

# Summer in the Psalms: Psalm 146

## The Realities of Life

Most days, it seems like we live in two different worlds: (1) Monday through Saturday — our life filled with mundane routines, moments of pleasure, mindless lounging, and meaningless interactions and (2) Sunday — worshipping God with his people — singing, praying and receiving and responding to God’s word.

In the day in day out frenzy of life — work, meals, chores, commute, Netflix, video games, workouts, and other activities — the reality of God’s assuring presence, His hope-filled promises, and His life-giving power is easily overshadowed. We can go an entire day, perhaps a few days or even a week, and not even think about God. In fact, when we sit still and silent long enough, we may realize that we live lonely, uncertain, and powerless lives. God seems to be hidden in the countless pages of the Bible.

If we slow down to think about God, most of us will confess that we struggle with a “head-heart” disconnect. How many times have you heard yourself, or someone else, say, “In my head I believe God loves me but I don’t experience His love in my heart”? More times than not, our experience of God doesn’t match with what we know about God. The reality of this disconnect and mismatch associated with our relationship with God can leave us fearful that we are not good enough as a Christian, apathetic after repeated attempts to feel something from God end in disappointment, or hardened after giving up on God who we think has given up on us.

## You Are Created to Know and Experience God

Given the realities just discussed, the Christian life seems confusing—so hard to figure out. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus Christ died for our sins so that we would be reconciled with God. The best news of the gospel is that God saved us so that we could know Him, to enjoy life with Him, and to experience His love. God has invited us on a journey where He is making us more and more beautiful in Christ with each glance of His glory, with each taste of His goodness, with each response of faith, and with every moment of trust and obedience.

Believe it or not, God is pursuing you, specifically your heart. He wants to win your affections. He created you to adore Him and to be overwhelmed with His love. He delights when you seek Him for refuge when you are afraid. In your stillness, He wants you to know He is God.

***What reality is pressing down on you? Honestly describe how are you experiencing your relationship with God.***

## Experiencing God through His Word

God's time-tested way of deepening your relational experience with Him is through receiving, praying, and living out His word by the power of His Spirit. God's word gives us new life and is implanted in our hearts (James 1:18, 21). God invites us to hunger and thirst for His righteousness (Jesus Christ) AND promises to satisfy us (Matthew 5:6). Only God's Spirit can calm our heart, lift our eyes to Christ, and restore our soul.

Every Christian needs to learn how to draw near to God and experience His love through His living word (Hebrews 4:12). You will have an opportunity to experience God as you walk through Psalm 146 in various ways.

## Receiving God's Word – Psalm 146 (ESV)

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

<sup>2</sup> I will praise the LORD as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

<sup>3</sup> Put not your trust in princes,

in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

<sup>4</sup> When his breath departs, he returns to the earth;

on that very day his plans perish.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,

whose hope is in the LORD his God,

<sup>6</sup> who made heaven and earth,

the sea, and all that is in them,

who keeps faith forever;

<sup>7</sup> who executes justice for the oppressed,

who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free;

<sup>8</sup> the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;

the LORD loves the righteous.

<sup>9</sup> The LORD watches over the sojourners;

he upholds the widow and the fatherless,

but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD will reign forever,

your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Praise the LORD!

***What did you experience in your heart and mind as you received God's word?***



**Praying God's Word—Psalm 146**

Prayer flows out of your relationship with God. Prayer not only involves crying out to God from your heart, but more importantly, involves answering God, as you hear His heart through His word. Praying God's word guides what you pray, shapes how you pray and gives voice to your prayers. You can be confident when you pray God's word since His word reveals his purposes and desires.

***How did God care for you as you prayed through Psalm 146?***



**How did praying through Psalm 146 differ from your typical prayers?**

Jesus and His Spirit are praying for you, as God’s people, without interruption. Read Romans 8:26-27, and 34 (cf. Hebrews 7:25; Isaiah 53:12; John 17). The Father knows your heart and knows your needs. Given that God’s word reveals God’s will, it makes sense that Jesus and His Spirit pray God’s word for you to include Psalm 146.

***How may the Son and Spirit be praying the Father’s will for you as expressed in Psalm 146?*** (Write out the Son’s and Spirit’s prayer on your behalf to the Father. Include your name in the prayer.)

**Living Out God’s Word—Psalm 146**

Receiving and praying draws us into God’s presence and shapes our understanding and inclinations, enabling us to relate and respond to God rightly. In other words, receiving and praying God’s word are always connected with living God’s word. God invites us to be *hearers and doers* of His word in a reciprocal and parallel manner.

We can’t fully understand God’s word without living it out and we can’t fully live out God’s word without receiving and praying His word.

God gave us at least three different word pictures to help us to understand the importance of living out His word.

Firstly, Jesus uses the parable of *two foundations*, where He compares the wise and foolish builder (Matthew 7:24-27). The main difference being the wise builder hears and does the word, which enables him to withstand the storms of life. Jesus adds that those who hear the word and obey it are blessed (Luke 11:28).

Secondly, Jesus uses the image of *the vine and the branch*. Not only can we not do anything apart from Christ, but we abide in His love when we obey His commands, which also results in experiencing His joy (John 15:5; 9-11).

Thirdly, we are given the picture of a *mirror*. Those who merely hear the word is like one who looks in the mirror then forgets what they look like in their disobedience—forgetting who they are in Christ, how God calls them to live, and who God is and what He has done. But the one who looks at God’s word and does it, which helps in not forgetting what they heard, is blessed and finds freedom as they live *with* God and live *for* God (James 1:21-25).

Given what you noted about the reality that is pressing down on you, or how you are struggling in your relationship with God, consider how God is calling you to *trust* and *obey* Him so that you can live His word, which enables you to experience His blessing and find freedom found in Christ.

***How Can I Live Out Psalm 146?*** List 1 or 2 practical ways God is calling you to live out the truths found in Psalm 146.