

INTERVARSITY BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Psalm 130:1-8 NIV, A Penitential Psalm (60 minutes)

WELCOME (7 minutes)

Icebreaker: How easy or hard is it for you to apologize when you've done something wrong?

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. As we get started, I want to give you a heads up that toward the end of our study, I will invite you to take a next step of faith.

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)

Today we are studying a penitential psalm, which means it leads its readers to confess sin, express remorse, and acknowledge human frailty. This psalm is also one of the psalms labeled "a song of ascents." Traveling to Jerusalem to worship or to attend a religious festival meant walking uphill for a long distance, so Jews would traditionally sing these ascent psalms during the trip. Jewish priests may have also sung these ascent psalms as they walked up the steps of the temple in Jerusalem.

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 130:1-8 NIV –

A song of ascents.

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;

2 Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive

- to my cry for mercy.
- 3 If you, Lord, kept a record of sins,
Lord, who could stand?
- 4 But with you there is forgiveness,
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.
- 5 I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.
- 6 I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.
- 7 Israel, put your hope in the Lord,
for with the Lord is unfailing love
and with him is full redemption.
- 8 He himself will redeem Israel
from all their sins.

DISCOVER the Scripture Text (25 minutes)

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

1. Imagine what it might have been like to be walking up toward Jerusalem for worship while singing this psalm. How might this psalm have prepared people for worship?
2. Why does the psalmist connect waiting and hoping (verses 4-7)? How are they related?
3. How would you describe the author's relationship with God? What do the words of this psalm reveal about that relationship?
4. How might this psalm have impacted the ancient Hebrews as they prayed and sang it in worship together?
5. 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: Invitation to Faith (10 minutes)

Like I mentioned at the start, I will now invite us all to take a next step of faith. These psalms we have been studying are meant to draw us closer to God as we meditate on them and pray them for ourselves. Since we want to live out what we have been reading and talking about from the Bible, right now is our opportunity to step closer to God in faith.

If you have been following Jesus for a while, I would like you to consider responding by making a plan to have a spiritual conversation with a friend with whom you have not yet talked about faith in God ([resources here](#)).

If you are new to exploring faith, I would like to give you an opportunity to take a next step. First, I will share what it means to follow Jesus, and then we can see how each of us might want to respond. Let's open the [Invitation to Faith – Small Group](#) document and read it together...

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](https://www.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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this material and more can be found at tiny.cc/biblestudyguides
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