

LET'S

# TALK...

MAR 28-APR 3



DISCUSSION GUIDE

REFLECT PS 119

A WAY TO SEE

## PRAYING THE PSALMS PSALM 70:1-5

Pray for those who are in urgent need of God's deliverance.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What did you learn about God?

---

---

What did you think of the way the Israelites were told to handle justice?

---

---

How is God asking you to trust him?

---

---

When have you felt God telling you to "be strong and courageous"?

---

---

Do you identify more with Mary or with Martha in Luke 10:38-42?

---

---

## TALKING POINTS

### OLD TESTAMENT (DEUTERONOMY 18:1–32:27)

"But you must be blameless before the LORD your God." (DEUT 18:13)

Blessings for obedience, curses for disobedience (DEUT 28)

Moses reviews God's covenant with Israel (DEUT 29)

God predicts Israel's disobedience (DEUT 31:1-21)

God to Joshua: "Be strong and courageous" (DEUT 31:23)

### NEW TESTAMENT (LUKE 9:28–12:34)

"This is my Son, my Chosen One. Listen to him." (LUKE 9:35)

"Anyone who is not against you is for you." (LUKE 9:50)

The parable of the Good Samaritan (LUKE 10:30-37)

"A lamp is placed on a stand, where its light can be seen by all." (LUKE 11:33)

The parable of the rich fool (LUKE 12:13-21)



*By following these instructions, you . . . will cleanse the guilt of murder from your community.*

DEUTERONOMY 21:9

**REFLECT ON DEUTERONOMY 9:23**

Moses reminded the people of their unbelief 40 years earlier, when they had refused to enter Canaan. The Israelites had refused to follow God in spite of all he had already done. They looked only to their own resources instead of to God's power.

Sometimes God asks impossible things of his people. God asked Nehemiah and Ezra to rebuild the walls and the Temple under their enemies' watchful eyes. He asked Peter to walk across the waves. He asked Paul to bear a thorn in his flesh. And he asked Israel to drive the nations out of the Promised Land.

We tend to think that God gives orders and abandons us to complete them. But God is not like that at all. God told Israel he had already given them the land. God wasn't going to wish them luck and disappear. God was going with them. In truth, he was going before them.

If God is asking you to do the impossible, remember that he has not abandoned you to do it alone. God is going with you. His "power works best in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). And "what is impossible for people is possible with God" (Luke 18:27).

**REFLECTION THOUGHT**

**GOD WASN'T GOING TO WISH THEM LUCK AND DISAPPEAR.**

**DOES GOD KEEP HIS PROMISES?**

God specifically promised Abraham to bring his descendants into possession of the land of Canaan (Genesis 17:8). God repeated his promise to Moses (Deuteronomy 1:6-8). Now God was ready to fulfill his promise, using Moses' successor, Joshua, to begin the process.

God always keeps his unconditional promises. Joshua led Israel's first generation of settlers into the Promised Land, and his victories opened the hill country for settlement by the Israelites.

Whether or not an individual or a whole generation benefits from God's faithfulness depends on obedience. Throughout the history of the Old Testament, God's people alternated between their partnering with God and their turning from God—between enjoying the fulfillment of his generous promises and reaping the harvests of defeat, dispersion, and death.

Just as God fulfilled through Joshua the promise of land to Abraham and Moses, he later fulfilled through Jesus the promise of an unfailing dynasty to David (2 Samuel 7:11-16; see Matthew 21:9). God's fulfillment of his promises will continue into eternity.

Series of horizontal dashed lines for reflection notes.



"Questions for Discussion" and "Talking Points" copyright © 2012 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. "Praying the Psalms," "Reflect On," and "Does God Keep His Promises?" taken from *The One Year Study Bible*, copyright © 2011 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

LET'S

# TALK...

APR 4-10



DISCUSSION GUIDE

REFLECT

PS 119

A WAY TO SEE

## PRAYING THE PSALMS PSALM 79:1-13

Pray Psalm 79 on behalf of believers around the world who are facing imprisonment and death for their faith in God.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Was there anything in this week's readings that especially encouraged you or challenged you?

