

DISCUSSION IDEAS
GOD OUR PROVIDER
Psalm 65

May 28th, 2017

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Key Truth in this Psalm:

Staying mindful and grateful to God our Provider.

♦ **DISCUSSION POINT ONE: BEING GRATEFUL FOR GOD'S PROVISION.**
LEVITICUS 23:9-14 – CELEBRATION OF FIRST HARVEST

⁹ Then the Lord said to Moses, ¹⁰ “Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. When you enter the land I am giving you and you harvest its first crops, bring the priest a bundle of grain from the first cutting of your grain harvest. ¹¹ On the day after the Sabbath, the priest will lift it up before the Lord so it may be accepted on your behalf. ¹² On that same day you must sacrifice a one-year-old male lamb with no defects as a burnt offering to the Lord. ¹³ With it you must present a grain offering consisting of four quarts* of choice flour moistened with olive oil. It will be a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the Lord. You must also offer one quart* of wine as a liquid offering. ¹⁴ Do not eat any bread or roasted grain or fresh kernels on that day until you bring this offering to your God. This is a permanent law for you, and it must be observed from generation to generation wherever you live.¹

How would you feel if you did something kind for someone and then they did not show the least thankfulness?

How can we go about staying aware that it is God who makes possible all that we are and have?

Read through Psalm 65 with these ideas in mind.

Any comments?

Look at the second part of verse 3. How does this relate to earning God's favor?

What might have caused David to stick that thought into the Psalm?

♦ **DISCUSSION POINT TWO: GOD'S POWER.**

How do verses 5-8 strike you?

How do these verses affect your ideas of Who God Is?

What might cause us to take God for granted?

What could we do to prevent that?

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Le 23:9–14). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

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♦ **DISCUSSION POINT THREE: DEPENDENCE ON GOD.**

Imagine being a farmer – or maybe you already are one.

In spite of irrigation, how important is the weather to us?

Side note:

Our company has a customer that actually modifies weather (cloud seeding). Recently one of their customers was Saudi Arabia. Guess what the Saudis learned? You can't make it rain if there are no clouds or moisture in the air!!!

Read verses 9-13 thinking about the importance of God's provision of rain.

What in your life would be the equivalent of a farmer's rain?

How about your paycheck? What is God's involvement with that?

Discuss some ways in which we can show thankfulness to God.

What about when we are struggling with paying the bills?

Does God really care?

What effect does trusting God have on us even when we are having problems and do not see a way out?

Say I am having a terrible time: Is it all about me?

How much are you willing to suffer in order for your neighbor to be drawn to Jesus?

What might be some other reasons that God would not "fix it all up"?

HERE IS ANOTHER THOUGHT:

There is a pervasive false thought that "Faith" is a feeling which we need to work up in order to have God answer prayers.

What IS 'Faith'?

How does Hebrews 11:1 shed light on this?

In Matt. 9:27-28, what did Jesus ask the blind men? Look at the words carefully. Did He ask if they believed that they would be healed? What was the specific question? How does that relate to faith?

♦ **FOR COGITATION:**

What are some ways you can lead your family to remain aware of God's faithfulness?

What actions can we take to keep this perspective?

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♦ **FOR PRAYER:**

Our Grace Church Elders: Pray for our elders as they continue to guide Grace Church, always seeking God's will.

Shelter Valley: Continue to uphold the Shelter Valley believers, and the GCC team that serves there.

Pray for Scott and Leslie Stevens as Scott heads up this ministry.

Pray for the developing local leaders and for continued growth in understanding among those who attend about God's Plan and what it really means to follow Him.

Home Groups: Pray for our home groups.

Pray for the leaders to grow in understanding and skill so that those in each group will truly grow in their walk in the Spirit and in true agape love.

Pray that more folks will take part in a home group and be encouraged as a result.

Pray that each one of us would seek to learn how to use our individual spiritual gift(s) to build up the Body of Christ.

