



## Instructions for Bible Study

Following is a way of interacting with Scripture that is useful for processing emotions during discouraging circumstances.

Some of you may recognize this plan as a form of devotional reading referred to as *Lectio Devina*. This practice stems historically from the time when many either couldn't read or did not have personal access to a Bible as we do today. Devotional reading is not intended as an exercise in strict scholarly debate but that doesn't mean it lacks substance or depth. Rather, this time in the Word with God is a time of sitting down with a safe friend who desires to share something deep and personal with you. It is a time that will strengthen your relational bond and understanding with God resulting in courage and joy as you face your daily life.

Typically, most of the instructions we will follow below are done in a single session rather than spread out over an entire week. Taking a slower approach to the traditional practice affords us time to reflect on our responses to Scripture more meaningfully. In our society so much information enters our hearts and minds at a hyper speed. Thus, it is vital to be intentionally slow to uncover what we are thinking and feeling about our experiences and relationships.

### Materials Needed:

- Study Bible
- Dictionary
- A quiet, solitary place
- Notetaking tools of choice such as a journal, tablet, etc.
- Notecards, address book and stamps or email
- Optional: colored pencils or markers



## Every Day

Before proceeding with each day's instructions or activities take a few minutes to pause and calm your thoughts to focus on coming into the presence of the Lord. The goal here is to obtain a deep, lasting experience that not only engages the mind but transforms one's heart to be aligned with the Lord each day. The key is to take time to linger and reflect deeply on the psalm.

### Day One – Listening for Inspiration

Slowly read the psalm aloud. Jot down any words or phrases that spark a response from your heart. Include in your notes any immediate thoughts or impressions as to why these words or phrases are stirring you. Take as much time as you can to do this process. If nothing stirs your heart immediately, make a note of that. Consider why this may be.

### Day Two – Listening More Closely

Note in your journal whether any of the words or phrases from yesterday's activity with the psalm reappeared throughout your day in conversations, songs, or other things you read or heard.

Slowly read the psalm aloud again. Are the same words or phrases sparking a response in your heart again today that were dominant yesterday? Look up these words in a dictionary and notate which definitions fit the psalmist's usage and how or why these words are important to you today.

### Day Three – Personalizing the Psalm

As you slowly read the psalm today, say your name in place of the pronouns that represent you. For example, in verse one of Psalm 3:

O Lord, how many are \_\_\_\_\_'s foes!

Take note of where in the psalm hearing your name moves your heart deeply. Write about how reading the Psalm like this impacts you.

### Day Four – Dialogue with God

Slowly read the psalm aloud again. Review the notes you made from Day One and Day Two. Write or speak a prayer to God about the feelings that this process has stirred in you. After you finish praying, linger and listen for God's response to you. Notate any responses you receive from God.

### Day Five – Reflection Time

Review your notes from previous days. Slowly read the psalm aloud again. Consider how this psalm relates to your current life situation. What is the jewel of encouragement that God wants you to retain from studying this psalm?

### Day Six – Encouraging Others

Review your notes from previous days. Slowly read the psalm aloud again. Is there a word or phrase that strikes you as something you could share with another person to encourage them about God's presence in his/her life? Take time to communicate this to that person today!

### Day Seven – Resting

Spend time with the Lord today in quiet. If you can, spend this time outside or somewhere you can view the outdoors if the elements are not conducive to actually being outside. Simply be with the Lord.

