

THE GENEROUS HEART

• A BIBLE STUDY FEAST FOR ALL •

Session 1 – Psalm 100: *PRAISE*

..... **APPETISER**

The following background notes are provided to help you in preparation for the main teaching and follow-up activities. A summary of the content is provided in the teaching video to be shown in the 'Today's Special' section of this session.

Psalm 100 has been read, sung, dramatised and presented in every way imaginable. It's the 'go-to' psalm when we need to hear Scripture that is lively and uplifting, and, if we're honest, it's the emergency psalm we turn to when we need to share a thought at short notice. But if we're not careful, its familiarity prompts us to skim over the words without taking in their message. Psalm 100 provides us with a complete picture of a life of generous discipleship and, through these sessions, we will explore the theme of each verse.

Psalm 100 is identified as a song of praise and thanksgiving, and it is with this attitude that we will explore ways to give our time, talents and finances. We do not know the author of this psalm, but for generations the words have played an integral part in the worship of Jews and Christians alike. It's a psalm for those who want to worship and give thanks to the God they adore. As we delve into the words of Psalm 100, our lives as worshippers are reoriented and priorities realigned. It's the perfect psalm to begin the process of reviewing our giving, whether that be our time, talents or finances.

'Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.' (Psalm 100:1)

At the beginning of this psalm we are called to shout out our praises to God. This particular shout was reserved for the king and would be used when he returned from victory. It was also a way to declare allegiance to the monarch. This shout ensured that everyone around knew where your loyalties were placed and who you were committed to serving. Sung initially in a context where there were many gods, this psalm pledged allegiance to the God of Israel. Psalm 100 urges us to put aside anything that would draw our attention away from God or attempt to replace him in our life.

'Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.' (Psalm 100:2)

In Psalm 100:2 we are urged to 'worship the Lord with gladness'. The original Hebrew word used in this verse is *abad*, a combination of 'worship' and 'service'. It is with this attitude of worship and service that we approach the theme of generous discipleship. Through our gift of worship and service, we call others to join with us and draw near to God. Whether it's gathering in collective worship, serving in a lunch club, or presenting in a business meeting, each act of service points to the one who deserves all our praise.

'Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.' (Psalm 100:3)

In these verses we are reminded to love God intelligently, recognise that we are his, and seek to know him more. Rather than relying on the faith of others or becoming complacent on our Christian journey, we are encouraged to grow in the wisdom and knowledge of God.

In Mark 12:30, Jesus commands us to ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength’.

A life of generous discipleship requires all of who we are, including our minds. The Bible invites us to come to Christ as little children, but this doesn’t necessarily mean keeping our faith simple. Although this may be admirable in many ways, we need to ensure that it is not an excuse to skirt over the more challenging aspects of our faith.

‘I have often said that those who say having a childlike faith means not asking questions haven’t met many children.’ (Rachel Held Evans)

While discovering more about God through his word, we can make wise choices as we follow his plan for our lives. He knows us intimately as he created us, and he is the only shepherd that can be trusted to guide us.

‘Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.’ (Psalm 100:4)

In *The Message* paraphrase we are called to ‘Enter with the password: “Thank you!”’ We are often so quick to outline to God all the things we need that we forget to enter his presence with thanksgiving. As we reflect on our giving, we need to look at all we have to be thankful for individually and as a church.

Psalm 100 calls ‘all the earth’ to worship God, and we are part of the reflection of his glory on earth. The much-loved hymn, ‘O worship the King’ (SASB 52) reminds us how God is ‘Pavilioned in splendour and girded with praise’ – but is that the case in the lives of most Christians?

**‘O worship the King, all glorious above;
O gratefully sing his power and his love;
Our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendour and girded with praise.
(Robert Grant)**

- **When** we go about our everyday life, is Jesus Christ ‘pavilioned in splendour’?
- **Does** the presence of God shine out from us, showing that there’s something different about us?
- **Is our** life one that encircles (girds) God in praise?

