

Songs of Ascents (Tracks 10, 11, 12)
Psalms 129, 130, 131

Main Idea: These three Songs of Ascents should elevate our concept of God, and increase our love for God, as we consider three important experiences of the people of God: affliction, confession, and humility.

- I. The Pilgrims' Affliction (Psalm 129)**
 - A. The Persecution of God's People (129:1-3)
 - B. The Preserver of God's People (129:4)
 - C. A Prayer of God's People (129:5-8)
- II. The Pilgrim's Confession (Psalm 130)**
 - A. A Cry for Attentiveness (130:1-2)
 - B. A Confession of Confidence (130:3-4)
 - C. A Cry of Patience (130:5-6)
 - D. A Call to the Audience (130:7-8)
- III. The Pilgrim's Humility (Psalm 131)**
 - A. Learn to humble yourself before God (131:1).
 - B. Learn to hush before God (131:2)
 - C. Learn to hope in God (131:3)

We come to three more soul-strengthening Songs of Ascents. Psalm 129 is a communal song of confidence. Psalm 130 is classified as one of the seven penitential Psalms. Psalm 131 is an individual Psalm of confidence. Together, we learn some important lessons related to persecution, the forgiveness of sins, and personal humility. These three Psalms should elevate our concept of God, and increase our love for God, as we consider these three experiences of the people of God.

The Pilgrims' Affliction (Psalm 129)

An overcoming perseverance marked this year's World Series Champion, the Kansas City Royals. In game five they had yet another come-from-behind win to close out the series. They came from behind in each of their four wins against the Mets to win the championship (including three wins in which they were trailing in the eighth inning or later). No team has ever won post-season games in such comeback fashion, as the Royals have this year. In a total of eleven post-season wins, they trailed by at least two runs in seven of them! Their incredible resilience caused some baseball fans to dub them, "the kings of improbability." Here in Psalm 127, the Psalmist reminds us another resilient group of people. Throughout history, God's people have been knocked down, but not knocked out.

This Psalm reminds us of the need to stick-to-it, to persevere in the midst of persecution (cf., Heb 12:1-3); but not in our own power. The message here isn't reflecting the popular tune "I get knocked down, but I get up again, you're never going to keep me down" – for a variety of reasons! We can "get up again" because the Lord is with us. All boasting goes to Him alone, who is on the side of His people. We can persevere by His grace.

Some of the features in Psalm 124 and 125 are reflected in Psalm 129. We may divide this Psalm into three parts: (1) the persecution of God's people (1-3); and (2) the preserver of God's people (4), and (3) a prayer of God's people (Lawson, 295).

The Persecution of God's People (129:1-3). The Psalmist begins: "Greatly have they afflicted me from my youth" (129:1a, ESV) which is then followed by an invitation for others to join in liturgically, "let Israel now say" (129:1b, ESV). The "let Israel now say" phrase is identical to Psalm 124:1-2. Corporately then, the people should respond: "Greatly have they afflicted me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed against me. (Ps 129:2, ESV)

The phrase "afflicted me from my youth" (1, 2, ESV) looks back to the Exodus events, in which God's people were brought into existence in the midst of suffering (cf., Hosea 11:1; Ex 1:12-14, 2:23-25). Despite the suffering, the enemies never "prevailed" against the people; they couldn't eliminate them.

Paul wrote about believers, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed but not driven to despair" (2 Cor 4:8, ESV). The sixteenth-century French Reformer Theodore Beza told King Henry of Navarre, "Sire, it is the lot of the Church of God to endure blows and not to inflict them. But may it please you to remember that the church is an anvil that has worn out many hammers" (in Wilcock, 237). The people of God persevere by grace.

I find it interesting that the people are told to *sing* about "affliction?" The Lord doesn't want them to forget their history, nor to despair and quit when faced with present affliction.

The Christian church was also born in affliction, and must continue to endure it with hope and joy (Acts 5:41-42). We must also remember the persecuted church around the world, praying for her to persevere faithfully.

