

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

PREPARATION

1. Before you read **Psalm 25**, 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 25** slowly and thoughtfully in at least two translations.
Suggestion for reading out loud:
Reader A – Odd verses
Reader B – Even verses

As you read and reread, fill in the chart below by jotting down specific requests David makes of God as well as his statements of confidence and trust he makes about God and his ways.

Below is an example, but this is a reading tool so it's not necessary to share answers unless someone has a question.

Specific Requests	Statements of Confidence and Trust
<i>Do not let me be put to shame nor let my enemies triumph over me v. 2</i>	<i>In you I trust, O my God v. 2</i>
<i>Show me your ways and teach me your paths v.4</i>	<i>No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame v. 3</i>
<i>Guide me in your truth and teach me v.5</i>	<i>You are God my Savior, and my hope is in you v. 5</i>
<i>Remember your great mercy and love; remember not the sins of my youth v. 6-7</i>	<i>For you are good v. 7</i>
<i>For the sake of you name, forgive my iniquity v.11</i>	<i>Good and upright is the Lord v. 8</i>
<i>Turn to me and be gracious to me v. 16</i>	<i>He instructs sinners, he guides the humble v. 8-9</i>
<i>Free me from anguish v. 17</i>	<i>All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful v. 10</i>
<i>Take away my sins v. 18</i>	<i>The Lord confides in those who fear him v. 14</i>
<i>Guard my life and rescue me; let me not be put to shame v. 20</i>	<i>My hope is in you v. 21</i>
<i>Redeem Israel from all their troubles v. 22</i>	

QUESTIONS

3. Towards the end of **Psalm 25**, David describes his inner condition as he writes this psalm. From **25:16-18**, write the words that describe what he is feeling.

Lonely and afflicted; the troubles of my heart have multiplied; anguish; affliction and distress; sinful

In these same verses, what does David ask God to do about these things he is feeling?

Turn to me and be gracious to me; free me from my anguish; look upon me and take away all my sins

4. What are the two major causes of David's distress? **25:2, 19; 7, 11, 18**

His enemies and his sin

5. What are David's specific requests concerning his enemies? **25:2, 19-20**

Don't let my enemies triumph over me; Guard my life and rescue me; do not let me be put to shame

ENEMIES - Anything that would defeat us, bring us down, keep us from our purpose or prevent us from walking with God. Enemies can be people, powers, forces or even attitudes. They are anything that would harm or oppose us, especially in our relationship to God.

♥ Who or what are some of your enemies that you regularly find yourself "warring" with?

♥ How can enemies put us to shame, disgrace us and triumph over us?

6. How does David expect God to help him against his enemies? **25:3, 15, 20**

He expects God to put to shame his enemies who are treacherous and without excuse;

He asks God to release him from the traps of the enemy

He asks God to protect him and rescue him and to not let him be disgraced

How do you see these same things helping you against your enemies?

We can't fight our enemies (whatever they may be) in our own power or will (will power). We are totally dependent on God and he waits for us to ask for his help. God will fight for us and protect us. He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can stand up to (1 Cor. 10:13). He will show us the traps of the enemy and he will rescue us. He will also fight on our behalf against the enemy. He will show us what to do or say or what not to do or say.

♥ Besides God, what else does David hope will protect him from his enemies in **25:21**? Would these things help protect you from your enemies? Why or why not?

No matter what anyone does to us, we are responsible to conduct ourselves in an honest and honorable way. In the long run, our actions will be proved right and it will be obvious to others. When we let ourselves retaliate or use the same methods as our enemies, we are not better than they are.

7. How does David view his sin in this psalm? **25:7, 11, 18**

He acknowledges that he was rebellious and did wrong and that his sin has made him miserable. He doesn't rationalize or offer excuses. He owns his sin.

8. On what basis does David ask God to forgive his sins? **25:6, 7, 11**

He asks forgiveness on the basis of God's great mercy and love and for the sake of God's name. It's important to see that he knows he doesn't deserve forgiveness nor could he even "earn" it by being good or doing good things.

Why is this important?

God forgive us because of who HE is, not because of who we are. We will never deserve or earn forgiveness.

9. No one likes to have to contend with their sin. However, what encouragement do you find in 25:8? How do you see God doing this?

He instructs sinners in his ways or he shows the proper path to those who go astray.

