



7 Psalms

*to Help You Cope
with Life Again*

By Cindi McMenamin

If you're like most people you are probably familiar with Psalm 23, which speaks of how the Lord is our Good Shepherd. You might even be well-acquainted with Psalm 139 which reminds us of how intimately God knows us, or Psalm 91, which tells of God's protection over us.

Yet there are many other portions of the Psalms – the Bible's Song Book – that are just as rich, just as comforting, and just as helpful to your walk with God. Like a favorite song of yours during a certain season of your life, or a touching memory that continues to comfort you when you're sad, the Psalms in the Bible can encourage, heal, convict, instruct, and minister to you, regardless of your circumstances.

There are so many songs in the Bible that have impacted my life as I've studied them or stumbled upon them through the years. And if you highlight them, bookmark them, or even memorize them, I'm certain they will help you grow in your relationship with God, too. Here are seven psalms to bookmark to help you cope with life again:

1. Psalm 13 – A Song for Getting Back on Your Feet

Life takes a lot out of us at times. There are days you may not feel like getting out of bed. Do you realize the songwriters of the Bible felt many of the same emotions you have? In Psalm 13, David asked, "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day?..." (verses 1-2, ESV). He was clearly on his face in pity. Then, he got up on his knees to pray: "Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death...lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken" (verses 3-4). Finally, in verses 5-6, he was up on his feet – in praise, singing, "But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me."

What happened to get David up on his feet when he was previously on his face on the floor? What took him from pity to praise? Prayer. Bookmark Psalm 13 as a reminder of how to get back up on your feet and start praising God again, especially when you feel like He's forgotten you.

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2. Psalm 42 – A Song to Straighten Out Your Thinking

The Sons of Korah gave us this gem that you might recognize from a contemporary worship song: “As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God?” (verses 1-2, NKJV). The song teaches us that a desperation for God is a healthy detour out of despair and depression.

In verse 5, the psalmist starts asking himself why he is so disturbed: “Why are you in despair, my soul? And why are you restless within me?” Then he gives himself a swift kick in the pants, per se, by telling himself what he needs to do: “Wait for God, for I will again praise Him For the help of His presence, my God.” He then recounts God’s goodness and continues to tell himself what to focus on: “The Lord will send His goodness in the daytime; And His song will be with me in the night...” (verse 8). He concludes his song in verse 11 by again asking himself why he is so restless, and then giving himself his own best advice: “Wait for God, for I will again praise Him for the help of His presence, my God.”

The inspired and ever potent Word of God offers wise counsel when it comes to getting out of the mode of stinkin’ thinkin’. Bookmark Psalm 42 as a reminder of how to get your thoughts back on the right track if they start taking you down a dark tunnel of despair.

3. Psalm 51 – A Fresh Look at How to Repent

It’s likely that you’ve read the well-known song of David’s confession to God after being confronted by the prophet Nathan about his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, one of David’s best soldiers. Yet it’s possible you haven’t read this Psalm in *The Message* – a translation from the original Hebrew language into idiomatic English, which is the way we think and speak today. This rendering of this Psalm – by the late Eugene Peterson, a longtime Bible scholar and pastor – is so powerful it can bring you to your knees and show you what true repentance really looks like.

Sometimes we read certain verses in a familiar translation so many times that they fail to impact us as they once did. That’s when it’s time to turn to a passage and read it afresh in language that will allow the Word to pierce your heart again like a two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). The original Hebrew language, in which the Psalms were written, was a very raw and graphic language, much more expressive than our modern English language. Peterson’s translation contains the emotion behind the original impacting Hebrew words and thoughts, and the result is an equally-inspired rendering of a Psalm of confession and spiritual restoration.

Read it aloud – phrases like: “God, make a fresh start in me, shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life. Don’t throw me out with the trash, or fail to breathe holiness in me. Bring me back from gray exile, put a fresh wind in my sails!” (verses 10-12, MSG)

Bookmark Psalm 51 in *The Message* translation and let it revive your heart and help you fall in love with God once again.

4. Psalm 62 – A Song to Simplify Your Heart

We live in a culture that wants God plus something else in order to be content. God plus wealth. God plus marriage. God plus a fulfilling career. God plus grandchildren. God plus a successful ministry. Yet David shows us in Psalm 62 what it's like to be satisfied with God only.

