

PSALMS 120-134

PSALMS OF ASCENT

PARENT GUIDE



daily devos
RADIATE STUDENTS

WELCOME!

Dear Parents,

Thank you for joining us for our seventh series of Daily Devos! Our team is so excited that you've jumped in with us to go deeper with God and study his Word with your student.

The purpose of the Daily Devos is to get into the habit of spending time with God daily. The purpose of THIS material is to walk alongside your student as their primary disciple-maker. God has entrusted your child to you, and we pray that you will show them who Jesus is. We are here to support you!

When you download (or print) your parent guide, here's what to expect:

- 1. READ:** We also challenge you to pick a few verses to memorize during this series as a family.
- 2. REFLECT:** This section is an abbreviated version of what your student read in the Daily Devos. It's an explanation of the biblical passage for the day.
- 3. REAL TALK:** This section is an abbreviated version of what your student read in the Daily Devos. It's an explanation of the biblical passage for the day.

We are praying for you, and we love you.

Love,
The RADIATE Staff

WEEK 1 | DAY 1

READ: Deuteronomy 16:16

REFLECT:

The Psalms of Ascent are chapters 120-134, and they were sung by the Israelites who “ascended” the hill where the Temple was in Jerusalem. The Israelites would have traveled from their hometowns, villages, or different parts of the city, and they came to the Temple for three different festivals throughout the year. The 15 Psalms represent the 15 steps up the hill.

We’re going to take the same journey that the ancient people of God took to worship him in his Temple. It is such a cool feeling to realize that these Psalms have not only been read for centuries, but they were actually sung over and over again. These were well-worn, popular, nostalgic, and generational songs worshipping the same God we worship. Don’t forget to encourage your student to read the Daily Devos!

REAL TALK:

- What is the title of this series and what does it mean?
- How does it make you feel to know that you’re about to study songs that people sang to God thousands of years ago?
- What is your favorite worship song right now?
- What do you like about it?
- Where would you say your relationship with God is right now: do you have questions, would you like to grow in your faith, have you been distant from God recently, are you all-in and in love with the Lord, are you too ashamed or scared to talk to God?

WEEK 1 | DAY 2

READ: Psalm 120

REFLECT:

The traveler is in a distant land, living alongside people who are not following God. This new culture is hostile, hateful, and deceitful, according to the song. But as far as he was from home, the house of God is waiting for him at the other side of those mountains. I'm going to worship him all the way there and worship him when he gets me to my destination.

It's hard to be around people that don't follow God when you are truly trying to live for him. It's possible you're in a situation where you're wondering if it's just easier to blend in. Don't! When you can't see on the other side of your mountains, remember the beautiful gift that is on the other side. Sometimes it's hard to worship. Sometimes even if you want to, you don't know how. Keep worshipping him.

REAL TALK:

- Can you describe a time when you ever felt homesick?
- This Psalm points out the stark difference between Peace and Truth vs. War and Deceit. Which do you appreciate in other people?
- Would you say our home is a place of peace and truth? Why or why not?
- Would you say our home is a place of war and deceit? Why or why not?
- Have you ever been picked on because of being a Christian? Tell me more.
- Have you ever been in a situation where you felt like you were the only Christian? How did that feel?
- Can I share an experience like that that I've had in my life?

WEEK 1 | DAY 3

READ: Psalm 121

REFLECT:

You can confidently expect that God watches over you. Not in a creepy way, or in Santa's "he sees you when you're sleeping" kind of way. But in the most loving and genuine protector kind of way. And he'll never sleep on the job or get tired of his children coming to him for help.

This journey was risky. The paths were steep. Loose rocks could cause you to slip in some places. But it was worth it. "Safe" does not equal never experiencing difficulty. Safe in God's hands means sometimes hard or bad things do happen, but he is watching over you and taking care of you in the middle of it all. And an obsession with safety will sometimes deter you from taking godly risks for your faith. This terrain was risky, but at the end of the day, the traveler knew God keeps my soul in his hand.

REAL TALK:

- What's been one of the hardest things you've ever faced?
- Can I share with you one of the hardest things I've ever faced?
- Where do you need God's help right now?
- Who is someone who God has given you influence in their life?
- What are some risks you could take for the Gospel?
- How can I help you take steps to do that?
- Can you look back on your life so far and see some risks you did NOT take for the Gospel?
- How can I be praying for you today?

WEEK 1 | DAY 4

READ: Psalm 122

REFLECT:

Let's pray that we are eager to worship God and not doing anything out of obligation. Obviously COVID-19 has caused a lot of those "gathering" and "congregating" luxuries to be taken away. But at the heart of it, do you value time in God's presence, even if it's just you alone in your room?

Jerusalem literally means "City of Peace". The peace that God describes is a sense of completeness, well-being, justice, and prosperity...as well as, yes, the absence of conflict. Jesus himself is described as our peace. "He himself is our peace."