No matter what we have done (or not done), God will always forgive those that are truly repentant and then he will teach them through his Word, prayer and other believers how to live life God's way.

10. What requests does David make in 25:4-5 that shows his complete dependence on God as he deals with the problem of his enemies and his sin?

David asks for God to guide him and show him how to live. He says, "Show me the path where I should walk – point out the right road for me to follow. Lead me by your truth and teach me." David admits that he can't do this himself. He needs God to show him what to do, where to go and how to live life.

Any of us can ask God these same things. God never intended us to live life on our own with our own wits. Humans were made to live WITH God and to work WITH God.

GUIDANCE – God has purposes and plans for his people, as individuals and communities. Believers should seek God's direction and counsel in discerning these plans and purposes in their lives. True godliness is not outward conformity to God's laws or ways, but the *spiritual application of God's ways* to one's life *by God himself*.

11. Read the following scriptures and summarize from each what you learn about God's guidance for your life.

Answers will vary but make sure everyone understands that God can give us specific direction. See if anyone has any questions about how they receive guidance.

Exodus 33:13-14 – If we ask, God will teach us to live his way and he will guide us by being with us showing us the way. This is not a hard process; it is very restful or anxiety free way to live.

Psalms 119:105, 133 – God's Word, the Bible, will guide us and tell us what to do in many situations.

Proverbs 3:5-6 – If we trust God and want to do his will and don't depend on our own understanding or reasoning, he WILL direct us and show us what to do.

James 1:5-7 – If you need wisdom—if you want to know what God wants you to do—ask him (in prayer), and he will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking. BUT we have to believe that he will actually show us and we have to decide that we will do what he shows us to do.

John 10:3-4 – We can actually "hear" God talk to us. He can speak to us through the Bible, other Christians but also through hearing him in our thoughts. We can hear the still, small voice of God within us if we belong to Jesus. Jesus will talk to us and he will lead us. Jesus is always ahead of us, showing the way. He is never driving us from behind.

John 16:13 – The Holy Spirit (who lives in every Christ-follower) will guide us through our thoughts, prayers, circumstances, the Bible and through giving us peace.

♥ With what is God's guidance more concerned: Ethics or geography? Character or direction? Morals or prosperity? Explain your answers. Sometimes we want the easy, quick answer but God might lead us down a more difficult path – but it always for our good and His glory. He is more interested in developing our character because that is what will count for eternity.

- ♥ According to Psalm 25:9, 12, what kind of person does God teach and guide? Why, do you think, is this so? How does David illustrate in this psalm that he is this kind of person?

God will guide the humble and the one that fears Him or holds him in awe. Pride, rebellion or arrogance will block God's voice and guidance. If we want to do it our way and choose not to trust him or believe that he knows what is best for us, then he will let us go our own way. God's guidance is not "optional". He gives it to the person who is serious about doing what God desires.

12. From the following verses, write down what David did to position himself to receive God's protection, guidance and forgiveness.

25:1 – He lifted up his soul to God

25:2 – He decided to trust God

25:5, 21 – He put his hope (confident expectation) in God and what God would do

25:15 – He fixed his eyes on God (Gaze at God, Glance at the circumstances)

25:20 – He took refuge in God

13. Picture yourself doing what David did in 25:1. Describe what you see.

Have several share

- ♥ What, do you think, would be the benefits of "lifting up your soul" to God?

- ♥ What does Psalm 24:3-4 add to your understanding of *lifting up your soul*?

This verse tells us that we could lift up our soul to an idol rather than God. Lifting up our soul includes what we choose to worship and give our loyalty to. That can be God or something else.

14. *Hope* is the anticipation of a future outcome. In the Bible hope means the *confident expectation* of a future outcome. What do you think it means to *put our hope in God*? 25:5, 21

Hope means we have not received yet what we have asked for, but we wait for it, not with wishful thinking, wondering if God will come through. We wait for it with joyful, confident expectation knowing that God will keep his promise. It is only a matter of time before God will fulfill his promise to us. Hope in the Bible means that you are absolutely sure God will come through for you even if you have to wait for a while.

- ♥ If someone says "my hope is in you," how should they act? They would look to that person to give them and supply them with what they need. They would not be going to other people or sources to get what they need. We look to God for what we need and not other people or things.

