

REFOCUS

SUMMER STUDY ON THE PSALMS

STUDY GUIDE

SESSION 1: REFOCUS ON THE WORD

INTRODUCTION TO THE PSALMS

TEACHING NOTES

PSALM 16:8; PSALM 1; 119:28, 29, 25

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. It's so easy to lose focus on God, especially in this era of constant distractions. **What are some of the primary distractions that are causing you to lose focus on God?**

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2. One of the major themes of Psalm 1 is that God will judge the wicked and bless the righteous. We might not see the scales of justice balanced in our lifetime, but we can trust that God will eventually make everything right. **What wrong in the world do you most want to see God make right? How can you participate in establishing God's righteousness on earth as it is in heaven?**

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3. The best way to refocus our attention on God is to focus our attention on His Word. **What is your favorite way to focus your attention on God's Word? If you have never really read the Bible before, what challenges have you faced in that regard?**

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4. We learned that God's Word gives us strength, wisdom, and life. **Which of these do you feel you need the most right now? Why?**

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DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 1: DAY 1

PSALM 119:1-8

What are your overall feelings towards the Bible? Do you consider reading Scripture to be a chore or a delight? Why?

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According to this passage, list all the ways in which people are to be blessed:

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In verse 7, the author equates learning God's righteous rule (reading Scripture) with praise. **When was a time that a verse or story from the Bible caused your heart to fill up with praise? What was it about that particular verse or story that moved you? If you can't think of a previous example, what is something in this passage that particularly spoke to you?**

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Prayer: Ask God to transform your heart so that reading His Word becomes a delight and occasion for praise. Ask God to reveal to you, through the Scriptures, the hope and truth that comes from His Word in an age of misinformation and despair.

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DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 1: DAY 2

PSALM 119:9-16

In verse 9, what does the author credit with keeping him on a pure path?

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When was a time that you lost your focus on God's Word? What happened?

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In this passage, the author proclaims that he delights in Scripture more than riches and that God's Word is stored in his heart. **What verse or passage of Scripture do you have stored in your heart? What is it about the verse or passage that you hold so dearly? If you can't think of any, what is a verse from today's passage that spoke to you and why?**

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Challenge: Choose a passage of Scripture that brings you hope and causes your heart to fill with praise. Spend the day reciting that passage of Scripture until it is stored in your heart. If you're not sure where to start, here are three suggestions:

- Hebrews 2:14-18 (A succinct telling of the Gospel)
- 1 John 3:16-18 (A reminder of our purpose)
- Isaiah 25:6-9 (God's promise for our future)

DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 1: DAY 3

PSALM 1

The author of Psalm 1 expresses a desire to see the righteous prosper and the wicked stand judgment. **What is a wicked or wrong in the world that you desire to see God bring to justice and set right?**

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The author proclaims that the righteous delight in God’s Word. However, there are plenty of Christians in the world who have no interest in reading Scripture. **What do you think are the primary differences between Christians who delight in Scripture and those who do not? What are some of the negative consequences of having a world full of Christians who are biblically illiterate?**

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The author claims he “meditates on Scripture day and night”. Obviously, we can’t lock ourselves in a closet and spend all our time reading Scripture. **So practically, what does it look like for us to absorb Scripture so much that it’s always on our minds?**

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Challenge: Spend time making a list of all the things that are distracting you from focusing on God and His Word. Then make a counter list of things you can do to refocus your attention on God. Begin implementing one or two of your “refocus” strategies this week.

SESSION 2: REFOCUS ON THE KING

THE ROYAL/MESSIANIC PSALMS

TEACHING NOTES

PSALM 2

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was a challenge that you faced this week or are facing right now?

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2. How did tonight's lesson help you understand the reason why there is so much suffering in the world?

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3. One of the foundational confessions of the Christian life is "Jesus is Lord." **What do you think that means? And how did tonight's lesson help you better understand that phrase?**

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4. How does Jesus as the conquering King give you hope to face the challenges you are facing or that lie ahead of you?

