

Singing with Christ

The 150 inspired Psalms are given as the church's hymnal to sing to Christ. It is also given for the individual's walk with Christ. Throughout the centuries godly saints have returned to the Psalms for comfort and strength.

"[The Psalms] are an entire Bible in miniature—the perfect image for the soul's course of life."

— Athanasius

"[The Psalter] is the the anatomy of all the parts of the human soul."

— John Calvin

"[The Psalms are] a Little Bible, wherein everything contained in the entire Bible is beautifully and briefly comprehended."

—Martin Luther

"The Psalter is the prayer book of Jesus Christ in the truest sense of the word. He prayed the Psalter and now it has become his prayer for all time... we understand how the Psalter can be prayer to God and yet God's own Word, precisely because here we encounter the praying Christ...because those who pray the psalms are joining in with the prayer of Jesus Christ, their prayer reaches the ears of God. Christ has become their intercessor..."

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer

We can speak every word in the Psalter back to God in *lament, petition, thanksgiving* and *praise*. When we ride on the heights we can join with all creation in giving wholehearted thanks and praise. When we walk through the valley we can raise our voices in sorrow and anguish.

When the word of Christ in the Psalter (Colossians 3:16, cf. Ephesians 5:19) dwells richly within us we can enter into the sufferings and glories of Christ. By virtue of our union with Christ we have fellowship in his sufferings (Luke 3:10) so that in due time we may be exalted with Christ (1 Peter 5:6).

In all ways, Jesus Christ can sympathize with us as our High Priest who experienced human suffering (Hebrews 4:15). Now in his exalted state as King he sings with and over us in glory (Hebrews 2:12; Zephaniah 3:17). When we read, pray, study or sing the word of Christ in the Psalter he is speaking as our Prophet.

Are you ready to receive with meekness the Word of Christ implanted?

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Take time alone in silence and solitude with Christ and the Psalter: *The Book of Psalms for Worship* (Crown & Covenant)

Pray that God would quiet your heart (Psalm 131) and open your ear to hear what the Lord has to say (1 Samuel 3:10).

<— Look Back

1. Prayerfully think back on your past. What are some memories which bring recurring emotional responses? What is a biblical response? What do you need to believe about God? What theme or word would best describe that response to God?
2. Look up that theme or word in the “Index of Biblical Topics” in the *Book of Psalms for Worship* (Crown & Covenant).
3. Sing the Psalm in worship of God with Christ.
4. Journal how the Psalm transformed in you by the renewing of your mind (head), moved your affections (heart) and motivated you to do God’s will (hands).

Î Looking up

1. Ask God to search your heart (Psalm 139:23). What theme or word does he bring to mind as you pray for the Lord to search your heart? It can be something about God’s character, about your sin or your emotional state.
2. Look up that theme or word in the “Index of Biblical Topics” in the *Book of Psalms for Worship* (Crown & Covenant).
3. Sing the Psalm in worship of God with Christ.
4. Journal how the Psalm transformed in you by the renewing of your mind (head), moved your affections (heart) and motivated you to do God’s will (hands).

—> Look Forward

1. Ask God to show any hopes, fears, or anxieties about the future. Whatever is brought to mind, think of a theme or word associated with it. It can be something about God’s character or about the anticipated future.
2. Look up that theme or word in the “Index of Biblical Topics” in the *Book of Psalms for Worship* (Crown & Covenant).
3. Sing the Psalm in worship of God with Christ.
4. Journal how the Psalm transformed in you by the renewing of your mind (head), moved your affections (heart) and motivated you to do God’s will (hands).

Close your time in prayer with thanksgiving and praise for what Christ has revealed to you through the Psalms.