

# Lyrics for Life

## SELECTED PSALMS



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# STRONG

## curriculum

A world weak on truth needs a strong, trustworthy message. STRONG Curriculum builds stronger churches by teaching all Scripture to produce spiritually mature believers who measure up to the stature of Christ.

### A Plan You Can Trust








The Bible has the answers to what adult learners need most. No other book or philosophy contains God's power to save and transform lives. Because of this, we've made it our unwavering commitment to build Strong Adults upon the sure foundation of God's Word. With this curriculum, your church can develop adults who will be strong defenders of the faith.

Strong Adults is designed around the seven teaching aims Jesus modeled in His ministry. Those aims are listed in the box to the right. Note that the first letter of each aim spells out **BuildUP**, a word that captures the curriculum's overall aim to build stronger churches through God's Word.

Every session in the Strong Adults courses addresses one of Jesus' seven teaching aims. Since the **BuildUP** aims are Jesus' aims, you can be confident in their importance and effectiveness. Take time to familiarize yourself with each of the aims. And plan to introduce them to your learners. Look for the **BuildUP** icons in the table of contents and on the first page of each lesson.

The Strong Adults scope and sequence covers every Bible book, the major doctrines, and important topics. The Bible books alternate between Old Testament and New Testament, going in order of their appearance in the Bible. The scope and sequence will begin with the courses on Philipians and Job and proceed to the end of each testament before starting over with Genesis and Matthew.

### JESUS' TEACHING AIMS

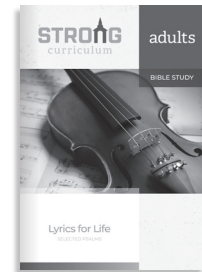
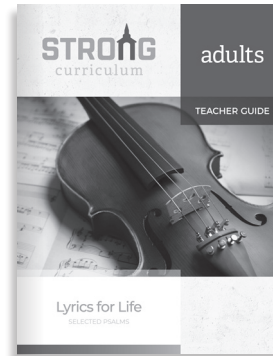
-  **BELIEVE THE GOSPEL.** Jesus taught His students to trust in Him alone for salvation and to share the gospel with others. This aim is obviously fundamental to all the rest
-  **UNDERSTAND BIBLICAL ETHICS.** Jesus instructed His students to live according to moral values. These values provided them with the tools to make wise decisions.
-  **INTERNALIZE GODLINESS.** Jesus taught His followers to be godly on the inside. He warned them not to become like the Pharisees, with a mere outward appearance of godliness.
-  **LEARN DOCTRINE.** Jesus knew the importance of teaching His students the truth and identified doctrine as one of the means for spiritual growth. Wishy-washy doctrine leads to faulty practice.
-  **DEVELOP LIFE SKILLS.** Jesus taught His followers to meet life's challenges in a way that honored and glorified God. He gave them the skills to navigate those challenges successfully.
-  **UPLIFT OTHERS.** Jesus' life was all about others. Leading by example, He taught His followers to be all about others too.
-  **PREPARE TO SERVE.** Jesus prepared His followers to serve in the context of local churches that were established soon after His ascension. He emphasized sacrifice and dedication.

# STRONG<sup>®</sup> curriculum

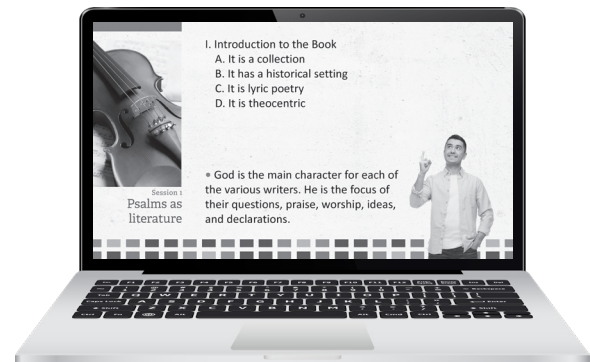
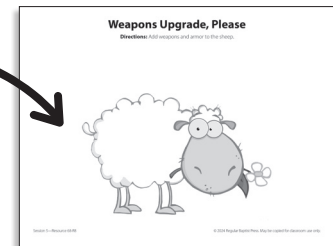
## Kit Contents

- Teacher Guide
- 6 Bible Study Books  
*Order one book for each learner*
- Digital Access Download Code  
*Gives you access to downloadable PowerPoint presentations, Prezis, visuals, promotional materials, and more.*
- Posters

Lyrics for Life covers select psalms on subjects such as God's nature and provision, confession of sin, and praise to God. Written as poetic songs, the psalms are timeless in their appeal and valuable in their revelation of God and life. We can go to the book of Psalms to find encouragement as well as instruction and challenge.



