

3.3

READING THROUGH THE BIBLE IN 3 YEARS AND 3 MONTHS

MORNING WATCH FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

January – March 2020



Chapter: Job 10

Theme: The Impatience of Job

Study Verse: Job 10:12, 13

Statement: Everyone talks about Job's faith and patience, and rightly so. Job was definitely a righteous man; we know because God said so. We also see in 13 and 14 that he still clings to faith. Yet in this chapter, Job expresses his pain, frustration, even anger with God. He demands to know why God is treating him unfairly. In verses 3 and 8, he even implies God is unjust. And he ends the chapter saying he'd be happier (v. 20) if God would leave him alone! Is it okay to say things like this to God? Let's keep reading to see if this is where Job stays, and what God's response will be.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Oh, God, I have sometimes felt like this! I have been tempted to think You have abandoned me or treated me wrongly. I try to believe You know what You are doing...but is it ever okay to be angry with You?*

Chapter: Job 11

Theme: Zophar's Rebuke

Study Verse: Job 11:1, 2

Statement: Clearly, Zophar thinks Job is wrong to be angry. In fact, he believes Job must be hiding iniquity, or this wouldn't be happening to him. He scolds Job for talking too much and for protesting his own innocence and urges him to repent so that all his troubles will cease. Can you find verses in this chapter that carry hope and peace even though Zophar is wrong about his assumptions?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Lord of all, Your eyes see secrets we can't even guess at. I know that Job wasn't perfect, and neither am I. But I sometimes feel, as he did, that I am being punished for something. Help me to cling to the kernel of my faith, as Job did.*

Chapter: Job 12

Theme: Job Gets Sarcastic

Study Verse: Job 12:13

Statement: Job's response is angry and sarcastic. "Oh, you people think you're so smart! I'm just as smart as you!" He proceeds to talk about God's power and the fact that we cannot fight him, but he lists God's abilities as negatives. God "imprisons," "tears down," "dries up." Look for words and phrases that show that, despite his anger and frustration, Job still believes in God and is trying to trust Him.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Master, when my friends are trying to help but they're saying all the wrong things, help me to stick with them, as Job did, even if I'm angry.*

Chapter: Job 13

Theme: Job's Defense

Study Verse: Job 13:15, 16

Statement: Frustrated, Job rebukes his friends, telling them they are judging with partiality and that their proverbs are as ashes. Our study verses are crucial to understanding the book of Job. We have all heard the first part of verse 15 many times, but how many times do we remember the second part? *I trust Him no matter what, but I will also argue my case!* Then notice verse 16: Job says this very argument will “be his salvation,” because sinners couldn’t (or wouldn’t) come to God to lay out their feelings, even the negative ones, before their Lord. Have you ever argued with God?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Beloved Judge, Whom else could I take my case to? Who else understands me, including understanding when I am frightened, angry, or confused? You are the only one I trust totally—even when I have no idea what You are doing!*

Chapter: Job 14

Theme: Job Talks to God

Study Verse: Job 14:15

Statement: In the last chapter, Job turned from talking to his friends to talking to God directly. Here, he lays out his anguish. He points out that death will silence him; he will no longer be able either to praise or to despair. He feels God's hand is against him and he has no hope of being heard...yet still, in verses 14-17, he states his stubborn faith. "You will long for the work of Your hands." Do you, like Job, even in the midst of despair, cling to belief that God loves you?

Response: _____

Prayer: *O my Lord, no matter how upset I get, never let me lose hold of my hope in You!*

Chapter: Job 15

Theme: Eliphaz Goes Further

Study Verse: Job 15:7, 8

Statement: Eliphaz has lost patience with Job. Apparently, he hears Job's anguish and anger, but does not hear the faith that keeps shining through. He calls Job's words "windy knowledge" and "east wind," and even accuses Job of speaking from sinful guilt. He repeats, in even stronger language, that only the guilty have the troubles Job has, and only sinners feel as he does. Do you believe that only sinners get angry and frustrated and confused when they don't see what God is doing? Why or why not?

Response: _____

Prayer:

God who sees truly, as You recognized Job's heart of purity toward You and did not hold his emotions against him, so be merciful with me.

Chapter: Job 16

Theme: Job's Anguish Grows

Study Verse: Job 16:19

Statement: Job, too, is using stronger and stronger language. His friends, instead of helping, are making him feel worse. Not only does he accuse them of being “sorry comforters,” but he says God is using him for target practice. Read verses 9 through 17. Of what does he accuse God? Then, just when you begin to think Job has crossed the line into outright sin, notice verse 19. He *still* believes he has an advocate on high! He wishes desperately that he could talk to God as to a neighbor, but he still trusts, in his heart. Can you do that?

Response:

Prayer: *Dear God, I, too, have wished I could talk to You, out loud, plain and clear, hearing You with my physical ears. But I, too, choose to trust even when I don't understand.*

Chapter: Job 17

Theme: Job Sees Death Near

Study Verse: Job 17:9

Statement: When Job talks of death and says he is ready for the grave, part of that is the same kind of thing many of us have felt: “I’d rather die!” we exclaim in trouble. But part of it is also real recognition that his condition, the loss of all his children, and now the boils all over him, could actually end in physical death. Before Jesus came, early people often did not have a clear picture of a resurrection, and Job may fear that if he dies, that’s the end. (He does know better, as we shall see.) He feels hopeless. Yet, even so, there is that one statement of faith and hope. Did you see it?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Master, I trust You. I trust You. No matter what, I trust You!*

Chapter: Job 18

Theme: Bildad's Rebuke

Study Verse: Job 18:21

Statement: Bildad, like the rest of Job's friends, insists that he must be guilty. All the things Job says are happening or about to happen to him, Bildad says are the reward of the wicked. He simply doesn't believe—none of Job's friends do—that bad things can happen to good people. What do you think?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Father, I know that I am an imperfect person, and that much of the evil that comes upon me is at least partly due to my own choices. But I also know that Satan is out to get all of Your children. Help me to stick to You and not let trials tear me from Your side.*

Chapter: Job 19

Theme: Job's Outburst

Study Verse: Job 19:25-27

Statement: Job is just about ready to send his friends away! They are insulting him, refusing to listen to him, insisting he is wicked. He says in so many words that God “has wronged him.” He lists his grievances against God, adding that God has even turned his own friends against him. Imagine Satan’s response at this moment. He must be gloating—Aha, see, I told You, God! He’s going to turn against You now! ... And in that very moment comes Job’s strongest testimony yet. *I know that my Redeemer lives.* Job declares, thousands of years before Jesus, that he knows the Redeemer will stand on the earth, and that Job will see Him in his flesh, which means Job believes in a resurrection!

