



## MAY REFLECTION GUIDE

### DAY 122-152

*This month I grouped some days of Psalms together and some days of the narrative together for easier discussion. So it will not necessarily be in the order of the days we read them.*

- Tim Keller has written an amazing devotional book walking through all the Psalms called *"The Songs of Jesus"*. Some of the thoughts from this book will be included as well as thoughts from the Bible Recap podcast as we walk through the Psalms together.
- We cover so many Psalms, we will not address every single one of them in this reflection guide, we will just hit the highlights.
- When looking at the narrative in I & II Chronicles vs what we see in Samuel & Kings, Tara-Leigh reminds us that "You can imagine Chronicles as a news story and Samuel & Kings as a docuseries. And if you forget which is which, just remember that the names of the books should hint toward which one is more personal."

### **Day 122-123 - Psalm 133, 106, 107**

**Psalm 133** is such a small little psalm, but such a beautiful message of unity.

Tim Keller has this to say in his book "The Songs of Jesus" about Psalm 133:

*"The unity of God's people brings opposites together, symbolized by tall Hermon in the rural north and the little hill of Zion in the urban south (verse 3). For Hermon's dew to fall on Zion would be a miracle—and so is the supernatural bond that brings people far divergent in culture, race, and class together in the Lord. The unity and love he gives us is like precious oil in ancient times (verse 2), making people fragrant and attractive to us who otherwise we would dismiss or reject. So "be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2–3)."*

Unity is impossible apart from the Lord. This is why we see injustice, prejudice, and bias in our world.

- **If unity is impossible apart from God, how does that change or inform your idea of unity?**
- **In light of what is occurring in our world today, what role should Christian play in helping to bring unity?**

### **Psalm 106**

Look at Psalm 106:7 paired with 106:45

vs. 7 says "Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works; they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love..."

vs. 45 says "For their sake he remembered his covenant, and relented according to the abundance of his steadfast love."

He showers us with an ABUNDANCE of his steadfast love whether we remember that He loves us or not... I couldn't help but think of what our lives could look like if we remembered this daily and lived life accordingly.

Tara-Leigh says,

*"The psalmist points out how vital it is to remember God's works and to remember God's love for us, and that is what will keep us abiding in Him and obeying Him. He doesn't say "remember the laws", He says, "Remember that you are LOVED." Forgetting that God loves us leaves a space in our heart where sin and rebellion sneak in. That's why reading His Word every day and looking for Him on these pages every day has a way of reshaping our hearts and our lives."*

- **Do you often forget His Abundant Love? What would change if you remembered it on a daily basis?**

Tim Keller reminds us that

*"Actually every day that your heart keeps pumping, your country is not invaded, and your brain keeps functioning is wholly an undeserved gift of God. We ought to live simple, normal, uneventful days full of amazed, thankful joy."*

In **Psalm 107**, we see several different types of people represented... some meandering through life, some being rebellious, some falling into sin unknowingly...but they all had one thing in common, they all cried out to the Lord.

Tara-Leigh reminds us that:

*"All of these people cried to Him, and He had mercy on them all, regardless of whether they arrived in their circumstances through oppression, evil, sorrow, or some combination of those."*

Tim Keller says this of Psalm 107 -

*"Despite their radically different situations, there was one common factor. Every time the people 'cried to the Lord' (verses 6, 13, 19, and 28) they were heard and given what they needed—community, forgiveness, healing, and haven. The lesson? The love of God is not earned; it's a gift of grace. You connect to it not by your merits or the quality of your life but through dependent prayer. Everyone who cried to God was heard. Behold how he loves us."*

- **Meditate on the idea of God's unconditional love being a gift that we cannot earn. What feelings does that bring?**
- **Have you ever cried out to the Lord and been given what you NEEDED instead of what you ASKED for? Share if you feel comfortable.**

## **Day 124, 127 - I Chronicles 13-17, II Samuel**

### **6-7**

In **I Chronicles 13**, we see the story of Uzzah touching the ark, this often bring up questions about why God acted so swiftly to kill him. **Here's some things to consider:**

- 1.) No matter how innocently, touching the ark was in direct violation of God's law and was to result in death. Failing to follow God's precise instructions would be seen as (a) not revering God's words (b) having an independent attitude that might border on rebellion (c) disobedience.
- 2.) The ark had stayed for a period of time at Uzzah's house, he was the son of Abinadab ([2 Samuel 6:3](#)), so he may have become accustomed to its presence. There's an old saying, "familiarity breeds contempt," Uzzah, having been around

the ark in his own home, could likely have forgotten the holiness that it represented. There are times when we, too, fail to recognize the holiness of God, becoming too familiar with Him with an irreverent attitude.

3.) Uzzah, for a moment, felt it was his responsibility to save the integrity of God, and that our almighty God somehow needed Uzzah's assistance, yet ultimately God was in control. We often try to take matters into our own hands forgetting that God's sovereignty and plan is the best.

Yes, God is loving and merciful, but He is also holy and He defends His holiness with His power, and affronts to His holiness sometimes bring about His holy wrath.

