

Be refreshed

A journey through the Psalms
for busy mums and dads

Written by Andy Frost and Cathy Madavan



kitchen
table
project



Inspire a faith that lasts



Introduction

The Psalms are an eclectic mix of prayers and songs that are filled with emotion.

They give us permission to come to God as we are, no matter how we are feeling. Whether we as mums, dads and carers, are riding on euphoria or if we are sleep-deprived and seem to be drowning in a sea of worries and concerns, the Psalms remind us that we can always come to God.

Over and over again the beautiful poetry reveals the true character of God, that he is King, that he is good and that he is listening. So join us on this whistle-stop tour of some of the psalms and create a little space in the busy routine of making packed lunches and the mountains of laundry to be with God.

About the authors



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The Psalms
remind us that
we can always
come to God.

Thanks

by Andy Frost



Read

Psalm 100



Reflect

There are these moments when something very deep within me wants to shout “Thank you!”

There was that magical moment when I clumsily held my daughter for the first time; holding this delicate, intricate human being against my chest and marvelling at the beauty of new life. There are those mornings, when I’m barely awake, when my four year old clammers into bed, tries to get her arms around me and whispers, “I love you Daddy.” There are those moments of pure joy as I spend time laughing with my six-year-old, as we finish our walk in the great outdoors as the sun sets with a flurry of colour.

It’s in these moments that I’m glad I’m not an atheist. I have someone to thank.

But the truth is, I can spend a lot more of my time asking God for things rather than thanking him for what he has already blessed me with. Psalm 100 is a helpful reminder to give “grateful praise.”

How do we give thanks?

We can give thanks with shouts of joy and song – and it doesn’t have to sound beautiful! The essence of the Hebrew word used for shout for joy is like a victorious battle cry.

We can give thanks by serving God, not with a begrudging attitude but with one of thanksgiving. Part of our worship is how we parent, how we partner with him in caring for our children.

We can give thanks by knowing God. He wants to be known and we express our

thanks to him by choosing to go deeper in our relationship with him.

We can give thanks together. Our faith is expressed in community – in our family and in the wider Church.

Why do we give thanks?

To be honest, there are days when we might not feel thankful at all. We are exhausted, the kids are grumpy, it’s raining outside and pay day is still a week away.

Our circumstances are not always easy, but the psalmist reminds us that ultimately we give thanks because of who God is. Every breath we have to praise him is in fact a gift from him. God is for us. We are his people. He does not disown us but identifies with us. God cares for us. God is good and faithful.

So, no matter what your circumstances are today, how can you give thanks?



Respond

What can you give thanks to God for today in terms of your children?

*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 forever; his
faithfulness continues through
all generations.*

Psalm 100:4–5

Planted

by Cathy Madavan



Read

Psalm 1



Reflect

I love being a mum and the joy it is to love my children. But sometimes I feel like I am pulled in so many directions. One minute I am attending a school concert, the next I am bashing the computer to make a work deadline and a moment later I am zooming around the supermarket like Lewis Hamilton with a trolley (beware anyone who comes between me and the tins of Peppa-Pig-shaped spaghetti).

But wherever I am physically, Psalm 1 reassures me that I can still be planted and rooted in God's truth continually and nourished by his presence. What a wonderful promise that is.

Deep roots

Of course, it is impossible to read the Bible around the clock, but we can deliberately get to know the word of God, savour it, meditate upon it and apply it in such a way that its truth becomes integrated into our life – and into the lives of our children.

When my girls were small, they loved sharing Bible stories at bedtime and listened to some wonderful audio Bible books as they went to sleep. But as our children grow older, we will want to encourage them to read and pray for themselves, to drive them to camps and youth groups and to deliberately ask more about what they have been discovering. We might not have all the answers to their questions, but we can always explore faith and the Bible together in an atmosphere of love.

Fruitful lives

Like us, our children are blessed when they know that God is with them everywhere. As

they are planted continually into the streams of God's love and truth, they can draw upon his presence in the playground or in an exam as well as on a Sunday morning.

As parents we can grow in our own desire for God's word and prayer, which will impact our families significantly. Our homes and churches are places where we put down those deep roots together so that we can all flourish and be fruitful wherever we find ourselves each day.



Respond

How can we remind each other to draw on the streams of God's presence? Are there creative visual, written or digital prompts that we could use to "meditate" on God's truths throughout the day?