---

---

Why was there such an emphasis on remembering the past in this week's Old Testament readings?

---

---

Why did Achan's sin have such massive repercussions?

---

---

What did you think about Jesus' statement about bringing division in Luke 12:51-53?

---

---

What was your favorite parable?

---

---

## TALKING POINTS

**OLD TESTAMENT (DEUTERONOMY 32:28—JOSHUA 10:43)**

“You will see the land from a distance, but you may not enter the land.” (DEUT 32:52)

“Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” (JOSH 1:9)

God's people cross the Jordan River on dry ground (JOSH 3:14-17)

“The commander of the LORD's army” gives Joshua instructions for destroying Jericho (JOSH 5:13–6:5)

The Israelites' defeat and Achan's sin (JOSH 7)

**NEW TESTAMENT (LUKE 12:35–17:10)**

“I have come to set the world on fire, and I wish it were already burning!” (LUKE 12:49)

The narrow door to God's Kingdom (LUKE 13:24-27)

“If you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.” (LUKE 14:27)

The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son (LUKE 15)

The rich man and Lazarus (LUKE 16:19-31)

*You cannot serve both God and money.*

LUKE 16:13

APR 4-10



DISCUSSION GUIDE

REFLECT

PS 119

A WAY TO SEE

**REFLECT ON LUKE 16:13**

Wealth promises power and control. It convinces us that it can secure health and happiness. How can you tell if money is your master? Ask yourself: "Do I think and worry about it frequently? Do I give up doing what I should do or would like to do in order to make more money? Do I spend a great deal of my time caring for my possessions? Is it hard for me to give money away?"

How much better it is to let God be your master. His servants have peace of mind and security, both now and forever. How can you tell if God is your master? Ask yourself: Do I think and worry about him frequently? Do I give up doing what I should do or would like to do in order to obey God more? Do I spend a great deal of my time caring for his creation? Is it hard for me to give up time with God?

**REFLECTION THOUGHT**

**HOW CAN YOU TELL IF GOD IS YOUR MASTER?**

**WAS RAHAB JUSTIFIED IN LYING TO SAVE THE LIVES OF THE SPIES?**

The Bible does not speak negatively about Rahab's lie. In Hebrews 11:31, Rahab is commended for her faith in God. Her lie is not mentioned. Several explanations have been offered: (1) God forgave Rahab's lie because of her faith; (2) Rahab was simply deceiving the enemy, a normal and acceptable practice in wartime; (3) because Rahab was not a Jew, she could not be held responsible for keeping the moral standards set forth in God's law; (4) Rahab broke a lesser principle—telling the truth—to uphold a higher principle—protecting God's people.

There may have been another way to save the lives of the Israelite spies. But under the pressure of the moment, Rahab had to make a choice. Most of us will face dilemmas at one time or another. We may feel that there is no perfect solution to our problem. Fortunately, God does not demand that our judgment be perfect in all situations. He simply asks us to put our trust in him and to do the best we know how. Rahab did that and was commended for her faith.

Dotted lines for reflection notes.



"Questions for Discussion" and "Talking Points" copyright © 2012 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. "Praying the Psalms," "Reflect On," and "Does God Keep His Promises?" taken from *The One Year Study Bible*, copyright © 2011 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.



## TALK...

APR 11-17

**PRAYING THE PSALMS** PSALM 86:1-17

Ask God to give you a heart to know his ways. Seek his protection and compassion, his strength, and his comfort as you follow him.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

What passage most surprised you?

.....

.....

Why do you think God specifically commanded his people to create cities of refuge?

.....

.....

How do you think God's command to destroy the Canaanites in Joshua 11:20 fits with the Bible's larger message?

.....

.....

Where in the Old Testament did you catch a glimpse of Jesus?

.....

.....

Why do you think so many people find Jesus' words about wealth (Luke 18:18-25) to be such a hard teaching?

.....

.....