➤ **What did you learn about God in this encounter with Uzzah and the ark?**

After seeing what happened with Uzzah and the ark, we see David struck with fear. David knew he had disregarded the rules for the ark and this led to what happened. This kind of fear drove him from God, he abandoned the ark.

Tara-Leigh says this about David's fear:

*"After God struck Uzzah dead, David becomes afraid of God. We've talked about proper fear of the Lord before, and it's entirely different than being afraid of God. Proper fear of God, the kind that rightly understands His heart -- is made up of delight and awe, and it draws you TO God. But this is the kind of fear that drives a person FROM God."*

- **What is the difference between a "fear of the LORD" that draws you to Him and one that drives you from Him?**
- **Can you share a time you have experienced one or the other?**

**In II Samuel 7**, we see Nathan tell David to do what He wants because the Lord is with Him, but the Lord has other plans.

*Tara-Leigh says, "Nathan basically says, 'Totally! Do whatever you want!' But it turns out that Nathan spoke too soon, without seeking God. You may hear people say to follow your heart. But even the man after God's own heart doesn't get to follow his heart. And he doesn't always get everything he wants. We know this because later that night, God corrects Nathan's advice. So Nathan goes back and tells David, 'Oops. Don't follow your heart -- follow your God. And by the way, God says the answer to this prayer is 'no'."*

God reveals the Davidic Covenant to Nathan and he spoke it to David. God says, "It is not you who will build my house, I will raise up your offspring after you and I will establish his kingdom." David's response of "Who am I Lord that you have brought me thus far?" shows humility and confidence in the Lord.

- **Have you ever prayed for something and God said "No"?**
- **Were you able to have a response like David? Looking back, can you see God's reason for the No?**

**Tara-Leigh reminds us of this:**

*"But this 'no' is followed with good news, including what's known as the Davidic covenant. It has two parts to it: David's dynasty and Solomon's temple. God's like, 'I know you want to build Me a house, but I'm going to build YOU a house. Not an actual house -- but a family. And one of your sons in this Davidic dynasty WILL build an actual house for me.' There are also parts of this prophecy that point to Christ and His eternal reign."*

*"When I get a 'no' from Him, that is His kindest possible answer. Because even in the 'no', God still has a good plan -- to glorify Himself and to bless His people at the same time. His 'no' is always for a greater 'yes'. We may not always feel like it's better -- it probably won't always be an obvious upgrade like it was for David, but we if we trust His heart, we can believe it even when we can't see it."*

## **Day 125-126 - Psalms 1-2, 15, 22-24, 47, 68, 89,96, 100-101, 105, 132**

**Psalm 23** -The imagery of this Psalm is so beautiful He gives us rest, He leads us, He restores our souls, He comforts us, we should have confidence in the Lord's care of our bodies, minds and souls. But so often we turn to other things to do that for us...

Tara-Leigh points out that :

*"In this psalm, God keeps reiterating stillness and lack of motion. He says, "lie down" and not in front of Netflix, but by "still waters". I always find it interesting that He has to MAKE US lie down in green pastures. Sometimes I despise the stillness and the waiting, but here it shows me that God invites me into the calm and the quiet. This is where He can get my attention long enough to restore my soul and comfort me, like the psalm says. It's what we're all here for, right? I hope so. Because He's where the joy is."*

- **What things do you turn to when you need comfort, rest, direction, guidance and care?**
  - **How different would your life look if you turned to the LORD instead?**
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**Psalm 89** - This is a Wisdom Psalm written by Ethan and talks about the Davidic Covenant. The author feels abandoned by God & is asking to be restored, but ultimately we see that this might be a result of being disciplined for sin. The author concludes by showing his trust in the Lord.

Vs. 3-4 - You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.'"

Tara-Leigh says

*"Near the end, in verses 38-45, Ethan accuses God of forsaking Israel. And yes, it feels like that. But if we look back at verses 30-32, we see what was really happening here -- this was a time of discipline for sin, just like God promised would happen whenever they rebel. Over time, God will show Himself faithful. And even the psalmist seems to know this in his heart, because he ends all these accusations with a call to bless the Lord forever."*

- **Have you ever felt forsaken by the Lord when it might have been discipline by God instead?**

**Psalm 100** is a song of worship "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve with gladness, come into His presence with singing." He is worth celebrating!

**Psalm 105** recounts the history of the Israelites -- from Abraham to the Promised Land.

**Tim Keller** - *"Believers rightly hear this as a summons to tell others around us what he has done in our own lives. Too often we stay silent about his saving actions in our own histories. We might think that keeping quiet about such things is modesty but its effect is the opposite. It allows others to believe that we have overcome our problems and lived our lives on our own strength."*

- **These days included 14 beautiful Psalms. What were your favorite lines or takeaways from these Psalms?**

## **Day 129, 131 - II Samuel 8-10, I Chronicles 18-19, Psalm 20**

In **II Samuel 8**, we see a catalog of David's victories.

