

**WEEK FIVE**  
**DAILY DEVOTIONAL**  
**Poetic Expression**

**OVERVIEW:**

Stephen Shoemaker says, “Psalm 131 is a tender and intimate song. It is simple but not simplistic. It displays childlike trust, but it is not childish. It is not sung this side of trouble; it has walked through it. It is a song of mature faith. It may even be called a song for midlife crisis. This psalm of trust has confronted the crises of the adult life.”<sup>1</sup>

**EXPLORATION OF TRANSLATIONS:**

This week we are going to explore the poetic expression of Psalm 131. Each day we will examine a new version of this Psalm to gain new insights and deeper revelations. As we read each variation, we will compare it to our regular translation, the Christian Standard Bible, and see how these texts differ and enhance our understanding of this Psalm.

- Day One: The Complete Jewish Bible
- Day Two: The Voice
- Day Three: The Message
- Day Four: The Expanded
- Day Five: Dave’s Version

**IMAGINATION AND MUSIC:**

To engulf yourself in the experience you will be ~~provided~~provide a scenario where you can imagine the psalm is being read. Each day we will also highlight a different song from our soundtrack that best fits the feel of the translation.

**SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: IDEAPHORIA**

This week we will explore a practice called Ideaphoria, an exercise where we break down each word in a selected passage by brainstorming synonyms, listing thoughts and ideas which come to your mind as you examine each word in that passage. As you brainstorm, write down any word, thoughts, or ideas no matter how simple, strange, or mundane. Once you have listed your thoughts over a word, move onto the next. Once your brainstorming session is complete, review your lists. Highlight or circle the words that stand out to you. Finally, rewrite the statement in your own words.

For this exercise Psalm 131 has been divided into five segments. Each day, as part of your daily devotional, break down the portion on the psalm.

- Day 1:** Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty.
- Day 2:** I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me.
- Day 3:** Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul
- Day 4:** Like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child.
- Day 5:** Israel, put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever.

**ARTISTIC EXPRESSION**

After examining the poem in various forms throughout the week, rewrite Psalm 131 in your own words. Allow the Spirit to guide you as you consider your heart and emotions, and what God is teaching you through the text. Your poem does not need to fit any literary structure or even rhyme. At our final gathering you will present our poem to the group and hear how God is speaking to us as individuals and as a community on this pilgrimage together.

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<sup>1</sup> Shoemaker, H. Stephen. Psalm 131

**DAY 1: THE COMPLETE JEWISH BIBLE****BREATHE:** Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

Take a few minutes and practice our breathing prayer as you come into God's presence. Calm your heart. Quiet your soul. Hope in the Lord. Trust now and always. Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me. Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen

**MUSIC:** Listen to Psalm 131 chant by John Michael Talbot

**IDEAPHORIA:** Break down the first line from Psalm 131, then rewrite that line in your own words. Use the worksheet in the next page.

- **Day One:** Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty.
- **Your version:**

**INTERACT:** Read Psalm 131 from the *Complete Jewish Bible*<sup>2</sup> and highlight phrases that stand out to you. Compare it to the version you read earlier.

***Complete Jewish Bible***

*Adonai*, my heart isn't proud.  
 I don't set my sight too high,  
 I don't take part in great affairs  
 or in wonders far beyond me.  
<sup>2</sup> No, I keep myself calm and quiet,  
 like a little child on its mother's lap —  
 I keep myself like a little child.  
<sup>3</sup> Isra'el, put your hope in *Adonai*  
 from now on and forever!

**CONSIDER:**

- What words or phrases stand out to you in this translation?
- Why are those phrases significant?
- How do they enhance your connection to this psalm?

**REREAD:** Psalm 131 from the *Complete Jewish Bible*.**MUSIC:** Listen to Psalm 131 (Come to the Quiet) by John Michael Talbot.

**MEDITATE:** Imagine you are on a spiritual pilgrimage during Old Testament times, singing this song as you journey towards the temple. What are the sights and sounds around you? What is the atmosphere of worship like? How does your heart move as you join with your traveling community?

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<sup>2</sup> You can learn more about the Complete Jewish Bible at [biblegateway.com/versions/Complete-Jewish-Bible-CJB/#vinfo](http://biblegateway.com/versions/Complete-Jewish-Bible-CJB/#vinfo)

**JOURNAL:** How has Psalm 131 spoken to you today? What new insights or perspectives have you gleaned from today's exploration?

**REST:** "Put your hope in *Adonai*"

**BREATHE:** Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

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**IDEAPHORIA: DAY ONE:**

LORD, MY HEART IS NOT PROUD;

MY EYES ARE NOT HAUGHTY.