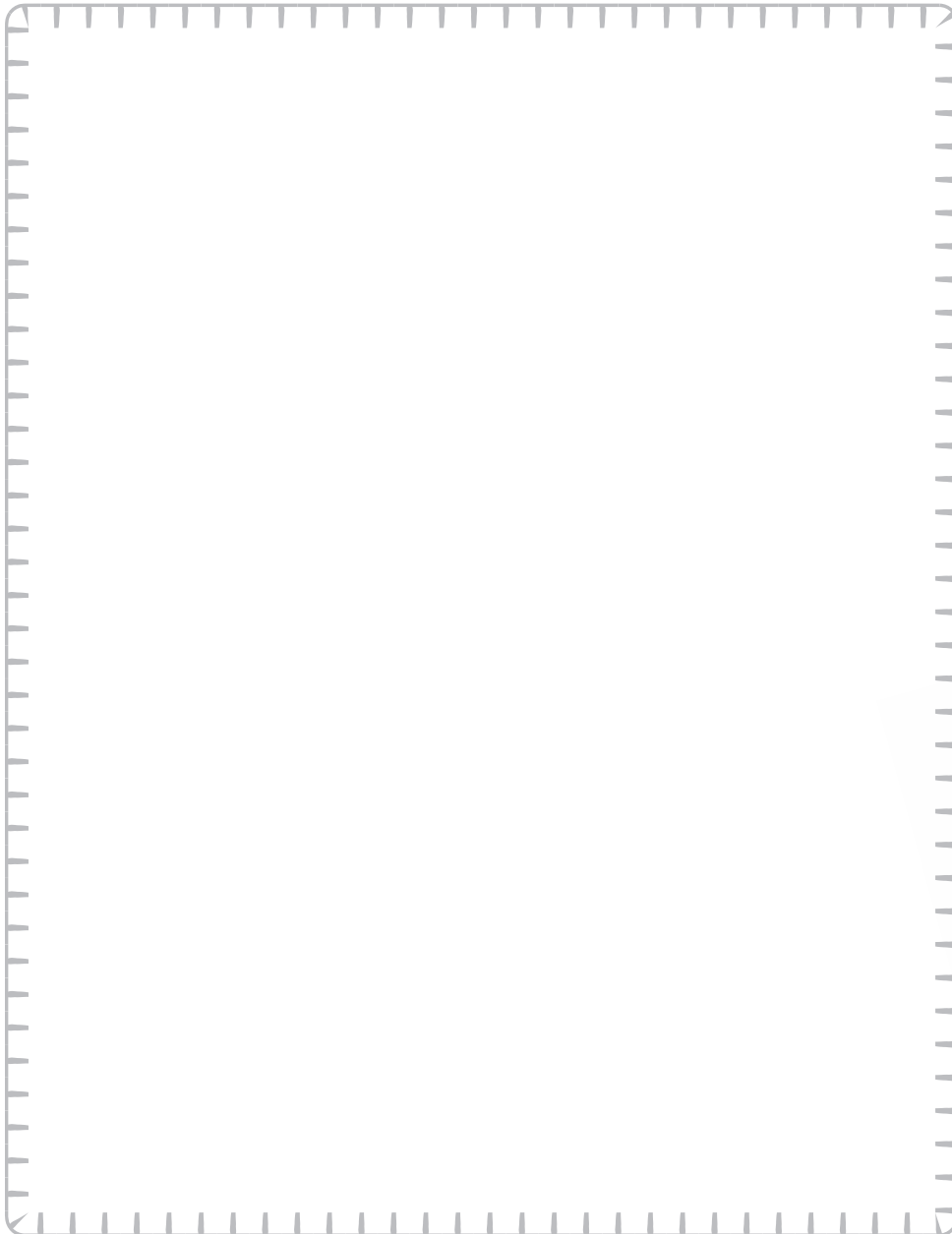


Since many of us have so much pressure in our daily lives and at times have circumstances that send us into a tailspin emotionally, taking this time to slow down and be purposeful will feel awkward at first. You may be struggling with so many emotions right now that you don't know which emotion to process first. Or you may be so numb from the stress in your life that you have no idea how you truly feel about your circumstances right now aside from knowing you are struggling to make sense of things.

Trust the process below and allow yourself to experience this slower pace. You will be astounded how taking this time as you study God's word will enhance your ability to think more clearly as you work through any difficulty.