Tara-Leigh points out that *"David is a winning king, for sure, but one thing scripture drives home repeatedly is that his victories are granted by God. Three times in our reading today we saw that 'the LORD gave victory'. Victory is God's to give! David wins because of God's plan and favor, not because of David's strength or ability. GOD is the hero of the story. Given David's circumstances, it would be easy to forget where the praise belongs. After all, he rose to power as the war hero -- the guy who defeated the Philistines with one sling of a stone. So this Scripture continues to remind us to give glory to God, not David. And David gives glory to God too. For instance, when other kings give him expensive gifts made of gold and silver and bronze, he dedicates those gifts to the LORD."*

David dedicates the plunder from these victories to the Lord. He ends up storing these things and they will be later used for his son Solomon to use in building in God's temple.

➤ **Do you think of God as the hero of your story?**

In **II Samuel 9**, we see David reach out to Mephibosheth who Saul's grandson and Jonathan's son

Tara-Leigh describes it this way *"David SEEKS OUT someone from Jonathan's family to show kindness to them. He actively pursues the opportunity to bless others." The way David treats Mephibosheth because of Jonathan is the way the Father treats us because of the Son! We're invited to live in His kingdom and eat at His table forever! And we could never get there on our own -- we're too crippled and lame. So He carries us. And all the work is done for us, because we can't do that either -- it is finished. I'm so glad I get to live in His Kingdom and eat at His table forever"*

➤ **Do you see the parallels between David's treatment of Mephibosheth and the treatment we receive because of the blood of Jesus?**

In **II Samuel 10**, we saw David send his servants to show kindness to Hanun (heir to the King of the Ammonites). The Ammonites were suspicious of David's men and didn't trust them.

As Tara-Leigh tells us *"They mistrust David's motives because they don't know him. They haven't seen how he's taken in Mephibosheth or how he's mourned the death of his enemies or even how he refused to kill Saul twice when he had the chance. They feel unnecessarily threatened by him."*

➤ **Have you ever had a time when someone thinks your motives are misguided because they didn't know you?**

## **Day 128, 130, 132 - Psalm 25,29, 33,36,39,50,53,60,75, 65-67, 69-70**

**Psalm 25:14** says *"The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant."*

In the CSB translation says *"The secret counsel of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he reveals his covenant to them."*

In the NIV translation says *"The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them."*

Tim Keller in his *"The Songs of Jesus"* book says this -

*"How does God guide us? The better question is not how, but whom God guides. What kind of person must we be so that he leads us in our decision making? We must be so immersed in God's written Word and truth (verses 4-5) that we are trained to choose rightly even in cases to which the Bible doesn't speak directly. We must be not wise in our own eyes (verse 9) but aware of our sins and limitations (verse 11). We must trust that all the things God*

sends us are grounded in his loving will (verse 10; Genesis 50:20). God “confides” in those who have all these attitudes of heart (verse 14). He makes us wise so we know the paths to take.”

➤ **What does being in a friendship with God mean to you?**

**Psalm 33** highlights that we are created to praise Him. Tara-Leigh says, “So when I’m failing to praise Him, I’m acting *AGAINST* my created purpose.”

Praising God is actually good for us. Tim Keller says

*“Thus, generous and happy people are prone to praise, while others are prone to complain. C.S. Lewis says...Praise is “inner health made audible.” But we were created not for praise in general but to worship something supremely, to have our thoughts and hearts captivated. We need to draw our hearts from fixation on other things and become enraptured with the beauty of the Lord.”*

➤ **What physical changes do you see in yourself when you are actively praising the LORD?**

**Psalm 39** is a lament of suffering due to sin. We see the pain that discipline has brought to the author.

Tara-Leigh says,

*“He talks about the pain it has brought him, and even asks God to bring an end to his discipline -- not because he doesn’t deserve the discipline, but because God’s rebuke is heavy and David feels like he’s learned his lesson already. Haven’t we all felt this -- like, “Okay, I get it, God. You can let up now -- promise. David paints a really clear picture of God’s loving discipline in verse 11. He says, “When You discipline a man with rebukes for sin, You consume like a moth what is dear to him.” God loves us too much to let us continue in idolatry, so sometimes He takes away our idols. We knit cashmere scarves for all our idols and He sends His little love-moths to eat them to pieces. He does it all out of love.”*

➤ **Can you think of a time that God has stripped idols from you as a consequence of sin or otherwise?**

**Psalm 50** contains a strong rebuke against people who misunderstand God’s grace and don’t experience heart change for themselves, they tend to use God’s grace as a free pass to sin.

