



KRISTIN NAVE

20-Minute

BIBLE STUDIES

— *in* —

Psalms





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KRISTIN NAVE



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20-Minute Bible Studies in Psalms
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Dear Friend,

I'm really glad you're here, no matter what brought you, or how full your life feels right now. Like many of you, I've walked through more busy seasons than I can count, when I've longed to be in the Bible more but felt stretched thin. Often that longing comes from the gentle nudge of the Holy Spirit, but sometimes it's also mixed with a heavy sense of guilt. That familiar feeling of not quite measuring up . . . again.

Recently, a conversation with a friend helped me to see this tension more clearly. She's a business executive, a wife, and a mom of two, and she said to me, "I love that you have time to study the Bible, but what encouragement would you give someone like me, who only has about twenty minutes?"

Her question stuck with me. It echoed the messages I've received from so many women asking the same thing: What do I do with the small amount of time I have? Does it even count?

Some seasons invite us to linger long in Scripture. Others feel nonstop—where "busy" isn't just a phase but a constant companion, and time in the Word is the first thing to slide. Wherever you find yourself today, I want to encourage you with Jesus' words: "Take heart" (John 16:33).

Take heart, because God's Word is powerful. One verse can change a life. Remember Jonah's eight-word sermon (in our English translations) that led an entire city—Nineveh—to repentance? Take heart, because God multiplied a small lunch of fish and loaves into a feast. And take heart, because He is still the same God, able to take our seemingly meager twenty minutes and multiply them into something far richer than we expect.

Is it true that more time in Scripture often brings deeper understanding? Yes. Is it also true that some of us may need to gently and honestly examine what's driving our busyness? Also yes.

But for now, let's come just as we are. Let's trust God's power and grace, believing He is ready and willing to meet us with the life-giving truth of His Word.

As we dive into the Psalms together, we can rejoice that we are growing more like our Savior. Jesus Himself was deeply shaped by the Psalms—quoting them, praying them, and living them out (more on that soon).

I'd love for you to join me in this prayer:

Lord, take my twenty minutes. Open my eyes, that I may see wonderful things in Your law (Psalm 119:18).

In His love,
Kristin





How to Use This Study

This study is an invitation—not to do more, but to meet God right where you are.

We will journey through forty selected psalms, eight from each of the five books within Psalms. Each psalm includes commentary along with reflection and study questions to help guide your time. One of the beautiful gifts of the Psalms is that while they form one unified book with shared themes, each psalm also stands on its own, telling a unique story and carrying its own message.

I learned this firsthand years ago when I began a simple weekend practice—choosing one psalm each weekend to read and sit with. That rhythm taught me something freeing: You don’t have to study the Psalms in perfect order or with perfect consistency for them to be deeply meaningful. Because of this, you can pick this study up whenever you’re able—whether that’s daily, weekly, or sporadically—and never feel behind or like you have to “catch up.”

Each study is designed to take about twenty minutes, give or take. Some days you may linger longer; other days you may move more quickly. Both are okay. This study was written with a deep confidence in a God who can take whatever time we bring Him and use it to teach, shape, and transform us through His Word.

To help you get the most out of your time, here's what I'd recommend:

- Begin with prayer, asking God to meet you where you are.
- Read the psalm at least once (more if you can).
- Read through the commentary.
- Reflect on and answer the questions—either quietly in your heart or in a journal.
- Consider how what you've read might shape the way you live, pray, or trust God today.

You'll notice there aren't specific "group questions" labeled in this study. That was intentional. Every group—and every season—looks different. My hope is that you'll feel the freedom to adapt the questions in a way that best serves the women you're walking alongside, should you decide to complete the study with others.

And most of all, whether you have twenty focused minutes or twenty imperfect ones, you are invited to open the Psalms and expect that God is ready to meet you there.





The Story of the Bible . . . Leading Us to the Psalms

I was years into my Bible study journey before I learned the beauty of understanding the Bible as one unified story. Ever since then, I've found it incredibly helpful to pause and review the bigger picture before diving into any individual book. When we focus on one book at a time, it's easy to forget that it's part of a much larger story—one that gives deeper meaning to its themes and purpose.

In the beginning, God created the world and everything in it, dwelling in perfect relationship with humanity. When Adam and Eve sinned, that relationship was broken, and sin entered the world. Yet even then, God had a plan—to redeem His people and restore what was lost. Throughout the Old Testament, God revealed this plan through a series of covenants—relational promises that showed His commitment to bringing His people back to Himself.

