

Pursuing God

In Step with the Psalms

Lesson 20: Psalm 145

The Guardian of Our Steps

Stay on the Path ~

Psalm 145 is ascribed to David and is the last composition in the Psalter that bears his name. In it he reveals the profound personal discoveries he made on the path about God's mercy and grace in the midst of his own trials and sin. The overpowering message is that our omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent Creator God holds these frail, finite human creatures in the grip of His indefatigable grace at all times! It is a stunning revelation that is incomprehensible this side of heaven. No one can understand the depth, breadth, width, and height of God's love; we can merely wrap ourselves in it and embrace it while we have breath in our lungs.

The Christian life becomes real to us when all we say and sing about in praise of Him becomes personal in relation to our need. As we encounter the bumps of life, we discover He was there all the time, those everlasting arms supporting us and holding us steady. We will spend forever praising God, whose righteousness is unsearchable; yet only those of us who acknowledge that we fail and fall at times can even begin to appreciate His good news of salvation and sanctification.

From one generation to another, as God's acts are told, each transformed life serves as a living witness to His power. David touches a nerve deep in the human soul through this psalm. It stands as a testimony to the greatness, goodness, and glory that is due God's name both here in this life and for all eternity to come.

Did you know ~

David authored more psalms than any other Old Testament writer—75 of the 150 that were composed are attributed to him. Known for being "the sweet singer of Israel," David's songs were first sung for an audience of One—out in the sheepfold while tending his father's flocks. There this talented musician and poet communed with God, honing his skill for playing on the harp which would later serve him well in the courts of King Saul. His reverence for God made him a man after God's own heart. The heading above Psalm 145 reads "a psalm of praise," the only psalm with this unique designation. While all of David's psalms were sung in praise to God, clearly this one stands apart as the clarion call to worship.

Psalm 145

A Song of God's Majesty and Love
A Praise of David.

1 I will extol You, my God, O King;
And I will bless Your name forever
and ever.

2 Every day I will bless You,
And I will praise Your name forever
and ever.

3 Great is the Lord, and greatly to
be praised;
And His greatness is unsearchable.

4 One generation shall praise Your
works to another,
And shall declare Your mighty acts.

5 I will meditate on the glorious
splendor of Your majesty,
And on Your wondrous works.

6 Men shall speak of the might of Your
awesome acts,
And I will declare Your greatness.

7 They shall utter the memory of Your
great goodness,
And shall sing of Your righteousness.

8 The Lord is gracious and full of
compassion,
Slow to anger and great in mercy.

9 The Lord is good to all,
And His tender mercies are over
all His works.

10 All Your works shall praise You,
O Lord,
And Your saints shall bless You.

11 They shall speak of the glory of
Your kingdom,
And talk of Your power,

12 To make known to the sons of men
His mighty acts,
And the glorious majesty of
His kingdom.

13 Your kingdom is an everlasting
kingdom,
And Your dominion endures
throughout all generations.

14 The Lord upholds all who fall,
And raises up all who are
bowed down.
15 The eyes of all look expectantly
to You,
And You give them their food
in due season.
16 You open Your hand
And satisfy the desire of every
living thing.
17 The Lord is righteous in all His ways,
Gracious in all His works.
18 The Lord is near to all who call
upon Him,
To all who call upon Him in truth.
19 He will fulfill the desire of those
who fear Him;
He also will hear their cry and
save them.
20 The Lord preserves all who love Him,
But all the wicked He will destroy.
21 My mouth shall speak the praise of
the Lord,
And all flesh shall bless His
holy name
Forever and ever.

(Scripture from the New King James Bible, ©1980 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission.)

Open your Bible and lesson each day by beginning with a word of prayer.

Read Psalm 145.

Listen to the psalm ~ First impressions

What is the *tone* of Psalm 145? What stands out to you from your initial reading?