Tara-Leigh says,

*“There were Israelites who viewed the sacrificial system as a trade-off for sinning, like a penalty you pay and then everything is even again -- like some kind of speeding ticket. But God says that’s never been what this is about. In verses 8-15, He basically says, “I don’t want your bulls and goats and birds -- I want your heart!” For some of them, this may have been very confusing, like, “Then why did You spend so much time telling us about the sacrifices?” They weren’t paying attention. And because of that lack of attention, they missed the very details that would reveal God’s heart to them. Meanwhile their hearts are far from him -- they’re doing wicked things or approving of others who do wicked things, or even just sitting by idly, complicit, when sin is committed. God rebukes them for this.*

Tim Keller says

*“God rebukes his people for two things. The first is external religiosity without inward heart change. The second thing God rebukes is doctrinal profession of belief without life change (verses 16–21). Some worship weekly and profess an orthodox faith, but they engage in theft, adultery, slander, and gossip (verses 18–20) based on too small a concept of God...Those who trust in him respond with a life of gratitude that honors God and reveals salvation to the world (verse 23). No one who is truly saved by faith and grace can fail to live a changed life of love for God and others (James 2:14–17).*

- **What is your understanding of God's grace in relation to our sin and his heart for offering us grace?**

**Psalm 53** addresses the fool who dismisses God and does his own thing.

**Tara-Leigh says,**

*"When that's how a person operates -- removed from the understanding of God's sovereignty and goodness -- it becomes easy to think you're in control of your own future. And if you're in charge, then lots of things can go wrong. And if lots of things can go wrong, then that can lead to a LOT of fear and striving. Verse 5 points to this. It says, 'There they are, in great terror, when there is no terror.' But God says there's a way out for a person like this. The way of salvation and trusting God's goodness prompts rejoicing and gladness, instead of fear and folly. It's counterintuitive, but surrender is actually the path to freedom. The one task the human will can never be fatigued by is surrender."*

**Tim Keller says,**

*"Psalm 53 is a call to believers. God has defeated their enemies (verse 5), so why are they overwhelmed with dread where there is nothing to dread (verse 5)? There are seasons when we feel almost smothered by fears for our health, our families, our jobs, even for the overall state of the world. Dread is less specific than fear. It is an attitude that something is sure to go wrong, if it hasn't already. Besides often being untrue, as the psalm says, it is an insult to our loving Savior, who will walk with us even if the worst does happen."*

- **Trying to be in control leads us to fear and striving, have you experienced that in your own life?  
How do we live with less fear and striving?**

**Psalm 66** is a reminder that although the Lord tests His people, he still brings them OUT to a place of abundance

**Tara-Leigh says,**

*"We see it in verses 10-12 especially. 'For you, O God, have tested us; You have tried us as silver is tried. You brought us into the net; You laid a crushing burden on our backs; You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet You have brought us out to a place of abundance.' David isn't holding a grudge toward God because of what Israel has gone through -- he's not saying, 'I don't trust you anymore.' Because of the parameters of the Davidic covenant, David knows that Israel's struggles are the result of their own rebellion, and even though he ascribes those hardships to God, he knows that God did it in response to their sin. Despite their tough history, David has his heart set on praise -- and in verse 16, he says, 'Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what He has done for my soul.' Wow, what a response!"*

- **Can you recall a time that God brought abundance from a trying time?**

## **Day 133 - II Samuel 11-12, I Chronicles 20**

Today we find the story of David and Bethsheba. We see David sin against the Lord in his actions with Bethsheba and we see Nathan confront his sin. David is forgiven of this sin, but there will still be consequences.

Tara-Leigh talks about what the consequences will be:

*"That four-fold judgment David demanded will be handed out to him, and here's what those four consequences look like: first, the sword won't depart from his house, meaning there will be division and death in his family."*

*Second, his wives will be taken away from him in a humiliating way. Third, God will raise up evil against David from his own household. That is terrifying. Then after David confesses, Nathan tells him the fourth consequence: his child with Bathsheba will die."*

➤ **What did you think about the consequences of David's sin?**

Tara-Leigh reminds us about how David reacted to these consequences:

*"Even after hearing such a harsh word from God, even after the death of his son, he somehow still trusts God's goodness and goes to the tabernacle to draw near and worship God. Repentance is marked by worship -- it serves as evidence of a changed heart. In the midst of his ache and almost certain self-hatred at this point, he demonstrates that he knows who God is and what it means to be His child: We run TO our Father when we sin, not FROM him. WE are the ones who can't be trusted. He can be trusted."*

➤ **"Repentance is marked by worship..." have you ever experienced this? Is your tendency to run TO God when you sin or run AWAY?**

**Day 134 - Psalm 32, 51, 86, 122**

**Psalm 32** reminds us that "Blessed are the Forgiven"

Tara-Leigh says:

"He works in the hearts of His kids to bless us even when we sin. He doesn't bless our sin, but He still blesses us when we sin and two of the ways He does that is by covering our sins and convicting us of our sins. Those are both blessings! There are two ways sin can be covered -- when I cover my sins, I hide them. But when God covers them, He atones for them, He pays for them. It's kind of like when you forget your wallet and the bill comes, and your friend says, "I'll cover you" - God the Spirit plays a different role. He lives in believers, and one of His jobs is to point out the places our sin has trapped us and guide us out. John 16:8 calls this "conviction" -- and it's important to note that this is different from condemnation. According to Romans 8:1, God's kids will never be condemned because our sins have been covered by Jesus. Conviction, on the other hand, is when God the Spirit prompts us to grieve our sins -- and He changes our hearts and our actions to align with God's will.