Blessed is the one ... whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season.

Psalm 1:1–3

Present

by Andy Frost



Read

Psalms 23



Reflect

We don't know the future. And as parents we often have a flurry of concerns for our children. Will they get into the right school? Will they make good friends? How much should we be concerned about their grades? Are we making the right choices about their futures?

We can end up living in a place of fear.

Psalms 23 begins with three verses that depict a serene country walk with green pastures, quiet waters and straight paths. Then verse four changes tack and begins talking about the darkest of valleys. In verse five, we have this strange picture of a meal prepared while surrounded by enemies. This is David the warrior writing and I picture this fine dining experience with sword-wielding soldiers set all around, waiting to attack.

Changing circumstances

In life, we are never sure how our circumstances will pan out. There will probably be times with green pastures and there will likely be some dark valleys.

In verse five, although enemies surround David, God has laid a banquet for him. His head is dripping with oil, which was a precious commodity, and his cup is overflowing. This is a beautiful picture showing that even in this dark moment with the enemy all around, God is present, meeting David's needs.

God-centred living

As we look into the future we can often fear what lies ahead, but this psalm is a reminder that we are ultimately not defined by circumstances. We can't control the future. The

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Psalms 23:4-5

Israelites were instructed to keep the Sabbath holy, resting one day in seven. Even during the harvest times, they were to keep this rhythm. It may have meant that they collected less crops but it reminded them that they were not the masters of their own destiny. They were to trust in the presence of God.

God-centred living is not about being dictated to by circumstance. It's about responding to the provision of God.

God-centred living is not about being defined by what we can make happen. It's about being rooted in God's grace.

God-centred living is not about being fixated on the "what ifs" in the future. It's about responding to God, who is our shepherd, in whom we lack nothing.



Respond

Put your concern for the future to one side and look for moments when you recognise the presence of God. It could be in the joy of your child's laughter or the stillness as your children sleep. God is present.

Still

by Cathy Madavan



Read

Psalm 46



Reflect

Stillness is not my natural state of being. I'm a bit of a fidget and I like being busy and thrive on getting stuff done. Even when sat in front of the TV, I end up multi-tasking on crafts or emails. I don't exactly find it easy to be still.

But I miss out on God's best for me when I don't pause and lean on him. If God really is my fortress and he is fighting my battles, then I don't need to be the superhero all the time. Maybe I should rest more in his strength as opposed to trying to win all the victories myself. If only I could be more still and know that he is God.

Can you relate at all?

Living in a fortress

How does describing God as a fortress or a military stronghold encourage us to be still anyway? Does that not imply we are living in a war-zone – which is hardly restful?! But maybe that's the point of the imagery. Fortifications were often built around settlements, sometimes even around whole towns. Within the safety of their huge walls, life carried on in relative calm while the strength of the fortress and the power of the king was your protection, even against hostile forces.

Living in stillness

Every one of us needs to know peace and stillness surrounding us in the busyness and battles of life. Our children also need to know that they are safe when the friendship issues or the exam pressures make them feel that war is being waged all around them. Within the confines of God's strength and protection, they are safe and secure in him.

He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Psalm 46:10–11

As parents whose natural instincts are to keep the schedules spinning, making sure everything is as OK as possible, as often as possible, perhaps we could benefit from learning to be still and know that God is God and we are not. He is stronger than we are and he loves our children even more than we do.



Respond

Take a moment to simply be still, wherever you are. Focus your thoughts on your Heavenly Father and his love and strength.

Consider areas where you are fighting battles – for yourself or on behalf of your family. What would it mean to dwell within the fortress walls of God's protection and to know his peace in the midst of it? How can you trust him to fight for you?

Positioned

by Cathy Madavan



Read

Psalm 145



Reflect

Children absorb so much at home. Our girls have learned that Mexican food is undoubtedly the best food. They know that country walks are more welcome than gym membership. They've witnessed our political opinions and our sports preferences. The truth is, we naturally pass on to the next generation our values, preferences and beliefs – intentionally or unintentionally. Every person has grown up in a context, and it always shapes part of us, for better and for worse!

So why do we feel so often that the influence we have on our children is limited? That they will happily listen to their teachers in school or at church, but not to us at home?