## My Journal

**Use this space to write a prayer to the Lord about what He wants to teach you in this study.**



# Day One

## Psalm 3 – Listening for Inspiration

Psalm 3 is attributed to David from Jewish tradition by a title that references when David's son Absalom was conspiring against him.

Read 2 Samuel 15:13-17 to familiarize yourself with this background information.

In 2 Samuel 15 we find David fleeing the palace in Jerusalem due to receiving word that his son Absalom had won the hearts of Israel against David's kingship. David took swift action to protect himself and the members of his immediate household who professed loyalty to him. Not only was David's kingship at risk here but also his life as well as those of his household.

Can you relate to the emotions in this scene? This passage may seem an extreme example to use for our modern age, but it demonstrates a natural response to take steps to protect ourselves and our household in times of crisis.

David needed to put some distance between himself and the men that Absalom was bringing to overthrow the palace. What sorts of actions do you need to take to protect yourself and your household today? These actions could range from:

1. Restructuring your current financial budget or setting one up for the first time.
2. Hiring a maid service and/or grocery delivery.
3. Informing someone that you need a temporary time of separation.
4. Limiting how much time you spend on social media or eliminating it for a specified timeframe.
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

Did you also notice that David took measures for his emotional safety? He didn't flee by himself but took his household as well, leaving only a remnant to tend after the palace behind him.

What friends or family do you have whom you can reach out to that will encourage and support you during this season? Make a list of those you know you can depend on during this time. List them below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

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*Slowly read the psalm aloud. Jot down any words or phrases that spark a response from your heart. Include in your notes any immediate thoughts or impressions as to why these words or phrases are stirring you. Take as much time as you can to do this process. If nothing stirs your heart immediately, make a note of that. Consider why this may be.*

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Now slowly read Psalm 3 aloud keeping in mind the passage from 2 Samuel we've just looked at.

Jot down any words or phrases that spark a response from your heart.

Include in your notes your immediate thoughts or impressions as to why these words or phrases are stirring you while keeping in mind the backdrop to the psalmist's words.

Take as much time as you can to do this process. If nothing stirs your heart immediately, make a note of that. Consider why this may be.

As David faced the serious threat to his kingship and household's safety he not only took practical actions to place distance between himself and Absalom's attack, but he also surrounded himself with those who remained loyal to him as we saw in 2 Samuel. Here in Psalm 3 we learn he turns directly to the Lord for help. David acknowledges throughout this psalm that the Lord is the one who will save him from the accusation of his enemies stated in verse 2.

Spend a few more moments writing about whether you fully trust that the Lord will work on your behalf to improve your current situation.

You may close your time with the following prayer or write one of your own:

*Heavenly Father, I come to You and Your Word to seek encouragement and wisdom as I am struggling with my current circumstances. Enable me to take actions that will provide safety for me and my household during this time. Show me who are the friends or family whom I can depend on for support and encouragement during this part of my journey. Help me reach out to them this week to ask them to pray for me. Most importantly, Lord, help me trust in You as my security regardless of my circumstances.*

Journaling Space



## Day Two

Slowly read the psalm aloud again. Are the same words or phrases sparking a response in your heart again today that were dominant yesterday? Look up these words in a dictionary and notate which definitions fit the psalmist's usage and how or why these words are important to you today.

### Psalm 3 - Listening More Closely

Yesterday we noted that David repeatedly acknowledges throughout Psalm 3 that the Lord is the one who will save him from the accusation of his enemies stated in verse 2.

Write verse 2 below:

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Before we can understand David's confidence in the Lord's salvation we need to return to the back story. As David and his household are escaping Jerusalem, they come across a man named Shimei from the house of King Saul. Shimei's cursing of David communicates that he believes God is giving the kingdom to David's son Absalom to avenge the house of Saul, David's predecessor as king. (See 2 Samuel 16:5-14).

David's response to Shimei however indicates that this is not David's understanding of the reason for the current situation.

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-27

In your own words describe what David did in 2 Samuel and what God's reaction was to it.

