

“Psalms: Meditating on the Way”
John Mark Hicks

About the Music

The music featured in the video series, “Psalms: Meditating on the Way,” for use by congregations and choirs, may be found in:

Timeless, vol. 1: In the Day of Distress, Psalms 1–41. Abilene: Abilene Christian University Press, 2011.

Timeless, vol. 2: God Enthroned Forever, Psalms 42–89. Abilene: Abilene Christian University Press, 2016.

Timeless, vol. 3: Sing to God a New Song, Psalms 90–150. Abilene: Abilene Christian University Press, 2023.

Introduction: “My God and King,” words and music by Konstantin Zhigulin ©2006, in *Timeless* vol. 1.

Episode 1: “He Has Set His King in Zion,” words and music by Marva L. Hughes ©2007, in *Timeless* vol. 1.

Episode 2: “In the Lord Do I Take Refuge,” words by Mark Shipp and music by Mel Witcher ©2008, in *Timeless* vol. 1.

Episode 3: “The Lord Is My Shepherd,” words by Mark Shipp and Michael E. Showalter, music by Michael E. Showalter ©2010, in *Timeless* vol. 1.

Episode 4: “Be Merciful, O God,” words by Sarah Shipp and music by Gary Pendergrass ©2009, in *Timeless* vol. 1.

Episode 5: “Return, O Lord,” words by Mark Shipp and music by Konstantin Zhigulin ©2010, in *Timeless* vol. 1.

Episode 6: “Thank Offering,” words and music by Keith Lancaster ©2019, in *Timeless* vol. 3.

Episode 7: “God Is Our Strength,” words by Jerry Shipp and Michael E. Showalter and music by Michael E. Showalter ©2012, in *Timeless* vol. 2.

Episode 8: “Why O God Do You Keep Silent?” words by Randy Daw and music by Carol Crowder Phillips ©2013, in *Timeless* vol. 2.

Episode 9: “Shout to God All the Earth,” words and music by Jack R. Reese ©2013, in *Timeless* vol. 2.

Episode 10: “Above the Earth He Sits Enthroned,” words by Mark Shipp and music by Michael E. Showalter ©2017, in *Timeless* vol. 3.

Episode 11: “I Will Remember,” words and music by Matthew K. Porter ©2013, in *Timeless* vol. 2.

Episode 12: “Let My Soul Bless the Lord,” words by Glover Shipp and music by Ruth Ann Somervell ©2015, in *Timeless* vol. 3.

Episode 13: “Come Sing in Celebration,” words and music by Clyde H. Slimp ©2018, in *Timeless* vol. 3.

“Psalms: Meditating on the Way”
Study and Discussion Guide
John Mark Hicks

1. Introducing the Psalter (Psalm 1-2, Psalms 146-150)
2. Types of Psalms: Psalms 11, 13, and 113
3. Using the Psalms Today: Meditation, Prayer, and Worship
4. Psalm 26 – Walking in Integrity
5. Psalm 88 – Lament
6. Psalm 116 –Thanksgiving
7. Psalm 46 – Communal Confidence
8. Psalm 58 – Prayers for Justice
9. Psalm 66 – Communal Worship
10. Psalm 99 – God is Holy
11. Psalm 77 - Questions for God
12. Psalms 103 –107 – Telling God’s Story in Poetry
13. Psalm 145 – Praising God

Lesson 1: Introducing the Psalter (Psalms 1-2, 146-150)

Discussion Questions

1. What primary themes emerge from Psalms 1-2 that provide a way of reading the Psalter as a whole?
2. What are the two ways that Psalm 1 sets before the worshipper who prays the Psalms?
3. What does Psalm 2 say about loyalty on the part of the worshipper who prays the Psalms?
4. What primary themes emerge from Psalm 146-150 that provide a way of reading the Psalter as a whole?
5. How do the opening and closing to the Psalter provide a framework for praying and worshipping with the Psalms?

