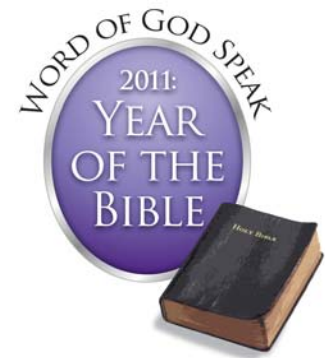


Week 35: Psalms 139 - 147

Study Guide for the week of August 29 – September 4, 2011



Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, spend time with Psalm 139. This among the most cherished psalms. Why do you think that is so? Slowly read through this psalm out loud, speaking it directly to God. As you do this, what are the verses that give you the most comfort and hope? Are there any verses that you find troubling or threatening? Reflecting on the state of your faith in light of Psalm 139, is viewing God as this uber present force in your life comforting or threatening? Describe how contemplating this psalm helps you to surrender more to the Lord. Again, review this psalm and pick one verse that speaks the most to you right now. Memorize that verse and speak it through out the week. Psalm 139 invites us into a type of prayer called the prayer of examen. In it, we welcome God to “search me ... and lead me.” In this type of prayer, we discover how God has been present in our day and how we responded to him. We also allow God to show us those areas that need to be cleansed, purified and healed. This week, invite God to join you in a spiritual inventory each evening. Quiet yourself and begin by praying Ps 139:23-24. Then ask the Holy Spirit to help you see through God’s eyes ...

- What gifts you have received during the day that you can be thankful for.
- Where God has been working during they day in your life; where you cooperated with God; where you were uncooperative with God.
- The forgiveness God offers for the times when you have not been attentive and responsive to God’s presence and love in your life.
- How God will guide you through tomorrow.

End by praying Ps 23.

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: Walk through the decades of your life. In each decade, who was the person that knew you the best?
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 139 This among the most cherished psalms. Why do you think that is so? Slowly read through this psalm out loud, speaking it directly to God. As you do this, what are the verses that give you the most comfort and hope? Explain. Are there any verses that you find troubling or threatening? Explain.
4. Psalm 141 This is the psalm we sing during the vespers service. It is a series of personal requests made to God. Some of the requests are asking God to strengthen one’s faith walk. Walk through the psalm and describe each request. Which request speak most to you right now? You are invited to pray these requests over each other.
5. Psalm 143:2 This verse is similar to other verses that teach we are all sinful. (Psalm 14:3; 53:3; Romans 3:23) There are some who object to this kind of teaching saying that the Church is too negative when it preaches these verses. “How can a baby be sinful?” is a question that is asked. How would you explain this Biblical truth to someone?
6. Psalm 143:5-10 Try praying these verses out loud to God in the morning to start your day. If you did this, share with the group how your day went after doing this.
7. Psalm 145 Circle the word “all” each time it is used in this psalm. If you have a New Living Translation of the Bible, you can do the same with “everyone”. Now read John 3:16-17. What strikes you as you compare these two passages?
8. Psalm 146:1-2 calls us to sing praises all our life. How can you do this? Read Deuteronomy 10:21, Luke 24:52-53, Hebrews 13:15, and Revelation 5:11-12. As you reflect on these

passages, is a life of praise a reasonable expectation in our world today? What do you need to do in your life to better orient it toward continual praise?

Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 139:23-24

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. One possibility this week would be to pray out of Psalm 139:23. Begin by having each person answer this question:

What is an “anxious thought” that you have and that you would like us to pray over?

After everyone has shared, go into a time of prayer having the person sitting to your right pray over you and your anxious thought.

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.