The next portion of 2 Samuel tells us the prophet Nathan is sent to expose David's sin. He entices David to feel anger about an injustice done by a rich man against a poor man. David is told he is this man who has sinned. Nathan further reveals that God's punishment for this will be an uprising of evil against David from within his own house. (see 2 Samuel 12:11-12).

Write 2 Samuel 12:13 below:

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This promise to David from the Lord is why he repeatedly states in Psalm 3 that the Lord is his salvation in contrast to his enemies' accusations towards him.

You may be asking how does this apply to your personal situation? Think about the emotions involved with this story from David's life. Are you feeling any of

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Note in your journal whether any of the words or phrases from yesterday's activity with the psalm reappeared throughout your day in conversations, songs, or other things you read or heard.

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the same emotions that any of the characters, not just David, would have felt in relation to your current situation? Anger? Jealousy? Shame? Heart brokenness? Make a list below of whatever those emotions are:

Slowly read Psalm 3 aloud.

Take note of any words or phrases that continue to spark a response in your heart that struck you yesterday as well. Take time to look up these words in a dictionary and notate in your journal which definitions fit the psalmist's usage.

For example, David uses the word shield in verse 3. What does the word shield convey to you? What is the definition of shield in the dictionary? What do you notice specifically about David's use of this word?

Spend some time reflecting and writing about why you feel drawn to a particular word or phrase considering your current circumstances and the emotions you listed above.

You may close your time with the following prayer or write one of your own:

*Heavenly Father, thank you for showing me that during difficult circumstances it is normal for my emotions to be complex and raw. Continue to grant me the courage needed to trust in Your promises from Scripture that You are my salvation regardless of my circumstances, my feelings about my circumstances, and what others may be saying about me and my circumstances. As I seek to improve my situation please help me present confidence in the abilities you've given me while at the same time remaining Your humble servant.*





## Day Three

Objective for today: As you slowly read the psalm today, say your name in place of the pronouns that represent you. For example, in verse one of Psalm 3:

O Lord, how many are \_\_\_\_\_'s foes!

### Psalm 3 – Personalizing the Psalm

Today, as you slowly read Psalm 3 aloud, say your name in place of the pronouns that represent you:

O LORD, how many are \_\_\_\_\_'s foes! Many are rising against \_\_\_\_\_;  
2 many are saying of \_\_\_\_\_'s soul, there is no salvation for \_\_\_\_\_  
in God. Selah 3 But you, O LORD, are a shield about \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_'s  
glory, and the lifter of \_\_\_\_\_'s head. 4 \_\_\_\_\_ cried aloud to the  
LORD, and he answered \_\_\_\_\_ from his holy hill. Selah 5 \_\_\_\_\_ lay  
down and slept; \_\_\_\_\_ woke again, for the LORD sustained \_\_\_\_\_.  
6 \_\_\_\_\_ will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set  
themselves against \_\_\_\_\_ all around. 7 Arise, O LORD! Save \_\_\_\_\_,  
O \_\_\_\_\_'s God! For you strike all \_\_\_\_\_'s enemies on the cheek; you  
break the teeth of the wicked. 8 Salvation belongs to the LORD; your blessing be on  
your people! Selah (Psa 3 ESV)

Take note of where in the psalm hearing your name moves your heart deeply. Write about how reading the psalm like this impacts you.

Look closely at verses 5-6. Did you notice that David is able to lay down and sleep well during his stressful situation? What reason does he give for this ability?

Do you trust the Lord to sustain you to the point that you can rest peacefully at night with your own situation you are facing?

You may close your time with the following prayer or write one of your own:

*Heavenly Father, enable me to trust in You as completely as David did so that I can sleep and be refreshed for the work You have for me right now and planned for me in the future. Regardless of my circumstances help me focus on doing Your will each day you continue to grant me on this earth. I know Your will is to love You with all my heart, soul, and mind and to love my neighbor as myself. If this is all I accomplish in a day, I have served You well.*

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Take note of where in the psalm hearing your name moves your heart deeply. Write about how reading the psalm like this impacts you.