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DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 2: DAY 1

PSALM 2

This Psalm is a celebration in the midst of surrounding opposition. **In vv. 1-3, how does the Psalmist describe the setting of this Psalm?**

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How does this relate to our world today? How does it relate to you personally?

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Read Mark 1:9-11. **How does Psalm 2 in the background enhance your understanding of who Jesus is and what He came to do?**

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Where in your life do you need to submit to the Kingship of Jesus more fully?

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Study Deeper: Read the following New Testament passages that quote Psalm 2: Acts 4:25-26, Romans 1:4, and Hebrews 1:5. Why do you think the early church so often returned to this Psalm in their teaching?

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DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 2: DAY 2

PSALM 110

What promises does God make to His king throughout this Psalm?

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For the background on Melchizedek, see Genesis 14:17-24. **We don't know much about him, but what do we know from this passage? What point might David be trying to make when he says that the Lord calls the king "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4)?**

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Psalm 110 was another one of the early church's favorite Psalms. Read Matthew 22:41-46; Luke 22:66-71; Acts 2:29-36; Ephesians 1:16-23; Hebrews 1:3, 5:11-14, and 7. **In what ways does Jesus represent the fulfillment of this Psalm?**

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Prayer: Write a prayer of response to God about what it means to you that Jesus is your King and your Great High Priest.

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DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 2: DAY 3

PSALM 144

What does David praise and thank God for in vv. 1-4?

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How do vv. 1-4 set the stage for David's requests in the remainder of the Psalm?

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What is an example of a time when God delivered you in the past?

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How can remembering the character of God fuel your prayer life, as it did for David?

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Challenge: David closes this Psalm by saying that “Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord!” (Psalm 144:15b) Write down the names of five people you know whose God is not the Lord, who are not followers of Jesus Christ. Spend time praying for each of them right now, by name, that they would come to a place of submission to Jesus as Lord and King.

SESSION 3: REFOCUS YOUR SORROW

THE LAMENT PSALMS

TEACHING NOTES

PSALM 13

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you find it easy to recognize when you feel sorrow? Why or why not?

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2. Why do you think we struggle to honestly share our emotions with God?

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3. Our circumstances can be the blinders that keep us from seeing God's purpose, especially in our sorrow. **What are ways you've either enlisted in the past or would like to enlist now, to keep focused on God's purpose?**

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4. Read Psalm 13:5-6. In this Psalm we see David transition from deep sorrow and wrong belief that God has forgotten him, into great joy in God's steadfast love. **Have you seen where God built joy from your sorrow in your life? What are ways you've seen God turn your questioning of Him into assurance in Him?**

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DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 3: DAY 1

PSALM 86

Before you get into God’s Word today, journal the emotion you are feeling. **What are you feeling right now? (Happy? Sad? Anxious? Angry? Confused? Excited? Frustrated? Depressed?) What is or might be causing you to feel that way?**

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What do you see David expressing to God in vv. 1-7? (Be specific — what do you think he’s feeling, and how is he expressing it, and what is he asking for?)

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Look at vv. 8-13. **What characteristics of God do you see David point out? How have you seen those characteristics at work in your life?**

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Now look at vv. 14-17. **What do you see David telling God? How can you see David reminding himself of God’s character in verse 15?**

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Challenge: Write out your own prayer modeling Psalm 86. Start by expressing how you feel to God. Let him know it all. Then follow it with what you know to be true of God. Then ask God for help where you need it most right now, and follow it with how God helps you.

DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 3: DAY 2

PSALM 51

Before you get into God’s Word today, journal the emotion you are feeling. **What are you feeling right now? (Happy? Sad? Anxious? Angry? Confused? Excited? Frustrated? Depressed?) What is or might be causing you to feel that way?**

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What is David asking God in this Psalm?

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What emotion do you discern from all of David’s words? How does this impact his repentance?

