

**WEEK ONE**  
**FAMILY DEVOTIONAL**  
**THE PSALMS OF ASCENT**

**QUOTE:** *Pilgrims are on a journey, but it is not a simple or linear path. Along the way there is a broad range of possibilities and a full range of experiences of life and relationships, resulting in emotional highs and lows. There is, moreover, a sense of forward motion even throughout the ups and downs of life.*

**CONSIDER:** How has God been with your family throughout the ups and downs of life?

**OPENING PRAYER:** Psalm 131 (ERV)

Lord, I don't feel proud. I don't see myself as better than others. I am not thinking about doing great things or reaching impossible goals. No, right now I am calm and quiet, like a child content in its mother's arms. Hope in the Lord. Trust in him now and forever! Amen.

**BREATHING PRAYER**

As a family, consider doing the breathing prayer at the start of your devotional time. Take a deep slow breath in. Allow the air to fill your lungs, then slowly exhale. Repeat. Slow deep breaths allow us to relax and release the stress and tension that can overwhelm our bodies. Breathing prayers allow us to release our stress and worry to God and receive the Spirit of comfort and peace. Our Psalm 131 breathing prayer focuses on four statements: *calm my heart, quiet my soul, hope in the Lord, trust now and always.*

Breathe in, asking God to calm your heart. Breathe out, releasing quiet into your soul.

Breathe in, filling yourself with the hope of the Lord. Breathe out, releasing control by trusting God.

Breathe in: Calm my heart. Breathe out: Quiet my soul.

Breathe in: Hope in the Lord. Breathe out: Trust now and always

Breathe in: Calm. Breathe out: Quiet. Breathe in: Hope. Breathe out: Trust.

Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

Repeat

**THE PSALMS OF ASCENT:**

The Psalms of Ascent are a special collection of fifteen Psalms, 120-134. They were used as a soundtrack for the Jewish people going on spiritual pilgrimage. Families would travel to Jerusalem for the three Jewish festivals: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, and sing these songs on their journey. These songs were used as a preparation for worship.

**THIS WEEK'S JOURNEY:**

This week take some time to explore the Psalms of Ascent. I have selected four, but you are welcome to choose your own. Choose one psalm each day, read it together as a family, and interact with it. You can use the discussion questions that I have provided or consider having each family member draw a picture based on the Psalm and then having them share their picture with the family. Whatever you do, have fun together.

**CLOSING PRAYER:** Psalm 131 (ERV)

*Wrap up your time with your family by saying the Psalm 131 prayer together.*

Lord, I don't feel proud. I don't see myself as better than others. I am not thinking about doing great things or reaching impossible goals. No, right now I am calm and quiet, like a child content in its mother's arms. Hope in the Lord. Trust in him now and forever! Amen.

**PSALM ONE: Psalm 121**

- 1 I look up to the hills, but where will my help really come from?
- 2 My help will come from the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth.
- 3 He will not let you fall. Your Protector will not fall asleep.
- 4 Israel's Protector does not get tired. He never sleeps.
- 5 The Lord is your Protector. The Lord stands by your side, shading and protecting you.
- 6 The sun cannot harm you during the day, and the moon cannot harm you at night.
- 7 The Lord will protect you from every danger. He will protect your soul.
- 8 The Lord will protect you as you come and go, both now and forever!

**Discuss:**

- Who do you go to when you need help? (Other than Jesus)
  
- How do they help and protect you?
  
- This Psalm talks about how God is our Protector. What are some of the ways God protects us, either from this psalm or other ways?
  
- How does knowing God protects us, give us courage to walk with him?

**PSALM TWO: Psalm 127**

- 1 If it is not the Lord who builds a house, the builders are wasting their time.  
If it is not the Lord who watches over the city, the guards are wasting their time.
- 2 It is a waste of time to get up early and stay up late, trying to make a living.  
The Lord provides for those he loves, even while they are sleeping.
- 3 Children are a gift from the Lord, a reward from a mother's womb.
- 4 A young man's sons are like the arrows in a soldier's hand.
- 5 The man who fills his quiver with sons will be very blessed.  
He will never be defeated when he opposes his enemy at the city gates.

**Discuss:**

- How do you like to waste time?
  
- What do you think this Psalm means by wasting time?
  
- How does God provide for us even when we are sleeping?
  
- What does this psalm say about the gift of children?
  
- Since we are God's children, how does that give us courage to walk with him?

**PSALM THREE: Psalm 128**

1 Great blessings belong to those who fear and respect the Lord and live the way he wants.

2 You will get what you work for. You will enjoy the Lord's blessings, and all will go well for you.

3 At home, your wife will have many children, like a vine full of grapes.

The children around your table will be like an orchard full of olive trees.

4 Yes, the Lord will really bless those who respect him.

5 May the Lord bless you from Mount Zion.

May you enjoy the blessings of Jerusalem all your life.

6 And may you live to see your grandchildren.

Let Israel always enjoy peace!

**Discuss:**

- What are some of the blessing God has given your family?
- Who are the people that God gives blessings to?
- What is the blessing that God give people who respect him?
- How does receiving God's blessing give us courage to walk with Him?

**PSALM FOUR: Psalm 133**

1 Oh, how wonderful, how pleasing it is when God's people all come together as one!

2 It is like the sweet-smelling oil that is poured over the high priest's head, that runs down his beard flowing over his robes.

3 It is like a gentle rain from Mount Hermon falling on Mount Zion.

It is there that the Lord has promised his blessing of eternal life.

**Discuss:**

- How do you feel when everyone in your family is getting along?
- How do you feel when people are upset with each other?
- This psalm has some interesting descriptions of people getting along, what are they?
- Why do you think God wants us to get along with others?
- How does getting along with others give us courage to walk with God?