Response: _____

Prayer: *Holy One, in the depths of our despair, You remind us of the truths we know—Your great and precious promises hold us up. Thank You so much!*

Chapter: Job 20**Theme: Zophar Accuses Job****Study Verse: Job 20:4, 5**

Statement: Zophar says he is insulted by what Job has said, but his response is more insulting: he gives a long rant about evil people and the recompense they can expect from a righteous God. What he says is true—evil ones *will* only be happy a short time unless they change their ways. But the implication is that Job is one of these wicked ones. He seems to imply that Job gained his wealth by dishonest means, by oppressing the poor.

Response: _____

Prayer: *O Lord, help me not to be so quick to judge—to assume someone who is in trouble must have done something to deserve it! Help me to be a true comforter instead.*

Chapter: Job 21

Theme: Job's Protest

Study Verse: Job 21:7

Statement: Job knows (as we do) that what Zophar has said is true—the wicked will face their consequences. But it often doesn't look that way now! Have you noticed that? Job protests that the wicked seem to live in peace and prosperity, with nothing ever going wrong, until they day they die, even though they say to God outright, "Depart from us; we do not even desire knowledge of Your ways!" Have you ever felt like that? What would you say to Job to comfort him if you were there?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Dear Father, I know—I **know** You are with me, even if it doesn't seem like it! I know You see the ways of all people and will do all You can to lead us out of wickedness and toward You. I agree, life seems unfair sometimes, but I will trust You.*

Chapter: Job 22**Theme: Eliphaz Begg Job to Repent****Study Verse: Job 22:21, 22**

Statement: Eliphaz goes even further than Zophar—he accuses Job in so many words of unjust dealings with the poor and even with widows. However, he seems to have a more loving attitude overall. His exhortations from verse 21 and on are beautiful and are full of truth—if a person has iniquity in their life. In one way, this is true of all of us, Job included; we are all sinners and fall short of God’s glory. In another way, it is not true, Job insists that he has knowingly acted cruelly or maliciously. How does it feel when you are unjustly accused?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Master of all, You know what I have done well and what I have done wrong. If there is wrong in my life that I do not see, show me, so that I can repent. But help me to remain patient when I am accused of wrong, I did not commit.*

Chapter: Job 23**Theme: Job in Despair****Study Verse: Job 23:10**

Statement: Job can no longer bear being misunderstood by his friends. He longs to stand before God Himself and reason with *Him*—God Himself, Job knows, will understand and not judge him falsely. But he turns every way and can't see God. That's a painful place to be, and most humans spend some time there sooner or later. Have you felt abandoned by God? Were you able to cling, as Job does, to the truth that God knows what He is doing and will eventually bring you forth “as gold”?

Response: _____

Prayer: *O dear Jesus, I cling to You even when I can't see You; even when it seems You are acting unfairly and arbitrarily. I know You understand and will bring me through!*

Chapter: Job 24**Theme: Job Questions God's Care****Study Verse: Job 24:1**

Statement: Not only does it seem unfair to Job that he is being blamed for being wicked, it seems to him that even God doesn't care. He lists the things disobedient people do and seem to get away with. Toward the end of the chapter, he does say the grave (Sheol) will swallow up these people and their evil, but he would like to see God respond more obviously now. What do you do when you feel like this?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Lord God, You see all and know every act and thought of every human. Yet it does seem that wickedness sometimes faces no consequences. I am glad I have access to knowledge Job didn't, concerning the Great Controversy between You and Satan. But he was experiencing it—that battle. I want to meet him in heaven, after he has his reward, and ask him if it was worth it.*

Chapter: Job 25

Theme: Bildad's Reply

Study Verse: Job 25:4

Statement: In this short speech, Bildad simply ascribes all this confusion to the fact that humans are sinful, period. How can any of us be good enough for God? We can't! That's true, but Bildad is mistaken when he seems to think God thinks of us as worms or maggots. God considers us worth the life of His Son! When you feel worthless, remember that!

Response: _____

Prayer: *Dear Father, I am glad I live in times after Jesus came. They had the promise of it for many centuries, but we have the fact! I will remember this when I am sad, lonely, or feel inadequate.*

Chapter: Job 26**Theme: Job Rebukes Bildad****Study Verse: Job 26:14**

Statement: Job seems quite sarcastic in his reply to Bildad.

“What a big help you are, just pointing out our imperfections!” he says. But then, notice, Job does what he has done before, praising God’s power and glory, despite his unhappiness and confusion. Again, he uses language much like the language God will use in His eventual response near the end of the book. Job has no doubts about God’s might. He just wishes he understood Him better!

Response: _____

Prayer: *Almighty God, when I look at the earth and the stars, the waves of the ocean, the brightness of a bird or butterfly, I remember Your works, even when I am confused or afraid, and I trust You.*

Chapter: Job 27

Theme: Job Declares His Truth

Study Verse: Job 27:6

Statement: Job agrees with all his friends that God will judge the wicked. But he says that if he agreed with them that he is one of those wicked ones, he would be lying. He will not bow down and agree that he must have done *something* to deserve all this sorrow. He will simply cling to God, no matter what. Where can you find hope or faith in this chapter?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Holy One, You are so high above us that we can never claim to be righteous like You. But if we have clean consciences, we can and do and will cling to You, and to **Your** righteousness!*

Chapter: Job 28

Theme: Mining for Wisdom

Study Verse: Job 28:23

Statement: Job speaks of the treasures of the earth, and the difficulties and dangers humans face in digging them up. But, he says, finding wisdom is even harder. You can't go look for it somewhere in the ground or weigh it or measure or set a value on it. Only God knows it. So, we see that no matter how angry and depressed Job is about his own lack of understanding of why these things are happening to him, he *knows* that God does understand. He hangs his whole life on that fact.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Father of all humankind, You have made it simple for us: wisdom is simply trusting You, no matter how clueless we feel!*

Chapter: Job 29

Theme: Job Laments the Good Old Days

Study Verse: Job 29:2, 3

Statement: We forget, sometimes, how much reason Job had for immense sorrow. Sure, he's lost his possessions, and even his health. But he's lost his children, too—all of them! There is nothing so hard to face as that. Job remembers when his children were around him and people looked up to him. How he mourns for his great loss! What losses have you faced? Did you, too, become angry and depressed, but still cling to faith no matter what?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Dear God, I'm so glad that I live in an age when we know that Job will once again see all his children, and they will gather around him with joy. How surprised he will be to learn that we all still honor him and learn of him, all these years later!*

Chapter: Job 30

Theme: Job Cries Out to God

Study Verse: Job 30:16, 17

Statement: Then Job compares how his life is now with those long-gone days. People who were the poorest and lowest of the whole community now taunt him and even spit at him. It seems everyone thinks Job must have deserved it. He cries out to God, but feels God is not answering. Do you think maybe what he longs for most is just to know that God is *there*, even if nothing changes?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Lord, I know that what I most long for is just to know You are here with me, even if You are silent.*