Digital Access Card



## Ordering Information

All materials are available from Regular Baptist Press.

- Web: [www.StrongCurriculum.com](http://www.StrongCurriculum.com)
- E-mail: [orders@rbpstore.org](mailto:orders@rbpstore.org)
- Toll-free orders in the United States: 1-800-727-4440
- Fax: 1-847-843-3757
- Canada: Contact your distributor.

## The Doctrinal Basis of Our Curriculum

*A more detailed statement with references is available upon request.*

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|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures</li> <li>• Only one true God</li> <li>• The Trinity of the Godhead</li> <li>• The Holy Spirit and His ministry</li> <li>• The personality of Satan</li> <li>• The Genesis account of creation</li> <li>• Original sin and the fall of man</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The virgin birth of Christ</li> <li>• Salvation through faith in the shed blood of Christ</li> <li>• The bodily resurrection and priesthood of Christ</li> <li>• Grace and the new birth</li> <li>• Justification by faith</li> <li>• Sanctification of the believer</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The security of the believer</li> <li>• The church</li> <li>• The ordinances of the local church: baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper</li> <li>• Biblical separation—ecclesiastical and personal</li> <li>• Obedience to civil government</li> <li>• The place of Israel</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pretribulation rapture of the church</li> <li>• The premillennial return of Christ</li> <li>• The millennial reign of Christ</li> <li>• Eternal glory in Heaven for the righteous</li> <li>• Eternal torment in Hell for the wicked</li> </ul> |
|---|--|---|---|



# How to Teach **STRONG** adults Lessons

# Leading a Student to Christ

STRONG ADULTS has been designed to help you clearly present God's Word to your students. Each lesson will guide students through the Bible, encouraging them to interact with the material and apply it to their lives.

Familiarize yourself with the teaching resources so you can maximize your effectiveness in the classroom. Find the download card in your kit. Follow the instructions on the card to gain access to the teaching resources you will need throughout the course. The downloadable resources include a PowerPoint for each session, a Prezi presentation for select sessions, visual resources, and promotional materials.

Encourage students to do their Bible study book lessons before class so they are ready to interact when you ask the questions during your lesson. Note that the questions and commentary in this leader's guide match those in the Bible study books.

Some of the PowerPoint presentations contain additional slides that obviously tie into the teacher guide lessons. Make sure you review the PowerPoint presentations before teaching.

## Before Each Lesson

- Read the **Scripture Focus** passage several times. Read and ponder the **Teacher Preparation** section on the first page of the lesson.
- Read the **BuildUP Theme, Measurable Response, and Session Summary** to get an overview of the lesson. Work on the **Memory Verse**.
- Read the **Bible Study** and the passages referenced in the lesson. Read the questions and answers. Consider additional questions and answers to add to the session.
- Plan how to use the PowerPoint or the Prezi. Practice using them along with the lesson.
- Prepare any materials you will need for the **Session Starters**.
- Read the steps and questions in the **Session Application** section of the lesson. Consider how to personalize the application.
- Pray for yourself, your students, and your lesson.

AS A TEACHER, your most important concern is the personal salvation of your learners. Talk to them about whether they know Jesus Christ as their Savior. Consider giving your students several minutes to write out an answer to a question like, How can a person get to Heaven? Collect their answers and read them during the following week. Talk to any of your students who seem confused about salvation. Present the gospel to them and provide the opportunity for them to trust in Christ. If possible, deal with students individually.

## The Plan of Salvation

- Everyone is a sinner. No one can live up to God's perfect standard (Romans 3:23).
- Sin's penalty is death (Romans 6:23).
- God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay for our sin. Christ died in our place (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).
- When people place their trust in Jesus' payment for sins, Christ becomes their Savior. God forgives their sins and grants them eternal life (John 1:12; 5:24). Everlasting life begins the moment we trust in Jesus (John 3:36).
- Once people are saved, they are always saved. Nothing could take them out of God's hand; they are secure (John 10:27–29).
- The experience of the new birth (being born into God's family) is not based on a feeling, but on confidence in God's Word (1 John 5:11, 12).

Encourage students to pray, but explain that prayer does not save a person. Prayer is how we communicate our inward thoughts to God. Ask new believers to explain what they have done and what has happened to them.

## Discipleship

Give new believers guidance in reading the Bible and explain the importance of prayer. Connect them to someone to who can invest in teaching them how to live the Christian life. Your goal is for the new believer to become a disciple maker him- or herself.