My friend C.J. Mahaney says, "In your darkest moments, you will need your best theology." This Psalm addresses a powerful theological concept that can indeed strengthen us in dark moments; that is, it points us to the Suffering Servant Jesus. For instance, Psalm 129 actually provides us with a key for understanding Matthew's quotation of Hosea 11:1. Hosea writes, "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son" (11:1, ESV). Hosea sees Egypt as the childhood of the nation. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus and His parents leave Bethlehem because of the persecution of Herod, and head to Egypt (Matt 2:13-14). They stay there until Herod dies (Matt 2:15). Then Matthew says that the reason the angel told Joseph to flee Bethlehem and to go to Egypt was to fulfill what Hosea said, "Out of Egypt, I called my son" (Matt 2:15, ESV). Some critical scholars think Matthew wrongly applied this verse to Jesus. But I disagree. I concur with Ligon Duncan who says that as Israel was born into suffering in Egypt, so God's one true Son went into Egypt in suffering also. He would then leave Egypt, return to His people, live in suffering, and then die in suffering. Why? Because Jesus is the fulfillment of all the suffering Servant Songs of the Old Testament (Duncan, "Greatly Afflicted"). Matthew ties together this whole Old Testament theme. We see this theme in Psalm 129. Israel was born into suffering; Jesus was born into suffering. Jesus would live perfectly obedient life (unlike Israel), and create a new people, who are united in Him.

Here's the hope for dark moments: We can endure affliction with great hope because Jesus Christ has already suffered the ultimate affliction on our behalf. Isaiah says that Jesus "was smitten by God, and afflicted" (53:4, ESV); He "was oppressed, and He was afflicted" (Isa 53:7, ESV), as He offered up His body and blood on behalf of sinners (Isa 53:4-6). Because of Jesus' atoning death, and glorious resurrection, any suffering we face on this earth is short-lived. We will prevail over the grave because Jesus has prevailed. And any suffering we face in this short life, we can find grace through Christ to endure it. Therefore, let's labor with humble, Christ-centered confidence.

In verse 3, the Psalmist likens the enemies of God to a farmer who plows the fields with long rows – with the field being “the back” of Israel. They inflicted great lashes on the backs of God’s people (cf., Ex 5:14). Moreover, the furrows were “long,” meaning that the suffering occurred over a long period of time. The powers of darkness often try to wear down God’s people down until they give up.

One can hear the Servant Songs of Isaiah here again, “I gave my back to those who strike...” (Isa 50:6, ESV) and “by His stripes we are healed” (Isa 53:5c, ESV). And now, though not for atonement, but for gospel advancement, we must “follow in His steps” (1 Pet 2:21). Jesus identifies with us in such suffering and enables us to endure it (cf., Phil 1:29).

The Preserver of God’s People (129:4). The Psalmist reminds the people of the Lord’s character in verse 4 saying, “The LORD is righteous; He has cut the ropes of the wicked” (Ps 129:4). Kidner says, “Many of the later ordeals of Israel, unlike the Egyptian bondage, were punishments; but God’s character as righteous ... and as rescuer (4b) shines through them all” (444). Despite the affliction, the Psalmist says that the Lord, the Righteous One has intervened. He has preserved His people. He is faithful to His promises (cf., Gen 12:1-3). He hears the cries of His people in distress (cf., Ex 2:24-25).

In pointing the people to the character of God, the Psalmist teaches us a great lesson. In seasons of trials, ponder the Lord’s attributes. Ponder His work in history. Ponder His promises. He is righteous. He is a rescuer. Let hope arise as you ponder His ways. You will need good theology in dark moments.

The particular context in view here may be Israel’s release from Babylonian captivity, in which the Lord “cut the ropes of the wicked” (129:4b). But we can’t be certain. The fact is, the Lord set Israel free from a host of enemies, including Egypt, Amalek, and Assyria, just to name a few. Indeed, the Lord’s specialty is in cutting ropes! He breaks the bonds of oppression, addiction, and affliction. Ultimately, He has cut the ropes of the great enemy of death, through the resurrection of Jesus! Look to the rope cutting Lord in times of hardship and temptation.

A Prayer of God’s People (129:5-8). To quote a popular expression, “haters gonna hate.” In verses 5-8, the Psalmist reminds us that though God’s people will be hated (Jn 15:18-25), those the haters will eventually lose.

These verses are to be read either as a prayer or as a declaration of confidence (Goldingay, 519). Wilcock says, “Vv. 5-8 may be a prayer, but they are also in effect a prophecy” (237). The Psalmist prays with confidence for none of the plans of the enemies to prevail. These enemies have no regard for the Lord’s presence among his people, His covenant and blessing, and the hope of a victorious kingdom to come (VanGemenen, 798-99).