➤ **Explain the difference between conviction and condemnation. In the past have you assigned the same feeling to both words?**

Tim Keller says:

*"God calls us to go beyond forgiveness to real friendship with him. We usually live as we should only if we have to, out of self-interest, because there are consequences that keep us on the path. That is to heed God like a mule, controlled only by bit and bridle (verse 9). Instead we should obey because we want to, out of love for him, who counsels us personally through the Word and prayer (verse 8). Sometimes God allows a difficult season of "mighty waters" to be a kind of bit and bridle that pulls us back to him and shows us we need his friendship and love above all else. Be glad that he doesn't let us wander."*

➤ **What typically drives your behavior? Consequences and self-interest or love for the Father? Be honest!**

In **Psalm 51**, we see David lamenting and repenting of his sin with Bathsheba. 51:10-12 says *"Create in me a clean heart O God and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me. "Restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit."*

Tara-Leigh says,

*"This is the psalm of confession and repentance he wrote after raping Bathsheba and murdering her husband. but his focus in this particular psalm is on restoring the broken intimacy between him and God, first and foremost. Nothing else can get set right until that is set right."*

Tim Keller says,

*"Restore to me the joy of your salvation" is a prayer we should pray frequently. The Bible commands us to rejoice in God (Philippians 4:4). This is a command not simply to have an emotion but to remind ourselves in such a disciplined way about all we have in Christ that the greatness of it breaks in on our hearts. It is a sin to be less than joyful at what God has done in our lives. Furthermore, we cannot minister to others except out of our own joy. Our words will be hard, harsh, indifferent, or absent unless we are overflowing with the joy of knowing that we are God's precious possessions, bought at great cost."*

➤ **What can we learn from this prayer of repentance from David?**

### **Day 135, 137 - II Samuel 13-18**

Amnon, David's firstborn son, falls in love with his half-sister Tamar. Amnon pretends to be needy so he can prey on Tamar and rape her. When Tamar tells him no and even tries to reason with him, he overpowers her. Absalom later kills Amnon in retaliation for what he did to their sister. Absalom leaves for a few years and when he returns David greets him with a kiss. This is a sign of reconciliation on David's part, but Absalom has other plans and is looking to take over the throne.

Tara-Leigh says this about God:

*"He's still working out His plan to bring the Messiah through David's line, despite David's sin. And in the way that only God can, He works out the precise timing of having David get news of Ahithophel's betrayal, then run into Hushai, then have Hushai run into Absalom. It doesn't matter how many people the enemy ropes into his conspiracy against God's plan and God's people -- nothing beats sovereignty. What a relief! He's still in control, and He's where the joy is!"*

➤ **How does it feel to know that nothing beats God's sovereignty?**

### **Day 136, 138 - Psalm 3-4, 12-13, 28, 55, 26, 40, 58, 61-62, 64**

In **Psalm 13**, we see David asking "How long O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?"

Tara-Leigh says,

*"In this song, David accuses God of forgetting him. David feels forgotten, but God hasn't forgotten him. David longs for the opportunity to feel God's nearness, to seek God's counsel -- he feels desperate to have to be his own counselor. As someone who tends to lean on my own understanding, this serves as a good challenge to me. Then David ends with a reminder to his soul that hope is coming -- he knows God is trustworthy, and he's going to praise God for what He's already done while he waits to see what God will do next!"*

Tim Keller says,

*"He cries out that God has ignored his pain and his sorrow. It is almost a howl, and the fact that it is included in the Bible tells us that God wants to hear our genuine feelings, even if they are anger at him. David never stops praying, however, and that is the key. As long as we howl toward God and remember his salvation by grace (verse 5), we will end at a place of peace."*

- **Can you remember a time when it felt as if God had abandoned you? Why is it important to continue to cry out to Him in those seasons?**

Tara- Leigh says that...

"In the beginning of **Psalm 26**, it may seem like David is boasting about his righteousness, but as he continues on, he makes it clear that the source of his righteousness is God's steadfast love. That's what enables him to trust in God. In verse 3, he says he's walking in GOD's faithfulness, not his own. This is a crucial distinction."

- **What could happen if we don't realize that the source of our righteousness is the LORD?**

In **Psalm 62**, we see David after being betrayed so many times wonder who He can trust.

Tara-Leigh says,

*"He's been surrounded by hypocrites and liars and is just now finding out the truth -- and David decides he'd rather keep silent than talk to anyone about it all, because who knows who can be trusted? So he pours out his heart to God. GOD can be trusted."*

- **Have you ever felt like God is the only one you can trust?**

## **Day 139 - II Samuel 19-21**

David mourns Absalom's death and works to reunite the kingdom, but due to Sheba's rebellion there is increasing unrest among Northern and Southern Kingdoms.

