

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
 - Joy
 - Peace
 - Patience
 - Kindness/Goodness
 - Faithfulness
 - Gentleness
 - Self-Control
 - **Hope**
- "I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ."**
- Humility

One of the things that I love about the Psalms is the authenticity and depth of the emotions that are expressed there. Deep feelings and hard questions get verbalized, many of which I've felt myself. But I grew up believing that it wasn't "OK" to talk to God like that—to question Him, to even be angry with Him sometimes. But David, "a man after God's own heart," seemed to pour out these kinds of feelings to God regularly. The trust is, the emotions are there and God knows it already—so why not tell Him about them? Suzan Brown (our current Engage writer) has done a wonderful job of leading us through the honest expressions we find in this Psalm and in relating them to our own experience. I pray that you'll allow yourself to open up to God and pour your heart out to Him—He can take it! It might even be good for you.

Walking with you,

Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation

Monday

Begin your time today by sitting in silence for a few moments.

On a piece of paper, write down short statements that describe your life right now.

Ex. Finances are tight causing me worry.

Friendships are fulfilling giving me a safe place to bring joys and hardships.

Disappointed in son's reaction to boundaries we have set.

In your life right now, how hopeful would you rate yourself? Use a scale of 1-10 (1=low, 10=high).

Describe why you gave yourself this score.

Read Psalm 13.

This is a Psalm of David in which he honestly pours out his hopelessness in the first few verses. By the end of the Psalm his outlook has been transformed from hopelessness to trust.

This week we will track his process and learn from his journey.

What verses in this Psalm did you find yourself identifying with? Why?

What do these verses show us about David?

What do these verses show us about God's character?

Close your time in prayer. Ask God to help you move into a deeper place of trust and hope.

Tuesday

Read Psalm 13 verses 1-2. David honestly pours out his heart to God expressing fear, discontent and hopelessness.

Examine your own heart and honestly express to God any fears, discontent or anger that you may have.

David asks four "How Long" questions in these verses. List them below.

How long...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Next to these questions, write what this question exposes about David's beliefs.

Ex. (taken from Psalm 94:3)

***How long will the wicked triumph? The psalmist fears that righteousness will not be rewarded and that God will not come through in His promise to redeem all things and rid the world of evil.*

Exposed in David's questions is deep hopelessness. This has led him to believe wrong things about God's character. When we feel hopeless, we can go to scripture to answer our questions with truth. Read the following verses that correspond with David's questions. Next to the verse, write the truth found in it.

1. Deuteronomy 31:6
2. Psalm 33:18
3. Psalm 43:5
4. Job 20:5

What "how long" questions are you asking God today?

What do these questions expose about your belief in God?

Close your time today by finding a scripture that brings truth to one of your questions.

Wednesday

Begin your time today in prayer. Ask God to enlighten your heart to the truth of His Word.

Read Psalm 13. Reread verses 3-4.

In these verses, David moves from despair to crying out in prayer to God. His authentic request for enlightenment demonstrates His renewed belief in God as the One who can help him.

What is David requesting from God?

Why did David ask for enlightenment?

A consistent theme in many of David's Psalms is protection from his enemies. We know from Biblical history that David's reign as king was marked by consistent battle with surrounding nations. David was engaged in a battle for the physical land of Israel as well as the spiritual state of His people. He expresses his fear that unless God enlightens Him, He will be conquered by His enemies.

These verses could be applied to both a physical enemy like the one David faced and the spiritual enemy that we face in Satan.

How is Satan, your enemy, attempting to discourage or distract you?

Use these verses as a model to express this to God and ask for enlightenment.

Close your time today by memorizing verses 1-4.

Thursday

Begin by reviewing some of your notes from your previous days of study this week. Bring before God your fears and worries. Ask Him to continue to deepen your trust in Him.

Read Psalm 13.

Reread verse 5 aloud as a declaration of your desire to trust in Him.

In what does David put his trust?

Read these other Psalms that tell of God's unfailing love; next to the verse summarize what it tells us about His unfailing love.

Psalm 21:7 - 51:1 -

32:10 - 130:7 -

33:5 - 143:8 -

36:7 -

In what area of your life do you need to trust more deeply in God's unfailing love?

Close your time in prayer. Ask God to continue to reveal his unfailing love to you and reaffirm your trust in Him.

Friday

Read Psalm 13. Memorize verses 5 & 6.

David's process of moving from despair to hope is one that he repeated many times in his life. There are seasons in our lives in which this process might occur on a daily basis or even more often. It is okay to be discouraged; God can handle our honesty.

What God asks of us is that we bring our despair or disappointment to His Word and allow Him to reframe our circumstances in the light of His character.

Read vs. 6. Here we see David move into a more profound sense of joy and thanksgiving even though his situation has not changed. He has been reminded of God's steadfast love and goodness and he is changed because of the encounter.

Look back at Tuesdays' notes and your "how long" questions.

What truths about God's character have been enlightened this week in regard to this question?

How have you experienced his unfailing love?

Spend the rest of your time today, thanking God for His goodness particularly in this area of your life.

Suggested Format:

**Thank Him for the "how long" question He has given you as an opportunity to grow deeper in your knowledge of Him and love for Him.*

**Express your desire for change in this area, but willingness to submit to His plans.*

**Affirm the truth of His love and care.*

**Thank God for His presence and love.*