If not, then the challenge for all of us is to live lives of praise and thanksgiving that draw others to Jesus.

*‘For the Lord is good and his **Love** endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.’ (Psalm 100:5)*

The psalm concludes with a reminder of God’s love and faithfulness. We are called to worship as an expression of our love for God, and through our service to others we show his love here on Earth. Sometimes we may get a little weary in serving or see the limitations and obstacles in our situation, but it is in those moments that we remember God’s faithfulness to us.

‘Do you know that nothing you do in this life will ever matter, unless it is about loving God and loving the people he has made?’ (Francis Chan)

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STARTERS

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GENEROUS DISCIPLESHIP

Choose one or more of the following questions to start a discussion about generosity.

- **What** is the most generous thing anyone has ever done for you?
- **What** does generosity look like to you?
- **What** film/book character comes to mind when you think of the word 'generous'?

These Bible studies are part of the Generous Discipleship programme exploring ways that we can give of our time, talents and finances.

- **What** do you think it means to be a generous disciple?
 - **What** does a life of generous discipleship look like?
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TODAY'S SPECIAL

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Watch the teaching video to discover the themes for each session, focused on Psalm 100.

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MAINS

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Psalm 100 provides us with a complete picture of a life of generous discipleship, and through these sessions we will explore the theme of each verse.

As we delve into the words of Psalm 100, our lives as worshippers are reoriented and priorities are realigned. It's the perfect psalm to begin the process of reviewing our giving, whether that be our time, talents, or finances.

Read Psalm 100 together from The Message paraphrase.

'On your feet now – applaud God! Bring a gift of laughter, sing yourselves into his presence. Know this: God is God, and God, God. He made us; we didn't make him. We're his people, his well-tended sheep. Enter with the

password: "Thank you!" Make yourselves at home, talking praise. Thank him. Worship him. For God is sheer beauty, all-generous in love, loyal always and ever.'

(Psalm 100:1-5 MSG)

In each session we will take one verse from this well-known psalm and look into a different aspect of generous discipleship. The purpose of today's session is to give a brief introduction to the Scripture and theme for the Generous Discipleship Bible studies.

The aim of this session is to give a brief overview of the content. Keep the pace moving as you move through the content as there will be opportunity for deeper discussion in the later sessions.

SHOUT

'Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.' (Psalm 100:1).

At the beginning of this psalm we are called to shout out our praises to God. This particular shout was reserved for the king and would be used to ensure that everyone knew where your allegiance lay. This session is based on the story of the Rich Young Ruler found in Mark 10:17-24. **Read the passage together.**

- **In what** practical ways do we live out a life that shouts our allegiance to King Jesus?
- **In what** area was the Rich Young Ruler struggling to shout his allegiance to Jesus?

WORSHIP

'Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.' (Psalm 100:2).

In Psalm 100:2 we are urged to 'worship the Lord with gladness'. The original Hebrew word used in this verse is *abad*, a combination of 'worship' and 'service'. It is with this attitude of worship and service that we approach the theme of generous discipleship. **Read 2 Kings 4:8-10 - The Woman of Shunem.**

- **In what** ways are worship and service interlinked?
- **In these** short verses, what does the woman of Shunem teach us through her attitude to worship and service?

KNOW

'Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.' (Psalm 100:3).

Psalm 100 places God at the centre of our giving. He is the one who created us and gave us everything we have. We are encouraged to grow in wisdom and get to know him more as our shepherd. Our Scripture for today focuses on a less well-known Bible story found in 1 Samuel 25. In this story, we meet a foolish landowner, a frustrated leader and a wise woman. Abigail's wisdom encourages us to seek God and love him with our minds, discovering more about him.

- **As you think** about growing in God's wisdom and ways to discover more of him, what is your response to the following quote?

