

# The Psalms: Divine & Human Prayer

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The child learns to speak because the parent speaks to the child. The child learns the language of the parent. So we learn to speak to God because God has spoken and speaks to us. In the language of the Father in heaven God's children learn to speak with God. Repeating God's own words, we begin to pray to God. We ought to speak to God, and God wishes to hear us, not in the false and confused language of our heart but in the clear and pure language that God has spoken to us in Jesus Christ.

God's speech in Jesus Christ meets us in the Holy Scriptures. If we want to pray with assurance and joy, then the word of Holy Scripture must be the firm foundation of our prayer. Here we know that Jesus Christ, the Word of God, teaches us to pray. The words that come from God will be the steps on which we find our way to God.

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If we want to read and to pray the prayers of the Bible, and especially the Psalms, we must not, therefore, first ask what they have to do with us, but what they have to do with Jesus Christ. We must ask how we can understand the Psalms as God's Word, and only then can we pray them with Jesus Christ. Thus it does not matter whether the Psalms express exactly what we feel in our heart at the moment we pray. Perhaps it is precisely the case that we must pray against our own heart in order to pray rightly. It is not just that for which we ourselves want to pray that is important, but that for which God wants us to pray. If we were dependent on ourselves alone, we would probably often pray only the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer. But God wants it otherwise. Not the poverty of our heart, but the richness of God's word, ought to determine our prayer.

*Prayerbook of the Bible: Introduction to the Psalms*  
By Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906 – 1945)

PSALM	THEME	TYPE
<b>Psalm 1</b>	True Happiness in God's Law	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 2</b>	A Psalm for a Royal Coronation	<i>Royal</i>
<b>Psalm 3</b>	Threatened but Trusting	<i>Confidence</i>
<b>Psalm 4</b>	Trust in God	<i>Confidence</i>
<b>Psalm 5</b>	Prayer for Divine Help	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 6</b>	Prayer In Distress	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 7</b>	God the Vindicator	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 8</b>	Divine Majesty and Human Dignity	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 9</b>	Thanksgiving for Victory and Prayer for Justice	<i>Thanksgiving</i>
<b>Psalm 10</b>	Thanksgiving for Victory and Prayer for Justice	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 11</b>	Confidence in the Presence of God	<i>Confidence</i>
<b>Psalm 12</b>	Prayer Against Evil Tongues	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 13</b>	Prayer For Help	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 14</b>	A Lament over Widespread Corruption	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 15</b>	The Righteous Israelite	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 16</b>	God the Supreme Good	<i>Confidence</i>
<b>Psalm 17</b>	Prayer for Rescue from Persecutors	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 18</b>	A King's Thanksgiving for Victory	<i>Royal</i>
<b>Psalm 19</b>	God's Glory in the Heavens and in the Law	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 20</b>	Prayer For the King in Time of War	<i>Royal</i>

<b>Psalm 21</b>	Thanksgiving and Assurances for The King	<i>Royal</i>
<b>Psalm 22</b>	The Prayer of An Innocent Person	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 23</b>	The Lord, Shepherd and Healer	<i>Confidence</i>
<b>Psalm 24</b>	The Glory of God in Procession to Zion	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 25</b>	Confident Prayer for Forgiveness and Guidance	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 26</b>	Prayer of Innocence	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 27</b>	Trust in God	<i>Confidence</i>
<b>Psalm 28</b>	Petition and Thanksgiving	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 29</b>	The Lord of Majesty Acclaimed as King of the World	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 30</b>	Thanksgiving for Deliverance	<i>Thanksgiving</i>
<b>Psalm 31</b>	Prayer in Distress and Thanksgiving for Escape	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 32</b>	Remission of Sin	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 33</b>	Praise of God's Power and Providence	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 34</b>	Thanksgiving to God Who Delivers the Just	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 35</b>	Prayer for Help Against Unjust Enemies	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 36</b>	Human Wickedness and Divine Providence	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 37</b>	The Fate of Sinners and the Reward of the Just	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 38</b>	Prayer of an Afflicted Sinner	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 39</b>	The Vanity of Life	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 40</b>	Gratitude and Prayer for Help	<i>Thanksgiving</i>
<b>Psalm 41</b>	Thanksgiving After Sickness	<i>Thanksgiving</i>
<b>Psalm 42</b>	Longing for God's Presence in the Temple	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 43</b>	Longing for God's Presence in the Temple	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 44</b>	God's Past Favor and Israel's Present Need	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 45</b>	Song for a Royal Wedding	<i>Royal</i>
<b>Psalm 46</b>	God, the Protector of Zion	<i>Song of Zion</i>
<b>Psalm 47</b>	The Ruler of All the Nations	<i>Kingship of God</i>
<b>Psalm 48</b>	The Splendor of the Invincible City	<i>Song of Zion</i>
<b>Psalm 49</b>	Confidence In God Rather than in Riches	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 50</b>	The Acceptable Sacrifice	<i>Divine Oracle</i>
<b>Psalm 51</b>	The Miserere: Prayer of Repentance	<i>Lament</i>

