

## TALK...

OCT 24-30

**PRAYING THE PSALMS PSALM 101:1-8**

Ask God to help you live a life of integrity and to give you friends who will help you do so.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

Was there anything in these readings that especially encouraged or challenged you?

.....

.....

What did you learn about yourself?

.....

.....

What do you think is the significance behind Lamentations ending with a question?

.....

.....

Why did God tell Ezekiel to study God's words carefully before prophesying to others (Ezekiel 3:10-11)?

.....

.....

What evidence does the author of Hebrews use to show that Christ has the power to save us from sin?

.....

.....

**TALKING POINT****OLD TESTAMENT (JEREMIAH 51:54—EZEKIEL 9:11)**

"Though [God] brings grief, he also shows compassion because of the greatness of his unfailing love." (LAM 3:33)

Jeremiah's prayer for restoration (LAM 5)

Ezekiel sees a vision of heavenly beings (EZEK 1)

God commands Ezekiel to be a prophet to the Israelite exiles (EZEK 3)

God shows Ezekiel the idolatry in the Temple (EZEK 8)

**NEW TESTAMENT (TITUS 3:1—HEBREWS 5:14)**

"[Believers] should be obedient, always ready to do what is good." (TITUS 3:1)

"It seems you lost Onesimus for a little while so that you could have him back forever." (PHLM 1:15)

Jesus Christ really is God's Son (HEB 1)

"Since [Jesus] himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested." (HEB 2:18)

Jesus, our High Priest (HEB 4:14–5:10)

*“The LORD is right,” Jerusalem says,  
“for I rebelled against him.”*

LAMENTATIONS 1:18

OCT 24-30



DISCUSSION GUIDE

REFLECT

PS 119

A WAY TO SEE

**REFLECT ON LAMENTATIONS 1:12-18**

God had given special care to Jerusalem, like a father protecting his daughter. But her sins had been persistent, and her punishment was horrible. Jeremiah’s sorrow and weeping over the judgment of Jerusalem expresses the sorrow of the nation.

At first, sin seems to offer freedom. Then we become captive to sin, bound by its “yoke.” When we suffer the consequences of sin, repentance is the first and most important way to find relief—this means turning away from the sin that caused the problem and turning to God for forgiveness and restoration.

No matter what you’ve done, and no matter what the consequences have been, you can turn away from sin and turn to God now, and he will forgive you. He won’t necessarily erase all the consequences, but he will give you forgiveness, comfort, relief, and freedom from the sins that you’ve been obligated to maintain.

**REFLECTION THOUGHT**

**REPENTANCE IS THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT WAY TO FIND RELIEF FROM SIN’S CONSEQUENCES.**

**WHAT IS SPIRITUAL MATURITY?**

The author of Hebrews was concerned with the spiritual immaturity of his audience. He wanted to give them real spiritual food, but they were acting like spiritual babies who needed basic nourishment rather than deeper teaching. They had not been listening to the word of God. They had been believers long enough to be teaching others, but a growing insensitivity had rendered them spiritually dull. They lacked maturity to discern the basic difference between right and wrong.

The author challenged them to move on to maturity so he could present them with deeper truths of the faith (Hebrews 6:1-3). As elsewhere in the New Testament, maturity in Hebrews has to do with one’s ability to discern spiritual truth (1 Corinthians 2:6). Christians are exhorted to be mature in their thinking (1 Corinthians 14:20). The body of Christ is growing to maturity through the equipping of believers and by growing in knowledge of the Son of God (Ephesians 4:11-16). The result is a united community of faith in which love and truth further build up the body of Christ.

Spiritual maturity is not an automatic result of time. It results from focused listening to the word of God and living out that word in fellowship with the community.

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...

OCT 31 - NOV 6

**PRAYING THE PSALMS** PSALM 106:1-12

Give thanks to God for not giving up on us even when we give up on him. Thank him for showing us how faithful he is.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

What passage most surprised you?

.....

.....

Have you ever been tempted to think that God is wrong to do something (Ezekiel 18:25)? How does God answer those doubts?

.....

.....

Why does Hebrews place such an emphasis on priesthood?

.....

.....

What parallels did you notice between the Old and New Testaments?

.....

.....

Was there anything you found confusing or had questions about?

.....

.....

