

How Do We Live out the Most Important Command the Scripture Gives: Loving God?

God gives us an important roadmap in the Psalms. What do the Psalms teach us about loving and worshipping God? How do the Psalms guide us through the trials of life as well as the mountain tops? Come and be rooted again in God's vision for how to love and worship Him.

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I. Introduction

A. Loving God is the greatest privilege we have as humans

1. God created us for relationship with Him

II. The Psalms

A. Book of 150 poems – Unique among the other books of the Bible

B. A source of guidance, the Psalms have a profound effect on the development of the life of the believer.

C. My love for God increases as I read and meditate on the Psalms because:

1. The Psalms express all facets of life (there is nothing new under the sun)

a. The Psalms offer us a look through different subjects, experiences, challenges and praise more than any other book in the scriptures. Psalms help us express ourselves to the Lord. Praise, Lament, Grief, Joy, Confusion, etc., their words can become our words to God.

b. As Ignatius said, "We don't study the scriptures, we study *with* them."

Psalm 18 – A Psalm of Love for God

*I love You, Lord, my strength.
The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise,
and I have been saved from my enemies.
The cords of death entangled me;
the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.
The cords of the grave coiled around me;
the snares of death confronted me.
In my distress I called to the Lord;
I cried to my God for help.
From His temple He heard my voice;
my cry came before Him, into His ears.*

2. The Psalms renew my mind to love God's law

- a. Romans 12:2 - Be ye not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
- b. The walk of faith is a walk of transformation. Transformation is the result of renewed thinking.

Psalm 119

³³ *Teach me, Lord, the way of your decrees,
that I may follow it to the end.^[b]*
³⁴ *Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law
and obey it with all my heart.*
³⁵ *Direct me in the path of your commands,
for there I find delight.*
³⁶ *Turn my heart toward your statutes
and not toward selfish gain.*
³⁷ *Turn my eyes away from worthless things;
preserve my life according to your word.^[c]*
³⁸ *Fulfill your promise to your servant,
so that you may be feared.*
³⁹ *Take away the disgrace I dread,
for your laws are good.*
⁴⁰ *How I long for your precepts!
In your righteousness preserve my life.*

- c. Love must begin with truth - If we are not grounded in truth, we can be wrong about worship
 - i. John 4
 - ii. Cain and Abel
- d. Nothing else in our life should concern us more than to love God and be loved by God. God's word and God's law is his expression and will for the best life on earth. The Law points to Jesus Christ, who both empowers us by the Holy Spirit to fulfill it and forgives and restores us when we break it.
- e. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." John 14:15

3. The Psalms teach me what God thinks about me

Psalm 139

*13 I knit you together in your mother's womb
 14 You are fearfully and wonderfully made
 16 My eyes saw your unformed substance*

Psalm 8

*6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
 you put everything under their^[a] feet:
 7 all flocks and herds,
 and the animals of the wild,
 8 the birds in the sky,
 and the fish in the sea,
 all that swim the paths of the seas.*

Psalm 103

*13 As a father has compassion on his children,
 so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;
 14 for he knows how we are formed,
 he remembers that we are dust.*

Psalm 8:5

I have crowned you with Glory (as the pinnacle and final act of the 6th day of creation)

4. The Psalms anchor us in times of trouble

- a. We can hide and seek shelter (Psalm 57)
- b. We can cry against trouble (Psalm 82)

Psalm 71

In you, Lord, I have taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame.

²In your righteousness, rescue me and deliver me;
turn your ear to me and save me.

³Be my rock of refuge,
to which I can always go;
give the command to save me,
for you are my rock and my fortress.

⁴Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of those who are evil and cruel.

5. The Psalms cultivate a life of worship

- a. Col 3:16 “*Sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.*”

Psalm 100

¹Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

²Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

³Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

⁴Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to
him and praise his name.

⁵For the Lord is good, and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues
through all generations.

The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God which made David dance (C.S. Lewis)

Suggested Readings:

- Commentary on *Psalms* (three book series) Eric Lane, Christian Focus Publishing
- <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/psalms>
- *Prayerbook of the Bible: Introduction to the Psalms* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer