

# Study and Discussion Guide for *Psalm 63*

*A Psalm of Intense Longing for God in Time of Need*

## The Structure of *Psalm 63*

- 1 *Top Frame: Longing* to Experience God
- 2-5 *Stanza One: Reflecting on what God has done* (Each verse paired with Stanza Two)
- 2 Where is God present in the Sanctuary? Under the **Wings** of the Cherubim.
- 3 How **close** is God to me? His love is better than life
- 4 Where will I be? Lifted **up** in **praise**.
- 5 Where will I be? **Eating** rich food with praise in my mouth.
- 6 *Centering Line* connects Top and Bottom Frame:
- Night Meditation Nurtures **Longing** (verse 1)
  - Night Meditation Reinforces **Expectation** (verse 11)
- 7-10 *Stanza Two: Anticipating what God will do* (Each verse paired with Stanza One)
- 7 Where do I rejoice in God's help? Under the shadow of his **wings**.
- 8 How **close** am I to God? My soul clings. His right hand supports.
- 9 Where will my enemies be? Destroyed **down** into **silence**
- 10 Where will my enemies be? **Being eaten up** by swords and jackals
- 11 *Bottom Frame: Expecting* to Rejoice in God

## Some Questions for Listening, Meditating, and Discussing

1. I have had this psalm committed to memory for more than thirty years. I never before noticed its intricate structure. What a delight! The two stanzas [Stanza One (verses 2-5) and Stanza Two (verses 7-10)] are precisely balanced—each having four verses and each made up of exactly 27 Hebrew words. Each verse in one stanza is paired with and has a thematic link with the corresponding verse in the other stanza. In the above outline I have suggested some possible links between these two stanzas. My suggestions could be wrong or incomplete or both. What do you see as some thematic links between these two stanzas?
2. *Seeking*. Do you ever earnestly seek God? How do you go about doing the seeking? Why do some people seem not to seek God very earnestly? What does God promise those who seek? See Deut. 4:29; Jer. 29:13; and Matt. 7:7. Does God keep that promise to you?
3. *Longing*. Why does the Psalmist say his soul *thirsts* for God and his body *longs* for God? Wouldn't it make more sense to say it the other way around? Do you experience physical symptoms of your longing for God? emotional symptoms of being separated from him?
4. *Sanctuary*. What did the Psalmist see when he "beheld God's power and glory" in the sanctuary? What does the word *sanctuary* mean today? Ever see power and glory there?
5. *Praising*. What combination of circumstances would have to happen for you to be filled with such exuberance for God as in verses 2 through 5? ("better than life" "lift up my hands" "richest of foods") How would you pray these verses as your own prayer?
6. Do you *think of God in bed*? What kind of thoughts? Praise? Thanks? Anxious? Asking?
7. Do you face physical or spiritual *enemies*? Do you ever ask God to destroy them? to silence them? Would you then rejoice? How would the truth help you overcome them?