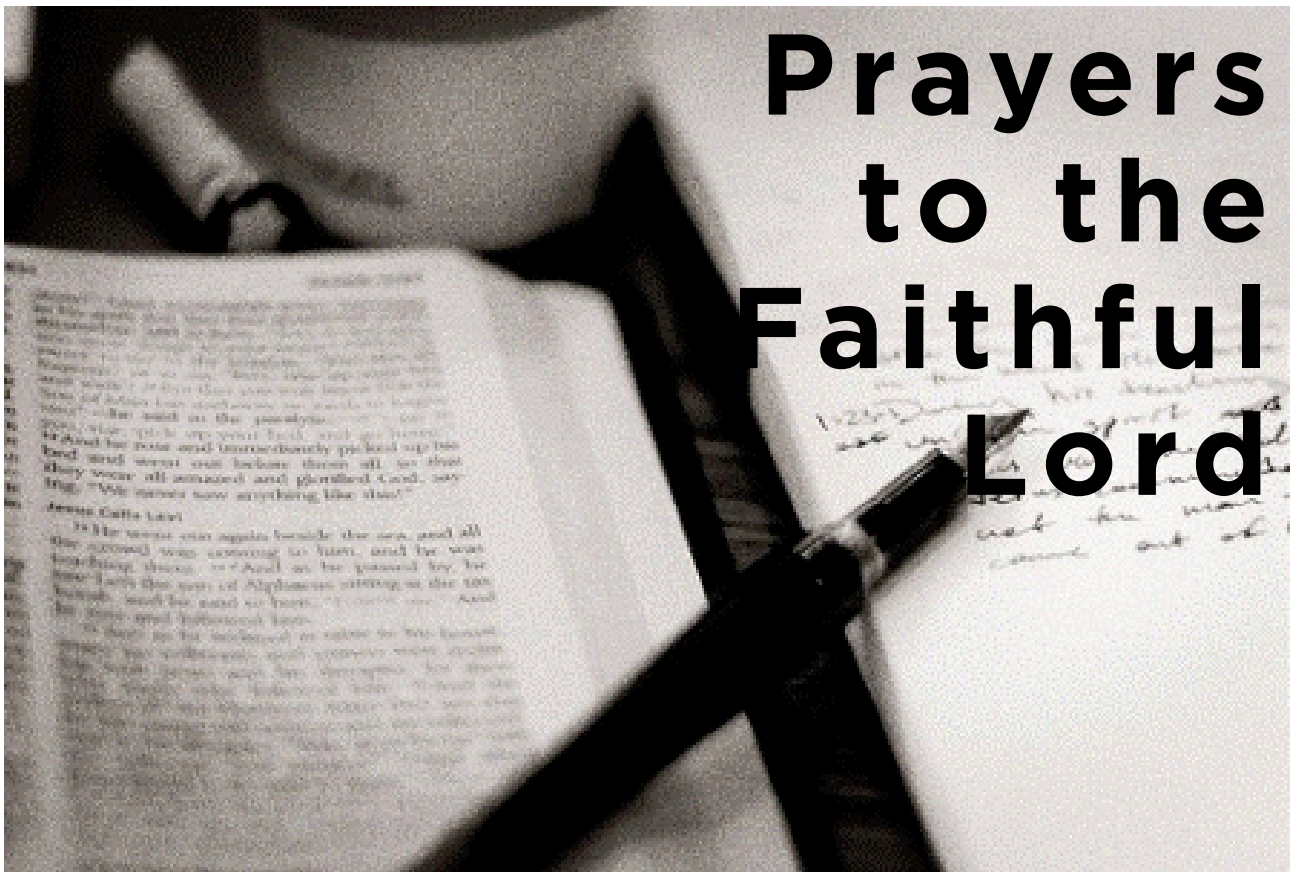


# Psalm 12-



**Integrated Bible Study Guide**

## **2 | Psalms 12-17: Prayers to the Faithful Lord**

### **Contents:**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Study 1: Where are the Faithful?</b> Psalm 12	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Study 2: How Long O Lord?</b> Psalm 13	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>Study 3: The Fool Says...</b> Psalm 14	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>Study 4: Who May Dwell in Your Presence?</b> Psalm 15	<b>Page 10</b>
<b>Study 5: Keep Me Safe O God</b> Psalm 16	<b>Page 12</b>
<b>Study 6: Hear My Righteous Plea</b> Psalm 17	<b>Page 14</b>