Where are we positioned?

The voices that influence our children are many and varied – at school, online and in their wider relationships. We know that some of what they pick up will be great, and some of it less so. But let's never underestimate our own significance. No matter how it feels, what we say and do is impacting our children. As parents, we are able to nurture the next generation spiritually as well as emotionally and physically, giving them food for thought as well as packing their lunch boxes!

Of course, small children will initially believe everything we say, will then question it and finally they will make their own decisions. That's perfectly normal. We are, however, uniquely positioned and called to pass on to our children the amazing truth of God's love and his passion for them – that he created them and has good plans for them.

What can we say?

Most of us don't have a theology degree. We can't share with our children what we don't know, but the challenge is to authentically share what we do know about God's goodness in our lives. Importantly, we can even acknowledge his faithfulness in the disappointments, mistakes and tough times and share those experiences too. We can choose to prioritise faith conversations, prayer and church activities that will help them to grow spiritually.



Respond

How often do we share stories about what God has done in our lives? Start small, giving thanks for today, and then share one story of God's goodness.

*Great is the Lord and most
worthy of praise; his greatness
no one can fathom. One
generation commends your
works to another; they tell of
your mighty acts.*

Psalm 145:3–4

History

by Andy Frost



Read

Psalm 40



Reflect

Do you ever have dark days when life is hard?

You're feeling under the weather and it's wet and windy outside. The house is a mess, overflowing with laundry. The kids are going stir crazy cooped up indoors all day and the boiler decides to break down.

Parenting alongside the pressures of everyday life is hard. Sometimes there are hard days and sometimes these seasons last longer than a day. There are financial problems or health issues or relational difficulties.

David had endured some tough seasons. In this psalm he uses language like being in a slimy pit, about being in the mud and mire. We are not sure exactly what he was referring to. Perhaps it was facing off wild animals as a young shepherd boy, or walking towards Goliath on the battlefield. Or maybe it was the season where he had to live in exile hiding from King Saul. But whatever the situation, David remembers God as his rock and saviour.

The rear view mirror

David begins this psalm by looking back. He had waited patiently for God to do something (v1). God doesn't always work to our timetable but God does come through for David. Not only is David rescued but he also writes, "He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand" (v2). And the result is that David sings a new song, like Moses and Miriam after their escape from Egypt and like Mary after her angelic visitation.

*I waited patiently for the Lord;
he turned to me and heard my cry.
He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire; he set my feet
on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.
He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the Lord
and put their trust in him.*

Psalm 40:1-3

A fresh perspective

God doesn't always come through for us in the way we expect or want him to, but looking back David sees God's faithfulness and it helps him see clearly in the present. Reflecting on the past helps David to trust in God (v4); to follow God's ways (v8); to speak of God's works (vs9-10); to face difficulties in the present (vs12-13); and to worship God no matter what (v16). Above all, it helps David to remember that although he is king, he is still, "poor and needy" (v17).

When we remember the good things God has done and the times he has set our feet on the rock, it can help us to refocus and trust in him, no matter how deep the pit may seem.



Respond

Take some time to reflect on your life story. Where has God helped you and what does this mean for how you tackle the difficulties you might be facing in this season?

Love

by Cathy Madavan



Read

Psalm 117



Reflect

Isn't it interesting how children are so totally different? I'm amazed at how our two girls take such alternative approaches to life. One thrives in maths, logic and deadlines; the other loves creating, relating and takes a more relaxed approach. Likewise, my husband and I are a case study in how two totally opposite temperaments can live in the same house without driving each other crazy. (Well, most of the time!)

Unsurprisingly then, we each show our love to one other and to God in different ways. Some of us are more expressive and others more introverted. Some of us love discovering more about God by studying the Bible, and others are more likely to connect in worship or by admiring God's wonderful creation. The important thing is not how we respond to his great love towards us, but that we do praise and love him in our own way.

Learning to love

One of the joys of having small children is being able to point to God's goodness in the everyday circumstances around us. We can admire a rainbow and be reminded of his promises, we can pray and give thanks for the kindness of people, we can paint pictures for God or learn verses that remind us of his love.

Learning to integrate our relationships with God into our conversations and activities is not only a wonderful discipline, but also a delight – for us as well as our children.