Chapter: Job 31

Theme: Job Lays His Heart Bare

Study Verse: Job 31:5, 6

Statement: He has always held that he is innocent and does not deserve his calamity. Now, Job goes further, listing categories of sins, and calling God to witness that he is not guilty of any of them. If he is, let God declare his guilt and show him his wrongs, he begs. With his friends as his witnesses, he says that if God knows of wrong against him, He should bring it up.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, You must have wept with Job, even though he couldn't hear You. I know (Job showed often that he knew, too) that You are there, and You will ultimately prevail.*

Chapter: Job 32

Theme: Elihu Has His Turn

Study Verse: Job 32:7, 8

Statement: All this time, these three friends of Job have been arguing and debating, and there has been a much younger man, Elihu, sitting by, feeling he should not speak up. Now he does. He is angry that Job still asserts his integrity. He says that he, too, though he is young, has his own opinions, and will now share them. In verse 14 he says he will not reply to Job with their arguments. We will see if Elihu has anything different to add to the discussion.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Lord, I, too, am young, and wait on the wisdom of my elders. But sometimes I feel I have to speak up. Help me to be wise and respectful when I do.*

Chapter: Job 33

Theme: Elihu's Self-proclaimed Wisdom

Study Verse: Job 33:4

Statement: Well, what do you think so far of the speech of this young man in the presence of his elders? There is definitely truth in it; make a list of the truths you find. But does he really say anything different than the others said? Doesn't he still accuse Job of being secretly sinful and implore him to repent? If you were Job, what parts of this chapter might you respond positively or negatively to, and why?

Response: _____

Prayer: *God of all wisdom, You do speak even in the confused speech of mortals. This young man points out that it is not for us to judge how You choose to do things. But compassion seems lacking, and You have said you value that most of all. Help me to be compassionate and respectful of others, especially when they are in trouble.*

Chapter: Job 34

Theme: Elihu Continues

Study Verse: Job 34:21, 22

Statement: Now Elihu becomes sarcastic and judgmental, just as the others have before. He throws down all Job's arguments and complaints and not only believes that Job must be wicked (see v. 11) but that he is adding to his wickedness by all this complaining. Do you think he's right? Is it allowed for us to be angry with God? Job certainly has been. Has he crossed the line to disrespect, sometimes, in your opinion?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Almighty God, I confess, I have been angry with You. Whether I've told You about it or not, of course You have known it. I repent if I've ever thought You were treating me wrongly, because I know You never do. On the other hand, I do want to be completely honest with You concerning my feelings, good and bad. Who else can help me deal with them if not You?*

Chapter: Job 35**Theme: Elihu Rebukes Job Again****Study Verse: Job 35:10, 11**

Statement: Again, there is truth in this young man's words. In fact, if you pay attention, you will find that some of what he says is similar to what God is going to say in a few chapters. But he is still very angry and sarcastic with Job. Since Elihu is young, he may not even have children. How can he know what it would be like to lose them all? In all our dealings with each other we must be humble and compassionate.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Master, You are the only One who truly knows. You know that Satan is behind all Job's troubles, not You. You have a purpose in allowing all this—and part of it is that I can read and learn! Help me to be humble in all circumstances.*

Chapter: Job 36**Theme: Elihu Thinks He Knows the Truth****Study Verse: Job 36:26**

Statement: Elihu is getting more and more sure he knows all about everything! Notice verses 7 through 12; they lay out the belief of all these men—even Job, up till now. They're sure God rewards righteous people and only punishes wicked ones. But Job knows he has not rebelled against God, and he can't understand why these things are happening to him. All the rest simply think he *must* deserve it somehow. What are they learning through this trial about bad things happening to good people?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Lord God, I do exalt You and look up to You, and I do recognize that You are far, far above the understanding of any human. Thank You for preserving this story so that I can learn from it.*

Chapter: Job 37**Theme: Elihu's Conclusion****Study Verse: Job 37:14**

Statement: Once he got started, Elihu seems to have had a lot to say! Again, there is much truth (some glorious truth!) in what he says. We could think he was the one who was right in all this discussion...except that when the Bible was written, there were no chapters and verse numbers. God's voice, heard in the next chapter, comes right after Elihu's last words. We don't know if any time passed between. It almost looks as if God interrupts Elihu. You will read chapter 38 tomorrow but take a look at just God's first sentence now. What does He think of the wisdom of Elihu (and the rest)?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Dear God, much of this chapter describes You and Your majesty well. I do stand up and praise Your mighty wonders, and I do not know how You do them. But I still believe, with Job, that You will stoop to answer our cries for help.*

Chapter: Job 38**Theme: Finally, God Speaks****Study Verse: Job 38:4-7**

Statement: All this time, Job has been begging God to answer him. Now God demands that Job answer *Him*. For the next four chapters, God will ask hundreds of questions designed to show Job and his friends that none of them know as much as they think they know. Job has only two defenses: first, he has never claimed to have answers, as his friends have, and second—even more importantly—he has maintained his trust in God despite his confusion, pain, and discouragement. In this chapter God begins with the glories of His creation of the universe. Which are your favorite parts?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Great Creator, Your glory and power and majesty are shown in the stars and galaxies and nebulae, and in the mountains and oceans and rainbows You have put here to turn our hearts to You. Thank You!*

Chapter: Job 39

Theme: God Cares for Creatures

Study Verse: Job 39:1

Statement: God turns, at the end of 38 and throughout 39, to His care of the creatures. In Job's time, little of the earth was known. Even today, there are still millions of square miles of tundra and jungle and ocean where creatures live lives we know little about. But God knows every secret and every moment of their lives. What feelings does this bring up in you?

Response:

Prayer: *Caring Creator, You see every baby mountain goat, every chick of every bird, and every trial faced by one of Your human children. I believe, with Job, that You have plans for all, whether they are visible to us or not.*

Chapter: Job 40

Theme: God's Mighty Creatures

Study Verse: Job 40:2

Statement: Job admits (for himself and perhaps for his friends as well) that he can't answer God. God then turns to some of His less ordinary creatures. In this chapter, "Behemoth" is a huge and mighty creature, possibly a hippopotamus or rhino. Everyone in the room with Job knows they can't do anything to it or make it do anything it doesn't want to. What "behemoth" in your life is beyond your power to control?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Shepherd of the wild things, please take charge of the wild things in my life, whether they are people, situations, or events or just fears and temptations in my own mind. I choose to trust You.*

Chapter: Job 41

Theme: God Is In Charge

Study Verse: Job 41:11

Statement: In ancient mythology, Leviathan was a sea serpent. We think Job might be referencing a crocodile. In any case, again it is a huge, fierce creature humans can't tame or control—just like the pains and sorrows that have come upon Job. Perhaps one of God's lessons to his “comforters” is that we can't control or predict our circumstances any more than we can control whales or crocodiles. God also reminds them He doesn't *owe* us anything at all.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Mighty God, You are Lord of all creation—of all the universe! I don't believe You bring evil, but I believe You can master it and bring good from it. From Job's sufferings, though he never knew it, have come thousands of years of reassurance for billions of people. May my sufferings be of use to me and to others.*