SESSION 1

# Psalms as literature

## SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Various Scripture passages

## BUILDUP THEME



### LEARN DOCTRINE

God wants us to study Psalms meditatively because of its poetic structure and rich content.

## MEASURABLE RESPONSE

The students will choose a psalm to meditate on during the coming week.

## MEMORY VERSE

“My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I may meditate on Your word”  
(Psalm 119:148). NKJV

“My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promise”  
(Psalm 119:148). ESV

## Teacher Preparation

- Read Psalm 119:148. When, if ever, have you stayed up late at night so you might think about God’s Word and how it applies to your life? Perhaps that sounds crazy. But consider the greatness of Psalm 119. The author stayed up late thinking about God’s Word and wrote Psalm 119 as a result.
- Read all of Psalm 119 with an eye to noticing what the author says about thinking about God’s Word and the greatness of God’s Word.
- This course will provide just a snapshot of the psalms. It won’t even cover ten percent of them. So, this first session focuses on helping students know how to study the psalms for themselves. It ends with an assignment for them to spend time meditating on a psalm of their choice. Hold them to the assignment, and make sure you complete it yourself.

## Session Summary

The book of Psalms isn’t like any other book of the Bible. Its uniqueness demands we take some time to think about how to study it and gain the most from it. This first session has that aim. It introduces the book as lyric poetry and then provides instruction on key literary features of psalms. The information gives a foundation for the students to do some study of the psalms on their own.

# Session Starters

## Option 1—I'd Stay up Late to . . .

### Steps

1. Have the students suggest how they would finish the following sentence starter: I would stay up late in order to . . .
2. Give your students a minute or two to think or talk among themselves before volunteering to share their answers.
3. Read Psalm 119:148, the memory verse for this session. Challenge students to consider whether they would stay up late to meditate on a psalm.
4. Transition to the Bible study.

The poetic nature of Psalms demands we take some time to think about how to study the book. This first session has that aim. It introduces the book as lyric poetry and then provides you with instructions on key literary features of psalms. The information will equip you to do some study on your own throughout this course and over the course of your life.

## Option 2—First Impressions

### Steps

1. Have students discuss their thoughts about Psalms before beginning this study. Use the following questions as prompters.

**ASK:** How would you describe Psalms?

**ASK:** What role does the book of Psalms play in your life?

**ASK:** What have become of your attempts to study the psalms?

2. Transition to the Bible study.

The poetic nature of Psalms demands we take some time to think about how to study the book. This first session has that aim. It introduces the book as lyric poetry and then provides you with instructions on key literary features of psalms. The information will equip you to do some study on your own throughout this course and over the course of your life.

# Bible Study

## I. Introduction to the Book

### A. It is a collection



Psalms is a collection of individual poems arranged in five books. The books start at Psalm 1, 42, 73, 90, and 107. Each book ends with a doxology that states the Lord God is blessed from everlasting to everlasting (41:13; 72:18, 19; 89:52; 106:48). Book 5 ends with Psalm 150 as a doxology.

**READ:** Psalm 72:18, 19; 106:48. **ASK:** What do we learn about God's purpose for Israel through the doxologies that end each book? (Q3) *God's purpose for Israel leads to His eternal praise and glory being recognized throughout the earth.*

The doxologies' emphasis on God's glory is echoed in Ephesians 1, where Paul stated that God saves individuals for the praise of the glory of His grace (Eph. 1:3–14). God's glory is the underlying purpose of God's overall plan for humanity. It makes sense that the five book divisions in Psalms end with a focus on God's glory.

Beyond the doxologies, there isn't an obvious reason for the arrangement of the individual psalms into five books. We shouldn't get hung up on trying to come up with an outline or theme for each book. Instead, we should consider each psalm individually, keeping the overall historical setting for the book of Psalms in mind.

## **B. It has a historical setting**

The themes of Israel's need for Torah and Israel's expectation of the Messiah run throughout the book. That's because the book was mostly written after God gave Israel the law of Moses at Mount Sinai and after God promised the Messiah would come to rule the world through the line of David. The Mosaic Covenant called Israel back to God's instructions and promises concerning their present life. The Davidic Covenant called Israel to look ahead to deliverance, victory, and the arrival of the Son of God on earth as the Messianic King.

**READ:** Psalm 1:2.

Psalm 1, which we will study for the next session, directs Israel's attention back to the law of Moses as the key for a prosperous life in the Promised Land. God promised Israel they would stay in their Land and live prosperously if they obeyed the laws in the Mosaic Covenant (Deut. 28:1–14; 2 Chron. 7:14).

