper** “Spiritual Depression in the Psalms”*

The Christian is different from other people, the Christian has something which the non-Christian does not possess, and the ideal for the Christian is that which is stated so perfectly by the Apostle Paul in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians: 'I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content ... I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me. That is the Christian position, that is what the Christian is meant to be like. The Christian is never meant to be carried away by his feelings, whatever they are--never. That is always wrong in a Christian. He is always to be controlled. The trouble with these men was that they were lacking in self-control. That is why they were miserable, that is why they were unhappy, that is why they were alarmed and agitated, though the Son of God was with them in the boat. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones "Spiritual Depression – Its Causes and Cure" pg. 138

- Don't be a pessimist (Living through your emotions)
 - This makes it all about you!!!

The Psalms were not written to give you license to let your emotions and feelings control your life!

INSIGHT: We must apply this biblical theology to our interactions with others!

Well, I'm this...or I'm that...we all have a natural bend!

John 11:1-4,32-36 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. 3 So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." 4 But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." 32 Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. 34 And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus wept. 36 So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

Not only did Jesus know he was going to raise Lazarus, He purposely stayed back...AND STILL expressed emotion and care for those He walked with.

We're slowly losing a value for walking emotionally with the body of Christ.

Hope Fights Back

The Psalms meet us where we are...and show that God loves us too much to keep us there.

Psalm 13:5-6 But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. 6 I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

Psalm 42:5,11 Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. 11 Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

Psalm 75:1 We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks, for your name is near. We recount your wondrous deeds.

- This is not a permission slip to walk into a hospital visit, recount the wonderful works of God, enlighten them to hope in God, then dip out...BUT let's not lose sight of that truth!

*I must regard circumstances and conditions, not in and of themselves therefore, but as a part of God's dealings with me in the work of perfecting my soul and bringing me to final perfection. Whatever my conditions may be at this present moment they are only temporary, they are only passing, and they can never rob me of the joy and the glory that ultimately await me with Christ. **Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones**
"Spiritual Depression – Its Causes and Cure" pg. 284-285*

Romans 8:31-35 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Psalms 42:1-2 ...My soul thirsts for YOU!!