'I have often said that those who say having a childlike faith means not asking questions haven't met many children.' (Rachel Held Evans)

- **What** stands in the way of us getting to know God more?

ENTER

'Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.' (Psalm 100:4).

Psalm 100 is identified as a psalm for giving grateful praise. *The Message* paraphrase says, *'Enter with the password: "Thank you!"'* (Psalm 100:4).

- **At the start** of this journey, exploring the theme of giving, what gifts from God are you personally thankful for?

Our Scripture for this session is John 12:1-7. **Read the passage together.**

- **What** prompted Mary to give such a generous gift?

LOVE

*'For the Lord is good and his **Love** endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.'* (Psalm 100:5).

In Psalm 100:5 we are reminded of God's love and faithfulness throughout the generations. When we live as generous disciples, we show God's love and faithfulness through our giving. Our Scripture today shares the well-known story of Jesus feeding the five thousand. **Read Matthew 14:13-21.**

- **What** was the disciples' attitude to giving in comparison to Jesus?

Share an example of God's faithfulness to you or your church.

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DESSERT

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Give the group time to reflect on the five themes covered throughout this session.

- **Shout** your allegiance to King Jesus.
- **Worship** and serve him with a heart full of gladness.
- **Know** that you are part of his precious flock and discover more of his wisdom.
- **Enter** into his presence with a heart of thanksgiving and praise, recognising he will abundantly bless whatever you have to offer.
- **Love** God and others, remembering that his faithfulness continues from generation to generation.
- **Which** one of these statements resonates with you the most? Why?

PRAYER

Close the session by reading Psalm 100 from *The Passion* translation:

'Praise God - A poetic song for thanksgiving. Lift up a great shout of joy to Yahweh! Go ahead and do it - everyone, everywhere! Worship Yahweh with gladness. Sing your way into his presence with joy! And realise what this really means - we have the privilege of worshiping Yahweh our God. For he is our Creator and we belong to him. We are the people of his pleasure. You can pass through his open gates with the password of praise. Come right into his presence with thanksgiving. Come bring your thank offering to him and affectionately bless his beautiful name! For Yahweh is always good and ready to receive you. He's so loving that it will amaze you - so kind that it will astound you! And he is famous for his faithfulness toward all. Everyone knows our God can be trusted, for he keeps his promises to every generation!' (Psalm 100:1-5 TPT).

BACKGROUND MUSIC

Listed below there is a selection of music that fits with the theme of today's session.

- **'Psalm 100 (Enter in)'** - feat, Joshua Sherman, Charity Gayle, Steven Musso
- **'Psalm 100'** - The Halls

SALVATION ARMY SONGBOOK

41. 'Let all the world in every corner sing'

49. 'O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder'

52. 'O worship the King, all glorious above'

55. 'Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven'

61. 'The King of love my Shepherd is'

64. 'The splendour of the King, clothed in majesty'

74. 'At the name of Jesus'



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Takeaway!

A psalm. For giving grateful **PRAISE**.

SHOUT for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

WORSHIP the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

KNOW that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

ENTER his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his **LOVE** endures for ever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

(Psalm 100: 1–5)

'On your feet now – applaud God! Bring a gift of laughter, sing yourselves into his presence.

Know this: God is God, and God, God. He made us; we didn't make him. We're his people, his well-tended sheep. Enter with the password: "Thank you!" Make yourselves at home, talking praise. Thank him. Worship him. For God is sheer beauty, all-generous in love, loyal always and ever.'

(Psalm 100:1-5 MSG)

'I have often said that those who say having a childlike faith means not asking questions haven't met many children.' (Rachel Held Evans)

- **Shout** your allegiance to King Jesus.
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 - **Know** that you are part of his precious flock and discover more of his wisdom.
 - **Enter** into his presence with a heart of thanksgiving and praise, recognising he will abundantly bless whatever you have to offer.
 - **Love** God and others, remembering that his faithfulness continues from generation to generation.
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