

Trusting God in tumultuous times

Abby Van Solkema

As the time of the judges came to an end, the people of Israel asked God to give them an earthly king like the heathen nations that surrounded them. God answered their request by raising up Saul to be their king. Saul's reign, however, was marred by disobedience and rebellion against God. After Saul's sin of offering an unlawful sacrifice at Gilgal, Samuel rebuked him with these words in 1 Samuel 13:14: "But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart."

Who was this man the Lord had chosen? None other than David, a shepherd boy from Bethlehem, whom God would raise up to be Israel's greatest king. But even though he had been specially chosen by God, David's path to the throne would not be an easy one. David's life, from the time when he was anointed by Samuel as a young teenager to when he was crowned king at age thirty, was filled with many difficulties. He experienced friendship and betrayal, success and defeat, confidence and uncertainty. David had many different roles

during this time in his life, including shepherd, warrior, musician, fugitive, and leader. God used each one of these roles to teach David important lessons about how to be a godly king.

The psalms that David was inspired to write during this tumultuous time in his life are a mixture of praise and lament, eloquently expressing the spiritual ups and downs that he experienced. But whether he is praising God for his faithfulness or pouring out his heart to God in lament, the common thread that runs through all of David's psalms is an emphasis on the character of God. This is where David found comfort and confidence even when his life was scary and unpredictable. He confesses in Psalm 9:10, "And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee."

Because David knew who God was and had a close, personal relationship with him, he had faith that God would help him through whatever he faced. David could be confident in God's character because he saw it revealed in creation and

the history of the nation of Israel, as well as through God's work in his own life. Even though David stumbled often because of sin, the path of his life was guided by trust and obedience to God's will. That is why he is called a man after God's own heart.

How did David develop this close, personal relationship with his heavenly Father? We find the answer in the second half of Psalm 9:10: "For thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." Through the psalms that David wrote, we are given an inside look at his strong prayer life. He sought the Lord daily through prayer, often mentioning times when he rose early in the morning to talk to God and ask for guidance before he started his day. David's prayers are a beautiful example to learn from if you are struggling in your own prayer life. They were not formal and perfunctory, but personal and sincere. They were not centered on David and what he needed, but humbly centered on God and who he is. David would always come to God first with worship and thanksgiving,

acknowledging his dependence on him. He often would confess and repeat God's promises to himself. But he was not afraid to be honest with God about his worries and doubts as well.

Is your life feeling tumultuous right now? In his commentary on Psalm 9, C. H. Spurgeon refers to the attributes of God as "every one of them anchors to hold the soul from drifting in seasons of peril." As you read through a selection of the psalms of David this month, take hold of these anchors. Notice which attributes of God David mentions over and over again in the psalms, such as God's justice, holiness, mercy, power, and love. Pour out your troubles to God in prayer just as David did. Pray that he will use your study of his word to work in your heart an increasing knowledge of and confidence in him. Pray for growth in obedience to his will for your life. And remember the truth of Proverbs 18:10: "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

Abby is a wife and mother in the home. She attends Trinity Protestant Reformed Church with her husband, Tedd, and three children

Date	Read	Study	Psalter
May 8	Psalm 39	How does praying for humility during difficult seasons change your perspective on your trials?	106
May 9	Psalm 9	How does learning more about God's character increase your trust in him?	16
May 10	Psalm 23	What do you learn about how God cares for his people when you consider this picture of him as your shepherd?	53

May 11	Psalm 5	Why is starting your day by spending time in God's presence so important?	9
May 12	Psalm 12	How do the "pure words" (v. 6) of Scripture give you hope when you are discouraged by the darkness of this sinful world?	21
May 13	Psalm 59	What can you learn from David here about how to pray when you are treated unjustly?	157
May 14	Psalm 11	How would you answer David's question in verse 3?	20
May 15	Psalm 22	How does remembering God's past faithfulness encourage you in times of spiritual weakness when it seems like he is far away?	48
May 16	Psalm 7	How does contemplating God's justice give you confidence when you face bullying or mistreatment in your life?	13
May 17	Psalm 25	What means does God use to teach and guide you through your daily life?	62
May 18	Psalm 26	What does it mean to walk in integrity? How can you do this according to 2 Peter 1:3-8?	70
May 19	Psalm 34	What does it mean to "taste and see" (v. 8) that the Lord is good? How have you experienced this in your own life?	88
May 20	Psalm 56	What truths about God can you cling to when you struggle with the fear of other people and what they can do to you?	152
May 21	Psalm 142	What can you learn about prayer from the way that David freely pours out his heart to God when faced with the troubles of life?	387
May 22	Psalm 141	Do you have true, godly friends who will lovingly rebuke you when you fall into sin (see Prov. 27:5-6)?	386
May 23	Psalm 64	Have you ever been hurt by someone who used their "tongue like a sword" (v. 3)? Are you careful with your own words?	165
May 24	Psalm 52	Why does contemplating God's judgment of the wicked produce both fear and laughter in the righteous (v. 6)?	145

May 25	Psalm 140	Do you regularly pray for God to deliver you from evil? If not, why?	385
May 26	Psalm 31	How would you describe God's goodness? How have you experienced it in your own life?	82
May 27	Psalm 13	How does trusting in the Lord's mercy help you to be patient when you are in a long, difficult season of life? (See also James 5:7-11.)	22
May 28	Psalm 17	What does it mean to be the apple of God's eye (v. 8)? (See also Deut. 32:7-14.)	33
May 29	Psalm 54	How does fixing your eyes on God help you to let go of the hurt and anger that come from being betrayed by someone?	147
May 30	Psalm 16	How do you experience the benefits of your eternal inheritance in a small way while still on this earth?	28
May 31	Psalm 35	What can you learn about how to treat your enemies from this passage and Romans 12:17-21?	92
Jun 1	Psalm 57	What are you most tempted to fix your heart on in times of trouble instead of God?	154
Jun 2	Psalm 63	What does it mean to long for God? How do our trials serve to deepen this longing?	164
Jun 3	Psalm 108	What can you learn from the fact that this psalm is almost identical to portions of Psalm 57 and Psalm 60?	298
Jun 4	Psalm 4	What truths about God found in this psalm enabled David to sleep peacefully despite his many troubles?	6
Jun 5	Psalm 58	How does Romans 13:1-5 fit with this psalm to show how you should think, pray about, and respond to wicked leaders?	156
Jun 6	Psalm 93	How does God's role as King of creation give you assurance as you face the stormy waters of this life? (See also Matt. 8:23-27.)	252
Jun 7	Psalm 95	What do you learn about the characteristics of true worship from David's song of praise here?	255