2. Even though David was king over Israel, he declares God to be his King. His choice of the words, “I will praise” literally means “to bend the knee” and “to give a blessing.” His praise of God’s name was not for a moment; what does David say about it? v. 2

Pause & ponder ~

Praise and worship are meant to be a lifestyle for the believer—every day and on every occasion, merely because He is great and greatly to be praised (v. 3). What does this verse say specifically about God’s greatness? What does this mean to you?

As part of their contribution to praising God, each generation will tell about what God has done, both historically and personally as a testament to Him.

3. Upon what does David meditate? vv. 5–6

- a. What will this prompt him to do?

- b. What will be on everyone’s tongue? v. 7

II. We praise God for His righteous character. vv. 8–13

The psalmist extolled the Lord for His goodness and greatness in creation. Next the song of praise transitions from what God has done to who/what God is. With a sense of awe, David shares from the perspective of his own life experience.

1. David proclaims what about God’s character in the following?

- a. v. 8: _____

- b. v. 9: _____

How was David able to know of God's love? The failures of his own life had taught him that "The Lord upholds all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down" (v.14). The word *upholds* in Hebrew is descriptive of the Lord's name: *Yahweh [the Lord] upholds*. He supports us when we fall down in life. He also raises up those who are *bowed down*. The picture is that of a reed bent by the strong blast of a windstorm or the intense heat of the sun.

2. Remember: You *fall down* because of your own choices in life; but you are *bowed down* by what life hands to you. Which is true of you today? Why? In either case, the Lord is there to uphold you because He is righteous—reason enough to praise Him!

3. Using verses 10-13 as your reference point, what does David say about the following:

- a. God's works:

- b. God's saints:

- c. God's kingdom:

Touchpoint~

How are *you* able to know that God is full of compassion, slow to anger, and great in mercy? Because you have fallen—who hasn't? And when you fail, He forgives. If you had never fallen or failed in life, you would never be able to know of the absolute reliability of God's grace and mercy. He is always there to restore you. It is not the wrath or judgment of God that leads you to repentance—rather it is His goodness (Romans 2:4). Share a recent time when God's goodness led you to experience His gift of repentance.

III. We praise God for His providential care. vv. 15–21

The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth (v.18). Looking at this verse closely, we see that it covers the necessities and desires we have from day to day. He upholds those who fall down; He raises up all who carry the heavy weight of daily burdens.

1. As the eyes of all look expectantly to Him, what does He generously supply?
 - a. v. 15:

 - b. v. 16:

The Lord answers the prayers of those who love Him and fear Him when they call to Him. He opens His hands to meet our needs when we open our hearts to express those needs to Him.

Pause & ponder ~

If you fear (revere) Him (v.19), God will fulfill your desire—what is your desire today?

God is listening—from what/whom do you need to be saved?

Do you love Him? If so, He promises (v. 20) to preserve your going out and your coming in. He is the Guardian of each and every step you take. When was the last time you praised Him for that?

2. Personal: Do you desire to know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? If so, would you bow your heart right now and pray the following . . .

Lord, I see in Your wonderful Word that it's possible to experience a walk with You that brings forgiveness, joy, and satisfaction in abundance, and I want that with all my heart. I invite You now to come inside; forgive me of my sin; wash me in the shed blood of Christ; fill me with Your Holy Spirit. I want to live my life to please You and I praise You right now with my whole heart. In Jesus' precious name, amen!

If you prayed that prayer to invite Jesus Christ to come into your heart, tell someone about it: your group leader, counselor, or pastor. Note the date in your Bible, and welcome to the family of God!

Live the psalm ~

What David declared in Psalm 145 about praising God should be *your* daily, personal experience. God is unsearchable, indescribable, and incomprehensible—He is praiseworthy! In your own words, what is it about Him that produces in you a sense of awe and wonder today?

Pray the psalm ~

By far, your most painful failures are centered around your relationship with the Lord. You may say you love Him with your lips but then deny Him by your disobedience. If prayer has become a duty and serving an obligation, then God is not as near as He wants to be. Lift up your voice and call upon Him in truth right now. He is near and He wants to hear from you. Close your study with a time of praise.

Praise is the rehearsal of our eternal song.
Charles H. Spurgeon

