



Series: Summer of Psalms

The Psalms reflect just about every emotion and mood of our human experience, from shouts of praise to wrestling with the hardest questions about suffering. Their voice is refreshingly spontaneous in conversation with the divine through poetry, prayer, and of course, song. This summer, we will celebrate the rich diversity of the Psalms, exploring major themes and how they can help us draw into closer relationship with an ever-present God. Come, let us join with God’s people throughout the ages in singing praise and heartfelt prayer as we experience a Summer of Psalms.

“Here at the very center of the Bible are songs, rising up like a tune from its heart.
They capture the innermost thoughts and prayers of Old Testament people –
and they still speak directly to our needs”
(*NRSV Student Bible* with notes by Philip Yancey and Tim Stafford)

Message description:

Wisdom literature refers to the books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes in the Hebrew Bible that reveal the collected wisdom and teachings of generations of godly people. They challenge us to consider both the complexity and the simplicity of living wisely and show us how the way of wisdom is the way of godliness. How many of us have been in that place in life where we just want to know what comes next? What am I supposed to do now? We have a desire to follow God, to honor him, to know the will of God, so we can follow it! We just need a little help. A little direction. The Psalms of wisdom provide for us a resource, a script even, of how to turn to God in prayer first for wisdom. These Psalms can be seen as a type of prayer for help or deliverance- specifically seeking the help, guidance, direction, teaching, leading from God. And not just for one circumstance, but for our whole lives.

The way of wisdom is the way of godliness. One who prays for wisdom must be humble and open to the teaching of God, seek forgiveness as a way of growth into godliness, and wait with hope for God's promises to be fulfilled.

Psalms of Wisdom: (9, 14, 25, 32, 39, 49, 53, 112, 119)

Prayers for help, guidance, direction, teaching, leading from God.

General information about Wisdom Literature:

In the ancient Near East, wisdom had to do with ordering life and society, pleasing God and others, and carefully observing life, society, and nature. In Israel, wisdom shares these concerns but is distinct in the centrality it gives to fear of the Lord. God alone is the center and focus of life (76:7), and proper fear of him opens the path of wisdom (111:10).

The way of wisdom is the way of godliness. Psalm 1:1-3 invites all readers of the Psalter to delight in God, his revelation, and the lifestyle that results from his care for the wise.

Key Scripture: Psalm 25

How to pray for wisdom and to seek the counsel of God:

1. Remain humble.

- *The lifestyle of those who trust God will be characterized by humility, an openness to God's teaching and a reliance on God not self.*

2. Ask for forgiveness.

- *When we fail to follow God and instead rely on self, we must seek forgiveness... asking God to remember God's own character and promises and have mercy.*
- *Humility and forgiveness lead to growth. Maya Angelou, "Do the best you can until you know better. When you know better, do better."*

3. Wait with hope.

- *The term "wait" here translates the Hebrew word qawah, which means both to "wait" and to "hope." This isn't an idle waiting... it is an active waiting that also hopes for God's promises to be kept.*
- *For Israel, that was a waiting and hoping for the Messianic king to redeem Israel.*
- *For us now, that is looking forward to the day when Christ will return and establish his reign in the kingdom of God.*