



LESSON 21: THE GRAND FINALE

PSALM 145

BACKGROUND

Psalm 145 is a great hymn of praise and it is a fitting way to bring our "Honey for the Heart" Psalms study to a close. This psalm is also the last psalm in the book of Psalms that was written by David, the great king of Israel. In this song written to God, David the king praises and honors God as the Great King over all that exists.

Psalm 145 was written with great skill and care and it has an intricate structure. The poem is an *acrostic poem*, with each verse beginning with a successive letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

The verses of this psalm praise God for his attributes and his acts, i.e., who God *is* and all that he has *done*.

In Jewish religious practice, this psalm was recited twice in the morning and once in the evening. Psalm 145 not only encourages us to praise God, it also give us good reasons to do so. It even gives us a vocabulary to help us express our praise. The whole psalm inspires us to affectionately and gratefully praise the Great King of the universe.

DISCUSSION STARTER

- Have you ever seen or lived under a modern day monarch? How does royalty differ from presidents or prime ministers? Is King a good title for God?

PREPARATION

1. Before you read **Psalm 145**, 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 145** slowly and thoughtfully in at least two translations. As you read and reread, mark any words or phrases that are meaningful to you and put a question mark by anything that you don't understand.
3. Write out a verse(s) or phrase(s) from Psalm 145 that is, today, "music to your ears" because it's what your heart needs to hear.
4. Make a note of anything in Psalm 145 that was new to you or you don't remember hearing before.

QUESTIONS

5. In **Psalm 145**, David exposes God's identity and gives many reasons why God deserves our praise. Fill in the chart below by recording everything you learn in **Psalm 145** about *who God is* and *what he does*.

v. 1 <i>God the King</i>	v. 3 <i>His greatness is beyond discovery</i>	v. 4-5 <i>mighty acts majestic, glorious splendor wonderful works</i>
v. 6-7	v. 8	v. 9
v. 11-12	v. 13	v. 14
v. 15	v. 16	v. 17
v. 18	v. 19	v. 20

- ♥ From the statements on your chart about who God is and what he does, which ones to you most need to hear today? Why? What things about God are you most grateful for?
 - ♥ How do you think David knows all these things about who God is and what he does?
 - ♥ Are there any statements on your chart that don't match your experience of God? Does this matter? Why or why not?
6. Is it possible that these statements about God could sometimes be true but sometimes not? Or, might they be true for some people, but not for others? Why or why not?

- ♥ What kind of ruler is God to you: a) Benevolent king? b) Harsh dictator? c) Ceremonial monarch? d) Democratic leader? e) Prime minister?

7. Notice the description of God in **145:8**. Read **Exodus 34:4-7**. From whom did this description of God originate and why is this important?

♥ In what specific ways have you experienced these divine qualities in your life?

♥ Can you give an example of how God has been "slow to anger"?

8. David declares that "the Lord is good to all" (v. 9) and he is "loving toward all he has made" (v. 13,17). What do these statements reveal about God's character and his love?

♥ Do these characteristics about God seem fair to you? Why or why not?

♥ How should these characteristics about God make a difference in how you view and relate to people?

9. What in **145:20** seems to contradict the statements found in **145:9,13** and how can you explain this "contradiction"?

♥ What two characteristics in **145:17** does God hold in balance? How does this help explain the "contradiction" mentioned in the above question?

10. What are some specific ways that God shows his compassionate love in **145:13b-16**?

♥ What people fit the description in **145:14**? How does God do these things?

♥ How does God do what he does in **145:15**? Why is this easy to take for granted? What would happen if God stopped doing this?

♥ How does God satisfy (v. 16) the desires of every living thing as well as fulfill (v. 19) the desires of those who fear him? What desires is David referring to? Has God fulfilled and satisfied your desire?

11. If you desire to experience God's closeness, what two conditions must you fulfill according to **145:18**?

♥ What does it mean to call on God? How do we know if we are being sincere?

♥ Are you ever aware of God's action in **145:20a** in your own life? How do you think God does this?

12. Because God is such a great and awesome King, David begins this psalm with a strong statement of intent and desire. From **145:1-2**, list all that David desires to do and how often he intends to do it.

♥ Why does David want to praise God everyday? The *Amplified* translation gives one reason. Can you think of others?

♥ If you made David's statement of intent in **145:1-2** your own, what specific things would you do?

13. According to **145:3**, why will praise given to God take forever and ever?

- ♥ What are some things about God that you just don't understand?
- ♥ Does knowing that God will always be a mystery in many ways *motivate* you or *discourage* you when it comes to praising God? Why?

14. What method is used to spread the fame of God the King's goodness and greatness? (**145:4-7**)

Why is it important to do this? Won't it be obvious to others?

- ♥ What are some of God's "mighty acts" (v.4) that you want to tell the next generation? What are some ways you can do this?

15. List all the verbs (action words) David uses in **145:1-7**.

- ♥ What do these words reveal about praise?
- ♥ How much of your life is characterized by proclaiming God's praise?

16. What is the difference between praising someone and thanking someone?

- ♥ When given to you, which do you appreciate more, praise or thanks? Why?
- ♥ What are you more likely to do, thank God or praise God?
- ♥ What will you do to live out **145:21**?

RESPONSE:

It has been wisely said that *the highest form of praise is to imitate the actions of the one you are praising*. Review your chart from Question 5. What traits and actions of God do you find hard to imitate? Consider some reasons why you are this way. Are you willing to change? Write a prayer telling God about what you presently see in yourself and express your desire to change and become more like him.

Take some time to be quiet before God. Allow your heart to listen to what God may be saying to you about what you have written. Ask God to show you any action you need to take or any attitudes you need to change. Write down anything you sense God is asking you to do.

The highest form of praise is to imitate the actions of the one you are praising. Praise God in the coming days and weeks by following through on what he has showed you.