Let all who hate Zion
be driven back in disgrace.
Let them be like grass on the rooftops,
which withers before it grows up
and can’t even fill the hands of the reaper
or the arms of the one who binds sheaves.
Then none who pass by will say,
“May the Lord’s blessing be on you.”
We bless you in the name of Yahweh. (129:5-8)

In view of the seriousness of opposing God’s people, the people call down destruction on the enemies of God with three curses. First, they plead for those who “hate Zion” (i.e., those who

hate God's people) to be shamed by defeat and turned back in retreat (129:5). Israel will be victorious.

Second, they plead for those who afflict God's people to be useless as "like grass on the rooftops" (129:6). Roofs were flat during this time, and the grass might sprout for a moment in the shallow dirt. But they would soon wither because of the beating sun. The grass would grow but would be useless. The reaper wouldn't even have to cut it down nor bind it into sheaves (129:7). The Psalmist, then, is praying for the enemies to be scorched and fruitless – for the enemies to no longer harm God's people.

Finally, they plead for the enemies to remain "unblessed" (129:8). When Israel passes by the territory of her enemies, they're not to bless them in a neighborly way (129:8; cf., Ruth 2:4). They are to be held under the curse. The blessing of Psalm 128 is contrasted with the lack of blessing in Psalm 129 (Goldingay, 519).

We must also remember that the Lord is just, and He is right to judge the wicked. He cannot sweep sin under the rug and remain holy. So you are wise to fear Him. The writer of Hebrews says, "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" (Heb 10:31, ESV)

Further, praying against one's enemies in this context is an expression of concern for God's kingdom. We share this concern today. We share the Psalmist's desire for the Kingdom of God to prevail against the kingdom of darkness. Sometimes that may mean our enemies are brought to justice, and/or that they're converted (Matt 5:44).

This Psalm reminds us that everyone is either under a curse, or under God's blessing (cf., Ps 1; Gen 12:1-3). There's no third option. The way one goes from curse to blessing is by looking to the afflicted Christ, who bore our curse on the cross, and poured out blessing upon repentant sinners who turn to Him in faith (Gal 3:13-14).

Further, as we survey the whole storyline of Bible, we must remember that this prayer is – in the grand scheme of things – a prayer of *love*. *God's preservation of His afflicted people led to the coming of Jesus Christ*, who inaugurated the Kingdom of God. For God so loved the world, that He preserved His people, so that through Jesus, all the ends of the earth may be saved. That's love. God graciously invites everyone to bow the knee to Jesus and confess Him as Lord, so that they will not perish like grass on the roof, but have everlasting life (Jn 3:16).

In sum, how do believers in Jesus Christ endure affliction? We endure with prayer. We remember that affliction is part of our faith. We remember that Jesus identifies with us in suffering. We take comfort in knowing that the Lord stands with us in suffering (cf., 2 Tim 4:17-18). We live with the assurance that Christ will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb 13:5). We remember that through Christ, we are more than conquerors. And we live with confidence, knowing that we will have the ultimate victory over the grave because "the greatest comeback ever" has occurred with the resurrection of the Suffering Servant, Jesus, the real "King of Improbability!"

The Pilgrim's Confession (Psalm 130)

Many people are familiar with John Wesley's conversion story. It happened one May evening in 1738 in a London meetinghouse, as he listened to a reading from Martin Luther's preface to his commentary on Romans. But many aren't familiar with the events that preceded this historical moment. Earlier that same day, in St. Paul's Cathedral, Wesley was deeply moved by the singing of Psalm 130. Wilcock says, "The cry of the psalmist was his cry; the word of the apostle [from Romans] was God's answer" (238). Wesley deeply desired to be right with God, and by God's grace found it in Christ.

This Psalm is part of the wider biblical theme of sin and forgiveness. In fact, Luther called this Psalm, along with the other six “penitential Psalms” (i.e., Psalms of confession), “Pauline Psalms” because they emphasize confession of sin and guilt, and express the need for divine forgiveness (VanGemeren, 799). In this Psalm, the supplicant is overwhelmed with trouble of some kind, but the context presupposes that this trouble resulted from his own wrongdoing (Goldingay, 522). That’s why he needs forgiveness. In the last verse, he calls on the community to follow Him in looking to God for redemption.

So the pilgrim cries out, look, longs, and waits for God’s mercy as a result of his guilt. Interestingly, he never asks God to do anything but to be “attentive” (130:1). However, the Psalmist’s confidence in God’s willingness to forgive repentant sinners runs through this prayer, and he believes that “if one can get [Yahweh’s] attention, action will follow” (Ibid., 523).