David sang “My soul waits in silence for God alone; From Him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I will not be greatly shaken (verses 1-2, NASB). A few verses later he reiterates the source of his hope and trust: “My soul, wait in silence for God alone, For my hope is from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, My refuge; I will not be shaken” (verses 5-6, emphasis added). Can you drop the expectation of anything else and wait for God only, rest in God only, find your joy in God only? Bookmark this Psalm, reflect on it often, and it will change the course of your heart.

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5. Psalm 101 – A Song to Keep You from Compromise

In Psalm 101, David sang of God's lovingkindness and justice (verse 1) and contrasted it with the evil in this world. This song is his commitment to be careful to live a blameless life.

“I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart,” David sang in verse 2. “I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me” A perverse heart shall leave me; I will know no evil (verses 3-4, NASB).

David commits himself to tolerate no sin in his presence and vows that his eyes will be “upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; One who walks in a blameless way is one who will serve me” (verse 6).

This passage of Scripture reinforced to me, in my early 20s, that I needed to, like David, take a stand in how I would choose to live. I couldn't walk the middle of the road. I had to choose righteousness over worldliness, integrity over dishonesty, good over evil, God over self and sin. Bookmark this song as a personal commitment to integrity, a dedication to live purely, a commitment to your home and family, or as a vow to God to live fully for Him.

6. Psalm 77 – A Song to Find God in the Silence

Does God ever seem silent? Asaph, the songwriter, might have felt that way too when he penned Psalm 77. But the beauty of his song is that he wrote it in retrospect. He knew God was there and He recounted for us how we can know, too.

In verses 7-9 Asaph asked questions that you and I might ask from time to time: “Will the Lord reject forever? And will He never be favorable again? Has His favor ceased forever? Has His promise come to an end forever? Has God forgotten to be gracious, or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion?” (NASB). Asaph surely felt forgotten by his God. But then he admitted in verse 10 that it was his perception (not the truth) that the right hand of the Most High had changed. He then remembered God’s “wonders of old” and was able to declare “You are the God who works wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples” (verse 14). Asaph then recalled the waters, the clouds, the skies, the lightning, and the sound of thunder, as evidence of God’s presence and protection of His people. Then he says something so precious: “Your way was in the sea, And Your paths in the mighty waters, And Your footprints were not known. You led Your people like a flock By the hand of Moses and Aaron” (verses 19-20). Asaph remembered that, even in silence, God was there when He led the Israelites through the sea on dry ground.

Sometimes God’s way seems unfathomable to us. (Who would choose a path through pounding waves?) Yet God is One who leads us through the waters, even though His footprints may not be seen, and guides us like a gentle shepherd. Bookmark Psalm 77 so that you remember that even when God seems silent, His presence can be sensed through His wonders all around you.

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7. Psalm 145 – A Reminder of God’s Protection and Provision

From the time I was a teenager, I have prayed through this song, and through the years I’ve taught others to do the same, as a way of staying aligned with God’s will and His ways. It’s a song of comfort “The Lord supports all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down” (verse 14 NASB). It’s a song celebrating God’s provision: “The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing” (verses 15-16). And it’s a song that will reinforce to You God’s ability to keep you safe and secure: “The Lord is righteous in all His ways, And kind in all His works. The Lord is near to all who call on Him, To all who call on Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry for help and save them. The Lord watches over all who love Him...” (verses 17-20).

Bookmark this Psalm and start praying through it at least once a week. I guarantee it will change your life and heart, and draw you closer to the Only One who satisfies.

Cindi McMenamin is a national speaker, Bible teacher, and award-winning writer who helps women and couples strengthen their relationship with God and others. She is the author of 17 books, including *When Women Walk Alone* (more than 150,000 copies sold), *When a Woman Overcomes Life’s Hurts*, *When God Sees Your Tears*, and *When Couples Walk Together*, which she co-authored with her husband of 32 years. Find out more about her speaking ministry, coaching services for writers, and books to strengthen your soul, marriage, and parenting, at www.StrengthForTheSoul.com.

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