

## Devotion to Our God

**Lesson Scope:** Psalms 63, 95, 103, 144

### Lesson Focus

In all of David's trying experiences, what was it that sustained him spiritually? Whether fleeing from Saul, fighting enemies in battle, enduring long times of uncertainty, facing treachery from within his own household, relating to personal failures, or experiencing success in his wise and long reign, there was a constant in David's life that he continued to cling to. As a young man, he fought Goliath for the honor of the God of Israel. Now in Psalm 63:1, he says, "O God, thou art my God." This is the kind of commitment and relationship we all must have.

This lesson will present some unique challenges to us. Many professing Christians in our day seek to worship God. While we do not judge their actions of worship, we do look for accompanying works of righteousness which indicate a close, personal relationship with God.

There should be an emphasis that true devotion and worship to God always results from a personal fellowship with God. This fellowship begins when a person recognizes his need of salvation and surrenders his will to God's will.

Emphasis also needs to be placed upon the need for devoted individuals to worship collectively with God's people who are seeking to follow Him faithfully. Our devotion to God is proven by our conformity to the principles of the Word as applied to daily living by a spiritual brotherhood. The New Testament is clear that Christ works through His people to perform His work. Emphasize that our devotion to Christ must include appreciation for His body, the church.

God's redeeming work in our lives should produce worship that permeates our entire being. Such worship draws man closer to God and gives strength for his duties.

**Lesson Aim:** To see how man should respond to God's majesty and His wondrous works.

**Theme Verse:** 1 Chronicles 16:29. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

### Lesson Text

#### "Early Will I Seek Thee"

**Psalm 63:1-8** <sup>1</sup> O God, thou *art* my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; <sup>2</sup> To see thy power and thy glory, so *as* I have seen thee in the sanctuary. <sup>3</sup> Because thy lovingkindness *is* better than life, my lips shall praise thee. <sup>4</sup> Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. <sup>5</sup> My soul shall be satisfied as *with* marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise *thee* with joyful lips: <sup>6</sup> When I remember thee upon my bed, *and* meditate on thee in the *night* watches. <sup>7</sup> Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. <sup>8</sup> My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.

#### "Come, Let Us Worship"

**Psalm 95:1-6** <sup>1</sup> O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. <sup>2</sup> Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. <sup>3</sup> For the LORD *is* a great God, and a great King above all gods. <sup>4</sup> In his hand *are* the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills *is* his also. <sup>5</sup> The sea *is* his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry *land*. <sup>6</sup> O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

#### "Bless the LORD, O My Soul"

**Psalm 103:1-5** <sup>1</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, *bless* his holy name. <sup>2</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: <sup>3</sup> Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; <sup>4</sup> Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; <sup>5</sup> Who satisfieth thy mouth with good *things*; so *that* thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

**Psalm 103:15-22** <sup>15</sup> *As for* man, his days *are* as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. <sup>16</sup> For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. <sup>17</sup> But the mercy of the

LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; <sup>18</sup> To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. <sup>19</sup> The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. <sup>20</sup> Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. <sup>21</sup> Bless ye the LORD, all *ye* his hosts; *ye* ministers of his, that do his pleasure. <sup>22</sup> Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.

### **"Happy Is That People"**

**Psalm 144:9-15** <sup>9</sup> I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee. <sup>10</sup> *It is he* that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword. <sup>11</sup> Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood: <sup>12</sup> That our sons *may be* as plants grown up in their youth; *that* our daughters *may be* as corner stones, polished *after* the similitude of a palace: <sup>13</sup> *That* our garners *may be* full, affording all manner of store: *that* our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets: <sup>14</sup> *That* our oxen *may be* strong to labour; *that there be* no breaking in, nor going out; *that there be* no complaining in our streets. <sup>15</sup> Happy *is that* people, that is in such a case: *yea*, happy *is that* people, whose God *is* the LORD.

