



SMALL GROUP GUIDE

WEEK FIVE

POETIC EXPRESSION

WEEK FIVE: POETIC EXPRESSION

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

This lesson's structure is somewhat different from other lessons. It contains activities to help prepare group members to write their own version of Psalm 131, as either a poem or prayer.

ICEBREAKER: Each week the discussion begins with a question that allows the group to share from their own personal experiences.

Icebreaker Questions:

- What is a lullaby that you were sung to as a child, or a lullaby you sang to your kids?
- Why are lullabies important?
- What do these songs teach kids?

PRAYER: Psalm 131

Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or wondrous for me. Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen

QUOTE: H. Stephen Shoemaker

Psalm 131 is a lullaby. It is a tender and intimate nightsong.

- How might Psalm 131 be considered a lullaby that comforts our souls in the dead of the night?

This week we are examining Psalm 131 as a song that resonates with our hearts, and invites us to join in. It is a song of reflection and hope that speaks to where we have been, where we are at, and where we are going. It is a song that calms our hearts and quiets our souls so that we can hope in the Lord and trust in Him now and always.

Quote: H. Stephen Shoemaker

Psalm 131 is a lullaby. It is a tender and intimate nightsong. It is the song of a troubled heart being given the peace that passes understanding. If we could pray it as our own, perhaps we would sleep better at night.

- How might Psalm 131 bring peace to a troubled heart?
- How might this song help you “sleep better at night?”
- Has it brought peace to your heart? How so?

Quote: H. Stephen Shoemaker

Psalm 131 is a tender and intimate song. But this lullaby is not for children only, it is simple but not simplistic. It displays childlike trust, but it is not childish. It is not sung this side of trouble; it has walked through it. It is a song of mature faith. (Shoemaker 91-92).

- Shoemaker suggests that this is a lullaby for people with a mature faith. How might Psalm 131 hold the characteristics of both a lullaby and a mature faith?
- What does a mature faith look like, as embodied in this psalm?
- According to Shoemaker, a mature faith can be simple and childlike, while not simplistic or childish. How can a Psalm 131 faith be simple (but not simplistic), and childlike (but not childish)?
- How does walking through trouble help bring about maturity in faith?

QUOTE: H. Stephen Shoemaker

This psalm pictures the simplicity on the yonder side of complexity, not on this side of complexity. Simplicity this side of complexity is only simplistic; it is not childlike, it is childish. The simplicity which has traveled through complexity to the yonder side, however, is the spiritual simplicity of mature faith. A mature faith seeks to trust God and have hope in the midst of these crises as we discover personal self-limitation, the intransigence of society, and the tragic dimensions of life.

Shoemaker wrestles with the journey from “this side” to “yonder side” of complexity, which he believes leads us to simplicity and maturity.

- How does journeying through trouble (or complexity) simplify faith?
- How has life's complexities simplified your faith?
- How might traveling through complexity mature our faith? How has life's complexities matured your faith?
- How has life's complexities lead you to calm, quiet, hope, and trust?

SERMON DISCUSSION:

On Sunday, Dave wrapped up his series on Psalm 131. Next Sunday he will explore Psalm 132, but we will still have one more session in Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust. Take some time to review the sermon, discussing the themes, application, and questions.

- What were some of lessons of Psalm 131 that were discussed during the sermons?
- What are your overall thoughts on the themes from Psalm 131? How did they inspire you on your spiritual journey.
- How did this Sunday's them connect with you and your spiritual life?
- How were you encouraged to apply the lessons from this psalm to your life?

Share any questions or concerns that came to you have been wrestling with over the past few weeks.

EXPLORING PSALM 131 IN NEW WAYS

POETIC EXPRESSION:

This week your challenge will is to create your own version of Psalm 131 in the form of a poem or prayer. In doing this, you are joining the eternal choir as they sing around God's throne. Find your harmony and join your voice to the worship of God. Allow your life, personality, and emotions, to fuel your voice.

Here is an example from a previous group.

*Lord I am not impressed with myself
Nor should I see myself as someone who could ever accomplish
things without You
I do not get somethings, so I quiet myself In place of strife.
I actively make my goal a heart that is calm and quiet
shutting out the worlds relentless noise
I feel comfort like the comfort a child feels with their Mom.
That is how I feel in my soul.
People of God put your expectation in our one true God,
Today and Forever.*

As we continue our pilgrimage through this tender and intimate lullaby let's view Psalm 131 in a new perspective and expand our understanding and appreciation of Psalm 131.

Together we will explore the classical, King James Version, as we ask ourselves the following questions; (1) what words or phrases stand out, (2) why are those words and significant to you, and (3) how do they enhance and enrich your connection to this psalm?

During your weekly devotional you will look at the Complete Jewish Bible, The Voice Translation, the Message, and the Expanded Bible.

READ TWICE: Psalm 131 - King James Version

*Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty:
neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.
Surely, I have behaved and quieted myself,
as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.
Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and forever.*

DISCUSS:

- As you read and listened to the King James Version of Psalm 131, what words or phrases stood out to you in this translation?
- Why are those words or phrases significant to you? Why do they resonate with you?
- How does this translation compare with our standard translation?

- How does the King James version enhance and enrich your connection to this psalm?

BRAINSTORM: Ideaphoria

There is a video describing this exercise at

www.barmillscommunitychurch.org/cqhtprayer

This week we will break down Psalm 131 in a brainstorming activity known as Ideaphoria. This is done by brainstorming synonyms, thoughts, and ideas for each word in the psalm. As you brainstorm, write down any word, thoughts, or ideas, no matter how simple, strange, or mundane. Once you have listed your thoughts over a word, move on to the next. Once you have completed the activity, rewrite the line in your own words. You can choose words from your brainstorm or go in an entirely new direction.

PRACTICE: (Psalm 131:3a) Put your hope in the Lord.

Examples:

<i>place</i>	<i>mine</i>	<i>trust</i>	<i>inside</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>Jesus</i>
<i>Insert</i>	<i>personal</i>	<i>expectation</i>	<i>centered</i>	<i>fixed</i>	<i>Yahweh</i>

PUT YOUR HOPE IN THE LORD

Create: Using the brainstormed words, each group member should write their own version on Psalm 131:3a)

Example: Place your personal trust inside the singular God, Yahweh.

Share: Have each group member share their version of Psalm 131:3a

MUSIC: Listen to *Trust in the Lord (Psalm 131)* by Jason Silver.

- How does this version connects with your heart and encourages you to discover calm, quiet, hope, and trust.
- Did this song bring new life into Psalm 131?
- How does worship music lead us closer to God?

CLOSING QUOTE: William R. Nicoll

The Psalmist closes this song with a call for the people of God to hope in the Lord; whereby they, too, may enter into peace. It is a song that reveals both a secret of forgiveness and deliverance from iniquities and is also the secret for rest from tyrannous longings and disturbing desires. Hope in God brings pardon, purity, and peace.

CLOSING PRAYER: Psalm 131

Lord, my heart is proud and my eyes are haughty. I get involved with things greater than myself. I surrender control to you. Guide my spirit toward peace. Help me discover the calm and quiet of a weaned child. Lead me into maturity. I put my hope in you, for there is faithful love and redemption in abundance. I am trusting you to guide me both now and forever. Amen.

Next week we will wrap up our journey together as we answer the call to put our hope in the Lord, now and always. Bring your version to share with the group.