The context is unknown. It falls into four parts. I will outline it as follows: (1) a cry for attentiveness, (2) a confession of confidence, (3) a commitment to patience, and (4) a call to the audience. The first three parts involve an individual seeking God, and the last part (verses 7-8) calls on the community to have confidence in God’s love.

A Cry for Attentiveness (130:1-2). The Psalmist begins, “Out of the depths I call to You, Yahweh! Lord, listen to my voice; let Your ears be attentive to my cry for help” (1-2). The phrase “out of the depths” involves the idea of being cast into the depths of the sea, a place of trouble and despair (cf., Ps 69). The Psalmist uses the expression to describe the anguish of a godly person who has fallen into sin and guilt, as he mentions in verse 3, “iniquities.”

The biblical character that comes to mind immediately is Jonah. His prayer in the belly of the great fish expresses this anguish (see Jon 2:1-ff.). Like the Psalmist, and Jonah, our sin alienates us from God. The good news, however, is that God hears sinners’ desperate pleas, even from the belly of a fish!

There’s another Old Testament character that comes to mind here. In verse 2, the Psalmist asks God to pay attention to his cry (130:2). The word “attentive” hardly appears anywhere else except for Nehemiah, as he pleaded for God to hear His prayers of confession and need for himself and the people (cf., Neh 1:6, 11). Later in the book, Nehemiah and the people confess their sin and express a similar confidence of the Psalmist saying, “But you are a God ready to forgive” (Neh 9:17b). How hopeful is this truth? God is more ready to forgive than we are to confess.

So where do you turn when you’re in the depths? Drugs? Alcohol? The pits of depression? Learn from the Psalmist, and cry out to the God who hears desperate pleas.

A Confession of Confidence (130:3-4). The Psalmist goes on to make a statement of confidence about God’s ability and willingness to forgive, similar to Nehemiah’s statement: “If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared” (3-4, ESV). Can you imagine your “sin score” right now? If God was keeping a record of sin, or “acts of waywardness” (Goldingay, 526), we could not stand before Him. Even the best of men, would have no hope. The good news is that He forgives (cf., Ex 34:7; Ps 86:5; 103:3; Mic 7:18-20). In His kindness, He leads us to repentance (Rom 2:4).

How should one deal with guilt? This is an important question because every human being tries to deal with it. Some people choose *denial*. They refuse to believe that they’re guilty of anything. Others choose *rationalization*. They may admit they’re guilty, but they blame it on something or someone – parents, teachers, government, culture, or one’s genes. Another wrong option is *relativization*. Those who choose this response point out that others are guilty also, and that their guilt then isn’t so bad (Williams, kindle). Have you ever played these games?

Instead of denying, blame shifting, or relativizing our guilt, the Psalmist gives us the way to deal with the root of guilt: admit and confess it to God in order to receive forgiveness. Should you choose this way, you won't have to carry your guilt anymore. These other faulty options will not remove your guilt. Should you confess your sin to God, you can experience God's healing. So the question is: Are you confessing sin to Him? You will never find liberty, joy, and renewal in hiding sin. Richard Sibbes remarked, "The way to cover our sin is to uncover it by confession" (in Lawson, 297). God does cover our sin, but we must confess it (cf., 1 Jn 1:9).

For we know something more than even the Psalmist knew here. We know that in Jesus Christ, you can find the type of forgiveness that John Wesley found in the gospel, complete pardon for your sins. While we don't see a mention of the cross in this Psalm, we see two fundamental concepts that are expressed in the atoning work of Jesus: God's hatred of sin, and God's willingness to forgive. The cross displays how God punished sin and how He forgives sinners at the same time, through the wrath-absorbing, sin-covering death of His Son (cf., 1 Jn 2:1-2). In great love, Jesus endured the floodwaters of judgment for us. If you look to Jesus Christ, then you hear the words of Paul, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1).

Praise God is He can and does forgive desperate sinners! Paul told the Corinthians about how anyone who looks to Jesus can find such full forgiveness saying, "in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them" (2 Cor 5:19a). God has now entrusted to us this ministry of reconciliation, giving us the privilege of sharing this good news with the world (2 Cor 5:19b-21).

Further, for those who have been justified by God through Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1), we have the responsibility of maintaining healthy fellowship with God by daily repenting of sin in the process of sanctification.

