



GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Winter Quarter - Lesson 4 - Week of February 5, 2023

Lesson: **God's Love Endures Forever (Psalm 136)**

Bible Verses: Psalm 136; Philippians 4:4-6; I Thess. 5:16-18

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

- What is your favorite song to sing during worship?
- What is one thing you love about being a child of God?

DISCUSSION

KEY TERM: HESED

A Hebrew word that means kindness or love between people; specifically of the devotional piety of people towards God as well as the love or mercy of God towards humanity.

The most important theological word in the Old Testament is God's loving-kindness or loyal love (hesed). The root meaning of hesed is goodness and kindness, but it came to mean loyal love on the basis of God's promises and deeds toward His people.

The Psalmist repeats "*His love endures forever*" no less than 26 times in Psalm 136. Why? Did he have nothing else to say? He was repeatedly emphasizing the fact that God's love endures forever. By the time you get through the psalm, you know the bottom line - His love endures forever!

Some Psalms give us a glimpse of ancient Israelite worship, and Psalm 136 is one of them. This was probably sung antiphonally: either a restricted part of the congregation in the temple would sing the lead line of each cycle, and the whole congregation would respond with His love endures forever. There were some other psalms sung this way.

In Jewish tradition, this psalm is known as the Great Hallel, the Great Psalm of Praise. The refrain celebrates God's love (the Hebrew word is hesed, and it is difficult to render consistently by one English word). The King James Version opts for steadfast love. It is bound with God's faithfulness to the covenant; and in various contexts, it might properly be rendered grace, love, even covenant fidelity - with overtones of reciprocal obligation. What is the application and emotion of this Psalm?

God promised Israel He would have mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments (Deuteronomy 7:9); and indeed, He did.

1. How have you witnessed God's loyal love in your life?
2. What difference does it make that God's love endures forever?

3. The word love in the NIV (His **love** endures forever) is translated **mercy** in the old King James. How does your translation read?
4. What do we learn about God from Psalm 136:23-26?

Every other line in Psalm 136 has the words *His love endures forever*. As the psalmist briefly recites parts of Israel's history, each act is followed by these words. There is repetition in the second line of each verse being repeated. Also, there is repetition in the first three verses with the phrase *give thanks*.

Read Philippians 4:4-6 and I Thessalonians 5:16-18. As often as Paul expressed thanks and encouraged others to express theirs, he was careful never to attribute to men the thanks due to God alone.

1. Why is giving thanks so important and what good things come to those who give thanks?
2. How does gratitude change us?
3. Do you believe that God is good? Why is it important that we believe that God is good?

When you look back over your life, what choices, changes, trials, or great joys come to mind? Perhaps you did not always sense God's love, but the perspective of time shows that His faithful love was in each situation. You can trust Him today because you have experienced His loving hand in the past.

One of the best ways to remember what God has taught us through experiences is to write down those lessons while they are fresh. You may want to keep a journal and record them daily or monthly.

4 Simple Steps to Discover God's Faithfulness

- Reminisce (Recall God's faithfulness).
- Meditate (Read scriptures on God's faithfulness).
- Trust (Rely on God).
- Choose (Choose to believe in God's faithfulness).

God is loyal, and He does not forsake His people. Remember, you can trust God for your good.

Prayer Focus: God, help me to always remember your faithfulness and to be grateful.