

The Summer of Psalms

By Doug Hamilton

Strength From God

There have been five lessons we have covered in the *Summer of Psalms*, with all five clearly to have been communicated in this largest book in the Bible. They are the following.

1. Praise to God: This is the core element of the Christian's relationship with God, for we were created in Christ with the intention to bring praise and glory to the Father.
2. Protection from God: He is our Protector from this present and evil generation. We need not lose sleep if we know that God is watching out over us.
3. Service for God: All the passion for God is nothing if we cannot nor do not serve Him in sincerity and in truth. He saves us from our sins and puts us in His service to Him for the remainder of our lives.
4. Reverence of God: If we do not have the fear of the judgment of God in our hearts, we likely will not hold the correct relationship with God. The Psalms communicate our reverence for Him.
5. Guidance from God: It is the word of God, the Bible, which is the primary source of our guidance from God. He wants to and will direct our path in the correct way if only we are truly looking for the answer.

In this next lesson we will learn yet another topic from the Psalms that deal with the strength that God reveal to us from the Psalmist's perspective.

6) Strength from God

David states in *Psalms 18:1* "I love You, O LORD, my strength." He is ascribing his very strength of his being to the source of the strength, which is from God. David understood that *the LORD will give strength to His people* (Psalm 29:11) and that *He is their strength in time of trouble* (Psalm 37:39). He further said "How blessed is the man whose strength is in You..." (Psalm 84:5). In fact we are to "Seek the LORD and His strength..." (Psalm 105:4). God is the source of strength for His people and the Psalms makes it clear. That in itself is a powerful generic statement that we can boldly proclaim, but two questions arise:

- A) "How do we tap into this strength of God?"
- B) "How does this strength work once we have it?"

Though there might be many ways to answer these questions, here are the primary answers through the eyes of the Psalmist.

1) Through Knowledge

We thoroughly covered the word of God as our source of guidance in the last lesson, but we still need to answer the above questions to make the practical application. David said in *Psalms 119:28* "...Strengthen me according to Your word." God's word is a source of strength because it allows us to know more about God and guide us in the way we should go.

By studying God's word we end up learning more about God and can be more driven to serve Him on new and higher levels. *Psalms 147:5* Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite. When we try to understand the word of God, we are tapping into His strength, hence being undergirded by His power.

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Our reverence for God and His word leads us to search more for His knowledge and the result is applied wisdom and confidence that we are on the right path. *Psalm 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; That is strength from God!*

2) Through Singing

David remarks in *Psalm 59:17 O my strength, I will sing praises to You; For God is my stronghold, the God who shows me lovingkindness*. Singing has often been a source of strength for the people of God.

- It was singing to the Lord that the Israelites prepared for battle against their enemies. *2 Chronicles 20:22 When they began singing and praising, the Lord set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed.*
- It was singing that Jesus embarked on His final journey to the Garden of Gethsemane the night before the crucifixion. *Matthew 26:30 After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*
- It was singing that kept the spirits of suffering Paul and Silas the night they lay in a prison cell. *Acts 16:25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God...*

How does singing allow us to tap into the strength of God? It is true because singing centers on the joy of the Lord. It says in *Psalm 95:1 "O come, let us sing for joy to the LORD..."* It is true both in the Old and New Testament. *James 5:13 "...Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises."* Singing and the accompanying joy is a topic that the Psalms connects together over and over again. It focuses us on God and His wonderful attributes, resulting in further joy.

- *Psalm 81:1 "Sing for joy to God our strength..."*
- *Psalm 51:14 "...my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness."*
- *Psalm 59:16 "...I shall joyfully sing of Your lovingkindness"*

When we are feeling weak, we can sing to the Lord! When we need to call upon the strength of God, SING! Shout joyfully to the Lord and watch what occurs.

Song: You are My All and All

*You are my strength when I am weak
You are the treasure that I seek
You are my all in all
Seeking You as a precious jewel
Lord, to give up I'd be a fool
You are my all in all*

*Jesus, Lamb of God
Worthy is Your name
Jesus, Lamb of God
Worthy is Your name*

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3) Through Prayer

David says in *Psalm 138:3* *On the day I called, You answered me; You made me bold with strength in my soul.* David did not call the LORD on a cell phone or a walkie-talkie, but through prayer. There is great power in prayer and great strength to be derived from our prayers to God. Read the following verses from the Psalms and ask, “Is there strength to be derived from prayer?”

- Psalm 32:6 Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters they will not reach him.
- Psalm 6:9 The LORD has heard my supplication, The LORD receives my prayer.
- Psalm 116:1 I love the LORD, because He hears My voice *and* my supplications.
- Psalm 4:1 Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Be gracious to me and hear my prayer.

Have you ever wondered what phone numbers you might find on a famous celebrity’s or politician’s cell phone? One of these famous stars lost her Blackberry cell phone last year and it contained many dozens of other famous celebrities’ contact information. The person that found the lost Blackberry wasted no time selling this valuable information and it resulted in the publication of it on the Internet. It wasn’t long before Hollywood’s finest were being bombarded with calls and emails from celebrity seeking strangers wanting to just have a word or two with someone in the limelight. Needless to say that the star that lost her Blackberry was “Black-listed” for a few months from the others whom had to change all their information to rectify the problem.

The focus of the story was there were thousands of people that took the information and pursued with passion the opportunity to communicate with someone of stature and power. Let me ask a few more questions:

- If you were able to locate a cell phone number of God, would you not try to call it ASAP?
- Is He not far more famous, important and powerful than all the celebrity cell phone numbers in the world?
- Would you not put this number on speed dial and in memory?
- Would you not feel like the most important person on the planet that you had the Creator of the Cosmos personal number on the cell phone in your pocket?

I would like to give you God’s cell phone number so you can feel like the most important person in the world. God’s Cell Phone Number is 1-800-772-9669.

1 = You are the ONE that has the number.

800 = Free to call

772-9669 = PRAY NOW means without ceasing

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In other words you already had God's number and I had it too. It is in prayer that we can reach out to God, not in the push of a button, but the drop of a knee. It is not on a cell phone, but built into your soul. You don't have a bill for it and are expected to use it on a daily basis. Prayer is the #1 source of our strength from God and we never forget it.

There are other ways that we can draw strength from God like fellowship and through trials, but the three discussed are the top three that I wanted to mention in this lesson. If we are trying in these three with all our heart, soul and mind, then things tend to work out in the end.

Closing Story

There was a pilot named Doc Hall and he was out flying his plane over a forest in Devil's Creek, Alaska. He saw the curious sight that day of a bear that was walking around in a group of six large, worn, flattened circles in the grass of an opening. Apparently while rummaging amidst cast off garbage, the bear had stuck its head inside the can and could not extricate it. Hall said, "The bear must have walked more than 500 miles in circles. It had made six worn smooth circular paths in the thick blanket of leaves and twigs which covered the ground."

This bear was capable of being the king of the beasts of the forest, but had been reduced down to nothing more than a creature of weakness. It was not the result of disease, a dart gun or even a bigger creature, but a simple coffee can that blocked the world of reality. The bear had lost vision and had become weakened.

The strength of God is similar in that Satan tries to keep our head in a coffee can, blocking the view of the realities of God. Jesus came to remove that blinder and empower us with strength of a new vision and destination. If we will just open our hearts and minds through the hope of Jesus, then we can stop walking in circles of weakness.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Tap into the strength of God today by tapping into His strength.