

Life Lessons from Book of Psalms

LESSON 9: A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

REFLECTION

Begin your study by sharing thoughts on this question.

1. How do you cheer yourself up when you feel discontent or dissatisfied?

BIBLE READING: Psalm 90:1–12 NIV

¹ [A prayer of Moses the man of God.]

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

2 Before the mountains were born
or you brought forth the whole world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

3 You turn people back to dust,
saying, “Return to dust, you mortals.”

4 A thousand years in your sight
are like a day that has just gone by,
or like a watch in the night.

5 Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of
death—

they are like the new grass of the morning:

6 In the morning it springs up new,
but by evening it is dry and withered.

7 We are consumed by your anger
and terrified by your indignation.

8 You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your presence.

9 All our days pass away under your wrath;
we finish our years with a moan.

10 Our days may come to seventy years,
or eighty, if our strength endures;
yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow,

for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

11 If only we knew the power of your anger!
Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your
due.

12 Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

DISCOVERY

Explore the Bible reading by discussing these questions.

2. What did the psalmist want his readers to understand about God? About themselves? About life?

3. How does this passage contrast God with people?

4. Why does God address the sin of people?

5. What does it mean to fear God?

(These passages may contribute to our understanding of the fear of God: Exodus 3:5; Deuteronomy 10:12; Joshua 24:14; Psalm 89:7; Ecclesiastes 12:13; Isaiah 8:13; Habakkuk 2:20; Matthew 10:28; 1 Peter 1:17; 2:17.)

6. Why is it important to remember that life is short?

INSPIRATION

Psalm 90 is the only psalm specifically attributed to Moses. He may have written others, but we know for sure he wrote this one. Remember Moses? Most think of him as a man of action, an aggressive leader, point man in the exodus,

outspoken giver of the law. But it is easy to overlook the repetitious, monotonous routine he endured.

Between ages forty and eighty, Moses led his father-in-law's flock of sheep in the desert. Following the exodus, he led the Hebrews for another forty years as they wandered across and around the wilderness. I'd say he knew about the blahs. Same terrain, same scenes, same route, same ornery people, same negative outlook, same complaints, same miserable weather, same everything! The prayer he wrote could have been his means of maintaining sanity!...

Frequently, our problem with boredom begins when we fall under monotony's "spell." ... How to cope? We must direct our attention (as Moses does) to (a) the right object and (b) the right perspective....

As I probe my soul during times of such wrestling, almost without exception, I find three thoughts washing around in my head. First, I think: Life is so short.... Look again at Moses' prayer. He brings a second thought that plagues me when the blahs come: My sins are so obvious....

Yes, life is short. Yes, our sins are obvious.... And if those thoughts aren't hard enough to handle, there is a third feeling: My days are so empty.... After the satisfaction that comes from fresh joy in the morning, there is restoration.... God has a way of balancing out the good with the bad.

(From Living Above the Level of Mediocrity by Charles Swindoll)

RESPONSE

Use these questions to share more deeply with each other.

7. Why do some people feel discontent and disillusioned?

8. How does this passage encourage us to cope with the monotony of life?

9. What steps can you take that will refresh you when you grow discouraged?

(For more Bible passages about finding a fresh perspective, see Matthew 6:19–21; John 4:35–38; 15:16; Colossians 1:10–12; 1 Timothy 4:16; 6:17–19; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; Hebrews 10:34–36.)