- ♥ What promise is given in 25:3 to the one who puts their hope in God? Why is this true?

If we hope in God we will not be ashamed or disgraced. That is because God is faithful to his promises to us. He will not let us down. He will deliver and rescue us if we put our hope in him.

15. David was able to put his hope in God because he knew God's character. Write a brief character description of God from how David describes him in 25:5-8, 10.

Have several share their insights

God is my Savior, saving me from my sin and from what will harm me. God is merciful and shows unfailing love. God is good (all the time!) and he always does what is right. He loves to show us the way to go. God is always faithful to us and to his promises.

- ♥ Does David's *description* of God match your *experience* of God? Why or why not?

- ♥ Why are these character traits of God so important when we ask for protection, forgiveness and guidance?

- ♥ What about God's character gives you the most hope when you face a tough time?

- ♥ How has God proven his reliability to you?

16. What specific blessings and promises are given in **25:12-14** to the one who fears (reveres and worships) God?

For those who fear God, God will instruct them in the path that they should choose. They will live in (spiritual) prosperity and their children or descendants will inherit all that God has for them. They will be friends of God and God will confide his plans and ways and secrets to them!

- ♥ Which of these benefits have you personally experienced?
- ♥ Is there anything you can do so that you can experience them more?

17. Read **25:14** in all four translations. What is the ultimate blessing given to the one who is humble and allows themselves to be taught by God?

Friendship with God – sweet, satisfying companionship

What are the benefits of this kind of relationship with God and how do you think this relationship would function? (You may want to consider **John 15:12-15** in your answer.)

Our friendship with the Triune God is an intimate friendship based on love. God has proven his love for us by dying for us. If we love him, we will do what he commands (live life his way). God will confide in us and share his secrets with us so that we may work with him to further his Kingdom. Someday we will go to be with him forever and our friendship will have no end.

- ♥ Why might a person *not* want this kind of relationship with God? The benefits of friendship with God are enormous – but one has to give up control to God and trust his leading and kingship. If we insist on doing it our way, God will let us, but we forfeit the goodness and joy that he has in store for us.

RESPONSE:

Have different ones in your group share which question they answered

Make a personal application of **Psalms 25** to your life by answering one or more of the following questions:

- ❖ David asked God for protection, guidance and forgiveness. Which of these are you most in need of today? Do you feel you will receive it? Why or why not?
- ❖ Are you more concerned about your sin against God or about getting relief from the pressures and problems in your life? (**25:18**) Which one do you think is more important? Why?
- ❖ Do you think you are the type of person the God guides and teaches? (**25:9,12**) Why or why not? Would other people describe you as having a teachable or stubborn spirit?
- ❖ In light of how you are doing spiritually in your life today, which verse in **Psalms 25** is the most important at this time? Why?
- ❖ What does **Psalms 25** teach you about prayer? Why would this be a good psalm to use in your "daily devotions"?

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.

Exodus 33:13-14 If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.” The LORD replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

Psalms 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Psalms 119:133 Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; **6** in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

James 1:5-7 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. **6** But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. **7** That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord;

John 10:3-4 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. **4** When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

Psalms 24:3-4 Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? **4** He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.

John 15:12-15 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command. **15** I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Exodus 33:13-14 Please, if this is really so, show me your intentions so I will understand you more fully and do exactly what you want me to do. Besides, don’t forget that this nation is your very own people.”

And the LORD replied, “I will personally go with you, Moses. I will give you rest—everything will be fine for you.”

Psalms 119:105 Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.

Psalms 119:133 Guide my steps by your word, so I will not be overcome by any evil.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. **6** Seek his will in all you do, and he will direct your paths.

James 1:5-7 If you need wisdom—if you want to know what God wants you to do—ask him, and he will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking. **6** But when you ask him, be sure that you really expect him to answer, for a doubtful mind is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. **7** People like that should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

John 10:3-4 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. **4** After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they recognize his voice.

John 16:13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not be presenting his own ideas; he will be telling you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.

Psalms 24:3-4 Who may climb the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? **4** Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies.

John 15:12-15 I command you to love each other in the same way that I love you. **13** And here is how to measure it—the greatest love is shown when people lay down their lives for their friends. **14** You are my friends if you obey me. **15** I no longer call you servants, because a master doesn’t confide in his servants. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.