

# IN THE CLOSET

## Prayer Guide



October 2021

Psalm 136

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.  
Give thanks to the God of gods,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.  
Give thanks to the Lord of lords,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
to him who alone does great wonders,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
to him who by understanding made the heavens,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
to him who spread out the earth above the waters,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
to him who made the great lights,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
the sun to rule over the day,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
the moon and stars to rule over the night,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
and brought Israel out from among them,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
with a strong hand and an outstretched arm,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;

to him who divided the Red Sea in two,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
and made Israel pass through the midst of it,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
to him who led his people through the wilderness,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
to him who struck down great kings,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
and killed mighty kings,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
Sihon, king of the Amorites,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
and Og, king of Bashan,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
and gave their land as a heritage,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
a heritage to Israel his servant,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.  
It is he who remembered us in our low estate,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
and rescued us from our foes,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
he who gives food to all flesh,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.  
Give thanks to the God of heaven,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.

It is truly part of our human nature to rush into God's Presence in our prayers with urgent, heartfelt requests on behalf of others and

ourselves. God does not reject such prayers. He cares. He listens. He acts. However, our hearts can miss out on the particular, the strengthening blessing of focusing on God's Loving Nature if we neglect praise and thanksgiving. As we choose to turn our focus toward Him in praise and thanksgiving, His Spirit softens our hearts to receive His inspiration, His direction and His redemption as He acts in reply to our supplication.

I have noticed in my own devotions, and in my involvement in prayer groups of every size and involving Christians of every age; how urgently we move toward long lists of supplications. In so doing, we often rush through half-hearted, inattentive praise and thanksgiving. This is so much less than the devotion our God deserves. This is so much less than our hearts require to remain healthy and open and devoted as our times in prayer deepen.

Every word of praise or thanksgiving not only honors God, as it should; but also builds our faith and confidence in Him who blesses us so much more than any of us suppose. We need praise and thanksgiving and praise in our lives as we understand more and more how fully He develops the fruit of His love in us.

So, read Psalm 136 above. Notice the refrain, over and over again; "his steadfast love endures forever." God's love steadfastly endures and deepens His Presence, His Influence and His Blessing in and through our lives.

Now, take time to sing along with, or perhaps listen worshipfully to a praise hymn or song. For me, "Is He Worthy?" and "Waymaker" are effective in lifting my heart into His Presence. Also, for me there are many hymns which bless me so; including "Holy, Holy, Holy," "Amazing Grace," "This Is My Father's World," "Day By Day," and "Sing To The World."

Next, list some praises and thanksgivings by categories based upon Psalm 136. Begin, each section by echoing the confirmation; "Your steadfast love endures forever;" or a similar phrase which speaks your praise for God directly.

God, these things remind me; You are good . . .

God, these things inspire me; You alone are God . . .

God, these things remind me; You are Lord of Lords . . .

These are great works You do . . .

These are the wondrous things You have made . . .

You have made the Heavens and . . .

You have made the waters, the earth and . . .

You have made the galaxies, the stars, the sun and the moon and . . .

You have defeated evil people who . . .

You have delivered me from evils such as . . .

You have unrivaled power over . . .

You provide me paths to joy including . . .

You overthrow the enemy when You . . .

You lead me into Your Promised Land where I . . .

Your remember me and lift me up when I struggle in the depths of suffering such as . . .

You rescue me from my foes who . . .

You provide abundant blessings all around me such as . . .

I give you thanks.  
You are my God.  
You are the God  
of the universe . . .

Consider this: Our prayer life reflects the condition of our faith life. Our faith life is a living relationship with our Heavenly Father through our Savior, Jesus Christ. Communication is at the heart of our life in and through Him. So, we are granted the privilege of conversing with Him through prayer, and in that give-and-take we surely find ourself praising and thanking Him as He reveals Himself in Grace and Mercy and Love in us and around us, with us, before us, beside us—we cannot but give voice to thank Him as He eternally blesses us.

Your steadfast love endures forever; . . ."