

# THE LOOKOUT

OCTOBER 2022

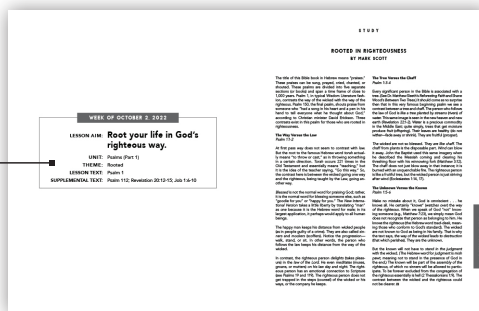
## Unit: Psalms (Part 1)

## Theme: Rooted

**Overview:** “Texts have tunes,” preacher and professor Fred Craddock said. That is especially true of Psalms, the hymnbook of the Bible. Most biblical psalms were sung or prayed. They are poetic in genre and speak to every human emotion. Psalms (the book) consists of five sections—Psalms 1–41; 42–72; 73–89; 90–106; and 107–150—which makes it similar to the five books of the Pentateuch and the five discourses of Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel. The main imagery of the book of Psalms coincides with a Middle Eastern agrarian culture, and the main characteristic of Psalms is parallelism (rhetorical pattern of likeness). In October, students will learn how righteousness, reality, repentance, reason, and worship are “rooted” in God.

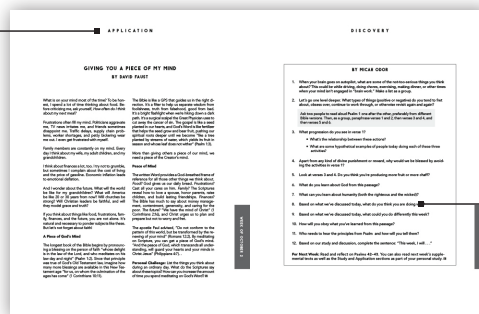
## HOW TO USE

Each week has a **lesson aim**, **lesson text**, and **supplemental text**.



Tabs indicate the week of each lesson.

Each week features three sections: **Study**, **Application**, and **Discovery**.



Use the **Discovery** questions to study, discuss, and apply the Scripture passages in a group or class.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 30, 2022

**LESSON AIM:** **Take advantage of  
weekly opportunities to  
praise and worship God.**

**UNIT:** Psalms (Part 1)

**THEME:** Rooted

**LESSON TEXT:** Psalm 92

**SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT:** 2 Chronicles 31:2-3; Psalms 36:5-6; 47:1-9; 150:1-6;  
Colossians 3:15-17; James 5:13-16

## ROOTED IN WORSHIP

BY MARK SCOTT

Some say demons are at the heart of Halloween. But worship is at the heart of Scripture. Worship was compromised in Eden (Genesis 3:1-19). What we worship is what we become (Hosea 9:10; Romans 1:23). The angel told John to “worship God” (Revelation 22:9). The Old Testament hymnal (the book of Psalms) called God’s people to worship. In fact, our lives are rooted in worship.

A significant hermeneutical construct (way to read the text) is called chiasmus. A chiasmus is a cross-shaped rhetorical pattern. If we use letters to represent sections of Psalm 92, it looks like this: A (vv. 1-5); B (vv. 6-7); C (v. 8); B (vv. 9-11); A (vv. 12-15). Verse 8, the very middle of this psalm, becomes the interpretative key, “*But you, Lord, are forever exalted.*” This is the content at the heart of this worship psalm.

### The Righteous Worship

Psalm 92:1-5

Worship of God is rooted in who God is and what he has done. God’s identity and his works are praised in this section. The praise (or giving of thanks) for God being *Lord* and *O Most High* (identity) sometimes takes the form of music. God’s love (loving-kindness) *in the morning* and his faithfulness (steadiness or stability) *at night* can be played on the *ten-stringed lyre* (like the lute) and can be enjoyed by *the melody of the harp*.

The unnamed psalmist was glad (rejoiced) not just because of God’s identity but because of what God had done. His deeds were his activities in history (such as the exodus). His *hands* celebrated his miracles (such as the Red Sea and the Jordan River crossings). His *thoughts* (plans or devices) were *profound* (deep, as mentioned in Isaiah 55:8-9).

### The Wicked Do Not

Psalm 92:6-7

The contrast between the righteous and the wicked is retained throughout the Wisdom Literature of the Bible. That is clearly seen in this text. These verses identify wicked people in four ways: *Senseless people* are brutish or foolish. *Fools* are simpletons or dullards. *Wicked* people are criminals or reprobates. And *evildoers* (from a root word that means “to pant,” maybe in the sense of mad lust) are “workers of iniquity” (*New King James Version*).

These wicked people who refuse to worship God prove that they do not know God or understand him. They might *spring up like grass*, but they will not last. They might look like they would *flourish* (blossom or shine), but they will be *destroyed* (exterminated).

### God Remains

Psalm 92:8

The Lord remains no matter what. He desires that people worship him, but his royalty is not threatened if people choose not to do so. This climactic verse announced, “*But you, Lord, are forever exalted [made high].*” The word *forever* can sometimes mean just “a long time,” but in this passage it means “time unending.” People who worship God come and people who do not worship God go, but God remains. He is consistent within himself; he exists whether people worship him or not.