Leaning into love

As our children grow and we see their unique personality flourish, it's fascinating to see how

they are wired to show love to others and God. One of my girls is motivated by working with children, the other is more passionate about justice issues. One is more tactile, the other more verbal. They respond differently to how they receive love but also how they serve and worship and lean into loving others. As author Gary Chapman says, we each have our own 'Love Language.' *

Have you ever considered how members of your family best give and receive love in their own unique way?



Respond

What a wonderful calling it is to discover more about love together in our family. How do you each best express and receive love?

Invite the Holy Spirit to remind you again of the Father's love for you and every member of your family. Spend some time receiving that love and praying about how best to show his love to those around you today.

*Find out more about the Five Love Languages at www.5lovelanguages.com

Praise the Lord, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples. For great is his love towards us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.

Psalm 117:1–2

Trust

by Andy Frost



Read

Psalm 121



Reflect

Having children has definitely marked a new season of life and as I begin to look back on my life so far, I can see the many twists and turns it has taken. Many people use the analogy of life as a journey and I can begin to see why that analogy is helpful.

Commentators believe that Psalm 121 pictures a journey, the pilgrimage journey to Jerusalem. The journey is hard and dangerous with various perils lying ahead and the opening line is an acknowledgement of the need for help. The psalmist looks up to the mountains, which were the place where all kinds of idolatry took place, and there is a sense of wondering and searching. "Where does my help come from?"

Not where but who

The psalmist continues to tell us that help comes from God and the following verses unpack what that help looks like. He stops our feet from slipping. He helps us against the elements, the searing sun in the day and the bitter coldness of night. He protects us from harm.

Sometimes we can take this psalm too literally, and believe that following God means there will be no trouble in the journey of life. We could almost think that if God is our shade, there is no need to wear sun cream. The truth is, there will be hardships, but despite those difficulties there are echoes of Romans 8:38, that nothing can separate us from God's love.

Responsibility

No matter how easy or how tough the journey of life is, the psalmist declares that God will watch over us. Although we get tired at times,

I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Psalm 121:1–2

God does not stop watching over us because he doesn't need to sleep. That's a powerful image!

In those early days and weeks of childhood, we watch over our children intently. Having watched over our children since birth, one of the hardest things about seeing them grow up is having to begin to let go and allow them to do things by themselves. There is the first play date, the first day at school and the first overnight away from home.

Ultimately we can't watch our children all the time, but this psalm reminds us that God will be their help and will never leave them. In the journey of life, they will face tough times but God is watching over them.



Respond

How does knowing that God is watching over our children impact the way we parent? How might it affect how we pray for them?

Battle

by Cathy Madavan



Read

Psalm 17



Reflect

We may not be in a literal war zone like the psalmist King David, but haven't we all felt like we live in a battlefield from time to time?! Our family have fought over many things including vegetable eating, leaving the house on time, bedroom-floor-mess-issues and more. It really is living on the front-line, this parenting lark.

Some battles are tougher than others, and it is here that our faith is so precious to us. Sometimes though, we end up struggling away on our own, using up our own resources instead of depending on God. Maybe we forget to ask him or others for reinforcement as we face our challenges.

He keeps us secure

As parents, it is good to know where we stand in a battle. When our children sense division in the ranks or uncertainty in the orders, they will take full advantage! This means not throwing out a hundred threats that mean nothing, but instead we should be secure and sure about what really matters most.

With God's help, we can be strong and loving and fair, especially when that means keeping our children safe or making decisions in their best interests that they might not appreciate. God might even prompt us to compromise when we need to!

He trains our hands

Consider the wise friends or parents who have helped you to learn more about parenting or marriage. Many of us simply could not have coped without other people and the various

parenting courses, blogs, books and peer groups (as well as the Bible's great guidance) that have equipped us for the ups and downs of relationships.

It's not a failure to know we need help, it is a strength, and none of us come fully trained for the relationships struggles of life. Thankfully God is always there to equip us and so are other people who have fought the same battles.



Respond

Where do you go for advice when the going gets tough? Who do you learn most from?

Tell God where you are facing any battles at the moment. How can you prayerfully expect God to equip you for the task at hand? Ask for his strength and strategies.

