

Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. A teacher will teach from the Bible that a disciple of Jesus prays. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme.

Jesus says, "Ask and it will be given to you" (Matthew 7:7). Paul says, "Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). And James says, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16). The Bible teaches much about prayer.

The third series of 6 teachings is about "The prayers of people in the Bible". We will learn from the prayers of different kind of followers of the Living God and the topics are: "Prayers in the Psalms", "Prayers of the prophets in the Bible" and "Prayers of the statesmen in the Bible". Every topic will be in two parts.

Today we will learn about "A DISCIPLE USES THE PRAYERS IN THE PSALMS - PART 1". In part 1 we will consider the prayers that focus on relating to God and some prayers that focus on yourself.

**The Psalms** is the largest collection of biblical poetry. Biblical poetry is a means of expression of the deepest and highest thoughts and feelings of the human heart. The source of this poetry is a heart that is hungry for God. The object of this poetry is God. The theme of this poetry is the personal encounter with the living God. The word "psalm" literally means "a song of praise". In the Psalms the poets give expression to their experiences and emotions of sorrow and joy, fear and hope, bitter disappointment and glowing expectation, puzzling questions and childlike trust. They express their innermost thoughts and feelings and lift up their hearts to God.

The Psalms speak to our hearts in a very special way, because we can identify with their experiences, thoughts and feelings. By reading, praying or singing the Psalms, we too can give expression to our deepest thoughts and feelings, we can fellowship with God and we can learn more about God. In this study we will consider how to use the Psalms in our prayers. The prayers in the Psalms may be divided into three parts: prayers that focus on God, prayers that focus on yourself and prayers that focus on other people.

### **POINT 1. PRAYERS THAT FOCUS ON RELATING TO GOD**

The writers in the Bible are also people who grow in their relationship to God and who sometimes struggle in their relationship to God. Sometimes they feel dirty because of sin in their lives and they need to confess their sins to God. Sometimes they do not experience the reality of God or the presence and nearness of God. Then they need to ardently seek God's face. At other times they want to thank God for what he has done, praise God for who he is or dedicate themselves to God. Let us consider some of these prayers in the Bible that you could use when you develop your relationship with God.

#### **First. Prayers of confession.**

Psalm 38 is a "prayer of remorse" in response to God's *discipline of David's sin*. David says, "My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear (4). All day long I go about mourning (6). I am utterly crushed (8)" David groans and sighs, his strength fails, the light has gone out of his eyes and his friends avoid him. Then he confesses his sin and says, "I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin (8). O Lord, do not forsake me; be not far from me. Come quickly to my help" (21-22). David knows that a holy God cannot leave sin unpunished. Therefore, he says, "You rebuke and discipline men for their sin" (39:11).

Psalm 51:1-4 and 7-12 is "a prayer of confession" of his *sin against God*. David prays, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. ... Wash me and I will be whiter than snow. ... Hide your face from my sins ... Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."

When you know that you have sinned against God or other people or yourself and your sins overwhelm you, then pray a prayer of confession. Use this Scripture prayer to express your guilt, to ask for forgiveness and to plead for cleansing and renewal. Nothing can cause you to feel so dirty than sin. Nothing can make you feel so hopelessly forsaken by God than sin. Nothing can destroy you more than sin. Therefore, don't delay, but pray this prayer of confession. Then you

too will experience the truth of verse 17, “God will not despise a broken and contrite heart.” Nothing can make you feel cleaner than when Jesus has forgiven you!

### **Second. Prayers of practising the presence of God.**

Psalm 61 is a “prayer of practising God’s presence”. King David cries to the Lord and says, “From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe. I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings” (2-4). King David knows *loneliness*, he knows the *feelings of being forsaken* and he knows the *fear of enemies*. So he prays to God that he may again experience the reality, presence and nearness of the living God. And the poet prays for the king, saying, “May the king be enthroned in God’s presence forever; appoint your love and faithfulness to protect him” (7). In

Psalm 63 king David wrestles in prayers to again experience the presence of God. He prays, “O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirst for you” (1). 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. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me” (6-8).

In Psalm 16 he testifies to being conscious about the reality, presence and nearness of God. He says, “... O God, in you I take refuge. I said to the Lord, ‘You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.’ ...The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods. ... I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure. ... You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

When you do not experience the reality of God, or do not sense the presence of God, or do not feel the nearness of God, then pray a prayer of practising the presence of God. Use these prayers in the Psalms to seek God, to think of God and to cling to God.

### **Third. Prayers of praise.**

Psalm 36 is a “prayer of praise”. David exalts God’s *character* and God’s *providential care*. He says, “Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep. O Lord, you preserve both man and beast. ... Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from the river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light” (5-9).

In Psalm 86 he praises God’s *grace*, “You, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness” (15).

In Psalm 97 he praises God’s *sovereign reign*, “The Lord reigns! ... He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth” (10,13).

In Psalm 103:2-5 and 8-14 he praises all God’s *benefits*: God forgives his sins, heals his diseases, rescues him from death and crowns him with love and honour. God satisfies his life with good things and renews his life again and again. As a father, God has compassion with his children and takes their weaknesses into account. And so he praises God, saying, “Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

In Psalm 104 he praises God’s *creation*, “How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. When you send your Spirit, they are created and you renew the face of the earth” (24,30). In

Psalm 135 he praises *God’s sovereignty*, “The Lord does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth” (6). In

Psalm 146 he praises God’s *care for the helpless*, “The Lord upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free, the Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, ... The Lord watches over the alien and sustain the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. The Lord reigns forever” (6-10).