There's one more important note related to forgiveness in Psalm 130:4. The Psalmist tells us the natural response to one who has been forgiven such debt: *reverence*. When we understand God's forgiveness we will rightly fear God. Spurgeon said, "None fear the Lord like those who have experienced his forgiving love" (in Wilcock, 239). Indeed, forgiven sinners will stand in awe of Him (cf., Deut 5:29; 1 Pet 1:17; Mk 2:12; Rom 6:1). Our respect for Him will increase. And this awe will inspire us to seek this daily renewal.

A Cry of Patience (130:5-6). The Psalmist continues by expressing his commitment to wait on the Lord, "I wait for Yahweh; I wait and put my hope in His word. I wait for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning— more than watchmen for the morning" (5-6). Here we find the supplicant's present position. He knows God is merciful (3-4), so he waits for Him.

What does this waiting involve? From Psalm 62:5, this type of waiting may involve *silence*; that is, being still before God, and experiencing His grace. From Psalm 40:1, it involves a sense of waiting in *expectation* before God; that is, waiting on Him to act. Here in Psalm 130, it involves hoping in God's Word; that is, His promises. In each of these three verses about waiting on God, one thing is common: the Psalmists are looking to *the Lord*. They are longing for God Himself to work, not simply an escape from punishment (Kidner, 446). And in Jesus Christ, the long awaited answer ultimately came.

What is this waiting for God like? In verse 6, the pilgrim says that he waits like a watchman waits for the sun to rise in the morning. He waits eagerly for the Lord, and with the assurance of God's new mercies every morning.

Practically speaking, based on this text, one of the ways we should express a deep longing for the mercies of God is by seeking Him in His word. It's in His Word that He meets with us; speaks to us. It's in His word that we hear the gospel afresh, His assurance of pardon every day (Ps

119:147-48). In this busy world in which we live, you must fight find time to sit patiently before the Lord and in His Word. Our spiritual lives will be shallow if we refuse to wait on the Lord; if we refuse to be long in the prayer closet. The Puritans used to say, “pray until you’ve prayed.” Don’t get in a hurry. Seek God in the quiet place. Protect your daily communion with God, and long to see the risen Son, like the watchmen long to see the rising sun.

A Call to the Audience (130:7-8). The Psalmist’s hope causes him to call the whole nation to renew their hope in the Lord. Kidner says of the whole Psalm, “There is a steady climb towards assurance, and at the end there is encouragement for the many from the experience of the one” (446). The Psalmist writes of this assurance, “Israel, put your hope in the Lord. For there is faithful love with the Lord, and with Him is redemption in abundance. And He will redeem Israel from all its sins” (7-8). He has put his personal hope in the Lord (5), and now he tells the people to do the same.

In verse 7, the supplicant mentions three wonderful words: *forgiveness*, *covenant love* (“faithful” or “steadfast” love), and *redemption*. When you think about the God of the Bible, these terms should come to mind. Because God is ready to forgive, faithful to His promise, and the great Redeemer, we should “hope in the Lord” (7a). We have reason to hope in Him. We have reason to look to Him.

God’s unfailing love and abundant redemption is bestowed on people sovereignly and mercifully. His mercy is so great that in verse 8 the Psalmist says that He can redeem people from “all [their] sins” (8). In the words of Paul, “Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” (Rom 5:20, ESV).

So then, the picture is that God forgives sinners who repent. What sort of forgiveness do you need? Do you need salvation that comes only through Christ? Do you need restored fellowship with God? Does the community of faith need forgiveness? Let’s seek Him in these ways with the confidence that “with Him, there is forgiveness” (130:4).

The Pilgrim’s Humility (Psalm 131)

Spurgeon said of this individual Psalm of confidence, “It is one of the shortest Psalms to read, but one of the longest to learn” (Spurgeon, [page](#)). Why would he say that? It’s because humility not something we ever fully live out. To assume you have arrived at humility proves otherwise! Here’s this “short-yet-lifelong” Psalm, originally penned by David:

A Davidic song of ascents.

LORD, my heart is not proud;
my eyes are not haughty.
I do not get involved with things
too great or too difficult for me.
Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself
like a little weaned child with its mother;
I am like a little child.
Israel, put your hope in the LORD,
both now and forever. (Ps 131:1-3)

David expresses a child-like, humble trust in the Lord. He shares his experience (131:1-2) as an encouragement to the whole community of faith (131:3). David’s childlike trust and contentment has much to teach us.