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# Day Four

## Psalm 3 – Dialogue with God

Today focus on verses 7-8 as you slowly read Psalm 3 aloud again.

In these verses, David cries out for rescue from the Lord and petitions for the wicked to be chastised. David asks specifically for God to strike the cheek and break the teeth of the wicked. Why does David ask God to do these specific things?

Have you ever been slapped in the face or felt like you have? Striking another person's cheek is a way of shaming that person for inappropriate behavior. Certainly, conspiring against King David's rule was inappropriate behavior but that is not what David is referring to here. Look back at verse 2 of the Psalm. Write the accusation that has been stated by David's enemies:

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David is asking God to shame those who fail to recognize the power of God's salvation and the promises God has issued.

Why does David ask God to break the teeth of the wicked? Have you been around young children, elderly adults, or other people who didn't have teeth? When they try to talk, is it easy to understand them? Without our teeth, it is very difficult to speak legibly. So, here David is asking God to silence the wicked so that they can no longer speak untruth about God.

We too can claim these same actions as we go through our own trials. Ask yourself who is your enemy? Your enemy is Satan who repeatedly lies to you about your worth, value, and most significantly about who God is and whether or not God is powerful enough to truly save you. No matter our circumstances we need to remember God is on our side and is at work on our behalf.

Write or speak a prayer of your own to God about the feelings that this process has stirred in you. After you finish praying, linger and listen for God's response to you. Notate any responses you receive from God.

*Journaling Space*

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*Slowly read the psalm aloud again. Review the notes you made from Day One and Day Two. Write or speak a prayer to God about the feelings that this process has stirred in you. After you finish praying, linger and listen for God's response to you. Notate any responses you receive from God.*

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# Day Five

## Psalm 3 – Reflection Time

Spend time thanking the Lord by listening to or singing a hymn that helps you express gratitude for His provision. Choose from the following hymns if you need an idea of where to start: *O Worship the King*, *Amazing Grace*, *Christ Beside Me*, *On Eagle's Wings* or *Healer of My Soul*.

Journaling Space

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Review your notes from previous days. Slowly read the psalm aloud again. Consider how this psalm relates to your current life situation. What is the jewel of encouragement that God wants you to retain from studying this Psalm?

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# O Worship The King

1. O wor - ship the King, all glo - rious a - bove, And grate - ful - ly  
 2. Thy boun - ti - ful care, what tongue can re - cite? It breathes in the  
 3. Frail chil - dren of dust, and fee - ble as frail, In Thee do we

sing His won - der - ful love; Our Shield and De - fend - er, the  
 air, it shines in the light; It streams from the hills, it de -  
 trust, nor find Thee to fail; Thy mer - cies how ten - der! how

An - cient of Days, Pa - vil - ioned in splen - dor, and gird - ed with praise.  
 scends to the plain, And sweet - ly dis - tills in the dew and the rain.  
 firm to the end! Our Ma - ker, De - fend - er, Re - deem - er, and Friend!

Words by Robert Grant  
 Music Attr. Joseph Michael Haydn, in William Gardiner's Sacred Melodies