It is God who arms me with strength and keep my way secure. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he causes me to stand on the heights. He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

Psalm 17:32-34

Creation

by Cathy Madavan



Read

Psalm 8



Reflect

Have you ever sat watching a sunset, the sea or a magnificent mountain view and been left in awe? These moments lead us instinctively to consider that there must be more than just us. It's too incredible and transcendent to all exist without a Creator.

Like the psalmist we might sometimes feel small in the grand landscape of God's majestic handiwork, and yet he knows and loves us, who are part of his creation.

Noticing the Creator

Just as we don't look at the Mona Lisa without considering Da Vinci's workmanship, creation also points to its master craftsman. As we walk through a magnificent forest of trees that bring life in so many ways, we are reminded to admire not only the foliage but the even greater wonder of the One who can germinate mighty oaks from hard little acorns.

God must love it when we notice his creation, don't you think? He must enjoy hearing us say, "Great job, God! This is beautiful!" Our children and young people instinctively love the texture of sand, the smoothness of pebbles and the wriggleness of bugs. There's so much to discover about the Creator as we enjoy his creation.

Magnifying the Creator

When our children were small, we used to put spiders and leaves under a magnifier to examine them more closely. These days, however, one of them is studying physics

*When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers, the moon
and the stars, which you have set
in place, what is mankind that
you are mindful of them, human
beings that you care for them?*

Psalm 8:3–4

at university and is looking at the universe down a lens. The more she learns about the extraordinary principles of creation at a macro and a micro level, the more surprised she is that every physicist is not a believer! At any age, we can zoom into God's beauty and magnify his power as we examine the works of his hands and give Him the glory and praise he deserves.



Respond

When was the last time creation took your breath away or restored your soul? Do you need some more time in God's creation?

How can you create moments of wonder with your children, where you notice the maker of the universe? Would creating worship nature-collages or a poem or looking into the fascinating science of nature nurture their faith as you talk together about God?

Time

by Andy Frost



Read

Psalm 90



Reflect

“The days are long but the years are short” is a phrase that was often quoted as I began the adventure of parenthood. And it’s so true! There were those moments at 3am, with my eyes so heavy with tiredness, trying to gently rock my newborn to sleep, that seemed to last an eternity. And yet, when I look back at those first few months, they seemed to go in an instant.

Time is a strange thing. This psalm speaks about the timelessness of God and compares it to the brevity of our lives, maybe 70 or 80 years (v10). It also hints at the holiness of God and the sinfulness of our lives. The psalm reminds us that death was never part of the plan but is a consequence of our selfishness and pride in the presence of holy God.

Life is short

With this hefty reminder of how short life is, this psalm is a challenge to how we will live our lives. In our sanitised society we can often ignore the reality of death, that one day we will return to dust (v3). The psalmist offers us a wake-up call to that reality and gives us two pieces of wisdom.

The first is that God can be “our dwelling place” (v1). Though we are finite and fallen, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, we can have a relationship with this eternal God. This is what gives our life meaning.

The second is that we ask God to bless us (vs13–17) because his blessings satisfy more than anything the world has to offer. The psalmist suggests we ask God to “establish

the work of our hands” (v17). There is an acknowledgement here that when the eternal God is our dwelling place, that all of life becomes sacred. What we do matters.

Investment

When we are making a financial investment in car or a home, we often do the necessary thinking to make a wise investment. With time being such a more precious commodity, how will we invest our time wisely?



Respond

Ask God to show you one area of time that isn’t used wisely. Could you switch it for something more worthwhile?

*Before the mountains
were born or you brought
forth the whole world,
from everlasting to
everlasting you are God.*

Psalm 90:2

Hope

by Andy Frost



Read

Psalm 33



Reflect

"Sing joyfully to the Lord ..." My children go through phases of loving to sing along to worship music in the car. They sing with both joy and volume. I have to be honest that we sometimes limit the number of times they can listen to one album, especially on long car journeys!

Lots of worship songs echo much of what is written in this psalm. There is a joy that comes in singing out the simple truths about God. This psalm lists the reasons to worship God. He is Creator (vs6–9). He is faithful (v4). He is all that is right and just (v5). His plans can't be thwarted (vs10–11). He sees all things (vs13–15).

The challenge

We all worship something and Psalm 33 is a reminder that God is worthy of all our worship. Sandwiched in between all the reasons why God deserves our worship, this psalm also carries a powerful challenge. In verse 16, the psalmist confronts the human wisdom that kings are saved by the size of their armies and warriors are saved by the great strength.

