

**PLEASE DON'T READ THESE NOTES UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR LESSON.
YOU WILL ROB YOURSELF OF THE JOY OF DISCOVERY!**

**In case you don't have time to discuss all the questions,
be sure to ask your group which questions
they want discuss.**

PREPARATION

1. Before you read **Psalm 62/63**, ask the **Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you into all truth** (John 16:13). We have been using the prayer, *Holy Spirit, think through me until your ideas become my ideas*, or King David's prayer, *Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your law*.
2. Read **Psalm 62/63** slowly and thoughtfully in at least two translations. As you read, let your mind and imagination *picture* what you are reading.

Psalm 62

Reader A: Odd verses, 1-11

Reader B: Even verses 2-12

Psalm 63

All: Verse 1

Divide into two groups, read responsively

Both psalms are full of vibrant and expressive *words pictures*. As you read, write some of your favorites below.

3. Which Psalm do you like best? Why?

QUESTIONS

PSALM 62

4. What difficulties prompted David to write **Psalm 62? 62:3-4**
Enemies who are trying to bring him down and even kill him;
Enemies who act like friends and who tell lies behind his back
 - ♥ When has someone tried to "topple you and bring you down"? What did you do?
 - ♥ Which is worse: To have someone bless you with their lips and curse (condemn) you in their heart **OR** to have someone condemn you with their lips and their heart? Why?
 - ♥ Who do *you* sometimes bless with your lips, but condemn in your heart? What is the motivation behind this behavior? Which is easiest to change: The lips or the heart?
5. What is David's strategy in coping with difficult people and situations? **62:1-2 and 5-6; 62:7-8**
He waits patiently for God; he looks to God for his salvation. He looks to God to be his rock and fortress; with God, he says he won't be shaken.
 - ♥ How realistic and effective is this strategy? Does David have "his head in the sand" or will this strategy actually work? Why or why not?
6. Read **62:1 and 5** in all four translations. How does the NIV translation slightly differ in meaning from the other three translations in describing David's actions?
The NIV seems to say that David finds soul rest only in God. The other translations indicate that David is waiting quietly before God, stilling himself as he waits for God to act.

7. Most Bible scholars agree that **62:1 and 5** speak of being *still and quiet before God*. Explain *what* you think this means and *how* you think it is accomplished.

Answers will vary – Being still and quiet seems to be the opposite of anxiety and fretting. It is a state of inner peace as we focus on God and what he will do for us. It is giving up control God and it is quiet trust that he will deliver you. It is quietly putting your confidence in God and not trying to work things out for yourself. Silently sitting in God's presence brings a stillness and quietness of soul.

8. Reflect on the following verses and suggest some reasons why David found quietness and stillness before God necessary.

Exodus 14:14 – God will fight for us if we stop trying to do it ourselves; he won't fight us for control

Psalms 37:7 – Being still and quiet is the opposite of fretting and anxiety; it is quiet trust

Psalms 46:10 – Only when we are still can we know the power of God

Isaiah 30:15 – Inner quietness and trust in God is our strength. We have no strength on our own.

Take some time to discuss the following heart questions:

- ♥ *How often* are you *still and quiet before God* (where your body is relaxed and your mind is focused on God – his character, promises and love)? Do you think being *still and quiet before God* is an important exercise for you? Why or why not? Why is this sometimes a difficult thing to do?
- ♥ *How long* do you think you could be *still and quiet before God*? Would practice help? Is it worth the time? Why or why not? What benefits do you think you might experience if you had a regular habit of being *still and quiet before God*?
- ♥ Can one be *still and quiet before God* when other people are around? Why or why not?

9. In **62:8-10**, what is David's instruction to others who are in difficult situations?

Always trust in God. Pour out your heart to God and take refuge in Him. Don't rely on other people because people are nothing compared to God. People are no stronger than a puff of air. Don't try to cut corners or do something that will compromise your reputation in order to protect yourself. Don't depend on money to get you out of trouble.

10. How does the Amplified translation define *trust* in 62:8?

Trust in, lean on, rely on and have confidence in at all times

If someone asked you *how* to trust in God, what would your answer be? How would you instruct them? What examples would you use from your own life?

