

## Trust in God Alone

Devotional Reading: [Jeremiah 17:5–11](#)

Background Scripture: [Psalm 62](#)

### Psalm 62

For the director of music. For Jeduthun. A psalm of David.

- <sup>1</sup> Truly my soul finds rest in God;  
my salvation comes from him.**
- <sup>2</sup> Truly he is my rock and my salvation;  
he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.**
- <sup>3</sup> How long will you assault me?  
Would all of you throw me down—  
this leaning wall, this tottering fence?**
- <sup>4</sup> Surely they intend to topple me  
from my lofty place;  
they take delight in lies.  
With their mouths they bless,  
but in their hearts they curse.**
- <sup>5</sup> Yes, my soul, find rest in God;  
my hope comes from him.**
- <sup>6</sup> Truly he is my rock and my salvation;  
he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.**
- <sup>7</sup> My salvation and my honor depend on God;  
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.**
- <sup>8</sup> Trust in him at all times, you people;  
pour out your hearts to him,  
for God is our refuge.**
- <sup>9</sup> Surely the lowborn are but a breath,  
the highborn are but a lie.  
If weighed on a balance, they are nothing;  
together they are only a breath.**
- <sup>10</sup> Do not trust in extortion  
or put vain hope in stolen goods;**

though your riches increase,  
do not set your heart on them.

<sup>11</sup> One thing God has spoken,  
two things I have heard:  
“Power belongs to you, God,  
<sup>12</sup> and with you, Lord, is unfailing love”;  
and, “You reward everyone  
according to what they have done.”

## Key Text

*Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him.*—[Psalm 62:5](#)

Worship in the Covenant Community

## Unit 2: Songs of the Old Testament

Lessons 6–9

### Lesson Aims

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. List the many ways God is a source of strength in times of trouble.
2. Identify the barriers to peace found in [Psalm 62](#).
3. Create a plan for intentional time to wait quietly on the Lord.

### Lesson Outline

#### Introduction

A. Song of Your Life

B. Lesson Context

#### I. Calm Amidst Trouble ([Psalm 62:1–4](#))

A. Wait on God (vv. 1–2)

*Quake Proof*

B. Confronting Enemies (vv. 3–4)

#### II. Calm Discovered ([Psalm 62:5–8](#))

A. Refocusing on God (vv. 5–7)

B. Admonishing the People (v. 8)

#### III. Calm Grounded in God ([Psalm 62:9–12](#))

A. Rejecting Insubstantial Help (vv. 9–10)

## *Weighing Air*

### B. Embracing Substance (vv. 11–12)

## Conclusion

- A. Singing with David
- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

## How to Say It

Absalom *Ab-suh-lum*.

Ecclesiastes *Ik-leez-ee-**as**-teez*.

Israelites *Iz-ray-el-ites*.

Jeduthun *Jeh-doo-thun*.

Selah (*Hebrew*) *See-luh*.

## Introduction

### A. Song of Your Life

If you were asked to describe your life as it is now with a song, what song would you choose? Consider what characteristics make it the right song for this time. Is it the tone (major or minor key) or the instruments (a violin that sounds forlorn)? Is it the lyrics, expressing contentment or love or betrayal? Is it a song you sing with others or all by yourself? If you've been honest with yourself, you might feel an emotional *click* when you name the song of your life at this time.

Songs have long been part of worship, in part because of their power to express our deepest hopes and fears while drawing us back to God. Perhaps the importance of songs in our relationship with God is best understood when we find ourselves in trouble, not knowing where to turn. At such times, songs like [Psalm 62](#) affirm God's power and love even as they help us express what we need to tell God.

### B. Lesson Context

As prayers and songs, the Psalms give worshippers a voice. Sometimes it is the voice of lament (see [Psalms 10](#); [13](#); [44](#); [77](#)), and sometimes it is a voice of thanksgiving and praise (see [Psalms 66](#); [107](#); [148](#)). Lament prayers grieve suffering, and thanksgivings express gratitude. [Psalm 62](#) is neither a lament nor a thanksgiving hymn, though it contains elements of both. Instead, this psalm can appropriately be called *a confidence psalm*. It expresses trust and hope in God in the middle of distress. Confidence psalms arise from an assured relationship with God. The psalmists are confident that God is their help and refuge. They trust in God's power and goodness, and they hope in God's faithfulness (compare [Psalms 11](#); [23](#)).