Chapter: Job 42

Theme: Reconciliation

Study Verse: Job 42:5, 6

Statement: You can look through Job from one end to the other, and you won't find answers to his questions. You will find a mighty and powerful God who is in control. Is this comforting? Yes, certainly. But what Job was really asking, what is most important to a suffering person, is, *"Are You there? Do You care?"* Resoundingly, God says, *"I am here. You can trust Me...no matter what! And you can look at the world around you to remind you of that."*

Response: _____

Prayer: *Merciful Father, You do know what You are doing. If I didn't believe that, I couldn't go on. I trust you. No matter what!*

Chapter: Psalm 1**Theme: The Tree of Your Life****Study Verse: Psalm 1:3**

Statement: We will be spending months and months in Psalms. They are the heart of the Bible—a textbook of prayer and song that shows us we can pray with every emotion of our hearts, good or bad, and in the end, always come back to God’s love for us. If you are a girl, read “she” where the speaker says “he.” These prayers are for you, too. This first one paints a lovely picture of a godly life growing like a tree, fruiting in season and continuing to grow as long as its roots are in the everlasting spring of living water brought by the Holy Spirit. How is your tree right now?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Holy One, You are the only one who can make my roots grow. Please pull them deep, deep into Your Spirit and Your love.*

Chapter: Psalm 2

Theme: God's True King

Study Verse: Psalm 2:11

Statement: This is the first of the Messianic Psalms that prophecy the coming of God's Son. We don't know who wrote it, but it clearly refers to the reign of Christ. The Old Testament writer emphasizes the anger of God's final judgment more than the love God continues to beg people to remember, from Genesis to Revelation. But there is still great comfort to be found in this psalm. Which verse do you like best?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Son of the Most High, I still can't believe You were willing to be "begotten" as a human child to live with us! I am so grateful!*

Chapter: Psalm 3**Theme: God's Care****Study Verse: Psalm 3:3**

Statement: It's always interesting when a psalm not only gives David's name, but also when he wrote it. This was a sorrowful time for him; his own son turned against him and ended up dying for it. This is also, already, our first example of David praying with harsh feelings that were not, in fact, in line with God's will. God does not shatter teeth, nor does He want us to wish for it! But David lived in violent times (and so do many of us) and God wants us to see that He still loves us even with our anger and hatred, though He will cleanse us of them if we stick with Him. David as an old man was a different person than David as a young man. How is God changing you?

Response: _____

Prayer: *God of power, You do rescue me from enemies within and without, and the teeth that You shatter are the vicious grip of fears, angers, and temptations that try to drag me from Your side.*

Chapter: Psalm 4

Theme: How to Deal with Fear

Study Verse: Psalm 4:8

Statement: Both Psalms 2 and 4 mention finding peaceful sleep in hard times through God's grace. This one points out that even when we are trembling from either anger or fear, we need not sin, but can by meditation hide ourselves in God and be safe. Have you ever tried this method for getting to sleep, especially when you are stressed or worried?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Gentle Lord, I know You are by my side, waking and sleeping, and I am learning to trust and lean on You no matter how I feel.*

Chapter: Psalm 5**Theme: A Song of Lament****Study Verse: Psalm 5:12**

Statement: One of the most important lessons of the psalms is to show us what to do with our grief—like everything else, take it to God! Also, it always helps to make some kind of art out of it. As a songwriter, David made songs from anger, joy, fear, pain, and ecstasy. This increases joy and brings down pain to something more manageable. But that's not enough in itself, you must also use the art to bring the feelings to the Creator. What changes can you see happening in David from the beginning to the end of this song? How do you use your creativity to help with emotions?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Master Creator, You have given each of us a germ of Your creativity. Help me to discover and develop mine for the good of myself and those around me, and for Your glory.*

Chapter: Psalm 6**Theme: Pleading for Mercy****Study Verse: Psalm 6:4**

Statement: Have you ever prayed and prayed, and felt as if God didn't hear you? David wrote this psalm when he felt like that. He asked God how long it would be before He answered. He felt as if he were wasting away from his grief and sorrow. Yet, look at the last couple of verses: before his circumstances have changed, David states his faith and trust. You can do that, too.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Merciful God, we humans are too small to understand what You are doing when our lives are going well, let alone when they are difficult! I trust You—always!*

Chapter: Psalm 7**Theme: Prayer for Defense Against the Wicked****Study Verse: Psalm 7:9, 10**

Statement: As we study the psalms, you will see many times when David gives in to his own anger and asks God to turn against the wicked, and even to destroy them and their children. When you read those, remember this psalm. Here, David gets it right: “let the *evil* of the wicked come to an end”! We can all pray that if possible, God can redeem and change the people themselves, while destroying their wickedness.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Just God, remind me that no matter how angry I am at someone, or how they have used me, that person was created by You and is loved by You. If only something I say or do could help a sinful person turn to You, I would be satisfied.*

Chapter: Psalm 8

Theme: Your Name Here

Study Verse: Psalm 8:3, 4

Statement: Write down this psalm, and when you come to phrases like “what is man,” put in your own name. Then read it over prayerfully and see what feelings arise in your heart. The psalms were written by real people expressing real feelings (good and bad) but we have the collection now because God wanted them to be for us—for *you!* Why do you think God is mindful of you?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Loving Lord, why do You love me so much? I wish I could love You back just as much!*

Chapter: Psalm 9

Theme: Praises and praises!

Study Verse: Psalm 9:1, 2

Statement: If you set out to list all the things you praise God for, your psalm, like this one, would be pretty long! As you read it, think about which parts most apply to your life and your heart. What things could you add to this psalm, to praise God for?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Great and almighty God, You are so high and so full of wonders that all our human languages are incapable of praising You enough!*

Chapter: Psalm 10**Theme: Prayer Against Injustice****Study Verse: Psalm 10:17, 18**

Statement: This psalm may have been written by David or by someone else. Almost everybody has felt this way at one time or another. Have you? *Why* do the wicked seem to get away with all kinds of cruelty and oppression? *Why* do the widows, orphans, displaced people, and other vulnerable ones seem to constantly get treated badly? While you're at it, ask God what you, personally, can do to help change this situation.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Father of the world, Your children are hurting each other. Show me how to help, even in a small way, to spread Your plan of a world where all share and care for each other.*

Chapter: Psalm 11

Theme: Fly to God

Study Verse: Psalm 11:7

Statement: What a lovely image David uses here—of a bird flying to her mountain nest where she is safe. David had a lot of chances to feel unsafe and hunted. He spent his entire young manhood running from King Saul, and then when he became king, he still had several wars, and even ended up in conflict with his own son! Where does David say his refuge is? Where is yours?