**TALKING POINTS****OLD TESTAMENT (EZEKIEL 10–22)**

Ezekiel prophesies against corrupt Israelite leaders (EZEK 11:1-13)

God will judge false prophets (EZEK 13)

“What a sick heart you have, says the Sovereign LORD, to do such things as these.” (EZEK 16:30)

“If wicked people turn away from all their sins and begin to obey my decrees . . . they will surely live and not die.” (EZEK 18:21)

God’s righteous judgment and Israel’s repentance (EZEK 20)

**NEW TESTAMENT (HEBREWS 6:1–10:17)**

“Jesus became a priest . . . by the power of a life that cannot be destroyed.” (HEB 7:16)

The old covenant is “out of date and will soon disappear” (HEB 8:13)

Jesus Christ, the perfect sacrifice for our sins (HEB 9)

Jesus’ death on the cross is sufficient to cover all sins for all time (HEB 9:25-28)

“The old system under the law of Moses was only a shadow . . . of the good things to come.” (HEB 10:1)

*But Jesus did this once for all when he offered himself  
as the sacrifice for the people's sins.*

HEBREWS 7:27

OCT 31 - NOV 6



DISCUSSION GUIDE

REFLECT

PS 119

A WAY TO SEE

**REFLECT ON HEBREWS 7:27**

In Old Testament times when animals were sacrificed, they were cut into pieces, the parts were washed, the fat was burned, the blood was sprinkled, and the meat was boiled. Blood was demanded as atonement for sin, and God accepted animal blood to cover the people's sin (Leviticus 17:11). Because of the sacrificial system, the Israelites were generally aware that sin costs someone something and that they themselves were sinful.

Many people take Christ's work on the cross for granted. They don't realize how costly it was for Jesus to secure our forgiveness—it cost him his life and, for a time, painful separation from his Father (Matthew 27:46; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

In the same way that the animal sacrifices reminded the people of their sinfulness, let the Cross remind you of your own sinfulness. And while the Cross is a sober reminder of our failures, it's also a reminder of our hope. It reminds us that God makes good things happen out of bad situations. It reminds us that our sinful lives can be transformed into lives of blessing for others and ourselves.

**REFLECTION THOUGHT**

**THE CROSS REMINDS US THAT GOD MAKES GOOD THINGS HAPPEN OUT OF BAD SITUATIONS.**

**HOW CAN GOD DECEIVE A PROPHET AND STILL HOLD HIM ACCOUNTABLE FOR HIS ACTIONS?**

Ezekiel 14 raises this question in many people's minds (see Ezekiel 14:9-11): How can God have sovereign control over all things if people will be held accountable for their personal choices and decisions?

The Bible traces all things back to God's sovereignty. That the rain falls on the just and unjust alike is part of God's sovereign plan (Matthew 5:45). A false prophet could only give a prophecy that led people astray with the Lord's permission or direction.

At the same time, God is in no way responsible for our sins. It is our responsibility because it comes from our own sinful desires. In giving deceitful messages to false prophets, God was simply giving them and their hearers exactly what they wanted (see 2 Thessalonians 2:11). Unless God restrained them from their sin, they would naturally choose lies instead of the truth and worship creation in place of the Creator (Romans 1:18-25). God simply allowed them to live according to their hearts' sinful desires.

The remarkable fact is not that God allows some sinners to persist in their chosen delusions, but that he saves sinners, changes our natures, and gives us the desire to do good for the glory of God (see Ezekiel 36:25-26; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:12-13).

Handwriting practice lines consisting of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.



"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...

NOV 7-13



DISCUSSION GUIDE

## PRAYING THE PSALMS PSALM 113:1–114:8

Rejoice that God takes an interest in your life. Celebrate how he lifts people out of dust into the family of God.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

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

.....

What did you learn about God?

.....

Why do you think God gave Ezekiel messages for Israel's neighboring nations?

.....

What do you think that joy in the midst of trouble (James 1:3) looks like?

.....

How is God asking you to trust him?

.....

## TALKING POINTS

### OLD TESTAMENT (EZEKIEL 23–36)

Ezekiel forbidden to mourn the death of his wife (EZEK 24:15-27)

"The people of Israel will again live in their own land." (EZEK 28:25)

Ezekiel, the watchman of Israel (EZEK 33)

God restores Israel to bring glory to his name (EZEK 36:22-24)

"For I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do what I say." (EZEK 36:36)

### NEW TESTAMENT (HEBREWS 10:18—JAMES 1:18)

The "Faith Hall of Fame" (HEB 11)

"Let us run with endurance the race God has set before us." (HEB 12:1)

"God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness." (HEB 12:10)

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." (HEB 13:8)

Difficulties and hard times are an opportunity for joy (JAS 1:3-4)

REFLECT

PS 119

A WAY TO SEE

*It was by faith that Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice when God was testing him.*

HEBREWS 11:17

NOV 7-13



DISCUSSION GUIDE

REFLECT PS 119

A WAY TO SEE

**REFLECT ON HEBREWS 11:17-19**

Isaac was the son who had been promised to Abraham and Sarah in their old age. It was through Isaac that God was to fulfill his promise to eventually give Abraham countless descendants. Abraham was willing to give up his son when God commanded him to do so (Genesis 22:1-19). God did not let Abraham take Isaac's life because God had given the command in order to test Abraham's faith. Instead of taking Abraham's son, God gave Abraham a whole nation of descendants through Isaac.

If you are afraid to trust God with the possession, dream, or person you treasure most, pay attention to Abraham's example. Because Abraham was willing to give up everything for God, he received back more than he could have imagined.