**ASK:** What can we take away from the book's emphasis on obedience to the law of Moses? (Q4) *God's emphasis on righteous living and holiness; God's pleasure in people's obedience; God's love in providing a Redeemer because of man's inability to keep His law.*

**ASK:** What should we not take from the book's emphasis on the law of Moses? (Q5) *The specific promises God made to Israel that are rooted in the Mosaic Covenant. God has not promised us a prosperous land if we obey Him.*

**READ:** Psalm 2:6–9.

Psalm 2 directs Israel’s attention to the future when their King, the Son of God, will reign on the throne of David. We can look forward to Christ’s Kingdom too. We will rule with Christ and enjoy all the benefits of His reign. But we aren’t telling people to look for the coming of the Messiah. Our focus is on sharing the gospel and teaching believers to be growing and active members in Christ’s church (Matt. 28:18–20; Eph. 4:11–16).

The psalms were compiled and arranged sometime after Judah returned from Babylonian captivity during the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (450–425 BC). Judah had been in captivity because they abandoned God’s law and served other gods. The nation needed to return to God’s law and live in light of their coming Messiah. So, it is fitting that Psalms 1 and 2 are placed at the beginning of the collection in that they emphasize what Israel needed to remember as they lived their daily lives in post-captivity Israel.

What a blessing to read the psalms knowing the Messiah came, died for the sins of the world, and promised to return first for His church and then with His church to establish His Kingdom in Zion.

**ASK:** How should we respond to God’s track record of faithfulness? (Q6) *We should have a deep trust in Him and great joy to know He keeps His promises.*

### **C. It is lyric poetry**

God chose to use a wide variety of literature to communicate His message through the Old Testament. When we come to the book of Psalms, we can’t read it like a narrative. There is obviously no central plot or story that moves along from beginning to end. But there is structure to lyric poetry. Understanding the structure helps us make sense of each psalm.

All the psalms are lyric poems. As such, they all have common characteristics. First, lyric poems have a theme that unifies them. Sometimes the theme is obvious.

**READ:** Psalm 23. **ASK:** What is the theme for this psalm? (Q7) *The Lord’s provision for His own.*

Discovering a theme can be difficult, especially if the parts of a psalm seem disjointed. But if we spend time thinking about how the parts relate, we can uncover the unifying, umbrella theme. Most study Bibles include a heading before each psalm. Those can be helpful.

Second, lyric poems tend to be either affective or reflective. Affective lyric poems emphasize emotion and response. The writer might be

distraught or overjoyed. Reflective lyric poems tend to focus more on ideas. Those poems are thought provoking and meditative.

**READ:** Psalm 1. **ASK:** Would you say this psalm is affective or reflective? (Q8) *Reflective.*

**READ:** Psalm 6. **ASK:** What do you feel as you read this psalm of David? (Q9)

When studying reflective psalms, we should spend time meditating on the writer's points and consider how they fit together and instruct our lives. When studying affective psalms, we should seek to identify with the writer's emotions, keeping in mind that his expressions are descriptive of his feelings but not necessarily prescriptive for our lives. We need to keep the context of each part of an affective psalm in mind. We must connect David's cry in Psalm 6:3–7, for example, to David's conclusion in verses 8–10 to properly understand the psalm's purpose.

Third, lyric poems are structured to help us understand their meaning and flow. The subject is usually stated somewhere near the beginning of the poem. In Psalm 23, verse one tells us the poem's subject is the shepherd's care for his sheep. The rest of the poem expands on the subject, giving us variations and different perspectives. The poem then ends with a concluding statement that resolves the poem. Psalm 23 ends with David's declaration that he will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

**BIBLE STUDY:** Have your students read the last few verses of several psalms to recognize the concluding nature of lyric poems. Note that many of them have an emphasis on God or the writer being or doing something forever (e.g., Ps. 16:11; 18:50; 23:6; 28:9; 30:11, 12).

How a psalm ends is important. We need to read the end to help us understand the rest of the psalm. That is especially true when studying effective psalms.

## **D. It is theocentric**

The book of Psalms is also theocentric. God is the main character for each of the various writers. He is the focus of their questions, praise, worship, ideas, and declarations. The theocentric nature of the book gives it tremendous value for us. We are living in a very different historical setting than the original authors and readers. And we have a much more informed understanding of God's plan for the ages. Yet Psalms relates truths about God in ways no other Bible book does. The book teaches us to trust, love, praise, and worship God from our hearts.

