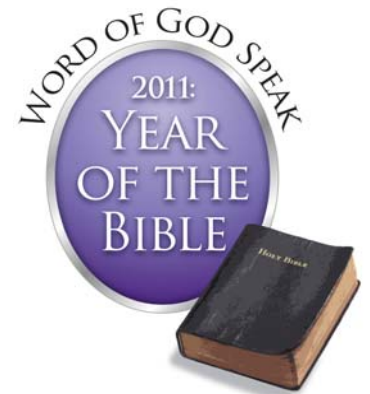


## Week 31: Psalms 97-106

### Study Guide for the week of August 1-7, 2011



#### Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, spend time with Psalms 103 and 104. These are great hymns of praise for the Lord. Psalm 103 calls on us to praise the Lord with all of our inmost being (vss. 1-2) and then lists some “benefits” the Lord has bestowed on us (vss. 3-19). What benefits listed mean the most to you? Why? Are there other benefits you would add to the list? What do you think it means to praise the Lord with *all of your inmost being*? How do you imagine getting to the point where you would praise the Lord like that? In a similar way to the previous psalm, Psalm 104 is a hymn that lists reasons to praise the Lord. In this psalm, however, the reasons listed have more to do with what God does through nature. From the acts of God listed in this psalm, what moves you most to praise the Lord? Why? What would you add to the list of the acts of God in nature that move you to praise the Lord? Psalm 104:15a says that the Lord makes “*wine that gladdens the heart of man,*” What does this verse teach you? How has God’s gift of alcohol gladdened our hearts? How has it saddened our hearts? What does this example teach you about how we faithfully use but also misuse the good gifts God has given us? Can you think of other examples? How can you see Psalm 104:33-34 describing your life? Explain.

**Discussion starters** *If you are leading a small group, you may not have time for all of these questions. Pick the ones that will work best for your group.*

1. Ice Breaker Question: How has the Lord been faithful to the generations of your family? If you have children or grandchildren, how is condition of their faith?
2. Was there something that jumped out at you, surprised you, encouraged you, or disturbed you from the readings this last week (or two)? Why?
3. Psalm 97 This is an Enthronement Psalm that praises Yahweh as the Kind enthroned over the universe. (See v. 1) List the reasons why you are glad that the Lord reigns. What would it be like if the Lord did not reign over the universe?
4. Psalm 97:7,9 Twice this psalm declares “*You, O Lord, are exalted far above all gods.*” In Old Testament times this might have been referring to the other “gods” that people worshipped, Baal, golden calves, idols, etc. What are the “other gods” that compete with the Lord God for preeminence in our lives today? What do you do to keep the Lord first in your life?
5. Psalm 98:1 What is a new thing that the Lord is teaching you recently?
6. Psalm 99 How do you praise the Lord?
7. Psalm 100 I read this psalm when I visit parents after the birth of a baby. Do you think this is an appropriate use of this psalm? Why?
8. Psalm 101:3a How do we violate this spiritual guideline?
9. Psalm 106:4-5 Pray these words.
10. Psalm 106:6-39 These verses list the many specific ways that God’s people turned their backs on the Lord. The list states names and particular events. Read verses 37-38 to see the great depth of their sin. If you were writing a psalm listing the ways we Christians in America are turning our backs on God, what would you include? Be as specific as you can.

#### Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 106:1

#### Caring Time

It is important to make time in your group to care for each other. Sometimes that happens during the discussion and sometimes it is best to end your time together praying for each other.

Building off of Psalm 100:5, one possibility this week would be to pray for the faith in each your families using this question:

**Who is a person in your family that you would like us to ask God to grow in faith?  
Is there a particular prayer request that you have for this person's faith?**

After everyone has shared go into a time of prayer having the person or couple sitting to your right pray for the family member(s) you mentioned in your answer.

Also encourage people in the group to get together outside of the group time to foster deeper friendships with each other. Remember that being in a small group is primarily about sharing life together. It has been said that the most important time in small groups is the time people connect outside of the meeting time. Make plans now with your small group to enjoy an end of the summer event together.