



LESSON 16: AN APPETITE FOR GOD

PSALM 62/63

INTRODUCTION

Psalms 62 and 63 are beautiful Psalms full of vivid word pictures. Both Psalms were written by David while he was under adverse circumstances. Twice in his life, David had to run to the Judean wilderness in order to escape being killed; first from King Saul and then later in his life from his own son, Absalom, when he tried to depose his father and take over the kingdom. On the run, stuck in the desert, David cries out to God and makes a choice from the heart to trust God no matter what.

Psalms 62 and 63 *are Songs of Trust*. They express confidence and dependence on God, especially when things aren't going well.

Remember, trust is believing God's promises *before* you see them fulfilled. These Psalms give us something to hold on to during our hard times while we are still *waiting* for God to act.

Because David chooses to keep his eyes on God, rather than his circumstances, he experiences God as his Rock, Fortress and Refuge. He learns from experience that God is both strong and loving. He pursues God with his whole heart and as a result, he finds himself sheltered under the shadow of God's protecting wings. Out of deep gratitude, David declares that he will praise God as long as he lives.

DISCUSSION STARTER

- What is the best reward someone could give you for a job well done?
- What characteristics do you look for in a friend?

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.

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**
 - ♥ 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**
 - ♥ 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?
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.
8. Reflect on the following verses and suggest some reasons why David found quietness and stillness before God necessary. **Exodus 14:14; Psalm 37:7; 46:10 and Isaiah 30:15**
 - ♥ *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?

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

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?

- ♥ 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?

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

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?

- ♥ 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.

- ♥ 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?

- ♥ 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**)

♥ 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?

♥ 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**?

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

♥ 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**?

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?

♥ 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?

♥ 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

♥ 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**)

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

RESPONSE:

How would you like your relationship with God to be like David's? Be specific.

What actions will you take to make it so? Be specific.