Learn to humble yourself before God (131:1). David begins by confessing his spiritual condition, with three denials. He claims that his heart is not “lifted up” (proud). His eyes are not raised to high. He doesn’t occupy himself with things that are too great or difficult. These denials suggest that this condition hasn’t always been the case (Lawson, 301). David, like us, knew the temptation of spiritual pride and selfish ambition. His pride caused him to look down upon others, with his haughty eyes. VanGemeren summarizes pride powerfully saying, “The proud person looks, compares, competes, and is never content” (803).

Pause for a moment and take an inventory of your heart. Are you constantly comparing yourself others? Are you constantly competing with others? Are you seeking to outdo and outperform others? Are you discontent? These are manifestations of sinful pride that needs to be killed.

What does David mean by things “too great” or difficult?” David may be thinking about great theological mysteries. The intellectually arrogant lacks theological humility. But I think David has in mind great *plans and accomplishments* (cf., Deut 17:8; 30:11). Goldingay puts it well:

The line is concerned with more than seeking to understand things that are too great for human comprehension. Rather the supplicant has avoided trying to go about doing great wonders, like God, rather than walking in faithfulness (Prov 8:20). This psalm testifies to having escaped “vain ambition. (536)

David is giving up trying to do things beyond His control, and things for His own glory. His selfish ambition and actions were expressions of arrogance, not humility. This new path that he expresses, however, involves a commitment to simple faithfulness.

Today – often well intended – we try to do the wonders of God. But stop trying to be God. Let’s learn to be faithful. Let’s learn to rest in God, like a child (131:2).

The attitude that God expects from us is conveyed in this Psalm. We need to admit our frailty. We need to admit our own limitations. We need to avoid rating others lower than ourselves. We need to beware of the destruction nature of pride (2 Chron 26:16; cf., 32:25). We need to remember that God hates pride (cf., Ps 18:27; 101:5; Prov 6:16-19; Prov 16:5; 30:13). We need to remember that competition and comparison, discontentment, and selfish ambitions are forms of pride. We need to remember, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (Jam 4:6, ESV). We need to remember that God calls us to “do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with [our] God” (Mic 6:8, ESV). Let us look to God, like David, as we seek to grow in humility (cf., Prov 18:12). We need the message of Philippians 2:1-11 to work deeply in our hearts.

Learn to hush before God (131:2). Richard Foster writes, “In contemporary society our Adversary majors in three things: noise, hurry, and crowds” (*Celebration of Discipline*, 15). So then, we should pay close attention to verse 2, as David talks about being “quiet” and “calm” before the Lord.

David says that He is like a “child” in the presence of God. This childlike spirit creates peace and contentment, instead of restlessness and discontentment. By trusting God and listening to God, he has found contentment. While believers should not be “childish,” they are called to be “childlike” in faith (Matt 18:3). We should have a simple, dependent, confident trust in the Father, in whose presence we find all we need. So let us learn to be still before Him (cf., Ps 46:10).

One of the reasons we experience contentment through silence before God, is because like a child, we experience the love of the Father. As believers, we don’t have to run around competing

with others, and promoting ourselves. We have already been accepted through Jesus Christ. The Father loves us with an everlasting love. So let us stop and be quiet, and receive His love in the quiet places. Let us trust Him for daily bread, and find contentment in knowing Him, and being known by Him.

Learn to hope in God (131:3). Based on David's relationship with God, he calls the people to hope in God. Childlike faith leads to hope in God. This hope isn't "wishful thinking" but a deeply settled confidence in God. When a believer is confident in God, they find contentment and peace. David tells Israel to hope in the Lord "forevermore," that is, to never stopping hoping in Him. Let's never stop hoping in Him until our faith ends in sight.

Corrie ten Boom said, "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God" (in Lawson, 302). How true! If you know Him, then humble yourself before Him; quietly rest in His love; and keeping hoping in Him.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Why are the people told to sing about *affliction*?
2. Why is it important for us to remember the nature of affliction in the Christian life?
3. What does Psalm 129 teach us about the character of God? How should we respond to this God?
4. Regarding Psalm 130, what are some common ways people try to (wrongly) deal with their guilt? How does this Psalm teach us to deal with guilt?
5. What does Psalm 130 teach us about the character of God? How should this encourage us to respond?
6. What does it look like to wait for the Lord?
7. How does Psalm 130 point us to the work of Jesus?
8. What is your reaction to Psalm 131? How does Psalm 131 teach us about pride and humility?
9. What does Psalm 131 teach us about contentment and resting in God?
10. Take a few moments to pray through these Psalms.