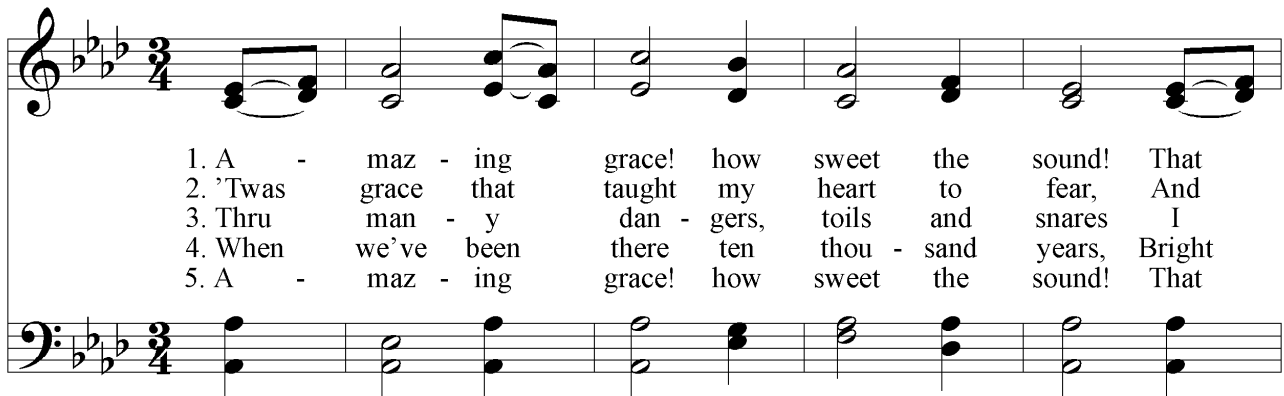
PDHymns.com

## To Worship Through Song

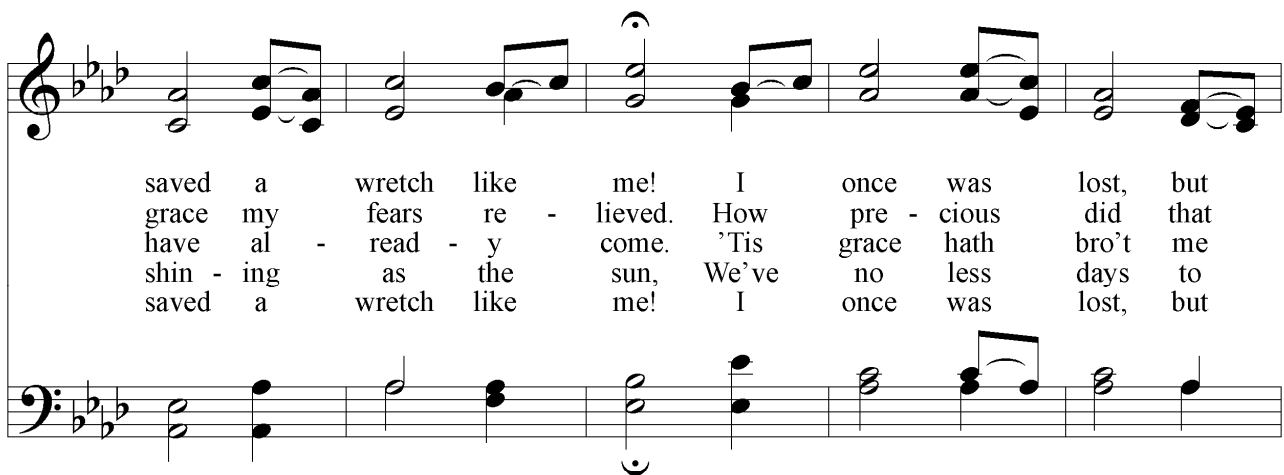
Listen/watch a contemporary version at: <https://youtu.be/We9aR22C9BI>



