

PSALMS: Introduction

The book of Psalms served as a songbook for the people of God in the Old Testament, a collection of 150 songs and prayers written to help God's people worship Him.

The Psalms likely make you think of David (and he did write many of them!), but these songs were written by many authors over many years—and have been preserved for our worship today.

While much of the Bible speaks **about** God, the Psalms model for us how to speak **to** Him. Covering the full range of human emotion, no other book in the Bible so clearly teaches how to relate to God in all circumstances. In reading this book, we can know that God cares how we feel and that He hears when we bring our joy and sadness and anger before Him.

Although the Psalms are meant to be read individually, they have been traditionally grouped for us into five books:

- Psalms 1–41** — Book 1
- Psalms 42–72** — Book 2
- Psalms 73–89** — Book 3
- Psalms 90–106** — Book 4
- Psalms 107–150** — Book 5

Here are a few ideas for helping you read Psalms well:

- The Psalms are **poems**! Try to be aware of the poetic form and imagery as you read, continually asking the question: **Why does it say it that way?**
- Psalms lend themselves to being read out loud. So look for opportunities to **read and experience Psalms in community**. Consider sharing a Psalm each day with your family or a friend.
- Psalms help us understand our human experience in relation to God, but humans are not the most important character here. What does each Psalm teach about **Who God is?** And how does it point to the gospel: how are the emotions, longings, and praises expressed in the Psalm ultimately fulfilled in Jesus?