

# Explore the Bible: Thankful

August 1, 2018

- *The Explore the Bible lesson for August 19 focuses on 2 Samuel 22:26-36, 50-51.*

“God is worthy of our praise and thanksgiving for his provisions in this life.” This is such a simple truth, yet it is very much worth our attention as we try to summarize this poetic passage. Consider this: If we know we have many things to be thankful for each day, *why do we not treat each day as Thanksgiving?*

After being delivered, David launched into this song, revealing his poetic side we are much more familiar with when we read the book of Psalms. While David had much to be thankful for, it is clear being pursued by his enemies brought a much-needed time to praise God.

Ask your group: *What makes you stop and thank God? What specific instances in your life have caused you to pause for praise more than at other times?*

## Holy (2 Samuel 22:26-29)

Here is where we easily can see the justice of God. He is justified in how he responds to people, and he responds by rewarding or punishing behaviors, which birth from the person’s heart. God also is equal in how he responds, responding in ways that are due the person.

Think of these verses from a parenting context: *How do we reward or punish behaviors of children?* Honestly, we tend to do a *quid pro quo* where there is an equal return for what took place. A child who completes a homework assignment to the standard gets an equal return of a positive

grade. A child who does not do so gets the opposite.

*Is this how God responds to us?* God does show himself in a positive light, but he goes beyond our expectations. David said, “You are my lamp, O Lord.” In darkness, none of us deserves a light, yet God is light to those who are willing to follow him away from darkness.

## **Shield (2 Samuel 22:30-36)**

In the previous verses, we see how holy and set apart God is. His standard is beyond our standard. Yet, he does not stand at a distance, being the judge; he defends those who follow him because only he is capable of rescue.

For example, only a mother hen is able to be the mother hen to her baby chicks. Only she can do for her babies what they need, in nurturing and in protecting. Jesus later would say over Jerusalem that he “longed” to gather her people together “as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings” (Matthew 23:37). When a child or a baby chick refuses the rescue of the only one who can rescue, there is no other option.

We need to see exactly what David saw and knew with real experience: Only God can rescue. Ask your group: *How have you tried to rescue yourself, and how did that work out?* When we seek rescue from anyone else, we will be disappointed. Perhaps consider reading Psalm 18, as you will notice some significant similarities between it and today’s text.

## **Eternal (2 Samuel 22:50-51)**

These closing verses sum up the eternal nature of God’s protection and promises. To those who are his followers, God will be both the provider and protector forever and always. Again, we likely hear this often, yet with

David's experiences, we can even more attest to its truth.

Even more eternal is David's promise by God that his dynasty would continue. If he was not fully removed from his God-given role as king, then God still must be faithful to the promise given to him by his covenant love. It is after enduring such world-shaking difficulties that we can become more aware of how forever God's promises are.

This should cause us to become aware of how well we do or do not rely on God for his care. David proves to us that even though he messed up terribly, God was able to be the just judge who would not go back on his promises. This should be a word of comfort to us. Even when we mess up terribly, God will be our just judge and will not go back on his promises. Our only requirement is to be obedient followers.

## Conclusion

What is most striking about this lengthy psalm is that David did not lose his song. With the terrible things he endured - although they were God's just judgments—he easily could have turned his back on God. Yet, David was known to write psalms because of his challenges, not only because things were going well. He did not lose his poetic voice.

*How do we tend to "lose" our song when things get tough? Do we stop singing such praises to God when things are bad, and only sing praises to God when things are well? We should never lose our song of praise to God. Singing songs of praise are not only our response to God, because they can also help us endure difficulties.*

Consider these lyrics in closing: "Every day is a song, one endless melody all day long. Love is the lyric and freedom is the message that it brings to me. Every day is a song, Jesus is telling me I belong to him forever, and endless melody" (Eugene McCammon, "Every Day Is A Song").

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