<b>Psalm 52</b>	The Deceitful Tongue	<i>Exhortation</i>
<b>Psalm 53</b>	A Lament over Widespread Corruption	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 54</b>	Confident Prayer In Great Peril	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 55</b>	A Lament over Betrayal	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 56</b>	Trust in God	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 57</b>	Confident Prayer for Deliverance	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 58</b>	The Dethroning of Unjust Rulers	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 59</b>	Complaint Against Blood Thirsty Enemies	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 60</b>	Lament After Defeat in Battle	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 61</b>	Prayer for the King in Time of Danger	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 62</b>	Trust in God Alone	<i>Confidence</i>
<b>Psalm 63</b>	Ardent Longing for God	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 64</b>	Treacherous Conspirators Punished by God	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 65</b>	Thanksgiving for God's Blessings	<i>Thanksgiving</i>
<b>Psalm 66</b>	Praise of God, Israel's Deliverer	<i>Composite</i>
<b>Psalm 67</b>	Harvest Thanks and Petition	<i>Thanksgiving</i>
<b>Psalm 68</b>	The Exodus and Conquest, Pledge of Future Help	<i>Thanksgiving</i>
<b>Psalm 69</b>	A Cry of Anguish in Great Distress	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 70</b>	Prayer for Divine Help	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 71</b>	Prayer In Time of Old Age	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 72</b>	A Prayer for The King	<i>Royal Hem</i>
<b>Psalm 73</b>	The Trial of the Just	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 74</b>	Prayer at the Destruction of the Temple	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 75</b>	God the Judge of the World	<i>Exhortation</i>
<b>Psalm 76</b>	God Defends Zion	<i>Song of Zion</i>
<b>Psalm 77</b>	Confidence in God During National Distress	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 78</b>	A New Beginning in Zion and David	<i>Historical</i>
<b>Psalm 79</b>	A Prayer for Jerusalem	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 80</b>	Prayer to Restore God's Vineyard	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 81</b>	An Admonition to Fidelity	<i>Exhortation</i>
<b>Psalm 82</b>	The Downfall of Unjust Gods	<i>Divine Oracle</i>
<b>Psalm 83</b>	Prayer Against a Hostile Alliance	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 84</b>	Prayer of a Pilgrim to Jerusalem	<i>Song of Zion</i>
<b>Psalm 85</b>	Prayer for Divine Favor	<i>Lament</i>