The superscript of [Psalm 62](#) identifies Jeduthun as the leader of the choir ([1 Chronicles 16:41–42](#);

25:1–3; see [Psalms 39; 77](#)). He might have been someone like a songwriting partner to David (ruled about 1010–970 BC), who is identified as the writer of [Psalm 62](#). Specific hardships are alluded to in the superscripts of David’s psalms (see commentary on [62:3–4](#), below).

The power of poetry, especially set to song, is to allow not only the writer or singer to express themselves—fears, pain, trust, love—but also to speak for an audience in attendance. [Psalm 62](#) invited Israelites to join the song, and it still does for us today.

## I. Calm Amidst Trouble ([Psalm 62:1–4](#))

### A. Wait on God (vv. 1–2)

#### 1. Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him.

*Truly* translates a key word in this psalm ([Psalm 62:2, 6](#); translated “surely” in [62:4, 9](#) and “yes” in [62:5](#)). Its repetition throughout the psalm emphasizes the truth of each statement, lending a heightened sense of the sincerity for the psalmist.

*My soul* identifies the seat of a person’s commitments and loyalties. It is the “I” of personhood. *Finds rest* translates a rare Hebrew word in the Bible, occurring only four times ([Psalms 22:2; 39:2; 62:1; 65:1](#)). This waiting is restful, sometimes even silent. David was not an autonomous self but a dependent one. David entrusted himself to *God* because *salvation* comes from God, though we do not yet know from what David required rescuing (see [62:3](#), below). In this instance, salvation should not be thought of as a distant spiritual reality but as a present, physical rescue (examples: [Exodus 14:13; 1 Samuel 14:45; Psalm 35:1–3](#)).

Like David, we are wise when we entrust ourselves to the Lord and do not trust ourselves ([Proverbs 3:5–6](#)). Trusting God completely is related to the covenant (see [Psalm 62:11b–12a](#), below). If David trusted God completely based on covenants in Israel, how much more should we, given that we have received what Israel hoped for ([Hebrews 11](#))?

#### What Do You Think?

How would you describe the experience of finding rest for your soul in God?

#### Digging Deeper

What habits make resting in God possible regardless of your circumstances?

#### 2. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.

Repeating the word *salvation* is another way David emphasized his confidence that he would find what he needed from the Lord (see [Psalm 62:1](#), above). Only God, the *rock*, can serve as the source of stability and rest. When God was David’s *fortress*, he could confidently and boldly profess that he could *never be shaken*—and so can we. Grounded in God’s gracious salvation and protected by God’s power, we confess that nothing will shake us (see also [Psalms 30:6; 46:5; 55:22; 66:9; 112:6; 121:3](#)). Our feet will not slip or give way. The soul committed to God alone is stabilized by God’s saving work and



protective care.

## Quake Proof

Building earthquake-resistant structures in California isn't just wise; it's the law. The engineering solutions required to mitigate the effects of a violent earthquake can be quite impressive. A simple but effective method is to use cross beams to reinforce the strength of a structure. Another method is to have pistons within the structure that absorb the energy of the shock waves. Flexible foundations will sway with the vibrations; a pendulum method utilizes a large counterweight attached to the building to absorb some shock. Using materials that will bend without breaking or crumbling is also key.

Given a big enough earthquake, though, even well-designed buildings will fall. The mitigation techniques used are primarily meant to preserve human life; the rebuilding process of physical structures after a quake can still be vast. But there is no earthquake of life that is so large that God cannot help you stand. Call on your rock and your salvation, and he will see you through.

—C. S.