Further Resources

“Psalm 1: Derek—Meditating on the Way” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2024/05/04/psalm-1-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

“Opening Psalm (Psalm 1)” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2015/01/31/the-opening-psalm-psalm-1/>)

“Psalm 2: God Reigns Over the Nations” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2013/08/14/psalm-2-god-reigns-over-the-nations/>)

“Psalm 2: Derek—Meditating on the Way” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2024/05/11/psalm-2-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

“The Big Bang of Praise: Creation’s Worship in Psalms 148-150” (<https://stonedcampbelldisciple.com/2020/08/31/the-big-bang-of-praise-creations-worship-in-psalms-148-150/>)

“The Closing Psalm (Psalm 150)” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2015/02/02/the-closing-psalm-psalm-150/>)

“Psalm 150: Derek—Meditating on the Way” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2024/05/24/psalm-150-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

“Seven Spiritual Gifts of the Psalms” (<https://stonedcampbelldisciple.com/2016/02/16/seven-spiritual-gifts-of-the-psalms/>)

“The Psalms: The Holy Spirit’s Instrument for Forging a Biblical Worldview” (<https://stonedcampbelldisciple.com/2016/01/05/the-psalms-the-holy-spirits-instrument-of-forging-a-biblical-worldview/>)

Lesson 2: Types of Psalms (Psalms 11, 13, 113)

Discussion Questions

1. When have you experienced “orientation” or confidence/trust/boldness in your relationship with God?
2. Identify some key moments in your journey where you experienced lament and sorrow that changed how you prayed?
3. Share some occasions where you experienced great joy and thanked God for new experiences that gave you a new song in your heart.
4. Viewing the Psalms through the lens of orientation, disorientation, and new orientation, how does that journey resonate with your own life of faith in its ups and downs? How might following the movements of the Psalms help us to experience our faith journey in more healthy ways?

Further Resources

“The Psalms: Three Types” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2025/01/10/the-psalms-three-types/>)

“Psalm 11: Derek—Meditating on the Way” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2025/02/20/psalm-11-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

“Psalm 13: An Exemplary Lament” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2025/01/10/psalm-13-an-exemplary-lament/>)

“Psalm 113: Derek—Meditating on the Way” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2024/08/09/psalm-113-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

“Classification of Psalms and Worship Moods” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2008/04/psalm-classification-and-worship-mood.doc>)

Lesson 3: Using the Psalms Today (Psalms 23, 57, 100)

Discussion Questions

1. On what occasions or where in your life has Psalm 23 played a significant role in your faith journey?
2. Share some of your own private prayer practices with each other? If you have prayed or meditated on the Psalms as part of your own private faith journey, share that practice with each other and what it meant for you.
3. Have you ever experienced any group practices of praying the Psalms? What was that like? Describe how that worked. Was it practical, meaningful, and helpful?
4. Do your worshipping assemblies use the Psalms in any regular way? How do they use them? Why might it be important to give some focus to the Psalms in our assemblies?

Further Resources

“Psalm 23: Derek—Meditating on the Way” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2025/02/27/psalm-23-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

“Psalm 57: Derek—Meditating on the Way” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2025/03/04/psalm-57-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

“Psalm 100: Derek—Meditating on the Way” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2025/03/18/psalm-100-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

“What Happens When We Pray the Bible: The Early Church Prays the Psalms” (<https://stonedcampbelldisciple.com/2023/09/15/what-happens-when-we-pray-the-bible-the-early-church-prays-the-psalms/>)

“Psalms: ‘A Little Bible’” (<https://stonedcampbelldisciple.com/2023/08/17/psalms-a-little-bible/>)

On Praying the Psalms (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2008/07/11/beyond-before-theological-hermeneutics-v/>)

- Find a Psalm that fits your circumstances, mood or needs, or choose one to learn how to pray.
- Understand the Psalm in terms of what it is saying and doing.
- Translate what it is doing into your own context and setting.
- Reword the Psalm to fit your own situation, language, emotion, fears, petitions, etc.
- Pray the Psalm line by line—adapt, change as your heart feels and mind perceives so that you are expressing your heart to God in the psalmist’s frame.

Lesson 4: Psalm 26—Walking in Integrity

Discussion Questions

1. What petition did you find most jarring or difficult to embrace in Psalm 26? What does the psalmist ask God to do that we might not find so appealing?
2. How does the psalmist identify his loyalty and commitment in the Psalm? What language in the Psalm describes his allegiance and devotion?
3. How does Psalm 26 echo Psalm 1? What is the confidence Psalm 26 exhibits, and are you comfortable with that kind of confidence?
4. What does the psalmist mean by claiming he has led a “blameless” life?
5. How might Psalm 26 prepare us for gathering to worship with other believers? What themes are important for worshippers who seek to enter God’s presence?