God preserved Noah and his family through the flood and promised never again to destroy the earth in that way. He later promised Abraham that through his family line, God's people would be established and all nations would be blessed. After generations of slavery in Egypt, God delivered His people through Moses, giving them His law and inviting them into covenant

faithfulness. Though God remained faithful, the people continually struggled to trust and obey Him.

Eventually, the people demanded a king. God established the monarchy, and through King David, He made another promise: that a Messiah would come from David's line—an eternal and perfect ruler (Psalm 89:3–4). Yet despite God's faithfulness and promises, the people continued to wander, disobey, and worship other gods. They lived in a constant tension between God's promises and their present reality—longing for restoration, deliverance, and the coming King.

It is within *this* story—the waiting, the longing, the hope—that the Psalms were written.





Overview of the Psalms

I know we're eager to dive directly into the Psalms. But before we do, I want us to slow down once more and consider a focused overview of this book. We now know where the Psalms fit in the larger biblical narrative, but understanding the book itself will help us read and interpret it with greater clarity and depth.

The Psalms are a collection of poems, prayers, and songs—expressions of both lament and praise—written in response to God's promises and the longing for the Messiah He had promised. They give voice to a people waiting, lamenting, rejoicing, repenting, and hoping, all while seeking to walk in covenant faithfulness.

There are 150 psalms written by a variety of authors. King David is the most prolific, with 73 psalms attributed to him. Others include Asaph, a musician (12); the Sons of Korah (11); King Solomon (2); and Moses (1). The remaining psalms are attributed to other worship leaders or remain anonymous.

The book of Psalms is arranged into five major sections (often called "books"), with Books 1 and 2 serving as an introduction. We will be studying eight psalms within each book so we get an overview of the book as a whole:

- Book One (Psalms 1–41) emphasizes praising God and trusting Him in covenant faithfulness.
- Book Two (Psalms 42–72) centers on God’s rule and reign, pointing toward the Messianic Kingdom.
- Book Three (Psalms 73–89) wrestles deeply with faith, doubt, and the tension of waiting for God’s promises to be fulfilled.
- Book Four (Psalms 90–106) opens with Moses’ only psalm and highlights a plea for mercy, contrasting God’s faithfulness with His people’s unfaithfulness.
- Book Five (Psalms 107–150) moves toward rejoicing and restoration, ending with an overwhelming focus on God’s reign overall.

The Psalms are both wisdom and poetic literature. They offer practical, God-centered wisdom, while also expressing truth through rich poetry. As we read, we should expect to encounter things such as metaphors, imagery, repetition, and even hyperbole—poetic tools used to describe very real experiences and historical moments.

On a deeply personal level, the Psalms are an intimate masterpiece. They give voice to nearly every human emotion and experience and often feel like reading the authors’ personal journals—raw, honest glimpses into their souls. The Psalms move freely between the depths of lament and grief and the heights of praise and delight.

What a gift that we get to step into this book together!

*The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express
that same delight in God which made David dance.*

—C. S. LEWIS





Jesus and the Psalms

One of the most beautiful aspects about the Psalms is that Jesus Himself loved and leaned on them. The Psalms were not just ancient songs to Him—they shaped His prayers, His teaching, and even His final moments on the cross.

We know this not only because all Scripture is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16), but also because of how deeply the Psalms are woven into the New Testament. Out of the New Testament's 260 chapters, there are roughly one hundred direct quotations from the Psalms and more than four hundred references or allusions to them. Even more striking, the Psalms were the Old Testament book Jesus quoted most often during His earthly ministry.

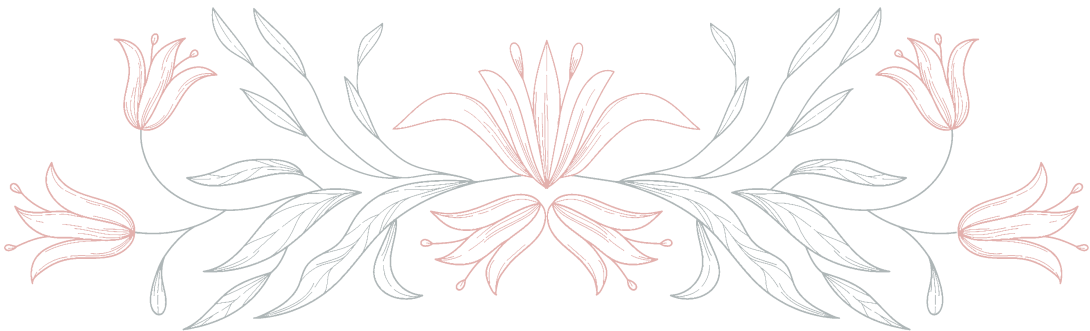
In other words, to know the Psalms is to better know the heart and mind of Jesus.