Response: _____

Prayer: *You are my hiding place, Jesus. You hold me safe like a nest, even when I am in the midst of trouble. Give me Your peace that is not like the world's, and keep me safe inside my heart even if I am not in safe surroundings.*

Chapter: Psalm 12

Theme: Praise in the Midst of Treachery

Study Verse: Psalm 12:5

Statement: Much of David's trouble (and sometimes, much of ours, too) comes from people betraying our trust or being deceitful. It must have been hard for David to hold onto his faith and trust in God when he was betrayed on every side by those who should have been his friends. Perhaps writing and singing these songs helped him to stay focused. What helps you?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Dear God, when I can't count on people, I can count on You. Help me never to be the kind of person who would betray another.*

Chapter: Psalm 13**Theme: How Long, Lord?****Study Verse: Psalm 13:6**

Statement: This would be a nice little psalm to set to music. Why don't you try it? There are three 2-verse stanzas. Notice, again, David's progression: he honestly expresses his feelings of abandonment and despair, he begs God to help him and lays out his situation, and then he ends with praise and trust. Can you praise and trust God while you are still praying for help?

Response: _____

Prayer: *David's Helper and my Helper, Lord, you are God of all. Sometimes I, too, feel You are taking too long to answer. Help me neither to hide from those feelings, nor to give in to them.*

Chapter: Psalm 14**Theme: Justice and Peace****Study Verse: Psalm 14:4**

Statement: Many psalms, as well as many, many other Bible passages, deal with fairness in God's kingdom. How do those who are in power treat those who are not? Here is one which speaks of corrupt "workers of wickedness" who "eat up people as they eat up bread." What do you think that means? Do you see situations in your area where this happens? What can you do about it?

Response: _____

Prayer: *God of justice and peace, throughout Your word You demand that Your people treat each other with compassion and mercy. You even set up an economy where all land went back to its original owners every 50 years, so that no one could get "too rich to care." What can I do to help bring about Your vision of fairness where I live?*

Chapter: Psalm 15

Theme: Description of a Heavenly Citizen

Study Verse: Psalm 15:1

Statement: Here is a psalm that is central to all psalms, or even to the whole Bible. This is a clear list of the attributes a faithful follower of God will have. Make a list of them in your own words, and if you are a girl, be sure to use “she” instead of “he.” Which characteristics come easily to you? Which are difficult?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Creator, this is the way You made me to be. Thank You so much for the characteristics You are growing in me now, and please help me to develop the ones that aren't there yet.*

Chapter: Psalm 16**Theme: God is Security, Now and Forever****Study Verse: Psalm 16:8**

Statement: This is another messianic psalm, as you can see in verse 10. God did not leave Jesus in the grave to decay. In another sense, though, like all psalms, it's for all of us, you included. It speaks of the joy and security now of following God, and also of future security in Him. If we follow God, our bodies may decay after death, but we will still be raised to live forever with Him. Choose your favorite bit of this psalm to write down, illustrate, and put up where you can see it.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Preserve me, O Lord, for I take refuge in You. You are the only Lord of my life, and I trust You to stay with me always.*

Chapter: Psalm 17**Theme: Prayer from a Hard Place****Study Verse: Psalm 17:8**

Statement: David faced a lot of troubles and dangers in his life. Do you, too? Do your prayers sometimes start in dismay and dread? If so, be sure to always end them in trust, whether you feel it or not—your heart will eventually follow your mind. And like the last verse, however our trials end here on earth, in the final end, we will be satisfied to see Jesus when we wake forever.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Beloved God, hear me—I know You always do. Be with me in joy and in trouble. Stay with me even until death, and then waken me with Your own dear voice.*

Chapter: Psalm 18**Theme: Praise for Deliverance****Study Verse: Psalm 18:6**

Statement: After all those trials, most of which were caused (at least in his younger years) by Saul, David cried out his joy at deliverance in this long song. First, there is a long list of things God is like. How many can you count? Which do you like best? The middle part sounds like a description of a thunderstorm. And then the praise for deliverance. Do you know the song we have today, based on verse 46?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Great Deliverer, sometimes You come in what seems like storm and danger, and it's only afterwards that I can see You had things in hand all along and what felt like trouble was Your way of sending blessing.*

Chapter: Psalm 19**Theme: A Song of Joy about God****Study Verse: Psalm 19:14**

Statement: This is one of the best-loved songs David wrote. It is in three parts. The first part, about how all of creation, without even any words, teaches us about God, has been used in music for centuries. Verses 7-10 and 14 were made into a song that was very popular some years ago. You can probably still find some of this music online if you have access. The psalm ends with a prayer to God to keep us from sin and help us to live holy lives.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Mighty Creator, You have not only given us a beautiful world, but You have put Your signature all over it. I learn about You every time I pay attention to a bird or a sunset or the growth of a food crop. Help me to pay attention even more.*

Chapter: Psalm 20

Theme: A Song for You!

Study Verse: Psalm 20:5

Statement: Here is an interesting psalm—it's not a song of David's feelings, but of his wishes for whoever sings or hears the song. That includes you and me! As you read through this song, think of specific times God has answered you in trouble, or granted you your heart's desire. Think of a way you can boast of His name to someone else this week.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Yahweh, You are my God as You were Jacob's and David's. You have delivered me from trouble, or given me my heart's desire. I do boast of Your name, and I thank You for Your love!*

Chapter: Psalm 21**Theme: For the King(s)****Study Verse: Psalm 21:13**

Statement: In this psalm, David praises God for caring for him through his kingship. Depending on how old he was when he wrote it, it's also possible that it could refer to his hopes for his son, Solomon, who did, in fact (after David's death, of course) fulfill all these hopes. It might be tempting to think this psalm doesn't refer to us—we're not kings or queens! But look again. What verses mean something to your life?

Response: _____

Prayer: *King of kings, You have put me in charge of responsibilities that may seem tiny to a world ruler, but matter to You and to me. Help me to be faithful, and grant me long life only within Your love, which is the only place I ever want to live.*

Chapter: Psalm 22**Theme: Jesus' Cry****Study Verse: Psalm 22:31**

Statement: Here is one of the greatest of messianic psalms. David wrote it from his own anguish—imagine if he'd known the true Messiah would quote it 1000 years later in His own anguish! But have you ever looked up the psalm Jesus quoted from on the cross? Look at the end—even during His agonizing death, Jesus was telling His enemies that He would prevail at last! *You* are one of those “generations yet unborn” who have been told His story!

Response: _____

Prayer: *Dear Lord, I admit I have felt as if You abandoned me, sometimes. Like Jesus, I know in my heart that the feeling is not the fact. May my tiny deeds of love help to shine the light of Your great love to every generation.*

Chapter: Psalm 23**Theme: Jesus is Our Shepherd****Study Verse: Psalm 23:1-6**

Statement: If you don't already know this psalm by heart, now is a good time to learn it. If you live where there are sheep, this imagery will be easily understandable to you. If not, learn what you can about sheep care; it is a very good picture of God's care for us. One pastor puts Psalms 22, 23, and 24 into a picture of Jesus' last days. Psalm 22 speaks of Jesus' death; 23 is peaceful and restful, like His brief time in the tomb; and 24—well, you'll find out tomorrow!