### B. Confronting Enemies (vv. 3–4)

**3. How long will you assault me? Would all of you throw me down—this leaning wall, this tottering fence?**

This verse and the next feature several contrasts between what has come before to what will come after. The images of an unstable *wall* and *fence* contrast the transient nature of David and his enemies with the unchanging, faithful God, who is David's "rock" and "fortress" (Psalm 62:2, above). The contrast highlights God's power versus the ultimate powerlessness of any human as well as God's integrity in his dealings with David against the unreliability of his enemies. We do not know the specific nature of the trouble David's opponents imagined, but we know that David's life was full of situations that might fit the bill (see 62:4, below).



Visual for [Lesson 9](#). While discussing verse 6, allow learners one minute to contemplate how the Lord is currently acting as their refuge.

**4. Surely they intend to topple me from my lofty place; they take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse.**

The Hebrew adverb translated *surely* appeared in [Psalm 62:1–2](#) (see commentary above). In the opening of the psalm, God is the only ground of assurance. But David’s opponents lacked reverence for God, as evidenced by their total disregard for David, God’s chosen king ([1 Samuel 16:7–12](#); [2 Samuel 7:8–9](#); contrast [1 Samuel 24:5–7](#)).

David suggested these opponents conspired to *topple me from my lofty place*, referring either to his position in Saul’s court or to the throne itself. Some examples come from before David became king while he was part of King Saul’s court or exiled from it ([1 Samuel 18:10–11](#); [23:7–29](#); etc.; compare [Psalms 57](#); [63](#); [142](#)). Another possibility occurs decades later when King David’s own son Absalom revolted against his father and tried to depose him ([2 Samuel 15:13–14](#); compare [Psalm 3](#)). These and other efforts revealed David’s enemies to be liars and hypocrites, willing to *bless* with their *mouths* while *in their hearts they curse* (compare [Matthew 23](#)). They sought to undermine God’s chosen and unjustly attacked David.

No one is sure what *selah* (a footnote in the [NIV](#)) means. Since the book of Psalms was used in Israel’s corporate worship and the psalms were frequently set to music (see [Lesson Context](#), above), we can postulate that *selah* is a musical note, perhaps for a silent pause. This guess works well if the song leader wanted to invite the congregation to consider their own concerns as they prayed and sang the psalmist’s words.

#### **What Do You Think?**

How do you handle opposition from people who speak well but have evil intent?

#### **Digging Deeper**

What verses inform your answer?

## **II. Calm Discovered**

([Psalm 62:5–8](#))

### **A. Refocusing on God (vv. 5–7)**

**5–6. Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.**

These two verses form a sort of refrain, largely repeating what was expressed in [Psalm 62:1–2](#) (above). *Rest* also appeared in [62:1](#). In [Psalm 131:2](#), the same word is used, describing a weaned child with his mother. There as here, the image is of security, peace, and silence.

**7. My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge.**

This verse expands what is said in [Psalm 62:1–2](#) and [62:5–6](#), above. Here as there, God is the psalmist’s *salvation*, *rock*, and *refuge*. The only new language here is of God as the psalmist’s *salvation*.

The word can also be translated “glory” (Psalms 26:8; 66:2; etc.). The first example of God’s giving people glory is found at creation (Genesis 1:26–27; Psalm 8:5). We also think of Jesus’ honoring people by becoming fully human in order to minister among us and die for our sins (Philippians 2:6–11).

#### What Do You Think?

Why was David able to express this kind of confidence in the Lord before Jesus’ atoning sacrifice?

#### Digging Deeper

How can Old Testament stories of God’s faithfulness bolster your own faith in Christ?

### B. Admonishing the People (v. 8)

#### 8. Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

Imagine a temple worship service where a singer offers a testimony and expresses his or her hope in God’s loving care. Then the singer turns to the congregation and invites them to share in this testimony. The singer calls the people of God to *trust* God, just as the singer does. God is not only the singer’s refuge but is *our refuge*. The people of God share the same story. They rehearse the story of God’s powerful deliverance through the exodus and his loving election of Israel as the people of his Old Testament covenant.