Tara-Leigh reminds us of

*"how seriously God takes sin. The land of Israel was suffering because Saul had broken a promise to the Gileadites -- his sin happened a long time ago, but God cares about justice, and He brought a famine to catch David's attention so that he would address the situation and make things right. It comforts me to know that God doesn't forget -- it comforts me to know that He can be trusted to handle those things. It frees me up not to take matters into my own hands. It frees me up to pursue Him instead of vengeance. It frees me up to love both Him and my enemies. When I'm the one who has been wronged, God can be trusted to handle it -- to work in the hearts of those who have wronged me, on my behalf. AND when I'm the one who has wronged others, the same thing is still true. He's going to work IN ME on their behalf. Our God is working to restore all things -- and that includes not just my story but also my heart."*

- **Does this truth free you up to let God handle the situation rather than trying to seek vengeance and justice on our own?**

## **Day 140, 142 - Psalm 5, 38, 41-42, 95, 97-99**

Tara- Leigh shares

*"Psalm 38 really endears me to David. We've probably all experienced some situation like this before. David is enduring all kinds of pain and suffering simultaneously -- physical, emotional, spiritual, relational. And he knows it's the result of his own sin and foolishness. He repents of his sin and accepts that these are his consequences, but he asks God to bring him relief and specifically, relief in the form of His nearness and salvation. Because when you've known the nearness of God like David has, then feeling distant from Him is far more painful than any other kind of suffering. Each of these psalms we read today ends with a request for God to act and an earnest belief that He will. I hope you can recall and praise Him for a time when you've seen Him deliver you. And if you haven't seen Him do that yet, I hope you can pray with the same kind of faith David displays here -- trusting God's character and commanding his soul to believe it. It was in my darkest hours when He felt the furthest from me that I first realized He's where the joy is!"*

- **In times of deep suffering, have you ever just had to cling to and trust God's character and "command" you soul to believe it?**

Tara-Leigh points out that **Psalm 97:11** says,

*"Light is sown for the righteous and joy for the upright in heart."* You may wonder where God is in this sentence. Who do you think is doing the sowing? It's Him! I love this imagery -- that light and joy are sown -- if you're in a dark season, the light and joy might not have bloomed yet, but God has planted them. Sometimes it takes a while for things that are planted to grow and bear fruit, but trust that they've been sown for you -- by His hand."

- **Can you recall a time where God planted a seed in a dark season that grew and now bears fruit?**

## **Day 141, 145 - II Samuel 22-23, Psalm 57, I Chronicles 23-25**

On these days we see David's Song of Deliverance and his last words. There is a key moment in II Samuel 22:36 where David says, *"Your gentleness made me great."*

Tara-Leigh reminds us

"God's gentleness doesn't get a lot of press. But David says it directly corresponds to what has made him fruitful in life. David has been the recipient of God's gentleness -- particularly in the way God showed him mercy in the midst of his sins. And David has also displayed God's gentleness. He didn't lord his power or position over others, he spared Saul's life, he cared for Mephibosheth, he pardoned his enemies. This is what meekness looks like -- meekness is not the absence of strength; it's strength under control. And it manifests in David as gentleness. For God Himself to display that kind of thing is remarkable and noteworthy."

- **Can you list some of the times we have seen David display gentleness?**

## **Day 143 - II Samuel 24, I Chronicles 21-22, Psalm 30**

On this day, we read about David taking a census. Taking a census isn't bad, God even commanded it many times. But this particular time, David is doing it on his own and not because God told him to. David wanted to be confident in their numbers, but God wanted David's confidence to be in Him!.

Tara-Leigh points out that

*"In the two accounts of David's census today, you probably noticed an interesting discrepancy. 2 Samuel says God incited David to take the census, and 1 Chronicles says Satan incited David to take the census. So which is it? Don't resist that tension -- it's there for a reason. This may actually be the perfect scriptural example of how evil works within God's plan. Just like with Job's story, here we have an enemy of God and His people who wants to perpetrate evil against them, and God allows it. By God allowing it, it still falls under His sovereignty and is still used for our good and His purposes."*

- **How do you feel about David wanting to take a census? Do you think he knew that he was going against the Lord?**

We see David go on to repent and seek out a location to offer sacrifices, he ends up purchasing the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, and when he arrives there, he finds the Angel of the Lord positioned there. There is a lot of significance to the site where David offered these sacrifices. This is the same hillside where Abraham went to sacrifice Isaac, the same hillside that Solomon built his temple on and the same hillside where Jesus died.

Tara-Leigh talks about it in this way,

*"First of all, David's sin of ordering the census -- that sin had to happen in order for David to have a reason to offer the sacrifice that would establish the location of first temple. So even though an evil spirit incited David, God was using that evil spirit's evil motives to bring about His plans for His people. And second of all -- and this is my favorite -- do you remember when it was in our timeline that God told David he'd have a son named Solomon who would build a house for Him? It was before David ever raped Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. Before he ever sinned against her and murdered her husband. Before he ever committed the heinous sins in his history, God had already told him how He had planned to work through those sins for the good of all people, how He would redeem it all on the other side. What does that tell you about God's heart! He's so generous and forgiving!! And not only that, but He's so victorious -- sin doesn't ever get to win against God and His people -- it always ultimately serves God's purposes somehow."*

- **As these details unfold throughout scripture, does it make you more aware of God's plan from the beginning and how He is perfectly working it out over time? He is in the details.**

## **Day 144, 146 - Psalm 108-110, 131, 138-139, 143-145**

Tara Leigh says this about **Psalm 109**...

