
A Year in the Word

A Year in the Word: So Will I: Part 3

Small Group Questions: The Songs We Sing

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Read

Psalm 120-122

Reflect

What does it mean to come back to the heart of what it means to worship? The longer we attend church, the most comfortable we become with the routine. After a while, it's possible to go through an entire service without our hearts really engaging with God. We aren't alone. Three times a year, God's people would go up to the city of Jerusalem to worship in a special way, and they would sing what are known as the Psalms of Ascent (Ps. 120-134) as they went. The order and structure of these Psalms were meant to help God's people engage their minds and hearts in worship, to connect with him again in a special way.

Pastor Josh Walters helps us identify three themes within the patterns of the Psalms of Ascent:

1. Theme 1: Pain, suffering, and hardship
 - a. The Psalmist calls out to God in his distress. It is perhaps most natural to call out to God when we need him, but do we see him as our natural companion when we are in pain? Do we see him as being close to us in those moments?
 - b. What does it mean for you to know that God is near to those who are in pain and enduring suffering?
2. Theme 2: Trusting God
 - a. Psalm 121 has the tone of hopefulness, of a confidence that God will come through for us. Take a moment and read through Psalm 121. Do you see this confidence reflected in your own life?
 - b. What would it look like for you to trust God in the ways the Psalmist writes about?
3. Theme 3: Praising and worshipping God
 - a. We often come to God when we are in pain and we may come to a place where we can declare our trust in him. But when we come through those times, do we end up in a place of praise?
 - b. Why do you think it is natural for the psalmist to respond with rejoicing, when he is asked to go up to the house of the Lord?
 - c. Read Psalm 122:8-9. For the psalmist, the natural companion to rejoicing in God is loving and seeking the good of those around us. Does your worship lead to a greater love for those around you? Why should a love for people be the natural companion of a love for God?

Respond: Where is God leading you? How can your small group support you?