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Now think about your own life. **Where are areas where you know you need to pray a prayer of repentance like David?**

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Challenge: Write a prayer of repentance to God. Think about your own life and areas where you have blindly or knowingly disobeyed God?

Study Deeper: To understand the context of this Psalm when David wrote it, read 2 Samuel 11-12.

DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 3: DAY 3

PSALM 42

Before you get into God’s Word today, journal the emotion you are feeling. **What are you feeling right now? (Happy? Sad? Anxious? Angry? Confused? Excited? Frustrated? Depressed?) What is or might be causing you to feel that way?**

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What is the psalmist “thirsty” for (vv. 1-3)?

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Have you ever felt a longing for God like water on a hot day? Describe that feeling.

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What do you see the Psalmist use as an antidote for his sadness of soul (v.5 & 11)? Why is it important to remember God’s character?

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Challenge: Make a note card with characteristics of God you’ve seen in scripture and in your life. Put it in a place where you will see it often and let it be a “Psalm of remembrance” when you encounter difficult circumstances.

SESSION 4: REFOCUS ON WISDOM

THE WISDOM PSALMS

TEACHING NOTES
PSALM 111:10, 131, AND 16

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the big differences between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom that comes from God?

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2. How can refocusing on God’s wisdom benefit you in these difficult times?

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3. When it comes to “fearing the Lord”, we discussed three aspects: practicing humility, knowing that God is the source of all goodness, and trusting in God’s promises. **Which aspect do you find most difficult? Why?**

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4. While “fear the Lord” might sound negative and scary, it’s actually the key to living a life of hope and joy. **Have you experienced this to be true? If so, how?**

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DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 4: DAY 1

PSALM 19

What important aspect of wisdom does David talk about in vv. 1-2?

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When was a time that God’s creation left you in total awe?

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David claims that it’s God’s perfect Law that revives his soul. **What do you think he means by that?**

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Prayer: Ask God to open your eyes to His goodness and majesty as to leave you in complete awe.

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DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 4: DAY 2

PSALM 37

There are so many wisdom statements in this passage. **List three pieces of wisdom that stuck out to you.**

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The opening of this Psalm tells us not to fret about evildoers, but to trust in God and do good. Easier said than done! **Why is it so difficult to not worry ourselves with the evil in this world? What are ways we can refocus our trust back on God when burdened by evildoers?**

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A big part of wisdom is knowing God and trusting in His promises. In this Psalm, God is described in numerous ways. **What are your three favorite descriptions of God and why?**

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Challenge: Take a look at the three pieces of wisdom that stuck out to you. Now list three practical ways that you can increase your wisdom in those areas. For example: If you picked, “Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him”, you could write, “spend 10 minutes a day in silence, waiting for the Lord to speak.”

DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 4: DAY 3

1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-13 (WE ARE GOING TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE PSALMS FOR JUST ONE DAY.)

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in imparting God’s wisdom to us?

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Is it possible to know anything about God apart from the Spirit? Why or why not?

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How have you experienced the work of the Spirit in your life, particularly when it comes to wisdom?

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Study Deeper: Read this article on the role of the Church in dispensing God’s wisdom to the world: <https://reknew.org/2015/06/the-purpose-of-the-church/>

SESSION 5: REFOCUS ON THANKSGIVING

THE THANKSGIVING PSALMS

TEACHING NOTES

PSALM 136

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Take some time in your group to go around and share one thing you are thankful for today.

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2. How have you seen God as Creator, Deliverer, Rescuer, or Provider? How does remembering who He is impact your thanksgiving?

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3. Why do you think thanksgiving is important?

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4. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says “give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” **What does this look like practically in your life? What do you think is meant by “all circumstances”?**

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DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 5: DAY 1
PSALM 116

Write out 3 things you are especially thankful for before reading this Psalm.

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After reading, how is your thanksgiving mirrored in the words of this Psalm?

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What do you see the Psalmist list as things God has done for him?

