

Bibliography – The Psalms

The Case for the Psalms: Why They are Essential by N.T. Wright, Harper Collins (2013).

This is a quick and easy read. In this book N. T. Wright shares ways in which the Psalms have been significant for him, ways he has found God in the Psalms, some of his favorite Psalms, and very briefly, his technique for incorporating the Psalms into his daily life.

Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Augsburg Fortress (1970)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer died at the hands of the Nazis in 1944. This translation of his small but succinct writing on the Psalms calls us to pray the Psalms as though we were listening to Jesus pray these psalms for himself and only then ask how do I pray these psalms in our own corporate and private worship. He covers various topics he finds in the Psalms such as Creation, the Law, history, the Messiah, the Church, life, suffering guilt, enemies, the End i.e. resurrection life. The book includes a short biography of Bonhoeffer.

Psalms: Prayers of the Heart by Eugene H. Peterson a LifeGuide Bible Studies, IVP Connect (1987, 2000)

This is a guided study of twelve Psalms looking at twelve topics: 1 – Inattention; 2 – Intimidation; 3- Trouble; 8- Creation; 51 – Sin; 103 – Salvation; 23- Fear; 137- Hate; 6 – Tears; 73 – Doubt; 90 – Death; 150 – Praise. This book is intended to be used either by individuals or a small group, but some of the topic and questions cause us to do some hard self-reflection and some may find them difficult to share unless the group has built a level of trust.

Praying with the Psalms: A Year of Daily Prayers and Reflections on the Words of David by Eugene H. Peterson, HarperOne (1979)

This is exactly what the title suggests: 365 readings which takes you through the Psalms in one year (you need a separate copy of the Psalms to complete the reading), a one to two verse selection from the psalm (or portion of the psalm) of the day, a two or three sentence reflection, and a two or three sentence prayer. Great for someone who wanted to complete the Psalms in the course of a year, but did not have time for a more in-depth study.

Reflections of the Psalms by C.S. Lewis, HarperOne (1958)

Lewis tells us up front that this is not an academic work, but more like two schoolboys (himself being one) trying to help each other with their homework. The Psalms are hard and he admits it up front and tackles the hardest stuff first, judgement, cursings and death then moves on to laughter or joy, vanity or self-righteousness, God in nature, praise, and reading a second meaning (Christian) into the Psalms. I found this book thought provoking, but not overly difficult.

Rage! Reflect! Rejoice! (Praying with the Psalmists) By Thomas H Troeger, Westminster Press (1977)

Reading the psalms, Troeger says, we are inclined to admit, "That's exactly how I feel! I have not been able to say it, but you've put it in just the right words." The psalms are not delivered demurely in a polite drawing room, but are often full of rage, complaint, anger, and also praise, thankfulness, and joy. Just as we are. This book is not so much a study of the psalms as it is an experience of living the psalms as a kind of prayer. Good book for individual or small group study.

Out of the Depths (The Psalms Speak for us Today) by Bernhard W. Anderson and Steven Bishop, Westminster John Knox Press, 3rd ed. (2000)

A readable textbook for the novice student of the psalms. Used in the spiritual formation program at the Seminary of the Southwest. Indispensable for understanding the background of the psalms - when, where, and why they were written and how they were used by the Hebrews in their worship and daily lives.