Further Resources

Psalm 26 – Derek: Meditating on the Way (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2024/12/19/psalm-26-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

“Psalm 26—Commentary” (<https://cepreaching.org/commentary/2018-10-01/psalm-26/>)

Psalm 26—Commentary on Psalm 26:1-8
(<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-22/commentary-on-psalm-261-8-2>)

Lesson 5: Psalm 88—Lament

Discussion Questions

1. What is this psalmist feeling? What are the circumstances in which the psalmist is praying? Are there any indications about the nature of the illness?
2. What questions does the psalmist raise to God? What argument does he prosecute with (or even against) God?
3. What does this Psalm teach us about the nature of lament and our own groaning in the midst of suffering?

4. Is this Psalm, as one writer suggested, “an embarrassment to conventional faith”? Is this kind of lament permissible for a believer in God and in the light of God’s redemption in Jesus?
5. Do you see any elements of praise or confidence in God in Psalm 88? How might we see Psalm 88 as an expression of faith in God? Where do you see faith in the Psalm?

Further Resources

“Psalm 88” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2015/02/15/psalm-88/>)

“Psalm 88: Derek—Meditating on the Way” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2024/06/28/psalm-88-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

“A Lament Homily” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2013/10/07/a-lament-homily/>)

“Dark Night of the Soul – Psalm 88 and the Cry of Faith”
(<https://stonedcampbelldisciple.com/2006/12/06/dark-night-of-the-soul-psalm-88-and-the-cry-of-faith/>)

Lesson 6: Psalm 116—Thanksgiving

Discussion Questions

1. Why does the psalmist love the Lord? What is the backstory or circumstances that gave rise to this psalm of thanksgiving? Identify some of the key aspects of that backstory.
2. How does the psalmist identify the life of faith through remembrance and thanksgiving? What are some elements of the journey?
3. What does the Psalm say about who God is and how the psalmist responds to God?
4. Where does the psalmist offer this thanksgiving? What does the psalmist bring and what is the psalmist’s testimony?
5. What is the significance of the assembly of God’s people in this Psalm?

Further Resources

“A Communion Meditation” (Psalm 116)
(<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2024/06/11/communion-meditation-psalm-116/>)

“The Egyptian Hallel and the Lord’s Supper” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2010/03/14/the-egyptian-hallel-and-the-lords-supper-psalm-113-118/>)

“Psalm 116: Derek—Meditating on the Way”
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUNkg5SrzTY&t=2s>)

“Psalm 116 – Paying the Vow of Gratitude” (<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-116/>)

“The Same Spirit of Faith (Psalm 116.10 & 2 Corinthians 4.13)
(<https://stonedcampbelldisciple.com/2023/09/20/the-same-spirit-of-faith-psalm-116-10-2-corinthians-4-13/>)

“The Crucible of Worship: Reflecting on Psalm 116”
(<https://stonedcampbelldisciple.com/2011/08/20/the-crucible-of-worship-reflecting-on-psalm-116/>)

“Precious in the Sight of the Lord is the Death: A Misunderstood & Misused Text (Psalm 116:15) (<https://stonedcampbelldisciple.com/2019/11/21/precious-in-the-sight-of-the-lord-is-the-death-a-misunderstood-misused-text-ps-116-15/>)

Lesson 7: Psalm 46—Communal Confidence

Discussion Questions

1. What is the contrast between faith and fear in the Psalm? How have you experienced those in your own life? What circumstances generate fear, and how does faith answer those fears?
2. Who is God in this Psalm, and how does that picture inspire confidence and strength in the middle of fearful circumstances?
3. To what is the psalmist inviting us in the language of “come and see”? How do we “come and see”? And what do we see when we respond?
4. How do you hear the call to “Be still, and know that I am God”? What is the point of “be still,” and do you have practices in your own spiritual journey that make this real for you? Where have you experienced this confidence in your own life?
5. “God is with us” is the refrain of the Psalm, and the Hebrew is *immanu* (with us). How is God “Immanuel” in Psalm 46, and how does this give fuller meaning to the presence of Jesus who is “Immanuel” (Matthew 1:23)?