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Look at vv. 12-13. **What is the writer's response for what God has done for him?**

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Take some time to think about what it means to “offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving.” **What do you think that might look like in your life?**

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Challenge: Memorize Psalm 116:7. Let this be a meditation in circumstances of frustration or defeat.

DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 5: DAY 2
PSALM 30

Write out 3 things you are especially thankful for before reading this Psalm.

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After reading, how is your thanksgiving mirrored in the words of this Psalm?

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Look at vv. 4-5. **What reason does David give for why we should sing praises and give thanks to God?**

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Read vv. 6-7. **Have you ever found yourself in a place of “prosperity” and let it build confidence in yourself instead of thanksgiving to God? How did it play out?**

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Where can you specifically apply vv. 11-12 in your life right now? How do they change your perspective?

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Challenge: Write out a way to remember thanksgiving in your affliction. How can you actively apply it to what you are facing right now?

DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 5: DAY 3

PSALM 118

Write out 3 things you are especially thankful for before reading this Psalm.

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After reading, how is your thanksgiving mirrored in the words of this Psalm?

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What does it mean for your life that God’s “steadfast love endures forever”?

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Look at vv. 5-13. What truth do you see about God’s character?

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Compare vv. 28-29 to vv. 1-4. You can see a more personal nature in verse 28. Why do you think it’s important that the psalmist ends where he began?

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Challenge: Write out 3 ways that you have seen God be your help. How has He shown His steadfast love toward you this week?

SESSION 6: REFOCUS ON WORSHIP

THE PRAISE PSALMS

TEACHING NOTES

PSALM 8

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are ways we express our worship to someone or something?

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2. Who/what is someone or something you are tempted to worship other than God?

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3. What praiseworthy attribute of God found in Psalm 8 stuck out to you and why? While that person or thing you are tempted to worship may be a good thing, what makes God even better?

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4. What are habits that you have or that you can implement in your life to remind you of the praiseworthiness of God?

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DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 6: DAY 1

PSALM 34

**What do we know about the circumstances in which this Psalm was written?
(See 1 Samuel 21:10-15.)**

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What does this Psalm have to say about what makes God praiseworthy?

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Which of those truths means the most to you and why?

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What two broad groups of people does this Psalm describe, and what are the ultimate outcomes for each group?

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What additional understanding do the New Testament quotations and allusions to this Psalm provide? (See 1 Peter 2:1-3, 1 Peter 3:8-12, and John 19:28-36)

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Challenge: To REFOCUS on worship today, write about a time that you have “tasted and seen that the Lord is good.” (Psalm 34:8)

DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 6: DAY 2

PSALM 103

Note the use of figurative language (metaphors, similes, etc.) in this Psalm. Write down examples of figurative language and then next to each example, write out the literal truth the figure of speech is trying to convey.

Figurative Language

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear Him (Psalm 103:11)

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Literal Truth

God loves His people as much as humanly imaginable.

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How are mankind and God compared/contrasted in this Psalm?

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What does this Psalm have to say about what makes God praiseworthy?

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Which of these truths means the most to you and why?

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Prayer: Write your own prayer of praise to God in response to how He revealed Himself to you through this Psalm today.

DAILY DEVOTIONS // WEEK 6: DAY 3
PSALM 150

What use of repetition do you notice? What point might the author be trying to make?

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Describe the structure of the Psalm. (Hint: Is this verse answering who, what, why, etc. as it relates to worship?)

V. 1:
V. 2:
Vv. 3-5:
V. 6:

What does this Psalm have to say about what makes God praiseworthy?

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Which of these truths means the most to you and why?

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This is the last Psalm in the entire book. **Why do you think the arranger(s) of the Psalms might have chosen this Psalm for the conclusion of the book of Psalms?**

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Challenge: How will you continue to REFOCUS your mind and heart on the Lord after the conclusion of this study? Share your commitment with your group, and continue to check in with each other and encourage one another in the days ahead.