## How to get the best out of these Studies...

The Book of Psalms has sometimes been called the Prayer Book of the Bible. The title of the book is from the Greek *psalmos* 'song', 'hymn'. It has been suggested that the collection of the Psalms in its final form was the hymnbook of the Second Temple, after the return from exile of God's people.

The Psalter is a book of praise, proclaiming that God, as Creator and Redeemer, has given to his people Israel, through the law and through the revelation of God in history, the possibility of new life and a comprehensive indication of how it should be lived. The Psalms are not to be read chronologically, as if they were a historical narrative. They are a collection of writings, many of them poetic, that engage with worldviews to help the believer live the faithful life before their Lord, Yahweh, the covenant making and covenant keeping God.

The overall theme of the collection can be found in Psalms 1 & 2. Psalm 1 speaks about the life that is blessed by God as the one that delights in his word (1:2). Psalm 2 speaks of the King and ruler God has installed, to whom all nations will submit, concluding with the promise that blessing is found by all who take refuge in him (2:12). So each Psalm that follows reveals for us something of the faithful believer who delights in God's word and trusts in his appointed King. This means the Psalms are always going to lead us to Jesus, who the New Testament declares has been installed as God's appointed ruler (Philippians 2:6-11). In many ways the concluding Psalm, 150, sums up the application that should result from an examination of any of the Psalms that precede: PRAISE THE LORD!

In these studies we will examine six Psalms: 12-17. All these Psalms have been attributed to David, so the experience of this King may help us to consider how we might live under God's king. All but Psalm 14 take the form of an appeal to God, or prayer. All of them address an experience of the believers' life that drives them to reconcile the world they live in with the Lord they serve. In this way we may approach the Psalms with a simple structure:

1. The question/issue that is raised.
2. The evidence that is presented.
3. The answer that is given.

1

## Where are the Faithful?

### Psalm 12

#### *The question/issue that is raised...*

1. What do the first and last verses of the Psalm present as the issue the Psalmist would like to see addressed?
2. When you consider human nature, do you think human beings are essentially good people who do some bad things, or basically bad people who do some good things? Does it matter which way you think?

#### *The evidence that is presented...*

The Psalm appears to break into two parts: 1) the speech of the ungodly; and 2) the words of God.

4. Verses 1-4 illustrate the problem David has with the world he lives in. Identify the practices of the people he describes.
5. What is the culmination of these practices which is condemned? (verse 4) What does this reveal about human nature and the true problem of humanity?
6. Identify the parallels of verses 1-4 with the words of James 3:6-12. How is the audience different in James, and what warnings are given to the reader?

7. In verses 5-6 the words of the wicked are contrasted with the sure words of God. Identify the contrasts.
8. What do the images of verse 6 suggest about the character of God's word? How is this meant to encourage the faithful believer reading the Psalm?

***The answer that is given...***

9. How does David see his prayer of verse 1 being answered in the Psalm? (verses 5 & 7)
10. Jesus' followers faced the same rejection and mocking as evidenced in Psalm 12. Jesus faced the ultimate abuse as he was crucified on a cross. What did Jesus explain was the key to enduring such opposition in John 15:1-8?
11. Verse 1 declares that the godly are no more! What would you say the application of this Psalm is:
  - a) stop swearing?
  - b) stop using sarcasm?
  - c) consider what God promises (and doesn't promise) in his word?
  - d) work at speech that builds up and doesn't bring down?
  - e) be more grammatically correct?
  - f) ask what it means to delight in his word? (Psalm 1:2)
  - g) all, some, or none of the above?

