

Life Lessons from Book of Psalms

LESSON 10: REMEMBERING THE IMPORTANT THINGS

REFLECTION

Begin your study by sharing thoughts on this question.

1. If you were asked to list your priorities, what would they be?

BIBLE READING: Psalm 103:1–14 NIV

¹ [Of David.]

Praise the LORD, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

2 Praise the LORD, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
3 who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
4 who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
5 who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
6 The LORD works righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.
7 He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the people of Israel:
8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
9 He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
11 For as high as the heavens are above the
earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
12 as far as the east is from the west,

so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;

14 for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

DISCOVERY

Explore the Bible reading by discussing these questions.

2. What is praise? Name some ways we can praise God.

3. What human needs does God meet?

4. How does God reveal himself to us?

5. Why doesn't God give us what we deserve?

6. Who receives God's mercy and compassion? Why?

INSPIRATION

Abraham Lincoln once listened to the pleas of the mother of a soldier who'd been sentenced to hang for treason. She begged the President to grant a pardon. Lincoln agreed. Yet, he's reported to have left the lady with the following words: "Still, I wish we could teach him a lesson. I wish we could give him just a little bit of a hangin'."

I think I know what the old rail-splitter had in mind. Yesterday, I got a little bit of hangin'.

We were having Sunday lunch at the home of a fellow missionary family. It was after the meal.... Their three-year-old daughter Beth Ann was playing with our two-year-old Jenna in the front yard. All of a sudden Beth Ann rushed in with a look of panic on her face. "Jenna is in the pool!" Paul was the first to arrive at the poolside ... and lifted her up out of the water to the extended hands of her mother. Jenna was simultaneously choking, crying, and coughing. She vomited a bellyful of water. I held her as she cried. Denalyn began to weep. I began to sweat.

For the rest of the day I couldn't hold her enough, nor could we thank Beth Ann enough.... I still can't thank God enough. It was a little bit of hangin'.

The stool was kicked out from under my feet and the rope jerked around my neck just long enough to remind me of what really matters. It was a divine slap, a gracious knock on the head, a severe mercy. Because of it, I came face to face with one of the underground's slyest agents—the agent of familiarity....

To say that this agent of familiarity breeds contempt is to let him off easy. Contempt is just one of his offspring. He also sires broken hearts, wasted hours, and an insatiable desire for more.... He won't take your children, he'll just make you too busy to notice them. His whispers to procrastinate are seductive. There is always next summer to coach the team, next month to go to the lake, and next week to teach Johnny how to pray. He'll make you forget that the faces around your table will soon be at tables of their own. Hence, books will go unread, games will go unplayed, hearts will go unnurtured, and opportunities will go ignored. All because the

poison of the ordinary has deadened your senses to the magic of the moment....

On a shelf above my desk is a picture of two little girls. They're holding hands and standing in front of a swimming pool, the same pool from which the younger of the two had been pulled only minutes before. I put the picture where I would see it daily so I would remember what God doesn't want me to forget.

And you can bet this time I'm going to remember. I don't want any more hangin'. Not even a little bit.

(From God Came Near by Max Lucado)

RESPONSE

Use these questions to share more deeply with each other.

7. How does familiarity divert our focus from life's most important things?

8. What happens when we neglect the important things in life?

9. What does this psalm remind you to do?

(For more Bible passages about praising God, see Deuteronomy 6:10–13; 1 Chronicles 16:9–12; Job 36:24; Psalm 33:1; 77:11; 147:1.)