<b>Psalm 86</b>	Prayer in Time of Distress	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 87</b>	Zion the True Birthplace	<i>Song of Zion</i>
<b>Psalm 88</b>	A Despairing Lament	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 89</b>	A Lament over God's Promise to David	<i>Royal</i>
<b>Psalm 90</b>	God's Eternity and Human Frailty	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 91</b>	Security Under God's Protection	<i>Confidence</i>
<b>Psalm 92</b>	A Hymn of Thanksgiving for God's Fidelity	<i>Thanksgiving</i>
<b>Psalm 93</b>	God Is a Mighty King	<i>Kingship Of God</i>
<b>Psalm 94</b>	A Prayer for Deliverance from the Wicked	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 95</b>	A Call to Praise and Obedience	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 96</b>	God of the Universe	<i>Kingship of God</i>
<b>Psalm 97</b>	The Divine Ruler of All	<i>Kingship of God</i>
<b>Psalm 98</b>	The Coming of God	<i>Kingship of God</i>
<b>Psalm 99</b>	The Holy King	<i>Kingship of God</i>
<b>Psalm 100</b>	Processional Hymn	<i>Him</i>
<b>Psalm 101</b>	Norm of Life for Rulers	<i>Royal</i>
<b>Psalm 102</b>	Prayer in Time of Distress	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 103</b>	Praise of Divine Goodness	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 104</b>	Praise of God the Creator	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 105</b>	God's Fidelity to the Promise	<i>Historical</i>
<b>Psalm 106</b>	Israel's Confession of Sin	<i>Historical</i>
<b>Psalm 107</b>	God the Savior of Those in Distress	<i>Confidence</i>
<b>Psalm 108</b>	Prayer for Victory	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 109</b>	Prayer of a Person Falsely Accused	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 110</b>	God Appoints the King both King and Priest	<i>Royal</i>
<b>Psalm 111</b>	Praise of God for Goodness to Israel	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 112</b>	The Blessings of the Just	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 113</b>	Praise of God's Care for the Poor	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 114</b>	The Lord's Wonders at the Exodus	<i>Historical</i>
<b>Psalm 115</b>	The Greatness of the True God	<i>Confidence</i>
<b>Psalm 116</b>	Thanksgiving to God Who Saves from Death	<i>Thanksgiving</i>
<b>Psalm 117</b>	The Nations Called to Praise	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 118</b>	Hymn of Thanksgiving	<i>Thanksgiving</i>
<b>Psalm 119</b>	A Prayer to God, the Lawgiver	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 120</b>	A Prayer of a Returned Exile	<i>Composite</i>

<b>Psalm 121</b>	The Lord My Guardian	<i>Confidence</i>
<b>Psalm 122</b>	A Pilgrim's Prayer for Jerusalem	<i>Song of Zion</i>
<b>Psalm 123</b>	Reliance on the Lord	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 124</b>	God, the Rescuer of the People	<i>Thanksgiving</i>
<b>Psalm 125</b>	Israel's Protector	<i>Confidence</i>
<b>Psalm 126</b>	The Reversal of Zion's Fortunes	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 127</b>	The Need of God's Blessings	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 128</b>	The Blessed Home of the Just	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 129</b>	Against Israel's Enemies	<i>Confidence</i>
<b>Psalm 130</b>	Prayer for Pardon and Mercy	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 131</b>	Humble Trust in God	<i>Confidence</i>
<b>Psalm 132</b>	The Covenant Between David and God	<i>Royal</i>
<b>Psalm 133</b>	A Vision of a Blessed Community	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 134</b>	Exhortation to the Night Watch to Bless God	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 135</b>	Praise of God, the Ruler and Benefactor of Israel	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 136</b>	Hymn of Thanksgiving for God's Everlasting Mercy	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 137</b>	Sorrow and Hope in Exile	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 138</b>	Hymn of a Grateful Heart	<i>Confidence</i>
<b>Psalm 139</b>	The All-knowing and Ever-present God	<i>Wisdom</i>
<b>Psalm 140</b>	Prayer for Deliverance from the Wicked	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 141</b>	Prayer for Deliverance from the Wicked	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 142</b>	A Prayer in Time of Trouble	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 143</b>	A Prayer in Distress	<i>Lament</i>
<b>Psalm 144</b>	A Prayer for Victory and Prosperity	<i>Royal</i>
<b>Psalm 145</b>	The Greatness and Goodness of God	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 146</b>	Trust in God the Creator and Redeemer	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 147</b>	God's Word Restores Jerusalem	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 148</b>	All Creation Summoned to Praise	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 149</b>	Praise God with Song and Sword	<i>Hymn</i>
<b>Psalm 150</b>	Final Doxology	<i>Hymn</i>