

Finding Renewal in the Love of God

Unit 1: Discovering Renewal in the Father's Love

Prayer Prompts, Week 1

*Today, we will **praise** God through our prayer time. That is, we will tell God how incredible He is! Today, in our collective prayer time, we will not tell Him our troubles or the ailments of those we love. Rather, we will concentrate on the majesty of the Father. We will go to Him, saying, "Let's not talk about me; let's talk about you!"*

*Praise is **not thanksgiving**. Thanksgiving verbalizes appreciation for what God has done; **praise exalts God for who He is!** Praise reaches behind God's innumerable acts of goodness to uncover the qualities of His heart, the goodness of His nature, the motivations for His work. When our children grow mature enough to thank us for gifts they receive, we are pleased. However, until they interpret those gifts as reflections of love, as insights into our very natures, they do not **know** us.*

Failure to see beyond ourselves and into the heart of our God represents a dangerous introspection, an immaturity of the soul. The psalmist and the prophets understood God. Their writings exalt Him as one possessing innumerable praiseworthy characteristics. These writings recognize God as an all-powerful, ruling authority, full of goodness and justice, displaying love and compassion, and wielding both power and grace eternally for the good of all.

*We worship this God. He is the Father of creation . . . and of re-creation; He is the God of renewal. His mercies are new every morning! He is the God who continues, day in and day out, to create order from chaos, to relieve pain, to restore, to give birth, to provide **life**. Think of it as creating a list in which every item begins, "Father, you are..." Each quality of God might be followed by some evidence of that characteristic, but it is not necessary.*

*Today, as you pray, your leader will provide you with prompts to direct your praise. Each of you should use these prompts to spur you on toward declaring God's nature and attributes before Him and one another. Recount the ways He has displayed these attributes—in dealing with others over the centuries and/or in your life this year or this week! Today, let's tell God that we can see **Him**—not just celebrate the many things He can and does do for us. As we share our praise, our hearts will be lifted and our faith will be bolstered. We serve a **MIGHTY** God!*

Instructions for your prayer of praise:

- The leader of your prayer group will pray aloud the prompts (in bold). She will also offer the first line of praise that will follow this prompt. Possible words of praise for each of these have been listed below.
- Others in the group will offer additional words, affirming God's praiseworthy nature. Brief periods of silence are not only okay, they are sacred, as we seek to listen to the Spirit's urging. Maintain the sacred nature of this time.
- Members of the group may pray more than once.
- When praise from one prompt has been spent, the leader will introduce the next prompt.
- Leaders may interject additional topics for praise; other members of the group may also interject prompts for praise, but they should wait until nearer the end to do so.
- When the prayer comes to an end, remain silent a couple moments to ponder God's greatness, to further declare private words of praise, or to reflect on the experience.
- Save a few minutes to share quietly. What did you learn about yourself or about God during this prayer? What does it mean to you to serve such a mighty, loving God?
- Commit to focus on praising God during the coming week.

Father, today we praise you for your holiness...

"You are (light; in you there is *no darkness at all.*)"

"You (lifted me from my struggle and assured me of your steadfast kindness.)"

Father, we praise you for your majesty...

"The heavens declare your glory."

"The king of darkness cannot harm You, nor any who rest in You."

Father, we praise you for your unfailing love...

"Your love endures forever."

"You were *always* faithful to Israel."

"You saved me from ..."

Father, we praise you for your creativity...

"You bring order from chaos; you created the world and everything in it."

"You saved my marriage when it was as good as dead."

Father, we praise you for your strength and might...

"You are my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer. In you, I take refuge"

"I cried to you, and ..."

Father, we praise you because you come near...

"You see my trouble; you lead me by the hand."

"You rescued me..."

Father, we praise you because you are just...

"You love justice; upright men will see your face."

"I can endure injustice because I know that *you* will set things right."

Father, we praise you because you are forgiving...

"Your mercies are new every morning."

Father, we praise you for your Word...

"The Word of the Lord is flawless."

Father, we praise you for your Spirit...

"You shared your very soul with me so I could know you."

Father, we praise you as the Lord who provides... You have done marvelous things!

"You raised me from the depths; you taught me your ways."

"Your provision is not only adequate; it is abundant!"