

Transformed By Praise

Week 3 Study Questions (pp. 11-25)

Group Questions

Discussion starter: Are you the kind of person who wants to listen to the blues or uplifting music when you are down? Why?

1. On what dominant note does the Book of Psalms begin? On what dominant note does the book of Psalms end?
2. What does the arrangement of individual psalms in the Book of Psalms communicate? What does it teach us about worshiping God? How might the Psalms be alternatively organized?
3. What are some of the benefits of singing and praying songs of lament in our private worship? In corporate worship? Why should we strive for “balance” in our singing and praying to the Lord?
4. What is the general flow in the psalms of lamentation? How is this general flow different than or similar to contemporary “praise and worship” songs? Modern day blues songs? Modern day “achy-breaky” country songs?
5. Scan the lament psalms 10, 11, 12, 13. What is the psalmist’s complaint? When does the psalmist begin “the extraordinary shift in mood”? What is it about God that the psalmist takes comfort in?
6. Give several possible explanations for the shift of lamentation to praise in the psalms of lamentation. Reflect on these and give an example from personal experience when your life moved from lamentation to praise.

7. Read Matt 16:13-28 and Luke 24:25-27, 44-47. What was the purposeful movement and flow in the life of Jesus Christ? Why was it difficult for the disciples to understand and accept this? How do Christians make the same mistake today? How do you make the same mistake?

8. Give an example of Jesus singing the psalms of lament. How did Jesus sing/pray the psalms of lament similar to the way we sing/pray? Different from the way we do? How is this comforting to the Christian?

9. Give an example of Jesus singing the psalms of praise. How did Jesus sing/pray the psalms of praise similar to the way we sing/pray? Different from the way we do? How is this comforting to the Christian?

10. How does the doctrine of union with Christ affect the manner we should live the Christian life?

Digging Deeper

Psalm 26 is a lament song by David. Read Psalm 26 imagining that you are David praying to God. Now read it imagining Christ praying to God. How does your overall perspective change of this psalm? Finally, personalize this psalm by praying it directly to the Lord. How is your prayer changed when offered personally, yet through the lens of Christ?

Application

The Book of Psalms is a wonderful guide for the life of prayer. They express the full range of human emotion by giving voice to our joys, fears, hurts, angers, confusions, and more. Read Heb 4:14-16 and Rom 8:18-39. Consider how these passages give context to our experiences of suffering. If you are presently in a time of suffering and lamentation, use Psalm 86 as a guide to bring your troubles to the Lord in prayer. If you are presently in a time of rejoicing and praise, use Psalm 103.