We can so easily trust in the things we can see and the things we can quantify rather than trusting in God. We can say that we worship God but we can actually pin our hopes on our abilities or on our bank balance.

As dads, mums and carers we can say that our hopes for our children are in God, but sometimes we live as though all our hopes for them are actually in human wisdom. Maybe that is in how well they do at school, or in their

We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.

Psalm 33:20–21

ability to excel at certain sports or in what we can provide for them to give them the best start in life.

Worship

Worship is about getting our priorities right. It's about focusing on God and hoping in him alone. Although we do all we can for our children, we have to give everything over to God and trust that he is love (v5) and that he has our best interests at heart.



Respond

Do our lives reflect that our hope is in God? What might we need to move around in our lives to make God the priority?

Forgiven

by Cathy Madavan



Read

Psalm 103



Reflect

I have a theory that many parents feel plagued with high doses of guilt. I certainly have been. I have felt guilty about bottle feeding, nappy choices, reading levels, time spent at home, time spent at work, not praying with my children enough and lack of dress-up day creativity. You name it, I have guilt for it.

And along the way, like every parent, I've made some bad mistakes as well as enjoying some wonderful moments. It's funny; today, my youngest daughter has left compulsory full time education for good and she has merrily gone camping while I sit here wondering where the last two decades have gone, with more than a few regrets.

My challenge is to forgive myself as God forgives me when I go to him.

Redeemed

This psalm contains the beautiful verse, "The Lord ... who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion." These words are a powerful reminder that there is always a way back with God. No matter how wrong we get it or how ashamed we feel, he can redeem us and put us right with him. He also helps us to build bridges and to love others, forgiving them as he has forgiven us.

I wonder what "pits" you might need to be pulled out of, or what mistakes you might need to bring to God today?

Removed

The good news is that God promises to remove our transgressions once and for all.

This matters to us as parents, but also to our children. They need to know they can have a fresh start when they get it wrong; learning from their mistakes and knowing God's grace to move on is a real blessing for young life. It is good news for them that they are not disqualified from partnering with God, and neither are we. We all fail sometimes but we are not therefore failures. God is too compassionate to leave us in the pit – he removes our sins forever, because of Jesus' sacrificial love for us.



Respond

Where do you need to confess and receive forgiveness today? Do you regularly come before God to ask him to remove your transgressions so that you can live in his grace?

How can we help children to know they have done something wrong without leaving them feeling condemned? Can we model more of God's truth and forgiveness in our home?

*For as high as the heavens are
above the earth, so great is his
love for those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the
west, so far has he removed our
transgressions from us.*

Psalm 103:11–12

Tell

by Andy Frost



Read

Psalm 78:1–8



Reflect

Children come up with these great little soundbites. Like the time my three-year-old, with a very serious face, one day informed me, “When you die I’m going to go to eat burgers every day.”

I find that I so quickly forget these funny quips as my kids quickly move into another phase of childhood. I have taken to creating a notes document on my phone where I write down some of the funny things my children say because I don’t want to forget them.

Psalm 78 is a challenge about forgetfulness. It can almost be divided into two segments. The first seven verses act almost as a preface to the rest of the psalm. The second segment from verse eight onwards details the Israelites’ history. It shows how quickly the Israelites forgot the incredible wonders of God and the implications of their forgetfulness.

Choosing not to forget

The author of this psalm chooses not to forget what God has done. In the time this psalm was written, there was a great oral tradition of passing on both the stories of what God had done and the laws that he had commanded. The psalmist chooses to open his mouth to share these truths with the next generation.

What’s interesting is that by verse four, “I” has become “we” as he writes: “We will not hide them from their descendants.” His personal choice not to forget God’s faithfulness becomes a corporate activity that will go on to affect even the generation that is yet to be born.

I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old – things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.

Psalm 78:2–4

A generational vision

The psalmist makes it evident that there is a vision behind passing on these stories and commands. The vision is specified in verse seven, that “they would put their trust in God”. As I choose to make a conscious effort to write down some of the quirky one-liners my kids come out with, how do we share God’s story and his commands for how we are to live?



Respond

The Great Commandment that Jesus gives us is to love the Lord our God and love others as we love ourselves. How can we share this with our children?



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