Yes, one very big takeaway from today's Daily Devo is that we should pray for peace in Israel. We should also pray for others, like the writer does. Ultimately, we can and should trust that Jesus is our peace. We can find it nowhere else!

For more background of Jerusalem and Scripture, check out the Daily Devos.

REAL TALK:

- What is your dream vacation?
- What's been your favorite vacation we've ever taken as a family? Why?
- Who are some people you get excited to see at church?
- What are some relationships at church you have that you may not have if we didn't go to church?
- Why do you think God put you in this specific town/school/family?
- How can we as a family bring peace to our neighbors?

WEEK 1 | DAY 5

READ: Psalm 123-124

REFLECT:

Psalm 46:1 “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

Psalm 118:6-9 “The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? The Lord is on my side as my helper; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes.”

Hebrews 4:16 “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Hebrews 13:6 “So we can confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?’”

REAL TALK:

- Where would you be if God had not been on YOUR side?
- Can I share with you a time where I was glad God was on my side?
- Have I ever shared with you how I gave my life to Christ?
- Who could God be calling you to help, where he wants to show them that he’s on their side through you?
- Who are some of our family members that we could help in God’s name?
- Do you have any questions for me today?

WEEK 1 | DAY 6

READ: Psalm 125

REFLECT:

Today is all about security. How God is our defense and safe place. Mountains surrounded Jerusalem, which made for a hard journey into the city. But it was also beneficial from a practical standpoint. You don't want your enemies to be able to walk right into town easily. According to this passage, the Lord surrounds his people "both now and forever". So just like the physical mountains surrounded his holy city, the Holy Spirit surrounds and delivers his people.

Eternal Security: The concept that is taught in the Bible that when a person has genuine faith in Jesus and has surrendered to him and accepted him as Savior, that person is forever kept secure by God. Aka "once saved, always saved". See Isaiah 33:6, John 10:28-29, John 14:17, John 17:24, Romans 8:38-39, Romans 11:29, Ephesians 2:8, Ephesians 4:30 for more.

For more in-depth content on this theological topic, please see the Daily Devo that your student read today.

REAL TALK:

- What is the most secure, sturdy, and safe place you can think of?
- What are some qualities that make this place feel safe to you?
- Are you SURE of your salvation? How do you know?
- Are you someone who is swayed easily or is more confident in your personal decisions?
- How can you be someone with more confidence in who God made you?

WEEK 1 | DAY 7

READ: JPsalms 126

REFLECT:

Today's Theme: We look back on his faithfulness, so we can trust him for the future.

When God did this good thing for the Israelites, it was amazing! And he's still so good to us. He's been good to you and given you example after example of his faithfulness and power. You may not be able to see it all, and you may not think what you're going through right now is good. But his goodness in your life is there.

Hebrews 10:23 says, "He who promised is reliable and trustworthy and faithful." That's such a cool promise! When we look back on how he's been faithful, we trust him to be faithful in the future too. (Disclaimer: This doesn't mean everything will always work out perfectly. But it does mean that we can trust him to take care of us. What we're talking about today is an exercise of trust that brings peace. God, you were faithful before, and I trust you to be faithful again, even if it's not what I expect.)

REAL TALK:

- Can you describe the happiest you've ever been in your life? What was the occasion? Give as much detail as you can.
- Do you mind if I describe my happiest moment?
- What is something God has done for you that's absolutely amazing?
- What is something that has happened in your life that's been absolutely awful?
- When is a time in your life where God was really faithful?
- How does this help you know you can trust him for the future?

WEEK 2 | DAY 1

READ: Psalm 127

REFLECT:

This quote is attributed to Saint Ignatius: “Pray as if everything depended on God, and work as if everything depended on you.”

Our old pal Solomon wrote this Psalm! He was the wisest man that ever lived. Don't read this Psalm and think that God does not care about hard work. On the contrary, we talked in our Proverbs series about how God honors hard work. Hard work is important, AND let the Lord build.

God calls us to be builders. He said to be fruitful/build families, to build homes and places of worship, and to build the kingdom of God. Remember John 15:5 from our last series? If you're not connected to God, the work you do isn't going to be powerful.

The balance is this: we are not in control. We must rely on God to build our lives. Before COVID-19, we certainly felt in control. Then when things shut down we quickly realized we are not in control. Don't forget! We must trust him for every part of our lives. Build. Trust. Let God.

REAL TALK:

- What are you building in your life?
- What are your thoughts on the pray/work quote?
- How do you think that applies to your life?
- Do you struggle in the are of giving God control?
- What are some things that are hard to give God control over?

WEEK 2 | DAY 2

READ: Psalm 128-129

REFLECT:

Happiness. Inner peace. Call it what you want. But blessings are a good thing, and being happy is not a bad thing. It's a GOOD thing to be happy, because that emotion is a gift from God. But it can never be our goal.

