



Week 34: Psalms 121-130

Study Guide for the week of Aug. 17-23

Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, spend extra time with Ps 123

What is the attitude of servants toward their masters? Are servants dependent on their master's goals, direction, timing or their own? What is your attitude toward dependence? Where are you depending on God and where are you depending on yourself or others or a change in circumstances?

Our culture tends to view dependence negatively and independence positively. What have you learned from your reading of the Psalms this summer that counters that belief?

Spend time in prayer asking God for the heart of a servant who expectantly and joyfully depends on The Master for their goals, direction, timing; knowing this is the abundant life Jesus promised (John 10:10).

Discussion starters

1. As a child, did you fear monsters under the bed or in the closet? How did your parents banish them? When do you feel most secure as an adult? Who do you look to in order to banish the “monsters” ready to pounce on you now? Reread Ps 121. What characteristics of God does the psalmist cite as reasons that he looks to God for security? Has God covered all the “monsters” in Ps 121 or are there problems or issues God can't help with?
2. What are your emotions when you come to worship? Do they echo the feelings found in Ps 122:1? Do you expect to experience peace (the Hebrew word “shalom” encompasses not just peace but also completeness, health, justice, prosperity, and protection)? Does the psalmist ignore the realities of our dark and fallen world? Hint: the call for prayer for peace – why pray for peace if it is already present in the world? There is power in a space when you recognize The Lord is there amidst the dark realities of our fallen world. How does that truth impact your expectations for and experience of worship?
3. How are you sleeping these days? How often do you respond to the question, “How are you?” with “I'm soooo busy!”? Do you wear your busyness as a badge of honor, evidence that you're important? Reread Ps 127:2. Is a good night's sleep (7-9 hours for adults) a spiritual discipline you need to practice? Is being God's beloved enough evidence you're important?
4. What are you waiting for? To get married, to find a new job, to retire, to go on vacation, to be healthy, to be happy, to lose 10 pounds, to have kids, to get the kids out of the house, the start of school, the end of school? Reread Ps 130:5-6. The psalmist is crying from the depths, waiting for the world to be put right. Where does the psalmist put his “waiting energy” – in himself, in others, in a change of circumstances, in God? Where are you putting your “waiting energy”?

Bible verse to memorize: Ps 121:1-2