

## INTERVARSITY BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

### *Psalm 8:1-9 NIV, A Praise Psalm (60 minutes)*

#### **WELCOME (7 minutes)**

Icebreaker: What is something you remember being praised for as a child?

We are studying the Bible together because we want to grow in our love for Jesus through Scripture and because we want to grow in our witness to Jesus through Scripture.

Let's pray and ask God to help us as we study today's passage together...

#### **GROUP NORMS (3 minutes)**

Let's remember our group norms as we study together today:

1. Use "I" statements (speak for yourself, not for everyone)
2. Avoid judgmental statements (no shame or blame)
3. Allow space for everyone to share if they choose
4. Practice active listening and give advice only if invited to do so
5. What we share here stays here (confidentiality)

#### **INTRODUCE the Scripture Text (3 minutes)**

For the ancient Hebrew people, the Psalms were songs of worship that captured their reality and guided them to turn their will and their longings toward God. These lyrics were first written in response to events in the lives of the authors, and then later the whole community used them in worship. After the return from exile in Babylon, many of these songs from over the centuries were collected into the book of Psalms. Individuals and communities can pray or sing the Psalms as honest spiritual expressions or as commitments of faithfulness, and at the same time, the book as a whole tells the story of Israel's redemption – monarchy, exile, and return.

There are many types of psalms (this list is not exhaustive):

- Praise psalms celebrate and adore God's character
- Thanksgiving psalms express gratitude for God's blessings
- Wisdom psalms give practical moral teachings on how to live a righteous life
- Salvation history psalms remember God's work and affirm the covenant with God
- Lament psalms cry out to God in sorrow, grief, or distress
- Imprecatory psalms invoke God's action to intervene and bring justice
- Penitential psalms confess sin, express remorse, and acknowledge human frailty
- Trust psalms commit to God, no matter the circumstances

In our first study, we began with Psalm 1, a wisdom psalm. Today we will study a praise psalm.

You may want to reference Genesis 1:26-28 for more understanding (that the original readers of this text would already have had).

### **SEE the Scripture Text (10 minutes)**

Let's read the passage and talk about what we see.

- Who are the characters? How are they connected?
- What is happening? When? Where?
- Which words are being repeated?
- Is the author comparing or contrasting anything?
- Would you like to point out anything else you notice?

Psalm 8:1-9 NIV –

For the director of music. According to *gittith*. A psalm of David.

1 Lord, our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory

in the heavens.

2 Through the praise of children and infants

you have established a stronghold against your enemies,  
to silence the foe and the avenger.

3 When I consider your heavens,

the work of your fingers,

the moon and the stars,

which you have set in place,

4 what is humankind that you are mindful of them,

human beings that you care for them?

5 You have made them a little lower than the angels

and crowned them with glory and honor.

6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands;

you put everything under their feet:

7 all flocks and herds,

and the animals of the wild,

8 the birds in the sky,

and the fish in the sea,

all that swim the paths of the seas.

9 Lord, our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

### **DISCOVER the Scripture Text (25 minutes)**

Let's discuss a few questions that will help us discover and understand the text.

1. Verse 2 describes a relationship between praise and what happens with enemies of God. How would you describe that relationship in your own words? Why do you think those two things are connected?

2. Verses 3-8 describe a relationship among God, humankind, and the rest of creation. How would you describe that relationship in your own words? What impact does it have on you to see this relationship God has designed for humanity?
3. How might this psalm have impacted the ancient Hebrews as they prayed and sang it in worship together?
4. If we could communicate the core message of this text in just one sentence, what would it be? What do we sense God is communicating through this passage?

### **RESPOND to the Scripture Text (10 minutes)**

This psalm boldly praises the majesty of God's name (God's character) throughout creation. The psalmist marvels at how God uses the lowly to upset the powerful (v. 2) as well as how God chooses to give humans great care, purpose, and responsibility in the midst of the vastness of creation (vv. 3-8).

The name of the Lord is known throughout the earth by enemies being silenced and creation flourishing under the rule of humanity.

Let's discern together how we can respond to what God is saying. We will answer one option from below, whichever seems most relevant to our group's discussion of the text.

- A. How does this psalm help you connect with God? What are you experiencing as you read and contemplate this passage?
- B. Have you ever pondered God while looking up at the night sky? What did that experience cause you to consider and wonder about God's relationship with humanity?
- C. Since this is a hymn of praise, spend some time as a group praising God together. Name aspects of God's character that are praiseworthy and thank God for things he has done in the world or in your lives.

### **CLOSE (2 minutes)**

Let's pray and thank God for our time in Scripture together...

*Tips for leading the group discussion (and more tips are available at [howto.bible](http://howto.bible)):*

- *Participate but keep your comments short to make space for others.*
- *Silence is okay. Encourage further discussion by saying "What else?" instead of commenting on every response.*

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contact [christy.gates@intervarsity.org](mailto:christy.gates@intervarsity.org) or [sara.chang@intervarsity.org](mailto:sara.chang@intervarsity.org) with any questions