

## The Psalms: Expressive Joy

### Key Scriptures:

Psalms 37:4 <sup>4</sup> Delight yourself in the LORD, And He will give you the desires of your heart.

Deut. 28:47-48 Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things, <sup>48</sup> therefore you shall serve your enemies.

Jer. 2:11-13 <sup>11</sup> Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. <sup>12</sup> Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD, <sup>13</sup> for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Matt. 15:7-9 <sup>7</sup> Hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied correctly about you when he said, <sup>8</sup> 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me, <sup>9</sup> and they worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

Ps. 34:8 Taste and see that the LORD is good! How blessed is the one who takes shelter in him!

Ps. 16:11 In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Ps. 36:8 They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

Ps. 42:1 As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. <sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

Ps. 63:1 O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water.

**Key Point:** Delighting in God, finding joy in Him as our strength, is fuel for praise. God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in Him.

## TALK IT OVER

**Start talking:** Pick a conversation starter for your group.

- If you could have an unlimited supply of one thing for the rest of your life, what would it be and why?

**Reflect, Think, & Share:** Read through the key scriptures and share any observations or questions with the group.

### Delight in God

- How do you interpret what Psalm 37:4 is saying? What are some things that hinder us from finding joy in God? How can we overcome them?
- In what ways do Deut 28:47-48, Jer 2:11-13, and Matt 15:7-9 highlight how people have refused to “delight themselves in the Lord?”

### Praise and Worship

- Do the Psalms listed on this page seem to be “extreme?” How so?
- C.S. Lewis realized that praise is a natural overflow of enjoyment. How does understanding praise as an expression of joy (rather than merely a duty) change the way we approach worship?

### The Glory of God

- God’s glory is described as splendor, weight or worth. What does it mean to ascribe glory to God in our daily lives?
- In what ways does the world seek after glory, and how does that differ from the glory God calls us to pursue?

### Joy and Satisfaction in God

- C.S. Lewis said, “We are half-hearted creatures... fooling about with *drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us.*” What are some “mud pies” that people settle for instead of the joy of knowing God?
- How does knowing that God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him impact the way we live our lives?
- What are some practical ways we can cultivate a heart that finds ultimate joy and satisfaction in God?

**Start doing:** One way to practice being joyful and praising God as a response is to personalize a prayer based on one of the psalms. Try praying Psalm 100 in a personal way. Then choose other Psalms.

**Prayer Requests.** Take some time to pray together. Use the key scriptures as a guide in praying the scriptures back to God.

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