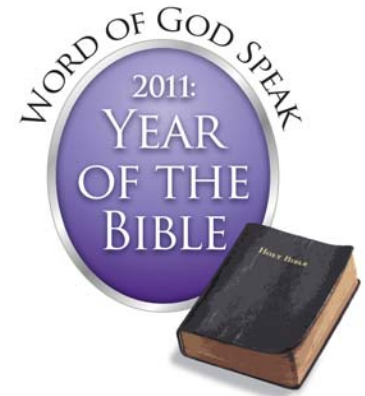


## Week 34: Psalms 129 - 138

### Study Guide for the week of August 22-28, 2011



#### Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, spend time with Psalm 136. See question #7 below. Write a history, in list form, of the events in your life where you have experienced the enduring love of God. Be specific and brief as you list each event. You may want to write “His love endures forever!” after each event as the psalmist did. As you read over your list, how does doing this affect your faith? How does it enhance your view of God?

Turn your thinking about your history into prayer as you thank and praise God for his enduring love that you have experience. How could you imagine using any part of your history as a testimony to the enduring love of God? Pray for God to use your history as a way to share the gospel with someone else. Be prepared. God will likely put someone across your path that can relate to a part of your history. That person will be drawn closer to God as they hear how God’s love endured with you through that part of your life. For a moment consider your future. What do you look forward to in experiencing the enduring love of God? Turn your consideration into prayer, asking God to meet the desires of your heart. Read Psalm 20:4 as you close your prayer.

**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: What is something that you had to wait for where it was difficult for you to remain patient?
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 130:5-6 What are you waiting for? To get married, to find a new job, to retire, to go on vacation, to be healthy, to be happy, to lose 10 pounds, to have kids, to get the kids out of the house, the start of school, the end of school? The psalmist is crying from the depths, waiting for the world to be put right. Where does the psalmist put his “waiting energy” – in himself, in others, in a change of circumstances, in God? Where are you putting your “waiting energy”?
4. Psalm 131 Sometimes it seems we never grow out of our childish desire for attention and adoration. We may no longer be saying, “Watch me, Mommy!” or “Look at me, Daddy!” but we often want to be noticed for our accomplishments. What are the ways you seek attention or adoration today? Psalm 131 is one of humility (v. 1) and trust (v. 2). What would happen to your hunger for attention if you stopped striving for eventful experiences (including spiritual ones) and instead quietly slipped into God’s presence and allowed him to quiet and comfort you as a mother lovingly quiets her tired or frustrated child?
5. Psalm 133 Describe how “good and pleasant” it is for you when the key relationships in your life are characterized by deep unity. Describe the same when deep unity exists in your church. Describe how you seek to contribute to that unity.
6. Psalm 135 This is a hymn of praise to the Lord. How do you most often praise the Lord?
7. Psalm 136 (*This question may take some time for everyone to answer.*) This psalm is a brief history of how the Hebrew people experienced the enduring love of God. Notice how specific the references are. Give your personal history of how you have experienced God’s love enduring in your life. Try to give specific examples of how you experienced God’s love enduring in your life. Briefly describe each event. As you share, you are invited to end the telling of each event by saying “His love endures forever!” before moving on to describe the next event in your life.

## **Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 136:1**

### **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 136, one possibility this week would be to pray over each person's history and future. Use this question to focus your prayers:

**What is one event from your life where you would like to thank God for his enduring love that he displayed in that event? Thank God for this. What is one desire that you would like to ask God to fulfill?**

After everyone has shared, go into a time of prayer and have each person pray for themselves, based on their answers to the questions.

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.