

IDENTITY, DISAPPOINTMENT, AND PRAISE

A REZ WOMEN'S MINISTRY TEACHING NIGHT
with LAURA KENNA

In preparation...

Life is full of disappointments and challenges to feeling at peace with our identities. As we begin this evening, take a few minutes to examine yourself and identify any tough issues you have been carrying. Use the space below to put a name to a source of frustration, discouragement, or sadness that is part of your life lately. Take this opportunity to consider how this issue(s) may be affecting your spiritual life—confessing this to yourself and also to God.

If you can't think of anything, praise God! Take this time to pray for the Lord to sustain you in this season of contentment and for Him to use tonight to prepare you for playing the role of a wise listener and godly encourager to others in the Rez community.

In response...

Psalm 13

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me
forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
How long must I take counsel in my soul and
have sorrow in my heart all the day?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over
me?
Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of
death, lest my enemy say, "I have
prevailed over him," lest my foes rejoice
because I am shaken.
But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my
heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt
bountifully with me.

Psalm 27: 7-14

Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious
to me and answer me!
You have said, "Seek my face."
My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I
seek." Hide not your face from me.
Turn not your servant away in anger, O you
who have been my help.
Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of
my salvation!
For my father and my mother have forsaken
me, but the Lord will take me in.
Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on
a level path because of my enemies.
Give me not up to the will of my adversaries;
for false witnesses have risen against me,
and they breathe out violence.
I believe that I shall look upon the goodness
of the Lord in the land of the living!
Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your
heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

Psalm 77

I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me.

In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying; my soul refuses to be comforted.

When I remember God, I moan; when I meditate, my spirit faints. *Selah*

You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

I consider the days of old, the years long ago.

I said, "Let me remember my song in the night; let me meditate in my heart."

Then my spirit made a diligent search:

"Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable?

Has his steadfast love forever ceased?

Are his promises at an end for all time?

Has God forgotten to be gracious?

Has he in anger shut up his compassion?" *Selah*

Then I said, "I will appeal to this, to the years of the right hand of the Most High."

I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your wonders of old.

I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds.

Your way, O God, is holy.

What god is great like our God?

You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples.

You with your arm redeemed your people, the children of Jacob and Joseph. *Selah*

When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; indeed, the deep trembled.

The clouds poured out water; the skies gave forth thunder; your arrows flashed on every side.

The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind; your lightnings lighted up the world; the earth trembled and shook.

Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen.

You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Ideas for getting into the Word, practicing praise, and trusting God...

- ❖ **Read the Psalms—one a day.** They're short enough that even if you generally have difficulty with the daily discipline of sitting down with the Bible, this might be a good way to break through into regular devotional reading. They'll provide consistent examples of God's character and of how to pray to Him with honesty about where you are.
- ❖ **Adopt a daily Bible-reading program,** for example "Encounter with God." This publication can be emailed to you daily for free or mailed to you for \$22/year. (Check it out at <http://www.scriptureunion.org/Bible%20Reading/Encounter%20with%20God>) Users work through the O.T. once and the N.T twice in a five year cycle, reading about 10-20 verses per day. (Just one example of this sort of resource.)
- ❖ Consider reading through **Ruth Myers "31 Days of Praise"** (about \$10 on amazon), which provides a month's worth of short devotionals specifically tailored to help train you to praise the Lord as a daily habit. Their brief length makes them easy to pair with whatever you may already be doing in terms of daily Bible study.
- ❖ Wrestling with something particularly heavy? You may benefit from the thoughtful and challenging approach to suffering in **Jerry Bridges' "Trusting God Even when Life Hurts"** (about \$10 on amazon, also available in the Rez online book store). This book recommendation from the Women's Care Team emphasizes God's sovereignty and character so that we can grow in our sense of how trustworthy He is even in the midst of hard circumstances.