*"These are the words of David in his lament to God. He's being honest about how he feels, and it's pretty clear he's not holding back. There are a few things we want to remember here. First, David is not personally retaliating. He's lamenting to God, and asking God to act. God can be trusted to do what is right, even when our feelings are wrong. So David is taking this to the place where it will be resolved in righteousness! In verse 4 David says, "In return for my love, they accuse me, but I give myself to prayer." The fact that this prayer is in scripture doesn't mean God agrees with it or answers it with a "yes" -- it's just showing us that God can handle receiving the honest outpouring of all our emotions, even the ones that don't honor Him or align with His plan. He's the safe space."*

- **Do you see God as a safe space to pour out your heart with all it's frustrations and pain?**

Tara-Leigh says this about **Psalm 138**

*"It's so rich with its descriptions of God and His character. I'm always telling D-Group to look in scripture for what God loves, what He hates, and what motivates Him to do what He does -- and this chapter has all of that! In verse 2 we see what He loves and what motivates Him to do what He does. It says, "You have exalted above all things Your name and Your word." In verse 6 we see what He loves and what He hates. It says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble". And in verse 8 we see what motivates Him to do what He does. It says, "The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; Your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever."*

➤ **When you hear "The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me.", how does that make you feel?**

**Psalm 139** is so personal and intimate... read some of these verses.

*"O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!"*

➤ **How does it feel that God knows you so intimately? Do you live like you know this to be true that you are fully known and fully loved?**

### **Day 147 - I Chronicles 26-29, Psalm 127**

On this day we see David make some final arrangements. He assigns the last officials for the Temple and he gives a charge to Israel and to Solomon. In both of these charges, he reminded them to remember and keep the Lord's commands, much like Moses and Joshua did in their final speeches. David knows where good things come from!

Tara-Leigh reminds us as well...

*"In several spots, I noticed the theme that He is the SOURCE of all things. Not only was it all over Psalm 127, but I saw it in parts of 1 Chronicles as well. In 29:12, David, says, "Both riches and honor come from You... and in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all." In verse 14, he says, "All things come from You, and of Your own have we given You." Then in verse 16, he says, "O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building You a house for Your holy name comes from Your hand and is all Your own." All that we give to God is God's gift to us. This is true not just of money, but of talents and time and service too. And along these lines, I noticed something else in 27:32. It's talking about Jonathan, David's uncle, and it says, "[he] was a counselor, being a man of understanding and a scribe." He was a scribe -- a man who spent his days in scripture. And from that came the wisdom he used to counsel the king. He was offering back to God's service the wisdom he got from God. Everything we give back to Him originated with Him. God is the SOURCE of all good things"*

➤ **When we see God as the source of all good things, how can it change our perspective and our attitude?**

## **Day 148 - Psalm 111-118**

Tara- Leigh says this about **Psalm 111**,

“There were two words that jumped out at me and reminded me of what we’re doing here. The first is in verse 2. It says, “Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them.” We’re studying His works! And I bet you’re finding more and more to praise Him about -- discovering more of His greatness along the way. And did you notice the word DELIGHT in there? That connects us with the other thing that jumped out at me, which was in verse 10. It says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding.” I will continue to point out that the fear of the Lord is comprised primary of delight and awe. And this verse says that viewing God rightly is where wisdom begins, and that those who PRACTICE the fear of the Lord have good understanding.

➤ **What does it look like for me to practice the fear of the LORD?**

## **Day 149, 151, 152 - I Kings 1-4, II Chronicles 1, Psalm 37, 71, 94, 72**

David is now on his death bed and his son Adonijah is trying to take the throne that God has already promised to Solomon. We see Nathan and Bathsheba come in and tell David so they can make this right. They officially anoint Solomon as king. We see David give Solomon some last words about some of the men that he had previously shown mercy to, he tells Solomon to kill them.

This might be hard to wrestle with, but here’s what Tara-Leigh reminds us...

“Lots of people repent on their deathbed, speaking words of peace and humility, but here David just sounds like a bitter old man seeking revenge against two men, one of whom had even repented. What do we make of this? David was right that both Joab and Shimei had earned the death penalty -- that’s justice being meted out. Would it have been nice if he acted mercifully instead? Absolutely. But honestly, I’m less concerned with figuring out who David is and more concerned with figuring out who God is. Hebrews 11:32-33 settles the score for us. David is listed in the “faith hall of fame” and is counted among the “great cloud of witnesses”, the forefathers of our faith. Our position in God’s family isn’t and has never been about our works or our perfection. Even in the Old Testament, it was about faith in the God who covers our sins -- even the sins committed in our final moments. Praise God for examples like David, who demonstrate His all-surpassing mercy and grace to us. They remind us of how incredibly forgiving our Father is. What a gift to know that all the sins of all God’s kids -- past, present, and future, intentional, confessed, and accidental -- are all covered by the blood of Christ.”