Further Resources

“Psalm 46 – Derek: Meditating on the Way” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2024/11/23/psalm-46-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

“Commentary on Psalm 46” (<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/reformation-day/commentary-on-psalm-46-3>)

“Commentary on Psalm 46” (<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/christ-the-king-3/commentary-on-psalm-46-9>)

Lesson 8: Psalm 58—Prayers for Justice

Discussion Questions

1. What is the problem the Psalm confronts?

2. How are the wicked describe, and what characteristics are ascribed to the wicked in the Psalm?
3. What does the psalmist ask God to do? What metaphors does the psalmist use to ask God to act?
4. Is this Psalm appropriate to pray in the Christian assembly? Are we uncomfortable with the Psalm? Why?
5. Is asking for justice inappropriate for the Christian? What is the prayer in Luke 18:1-8 or Revelation 6:9-10? May Christians rejoice when justice is served (Revelation 19:1-8)?

Further Resources

“Psalm 58” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2015/03/09/psalm-58/>)

“Psalm 58 – Derek: Meditating on the Way” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2024/08/06/psalm-58-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

“Praying the Psalms of Justice and Imprecation—Psalm 58”
(<https://stonebrook.org/resources/sermons/praying-the-psalms-of-justice-and-imprecation-psalm-58>)

“Do We Love Justice? A Journey in the Psalms”
(<https://stonedcampbelldisciple.com/2023/09/21/do-we-love-justice-a-journey-in-the-psalms/>)

On Imprecatory Psalms (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2008/04/imprecatory-psalms.doc>)

Curse Texts in Scripture (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2008/04/how-to-preach-a-curse.doc>)

Lesson 9: Psalm 66—Communal Worship

Discussion Questions

1. Who is invited to worship God? Why?
2. What does “Come and See” mean? What does that involve? How does the worshipping assembly “see” something? Why is that important?
3. What does “Come and Listen” mean? To what is the worshipping assembly listening and why? What is the occasion of the testimony given?
4. What elements of a worshipping assembly are identifiable in this Psalm? What did Israel do in their assemblies?
5. How might this Psalm inform and shape our own assemblies as a church?

Further Resources

“Psalm 66” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2017/09/23/psalm-66/>)

“Psalm 66: Derek—Meditating on the Way”
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hr9JAOixr8Q&t=2179s>)

“Commentary on Psalm 66:1-9” (<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-14-3/commentary-on-psalm-661-9-4>)

“Commentary on Psalm 66:8-20” (<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/sixth-sunday-of-easter/commentary-on-psalm-668-20-4>)

Lesson 10: Psalm 99—God is Holy

Discussion Questions

1. When you sing “Holy, Holy, Holy,” what is prominent in your mind? What does “holy” mean when ascribed to God?
2. What is the meaning of holiness in the first three verses of Psalm 99?
3. What is the meaning of holiness in the Psalm 99:4-5?
4. What is the meaning of holiness in Psalm 99:6-9?
5. How do you define God’s holiness in the light of Psalm 99?
6. Why is this Psalm significant, and what does it mean for your own understanding and practice of faith?

Further Resources

“Psalm 99: Derek—Meditating on the Way” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2025/01/09/psalm-99-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

“Commentary on Psalm 99” (<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/transfiguration-of-our-lord-3/commentary-on-psalm-99-2>)

“Psalm 99—The Holy God, Present and Revealed” (<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-99/>)

“Psalm 99—Commentary” (<https://cepreaching.org/commentary/2016-02-01/psalm-99-2/>)

“Do We Love Justice? A Journey in the Psalms”
(<https://stonedcampbelldisciple.com/2023/09/21/do-we-love-justice-a-journey-in-the-psalms/>)

Lesson 11: Psalm 77—Questions for God

Discussion Questions

1. What lines in the first part of Psalm 77 resonate with you? Have you ever felt this distance from God? Has grief ever rendered you “too troubled to speak”?
2. Which question in Psalm 77:7-9 has been part of your own experience? Why did you raise that question to God? Is it a shameful thing to ask God questions?

3. How does the psalmist answer these questions? What does the psalmist remember and upon what does the psalmist meditate to address these questions?
4. What story does the final part of the Psalm tell, and how does this respond to the questions the psalmist raised?
5. When these questions like these arise in your own heart or in the community, what story do you tell about God and how do you remember God?

