

GROUP LEADERS NOTES ON PSALM 34

Question 1

Get the group to both identify and discuss the characteristics in each group:

- Personal Testimony: See verses 1-2; 4; 6-7.
- Corporate Exhortation: See verses 3, 5, 8-10.

Question 2

- a) David includes both good times and bad.
- b) He is acknowledging that it is God who defines what is good for us. This is about the sovereignty of God in all things.
- c) NT references: **Rom 8:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; 1 Peter 1:6-7; James 1:2-4.**
- d) We often find that David's psalms of need or sorrow turn into Psalms of praise e.g. **Psalm 54:1, 6.**
- e) This is a reminder of Paul's exhortation in **Phil 4:6.**

Question 3

- a) Boasting in one's own ability and position is not biblical; for we rely not on ourselves but on the Lord: **1 John 2:15-17; Gal 6:14.**
- b) Here the Lord is both the subject and the object of David's praise: **Jer 9:23-24.**

Question 4

- a) Fear of the Lord is an Old Testament term for respect and submission to God.
- b) Although we are no longer under condemnation (Rom 8:1); such is our reverence towards God's holiness and majesty that we should not want to do anything that would offend him.
- c) The more we seek to be like Christ the more radiant we will become.
- d) See for example the radiance of a believing wife in **1 Pet 3:1-4.**

Question 5

- a) Fearing God will lead us to a certain lifestyle. It demands a response.
- b) In the following verses David will show the relationship between the righteous person and their God.
- c) Verses 12-14 give an indication of the lifestyle of the righteous person that brings a life of blessing (v12).
- d) Verse 14 emphasises the results of repentance. There is the leaving behind of the old life and living the new; leaving evil and pursuing good.

Question 6

- a) Verse 17: The Lord hears... when the righteous cry for help.
- b) Verse 17: The Lord delivers... when the righteous are in trouble. Notice that God does not keep them from trouble but delivers them out of it.
- c) Verse 18: The Lord is near... to the broken-hearted; a contrast to the proud and arrogant. This is as a result of an evaluation of ourselves before God. It is a sorrow for sin and a dependence on God.
- d) Verse 18: The Lord saves... the crushed in spirit. Those who acknowledge their sin and have come to the point of repentance (compare **Psalm 51:17**).
- e) Verse 19-20: The Lord delivers... from afflictions. Note that the righteous are not exempt! David is clear that the Christian will suffer afflictions, but the Lord preserves him.
- f) Verse 22: The Lord redeems...those who take refuge in his salvation. This is assurance of faith that there is no more fear of condemnation for those who are rescued (Rom 8:1).

Question 7

Encourage the group to identify key aspects of the psalms that stand out for them: e.g. Praise Him; Exalt Him; Look to Him; Fear Him; Trust Him. It all comes back to where the Psalm started: *"I will bless the Lord at all times"*.