When you think about the characteristics of God and remember all the good things God has done for you, then pray a prayer of praise. Use these prayers in the Psalms to express your adoration for God.

### **Fourth. Prayers of thanksgiving.**

Psalm 107:4-8 is a “prayer of thanksgiving”. In it he thanks God for his *guidance to the right destination*. “Some wandered in the desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle. They were hungry and thirsty, and

their lives ebbed away. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He led them by a straight way to a city where they could settle. Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.”

Psalm 116 is another “prayer of thanksgiving”. The writer thanks God for *deliverance from death*, “You, O Lord, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling ... I will sacrifice a thank offering to you” (8,17).

In Psalm 118 he thanks God for his *help against overwhelming odds*, “Nations surrounded me, ... I was pushed back and about to fall, but the Lord helped me. ... I will give you thanks ...(10,13,21). In

Psalm 136 he thanks God for *deliverance from enemies*, “To the One who remembered us in our low estate and freed us from our enemies, ... give thanks” (23-26).

When you want to say thank you to all God’s mercy and kindness to you, you could pray a prayer of thanksgiving. Use these prayers in the Psalms to express your heartfelt gratitude to God. You could add all the things you want to especially thank God for.

### **Fifth. Prayers of dedication.**

Psalm 40 is a “prayer of dedication”. David dedicates himself *to do God’s will and speak of God’s faithfulness*. God had changed his life. He said, “I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me up out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God (1-3). ... Many are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you (5).” As a result, David makes the following dedication, “I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart. ... I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and salvation. I do not conceal your love and your truth from the great assembly (8,10).”

In Psalm 101 David dedicates himself *to live a blameless life*, “I will sing of your love and justice; to you, O Lord, I will sing praise. I will be careful to lead a blameless life - when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with a blameless heart. I will set before my eyes no vile thing. The deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to me. Men of perverse heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with evil (1-4).”

When you desire to dedicate yourself to God, then pray a prayer of dedication. Use these prayers in the Psalms to express your commitment to God, to acknowledge him and to live a blameless life. Listener, you too could pray and say to God, “I will not look at any evil thing” and “I will have nothing to do with evil”.

## **POINT 2. PRAYERS THAT FOCUS ON YOURSELF**

### **First. Prayers of the forsaken.**

Psalm 10 is a “prayer of the forsaken”. David is mistreated by wicked people and feels as if God does not care what is happening to him. He prays, “Why, O Lord do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises. He boasts of the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the Lord. ... In all his thoughts there is no room for God. His ways are always prosperous; he is haughty and your laws are far from him; ... His mouth is full of curses and lies and threats (1-7).”

In Psalm 22 his enemies persecute David and he feels as if God has forsaken him. He prays, “My God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent (1-2).” His enemies scorned, despised, mocked and insulted him (6). They surrounded him like wild animals ready to tear him apart (12-14). They tortured him by piercing his hands and his feet with nails (16).

In Psalm 35 he experiences the silence of God and prays, “O Lord, you have seen this; be not silent. Do not be far from me, O Lord. Awake and rise to my defence! Contend for me, my God and my Lord” (22-23).

In Psalm 44 he feels as if God has rejected him and prays, “Do not reject us forever. Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression” (23-24).

And in Psalm 102 he feels as if God has thrown him aside and prays, “You have taken me up and thrown me aside. My days are like the evening shadow; I wither away like grass” (10-11).

When you feel forsaken by God, then pray a prayer of the forsaken. Use these prayers in the Psalms to express your own anguish at God's silence and inactivity, and your feelings of rejection. In the right time God will again come close to you and help you.

### **Second. Prayers of suffering.**

Psalm 69 is a "prayer of suffering". David experienced suffering from wicked people and from difficult circumstances. He often felt sick physically and experienced great anguish emotionally. He prays, "Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into deep waters; the floods engulf me. I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched. My eyes fail, looking for my God" (1-3). He weeps and fasts, because he is scorned, disgraced and shamed (10,19). He prays, "Scorn has broken my heart and has left me helpless; I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but there was none" (20).

In Psalm 142 he pours out his complaint before God, "No one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. ... I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me" (2,4,6).

In Psalm 6 he prays, "I am worn out from groaning; all night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears. My eyes grow weak with sorrow; they fail because of all my foes" (6-7).

In Psalm 42 he pours out his heart, "My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, 'Where is your God?' " (3-4). In Psalm 56 he prays, "Record my lament; list my tears on your scroll" (8).

And in Psalm 119 he prays, "Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed" (136).

When you suffer in body or spirit, then pray a prayer of suffering. Use these prayers in the Psalms to express your pain and anguish to God. God is interested in how you feel and he is concerned with your suffering. He sees your tears and remembers your cries for help.

### **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. During the next week, each day pray one of the Psalms as your own prayer to God.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and make disciples" and Internet on [www.dota.net](http://www.dota.net)

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to "Discipleship training on the air".