Have several share their perspective. It's easy to say, "Trust in God," but HOW do you do that? Different people may have different ways of how they trust God.

- ♥ Is it possible to trust someone you don't know very well? Why or why not?
- ♥ If you have a hard time trusting God, what would make it easier for you?
- ♥ How can people know if they are trusting in God, themselves, other people or money?

11. In **62:8**, David instructs others to "pour out your hearts" to God? What does it mean to "pour out your heart" to God and what good would it do when you are in the midst of a hard time?

To pour your heart out to God is to lament – express sorrow, regret annoyance or disappointment. This is what the psalmist does in a Song of Lament. Pouring your heart out to God is to tell God how it really is. We don't hold anything back. We don't pretend or act religious. We let God know what is really on our heart and how much we are hurting.

Pouring our hearts out is usually for our benefit. God already knows how we feel, but we need to face how we feel and letting it out is much better than stuffing it. When we pour our hearts out to God, we are starting a dialogue and are more likely to hear what God is saying to us.

♥ Would pouring out your heart to someone else be beneficial? Why or why not?

Pouring our hearts out is not the key; it's WHO we pour our hearts out to. Other people can't help us the way God can. Sometimes when we vent to other people, we, then, don't vent to God.

12. In **62:11-12** David uses the expression "*One thing . . . two things . . .*" which is a Hebrew idiom for "repeatedly". What is it that God has spoken and David has heard repeatedly?

God is strong

God is loving

♥ What characteristic of God is more important to you: *strong* or *loving*? Why?

♥ What if God was *strong* but not *loving* or *loving* but not *strong*? How would this affect our relationship with him?

♥ What conclusion does David come to at the end of Psalm 62? Do you believe this? What difference does it make in your life?

PSALM 63

13. If Psalm **63:1** were the opening monologue of a play, describe what you see on stage and anything you learn about the character who is speaking.

Answers will vary – Perhaps a desert scene. We learn that the character speaking is in some distress at being in "a dry and weary land, where there is no water." He equates his thirst with being thirsty for God. He is seeking God – but God seems to be absent at the moment.

♥ How would the impact of the opening line of this psalm change if the word "my" was dropped?

♥ With what line of **63:1** do you most identify?

♥ In your life, right now, what is your "dry and weary land where there is no water"?

♥ Are you thirsting and longing for God in your "dry and weary land", or are you hoping to meet up with him after you get out of the desert? Explain your answer.

14. In **63:1**, David says he is seeking God. How do you imagine he is doing this?

Praying, talking, waiting until he senses God's presence, perhaps crying out to God or pouring his heart out to God.

♥ What is David's level of commitment in seeking God in **63:1**? Is it possible to seek God with any other level of commitment? Why or why not?

♥ Do you ever seek God? If so, *how* do you do it?

♥ If we seek God and find him, does that mean we don't have to seek him again? Why or why not?

15. Why does God often wait for us to seek him before he shows up with help and provision? (The following verses may help you with your answer: **Psalm 9:10; Proverbs 8:17; Jeremiah 29:13; Matthew 7:7-8; Hebrews 11:6**)

God doesn't flippantly give intimacy with Himself to just anyone. We may have a tendency to "use" God – crying out to him only when we need help. God desires much more; he wants a relationship with us. We can show our seriousness and desire by seeking him with our whole heart. When we make him a priority and give him our best efforts, he promises that he will be "found". God never forsakes the one who truly seeks him. We ask and we keep on asking; we seek and we keep on seeking; we knock and we keep on knocking until we sense God's presence. Hebrews 11:6 is an important verse when it comes to seeking God. It tells us to not only seek God with our whole heart, but we must believe that he will be found.

♥ Which of the above verses most encourage you to seek God in the midst of difficult circumstances?

16. The tone of **Psalm 63** changes with David's remembered experience in **63:2**. What does he remember?

Seeing God in the sanctuary. David is remembering a worship experience. Remembering causes him to experience God's presence.

♥ How can David's experience be yours too? How would this help when you are in the "desert"?

17. What radical statement does David make in **63:3**?

That God's love is better than life itself.

Do you agree? What would it take for *you* to make this statement and really mean it?

