



## Week 23: Psalms 11-20

### Study Guide for the week of June 1-7

#### Personal reflection / journaling exercise

Consider starting each day this week by reading and meditating on Ps 15.

List the eleven attributes of the righteous person (there are three each in verses 2-4 and two in verse 5).

The first group of three consists of relatively general characteristics of the righteous person. What does it mean to speak the truth from sincere hearts? Are you willing to speak truth even when doing so places you at a disadvantage? Even if you are the only one who knows the truth?

The second group deals with avoiding specific sins. Why is there such an emphasis on one's speech? Read James 3:2-12. Where do you need God's power and grace to help you curb your tongue?

The third group deals with the people you surround yourself with. Are the righteous supposed to condone the sins of others? Can you speak the truth in love (Eph 4:14-15) to those close to you? Should you speak if you cannot speak in love? Who speaks truth in love to you?

The final group of two speaks to misusing assets: the asset of money and the asset of justice. Who are society's most vulnerable members? How did Jesus respond to them? How are you responding to them?

This psalm highlights how difficult it is for us to be holy as God is holy (Lev 19:2), but spending time reflecting on the way of obedience (Ps 1) influences us to follow courageously in the footsteps of Jesus (Luke 9:23-24).

#### Discussion starters

1. Did you ever run away from home as a child? What happened that you decided to run? How far did you go? What brought you back? Have you ever wanted to run away as an adult...or actually attempted it (Ps 11:1)? When you have those feelings to run, what does the psalmist encourage you to do?
2. Have you ever felt the "godly are fast disappearing! The faithful have vanished from the earth!" (Ps 12:1)? What events triggered those thoughts? Read 1 Kg 14:10-18. Even the great prophet Elijah felt alone in a world gone bad! What should you do when you feel alone in the struggle against evil?
3. How many times is the phrase "how long" used in Ps 13? What situations is the psalmist grappling with? What does the psalmist demand of God? How does the psalm end? Are you able to be so honest with God about your troubles and problems that you can finally come to trust and praise?
4. List the metaphors describing God you find in Ps 18:1-2. What does it mean when God is your strength? Your rock? Your fortress? Your savior? Your protection? Your shield? Your stronghold? When you see the list of God's characteristics, how do you respond? How does the psalmist respond (Ps 18:29)? An even more vivid translation of this verse is "with my God I can leap over any wall." Do you feel able to leap?
5. How does the psalmist describe God's law in Ps 19:7? God's decrees (19:7)? God's commandments (19:8)? God's commands (19:8)? How are they meant to function (19:11)? Do you experience God's ways as more desirable than gold or sweeter than honey? Why or why not?
6. At the end of your small group time, pray Ps 20:1-5 over each person in the group as a blessing for the coming week.

#### Bible verse to memorize: Ps 19:14