

A RESOURCE FROM
THE SPIRITUAL LIFE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

PSALMS

NATURE

SETTING

PSALMS IN A NATURE SETTING

What a joyful and renewing experience it is to pray a Psalm in a nature setting! Here are some examples to start a retreat with Jesus.

NATURE AND THE PSALMS

The beauty of God's creation draws us to delight in God's goodness and his loving presence in the moment. And the prayer of the Psalmist gives voice and shape to our struggles and longings and connects us with God's loving heart.

Meditating on Scripture (God's special revelation) in the nature setting described (God's general revelation) is a powerful combination for our devotional life! I have especially found this helpful with Praying the Psalms. God has given us the Psalms to help us learn to pray — he knows we need the help!

PSALM 1 & A TREE

Sit near a tree as you meditate on Psalm 1. Reflect on what you fill your mind with as you go about your daily life. Perhaps there's some clutter in your head (e.g., worries, gossip, wishing things were different in your life, self-criticism, angry conversations, lustful thoughts, lists of things you need to do, diversions).

Pray that you'd be like the Psalm 1 Man who delights continually in God's law and his Word, and so he easily and naturally bears much fruit. *"He is like a tree planted by the streams of water" and "his delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night"* (verses 2-3).

What is the Lord saying to you through the tree? How is your fruit-bearing going?



PSALM 16 & A PATH

Take a walk with Jesus on a path. Consider a decision you need to make, and with that in mind, imagine yourself following Jesus or walking hand-in-hand with him. Pray about what path you're to take. Perhaps it's even more important to pray about how you're to walk on whichever path you take.

Let David's words in Psalm 16 inspire you: *"I have set the Lord before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body will also rest secure... You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand"* (verses 8-11).

What is Jesus saying to you on your path? In your daily life what helps you to walk in the joy of the Lord?

PSALM 19 & THE SKY

Look up at the sky as you contemplate Psalm 19 and the sweetness of God's Word – his personal message of love for you!

Especially meditate on these words: *"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech... In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course"* (verses 1-2, 4-5).

How is Jesus like the sun to you? Your Bridegroom who pursues you in love? Your Champion who sets the way and pace for your life's race? What else do you notice about the sky?



PSALM 36 & A FOUNTAIN (OR FLOWING WATER)

Pray by a fountain. Perhaps you've been busy or dry lately. Let the fountain speak to your soul. Listen to the Spirit in its splashing waters. Attune your life rhythm to its rhythm; go with its flow.

Ask God to use the fountain to help you to meditate on Psalm 36, which includes these words: *"We feast on the abundance of your house; you give [us] drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light"* (verses 8-9).

What does the fountain teach you about where you're at in your relationship with God today? In what ways do you need Christ to be a fountain of life for you?

PSALM 42 & A WATERFALL, OCEAN OR STREAM

Sit at a stream or waterfall and listen to “the Deep” of God’s calling to “the deep” in your soul as you meditate on Psalm 42.

Let the flowing waters help you to pray with the Psalmist: *“Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me. By the day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me”* (verses 7-8).

What does the stream teach you about becoming the person that God dreams for you to be? How is Jesus speaking to you or ministering God’s love to you in the stream?



PSALM 46 & A LAKE OR STREAM

Pick a quiet spot by a lake to be still with Jesus and pray Psalm 46 (or pray as you walk around the lake).

After you’ve spent some time with the Psalm, focus on verse 10. Take in the peace of the lake as you slowly repeat to yourself God’s words to the Psalmist: *“Be still and know that I am God.”* Make your prayer a “Breath Prayer” by breathing in the words slowly and deeply.

What does the lake teach you about the kind of person God dreams for you to be? In what areas of your life do you need to learn from Jesus to “Be still”?

PSALM 62 & A ROCK

Find a rock – a large one to sit on (or near) or a small one to hold. In his desert trials, David often found shelter, safety, rest, and prayer in a cave in the rocks. Perhaps in some areas, you're feeling unsure or unstable, fearful or fickle. Open your heart to God and tell him just how you feel.

Use the rock to meditate on Psalm 62. Pray that his words would be true of you: *"My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation"* (verses 1-2).

How do you need Jesus to be your Rock today?



PSALM 72 & A GRASSY AREA

Sit in a grassy area – you might want to take your shoes off and let your feet feel the grass! Consider how you, like the grass, need continual water to live.

Let the grass help you to meditate on Psalm 72:6: *"[Christ] will be like rain falling on a mown field."* Feel your thirst for God's living waters... Try using this Breath Prayer... Breathe in slowly as you whisper: *"Fall on me, O Spirit of Christ..."* Breathe out slowly as you whisper: *"Like rain falls on a mown field."*

What helps you to relax and be refreshed? What helps you to satisfy your thirst for more of God's Spirit?

PSALM 104 & THE BIRDS

Look and listen for the birds. Notice how joyfully they sing! The same Father that cares for them cares for you. Let the birds lead you to give thanks and praise to God. With the birds and the angels of the heavens, you are joining God's love song – he sings his love over you first!

Meditate on the birds and Psalm 104:1, 12, 28, 30: *"Praise the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, you are very great... The birds of the air nest by the waters; they sing among the branches... When you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things... When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth."*

Recently, have you been appreciating God's goodness and care? Right now is a good time to smile, sing, and give thanks to God!





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