

LESSON 17

# THE LORD IS MY REFUGE

## *Psalm 31*

*To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.*

- <sup>1</sup>In you, O LORD, do I take refuge;  
let me never be put to shame;  
in your righteousness deliver me!
- <sup>2</sup>Incline your ear to me;  
rescue me speedily!  
Be a rock of refuge for me,  
a strong fortress to save me!
- <sup>3</sup>For you are my rock and my fortress;  
and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me;
- <sup>4</sup>you take me out of the net they have hidden for me,  
for you are my refuge.
- <sup>5</sup>Into your hand I commit my spirit;  
you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.
- <sup>6</sup>I hate those who pay regard to worthless idols,  
but I trust in the Lord.
- <sup>7</sup>I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love,  
because you have seen my affliction;  
you have known the distress of my soul,
- <sup>8</sup>and you have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy;  
you have set my feet in a broad place.

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**WELCOME:** *Fixing Our Focus*

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Discuss with your group members what it means to trust in the Lord. What are the implications involved? How does total surrender of one's life to God look like? How does one continue to trust in the Lord even during good times?

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## WORSHIP: *Adoring Our God*

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Suggested songs:

*My Redeemer Lives* by Reuben Morgan (Hillsong Worship)

*You are Good* by Israel Houghton (Lakewood Church)

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## WORD: *Understanding the Word*

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*Lesson Aim:* Members will fully surrender all aspects of their lives to God. This includes allowing God to be the one to vindicate them.

### **Introduction**

Have you ever experienced being backbitten by someone? It could be a family member who talked behind your back to the rest of your relatives. It could be a friend who spread things about you to the rest of your friends. It could be an officemate, business partner, competitor, or what have you. No matter who it is, the experience is sure to be a painful one. It is a betrayal of trust. What's even more painful is if the things being said about you are fabricated lies, and you end up being ostracized because of them. In this psalm, the psalmist relayed his experience of how his life was kept in tune with God even when he was slandered by his enemies, and how the Lord delivered him.

*Leader:* Lead in reading Psalm 31:1-8 aloud together. Then read the paragraph on the "Key Verse."

*Key Verse:* Throughout the psalm the psalmist depicts God as his refuge in times of distress. God is faithful and answers the cries of those who trust in him. The psalmist therefore ends this psalm with an exhortation: "Love the Lord, all you his saints! The Lord preserves the faithful but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride" (v. 23).

**Psalm 31:1-2. Theme:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Underline the requests made by the psalmist to God. How did the psalmist see God that enabled him to make those requests?

*In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 1-2.*

**Psalm 31:3-8. Theme:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. Underline the things the Lord has done for the psalmist. How do you see God based on the things mentioned here by the psalmist?
3. How is God contrasted to idols?

*In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 3-8.*

**Psalm 31:9-13. Theme:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Read verses 9-13 together.*

- <sup>9</sup>Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress;  
my eye is wasted from grief;  
my soul and my body also.
- <sup>10</sup>For my life is spent with sorrow,  
and my years with sighing;  
my strength fails because of my iniquity,  
and my bones waste away.
- <sup>11</sup>Because of all my adversaries I have become a reproach,  
especially to my neighbors,  
and an object of dread to my acquaintances;  
those who see me in the street flee from me.
- <sup>12</sup>I have been forgotten like one who is dead;  
I have become like a broken vessel.
- <sup>13</sup>For I hear the whispering of many—  
terror on every side! —  
as they scheme together against me,  
as they plot to take my life.

4. How did the psalmist describe the state he is in? How would you describe it in your own words? (*vv. 9-10*)
5. How did the psalmist portray his enemies? How were they afflicting him? (*vv. 11-13*)

*In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 9-13.*

**Psalm 31:14-18. Theme:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Read verses 14-18 together.*

- <sup>14</sup>But I trust in you, O Lord;  
I say, "You are my God."  
<sup>15</sup>My times are in your hand;  
rescue me from the hand of my enemies  
and from my persecutors!  
<sup>16</sup>Make your face shine on your servant;  
save me in your steadfast love!  
<sup>17</sup>O Lord, let me not be put to shame,  
for I call upon you;  
let the wicked be put to shame;  
let them go silently to Sheol.  
<sup>18</sup>Let the lying lips be mute,  
which speak insolently against the righteous  
in pride and contempt.

6. How did the psalmist affirm his trust in the Lord (*vv. 14-15*)?
7. What were the things the psalmist asked God to do for him (*vv. 15-17*)?
8. What were the psalmist's requests to God for his enemies (*vv. 17-18*)?

*In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 14-18.*

**Psalm 31:19-24. Theme:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Read verses 19-24 together.*

- <sup>19</sup>Oh, how abundant is your goodness,  
which you have stored up for those who fear you  
and worked for those who take refuge in you,  
in the sight of the children of mankind!

<sup>20</sup>In the cover of your presence you hide them  
from the plots of men;  
you store them in your shelter  
from the strife of tongues.

<sup>21</sup>Blessed be the Lord,  
for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me  
when I was in a besieged city.

<sup>22</sup>I had said in my alarm  
“I am cut off from your sight.”  
But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy  
when I cried to you for help.

<sup>23</sup>Love the Lord, all you his saints!  
The Lord preserves the faithful  
but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride.

<sup>24</sup>Be strong, and let your heart take courage,  
all you who wait for the Lord!

9. How is God described in relation to those who seek refuge in Him  
(*vv. 19-20*)?

10. What proof did the psalmist give to support his description of God  
(*vv. 21-22*)?

11. What exhortations did the psalmist give for those who seek refuge in  
the Lord (*vv. 23-24*)?

*In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 19-24.*

### **Allusion to Psalm 31 in Christ's crucifixion**

12. One of Christ's last words on the cross was lifted from this psalm.  
This was recorded in Luke 23:46. How did your study of this psalm's  
context affect your understanding of Christ's last words?

**Questions for Adults**

1. Have you come to the point in your life where you have totally surrendered your entire being, your whole life to God? Are there some areas in your life that you still haven't surrendered to him?
2. What is your modern "worthless idol" that you find yourself turning to during times of stress or distress? Is it your intellect or your skills? Or perhaps you cope by drowning yourself in food or work?
3. How do you respond to false rumors being spread about you? What do you think is the biblical way to respond?
4. Individually and as a group, pray back this psalm to God. You could start by saying something like:

*Father, you are the one I turn to during times of trouble. You are ever faithful and your love never fails. You have demonstrated this in the past. I fully surrender my life to you.*

5. Pray for one another (Each one to share their prayer requests).

**Questions for the Youth**

1. Gossip is a disease that breaks communities; Christian communities are not exempt. How do you approach those who gossip about you? What is your initial reaction when you discover rumors about you floating around?
2. The psalmist fully surrendered himself into God's hands. This includes allowing God to be the one to vindicate him from slander. Have you fully surrendered your life to God? What areas of your life do you still need to surrender to him?

**Questions for Children**

1. When there are people who hate you or want what's bad for you, to whom should you go and why?
2. What does God being lord over your life mean to you? Are there parts of your life that still need to be surrendered to him?
3. God is our refuge. This means that in God we are safe and secure. Thank the Lord for being there to protect you and ask him to help you trust in him especially in difficult situations.