

# Lesson 5

## Divine Worship (Psalms 73-75)

1. How does the tone of Psalm 73 differ from those written by David? What circumstances might have prompted Asaph to write, “I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked”? How is this sentiment still valid today? Why do Christ-followers wrestle with this theme?
2. Choose one verse or phrase from Psalms 73—75 that stands out to you. This could be something you’re intrigued by, something that makes you uncomfortable, something that puzzles you, something that resonates with you, or just something you want to examine further. Write that here.
3. Circle the descriptions Asaph uses to portray the ungodly in Psalm 73. What makes this psalm more than simply “complaining” about others’ success? What does it say about the relationship between wealth and God’s chosen people? How is this lesson applicable today?
4. Why do you think Asaph missed the point in his understanding of what it meant to serve God (Ps. 73:13–14)? How do people miss that point today? Why is it such an easy mistake to make? What is the proper response to God when a person sees the success of others while that person is in the midst of trials?
5. What is it about wealth that divides believers so quickly and dramatically? Why do some Christians hold tight to the idea that wealth comes to those who truly believe? How is this similar to the struggle the psalmist has in Psalm 73? Why is it easy to fall into the trap that says obedience to God should result in greater wealth or worldly success?

6. What lessons can we glean from Psalm 73 to help us better respond to those who have apparent success and wealth in contrast to those who are suffering? What concluding truth does Psalm 73:26–28 offer to the discussion about what’s truly important? How is this lived out in daily life?
7. How does the psalmist’s tone shift from despair to confidence in Psalm 74? What are modern parallels to the despair the psalmist felt after the destruction of the temple? What does this psalm teach us about God’s willingness to embrace our pain? About the ultimate answer to that pain?
8. What does Psalm 74:12 tell us about Asaph’s understanding of God’s role in the midst of his despair? How does he count upon past experiences with God to support his trust in God’s presence and Lordship? Why does the psalmist come to the conclusion that the Lord remembers His people (vv. 18–23)? What role does tradition—God’s noted role in historical events—play in our understanding of God and His ways today?
9. What does the psalmist mean by the phrase “your Name is near” in Psalm 75:1? How does the psalmist define God’s character in this psalm? What is significant about the way the psalmist “quotes” God in this psalm? How does this help to turn the focus to who God is, rather than the problems we take to God?
10. Why does the psalmist address two different audiences in this psalm? This seems to be a common thread. Is this also true of today’s church? What are some ways the church reaches out to both believers and the ungodly? Read Psalm 75:9. What does the psalmist’s personalization of the message teach us about what our worship ought to entail?
11. Have you ever been frustrated by the way bad people are prosperous while good people struggle? Explain. What does this frustration say about your view of God’s blessing? What greater truth can help you deal with the reality that sometimes good things happen to apparently undeserving people?

12. Is it important to you to maintain clean hands and a pure heart? Why or why not? What is a proper motivation for doing this? What is a wrong-minded motive? How does the message in Psalm 73 help you find proper perspective on blessing and the reasons to maintain a pure heart?
  
13. When have you felt like the psalmist in Psalm 74? What circumstances have led to feelings of despair? How have you found your way through those times? What does it take to lift your eyes to God's throne when you're struggling with difficult times? What are practical things you can do to move from despair to confidence in God?
  
14. Think of one or two things that you have learned that you'd like to work on in the coming week. Remember that this is all about quality, not quantity. It's better to work on one specific area of life and do it well than to work on many and do poorly (or to be so overwhelmed that you simply don't try). **Do you need to learn to trust God when you feel you're being treated unfairly? Do you need to grow confidence in God's nearness for difficult times? Be specific. Go back through Psalms 73—75 and put a star next to the phrase or verse that is most encouraging to you. Consider memorizing this verse.**
  
15. Write a prayer below (or simply pray one in silence), inviting God to work on your mind and heart in those areas you've previously noted. Be honest about your desires and fears.