

## Psalm 146 – What does life mean?

I truly believe there is great power in praising God. There are a number of things the psalmist talks about in terms of the meaning of life for the Christian.

**1 Life means praising God v1-2.** This psalm opens up the idea of building to a crescendo of praise to God. There is no doubt God rejoices in the sincere and genuine Holy Spirit inspired praise of His people. The importance of this praise is brought home to us in the fact that the psalmist says *“while I live I will praise the Lord. I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.”* This brings a whole new priority and urgency to the psalmist’s desire to worship the Lord in the whole attitude of praise. **We can praise God for life and for our existence.** As Paul tells us in Col 1:17; *In Him* (that is in Christ) *all things consist.*” The reality is that the moment we slip from God’s thinking is the moment we instantly return to dust. **We can also praise God for creation.** This is a constant refrain throughout scripture where God refers to Himself as the God of Creation or the God who made the heavens and the earth. **We can praise God for salvation.** I think we need to remind ourselves of the love of God speaking into our lives and transforming our hearts. I think this is why Paul was able to say, *“the love of God compels me”* to as it were communicate the Gospel. Paul was so gripped by this love of God that he just couldn’t help but communicate the Word of God and the message of salvation.

As one writer has put it, to receive gifts and not give thanks to the giver is the

### PRaise the Lord for:

- The team of writers and contributors to the Challenge paper. We are very grateful for their commitment each month
- Our faithful team here at Challenge who have served the Lord over many years
- Our prayer warriors who are a great blessing and asset to the work

essence of idolatry. To be able to receive the gift of life and salvation and to be able to enjoy that gift but not give thanks is why we see so many people caught up with idolatry of all types. Rather than seeing God behind all of this they can find themselves in a situation of making themselves a god or indeed look to creation and make it a god. We need to learn to consistently praise God and that is not only when things are going well but when things are difficult or pressured.

**2 Life means trusting God v3-6.** Sadly for most people their trust is often misplaced or misguided as we see in v3. We see people putting their trust in mankind or in their own

### PSALM 146

- 1 Praise the Lord!  
Praise the Lord, O my soul!
- 2 While I live I will praise the Lord;  
I will sing praises to my God  
while I have my being.
- 3 Do not put your trust in princes,  
Nor in a son of man, in  
whom there is no help.
- 4 His spirit departs, he  
returns to his earth;  
In that very day his plans perish.
- 5 Happy is he who has the  
God of Jacob for his help,  
Whose hope is in the Lord his God,
- 6 Who made heaven and earth,  
The sea, and all that is in them;  
Who keeps truth forever,
- 7 Who executes justice  
for the oppressed,  
Who gives food to the hungry.  
The Lord gives freedom  
to the prisoners.
- 8 The Lord opens the  
eyes of the blind;  
The Lord raises those  
who are bowed down;  
The Lord loves the righteous.
- 9 The Lord watches over  
the strangers;  
He relieves the fatherless  
and widow;  
But the way of the wicked  
He turns upside down.
- 10 The Lord shall reign forever—  
Your God, O Zion, to  
all generations.  
Praise the Lord!

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skills, abilities or talents. Scripture clearly tells us that if we do this we will be sadly disappointed particularly when we come before the Lord in judgment. The reality, if we trust in everything and anything instead of in the living God there will come a day when all of these things will simply perish before a holy God. We need to see that trusting in human beings can only be short-lived at best but trusting in the eternal God brings joy and happiness. The psalmist says, *“Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help whose hope is in the Lord his God.”* Now why is that so important? Because once we trust in the living God our hope will not be disappointed but further enhanced, if you will.

**3 Life means loving God v7-9.** It is important to understand that in the context of these verses our love for God is reflected in our desire to help the oppressed, the hungry and those in prisons. I believe the reaction of a Christian who is taken up with a deep love relationship with the Lord is that His love will pour out of us in our desire to meet the needs of these people. Not only can we meet the needs of the oppressed, hungry and those who are imprisoned but we can also pray for the sick, encourage the discouraged and also be a blessing to the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. I have to say there are times when I think the Christian church has been rather indifferent to meeting the needs of those less fortunate to themselves. It’s very important for us to recognise that meeting the needs of these people can also become a vehicle by which we can communicate the saving love of God to desperately needy people.

The flip side of course is that those who don’t love God are looking at a very difficult future indeed. That’s why the psalmist says rather boldly *“the way of the wicked He turns upside down.”* A similar verse is in Psalm 1:6 *“The way of the ungodly will perish.”* That word ‘perish’ doesn’t mean annihilation but rather you will not be what God has planned for you to be. This highlights the fact that God can do anything He wants to draw you to Himself, but ultimately the divine working of God, and the free will of man work in that mysterious way to draw a person into a right relationship with God.

**PRAYER needed for:**

- Kevin and Sam Taffurelli who head our project in Philippines. Opportunities are enormous, pray for God’s leading in terms of distribution and follow up
- Our Kenya project with 20,000 papers being distributed into 107 prisons (120,000 inmates). Pray for the teams as they share with prisoners using the paper
- The recent trip to Victoria and the churches who have taken on distributing Challenge. We pray people will see the vision and use the paper personally within their communities

**4 Life means reigning with God.** I think it’s important for us to recognise that not only will we reign with God in heaven but we can reign with God here on earth as we serve Him with faithful hearts and a joyous spirit. We can reign with God as we look to Him to help us overcome life’s difficulties and struggles. We can reign with God as we go about witnessing for Him and being a faithful servant of the living God. We can reign with God as we are faithful in our workplace to honour Him and glorify the King of kings and Lord of lords.

We need to see that the truths of this Psalm are not a fad or trend or something that is gimmicky, here today and gone tomorrow, but we must recognise that life is all about eternal issues.

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