Because we trust in God’s deliverance, we embrace him as our refuge. As such, the singer also invites us to *pour out* our hearts to God. Our restful waiting does not require silence (see Psalm 62:1, above), though it can imply it (examples: 131:2; Lamentations 3:28; etc.). Rather, as we rest in God’s care, we tell God the truth of our hearts.

#### What Do You Think?

Would it be accurate to say that you pour out your heart to God? Why or why not?

#### Digging Deeper

What is the most difficult thing in your life for you to talk to God about? What would happen if you prayed deeply about that thing today?

## III. Calm Grounded in God (Psalm 62:9–12)

### A. Rejecting Insubstantial Help (vv. 9–10)

#### 9. Surely the lowborn are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie. If weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath.

A stark contrast is drawn between God and people, whether *lowborn* or *highborn*. These contrasts are meant to be understood together, indicating all people (compare Psalm 49:2). When compared to God, each person from least to greatest is *a breath* and *a lie*. *Breath* is familiar from the book of Ecclesiastes, which frequently uses this same Hebrew word to assert the “meaninglessness” observed in

human life (examples: [Ecclesiastes 1:2, 14; 2:11; 3:19](#)). The word describes a mist that appears for a moment and then dissipates.

In this way, anyone can be (metaphorically) *weighed* and found to be *nothing* and *only a breath*. For ancient people, balance scales were vital to commerce. Coinage wouldn't be invented until sometime in the 600s BC, so transactions in David's day (about 400 years earlier) and for centuries following his reign were done by weight (examples: [Genesis 23:16; 1 Kings 7:47](#)). An unbalanced or loaded scale could cheat people out of precious resources (example: [Amos 8:5](#)). The weight of goods was truly important. When weighed against God on a balance scale, there is no substance to us (compare [Isaiah 40:15](#)). And this is the root of our untrustworthiness; this is what allows us to sin in the first place. We can try with all our might, but we lack the power to do most of the good we would like. And we ultimately cannot trust ourselves or others who hold no power for deliverance.

### Weighing Air

When I was a boy, my classmates and I enjoyed weighing objects on our science lab's balance scale. I found great satisfaction in the tactile process of adding or subtracting weight until the scales balanced. I especially appreciated the brass weights that were used to give accurate results. Sadly for my childhood self, this method of measuring weight has largely fallen by the wayside in favor of spring or electronic scales.

People, regardless of their station, weigh as nothing on the scale of trustworthiness. We are so light that if the right scale existed, we might all float away instead of weighing even one ounce as being worthy of trust. When faced with the question of where to place your trust, will it be your fellow weightless creatures or the creator God?

—C. S.

**10. Do not trust in extortion or put vain hope in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them.**

For the powerful, their success *in extortion* can feel like safety. The illusion of having control over not only one's own life but also the lives of others creates a false sense of selfdetermination and influence over the world. In truth, oppressors need fear God's wrath and judgment for their sins—a lesson Israel (and Judah) would learn long after David's reign ended (example: [Amos 2:4–16](#)).

In the Hebrew practice of poetic parallelism, the phrase *stolen goods* stands parallel to the extortion of the previous line in encompassing any number of financial or material crimes. It is an effective strategy for maintaining one's power. But even *riches* obtained without extortion or other wickedness are not to be trusted (compare [1 Timothy 6:10, 17–19](#)).

In short, no human resource can serve as a refuge from trouble. Rather than relying on creatures, David invites us to “trust in [God] at all times” ([Psalm 62:8](#), above).

#### What Do You Think?

How do you prevent prudent financial decisions from becoming idolatrous trusting in your wealth (savings, retirement funds, etc.)?

## Digging Deeper

What biblical advice would you offer to younger adults who are learning wisdom in their financial decisions?

### B. Embracing Substance (vv. 11–12)

#### 11a. One thing God has spoken, two things I have heard:

These two phrases poetically emphasize the efficacy of God's speaking. We might think of creation, when *God* had only to say a word, and what he said was created ([Genesis 1](#)). For David to hear God's speech twice might mean he repeated a particular message, or it could simply emphasize that David took what he heard to heart. The latter is certainly in view, based on the confidence David has expressed in the Lord.

