

WEEK FIVE
FAMILY DEVOTIONAL
Poetic Expression

OVERVIEW:

This week we are going to explore the Psalm 131 in a different way, with the goal of your family writing your own version of this Psalm. Each day you will examine a new version of this Psalm to gain new insights and deeper revelations and see how they enhance our understanding of our Psalm. We will do an exercise where we break down each word in a selected passage by brainstorming synonyms and writing the line in your own words. Finally, your family will rewrite Psalm 131 in your own words. Your poem does not need to fit any literary structure or even rhyme.

Here are the various translations that we will be looking at this week.

Easy-to-Read Version¹

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 after nursing, content in its mother's arms. Israel, trust in the Lord. Trust in him now and forever!

Complete Jewish Bible²

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. No, I keep myself calm and quiet, like a little child on its mother's lap — I keep myself like a little child. Isra'el, put your hope in Adonai from now on and forever!

The Voice³

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. 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. O Israel, stake your trust completely in the Eternal— from this very moment and into the vast future.

Expanded⁴

Lord, my heart is not proud; I don't look down on others [^lmy 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]. But I ·am calm and quiet [^lhave stilled and quieted my soul] like a ·baby [^lweaned child] with its mother, like a ·baby [^lweaned child] with its mother [^ca relationship with God is like that of a mother with her weaned child resting comfortably in her arms]. People of Israel, put your hope in the Lord now and forever.

The Message⁵

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. 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. Wait, Israel, for God. Wait with hope. Hope now; hope always!

¹ You can learn more about the Easy-to-Read Version at biblegateway.com/versions/Easy-to-Read-Version-ERV-Bible/#vinfo

² You can learn more about the Complete Jewish Bible at biblegateway.com/versions/Complete-Jewish-Bible-CJB/#vinfo

³ You can learn more about the Voice Translation at biblegateway.com/versions/The-Voice-Bible

⁴ You can learn more about *The Message* at www.biblegateway.com/versions/Expanded-Bible-EXB/#vinfo

⁵ You can learn more about *The Message* at www.biblegateway.com/versions/Message-MSG-Bible/#vinfo

DAY ONE: Complete Jewish Bible**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 after nursing, content in its mother's arms. Trust in the Lord. Trust in him now and forever! Amen!

IMAGINE: Your family is on a spiritual pilgrimage during Old Testament times, singing this song as you journey towards the temple. How does singing this song make you feel? What is the atmosphere of worship like? How does your heart move as you travel in community?

INTERACT: Read Psalm 131 from the *Complete Jewish Bible* and highlight phrases that stand out to you as 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. No, I keep myself calm and quiet, like a little child on its mother's lap — I keep myself like a little child. Isra'el, put your hope in Adonai from now on and forever!

DISCUSS: 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?

VERSE 1: Read these three versions of verse 1, then work together as a family and write verse one in your own words.

- **(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.
- **(CJB)** 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.
- **(MSG)** 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.
- **Your Family version:**

CLOSING 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 after nursing, content in its mother's arms. Trust in the Lord. Trust in him now and forever! Amen!

DAY TWO: The Voice**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 after nursing, content in its mother's arms. Trust in the Lord. Trust in him now and forever! Amen!

IMAGINE: You are at a coffee shop where someone is doing a poetry reading. Do a dramatic reading of *The Voice* version of Psalm 131. What words or phrases are emphasized with their voice? How is your heart moved by the reading?

INTERACT: Read Psalm 131 from *The Voice* translation and highlight phrases that stand out to you as 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. 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. O Israel, stake your trust completely in the Eternal— from this very moment and into the vast future.

DISCUSS: 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?

VERSE 2: Read these three versions of verse 1, then work together as a family and write verse one in your own words.

- **(ERV)** No, right now I am calm and quiet, like a child after nursing, content in its mother's arms.
- **(VOICE)** 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.
- **(MSG)** 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.
- **Your Family version:**

CLOSING 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 after nursing, content in its mother's arms. Trust in the Lord. Trust in him now and forever! Amen!

DAY THREE: EXPANDED**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 after nursing, content in its mother's arms. Trust in the Lord. Trust in him now and forever! Amen!

IMAGINE: You are in a classroom hearing a lecture on this psalm. The teacher shares insights and anecdotes to convey the purpose and meaning of Psalm 131. What insights does the teacher provide to expand your understanding? How are those in the class responding to the teaching? What are you learning?

INTERACT: Read Psalm 131 from *The Expanded* 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 [^Lmy 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]. But I ·am calm and quiet [^Lhave stilled and quieted my soul] like a ·baby [^Lweaned child] with its mother, like a ·baby [^Lweaned child] with its mother [^Ca relationship with God is like that of a mother with her weaned child resting comfortably in her arms]. People of Israel, put your hope in the Lord now and forever.

DISCUSS: 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?

VERSE 3: Read these three versions of verse 3, then work together as a family and write verse one in your own words.

- **(ERV)** Israel, trust in the Lord. Trust in him now and forever! Amen!
- **(EXP)** People of Israel, put your hope in the Lord now and forever.
(MSG) Wait, Israel, for God. Wait with hope. Hope now; hope always!
- **Your Family version:**

CLOSING 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 after nursing, content in its mother's arms. Trust in the Lord. Trust in him now and forever! Amen!

DAY FOUR: The Message**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 after nursing, content in its mother's arms. Trust in the Lord. Trust in him now and forever! Amen!

IMAGINE: You are at church and the pastor is going to preach on this sermon. What area of this psalm do you think they will highlight? What type of stories or jokes will they tell to accentuate their point? What will their takeaway be for the congregation?

INTERACT: Read Psalm 131 from *The Message* 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. 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. Wait, Israel, for God. Wait with hope. Hope now; hope always!

DISCUSS: 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?

CREATE YOUR OWN: Read the verses that your family wrote together. Put it into one complete poem. Edit it, add to it, take things out, change and expand. Come to a place where this Psalm represents your family's journey together.

- **Your Family version:**

CLOSING 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 after nursing, content in its mother's arms. Trust in the Lord. Trust in him now and forever! Amen!

SHARE: Consider sharing your poem with others. Post it on social media. Email it to others.