Because of Jesus' love for the Psalms, each study includes a section called *Connect to the Heart of Jesus*. This section is designed to help us trace how a particular psalm points forward to Christ, echoed in the New Testament, or lived out in Jesus' own life and words. It's where we begin to see how the Psalms don't stand alone, but fit beautifully into the bigger story of Scripture.

As we study, we'll see that Jesus used the Psalms to reveal His identity as the Messiah. He used them in moments of teaching and even in apologetics. He used them to affirm the authority and power of God's Word. He turned to the Psalms to face opposition and make sense of difficult circumstances. And perhaps most tenderly, Jesus used the Psalms for both comfort and lament—giving vocabulary to grief and suffering.

This means that when we read the Psalms, we aren't just reading ancient poetry—we are stepping into the prayer life, theology, and emotional expression of our Savior.

We could argue, then, that to know and live in the Psalms is to know and live more deeply connected to Jesus—and to better understand the Bible as one unified, redemptive story centered on Him.





STUDY 1

The Happy One

Psalm 1

KEY VERSE

*Blessed is the one . . . whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.*

(VERSES 1–2)

Pause . . .
pray . . . and ask
God for help in
understanding the
passage.



How often do we rush past beginnings, only to discover later that they carried the very theme of all God was doing? (Raising my hand here!) Psalms 1 and 2 are the ideal starting point for our study—not simply because they open the book, but because they frame the overarching themes that echo throughout the rest of the collection of psalms. Many believe that these two psalms lay the foundation for the message and purpose of the Psalms as a whole—and even reflect the heart of God’s Word itself. So, in this sense, these first two psalms do more than sing “Welcome!” to us

as we begin our journey into the Psalms. They embody the beauty of the entirety of God's Word and His plan for redemption. My hope is that as we start with Psalms 1 and 2, we'll discover—not rush past—the place where God wants to meet us most.



Open your Bible and read Psalm 1 at least once.

1. What does this psalm tell you about God: His character, His actions, and what He values?
2. What doesn't the "blessed" one do?
3. What does the "blessed" one do?

Think for a moment about your deepest heart's desire.

If we were sitting at a coffee shop, I bet you'd share dreams about your career or love interests, or maybe about finding security, or being free to travel. Maybe your desires are for family, friendships, or to grow closer to God.

Might you also share a desire to be happy?

Sometimes we hesitate to say that out loud because “happy” feels temporary or even shallow compared to words like *joy*. Our culture often ties happiness to things that don't satisfy our souls.

But our psalm of study today tells a different story. The word *blessed* in Psalm 1 is from the Hebrew word אֶשֶׁר (*esher*),¹ which means blessedness, or happiness. The kind of happiness inspired by the Spirit. This is not the kind of fleeting happiness that might come from the surprise of finding a ten-dollar bill in a random spot (though that is pretty great), or even from an epic vacation with family or friends (which is a lot better than ten dollars, of course).

As you read and observed in your opening questions, this blessedness—happiness—comes from turning away from sin and delighting in God's law. And what does that true, godly happiness look like? Well, what the unnamed author of our first psalm doesn't say about blessedness gives us a clue that it is NOT void of difficulty, feelings of sadness, or grief. As we will learn, biblical happiness and sadness are often traveling companions. And let's remember from our introduction to the psalms' historical context: *Times were rough*. The author describes a deep-rooted happiness, giving a visual image of a flourishing tree that is rooted deep in God's Word, nourished and fruitful.

¹ Strong's Hebrew: 835. אֶשֶׁר (*esher*): blessedness, happiness. (as translated in the NIV, ESV, KJV, NKJV).

How beautiful that we begin Psalms with an invitation into the **pursuit of blessedness**.

Could it be that we need to reorient our definition of true happiness, or maybe even more tenderly, have our hope for happiness reignited and rebuilt upon God's truth rather than our circumstances? Let's answer some more questions.

What Does the Scripture Mean?