#### 11b–12a. “Power belongs to you, God, and with you, Lord, is unfailing love”;

God's *power* stands in contrast to the illusion of power that people might have (see [Psalm 62:9](#), above). It has been alluded to several times already (see [62:1–2](#), [6–8](#), above), but here power is called out. For many, God's power, in combination with his wrath, is the primary way of understanding him as revealed in the Old Testament (examples: [Genesis 19](#); [Deuteronomy 5:9](#); [2 Kings 17:16–23](#); [Jeremiah 20:4–5](#); [Jonah 3:1–4](#)).

But a closer reading suggests that God's power cannot be understood without also considering his *love*. The Hebrew word translated *unfailing love* is frequently used in the context of God's covenant loyalty toward Israel (examples: [Exodus 20:4–6](#); [Deuteronomy 7:9–12](#)). His mercy both initiated and sustained the covenant.

One example of God's power and mercy at work for Israel was the story of the exodus. Out of his covenant loyalty, God promised to bring Israel out of Egypt ([Genesis 46:3–4](#)), and he then began that work ([Exodus 2:24](#)). Bringing the Israelites out from their slavery as conquerors and providing for them in the desert—even in the face of multiple rebellions—were actions motivated by love and accomplished with power ([15:13](#)). Even the examples of God's wrath reveal his desire for mercy (see [Genesis 18:20–33](#); [Jeremiah 23:3](#); [Jonah 3:10–4:2](#)). Perhaps most striking is, even after pronouncing judgment for three or four generations, God says he shows love and mercy to thousands ([Deuteronomy 5:10](#)). This is a difference of degree; God limits his wrath and lets his love and mercy overflow.

We do not know whether David wrote this psalm before or after receiving God's promise of a house for David's family ([2 Samuel 7](#)). God was powerful to keep that promise centuries later, and through it, we experience God's love in Christ ([Matthew 1:1](#)). Unsurprisingly, then, many called on Jesus to have mercy on them throughout his ministry (examples: [9:27](#); [15:22](#); [20:30](#)).

#### 12b. and, “You reward everyone according to what they have done.”

Paul alluded to this phrase in [Romans 2:6](#) (compare [Proverbs 24:12](#)) and expressed a similar sentiment in [2 Timothy 4:14](#). Some students propose that neither David nor Paul seems to have had the Last Judgment in mind when making this assertion. Instead, God's conduct is appropriately contrasted with human conduct. Whereas we might act with a lack of integrity or with only selfish ends



in mind, God acts out of his power and mercy and intends to set the world to rights.

## Conclusion

### A. Singing with David

Just as a song on the radio can feel like it was written for *you* at this *exact moment* in your life and expresses what you need to say, so too can psalms. [Psalm 62](#) invites us to sing along with David and join him in his expression of confidence in God alone. Without identifying a specific situation in David's life, the psalm becomes that much more accessible for any situation we might relate to the feelings expressed within. Whatever troubled David, we have our own troubles. David models for us how to face our own struggles even though our troubles are different from his. We surrender every circumstance to God because we not only know God's strength and love, but we also know he will deal with evil and hold human beings accountable for their actions. Those who trust in God have nothing to fear; we fear neither God's judgment nor the troubles that have swamped us. The God of power and mercy will do what is just and right.

Without any further details, we can say with confidence only that David found himself in a turbulent situation. In the midst of it, the king still expressed supreme confidence in God. Sometimes joining David in song will mean singing praise to God, alone or with fellow believers. But other practices also nurture confidence in God, especially when misplaced faith in people falls apart. One example of pouring our hearts out to God ([Psalm 62:8](#), above) could be reading the psalm as our own prayer. While doing so, we reflect on what we need from God, whether that is a change of circumstance or to strength to endure.

