

# Psalms



Daily Life  
Five Oaks Church  
Week 3: September 12–18, 2015

# *Day 1*

*September 14*



*Pray | Thank God for His provision, in good times and in bad.*

WHERE YOU GO for strength in a crisis reveals who or what is the Lord of your life.

Since the fall of man into sin in the Garden of Eden, part of the human experience here on Earth includes times of crisis—times when things are not going our way, times of stress, times when we are tested. It’s in these times when true character is revealed, both ours and the character of those around us.

It’s because he loves us and wants us to mature that God tests us (see James 1:2–4). When things are going well and life is easy, our natural inclination is to forget God and to think we have everything under control. Times of crisis remind us of our weakness and force us to rely on something other than ourselves. Those who make Jesus Christ their Lord and go to him in a time of crisis will find all the strength they need and will receive the ultimate reward: eternal life in the presence of God (see 1 Peter 1:10–12).



*Read | Psalm 11*



*Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection.*

Psalm 11:3 refers to a crisis situation where “foundations of law and order have collapsed” (NLT). There are many situations in our country and world that resemble that crisis description. How do you view and react to these situations? Are you inclined to flee to the mountains? How does God call his followers to react? (See 1 Peter 4:12–19.)

We often don’t recognize that God is testing us until the test has passed. What are the benefits of recognizing a crisis as a test from God while it’s occurring? How can we become people who consistently recognize crisis situations for what they are and maximize these opportunities?

Is Psalm 11:4–7 a source of encouragement or a source of concern or discomfort for you? Honestly assess your heart, and take a moment to reflect on that assessment. If these verses are a source of discomfort, and God is moving your heart to change that, please don’t ignore that urging. Reach out to a friend, small group leader, or pastor and talk with them about this.

## Day 2

September 15



*Pray / Tell God how much you love him. Praise him for never leaving you.*

THE PROMISES OF God are real and reliable. When you live a life dependent on God's promises, you are never alone.

Those of us who are followers of Jesus Christ are called to be light in a world filled with darkness. The words of Psalm 12 describe a world where there seems to be no light. The darkness is characterized by selfish behavior: two-faced people who seem pleasant on the outside but have hidden agendas motivated purely by the desire for personal gain, regardless of the cost to others. Sound familiar?

Behavior like this is completely contrary to God's plan for our lives. This is true in all aspects of life: family, community, business and church. God calls us to *love*. We are to love him above all else and others more than ourselves (Matthew 22:37–40). The selfless behavior that results will be a light in the darkness, drawing people to God, which must be our primary motive.



*Read / Psalm 12*



*Reflect* / Choose one of the following questions for reflection.

How is your life a light to the world? Describe some specific ways that your lifestyle and behavior demonstrates God's love and provision to those around you.

Psalm 12:6 describes God's words and promises as pure. This is confirmed and expanded by Paul in 2 Corinthians 1:18–20. Read these verses. How does the purity and reliability of God's promises impact how you live each day? List some specific, concrete things. If you cannot think of anything, consider what God might be communicating to you in that fact.

Psalm 12:5 reiterates a message that is revealed throughout the entire Bible: God has a passionate heart for the poor. Why do you think God so clearly articulates this message in the Bible?

# Day 3

September 16



*Pray / Ask God to speak to you through his Word, the Bible.*

STAY FOCUSED ON God's promises in times of despair.

We all encounter life situations in which the stress, sadness, anger or helplessness seems too much to bear. The situation consumes all of our waking thoughts, and the helpless feeling of despair sets in, a feeling of being inadequate or unable to handle the situation.

Followers of Jesus Christ are not immune to these situations. We are still sinful humans. However, a follower of Jesus Christ has access to resources that can be drawn from to move past the helplessness of despair to hope. The key is to find a way to admit our own weakness, recall the promises and reliability of God, and throw ourselves on the mercy and grace of God. The situation may not immediately go away, but the hope of having a trustworthy companion will allow the journey to move from destructive to constructive, maturing your faith and witnessing to those around you.



