

WRITING A PERSONAL PSALM TO GOD

Why Write a Personal Psalm to God?

The Lord loves it not only when we praise Him but also when we are authentic in our conversation with Him and others (Eph 5:18b-21). He already knows what you are thinking and feeling, so the exercise of writing out your own psalm is really about helping you. When taking the time to cry out to God this way, many find themselves in tears, in moments of deep appreciation, in times of overwhelming grief, or exhilarating joy. Remember, you are in relationship with a very intimate God. When is the last time you spoke to Him personally? If you could write Him a letter that truly expresses your heart right now what would it say? The aim of writing a personal psalm to God is to meet with Him in a way that transforms your heart and mind so that, by your faith and His faithfulness, you grow in knowledge and love for Him.

Who Are You Writing to?

Consider Who God Is: How you write will depend upon who you say God is. What are your current thoughts and feelings about God? Is He angry with you? Is He disappointed? Is He waiting for you with open arms? Sometimes the actual writing of the psalm changes the way we think about God. You can be raw and real in your emotions without losing reverence for who He is. Remember, God is holy AND compassionate, righteous AND loving. He is sovereign AND good. He is not a distant deity but a close and personal savior (Heb 4:14-16).

How to Write a Personal Psalm to God:

Consider what Christ Has Done for you: First of all, in preparation for writing your own psalm, consider the Gospel and what Christ did on the cross for you. If He did not spare His own Son for you how much more will He graciously give you all things that you need (Rom 8:32).

Confront the Lies and Replace with them with the Truth: It helps to get into the Word before you write to confront any lies or distortions of who God is or how he relates to His people. Where you should go in the Word depends on where you are both horizontally (your temporal concerns) and vertically (your orientation to God)—this might help:

- Afraid God won't meet you where you're at? Read Luke 15:11-32
- Tired or distant from God? Meditate on Matthew 11:28-30
- Overwhelmed by shame? Spend time in Psalms 25, 69, or 77
- Gripped by fear? Look at Psalms 23, 27, 34 or 46
- Disappointed or in despair? Read Ps 22, 27, 30, 42 or 66
- Need to quiet your anxious soul? Look at Ps 131
- Feeling abandoned or betrayed? Read Ps 37, 55, or 73
- Separated from God by sin? Consider Ps 32, 34, or 51
- Need to turn your gaze inward with vertical orientation? Spend time in Ps 139
- Filled with a spirit of worship & praise? Check out Psalms 95, 100, 103, 115 or 121

Commence with Prayer: The first few words in writing a psalm can be the hardest. After meditating on Scripture, take a moment to reflect and pray. Ask God to still your heart and mind. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in what to write (Eph 6:18).

Communicate your Heart: The topic you write about in your psalm should be in line with the present condition of your heart. Ask yourself: "How do I feel?", "What am I thinking?", "What are my attitudes?", and "What circumstances am I facing?" You may want to entitle your psalm something like

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“How Long oh God”; “Where are you My God?”; “I have wandered far from you”; or “Great is the Lord and Worthy of Praise”.

By looking at the list above or considering your favorite Psalm in the Bible you need to ask which one resonates best with your heart. You may want to model your letter after this particular Psalm or passage. Is this a lament or a plea for mercy? Is it a desperate cry for help, or confession of sin and repentance? Is this a psalm of praise, and thanksgiving? Are you asking for strength or seeking wisdom? You may want to incorporate all these elements in your psalm as it progresses. People have asked, “Is it ok to express anger or disappointment?” again the answer lies in being reverent and yet being real. If you are angry, it would be phony to try to write a beautiful love song to God. Instead, cry out to Him! Tell God you are angry or hurt. Seek His mercy, grace or love. Ask Him questions. Make honest statements. Be authentic!

Do not concern yourself with rhymes or eloquence of words – it’s about sharing your heart. Remember, don’t try forcing things you don’t think or feel and don’t try to write like someone else—be yourself. He wants to meet you where you are and wants you to open your life to Him as a father, friend, and savior.

Conclude by responding, in faith, to what God has brought to light:

Finish this exercise by getting alone and reading your psalm out loud with emotion – enjoying His presence as you pour out your heart and choose to stand on His character and promises. Be quiet and see what God might bring to mind. This would look like certain scriptures coming to mind or a biblical truth that counters a lie being clear in your meditation (Psalm 19:7-14).

When to Write a Personal Psalm

You should write a psalm when you are struggling to pray, when you feel distant or frustrated, or when you are in significant pain. It is amazing how your soul can be lifted as you move from lament to praising Him with a song or a poem from your own hand. There really is no wrong time to do this. You should remember that writing a personal psalm to God is about meeting with Him with the expectation of lasting change, growth and rest in Him. That said, this assignment can be a break through in expressing yourself to God and thus could be one of the most important things you have ever done in your walk with Christ.

We encourage you therefore to make this a habit as often as you need to. While you may currently be in a season of trial or suffering the time may come when God allows peace and joy to be your foremost companions – in that time you may want to come back and write a psalm of praise. Again, do it as often as you need to as a way to relate to your loving Father in heaven.

Where to Go from Here

Lastly, you may want to consider sharing your psalm in counseling or with a close friend. This can be very intimidating but in our experience everyone who shares this exercise deepens their fellowship and senses a relief as others know them better. This is a chance for others to see how you relate to God, what is burdening your soul and how to help you best. Now others can pray deeply for you because you shared your heart with them – it’s a good step toward uncommon community in the spirit of Col 3:16, Js 5:16 and Gal 6:1-2. You will get closer to God and to those He has brought into your life. If you are still hesitant, remember real emotion never betrays true reverence. Cry out to God today; trust Him to meet you where you are and to work on your behalf.