**TALKING POINTS****OLD TESTAMENT (JOSHUA 11-23)**

Israel's string of victories (JOSH 11-12)

"'I myself will drive these people out of the land ahead of the Israelites.'" (JOSH 13:6)

The cities of refuge (JOSH 20)

"'So the LORD gave to Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors.'" (JOSH 21:43)

Joshua's final address to the people of Israel (JOSH 23)

**NEW TESTAMENT (LUKE 17:11-20:47)**

The parable of the persistent widow (LUKE 18:1-8)

"'Those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.'" (LUKE 18:14)

Jesus and Zacchaeus (LUKE 19:1-10)

Jesus clears the Temple (LUKE 19:45-48)

Jesus is a stumbling stone for the wicked (LUKE 20:9-19)



# The southern boundary began at the south bay of the Dead Sea. . . .

JOSHUA 15:2

## REFLECT ON JOSHUA 15

The boundaries and descriptions of the Promised Land are very specific. God was telling Israel exactly what to do, and he was giving them just what they needed. They had no excuse for disobedience.

Often we complain that God's will seems vague. We have specific concerns, and we ask God which way to go, but God seems silent. In other areas, though, God has offered very clear direction. "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others" (Philippians 2:3). "Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows" (Isaiah 1:17). "The LORD has told you what is good: . . . to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). "Encourage each other and build each other up. . . . Be patient with everyone" (1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14).

"God has given us everything we need for living a godly life" (2 Peter 1:3). He's left nothing important out. Yet we often ignore God's clear commands. Instead, we should obey the commands he's given us. We may find, then, that our other concerns resolve themselves.

## REFLECTION THOUGHT

**GOD HAS OFFERED VERY CLEAR DIRECTION.**

## WHY WOULD JESUS TELL THE RICH MAN TO SELL EVERYTHING HE OWNED AND GIVE THE MONEY TO THE POOR?

Throughout Luke's Gospel, a reversal of worldly fortunes characterizes entrance into—or exclusion from—the Kingdom of God. Mary announced that God would lift up the poor and humble and bring down the rich and powerful (Luke 1:52-53). Jesus announced that the gospel is "Good News to the poor" (Luke 4:18). He pronounced blessings on the poor and hungry and woes against the rich and satisfied (Luke 6:20-25). This was a reversal of conventional wisdom, which held that God had blessed the rich and cursed the poor.

A number of Jesus' parables are severe warnings against the danger of riches. The parable of the rich fool reveals the consequence of storing up treasures on earth instead of having a rich relationship with God (Luke 12:13-21). The parable of the rich man and Lazarus shows the eternal cost of ignoring the poor and helpless while enjoying the good things in life (Luke 16:19-31). The rich man who asked Jesus the way to eternal life was devastated when Jesus said he must sell all that he had and give it to the poor (Luke 18:18-30).

Who are the poor in Luke's Gospel? Are they the physically poor or those that are poor in spirit? Almost certainly Luke includes both. The physically poor, who have very little, are naturally dependent on God for their needs. The rich and powerful are likely to be self-sufficient, forgetting their need for God. It is impossible for rich people to enter God's Kingdom as long as they trust in their riches to get them there (Luke 16:25-26). God accepts those who put their faith in him alone.

Series of horizontal dashed lines for reflection notes.

REFLECT

PS 119

A WAY TO SEE



"Questions for Discussion" and "Talking Points" copyright © 2012 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. "Praying the Psalms," "Reflect On," and "Does God Keep His Promises?" taken from *The One Year Study Bible*, copyright © 2011 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

## TALK...

APR 18-24

**PRAYING THE PSALMS** PSALM 97:1–98:9

Rejoice in God for devastating evil with his justice and for announcing his victory where darkness reigns.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

What passage most surprised you?

---



---

What did you learn about yourself?

---



---

Have you ever had a “Joshua 24 moment,” when you made a special commitment to follow God?

---



---

Why do you think the Israelites failed to fully defeat the Canaanites from the outset?

---



---

Why do you think Jesus told the women of Jerusalem to weep for themselves?