You cannot truly say this and mean it unless you experience God's personal love for you in relationship. It is not enough to know in our head or mind that God loves us. If we can really say that his love is better than life, his love will have to be a real to us as our human love relationships.

♥ What are some ways that God's love could be better than life itself?

18. In response to God's love and care, what does David do in **63:4**?

Praise God as long as he lives; lifting his hand to God in praise

19. Think of a young child lifting their hands to a waiting parent, a beggar lifting his hands to a passing crowd, a cheering crowd lifting their hands to a performer on stage and a victim raising her hands at the command of an attacker. What are we articulating when we "lift our hands" in praise to God?

All of the emotions in the above scenarios contribute something to what it means to lift our hands to God in praise. We come to our Abba Father, as a child asking to be picked up by a parent. When we lift our hands, we are asking our Father to give us what we need, just as a beggar uses his hands to ask. We lift our hands in worship to honor and adore God, just as a cheering crowd give praise to the celebrity on stage. When we lift our hands, we become vulnerable and we surrender our will, just as a victim may surrender to an attacker. Lifting hands to God is not just a figure of speech in scripture. It can be a very meaningful act of worship.

♥ How deep and strong is your commitment to praise God? How do you do it? How often?

♥ What effect did praise have on David? (63:5) How does this metaphor speak to you?

When we eat rich foods, our hunger is satiated and we are full and satisfied. Our souls will have the same satisfaction and sense of well being at the experience of God, that our stomachs feel are a wonderful meal.

♥ What does David do when he can't sleep at night (**63:6**)? What do you think about during a sleepless night? How would a sleepless night be changed if you thought only about God and his character?

20. Because of God's help, what is David able to do, even in the desert? **63:7**

He sings in the shadow of God's wings. God protects his soul from all the dangers of the "desert".

♥ What images come to mind when you think of being in the "shadow of God's wings"?

21. What is the purpose of being "in the shadow of his wings"? (The following verses may help you with your answer: **Psalm 17:8; Deuteronomy 32:11-12; Matthew 23:37**)

We are hidden, protected and led. We are close to the heart of God and he is watching out for us. The shadow is protection from surrounding heat and it also signifies a closeness to God's heart.

♥ If we want to be in the shadow of God's wings, what must we do? (**63:8**) How will you do this?

We cling to God. We put him first. We seek with our whole heart. We have a real relationship with him. We learn to recognize his voice and we listen for his guidance and his words of love.

On the next page is all the "extra scripture" from this lesson in case you want to make copies for your group so that you can easily read together the verses referred to in the questions.

NIV

Exodus 14:14 The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

Psalms 37:7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.

Psalms 46:10 “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

Isaiah 30:15 This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.

Psalms 9:10 Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

Proverbs 8:17 I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me.

Jeremiah 29:13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Matthew 7:7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. **8** For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Psalms 17:8 Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings

Deuteronomy 32:11 like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions. **12** The LORD alone led him; no foreign god was with him.

Matthew 23:37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

NLT

Exodus 14:14 The LORD himself will fight for you. You won't have to lift a finger in your defense!”

Psalms 37:7 Be still in the presence of the LORD, and wait patiently for him to act. Don't worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes.

Psalms 46:10 “Be silent, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world.”

Isaiah 30:15 The Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says, “Only in returning to me and waiting for me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength. But you would have none of it.

Psalms 9:10 Those who know your name trust in you, for you, O LORD, have never abandoned anyone who searches for you.

Proverbs 8:17 “I love all who love me. Those who search for me will surely find me.

Jeremiah 29:13 If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me.

Matthew 7:7 “Keep on asking, and you will be given what you ask for. Keep on looking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened. **8** For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And the door is opened to everyone who knocks.

Hebrews 11:6 So, you see, it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

Psalms 17:8 Guard me as the apple of your eye. Hide me in the shadow of your wings.

Deuteronomy 32:11 Like an eagle that rouses her chicks and hovers over her young, so he spread his wings to take them in and carried them aloft on his pinions. **12** The LORD alone guided them; they lived without any foreign gods.

Matthew 23:37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones God's messengers! How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings, but you wouldn't let me.