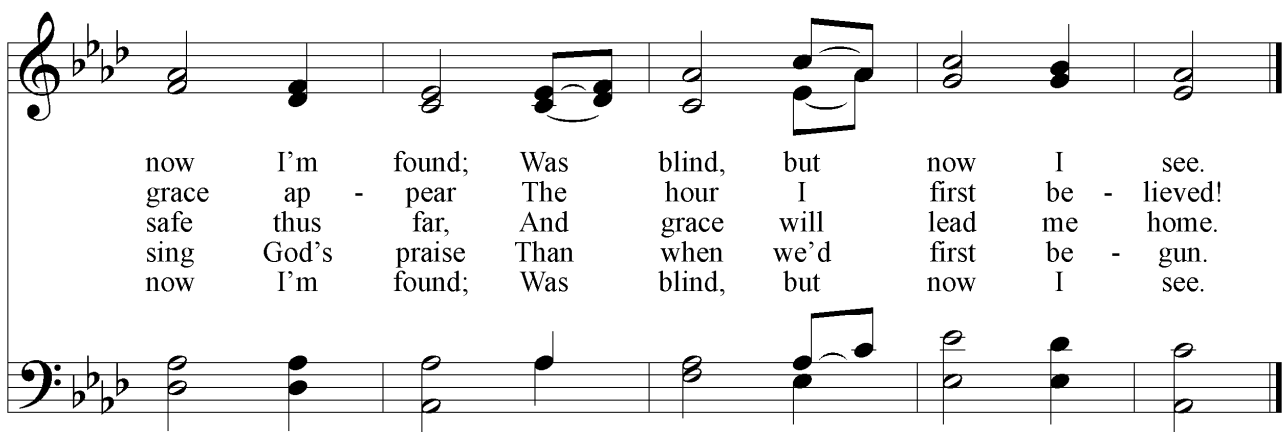
# Amazing Grace



1. A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the sound! That  
 2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And  
 3. Thru man - y dan - gers, toils and snares I  
 4. When we've been there ten thou - sand years, Bright  
 5. A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the sound! That



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but  
 grace my fears re - lieved. How pre - cious did that  
 have al - read - y come. 'Tis grace hath bro't me  
 shin - ing as the sun, We've no less days to  
 saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but



now I'm found; Was blind, but now I see.  
 grace ap - pear The hour I first be - lieved!  
 safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.  
 sing God's praise Than when we'd first be - gun.  
 now I'm found; Was blind, but now I see.

Words by John Newton  
 Music by Early American Melody

PDHymns.com

## To Worship Through Song

Listen/watch a lovely tradition version at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDdvReNKKuk&feature=youtu.be&list=RDCDdvReNKKuk>



# Day Six

## Psalm 3 – Encouraging Others

Slowly read Psalm 3 aloud again and review your notes from the previous day's studies.

Is there a word, phrase, or insight that you could share with another person who needs encouragement about God's presence in his/her life today?

Take time to write this person a note today.

Write or speak a prayer of your own to God thanking Him for the person whom you chose to write an encouraging note. Choose a different hymn to sing or meditate on from Day Five as you finish today.

Journaling Space

Today I wrote \_\_\_\_\_ a note of encouragement.

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*Review your notes from previous days. Slowly read the psalm aloud again. Is there a word or phrase that strikes you as something you could share with another person to encourage them about God's presence in his/her life? Take time to communicate this to that person today!*

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# Day Seven

## Psalm 3 – Resting

Spend time with the Lord today in simple quiet. If you can, spend this time outside in nature, or somewhere you can view the outdoors if the elements are not conducive. Enjoy this time of rest. Let it refresh and refuel you. Simply be with the Lord today. If appropriate, you may want to save something (i.e. leaf or flower petal) to represent your time with Him. We provide space below for you to draw, write, or paste something from this time together.)