Some of you reading this have it extremely hard, and it's okay to admit that. Some of you are in a good spot, so celebrate that! And if you're in a hard place, don't think God will make it better if you're on your best behavior. Matthew 5:4 says that even when you mourn you can still be blessed.

Luke 11:28 says that you're blessed when you hear and know God's Word. John 13:14-17 says that you're blessed when you know and do what Jesus says. Romans 10:12-13 says that you're blessed when you call on him as Lord. Matthew 5 talks about those who are blessed, including someone even when they are mourning, because God will comfort you.

REAL TALK:

- What comes to mind when you think of the word "blessing"?
- Do you think happiness is your goal in life?
- If so, how can you realign that goal to be honoring God first?
- How can you praise God today?
- What has he blessed you with?
- How has he blessed our family?
- Can I share some more ways?

WEEK 2 | DAY 3

READ: Psalm 130

REFLECT:

Romans 3:23 “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

Romans 3:10 “as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one’”

Romans 5:12 “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned”

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 5:8 “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 10:9-10 “because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”

Romans 10:13 “For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’”

REAL TALK:

- Do you know what God’s will is for your life?
- What questions do you have for me about that?
- Do you know for sure you’ll spend eternity with Jesus when you die?
- How?
- Can you tell me your story of how you came to know Jesus?
- How can I be praying for you today?

WEEK 2 | DAY 4

READ: Psalm 131

REFLECT:

Proverbs 11:2 “When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.”

Proverbs 16:5 “Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished.”

Romans 12:16 “Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.”

Galatians 6:3 “For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.”

Philippians 2:3 “Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”

REAL TALK:

- What are some examples of pride?
- What are some results of being prideful?
- What questions do you have for me about that?
- Where do you feel like you're better than other people, you're focused on yourself, you have rivalry, you're arrogant, or you refuse to “associate with the lowly”?

WEEK 2 | DAY 5

READ: Psalm 132

REFLECT:

Telling stories about your past is a huge element in sharing your faith and growing in it too. Already in this Daily Devo series you've been challenged to recall ways that God has been faithful to you and the things you're thankful for that God gave you. Looking at some hardships in your life and then showing people how God was faithful can be such a good practice. And telling people about how your life has been changed by Jesus is a crucial part of presenting the Gospel with someone.

God promised to be faithful and bless David, and he came through on that promise. You can trust him to do the same! Here are some verses that include promises of God: Deuteronomy 31:8, Psalm 32:8, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 11:28-29, John 16:33, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

REAL TALK:

- What are some of your favorite promises of God?
- Why?
- What has been one of the biggest takeaways so far from reading this Daily Devo series?
- What has God been teaching you?
- Let's practice talking about our personal testimonies: What was your life like before Jesus? How did you meet Jesus? What has your life been like since you met Jesus?
- Who do you need to share your faith story with?

WEEK 2 | DAY 6

READ: Psalm 133

REFLECT:

Disunity is not new. Harmony in the church (not just at BHBC, but more broadly we're talking about harmony among Christians) is beautiful, good, and pleasant. It also pleases the Lord. It is sacred. It sets a good example for the outside world of how the family of God should and does look. It propels ministry to be done. It is a pleasant thing. It is how God called us to be.

So why don't we always get along?

In a word: sin. In many words: it's because of what we talked about two days ago; we all want to be number one. James 4:1 says, "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?"

Trust God that he will look out for us, so we don't have to look out for our own pleasures and self-interest. Unity with others takes work. It takes humility. It takes risk. But as we see from our main verse today, it results in good, pleasant, and beautiful moments that should be celebrated among Christians.

REAL TALK:

- Why is Psalm 133:1 so significant?
- Would you be willing to commit to memorizing it together?
- Why or why not?
- Is there someone in your life that you need to reconcile with?
- How have you seen that it's UN-pleasant when you're not in unity with that person?
- Would you like to talk through what reconciliation would look like with that person?

WEEK 2 | DAY 7

READ: Psalm 134

REFLECT:

We have arrived! Praise the Lord! The journey is over! There were highs and lows – but NOW let's praise the Lord.

What are you happy about? Praise the Lord. What are you frustrated by? Praise the Lord. What are you worried about? Praise the Lord. What are you currently celebrating? Praise the Lord. No matter how the journey has been so far, let's take a moment and say that God deserves our praise and respect no matter what. Praise the Lord when you don't feel like it, and praise the Lord when you do.

God's character in each of the psalms that we have studied so far in our ascent on the journey to the Temple with the other Israelites. You'll notice that each step on the climb reflects some part of his character.

REAL TALK:

- What was the best part of your week so far?
- Why was it good?
- What was the worst part of your week so far?
- Why was that the worst?
- What can I pray for you about as you go into the next week?
- What character traits of God stood out to you the most during this series?
- How can we as a family do a better job praising the Lord no matter what?