



Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

Short Study 048: Psalm 40

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Read: Psalm 40.

Introduction: We owe a debt of gratitude to David for sharing his feelings so openly in his Psalms. It reveals him to be a man with like passions, emotions and weaknesses as ourselves. I take great encouragement in knowing that a man who faced so many pressures and trials in his busy life invariably won through to praising and trusting in God. There are many lessons we can learn from the life and writings of this king who started life as a shepherd and is described as “a man after (God’s) own heart” (Acts 21:22). A study of Psalm 40 will yield some valuable lessons.

The Value of Patience (verses 1-4). Here is a lesson for those who have been praying for a long time for God to act. Listed here are five blessings David gained for his patience. See if you can identify them. There is another in Isaiah 40:31.

A God to be Trusted (verses 4-5). Trusting in God brings further blessing. His works are beyond counting, says David. It should not be too difficult, then, to dwell on the good things that God has done, and is currently doing, rather than on the disappointing negatives that so often occupy our thoughts. How about taking a few minutes now to thank God for His blessings?

A God to be Obeyed (verses 6-8). Where are these verses quoted in the New Testament? Look them up and see in what context they are mentioned and what the New Testament author makes of them.

A Testimony to be Shared (verse 9-10). What does David say he has shared?

Appeal (verse 11-15). Notice David does not bring his requests to God until after He has recalled God’s greatness (in the first 10 verses). Can you see the wisdom of keeping to this order (a pattern that is repeated frequently in prayers recorded in Scripture – notably the Lord’s Prayer). What does David ask for here?

Reasons for Rejoicing (verse 16). Here David prays for others.

- Who is it that might rejoice and be glad?
- Who might be motivated to praise the Lord?

Closing Prayer (verse 17). Why do you think David, a King, considers himself “poor and needy”?

(Note: Several verses in this Psalm are repeated in Psalm 70.)

To think about: Am I patient enough? Am I praising enough?

To dig deeper: Read what commentators say about this Psalm and Psalm 70. Read about or consider what you know about the life of David. What might have influenced him to say some of the things he wrote in this Psalm?