### **Questions for Study**

#### **"Early Will I Seek Thee"**

1. What factors contributed to the psalmist's spiritual thirst?
2. Explain the role of meditation in worship (63:6).

#### **"Come, Let Us Worship"**

3. What are some reasons for worshipping God?
4. List some practical expressions of worship.

#### **"Bless the LORD, O My Soul"**

5. Enumerate benefits we enjoy from God's hand.
6. How can we cultivate thankful hearts and grateful expressions?

#### **"Happy Is That People"**

7. List some evidences of true joy and success in serving God.

## **Analyzing the Passage**

The personal pronoun *my* is prominent in Psalm 63:1. It speaks of personal, individual experience. No doubt, David experienced a physically dry and thirsty wasteland in Judah. But more importantly, he recognized a spiritual thirst in Israel at this time. He recognized that "to see thy power and thy glory" and to experience "thy lovingkindness" would satisfy his soul.

David recognized his need of the Lord continually. "While I live" (during the day), "upon my bed" (when I sleep), and "in the night watches" (while on night duty), he was conscious of the Lord's presence (Psalm 63:4-6).

The "shadow of thy wings" (Psalm 63:7) was sufficient for David. Human experience tends to demand more than shadows, but for the man of faith, God's shadow is enough to impart confidence.

Psalm 95:1-2, 6 call us to corporate worship. Verse 7 says, "He is our God." We are called to sing, to be thankful, and to bow down.

Psalm 103 enumerates many of God's benefits to man. Verse 22 gives a universal call to ascribe honor and blessing to God.

Psalm 144 enumerates some blessed and desirable conditions of the people whose God is the Lord.

## **Principles and Applications**

### **"Early Will I Seek Thee"**

1. God has created man to personally desire His presence and fellowship (Psalm 63:1-2). Every person longs for true satisfaction in life. That desire cannot be satisfied with anything short of God's presence in a person's inner being as he experiences salvation through the merits of Christ's sacrifice and surrenders his life to the Lord.

2. God's loving-kindness draws a response of praise from man's heart (Psalm 63:3-5). The satisfaction of peace with God surpasses any enjoyment of one's natural, physical life. This is because peace with God satisfies man's deepest need. When this need is satisfied, praise to God is forthcoming from the heart of the redeemed.

3. God's all-powerful help inspires man's continual confidence (Psalm 63:68). When we face difficult experiences of life and sense God's very present help, our confidence in God grows. Such experiences help us to lean more heavily upon His grace.

### **"Come, Let Us Worship"**

4. Those who have experienced God's salvation desire corporate singing and worship (Psalm 95:1-2). Those who are experiencing a close relationship with the Lord, and a resultant victorious experience over sin, desire to express their gratitude, praise, and thanksgiving to God. By participation in a cappella singing and in listening to practical Gospel preaching, one is inspired to continue to serve his God.

5. God's authority in the universe is cause for bowing in reverent prayer (Psalm 95:3-6). God faithfully controls the accurate movement of the heavenly bodies and the changing seasons. His overruling power restrains the evil in the world and faithfully provides for His people. These and many other evidences of God's power and goodness should cause us to bow before Him in reverence. We need never be ashamed of our practice of kneeling for prayer in our worship services. Our God is high above all gods.

### **"Bless the LORD, O My Soul"**

6. God's children must cultivate gratitude and thankfulness for His gifts of love (Psalm 103:1, 22). We often tend to take God's daily gifts for granted. Sometimes we should enumerate and reflect on specific things God is doing for us today. We should thank God specifically in our prayers. As we do that, we will also be cultivating a greater dependence on Him. A life of gratitude will be expressed in a life of service. If we appreciate what God has done and is doing for us, we will be ready to sacrifice in kingdom work.

7. Those who have experienced God's everlasting mercy are serious about faithful obedience (Psalm 103:17-18). We prove our commitment and devotion to God by our readiness to obey His commands. When members hedge or hesitate to comply with the church's direction in making Scriptural applications, their commitment and devotion to God may be questioned. "As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me" (Psalm 18:44).

### **"Happy Is That People"**

8. God's continued goodness is cause for new songs and renewed expressions of praise (Psalm 144:9). All of life should be bringing honor and glory to God. Let us never tire of praising God in song or of serving Him cheerfully. We will never express too much praise to God.

9. God's faithfulness in delivering us from evil should inspire faithfulness in future generations (144:11, 12). The world around us is filled

with evil, and we must depend on our God in every circumstance. We trust our great God for continual victory.

In such a setting, as the rising generations view a pure church, a great desire to be part of this brotherhood develops. Let us be faithful as God's people so that we may inspire faithfulness in those who follow.