## 2 How Long O Lord?

### Psalm 13

#### ***The question/issue that is raised...***

1. Lament is a word not commonly used in every day speech today. What are some synonyms for *lament*?
2. In what circumstances have you ever felt like uttering the prayer of lament like the one that opens the Psalm?

#### ***The Evidence that is presented...***

The Psalm appears to break into three parts:

- 1) the lament (verses 1-2);
  - 2) a request for deliverance (verses 4-5);
  - 3) a response of trust and confidence (verse 6).
3. How many times is the lament expressed in verses 1-2 and what does this reveal about the author's predicament?
  4. What do you think is the Psalmist's enemy in verses 2-4? What does he want to be rescued from, and why?
  5. How do the images used in verses 1 and 3 illustrate the request of the prayer?

***The answer that is given...***

6. What sort of 'enlightenment' does God deliver to the faithful believer in verse 5?
  
7. How does the psalmist apply this answer to prayer to his own life? (verse 6)
  
8. Though the Psalm does not spell them out, verse 5 indicates that the Psalmist is relying on God's past activities for future grace. If David is the author, what past work(s) of God may he be thinking of? (e.g. 2 Samuel 7:18-29)
  
9. How do we rely on God's past activities for future grace?
  
10. What would you say the application of this Psalm is:
  - a) more use of the word *lament* in every day speech?
  - b) less whinging?
  - c) remember the extraordinary patience of God with us? (Romans 5:8)
  - d) consider the past faithfulness of God as assurance for the future?
  - e) pray for the gift of patience?
  - f) sing to the Lord?
  - g) count it a privilege in prayer to bring our anxieties before God?
  - g) all, some, or none of the above?

## 3 The Fool Says...

### Psalm 14

#### *The question/issue that is raised...*

1. What do you think is the definition of wisdom in the Bible? (Proverbs 1:7; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18-19)
2. What do you think is the definition of wisdom in our contemporary world?
3. From verse 1 of the Psalm, where does foolishness originate from, and where does it lead?

#### *The Evidence that is presented...*

The Psalm appears to break into three parts:

- 1) An assessment of the world (verses 1-3);
  - 2) God's activity in the world (verses 4-6);
  - 3) A prayer for deliverance (verse 7).
4. What is the assessment of human nature in verses 1-3, and who does this apply to?
  5. How does God express his presence in a world that rejects him? (verses 5-6)

6. What deliverance does the Psalmist seek? (verse 7)

***The answer that is given...***

6. How does Paul use this Psalm in Romans 3:10ff? Has the audience he speaks of changed? (Romans 3:19-20)
  
7. In the light of Q.5, what is the only way we can be rescued from our own foolishness?
  
8. What does this say about the religious (those who seek God through their own performance like the older brother in Luke 15) or the irreligious (those who couldn't care less—the younger brother in Luke 15)?
  
9. What does the Psalmist look forward to in verse 7? How does this provide an answer to the question raised by the Psalm?
  
10. What saves us from the superior attitude the believer might have about the fool the Psalm identifies?

4

## Who May Dwell In Your Presence?

### Psalm 15

#### *The question/issue that is raised...*

1. When you think about the faithful Christian life, which of these realities is the most important?
  - i. forgiveness of sin and guilt
  - ii. no condemnation on the last day when Jesus returns
  - iii. the gift of God's Holy Spirit/his presence
  - iv. witnessing for Jesus
  - v. serving God's people
  - vi. something else?
  
2. In Psalm 15, what is the chief reality of the faithful believer that concerns the author?
  
3. What are the ways in which God is present with his people throughout the Old Testament?

#### *The Evidence that is presented...*

The Psalm breaks into three parts:

- i. A question (verse 1);
  - ii. An answer (verses 2-5a);
  - iii. An assurance (verse 5b).
4. What did the sanctuary and the holy hill signify for David? (See Psalms 20:2; 23:6; 78:68-69)

***The answer that is given...***

5. In the light of verse 1, what do the activities of verses 2-5 tell us about God's presence in our lives?
  
6. What does it mean to have a blameless walk and do what is righteous, and how are they linked? (see also Psalm 1)
  
7. Do you think the Psalm is implying that we are saved by our works? If not, why not? (see also Ephesians 2:8-10)
  
8. In what ways is this Psalm a response to Psalm 14?
  
9. How is God present with his people following Christ's coming? (John 1:14)
  
10. What outcome is the Psalmist seeking for the faithful believer? (verse 5b). What words would you use to describe the unshakeable life?
  
