



Approaching God

Begin your time with an opening prayer

Take a moment to quiet your heart and ask God to help you experience his presence today. Ask Him to free you from any distractions as you begin to read and meditate on today's passage.

Psalm 121

Passage Introduction:

“The Christian life is not a quiet escape to a garden where we can walk and talk uninterruptedly with our Lord, not a fantasy trip to a heavenly city where we can compare our blue ribbons and gold medals with those of others who have made it to the winners' circle. To suppose that, or to expect that, is to go about the Christian life entirely the wrong way. The Christian life is going to God. In going to God Christians travel the same ground that everyone else walks on, breathe the same air, drink the same water, shop in the same stores, read the same newspapers, are citizens under the same governments, pay the same prices for groceries and gasoline, fear the same dangers, are subject to the same pressures, get the same distresses, are buried in the same ground. The difference is that each step we walk, each breath we breathe, we know we are preserved by God, we know we are accompanied by God, we know we are ruled by God; and therefore no matter what doubts we endure or what accidents we experience, the Lord will guard us from every evil, he guards our very life. This is the prayer of Psalm 121.”

Eugene Peterson - *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - Read the passage slowly 2 or 3x's.

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Psalm 121 - A Song of Ascents (ESV) - **1** I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? **2** My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. **3** He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. **4** Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. **5** The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. **6** The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. **7** The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. **8** The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- One of the pitfalls that often comes on our spiritual journey is not being willing to ask for help. What makes us reluctant to go to the Lord for help?

- What are some ways the Psalmist describes the Lord in this passage? Make of list of the character of God from this text.
- Where in life right now can you see or sense the providence of God, even in the midst of difficulty?

Psalm 121

Passage Summary - (From The ESV Transformation Bible)

In their ascent to Jerusalem, pilgrims traveled dangerous roads and pathways. Their confidence along the way was focused on the destination point—not merely the “hills” (v. 1) where Jerusalem lay but more importantly the God of those hills and of that city. For this was the covenant God who had promised his people his care, provision, and protection as they walked faithfully with him. Indeed, their help came from the Lord, Yahweh, the God who made the heavens and the earth (v. 2). As they traveled uncertain paths, they knew his presence would never fail (vv. 3-4). Day and night, he would watch over them (vv. 5-6).

As people traveled down the Jordan Valley southwards and then turned west to ascend the steep roadway to Jerusalem, the sun would be to their left side. The Lord, then, was likened to the shade on their right hand (v. 5), where comfort and protection was felt. God would keep them from danger as they traveled to and then from the city of God, and throughout all the days of their lives (vv. 7-8). We see, then, the covenant care and grace of God toward his people. As they follow faithfully in his ways, and do what he has called them to do, they can be assured of his watchful presence. The good news of God’s grace toward his people, then, involves not only their past—i.e., forgiveness of sin—but also their futures—i.e., trusting his watchful care of their lives daily as they walk by faith in his power, his promise, and his presence. For we have been united to Christ, whose invincible care for us will never fail—“from this time forth and forevermore” (v. 8; cf. Hebrew 13:5-8).

Key Takeaway:

As you read today’s passage, what are 1 or 2 main takeaways that you wrote down that you want to take with you? How would you briefly summarize your observations and meditations for today?

Close in Prayer:

Close by turning today’s Psalm into your own prayer. If you don’t know where to start, use the verses for help.

- vs. 1,2 - *I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord. “God I need help, I’m tempted to look everywhere else for help.”*
- vs 2-4 - *God thank you that you are always watching over me, always protecting, never asleep.*
- vs. 6-8 - *God, keep me, protect me, guard me in these particular places in my life.*