



Week 25: Psalms 31-40

Study Guide for the week of June 15-21

Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, spend time with Ps 32.

What is the focus of the first five verses? The psalmist is honest that sin is pervasive, but he is celebrating forgiveness of sins. Have you experienced confession as cathartic and healing? Why or why not? Have you experienced forgiveness of your sins as a cause for celebration? Why or why not?

In verses 6-11, where does the psalmist direct his attention, to himself or to God and others? What surrounds those who trust the Lord? Does this love come as a result of the psalmist's own accomplishments? What does this teach us about God's grace?

Ps 32 is an important check against self-righteousness and legalism. Can you see similarities between the focus in Ps 1 and Ps 32? Is being righteous somehow managing to obey all the rules, to be sinless, to be morally perfect? Or does righteousness mean being forgiven, being open to God's instruction, living in dependence on God rather than yourself? Are you allowing yourself to continuously experience God's grace?

St. Augustine had the words of Ps 32 inscribed above his bed so they would be the first thing he saw every morning when he woke up. Not a bad way to start the day – celebrating God's grace! What would this look like in your life?

Discussion starters

1. Reread Ps 32:1-4. What are three aspects of God's forgiveness? What are some consequences of not confessing our sin? How does God want to guide us (32:8)? How does God sometimes have to guide us because of our rebellion (32:9)? Which method of guidance do you prefer? Which method of guidance do you seem to experience most?
2. Can you take delight in someone you don't know well (Ps 37:4)? Does delight deepen the better you know someone? What delightful thing have you learned about God in reading the Psalms so far?
3. Ps 39:6-11 reminds us that life is too short no matter how long we live. If you had only six months to live, what would you do? Tell someone you love them? Work to reconcile a relationship? Deal with an undisciplined area in your life? Slow down and listen better?
4. Avner Offer said, "Affluence breeds impatience and impatience undermines well-being." What four benefits of learning patience did the psalmist experience in Ps 40:1-3? Is impatience a struggle for you? Are the benefits of patience worth the effort of developing it? Why or why not?
5. Reread Ps 34:11-14. Are these words for wise living sufficient, or would you add to them? What are the characteristics of wise living?

Bible verse to memorize: Ps 37:5