---



---

**TALKING POINTS****OLD TESTAMENT (JOSHUA 24:1—JUDGES 9:21)**

“This stone . . . will be a witness to testify against you.” (JOSH 24:27)

“I will no longer drive out the people living in your land. They will be thorns in your sides.” (JUDG 2:3)

Deborah, Sisera, and Jael (JUDG 4)

Gideon asks for a sign from God (JUDG 6:33-40)

Gideon punishes the elders of Succoth (JUDG 8:15-16)

**NEW TESTAMENT (LUKE 21:1–24:12)**

The widow's offering (LUKE 21:1-4)

“Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot.” (LUKE 22:3)

The mob demands Barabbas released instead of Jesus (LUKE 23:18-21)

“Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.” (LUKE 23:42)

The women tell Jesus' disciples about the Resurrection (LUKE 24:9-12)

*“You have stayed with me in my time of trial.”*

LUKE 22:28

APR 18-24



DISCUSSION GUIDE

REFLECT

PS 119

A WAY TO SEE

**REFLECT ON LUKE 22:28-30**

Jesus gave the disciples great honors and great responsibilities in this passage. The disciples sit with Christ at his table in his Kingdom, and they would sit on thrones as judges over Israel. These were the men who participated in Communion, then quickly turned to arguing over their statuses in God’s Kingdom. Why did Jesus give them such honorable positions?

The only qualification that Luke suggests is in Jesus’ words, “You have stayed with me in my time of trial.” The disciples had simply stuck it out. They accompanied Jesus throughout his ministry. They stayed.

Jesus did not recognize their service or their humility or their leadership or their wisdom. They simply stuck with Jesus and persevered. We believe that we are saved by grace through faith, but it’s easy to think that God’s honor roll will list those who accomplished the most for God’s Kingdom. The disciples were promised great places in God’s Kingdom, however, for simply having stayed with Jesus.

If you’re losing hope in producing something worthwhile for God, or if you’re hanging on to God by threads, be encouraged and hold on. Being faithful sometimes simply means staying with Jesus, persevering, and sticking it out.

**REFLECTION THOUGHT**

**BEING FAITHFUL SOMETIMES MEANS STAYING WITH JESUS AND PERSEVERING.**

**WHY DID GOD ALLOW HIS PEOPLE TO BE OPPRESSED?**

The book of Judges suggests that the people were oppressed because of their disobedience to God’s covenant. Israel was promised victory in the conquest if they would obey God, but the reality was partial obedience, at best (Judges 1:19-36). With the rewards of victory in view, why did God’s people of old—and why does the Church today—fall short?

In Judges, the answer was that “another generation” arose that had not participated in the Exodus or the conquest under Joshua, so their faith was increasingly based on stories of divine intervention “in the olden days.” They had not personally “seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel” (Judges 2:7). This generation failed to “acknowledge the LORD or remember the mighty things he had done for Israel” (Judges 2:10). God had left enemies in the land to test the Israelites (Judges 3:1-4), but it was Israel who failed to drive out these enemies as God had commanded. The rest of the book of Judges illustrates the tragic results of that failure.

God only turns away from his people when they have turned away from him (Judges 2:12-14; 2 Timothy 2:12). He never abandons people who truly worship him. Yet notes of grace are sounded even in divine retribution. God turned his anger to a beneficial purpose: to teach his people obedience. The very foes who robbed Israel of its divine inheritance and blessing became part of God’s gracious testing. We can learn from oppression, as both physical and spiritual warfare require discipline. The experience can produce a “peaceful harvest of right living” (Hebrews 12:11).



“Questions for Discussion” and “Talking Points” copyright © 2012 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. “Praying the Psalms,” “Reflect On,” and “Does God Keep His Promises?” taken from *The One Year Study Bible*, copyright © 2011 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.





## TALK...

APR 25-MAY 1

**PRAYING THE PSALMS** PSALM 102:1-8

Express your sorrows and worries to God, then turn your attention to God's unshakable presence and secure power.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

What did you find confusing or have questions about?

.....

.....