Gettises: Pray for the Gettis family in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Fun Stuff:

I asked about the kids' creative self-entertainment, and David responds:

"Well, they invented a slightly-modified version of their balloon/fan game which they call "kite-balloons" – they attach a string to a balloon, turn a fan so it is blowing vertically, and then fly their balloon - like a kite - over the fan. :)"

I'm guessing that this is a bit less rowdy than launching their stuffed animals via the clothesline.

Praise:

- Praise God for continuing growth in relationships here, with co-workers and fellow students at ESEPA, and with other missionaries. We were blessed to spend some time with Paul and Nancy Mauger last week, who have served as missionaries with ESEPA for 25 years.
- David has also joined a men's prayer group, which has been a huge blessing.

Please pray for:

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- Please continue to pray for David's studies and work at ESEPA, and for his Spanish studies.
- Last week was a "test run" with a planned-out schedule for balancing these duties and family time. Please pray for wisdom and strength.
- Please continue to pray for increasing connectedness here.
- Nathan started first grade at a Christian Costa Rican school last week. Please pray for him (and mom!) as he adjusts from home-schooling.

Pearsons: John and Bobbie's son, John Caleb, is on hospice care with advanced cancer. He is bedridden and on two meds for pain control.

John and Bobbie take a turn in the around the clock family schedule for sitting with him, help daily with changing the bandage on his leg tumor, and help with preparing his special meals. Thanks for prayers during this stressful time.

Barangonan Island: Let's continue to pray for the Lord's love and power to be seen in Barangonan Island.

Continue to pray for wisdom and encouragement for the Ingvoidstads and the Binders as they adjust to a changed way of life.

Uphold the island church leaders in prayer. Remember, God wants YOU to be a part of what He is doing.

Pray the Elders in Training: Eddie and Ted, the teacher geeks, Jeremy who has the gift of discernment to protect the flock, and Sid who leads in outreach to other islands. Pray that the evil one will not attack them.

Continue to uphold the Tagbanwa believers who go to a neighboring island every Friday to teach about God. Pray too for the hearers to respond.

Continue to pray for strength and endurance for those who go, as well as understanding for those who hear.

Thank God and uphold in prayer the "TFG" (Time For God) group of children and young folks who meet every day!

Pray with the strong, self-motivated women's group as they study God's Word and grow to be mature believers.

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Persecuted Believers:

Let's not forget to uphold our fellow believers around the world who are experiencing real and intense persecution for following Jesus.

THIS WEEK:

1. **Uzbekistan:** Praise: Prisoner for Christ recently released after being arrested in 2007.

You may wonder if the letters you write on Prisoner Alert really do make a difference for our brothers and sisters in prison.

Recently a former prisoner for Christ, Dmitry "David" Shestakov, visited VOM's office and testified what a difference your letters made "a huge impact" while he was in prison in Uzbekistan. Letters even saved him from being beaten by the guards!

2. **China:** Praise: other prisoners for Christ recently released!

After nearly two years in prison, Christian human rights lawyer Li Heping returned home to his family earlier this month.

Li was arrested in July 2015, along with a group of other attorneys, for defending evangelical believers and others targeted by the government. Li was convicted of "subversion of state power" in a secret trial and was tortured repeatedly during his two-year imprisonment.

His brother, Li Chunfu, who was arrested at the same time, was so tormented in prison that he was released early after showing signs of mental illness.

Li himself is weak and thin, but his wife reports that he is in good spirits and was delighted to reunite with his family on May 9.

Many human rights lawyers in China are Christians who act out of personal conviction, which often puts them at odds with government authorities.

Pray that Li Heping and his brother, Li Chunfu, will be fully restored to health.

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3. India: Persecution for leaving a traditional religion.

“Shahri’s” husband was among the first in his tribal group to accept Jesus. Although his family were members of the priest caste in their animistic religion, he came to know Christ and soon started a small church in their village.

He was threatened and beaten many times by local communist rebels, who ultimately murdered him at his home because of his Christian faith.

His wife, Shahri, has taken over the leadership of their church but faces many difficulties.

Her late husband’s brother is threatening to take their home, and she is also struggling to pay for her four children’s education.

Pray that Shahri’s family can stay in their house and that her brother-in-law will turn from hate and come to know Jesus.