



## 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 131 - Humility

**Passage Introduction:**

Psalm 131 is a maintenance psalm. It is as functional to the person of faith as pruning is functional to the gardener: it gets rid of that which looks good to those who don't know any better, and reduces the distance between our hearts and their roots in God. The two things that Psalm 131 prunes away are unruly ambition and infantile dependency, what we might call getting too big for our britches and refusing to cut the apron strings. Both of these tendencies can easily be supposed to be virtues, especially by those who are not conversant with Christian ways. If we are not careful, we will be encouraging the very things that will ruin us. We are in special and constant need of expert correction. We need pruning. Jesus said, "[God] cuts off every branch of me that doesn't bear grapes. And every branch that is grape-bearing he prunes back so it will bear even more" (Jn 15:2). More than once our Lord the Spirit has used Psalm 131 to do this important work among his people.

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 131 - A Song of Ascents (NLT) - 1** LORD, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. **2** Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for its mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. **3** O Israel, put your hope in the LORD — now and always.

## Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- As you meditate on this short passage, what are some characteristics of pride or haughtiness? Where are you tempted towards these things in your life right now?
- What are we meant to learn from the metaphor/word picture of a child who has been weaned and no longer cries for his mother's milk? What is the difference between "infantile dependency" and "childlike trust?"

## Psalm 131

### Passage Summary - (From The ESV Transformation Bible)

Some might wonder how the opening of this psalm of ascent can fit with expressions in other psalms of ascent. Here we read, “O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high” (v. 1), whereas elsewhere we read, “I lift up my eyes to the hills” (121:1), and, “To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens!” (123:1). But as we consider these statements, we realize there is no conflict. In fact, precisely because the psalmist has his eyes lifted high to the hills, gazing on the One enthroned in the heavens, he is able to understand himself in proper perspective. His gaze toward God is high, but his consideration of himself is measured and modest. He recognizes that there is much he simply cannot understand rightly (131:1b), so he can be at peace entrusting those things to God. The calm and quiet of his soul (v. 2) is not an expression of resignation and defeat. Rather, he experiences this calm precisely as he expresses all of his hope in the superior greatness and majesty of the Lord (v. 3).

He longs, then, for the whole of the nation of Israel to experience the joy of this peace and calm, and so he calls them, “from this time forth and forevermore,” to “hope in the LORD” (v. 3).

### 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. Write some of your own prayers here using sections of Psalm 131 as a guide using the theme of humility.

- vs. **1** - *LORD, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don’t concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. (Spend some time praying around this verse with words of praise and confession.)*
- vs. **2** - *Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for its mother’s milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. (Use this verse to pray and make petition of the Lord for places where you desire and long for growth and childlike dependency to become more of a reality in your life)*
- vs. **3** *O Israel, put your hope in the LORD — now and always. (Use this time to pray for family, church members, friends that they would put their hope in the grace of God in the gospel of Jesus.)*