11. How does this Psalm respond to the notion that "my faith is private and I keep it to myself"?

5

## Keep Me Safe O God

### Psalm 16

#### *The question/issue that is raised...*

1. What do you think is the most significant threat to the wellbeing of your neighbours and friends in 21st Century Australia?
  - a) unemployment
  - b) paying a mortgage
  - c) loneliness
  - d) loss of freedoms/rights
  - e) economic downturn
  - f) rejection/loss of popularity
  - g) religion
  - h) drugs & alcohol
  - i) something else?
  
2. What is the threat the author wants to be kept safe from (verse 1) in Psalm 16? Would you have listed it among the concerns of Q.1?

#### *The Evidence that is presented...*

The Psalm breaks into three parts:

- 1) The petition to God (verse 1);
  - 2) The refuge God provides (verses 2-6);
  - 3) The response from God, and the response to God (verses 7-11).
4. How does David assess his own life and the saints with him?
  
  5. What is the threat that God's people face in living faithfully before him? (verse 4) Do you think our threats are similar today? Explain.

6. What are the assurances that the psalmist gives thanks for in verses 5-6?
7. What is the cup that is spoken of? (see Psalm 23:5; 116:13). What other cup does the bible speak of? (see Jeremiah 15:15; Mark 14:36)

***The answer that is given...***

8. How does God respond to the prayer of verse 1? (verse 10)
9. Peter quotes Psalm 16 in Acts 2:25-28. How does he see the ultimate answer to the request of verse 1 being fulfilled? (Acts 22:31ff)
10. If the Psalm is ultimately about the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus - that God did not abandon him to the grave. Peter applied the Psalm to his hearers in Acts 2:38. What benefits are promised to all those who repent?
11. How would these help us to experience the gratitude expressed by the author of Psalm 16?
12. Having considered Psalm 16, what do you think is the biggest threat to the wellbeing of 21st century Australians?

6

## Hear My Righteous Plea

### Psalm 17

#### *The question/issue that is raised...*

1. What does the author of the Psalm seek? (verses 1-2)
2. What is the difference between vindication from God and vindication from the world?

#### *The evidence that is presented...*

The Psalm is divided into the following sections:

- 1) An appeal for justice and vindication (verses 1-5);
  - 2) A request for protection (verses 6-9);
  - 3) A call for judgment on opponents (verses 10-14a);
  - 4) An answer: vindication and revelation (verses 14b-15)
3. What makes the appeal righteous in verses 1-5?
  4. What does God examine when he considers a righteous appeal?
  5. On what basis is the request of verse 6 made to God? (verse 7).
  6. What is the great love spoken of? (Psalms 6:4; 31:16). What does the right hand symbolise? (Psalm 10:12)

7. How does the writer sum up the enemies he seeks protection from? (verse 14)

***The answer that is given...***

8. How is the prayer answered? (verse 14b)
9. What is it that the writer expects to see that brings him satisfaction?
10. David bookends the Psalm by speaking of a righteousness that is given by God (verses 1 & 15) as a gift to the faithful. How does this pre-empt the work of Jesus on the cross? (see Romans 3:21-22)
11. What enemy does this righteousness save us from? (Romans 3:19-20)
12. The author of the Psalm is not presented as righteous by his own achievements, and nor are we. How then does God declare us righteous? (Romans 3:23-26)
13. Spend time in prayer thanking God for his righteous character and the blessing this is to our lives.



**TRINITY CITY**

A TRINITY NETWORK CHURCH

**87 North Terrace Adelaide SA 5000  
8213 7300**

**[office@trinitycity.org.au](mailto:office@trinitycity.org.au)**

**[www.trinitycity.org.au](http://www.trinitycity.org.au)**