1. List the three verbs in verse 1 used to describe the blessed person.

*

*

*

2. What do you suppose is the **significance** or **meaning** of this progression?

3. What does it mean to “delight” in and “meditate” on God's Word (verse 2)? How is this different from simply reading or obeying?

4. What does it mean when it says that the blessed—happy—one will yield “its fruit in season” (verse 3)?
5. What makes Psalm 1 such a *significant foundational psalm* and passage for the entire Bible?



Psalm 1 seems to neatly package life into two paths: the blessed one and the wicked one. But life doesn't always feel that simple, does it? Most of us (hopefully) wouldn't place ourselves squarely on the wicked path headed for destruction. But even the blessed path can feel pretty bumpy. We take detours and experience stalls, and our progress is often indirect, maybe even “curvy.”

When the psalmist says that the blessed person delights “in the law of the LORD,” and “meditates on [it] day and night” (verse 2), I can't help but wonder how many of us have read that and questioned how in the world that's even possible. It's almost ironic in this study as we're here, giving God about twenty minutes, and that already feels challenging. Among busy home lives, careers,

school, parenting exhaustion, and everything else, reading “day and night” can land us right back where we started: *That’s impossible. I’ll never get there. I’ll never live a blessed life.*

But then the New Testament enters the conversation—with Jesus.

Jesus steps into the reality that no one has perfectly lived out Psalm 1. Isaiah 53:6 puts words to what we already know to be true: “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way.” And then Isaiah gives us the answer to this problem: “And the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Jesus took on the weight of our failure—our inability to perfectly delight in and obey God’s Word—when our sin was laid on Him at the cross.

But Jesus doesn’t just forgive us. **He also enables us to live the blessed life.** In John 15, Jesus shows us that the path of the blessed one is actually possible—not through perfection, but through abiding.

*“I am the vine; you are the branches . . .
apart from me you can do nothing.”*

(VERSE 5)

Psalm 1 uses the image of a tree planted by water (the source), while Jesus uses a vine, but it’s the same idea. He is the source. We’re not called to generate fruit on our own—**we’re called to stay connected.** And it’s from that connection, even in the middle of full schedules and tired lives, that we slowly grow into people who delight in God’s Word and carry it with us throughout the day. True happiness is found, not in perfectly walking the path, but in being rooted in Him—**the One who sustains us, grows us, and calls us blessed** as we abide in Christ.

So again, what a place to begin our psalms journey.

Apply & Take Action

1. In what ways—big or small—am I walking, standing, or sitting in patterns that align me with attitudes or influences opposed to God?
2. *Do I truly delight in God's Word* or has it become neglected or simply a habit? What might be barriers in my life or heart that get in the way of delight?
3. Do I see myself as a “tree planted by streams of water” (Psalm 1:3)? Why or why not? *What might be draining my spiritual life*, or what's been keeping me rooted?

4. Who can I encourage this week in their pursuit of true happiness?

Pray and ask God to help you apply His truth to your life.



1. Psalm 1 and John 15 are two of **more than one hundred botanical metaphors** in the Bible.
2. Psalm 1 is unique and mimics proverbs—wisdom sayings—rather than speaking directly to God (like many other psalms).
3. **Chaff (verse 4)** is the light, papery husk surrounding grain before threshing. Farmers toss the threshed grain in the air while letting the light chaff blow away and the heavier, more useful grain fall to the ground. There are several other places in Scripture where chaff is used to describe the **separating of the wicked and righteous**.



STUDY 2

The King No One Can Overthrow

Psalm 2

KEY VERSE

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

(VERSE 12)

Pause . . .
pray . . . and ask
God for help in
today's study.



Jesus wins. That is the resounding message of Psalm 2. As I opened the news headlines today—perhaps you did too—and reflected on my own struggles and those of others, I found comfort in the message of Jesus' victory. As we learned in our first study, *the first two psalms give us a framework for the entire Bible*, and today we will get to see God's plan for humanity. So, as I like to say at the start of my Bible study, "Let's do this, Psalm 2!"



Look Deeper



Open your Bible and read Psalm 2 at least once.

1. What does this psalm tell you about God and His character?

2. What does this psalm tell you about the “Son”?

Have you ever pictured God laughing? I’ve imagined God the Father—creator of all good and beauty—bellowing loudly in heaven as He cracks jokes and laughs with delight alongside us. (And can you imagine how funny He will be? His dad jokes will actually be funny.) I can’t wait. But in Psalm 2, we encounter a very different kind of laughter from God. **This is one of only three places in Scripture where God is said to laugh** (see also Psalms 37:12–13 and 59:8). Here, His laughter doesn’t sing a happy tune—it’s directed toward those who stand in open rebellion against Him: nations, rulers, and people who try to defy His authority. In verse 4, we read that God laughs at them and holds them in derision—not out of cruelty, but because their attempts are ultimately futile.

