

CALL OUT

A STUDY OF THE PSALMS

HOW 'BOUT YOU?

"We have spirit, yes, we do. We have spirit..." Maybe your school doesn't do this cheer. However, I would suspect that you all knew the second half of the second sentence. As we open up our study on the book of *Psalms*, this simple cheer illustrates two important themes that we will see throughout our study.

First, cheerleaders are an important piece of the sporting experience. Outside of cheer leading being a sport in and of itself, sideline cheerleaders create excitement to the game. They don't just chant and dance, they lead the crowd to respond—to *Call Out*. So too with the *Psalms*, we're not meant to just passively read. We're challenged to respond often times with words that echo our hearts that are designed to worship. This is why we called the study of *Psalms* "*Call Out*" because that's exactly what we want you to do.

Second, without knowing the cheer above, you could probably guess the line "how 'bout you." Cheers are poetic, they have a rhyming structure we understand. The *Psalms* are written in a style that we refer to as "biblical poetry." Typically, when we think of poetry, we think of rhyming. Biblical poetry usually doesn't rhyme. Instead, *Psalms* typically rhyme based on parallel *ideas*.

In every case, there is a structure that the reader can understand. We're 2,000 years and thousands of miles removed from the original writing of most of these psalms, so it takes a bit more effort for us to understand them sometimes. However, every psalm is worth our time and effort to study because it's intensely intentional in it's crafting.

On the mountain or in the valley, you're not alone.

JAMES 1:22–25

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵ But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

"Good God almighty, I hope You'll find me, Praising Your name no matter what comes."

Each Week of the study, we want to provide you the opportunity to respond in worship. This section is devoted to sharing a song that relates to the passage.

As we get started, scan the QR code to worship along with *Good God Almighty* by Crowder, reminding us that no matter what we feel or experience, we can worship.



DISCUSSION

Take a minute to introduce yourself, and share what you hope to gain from this study.

ICEBREAKER

1. What command do we see in verse 22?

2. What does James compare the person who hears without doing? (23-24)

3. What is the ultimate result of acting on "God's perfect law"? (25c)

4. In what way is the person who hears without doing like a person who forgets his own face?

OBSERVATION

5. How does this passage challenge you as we prepare to study the *Psalms*?

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

As we mentioned in the Study Notes, you have an ally in your Coach. Each week, we'll use this box as a reminder that your Coach is there to walk with you through what God says to you.

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STUDY NOTES

EMOTIONS OF THE GAME

Check out this minute and a half clip with the QR code.



How many emotions did we see in those 90 seconds? How many rackets were smashed? Sports are emotional. Sometimes we witness unrestrained happiness and excitement. Other times we see extreme anger and frustration—sometimes violently so. Almost every week we hear announcers remark about something they see as “the emotions of the game.”

Sports are often a microcosm of life and the human experience. Emotions provide a great example of this truth. We must all live with a wide range of circumstances and emotional responses. Whether handling your own emotions or someone else’s, we can easily allow feelings to overcome truth rather than allow truth to guide our feelings. The *Psalms* show us how to fully express both.

This semester, as we dive into the *Psalms*, we’ll see every emotion from that clip and more. We’ll see emotions that are raw, intense, and honest. We’ll see that God isn’t afraid of our emotion and allows his followers to express their anger and hopelessness just as freely as their joy and gratitude. *Granting* and *experiencing* that freedom, rather than *judging* or *withholding* it, builds intimacy. That opens the door for God to provide comfort and encouragement.

Some psalms pose honest questions to God in light of life’s circumstances. Like us, the writer has questions. Perhaps more challenging for many of us is reading how, even in life-threatening circumstances, the psalmists express their confidence in Almighty God to provide deliverance or ask for help to gain such confidence.

WHO WROTE AND WHEN?

If you asked most Christians, “Who wrote the *Psalms*?” most would likely say, “David.” They wouldn’t be wrong, but they’d be only *partially* right. Of the 150 different psalms, 102 psalms carry named “credits” for the lyrics. Of these, “only” 73 are attributed to David. The remaining 29 credited psalms were written by six different authors, including one group. That leaves 48 psalms whose names remain unknown to this day. Knowing the range of authors leads us to an answer to the next question: When were they written?

Since we know David’s prolific role, we know that the majority of these songs were written

during reigns of Saul and David (~1,000 BC). However, we also know that Moses wrote one, so they reach back as *early* as ~1300 BC. Further, we know that an unnamed Jew wrote another one (Ps. 126) *after* returning from the exile in Babylon which began in 606 BC and lasted 70 years. That means the authorship of *Psalms* spans about 1,000 years! However, that only explains the individual Psalms.

The various Psalms were compiled into 5 books. Those 5 books were eventually compiled into the *Psalms* as we have it today. That collection probably didn’t reach its final form until after 400 BC. Each psalm was written within a particular context, but its inclusion in the psalter also gives us a glimpse of the time in which it was compiled. Just like we listen to certain music depending on how we’re feeling, so also the worship at the temple focused on different emotions depending on the circumstances of the day.

WHAT’S THE GAME PLAN

In Week 1 of our study, we’ll examine the “gateway” to the rest of the *Psalms* that will challenge us to **be doers of the word, and not hearers only**. After this first Week, we’ll study the *Psalms* in three main parts. In part 1, we’ll study 4 psalms expressing God’s revelation of himself (Weeks 2-4). In part 2, we’ll study how to respond to his self-revelation (Weeks 5-10). In part 3, we’ll close our study with an upbeat tone of celebration and praise (Weeks 11-12).

This study, by its very nature, can only offer a *sample* of each *kind* of psalm. On many occasions, we can only *sample* part of the *psalm*. We’ve done our best to provide the most relevant passage from each selected psalm. Additionally, we’ve worked to inform and inspire worship as a response to what we study. We want to hold up the **mirror** of God’s Word to see ourselves, our circumstances, and our thoughts and feelings so that we can learn to worship through all of it.

If you look closely at the banner images, you’ll see varying emotions. On the right, you’ll see the embrace of a coach. Throughout this study—throughout this semester—you’ll experience the ups and downs of life. None of us know what good and bad may happen over the next several weeks. However, this study is led by a Coach for the reason you see in the image. Your Coach is here for you. They care for you enough to prepare themselves to lead, to encourage, to rebuke (if necessary), and to support. On the mountaintops and in the valleys that may come, you’re not alone.



For an overview on *Psalms*, check out this 9-minute video.