**REWRITE:** Put this portion of Psalm 131 in your own words.

**DAY TWO: THE VOICE****BREATHE:** Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

Take a few minutes and practice our breathing prayer as you come into God's presence. Calm your heart. Quiet your soul. Hope in the Lord. Trust now and always. Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me. Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen

**MUSIC:** Listen to Psalm 131 chant by John Michael Talbot

**IDEAPHORIA:** Break down the second line from Psalm 131, then rewrite that line in your own words. Use the worksheet in the next page.

- **Day 2:** I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me.
- **Your version:**

**INTERACT:** Read Psalm 131 from *The Voice*<sup>3</sup> translation and highlight phrases that stand out to you. Compare it to the version you read earlier.

***The Voice***

O Eternal One, my heart is not occupied with proud thoughts.

my eyes do not look down *on others*.

I don't *even begin to* get involved in matters too big, *matters of faith, state, business,* or the many things that defy my ability *to understand them*.

<sup>2</sup> *Of one thing I am certain:* my soul has become calm, quiet, *and contented in You*.

Like a weaned child resting upon his mother, *I am quiet*.

My soul is like this weaned child.

<sup>3</sup> O Israel, stake your trust *completely* in the Eternal—  
from this very moment and into the vast future.

**CONSIDER:**

- What words or phrases stand out to you in this translation?
- Why are those phrases significant?
- How do they enhance your connection to this psalm?

**REREAD:** Psalm 131 from *The Voice*.**MUSIC:** Listen to *Waterdeep's* Psalm 131.

**MEDITATE:** Imagine you are at a large modern worship gathering, and people are all around you are raising their hands and singing Psalm 131. What are the sights and sounds around you? How are you joining in? What is the atmosphere of worship like? How are you participating?

<sup>3</sup> You can learn more about the Voice Translation at [biblegateway.com/versions/The-Voice-Bible/](http://biblegateway.com/versions/The-Voice-Bible/)

**JOURNAL:** How has Psalm 131 spoken to you today? What new insights or perspectives have you gleaned from today's exploration?

**REST:** "Stake your trust *completely* in the Eternal."

**BREATHE:** Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

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**IDEAPHORIA: DAY TWO:**

I DO NOT GET INVOLVED WITH THINGS

TOO GREAT OR TOO WONDROUS FOR ME.

**REWRITE:** Put this portion of Psalm 131 in your own words.

**DAY THREE: THE MESSAGE****BREATHE:** Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

Take a few minutes and practice our breathing prayer as you come into God's presence. Calm your heart. Quiet your soul. Hope in the Lord. Trust now and always. Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me. Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen

**MUSIC:** Listen to Psalm 131 chant by John Michael Talbot

**IDEAPHORIA:** Break down the third line from Psalm 131, then rewrite that line in your own words. Use the worksheet in the next page.

- **Day 3:** Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul
- **Your version:**

**INTERACT:** Read Psalm 131 from *The Message*<sup>4</sup> translation and highlight phrases that stand out to you. Compare it to the version you read earlier.

***The Message***

God, I'm not trying to rule the roost,  
 I don't want to be king of the mountain.  
 I haven't meddled where I have no business  
 or fantasized grandiose plans.  
<sup>2</sup>I've kept my feet on the ground,  
 I've cultivated a quiet heart.  
 Like a baby content in its mother's arms,  
 my soul is a baby content.  
<sup>3</sup>Wait, Israel, for God. Wait with hope.  
 Hope now; hope always!

**CONSIDER:**

- What words or phrases stand out to you in this translation?
- Why are those phrases significant?
- How do they enhance your connection to this psalm?

**REREAD:** Psalm 131 from *The Message*

**MEDITATE:** Imagine you are in a coffee shop, at a poetry reading, listening to someone performing a dramatic reading of *The Message's* Psalm 131. What words or phrases does the reader emphasize with their voice? What message are they trying to convey? What are the sights and sounds around you? How are you joining in? How is your heart moved by the reading?

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<sup>4</sup> You can learn more about *The Message* at [www.biblegateway.com/versions/Message-MSG-Bible/#vinfo](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Message-MSG-Bible/#vinfo)

**MUSIC:** Listen to *Sarah Sparks* Psalm 131

**JOURNAL:** How has Psalm 131 spoken to you today? What new insights or perspectives have you gleaned from today's exploration?

**REST:** "Wait, Israel, for God. Wait with hope. Hope now; hope always!"

**BREATHE:** Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

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**IDEAPHORIA: DAY THREE**

INSTEAD, I HAVE CALMED AND

QUIETED MY SOUL

**REWRITE:** Put this portion of Psalm 131 in your own words.

**DAY FOUR: THE EXPANDED****BREATHE:** Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

Take a few minutes and practice our breathing prayer as you come into God's presence. Calm your heart. Quiet your soul. Hope in the Lord. Trust now and always. Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me. Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen

**MUSIC:** Listen to Psalm 131 chant by John Michael Talbot

**IDEAPHORIA:** Break down the fourth line from Psalm 131, then rewrite that line in your own words. Use the worksheet in the next page.