Further Resources

“Psalm 77” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2010/09/29/psalm-77/>)

Psalm 77: Derek—Meditating on the Way” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2024/07/13/psalm-77-meditating-on-the-way/>)

“Psalm 77: Reflections of Lament” (<https://worldventure.com/psalm-77-reflections-of-lament>)

“Crying on a Different Tune: Psalm 77 of Asaph”
(<https://www.davidprince.com/2018/01/11/crying-different-tune-psalm-77-asaph/>)

“Day 15: Journey Thru the Prayerbook of Jesus, Psalms 73-77 (Pain, the Story, Faithfulness”
(<https://stonedcampbelldisciple.com/2022/11/15/day-15-journey-thru-the-prayerbook-of-jesus-psalms-73-77-pain-the-story-faithfulness/>)

Lesson 12: Psalms 103–107—Telling God’s Story in Poetry

The Mini-Bible

God Is Steadfast Love (Psalm 103)
 God Creates and Provides (Psalm 104)
 God Calls and Redeems (Psalm 105)
 God Remembers Despite Israel’s Rebellion (Psalm 106)
 God Responds to Cries for Mercy (Psalm 107)

Discussion Questions

1. How does the description of “mini-Bible” fit the story told in Psalms 103-107? Is that an appropriate description, or perhaps is there another way of saying the point?
2. Why does the mini-Bible begin with Psalm 103? What does that Psalm tell us about God’s identity, who God is, and what God does?
3. If Psalm 104 is about creation, why does Psalm 103 come before Psalm 104? How is Psalm 104 an expression of God’s nature identified in Psalm 103?
4. What basic story is told in Psalms 105-106? How is God faithful in that story, and how does Israel respond?
5. Why is Psalm 107 the conclusion of the mini-Bible? How does it bring Psalm 103-106 to a crescendo and conclusion?

6. How does this mini-Bible anticipate the coming of the Messiah and God's continued story with the people of God? How is the character of God played out in the rest of the story in the light of the mini-Bible?

Further Resources

"The Mini-Bible: The Bible in Five Psalms" (103-107)

(<https://stonedcampbelldisciple.com/2023/05/10/the-mini-bible-the-bible-in-five-psalms-pss-103-107/>)

"Psalm 103: The Song of Songs of Grace, Mercy, Hesed"

(<https://stonedcampbelldisciple.com/2016/02/25/psalm-103-the-song-of-songs-of-grace-mercy-hesed/>)

"Psalm 103: Derek—Meditating on the Way" (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2025/01/16/psalm-103-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

"Psalm 104: Derek—Meditating on the Way" (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2025/01/23/psalm-104-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

"Psalm 104" (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2015/02/18/psalm-104/>)

"Psalm 104: For God So Loved the World"

(<https://stonedcampbelldisciple.com/2013/05/31/psalm-104-for-god-so-loves-the-world/>)

"God's Aquarium: Psalm 104:24-26" (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2010/05/11/gods-aquarium-psalm-10424-26/>)

Psalm 105: Derek—Meditating on the Way (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2025/02/07/psalm-105-derek-meditating-on-the-way-2/>)

Psalm 106: Derek—Meditating on the Way (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2025/02/07/psalm-106-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

Psalm 107: Derek—Meditating on the Way (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2025/02/13/psalm-107-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

Lesson 13: Psalm 145—Praising God

Discussion Questions

1. What is the function of assembly and the generations that gather? What do they do? How do they carry on the story of God?
2. How is the nature of God identified in Psalm 145? Can you recall where this same identification is used in other Psalms studied in this series? From where does this language arise, and why is that important?

3. How is the kingdom of God described in Psalm 145? To whom does it apply, and who responds to its reality?
4. Because God is who God is, what sort of actions does God pursue in the good creation and among the people of God? What does God do?
5. What is our response to God's grace and goodness?

Further Resources

“Psalm 145: Derek—Meditating on the Way”

(<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2024/09/20/psalm-145-derek-meditating-on-the-way/>)

“Commentary on Psalm 145:1-8” (<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-25/commentary-on-psalm-1451-8-4>)

“Commentary on Psalm 145:8-14” (<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-14/commentary-on-psalm-1458-14-3>)

“Psalms in Life: Psalm 145” (<https://www.mattstaffordpsalms.com/psalm-145-commentary/>)