What we receive, however, is not always immediate or in the form of material possessions. Even by the time Abraham died, he had not "received all that God had promised" (Hebrews 11:39). In the same way, our faith, at some point, will demand that we look beyond blessings in this life. Our faith will require us to put our hope in God for blessings after we die. Will you continue trusting him then?

**REFLECTION THOUGHT**

**OUR FAITH, AT SOME POINT, WILL DEMAND THAT WE LOOK BEYOND BLESSINGS IN THIS LIFE.**

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE BY FAITH?**

Hebrews 11 is an extensive essay on faith and one of the most loved sections of Scripture, yet misconceptions about faith abound. Some see faith as being any form of spirituality. Others understand it as a resolute belief that something good is going to happen to them. Still others think that faith is a blind leap against known facts. None of these represents biblical faith.

Instead, faith involves confident action in response to what God has made known (Hebrews 11:1-3). As Hebrews 11 shows, faith comes into play in a variety of life's circumstances. And the results of faith are just as varied. Some people get rescued, achieve success in life, and see some of what God has promised in their lifetimes. Others get mocked, beaten, tortured, put in prison, and killed. Faith is sometimes rewarded sooner and sometimes later, but people of faith anticipate the rewards because of their confidence in God's character.

What does it mean to live by faith? It means that, in our various circumstances, we live out our belief "that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Those who live by faith take confident action based on what God has revealed about his character, seeking to do his will in all things.

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.



## TALK...

NOV 14-20

**PRAYING THE PSALMS** PSALM 119:33-48

Plant your hope in God's commands. Pursue freedom and happiness by committing your heart to obeying his Word.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

Why do you think God gave such specific instructions in Ezekiel for the new Temple?

.....

.....

Why do you think the tongue (James 3) has such power?

.....

.....

How do Paul's teachings about salvation through faith inform the way we apply James's words about good works?

.....

.....

What did you learn about yourself?

.....

.....

How might this week's readings affect the way you live?

.....

.....

**TALKING POINTS****OLD TESTAMENT (EZEKIEL 37-48)**

The valley of dry bones (EZEK 37:1-14)

Instructions for the new Temple (EZEK 40-41)

God's glory returns to the Temple (EZEK 43)

Rules for the princes of Israel (EZEK 45:9-25)

"The [tree's] fruit will be for food and the leaves for healing." (EZEK 47:12)

**NEW TESTAMENT (JAMES 1:19—1 PETER 3:7)**

"You all must be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry." (JAS 1:19)

"Unless it produces good deeds, [faith] is dead and useless." (JAS 2:17)

Control your tongue! (JAS 3)

"Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it." (JAS 4:17)

"You are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple." (1 PET 2:5)



*“And this is the basic law of the Temple: absolute holiness!”*

EZEKIEL 43:12

**REFLECT ON EZEKIEL 43:1-12**

Back in Ezekiel 11:23, as God’s glory was leaving Jerusalem, it had stopped over the Mount of Olives to the east. It is now from the east that God’s glory was returning. God’s departure from the city had been a signal for the destruction of the city and the Temple. Now God’s return would be restorative. But his conditions had to be met: Idolatry had to be removed, and holiness needed to be reinstated.

The basic law of God’s Temple was holiness. In all he does, God is holy, perfect, and blameless. Holiness needed to be reestablished in his Temple before he could return to dwell there. And just as God is holy, we also are to be holy (Leviticus 19:2).

Ultimately in Christ, God’s people are to become a holy temple within which he can dwell (1 Corinthians 3:16). Christ’s sacrifice and the Holy Spirit’s work make personal holiness a reality in our lives. We become people prepared for God’s presence. Since the Holy Spirit dwells in us, our bodies belong to him as part of his new temple (1 Corinthians 6:19). Holy and transformed lives are the mark of all God’s true children (1 Peter 1:13-16).

**REFLECTION THOUGHT**

**IN CHRIST, GOD’S PEOPLE ARE TO BECOME A HOLY TEMPLE WITHIN WHICH HE CAN DWELL.**

**HOW ARE GOOD DEEDS RELATED TO FAITH?**

James’s conspicuous emphasis on faithfulness to God argues for charitable deeds as an expression of faith (James 2:14-26). A faith relationship with God cannot be based merely on believing a true statement. Saving faith results in actions that emulate God, who generously gives good gifts (James 1:5, 17; 4:6). Faith and good deeds are inseparable. As with Abraham, good deeds show that a person has complete faith and is righteous before God (Genesis 15:6; James 2:23).

Our Lord taught and modeled faith that does good deeds, and Paul also affirmed the need for good deeds (Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Thessalonians 1:3). Christians are to endure testing and temptations, receive wisdom, inherit the Kingdom, pray for the sick, receive forgiveness, and rescue the wanderer (James 1:3, 13-14; 2:5; 5:15, 20). All of these things can be understood as “faith expressing itself in love” (Galatians 5:6).

**REFLECT**

PS 119

A WAY TO SEE

Lined writing area for reflection.



“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.