- **Day 4:** Like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child.
- **Your version:**

**INTERACT:** Read Psalm 131 from *The Expanded*<sup>5</sup> translation and highlight phrases that stand out to you. Compare it to the version you read earlier.

**Expanded**

Lord, my heart is not proud;

·I don't look down on others [<sup>L</sup>my eyes are not haughty/lifted up].

I don't ·do [consider doing] great things,

and I ·can't do [don't consider doing] ·miracles [wonderful acts].

<sup>2</sup> But I ·am calm and quiet [<sup>L</sup>have stilled and quieted my soul]

like a ·baby [<sup>L</sup>weaned child] with its mother,

like a ·baby [<sup>L</sup>weaned child] with its mother [<sup>C</sup>a relationship with God is like that of a mother with her weaned child resting comfortably in her arms].

<sup>3</sup> People of Israel, put your hope in the Lord now and forever.

**CONSIDER:**

- What words or phrases stand out to you in this translation?
- Why are those phrases significant?
- How do they enhance your connection to this psalm?

**REREAD:** Psalm 131 from the Expanded translation.

**MEDITATE:** Imagine you are in a classroom hearing a professor teach on this psalm, adding insights and anecdotes to convey the purpose and meaning of Psalm 131. What insights does the teacher provide to expand your understanding? What are the sights and sounds around you? How are those in the class responding to the teaching? How are you joining in?

<sup>5</sup> You can learn more about *The Message* at [www.biblegateway.com/versions/Expanded-Bible-EXB/#info](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Expanded-Bible-EXB/#info)



**JOURNAL:** How has Psalm 131 spoken to you today? What new insights or perspectives have you gleaned from today's exploration?

**MUSIC:** Listen to *The Orchardists* Psalm 131

**REST:** "Put your hope in the Lord now and forever."

**BREATHE:** Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

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**IDEAPHORIA: DAY FOUR**

LIKE A WEANED CHILD WITH ITS MOTHER;

MY SOUL IS LIKE A WEANED CHILD.

**REWRITE:** Put this portion of Psalm 131 in your own words.

**DAY FIVE: DAVE'S VERSION****BREATHE:** Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

Take a few minutes and practice our breathing prayer as you come into God's presence. Calm your heart. Quiet your soul. Hope in the Lord. Trust now and always. Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me. Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen

**MUSIC:** Listen to Psalm 131 chant by John Michael Talbot

**IDEAPHORIA:** Break down the final line from Psalm 131, then rewrite that line in your own words. Use the worksheet in the next page.

- **Day 5:** Israel, put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever.
- **Your version:**

**INTERACT:** Read Dave's version of Psalm 131 and highlight phrases that stand out to you. Compare it to the version you read earlier.

**Psalm 131, Dave version**

Restless heart, don't be arrogant.  
 Don't set your sights on things beyond you,  
 Things beyond your control  
 Weary soul, don't get caught up in selfish ambition,  
 the rat race, striving for upward mobility,  
 Trying to be bigger than you are.  
 What you should do is calm your heart,  
 Be calm, and quiet your soul, rest.  
 Like a baby sleeping on their parent's lap, be at peace.  
 Place your hope firmly on God, your father.  
 Trust in Him today, tomorrow, and for all eternity.

**CONSIDER:**

- What words or phrases stand out to you in this translation?
- Why are those phrases significant?
- How do they enhance your connection to this psalm?

**REREAD:** Psalm 131 from the Expanded translation.

**LISTEN:** Choose one or two of our Psalm 131 songs. Listen for how the voice of the songwriter interacts with the voice of the Psalmist.

**CONSIDER:** How do these voices blend to convey meaning to the songwriter and the listener?

**JOURNAL:** Write your own version on Psalm 131. Write it as a prayer to God, a song of worship and an expression of your heart. Allow your voice to blend with the Psalmist and create something new and beautiful. Take your time, come back to it, make changes.

**REST:** “Place your hope firmly on God, your father. Trust in Him today, tomorrow, and for all eternity.”

**BREATHE:** Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

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**IDEAPHORIA: DAY FIVE**

ISRAEL, PUT YOUR HOPE IN THE LORD,

BOTH NOW AND FOREVER.

**REWRITE:** Put this portion of Psalm 131 in your own words.

**WEEK FIVE  
ARTISTIC EXPRESSION**

**POETIC FREEDOM**

Write Psalm 131 in your own words, it could be a poem, a song, a prayer, or a picture. Allow the Spirit to guide you as you consider your heart and emotions, and what God is teaching you through the text. It does not need to fit any literary structure or even rhyme. In the advice of Mr. Keating from Dead Poets Society, “just don’t let it be ordinary.” Return to it a few times and make any changes God places on your heart.

You will have time to share your poem with your group as part of your final gathering. Consider e-mailing Dave Reiss what God has created with in you, [dave@sppcsa.com](mailto:dave@sppcsa.com).