Response: _____

Prayer: *Good and loving Shepherd of my soul, I know I'm a pretty silly lamb, often wandering off or eating something I shouldn't, or forgetting to follow You. But I do love You, and I trust You to be with me to the end of my days.*

Chapter: Psalm 24**Theme: The King Arrives****Study Verse: Psalm 24:3, 4**

Statement: The first part of this psalm praises the great Creator and reminds us that all that exists is His alone. It points out who may stand in God's holy place—and Jesus is the only One who meets these criteria. Then it tells Part 3 of the three-psalm story: a beautiful image of Jesus arriving back in heaven after what must have seemed like a *long* 34 years, even to immortal beings! The angels set up an antiphonal chant to welcome Him—the Victor! Heaven is open to God's children now, and in Christ, we *can* have clean hands and a pure heart!

Response: _____

Prayer: *Hallelujah, Lord! You did it, You won, and in You, I can win, though I don't deserve it. Hallelujah, amen!*

Chapter: Psalm 25

Theme: A Prayer for Guidance

Study Verse: Psalm 25:5

Statement: David was constantly reminding himself through his songs to keep his eyes, his heart, his whole being centered on God. He needed the reminders—so do we! There are many great memory verses in this psalm. Find the one you need the most, write and illustrate it, and keep it where you can see it.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Remind me, Guide of my soul, to keep myself centered on You. Teach me Your paths and keep me in integrity and righteousness.*

Chapter: Psalm 26

Theme: More Prayer for Guidance

Study Verse: Psalm 26:2, 3

Statement: You can never ask too much for God to keep you in the path. Here, David is examining his soul. He could not always say what he was saying on the day he wrote this song, but sometimes he could honestly say he'd stuck close to God, not wavering in his faith or hanging out with wicked and deceitful people. How is your soul this week?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Examine me, Lord, test my mind and heart and keep me in Your truth.*

Chapter: Psalm 27**Theme: A Psalm for Fear****Study Verse: Psalm 27:4**

Statement: Are you ever afraid? David was—lots of times. He wrote songs about it, and in those songs, he reminded himself to trust God *no matter what*. It's especially difficult when people are telling lies about you. Part of the fear is that others will believe them. David begs God (and you can beg with him) to hold up his head and hide him in God's tabernacle. What do you fear? What will you do about it?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Protector, You are here with me now, no matter what is around me. I am afraid, but I will not let the fear take over, because I know You know just what to do, and will do it.*

Chapter: Psalm 28

Theme: Request—and Answer

Study Verse: Psalm 28:7

Statement: In this song, more than many of them, there is a very obvious division between the part that begs for God's help—especially that David not be punished with those who have done wickedly—and the part that praises God for answering and helping David. He says in so many words that one reason he writes these songs is to thank God. How do you show your gratitude?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Lord, I am so grateful. Today, I will find a way to use the particular gifts You have given me to show You and others how grateful I am.*

Chapter: Psalm 29

Theme: The Thunderstorm Psalm

Study Verse: Psalm 29:11

Statement: This is another favorite. Read it out loud, perhaps with friends, with dramatic emphasis, and see how the storm begins slowly, then builds in power and drama, and finally stills. What is it like after a storm passes? Can you remember, as this psalm reminds us, that God is present from beginning to end of any storm, whether physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Dear God, the storms of my life can be powerful ones. Help me to remember that You are much more powerful! You don't bring us storms, but You do get us through them.*

March 3

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Chapter: Psalm 30

Theme: Mourning into Dancing

Study Verse: Psalm 30:11

Statement: We don't know what particular circumstance David was praising God over. This psalm has been sung by millions over the millennia, from someone praising God for deliverance from illness or death to one weeping tears of joy beside the crib of a child who is getting well now. What mourning has God turned into dancing for you?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Precious Jesus, so many times I have been in trouble, and You have both been with me through the trouble and brought me out of it, sometimes miraculously. If I am in trouble again, I will remember that, trust You, and sing Your praises anyway.*

2020 MORNING WATCH for Youth *and* Young Adults (Quarter I)

A Chapter a Day Bible Reading Plan with **daily** chapter summary

THIS PLAN WILL TAKE YOU THROUGH THE ENTIRE BIBLE IN 3 YEARS AND 3 MONTHS

Chapter: Psalm 31

Theme: Prayer in Great Sorrow

Study Verse: Psalm 31:24

Statement: As we've seen, many of the psalms are about being in distress and asking for God's help, but this one is more extreme. This time, David is speaking of being in deep anguish, apparently for a long time. Have you ever been in this state, or known someone who was? What caused such great grief? Can you still praise, as this psalm demonstrates? Count how many verses are about the sorrow and how many are about trust and praise.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Great Lord, help me to trust You when I am in great sorrow, and to be a loving help to others when they grieve.*

Chapter: Psalm 32

Theme: The Blessedness of Forgiveness

Study Verse: Psalm 32:1

Statement: This song has much to teach us of sin and forgiveness. First there is the graphic description of guilt eating up the sinner who has not confessed. Then the sinner admits the sin, confesses, and asks forgiveness. The psalm then goes into God's own voice, in verses 8 and 9. What does God say to you here?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I know what it feels like to fail You. I hate it! It makes me feel sick. Help me to confess and repent right away when I sin—to You and to any person I have wronged. Help me also to forgive readily and release another person's guilt and sorrow.*

Chapter: Psalm 33

Theme: A Song about Music

Study Verse: Psalm 33:2, 3

Statement: When we really want to praise God, there are lots of ways to do it, but nothing does it so well as music! Even the earth praises God in wind and wave and birdsong. How much more the children of God, with voices and instruments. How do you use music to praise the Creator?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Great Creator, You are worthy of every form of joyful praise we can think up! Help me to do more of that, every day of my life.*

March 7

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Chapter: Psalm 34

Theme: Praise for Deliverance

Study Verse: Psalm 34:3

Statement: It's always interesting when the psalm includes a note about when and why it was written. You can read the story in 1 Samuel 21:10-15. But we can all sing this psalm not only when God delivers us from trouble, but (as the first verse reminds us) at *all* times, whether things look good or not. There is also a messianic reference in verse 20. None of Jesus' bones were broken when He died.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Lord, You are always with me; Your angel is always camping out here in this sad world with me instead of in the glories of heaven. I can't thank You enough, so I'll try to live my life in a way that thanks You.*

2020 MORNING WATCH for Youth *and* Young Adults (Quarter I)

A Chapter a Day Bible Reading Plan with **daily** chapter summary

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Chapter: Psalm 35**Theme: Unjustly Accused****Study Verse: Psalm 35:9**

Statement: Have you ever been unjustly accused? Have people, even perhaps people you thought were your friends, spoken evil of you and tried to ruin your reputation? It's painful, isn't it? Bad enough to have people speak ill of you when you have done wrong; it's even worse when you don't deserve it. Both David and Jesus know what this feels like. You can read this psalm and pray with David for the truth to come out, and for faith to hold you in the meantime.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, I know people spoke lies about You—and still do! I will defend You whenever the chance comes, and will trust You when I face ridicule or lies myself.*

Chapter: Psalm 36

Theme: God's Great Goodness

Study Verse: Psalm 36:7

Statement: This song begins with a description of wicked people, but it uses up most of its time in some heartwarming expressions of the love and care of God. You could paint a picture with this vivid imagery. Which part is your favorite? How have you taken refuge under God's wings?