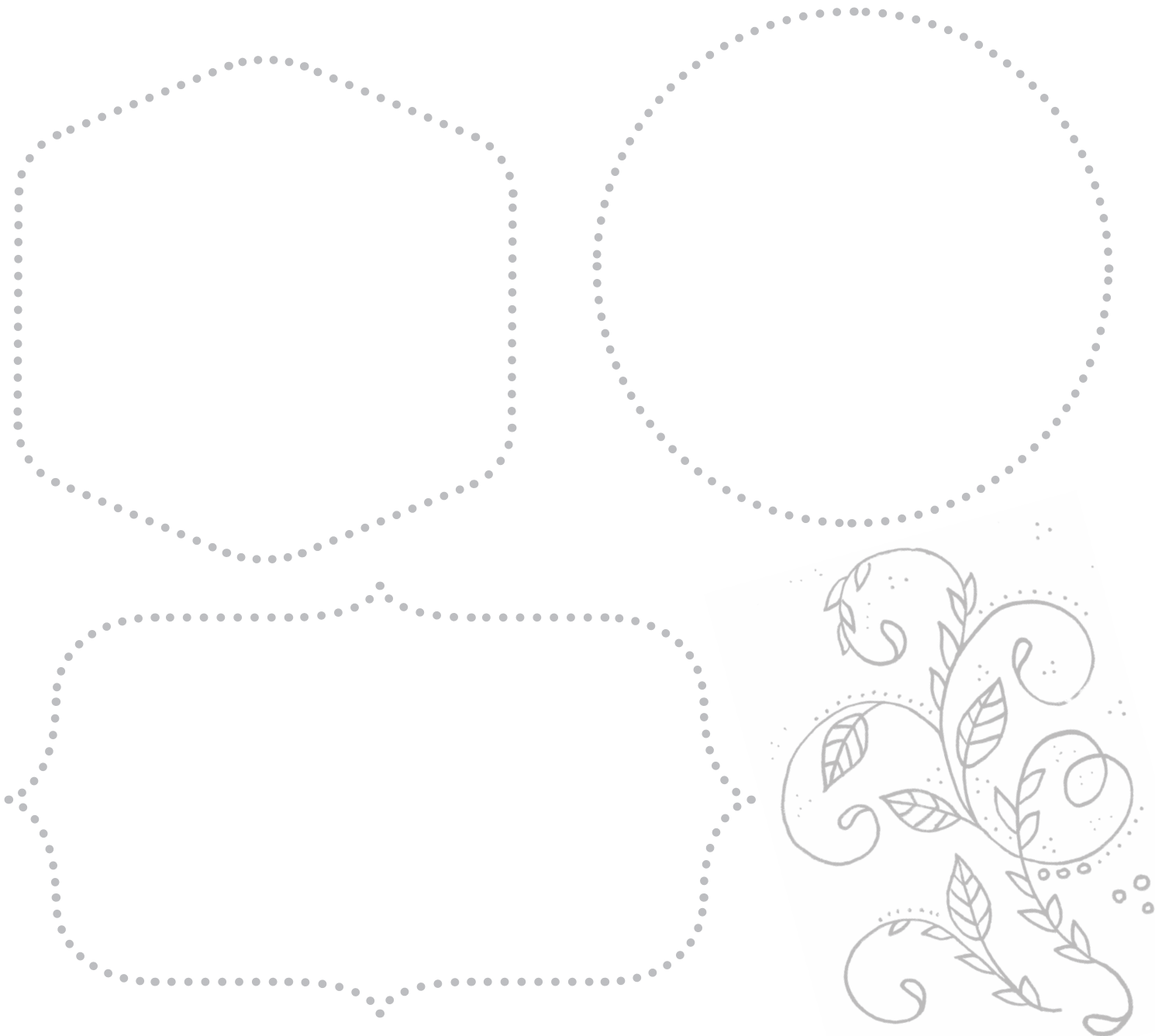
Revisit the hymns you enjoyed on Day 5, perhaps with singing or playing an instrument, or listening/watching the Youtube links.

May the Lord instill in you a confidence that can never be shaken no matter what your circumstances may be. May you see the many blessings He bestows on you each day spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically.

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*Review your notes from previous days. Slowly read the psalm aloud again. Consider how this psalm relates to your current life situation. What is the jewel of encouragement that God wants you to retain from studying this Psalm?*

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## Additional Psalms to try this process with:

Select a verse from each Psalm to write out, while prayerfully asking God which Psalm He may want you to apply this Lectio Devina approach to next.

**Psalm 11**

**Psalm 13**

**Psalm 16**

**Psalm 31**

**Psalm 63**

**Psalm 107**

As you work through these psalms or others of your choosing be sure to read the study notes and cross references to gain the deepest insights and encouragement.



Use this space to write a final prayer to the Lord about your time in this study.

## Journaling Space



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