**READ:** Psalm 27:1; 90:2; 91:1, 2. **ASK:** What have the truths in these verses meant to you? (Q10)

**ASK:** What other truths about God has Psalms helped you remember? (Q11)

## II. Literary Features of the Psalms

Earlier in this session we learned general characteristics of the lyric poetry found in Psalms. The following sections describe some of the literary features the psalmists used to communicate their themes.

### A. Use of images

An image is the basic unit to communicate truth in a psalm. There aren't scenes that unfold to reveal a meaningful story. The book of Psalms employs actions (walking, running) and things (sheep, rocks) to convey truth. Psalm 23 uses the image of the shepherd with his sheep. Psalm 104 uses a garment, a curtain, and beams (104:1–6). Psalm 1:1 uses the actions of walking, standing, and sitting.

In interpreting psalms that use images, we need to consider how the image sheds light on the meaning. We shouldn't take the imagery farther than the writer does. For example, in Psalm 23, David connects the image of a shepherd to the Lord in specific ways. We should not take everything we know about a shepherd and find a way for it to relate to the Lord. The psalm tells us what connections to make.

### B. Use of figures of speech

The writers of the psalms used figures of speech to convey truth. They use **similes** frequently. A simile is a comparison, stating that something is "like" or "as" something else.

**READ:** Psalm 42:1. **ASK:** What does the simile in this verse reveal? (Q12) *The depth of the writer's longing for God. He was desperate, knowing his life depended on his relationship with God.*

**Metaphors** directly compare one thing or person to another, saying something or someone is something.

**READ:** Psalm 18:2. **ASK:** How does the string of metaphors in this verse help your understanding of God? (Q13)

A **merism** lists two opposites to stand for everything in between them. For example, David said God knew his sitting down and rising up and his path and lying down (Ps. 139:2, 3). David meant God knew all about him no matter where he went. When we read a merism, we need to focus on what is between the opposites rather than on each of the opposites.

**Personification** gives inanimate objects personal qualities. Psalm 98:7 and 8 personifies the sea, rivers, and hills. They are asked to roar, clap, and express joy because the Lord is coming to judge the earth. Personification in the psalms helps communicate God's greatness and worthiness to be praised and worshiped.

## C. Use of parallelism

As poetry, Psalms uses parallelism to communicate thought. There are six types of parallelism to be aware of.

In **synonymous** parallelism, the second line restates the thought in the first line. It may even use the same words but in a different order.

**READ:** Psalm 3:1. **ASK:** How does the repetition of thought in this couplet affect the reader? (Q14) *It causes the reader to sympathize with David, the psalm's author.*

In **synthetic** parallelism, line two further develops the idea of line one. Line two either defines, proves, applies, or adds further information to line one. Synthetic parallelism gives further explanation or information in a striking way. In Psalm 104:5, the second half of the verse reveals the degree to which God laid the foundation of the earth.

In **antithetic** parallelism, the idea in the second line stands in sharp contrast to the idea in the first line.

**READ:** Psalm 1:6. **ASK:** Describe the difference between the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked. (Q15) *The way of the righteous is known and guarded by God while the way of the wicked will last forever.*

In **emblematic** parallelism, the truth in one line is coupled by a supporting figure of speech in the other line. In Psalm 23:1, the figure of speech in the first line, the Lord as a shepherd, explains why David is sure he will not be needy in life. The added figure of speech makes the abstract point clearer.

Climatic parallelism is seen in Psalm 29:1 and 2 and in Psalm 150. In Psalm 150, the list of instruments isn't as important as the conclusion that calls on everything that has breath to praise the Lord.

When interpreting figures of speech, we need to stay focused on what the author is trying to communicate without getting bogged down in the details of the comparisons. If we aren't careful, we will read too much into the psalm and miss the point altogether.

## Session Application

### Steps

1. Emphasize that studying psalms requires time to think.

The psalms require the reader to spend time thinking and meditating. The writer of Psalm 119 understood that. He stayed up at night to give himself extra time to meditate on God's Word. Psalm

119, one of the greatest portions of Scripture about God's Word, is a result of the author's meditation on God's Word.

2. Review Psalm 119:148 and remind your students to memorize the verse this week.

3. Challenge your students to meditate on God's Word. (Q16)

Pick a psalm to meditate on this week. It can be one covered in this course, one of your favorite psalms, or one you have never studied before. Read the psalm several times, considering its theme. If there are words or statements you don't understand in your psalm, look them up in study resources. You will want to study your psalm over more than one sitting. You will see things and nuances during the second or third look that you didn't see during your initial look.

Overall, be patient in your study and in your meditation. Come next week with a thought or two to share about your study process and about the psalm itself.

4. Close in prayer thanking God for the book of psalms and the insights it reveals about God and life.