*Read / Psalm 13*



*Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection.*

Are you currently living in a state of despair? Read Psalm 13:5–6 as a prayer of praise and confession to God. Confess your inadequacies and confirm God’s adequacy—throw yourself on God’s mercy and take him on the journey with you rather than trying to deal with it all on your own.

If you are a follower of Christ, one of the greatest acts of love you can commit is to help bring the hope of Jesus Christ to someone around you who is in despair. How would you approach the initial conversation? What are the key facts and thoughts you would share?

Are the promises of God real to you? Does your life reveal that to others? If so, give examples and then go to God in prayer and ask him to reveal one area of your life in which you are too reliant on yourself. If not, take a few minutes to consider why they are not real to you, if you want them to be, and how you will go about making them real.

*Day 4*  
*September 17*



*Pray / Thank God for sending Jesus, providing us a path directly to God.*

There is a God, and those who believe in the God of the Bible can rely on his promises.

The world is, and always has been, full of people who do not believe there is a God, or they do not believe that God plays an active role in the affairs of people here on Earth. These people are described using the word *fools* in Psalm 14. A fool in this context is someone who stubbornly rejects the truth or wisdom.

Isn't it interesting how Satan has turned the tables on this perspective, particularly in modern society? Today truth is relative, and people who believe there are absolute truths, provided by a God and Creator, are commonly considered closed-minded and foolish. Praise God for his words of truth in the Bible and his promise to conquer Satan and fully reveal his truth when Jesus returns.



*Read / Psalm 14*





*Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection.*

Is there a God? How do you know? (See Romans 1:20, 1 Corinthians 8:6.)

Psalm 14:5 gives assurance that God is with his people, the righteous. It also indicates that the evildoers (verses 4–5) are in great terror because of that. Under what circumstances will those separated from God feel this terror? What is the responsibility of followers of Jesus Christ to those who are separated from Jesus Christ and will face this terror?

Psalm 14:7 is a prayer of praise and hope, originating from confidence in the promises of God. Do you pray prayers of hope and praise and confidence in those same promises? Explain your answer. Jesus says in Mark 9:23, “Anything is possible if a person believes” (NLT). How can you change your prayer life to begin to acknowledge and take advantage of these incredible possibilities?

## *Day 5*

*September 18*



*Pray / Thank God that he loves you unconditionally.*

LIVING IN GOD'S presence requires a transformed character.

As a result of their special relationship with the one true God, the people of Israel were called to live differently from the people and nations around them. In addition to the physical differences called out in the Law, there were expectations of character that are summarized by David in Psalm 15: integrity (moral consistency), speaking the truth (no lying or gossip), discerning in dealing with others, and generosity.

For Israel, attempting to follow the Law and living according to these standards of character was designed to point out their need for a Savior. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ fulfilled the demands of the Law so that a relationship with God is now dependent on faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. The same expectations of character are still important, as they are evidence of a life dependent on Jesus.



*Read / Psalm 15*



*Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection.*

Psalm 15:1 refers to the idea of sojourning in the tent of the Lord and dwelling on his holy hill. From the writer’s perspective, it’s something that is prized and desirable. What did that mean to the people of Israel? Why was it important? How do you sojourn in the tent of the Lord and dwell on his holy hill? Why is it important today?

Psalm 15:4 indicates that “despising a vile person” is a desirable characteristic. What does it look like for a follower of Jesus, called to love their neighbors and enemies, to despise a vile person? Is there someone in your life that could be described as vile (a flagrant sinner)? How are you speaking into that person’s life?

Which of the four expectations of character listed here presents the greatest challenge to you: (1) integrity (moral consistency); (2) speaking the truth (no lying or gossip); (3) discerning in dealing with others; or (4) generosity? What steps can you take to improve your witness for Jesus in this area?

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