### The Wicked Perish

Psalm 92:9-11

Nonworshippers do not stand a chance against God. His enemies (foes) will *perish* (be destroyed), and the evildoers *will be scattered* (divided). In contrast, the psalmist acknowledged that God had *exalted his horn like that of a wild ox*. A horn was a symbol of power in the ancient world, so this was a victory phrase. *Fine oils* being *poured out* (mixed) upon this worshipper indicate his victory over his enemy and his blessed opulence.

Verse 11 is Hebrew parallelism on steroids. *Eyes* are parallel with *ears*. *Seen* is parallel with *heard*. *Defeat* is parallel with *roul*. And *adversaries* is parallel with *wicked foes*. Even in his lifetime, the psalmist had witnessed the defeat of nonworshippers.

### The Righteous Flourish

Psalm 92:12-15

In this concluding section the psalmist circled back to the opening idea of the righteous praising God. Because they do, the righteous will *flourish* (bud, blossom, or break out) *like a palm tree*, and they will *grow like a cedar of Lebanon*. Palm trees made the psalmist think of Jericho. Cedars of Lebanon made the psalmist think of the logs that were floated from the north to build the temple, which is where the psalmist went next.

*House of the Lord* and *courts of our God* were phrases connected to the temple (which was at the heart of worship for God’s people). The psalmist pretended that the trees used in the building of the temple would still *bear fruit* and *stay fresh and green*. Finally, the writer used personification by pretending that the trees in the temple would speak, “*The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him.*” If the trees and stones cry out in praise to God (Luke 19:40), should we not do the same? ■

## APPLICATION

### LIFT UP YOUR VOICE AND SING!

BY DAVID FAUST

TV pop star Dick Clark called music “the soundtrack of your life.” Martin Luther said, “Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world.”

I like church music that has a memorable melody, a hummable harmony, and a catchy rhythm, but I don’t care for songs with repetitious words, trite tunes, or questionable doctrines. If a song pulls my stubborn heart closer to the Lord, I don’t care if it’s old or new. If its words are consistent with Scripture and it has a singable tune, I can use it to praise the Lord.

Long ago, a worship leader wrote a song for God’s people to sing on the Sabbath day. The lyrics start with, “It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High” (Psalm 92:1). What is so good about praising God in song?

#### Musical Praise in the Gathered Church

*Congregational singing encourages involvement.* It gives everyone a voice in the service, changing us from sideline spectators and critics to active, involved performers.

*Congregational singing demonstrates unity.* “Corporate worship” happens when members of the body (“corpus”) of Christ voice our collective praise to the Lord, literally harmonizing like a choir. Quarrels over church music create disharmony at the very time when the harmony of God’s people should be most evident.

*Congregational singing confesses faith.* It strengthens my confidence in God when I join other believers to sing a classic hymn like “How Great Thou Art” or a newer song like the one that says, “I will look up for there is none above You; I will bow down to tell You that I need You; . . . I will look back and see that You are faithful; I look ahead believing You are able.”

*Congregational singing expresses emotion.* Even if you love God, life is filled with ups and downs, so the book of Psalms voices a wide range of emotions. Some of these ancient songs speak of courage: “The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?” (Psalm 27:1). Others express despondency and despair: “Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck” (Psalm 69:1). Some cheerfully exhort, “Shout for joy to God, all the earth!” (Psalm 66:1). Others convey profound sorrow and loss: “By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept” (Psalm 137:1). Whatever emotions we bring with us to church, music can express our feelings and remind us that God remains constant despite our changing moods.

#### Musical Praise in the Morning and Evening

Music helps us proclaim God’s “love in the morning” and his “faithfulness at night” (Psalm 92:2). Worship shouldn’t be restricted to weekend church services, but should continue throughout the week. The psalmist reminds us to wake up in the morning praising God for his love and settle into bed at night remembering God’s faithfulness.

In the “morning” of life when you are young and vigorous, “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth” (Ecclesiastes 12:1). When old age moves you toward the “evening” of your life, you can still “flourish in the courts of our God” and “still bear fruit in old age” (Psalm 92:13-14). In every stage of life, God’s praise should be the soundtrack.

**Personal Challenge:** What are your favorite worship songs? On a piece of paper or in your personal journal, list the top 10 (or 20!) songs that help you praise God. Keep this list handy so you can incorporate these songs into your personal devotions. ■

*David Faust serves as senior associate minister with East 91st Street Christian Church in Indianapolis.*

## DISCOVERY

### BY MICAH ODOR

1. When was the last time you were so excited you felt like shouting? A sporting event? Family news? Big win at work? Something else?
2. What's one thing that has been going well in your life over the past year or so? Where are you flourishing?

Ask two people to read aloud **Psalm 92** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then ask a third person to paraphrase the psalm, using as much detail as possible.

3. What does the author love about God?
  - What do you love about God?
4. Verses 6-9 have some harsh things to say about those who don't follow God. We know God wants everyone to know and follow him, so how do you make sense of these verses?
5. Verse 14 says, "They will still bear fruit in old age." What fruit do you want to bear more of as time goes on?
6. What's one thing you know is true about God because of this psalm?
7. In what verse or verses do you see yourself in this psalm?
8. Based on this passage, what's one thing you're doing well?
9. What's one thing you need to improve?
10. How will you obey what you've read today?
11. Based on our study and discussion, complete the sentence: "I will . . ."

**For Next Week:** Read and reflect on **Psalms 63:1-8; 105:1-4** as we continue studying Psalms with a new theme: "Godly Heart." You can also read next week's supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study. ■