Response: _____

Prayer: *My God, I huddle under You and I am safe. Help me to remember that is always true, not matter what my outside circumstances may be.*

Chapter: Psalm 37

Theme: Wickedness Will Not Last

Study Verse: Psalm 37:3, 4

Statement: Sometimes we look around us, or listen to the news, and it seems that only the wicked get their way all the time! Rich people oppress their workers and grow fat on the backs of those who do the real work for them. War leaders use up the lives of people around them, even children, as soldiers for their grim causes. Where is God? David reminds us—none of this will last. Eventually, every one of these cruel ones will face their Maker and answer for their sins. In the meantime, we can commit ourselves to God and seek to live in quiet trust.

Response: _____

Prayer: *King of the universe, I know Your real battle with evil is at the bottom of every human battle. And I know You will win! I am on Your side, no one else's!*

Chapter: Psalm 38

Theme: A Song of Repentance

Study Verse: Psalm 38:21, 22

Statement: Here is another prayer David made for forgiveness for sin. This time, when enemies speak against him, they may have cause. But he knows that only in God is healing and restoration. When you have done wrong and you feel miserable and guilty, read this psalm and ask God's forgiveness first. Then you will be prepared to talk to anyone you may have wronged. And you will be healed.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Merciful Lord, You keep on forgiving us—and we keep on needing it! Please don't only forgive me, but change me so that I don't keep doing wrong.*

Chapter: Psalm 39

Theme: A Song for Trying to Change

Study Verse: Psalm 39:12

Statement: David had trouble with hasty speech. He would say and do things he really didn't want to do. So, he tried being silent and saying nothing at all. Have you tried that? How did it work? It didn't work for David; he got frustrated and begged God to make him able to do and say the right things, and able to remember how frail and short-lived we humans are. What are you praying for today?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Mighty Creator, You intended us for long, healthy lives full of love and goodness. We made a different choice, and now our short lives are filled with selfishness and sorrow. Help me to hide my life inside of You so that my days, short or long, will be filled with Your goodness!*

Chapter: Psalm 40

Theme: Praise for Answered Prayer

Study Verse: Psalm 40:3

Statement: So many times, David prays for help in a bad situation—and almost always ends those prayers with praise in advance. This time he is praising God for deliverance that has already happened. What kind of deliverance has God granted you recently? Have you praised Him? Have you told someone else (if it's appropriate)?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Deliverer, You have saved me from so many “miry pits”! You have given me a new song, and words of encouragement for others. When they see how I have failed, and how You have delivered and changed me, perhaps they will want to know You, too.*

Chapter: Psalm 41

Theme: A Prayer in Sickness

Study Verse: Psalm 41:3

Statement: When you are sick, everything seems gloomy. Your sins rise up against you, and it's easy to feel as if you'll never be well again and God has forgotten you. Praying with David, you can remind yourself this is not true—it's just the imagination of a fevered body. God is with you and will heal you—at least your soul, if not your body—and ultimately, you will live with Him in heaven, forever. Note that the psalm begins by speaking of those who are kind to others when *they* are afflicted. Why do you think that matters?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Healer, heal my heart. Heal me when I am ill, and help me, also to be kind to those who are ill.*

Chapter: Psalm 42

Theme: A Song of Encouragement

Study Verse: Psalm 42:5

Statement: The first 41 psalms have mostly been songs of David. Now we enter a new section of the psalms, with this one which was written by some of the musicians that were sons of Korah. This is in itself a great encouragement. These people's ancestor led a revolt against God and Moses. Yet they are choosing to be faithful, and in fact were an important branch of the musicians for God's temple. What can you learn from this psalm?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Lord, even if my own family members may not be faithful, or may be outright rebellious against You, I choose to be Your child, and to be faithful.*

Chapter: Psalm 43

Theme: Praise Him Anyway!

Study Verse: Psalm 43:4

Statement: This psalm, by an unknown psalmist, follows the pattern we have learned, of expressing the truth about negative feelings, but then not letting them have the last word. It goes back and forth between despair and hope. Which does it end on?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, please help me to learn while I am young that no amount of despair or depression can stop me from hoping in You, no matter what my feelings are. Help me not to ignore them or pretend they are what they are not, but also not to let them rule me.*

Chapter: Psalm 44

Theme: A Cry for Help Against Enemies

Study Verse: Psalm 44:26

Statement: The sons of Korah must have written this song during one of the times when Israel was in danger from the enemies that surrounded them. This always happened when the Israelites turned from their faith in God, but the singers are pointing out that *they* have been faithful. Why should they have to face the consequences of others' evil-doing? What would you tell them if you could? Do they end in hope?

Response: _____

Prayer: *God, the world is growing old and feeble, and all of humanity is sharing in the consequences brought on us all by the actions of those who have refused to care for Your creation—people, animals, and all. We are all sinners, but some of us at least try to follow You and be faithful. Take care of us, as You have promised, even in the midst of calamity.*

Chapter: Psalm 45

Theme: A Wedding Song

Study Verse: Psalm 45:7

Statement: Here, in the middle of the psalms, is a song of love! It was written by the descendants of Korah, and seems to be about Solomon's wedding, but could relate to any king, or even to other weddings. Can you find some parts that might also be seen as showing Jesus' relationship with His church?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Bridegroom, Your bride, the church, is waiting. Please hurry and come!*

Chapter: Psalm 46

Theme: God is Present with Us

Study Verse: Psalm 46:10

Statement: This is another of the most popular psalms of all time, and you can see why. If you haven't already, it's a good one to learn by heart. How does it fit with your life, or with today's world? Try looking up verse 10 in several different Bible translations and see what you can learn. Do you trust even when it seems that everything is falling apart around you?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Mighty and present Help, I will cling to You no matter what oceans of troubles may surround me. I will cease my striving and struggling and know that You are God.*

Chapter: Psalm 47

Theme: Praise Song

Study Verse: Psalm 47:1

Statement: There are two Korahite “songbooks,” one here in the 40s and one in the 80s. This is a praise song—a loud one! If you count, you’ll find clapping, shouting, singing, and trumpet blasts. Remember that their trumpets couldn’t play tunes like ours; they could only make one or two notes but were blasted as sounds of joy and victory, or sometimes warning. What are the people praising God for in this psalm? How does it make you feel when you join in loud, excited praise to the Lord?

