

Leader Notes – Lesson 5 – “Taste and See!” Psalm 34

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

These are some comments, etc. on the lesson.
Don't try to include everything and you may not need to use any of the below!
I make these comments to clarify and give some additional thoughts and suggestions.

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

BACKGROUND:

Have someone read **1 Samuel 21:10-22:2** to get the background for this Psalm. See if there is any questions about the story of David. Someone in your group could probably give a brief summary of David's life. Many of his Psalms were written in response to his running for his life from King Saul.

DISCUSSION STARTER:

If anyone has a story to share about narrowly escaping danger or death, ask them how they felt during the incident and how they felt when it was all over.

Have someone pray and ask God to give understanding and to see wonderful truths from His Word.

Read the scripture out loud:

Since this is poetry and the Psalm is an acrostic (each verse starting with a letter from the Hebrew alphabet, you might consider reading the scripture with this pattern:

Psalm 34

Reader A: Odd verses

Reader B: Even verses

QUESTIONS:

Question # 3

Ask several to share their titles or one word summaries

Question # 4

What "I will" statements did David make?

♥ Sometimes good intentions get lost after the moment passes. If we intend to do something, it's good to do something to remind ourselves and to make our intentions clear. We easily forget.

Question # 5

I will . . . shows that praise is something I choose to do; it is an act of the will. I have the power to make this choice. I can choose to praise God.

Extol (NIV) – *to lift up and praise someone with great enthusiasm and admiration*

Question #6

at all times always.

What does this reveal about praising God? If it is possible to always praise God, at all times, then praise does not depend on how I am feeling or my circumstances. God never changes. The things that we praise him for never change. Many times, when we choose to praise God regardless of our feelings or circumstances, our feelings will change and God will meet us in a special way that will make coping with our difficult circumstances much easier.

Question #7

Verse 1 says praise will be on David's **lips** or in his **mouth** or he will **speak** God's praises.

This might involve reminding or telling ourselves who God is and what he has done; telling others; singing or praying. There seems to be power in **speaking** something rather than just **thinking** it. When we praise out loud, Satan and his kingdom can also hear it and they can't stand to be where God is praised. Praise can be a spiritual weapon against our enemy.

Speaking it can also build our faith (and the faith of others.) (Luke

♥ Can you think of a time when it would NOT be possible to praise God?

This is the same question as "Is it really possible to praise God all the time?" Because praise depends on who God is, and because God never changes, it is possible to always praise God.

Question # 8

Boast - to praise yourself, or speak arrogantly about things you possess or have achieved; something you say or write that praises yourself, or arrogantly refers to your possessions or achievements. Boasting usually carries a negative connotation.

We can, however, boast in God. No matter how "outlandish" my claims, I can not exaggerate God! Anything I can think to say to compliment or brag about God is absolutely true! My words will always be inadequate when it comes to praising or boasting about God!

I can boast about God by telling others what he has done and who he is. I can boast about him when I remember all that he has done for me, as I review it often. I enter his "gates" with thanksgiving and his "courts" with praise.

♥ If we overdo praising another person, it becomes uncomfortable and unbelievable. We begin to wonder what is really true; no one can be that good! But anything good and wonderful I can think to say about God is true and more!

♥ David could have boasted about how clever he was to do what he did to escape King Achish. Instead he gave God the credit. We often are tempted to take the credit what God does something for us. Even in answered prayer, we sometimes take the credit because we were praying instead of giving God all the glory.

Question # 9

When we are discouraged, it helps when we hear someone "singing God's praises" or boasting in God. It reminds us of God's power and goodness. It builds our faith to believe God's promises. It reminds us that our trouble won't last forever and it helps us look forward to the time that God will deliver us. We can even begin to thank God before it happens!

♥ We don't have to wait to for someone else to begin to praise God. We can do it when we are discouraged and it will have the same effect! There is power in praising God! Praise is not just words.

Question # 10

We are not "Lone Ranger" Christians. We are the Body of Christ. God put us in communities and relationships. We encourage each other. When we praise with someone it makes it real. Jesus said that when two or three gather in his name, his presence is with them in a special way. When we praise with someone, God's presence is with us.

♥ We can praise together in a church setting, but there is power in praising God with just a friend. Just talking about all that God has done or about an answer to prayer is praising God together. There should always be time to boast in the Lord during our small group times!

Question # 11

You might want to read these verses out loud again. Have your group share how they filled in the chart.

Question # 12

We are not "earning" God's answer by taking the first step, but God does want to know if we are serious. He is not going to give himself flippantly. He saves his intimacy for those who are really serious. God likes to be asked because he wants a relationship with us. Asking shows our dependency on God. We can't seek, look, cry out or ask if we are proud.

Let your group talk about what fear is and why it is so powerful. What are some things that make us afraid?

Someone has said that fear is "faith in the power of the enemy to destroy us rather than faith in God to keep us safe." Discuss how fear can be "faith in the power of the devil."

Question # 13

David TRUSTED God and PRAISED God

How do these work against fear? See what your group thinks and also have them look up: 1 Peter 5:8-9 and Philippians 4:6-7. What other verses can your group think of?

♥ Does God want us to live in fear? There are things that will happen to make us afraid. This is a natural reaction. But God does not want fear to control us. He gives us the antidote.

♥ God can give us strength, wisdom and peace even if our circumstances don't change. Ask your group what else he promises.

Fear of the Lord – In the box I say that the antidote to our fears is the fear of the Lord. Why is this true?

Question # 14

God will instruct or teach us and tell us which path to take; God will confide in us!

I will lack nothing and have everything I need

God will love me more than I can imagine; he will have Fatherly compassion on me.

♥ Brainstorm different ways we can express our "fear of the Lord."

Question # 15

Taste and see that God is good!

We taste something to see if we like it; to see if it is "good" and pleasing to us

David encourage us to "try God out" and to see for ourselves if he really is good!

Question # 16

This is a review of verses 1-14; List everything we are told to do. This is how we "taste" God's goodness.

Once we know for ourselves that God *is* good, we will want more and more of him! We will make him a part of our regular diet!

Question # 17

List the things we are told to do or not do in these verses.

Ask your group: Why are these things important? Why does David mention these things? How do they help us "see many good days?" What happens if we ignore this advice? Where will it lead?

♥ Discuss with your group why peace is so important. How do we have peace with God? With others? Society? And – what about peace with ourselves? How can we pursue peace?

Question # 18

Everything that God does for us in these verse should give us great comfort. God knows when we are hurting. Just because we are in hard times, doesn't mean that God doesn't care. He's working for us and he promises to make it all okay.

Your group may come up with several different words; it just depends on what you want to emphasize. God is Just, Compassionate, Understanding, Powerful, etc.

♥ Psalm 34:20 is a prophetic picture of Jesus, our Passover Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Even though the Passover Lamb in Exodus was killed and it's blood used for protection, not one of it's bones was to be broken. This points to Jesus when he was crucified. It's amazing that he is the only one of the three whose legs weren't broken. Yes, he died, but God was protecting him and delivered him by raising him from the dead.

Jesus would have memorized this Psalm. Think of him saying it while he was going through his Passion. How would it have been meaningful to him? If Jesus put his trust in God, why wouldn't we also find God faithful?

RESPONSE:

Question # 19

Have some of your group share their statements. Why is it important to "plan ahead"? Discuss how planning ahead will help us when trouble comes.

Question # 20

What happens when we give God our undivided attention and just praise him? Does anyone want to share their experience?

Encourage your group to do this exercise if they haven't already. This is part of "tasting to see that God is good." We never come away from worship unchanged.