➤ **“Our position in God’s family isn’t and has never been about our works or our perfection.” Is this thought comforting to you?**

As Solomon starts his reign we see him start off with an unwise decision to marry Pharaoh's daughter for political gain. He then does make the wise decision to ask God for wisdom which the LORD gracious gives him.

As Tara-Leigh says,

*“Solomon loves YHWH, but he also likes to sacrifice to pagan gods. He’s got a divided heart. This wasn’t uncommon in this day -- or even today, honestly. It’s called “syncretism” -- it’s where people try to synthesize two religious beliefs. This works well with pretty much every other religion except YHWH -- in fact lots of religions encourage worshipping multiple gods. The more the merrier. But they’re all on the same team -- Team Darkness and Demons. I’m not trying to make light of it, so I hope it doesn’t sound that way. Literally every false religion is opposed to the kingdom of Light. Even the false religion of morality that we see in a lot of cultural Christianity today. Paul address this in Galatians 5:4, saying that those who believe in Jesus but rely on their own good works to add anything to their salvation are cut off from Christ. He says, “You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the*

law.” YIKES. YHWH doesn’t synthesize with anything else, even our personal best efforts at living a good clean life. And he certainly doesn’t synthesize with pagan gods. It’s YHWH or the highway.”

- Can you think of some examples of how we try to synthesize two religious beliefs in our culture?

Solomon is worshipping other gods when YHWH, the one true God shows us to give Solomon anything he wants, and he is wise enough to ask for wisdom.

Tara-Leigh reminds us that...

*“Even when people aren’t asking Him for anything, do you see how much God wants to display His heart of generosity? Solomon wasn’t even asking Him for anything, and God shows up says, “Psst -- hey, Solomon, do you want anything?” Then, on top of that, God decides to triple the blessing -- not just giving Solomon what he asks for, but giving him things he didn’t ask for too! God is marked by this kind of abundant generosity. He owns everything, and He loves to bless His kids. He seeks out opportunities to bless them even when they don’t ask for it. His heart is so kind.”*

- What does this teach us about the character of God?

## **Day 150 - Psalm 119**

This Psalm beautifully points out praiseworthy attributes of God and His character. His righteousness, trustworthiness, truthfulness, faithfulness, unchangeableness, eternity, and light.

Verse 105 says “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

Tara-Leigh tells us that

*“The word used for “lamp” here refers to a foot lamp -- like a single candle. This kind of lamp would only give enough light for the next step. You could make the whole journey, step by step, with the candle -- you just had to keep referring back to it -- just like the Word of God. That’s the word for “lamp” in “a lamp unto my feet”, but here’s something I never discovered before: the word for “light” in “a light unto my path” -- that’s a different word. It’s a floodlight, it’s daybreak, it’s the “God said let there be light”. You guys -- this is incredible. God’s Word is both kinds of light -- the whole earth flooded with the fires of a thousand suns kind of glorious illuminating absolute truth, once for all, AND the individual, step-by-step kind of personal guidance we need moment by moment. It’s EVERYTHING. We have everything we need -- the bright light, the personal light -- all lighting up the same truths that we need for life and godliness, and for every good work. God has generously given it ALL to us.”*

- Explain what Psalm 119:105 means to you
- What have you learned about God’s character from studying the life of David?

## **Names & Attributes of God we’ve seen in these passages of Scripture**

ELOHIM (Creator God, powerful and mighty) – Genesis 1:1, Psalm 19:1, Psalm 139:13-16

EL (The Strong One) – Psalm 27:1, Psalm 46:1-3 Psalm 118:14

WONDERFUL COUNSELOR – Isaiah 9:6, Psalm 16:7, Psalm 32:8

PORTION – Psalm 16:5-6, Psalm 73:26, Psalm 119:57

GRACE / GRACIOUS - Psalm 86:15, Exodus 33:19, Psalm 25:16, Psalm 6:2, Numbers 6:25

JUDGE - Psalm 50:6, Isaiah 33:22, James 4:12, Psalm 9:8

KIND - Ephesians 2:7, Titus 3:4-7, Psalm 36:7, Psalm 63:3

LIFE - John 11:25-26, John 1:3-4, Psalm 16:11, Psalm 36:9, John 3:36

**Additional Resources available at [www.graceclarksville.com/womenintheword](http://www.graceclarksville.com/womenintheword)**

**Books:**

- *30 Days to Understanding Your Bible* by Max Anders

**Videos:**

- [Psalm Overview Video](#)
- [II Samuel Overview Video](#)
- [I & II Chronicles Overview Video](#)
- [I Kings Overview Video](#)

**Websites for further studies:**

- <https://bibleproject.com/> - Great overview videos by theme, book of the Bible and topic
- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/> - Choose a version of the Bible and click TOOLS next to the verse