Response: _____

Prayer: *King of Kings, we praise You, we rejoice in You, we shout Your name and Your glory to the nations!*

Chapter: Psalm 48

Theme: Praise in Zion

Study Verse: Psalm 48:14

Statement: Another praise song, this one goes in a different direction, suggesting that we “go around Zion, consider her ramparts, and go through her palaces, so we can tell coming generations.” Naturally, they are speaking of God’s temple at Mt. Zion, but what if we think of it symbolically, too? What are the “ramparts and palaces” God has built around your life? How can you “walk through them” and praise God for them?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Jesus, You are the High Priest of my life. You have built ramparts of Your love and care around my life, and I am so grateful!*

Chapter: Psalm 49

Theme: Human Pomp will not Last

Study Verse: Psalm 49:3

Statement: As you can see from the first few verses, this is meant to be a teaching song. Its subject is the same as Psalm 37: Don't worry about the wicked getting rich; it won't last. There is another interesting thought in the middle. What do you think the writer meant by saying that no one can ransom another person? How are we ransomed?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Dear Lord, help me to learn the principles in this psalm, and not be jealous or envious when others seem to be more "successful," so long as I am safe in the knowledge that You redeem me and will save me from the power of the grave.*

Chapter: Psalm 50

Theme: Judgment

Study Verse: Psalm 50:23

Statement: Now we come to a psalm by Asaph, one of the greatest of the temple singers. His song tells the story of Judgment Day: First there is a beautiful description of God coming to His throne and calling us all to stand before Him, then He rebukes the rebellious, and finally He makes a very particular promise to those who wish to be on the right side at Judgment Day. What do you think a “sacrifice of thanksgiving” means?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Our great Mediator and Judge, I am so glad it will be You judging and not a human! You are the only one who can read our hearts and know our true intentions. Please keep mine pure and in line with Your love.*

Chapter: Psalm 51

Theme: David's Contrition

Study Verse: Psalm 51:10-13

Statement: Aside from the 23rd, this is perhaps the most famous of all psalms. David had the courage to label it as being written right after his great sin of taking Bathsheba and having her husband killed. There is so much in this psalm! You can find step-by-step instructions for true repentance. Take some time and write down the steps you find. Learn those steps, in case you sin—but try to keep your eyes on God and on others' needs rather than your own, and you'll be saved from such great sin as this.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Lord, in the story of Your mercy toward David, and his humility toward You, I learn a lot about what You are really like. I do earnestly repent of my own sins and pray that you keep me from greater ones.*

Chapter: Psalm 52**Theme: Expressing Anger****Study Verse: Psalm 52:8**

Statement: David had reason to be very angry when he wrote this psalm. He had been betrayed to Saul, and many people were murdered because of it. You can read the story in 1 Sam. 21 and 22. David felt that it was at least partly his fault—he had seen Doeg and feared he would betray them. He could have gotten caught up in revenge, but notice how he ends this psalm. Do you think putting your feelings into music or other art might help to keep them from burning out of control?

Response: _____

Prayer: *God of justice, we can leave all “getting even” in Your hands, because only You can read their hearts, too! All mortals are Your children, and perhaps You can yet save some that look wicked to us—but not if we take our own revenge on them!*

Chapter: Psalm 53

Theme: A Song of Lament

Study Verse: Psalm 53:6

Statement: This is one of the psalms that shows us what to do when we feel hopeless. All but one verse of this psalm are about bad things—fools, corrupt people, those who “eat up God’s people like bread” again. David feels as if there is no justice anywhere. Even the last verse is more of a cry to God than a trusting statement of faith. Have you ever felt like this?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Lord, we believe; help our unbelief! It’s sometimes very hard to see any hope, when all around us the “bosses”—crime bosses, country bosses, war bosses, corporate bosses—seem to be acting with no fear of consequences. With David I beg you, send your salvation! Restore Your captive people! And show me how to help.*

Chapter: Psalm 54

Theme: Another Prayer for Safety

Study Verse: Psalm 54:4

Statement: Once again, we see one of David’s early psalms—yet again betrayed to King Saul, who wants to kill him. This time, he is able to cling more clearly to his faith, not only naming God as his helper and sustainer, but also, in verse 6, showing us what that “sacrifice of thanksgiving” is. He is sacrificing in praise *now*, before his prayer is answered! Can you do that?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Savior, You are my only safety. I thank You right now for deliverance I know will come in Your own time.*

Chapter: Psalm 55

Theme: The Worst Betrayal

Study Verse: Psalm 55:22

Statement: David has been betrayed many times, often by people who should have known better. But this is the worst. In this song, we can see that his anguish is not just from the betrayal and danger and injustice—it's because it was a friend, someone he trusted. He says he could bear it if it were an enemy. Jesus must feel the same way, when we who claim His name turn on Him. Has a friend ever turned on you?

Response: _____

Prayer: *Jesus, You called us Your friends, and I want to be a true friend to You. I don't ever want to betray Your trust! Keep me close to Your side, I pray.*

Chapter: Psalm 56

Theme: Trust in God

Study Verse: Psalm 56:3, 4

Statement: You can easily see the difference in this psalm, which tells of betrayal by an enemy David expected to be against him. He does not have the same heartbroken sorrow about it. But look at verses 3 and 4: “I *will* trust You,” (an act of will); “I *have* trusted You,” the result. If we make the choice, our heart will follow.

Response: _____

Prayer: *Faithful God, You are trustworthy, and no matter how bad it looks, I will trust You, and I have trusted You!*

Chapter: Psalm 57

Theme: A Beautiful Song

Study Verse: Psalm 57:7

Statement: This is what David wrote after he triumphed over temptation in the cave with Saul. He could have killed his enemy once and for all—his men thought he should—but he did not raise his hand against God’s anointed. Do you see a difference in attitude in this song, written after overcoming temptation?

Response: _____

Prayer: I will give thanks to You among the peoples, Lord, and sing praises to You among the nations. Your lovingkindness is as high as heaven!

Chapter: Psalm 58

Theme: Expressing Rage

Study Verse: Psalm 58:11

Statement: This time, David does not let faith and trust shine through. He prays for a kind of vengeance which, if God granted it, would make David as wicked as those he prays against. The very last verse at least brings up a reward for righteousness, but the implication is that all that destruction *is* their reward. We can see that God understands our anger and we can safely take it to Him, but we can also see how it can lead us astray just like those we are angry with.

Response: _____

Prayer: *O Lord, I know You will bring vengeance in the Last Day, but I also know it is a “strange act” for You, and You will hate it more deeply than we can begin to understand, destroying once and for all those who were originally Your beloved children. Save me from thoughts of rage and vengeance like this.*