Where did you see God at work?

.....

.....

Why does the writer of Judges keep repeating the phrase found in 17:6?

.....

.....

Why do you think John began his Gospel so uniquely, with an introduction of Jesus as the eternal Word?

.....

.....

What struck you as significant about Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4?

.....

.....

**TALKING POINTS****OLD TESTAMENT (JUDGES 9:22—RUTH 1:22)**

Jephthah's rash vow (JUDG 11:29-40)

Samson's Philistine wedding (JUDG 14-15)

Samson's final victory (JUDG 16:23-31)

Immorality and civil war among the people of Israel (JUDG 19-20)

"Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God." (RUTH 1:16)

**NEW TESTAMENT (LUKE 24:13—JOHN 4:42)**

Jesus appears on the road to Emmaus (LUKE 24:13-34)

"And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son." (JOHN 1:14)

Jesus says he will destroy the Temple and rebuild it (JOHN 2:18-22)

"He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less." (JOHN 3:30)

The Samaritan woman runs to tell everyone of her encounter with Jesus (JOHN 4:28-30)



[Micah said,] "You've taken away all the gods I have made . . . and I have nothing left!"

JUDGES 18:24

REFLECT ON JUDGES 18:24

Micah made idols and hired a priest to preside over his personal religion. He practiced his religion, believing that it would bring him blessing. When the men of Dan took his idols and priest, he had nothing left. What an empty spiritual condition! He had nothing left but himself.

Today, some people invest all their time and energy in pursuing money, success, possessions, or a career. Some even pursue religion and morality, believing that God will bless them for it. But we seek all these things for a deeper reason—to serve ourselves. When these things fail, we are left with our history of worthless pursuits. We have nothing left but ourselves.

But God did not create us to spend our lives on worthless endeavors. He created us to spend our lives on him. We were made to serve someone greater than ourselves, someone who does not fail or dissolve. Jesus encouraged his disciples to use their resources to benefit others. "Then, when your earthly possessions are gone"—like Micah's were—"they will welcome you to an eternal home" (Luke 16:9). Only by spending your life on God will you end up with something that is not worthless.

REFLECTION THOUGHT

GOD CREATED US TO SPEND OUR LIVES ON HIM.

DID JESUS REALLY RISE FROM THE DEAD?

Scripture unanimously depicts the personal and bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead by the power of God, but numerous other attempts to explain it have emerged. Here are a few popular ones: Jesus never really died—instead, he lost consciousness and regained it after being laid in a cool tomb (the swoon theory). Jesus' disciples stole his body and then lied about a resurrection (Matthew 28:12-15). The disciples had hallucinations and dreams that they mistakenly confused with a physical resurrection. The resurrection is a personal experience in the heart of faith, not an event in history.

Behind such suggestions lies a deep-seated skepticism of the supernatural, or at least of whether a miraculous event could have happened. Such suggestions fail to account for the fact that the term "resurrection" could only have meant the literal reanimation of a dead corpse to the New Testament authors who used it and the audiences who heard it.

The historicity of Jesus' resurrection and the historical reliability of the biblical accounts are supported on numerous grounds. (1) The evidence of an empty tomb. (2) The presence of women as witnesses: No one would have made up a story with women as witnesses, since the testimony of a woman was considered to be less reliable than that of a man. (3) The varied but basically unified accounts of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances. (4) The transformation of the disciples from a fearful band into fearless followers. (5) The disciples' ability to overcome the scandal of following a crucified man: Deuteronomy 21:23 indicates that one who dies such a death has fallen under God's curse. Judaism had no concept of a dying and rising Messiah that could conveniently be applied to Jesus. Inventing something no one would find conceivable would have made little sense. The most reasonable conclusion is that Jesus did, in fact, rise from the dead.

Vertical column of horizontal dashed lines for reflection notes.



"Questions for Discussion" and "Talking Points" copyright © 2012 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. "Praying the Psalms," "Reflect On," and "Does God Keep His Promises?" taken from The One Year Study Bible, copyright © 2011 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