We could also read the psalm as a way to listen for God ([Psalm 62:11](#), above). Listening for him in all of Scriptures allows us to learn who he is, grasp what he desires for and from us, and build the relationship that he desires and we so desperately need. We must constantly and consistently open ourselves to the Word of God through listening to the reading of Scripture in community, studying Scripture in family and private moments, and memorizing Scripture. We devote time to mulling over the language of Scripture in order to listen to the voice of the Spirit so that we might come to know God and become like God in our conduct.

In these ways and more, we must recenter ourselves on God to be reminded of his power and mercy. Only then will our confidence be found in God alone, and only then will we, too, have supreme confidence in who God is and what he is willing to accomplish because of his great love.

### B. Prayer

Our Father, you know we are often surrounded by troubles. Help us trust you so that peace and love might reign in our hearts by your power and because of your mercy. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

### C. Thought to Remember

We trust God because he is willing *and* able to save us.

## Involvement Learning

Enhance your lesson with [NIV Bible Student](#) (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at [www.standardlesson.com](http://www.standardlesson.com) or in the back of the [NIV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition](#)).

### Into the Lesson

Draw two columns on the board, labeling one *Heavy* and the other *Light*. Then ask learners to offer examples of pairs of objects that (1) share something in common and (2) demonstrate extreme differences in weightiness. An example to get them started could be a tricycle and a cargo plane; both are forms of transportation, but one is far heavier than the other. Other possible categories to spark thought could be mammals (or animals in general), objects found in nature, tools, etc. Allow a few minutes for volunteers to share their ideas.

*Alternative.* Distribute copies of the “Weighty Matters” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Have learners work individually for one minute to complete as indicated.

After either activity, say, “It’s easy to compare objects at extreme ends of the scale and know which will be weightier. In the same way, when we compare God to anything or anyone else we might trust, it is easy to see that he is the only true option. As we study today’s lesson, pay attention to the ways David describes God, and how these truths prompt him to respond to everything else.”

### Into the Word

Ask three volunteers to read [Psalm 62](#) in these sections: verses 1–4; verses 5–8; verses 9–12. As learners listen, ask them to make a note of any words or phrases that catch their ear, especially any that are repeated. After a second reading, ask learners to share what they heard and the significance of those words or phrases in this psalm. Consult the commentary for any questions that arise.

Divide learners into two groups. The **Who God Is Group** will list descriptions of God found in the psalm along with verse references; the **Who We Are Group** will list descriptions of people, also with verse references. While the groups work, write their group names as the headers of two columns on the board. When the groups have finished, have them take turns giving their answers until both lists are full. Compare the lists, putting a star next to any attributes that are shared between God and people, as described in [Psalm 62](#). (Note: do not expect any stars here; see commentary about the absolute contrasts that David set up between God and people.)

Then divide learners into three groups to survey David’s life for circumstances that might have provoked the writing of [Psalm 62](#): the **1 Samuel 16–19 Group**, the **2 Samuel 1–7 Group**, and the **2 Samuel 11–19 Group**. Before they start, note that [Psalm 62](#) does not offer a specific answer to this

question, so there are no right or wrong answers. Groups should summarize any circumstances they find and any specific verse(s) that suggest a connection. When they have finished, allow groups to present their answers. Then talk together about the variety of circumstances that can fit this psalm. Ask what this suggests for applying the confidence David expressed in the Lord in students' own lives.

*Alternative.* Distribute copies of the “Sing [Psalm 62](#)” exercise from the activity page. Have learners work in pairs or small groups to complete as indicated. Allow time for groups to share with the whole class one example they found.

## **Into Life**

Give each learner an index card. In one minute, each person should name a day this week and a specific time when he or she will wait quietly on the Lord, as well as what that waiting will look like. After the minute is up, have learners pair up to share their plans. Encourage learners to commit to this time and come back to class next week prepared to share with their partners what they experienced. End class with prayer.

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To print the reproducible activity page, simply click the highlighted text below to create a pdf file on your hard drive. Then open the pdf file in Acrobat Reader and print.

[Activity Page \(October 27—Trust in God Alone\)](#)

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