That might sound harsh at first, but there's deep comfort in it. God is not anxious or surprised by world chaos. When everything around us feels unstable—politically, culturally, even spiritually—**God's laughter reminds us of His unshakable sovereignty.** He's not intimidated, He's in control. And not only does He respond with laughter, He responds with the establishment of a King.

The original readers would have thought God's anointed (verse 2), who is set as king (verse 6) and later mentioned as God's Son (verse 7), was referring to King David, the Israelite king in the line of Jesus. But the New Testament tells us multiple times that these verses are referring to Jesus (Acts 4:25–26; 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5; Revelation 19:15).

Isn't this just amazing?! We get to be a fly on the wall as God the Father speaks to Jesus in this psalm! (I imagine us as cute flies, by the way.) And the Anointed, **Jesus Himself, tells us that God gives Him power over the nations** and the power to execute judgment. In other words, *Jesus wins.*

And in a somewhat surprising plot twist, the psalm ends by inviting the leaders (and essentially, us) into a message of incredible mercy and grace, a place of refuge from the judgment.

Let's study more.

What Does the Scripture Mean?

1. What does verse 3 reveal about the heart of what the leaders and people are rebelling against? What does this tell us about humanity?

2. From what we learned about the context of the Psalms in the introduction, who might the nations and the peoples be who are rising up and banding together “against the LORD” (verse 2)?
3. Why are the nations given to the king as an inheritance instead of taken by force?
4. According to verses 10–12, what merciful alternative does God offer to those who might otherwise oppose Him?

Connect to the Heart of Jesus

Did you know there's a prayer in the Bible that made the place shake? The prayer is in Acts 4, where Peter and John led a bold prayer with other believers. And at the center of that prayer is Psalm 2.

This powerful New Testament moment gives us insight into Psalm 2. The believers in Acts 4:25 tell us that the Holy Spirit spoke these words through David. **Throughout the psalm, we hear the voices of the Father and Son—and now we see the Spirit as the one speaking through David.** Psalm 2 is truly a Trinitarian song.

But it's not just theological insight; it's also applicable to our lives. **Peter and John** quoted Psalm 2 to remind themselves that rulers and nations would rise against God's Anointed—Jesus. And what did they ask for?

*“Enable your servants to speak your
word with great boldness.”*

(ACTS 4:29)

Psalm 2 became the believers' source of strength. It reminded them—and reminds us—that human threats are powerless against Jesus' reign. One of the psalm's purposes is to give us comfort in chaos and courage in the face of opposition—because Jesus is King. We also find this theme as the culmination of Scripture, reminding us that Psalm 2, like Psalm 1, undergirds the main message of the Bible.

Like those early believers, we have no reason to fear when we speak about Jesus. We can walk in boldness, knowing that God is sovereign and Jesus' reign is our refuge.



Apply & Take Action

- 1.** What hope does Psalm 2 provide in a world that can make me feel like chaos reigns?
- 2.** How do Jesus' words in John 14:6 also connect with this psalm, particularly verses 10–12?
- 3.** In what ways does (or doesn't) my life reflect one who sees Jesus not just as a friend, but as King?

4. Who might God be calling me to boldly tell about salvation through Jesus? How can I pray for them today?

Pray and ask God to help you apply His truth to your life.



BIBLE BITES for PSALM 2



1. Psalm 2 does not list an author, but the New Testament tells us that the author is King David (Acts 4:25).
2. Psalm 2 is quoted seven times in the New Testament, showing us its importance (Acts 4:25–26; 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5; Revelation 2:26–27; 12:5; 19:15).
3. First Kings 19:18 is another example of how a “kiss” to a leader was seen as reverence.



About the Author

Kristin Nave loves helping people understand, love, and apply the Bible to their lives. She's the host of the *Love the Bible* podcast and is the author of Bible studies. Kristin speaks at women's conferences, churches, and her Bible study workshops, equipping others to go deeper in God's Word. She loves sharing Bible insights and tools through social media and everyday life. Kristin holds a M.A. in Biblical studies, and lives in California with her husband and teenage daughter.





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