10. All of life's blessings, whether temporal or spiritual, must be acknowledged as gifts from God's hand (Psalm 144:13-14). It is true that God expects us to work with our hands to earn a living. But we must never lose sight of the fact that without God's blessing, all our labor would be in vain.

We must also acknowledge God's blessings in the spiritual realm. We are totally dependent upon Him for salvation. Even though we must surrender our lives to God and do our part to serve Him, without His blessing all would be in vain. "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

11. Stability and contentment result when the faithful give God His rightful place (Psalm 144:15). Spiritual rest is always forthcoming from those who choose and take God's way, following His commandments faithfully.

### **Important Teachings**

1. God has created man to personally desire His presence and fellowship (Psalm 63:1, 2).
2. God's loving-kindness draws a response of praise from man's heart (Psalm 63:3-5).
3. God's all-powerful help inspires man's continual confidence (Psalm 63:6-8).
4. Those who have experienced God's salvation desire corporate singing and worship (Psalm 95:1, 2).
5. God's authority in the universe is cause for bowing in reverent prayer (Psalm 95:3-6).
6. God's children must cultivate gratitude and thankfulness for His gifts of love (Psalm 103:1, 22).
7. Those who have experienced God's everlasting mercy are serious about faithful obedience (Psalm 103:17-18).
8. God's continued goodness is cause for new songs and renewed expressions of praise (Psalm 144:9).
9. God's faithfulness in delivering us from evil should inspire faithfulness in future generations (Psalm 144:11-12).

10. All of life's blessings, whether temporal or spiritual, must be acknowledged as gifts from God's hand (Psalm 144:13-14).

11. Stability and contentment result when the faithful give God His rightful place (144:15).

### **Answers to Questions**

1. What factors contributed to the psalmist's spiritual thirst?

The psalmist realized his own inner emptiness and lack of satisfaction apart from God. He understood that the natural world and even the people around him could not meet his need. What he had seen of God in the sanctuary was the answer to his need, and he longed for that inspiration to be constant in all of life.

2. Explain the role of meditation in worship (Psalm 63:6).

Unless we contemplate God's goodness and mercies, we will take Him for granted and fail to worship Him. By thinking upon His holy character, His righteous dealing with His people in history, and His mercies upon us personally, our faith is strengthened and our hearts well up in praise.

3. What are some reasons for worshipping God?

He is the rock of our salvation (Psalm 95:1). The Lord is a great king above all gods (Psalm 95:3). He controls the universe (Psalm 95:4, 5). He made us (Psalm 95:6).

4. List some practical expressions of worship.

Worship may be expressed in singing, thanksgiving, kneeling before the Lord in prayer, and leading a life of devotion and sacrificial service.

5. Enumerate benefits we enjoy from God's hand. God forgives our sins, heals our bodies, grants physical and spiritual protection, and provides mercy and grace to meet the daily issues of life. He supplies our physical needs of food, clothing, and shelter.

6. How can we cultivate thankful hearts and grateful expressions?

We must take time to reflect on all the blessings of God and where we would be in life without them. In the difficult experiences of life, we can be thankful that God is chastening us for our good, and that He will not allow what we cannot bear with His help. Consider how undeserving we are of any blessing or favor from the Lord.

7. List some evidences of true joy and success in serving God.

God is honored, and we are filled with joy when the rising generation embraces the faith and prospers spiritually (Psalm 144:12), when spir-

itual strength and growth are evident (Psalm 144:13-14), and when God's people are content and happy (Psalm 144:14, 15).

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,  
And when my voice is lost in death,  
Praise shall employ my nobler pow'rs;  
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,  
While life, and thought, and being last,  
Or immortality endures.

Happy the man whose hopes rely  
On Israel's God; He made the sky  
And earth and seas, with all their train:  
His truth forever stands secure;  
He saves the' oppressed, He feeds the poor,  
And none shall find His promise vain.  
—Isaac Watts

### **Research Guide**

1. Read pages 205-207 under the "The Service" in Separated Unto God by J. C. Wenger.
2. Read Matthew 26:6-13.
3. In Doctrines of the Bible by Daniel Kauffman read the chapter on "Worship."