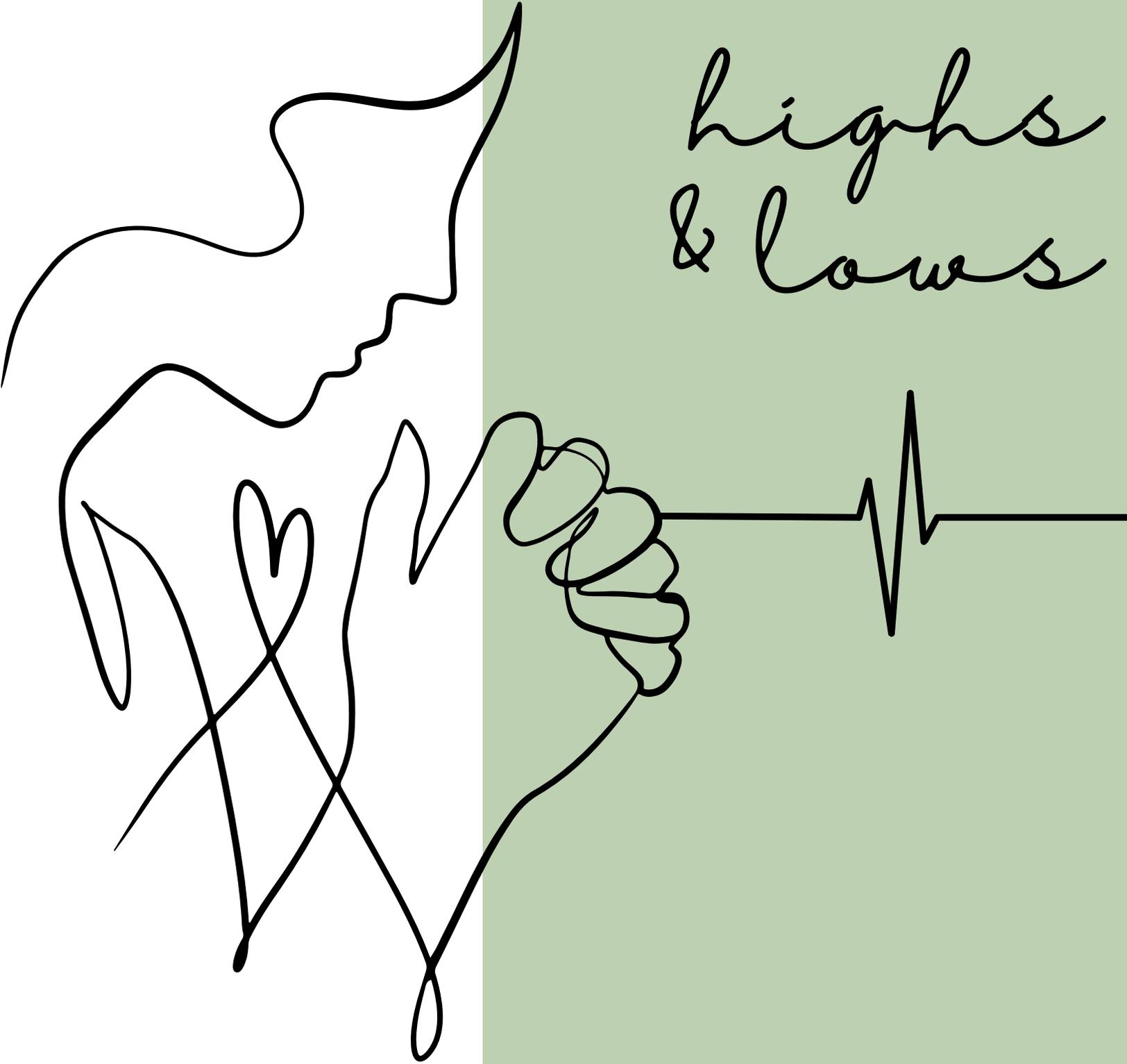


PRAYER COMPANION DRAFT: PSALMS

PSALMS

*highs
& lows*



WELCOME

This is a draft project - I will eventually publish a real-deal, polished-up walkthrough of the Psalms (and a pregnancy version therein!), but I am personally praying through it myself right now! I invite you to join me!

You want to explore the Psalms? I'm using this format and I hope it helps you too!

WHY PSALMS?

Adult life is an absolute roller coaster. Some days are dismal. Some days feel like emotionless fog. Some days are full of purpose and joy and passion, and you're on top of the world! Sometimes God feels close, and sometimes so far off.

Through it all, the Psalms are here for you.

David, who penned many of them, understood something that we would be wise to believe:

God can handle me at my worst.

When David had horrible days, he showed up in writing the Psalms and crying out honestly and angrily to God. When David had great days, he praised God thoroughly! We can see his tumultuous life play out in the 150 poems of the Old Testament. (Some of them were not written by David, of course.)

This is encouraging! Take each Psalm alone, and you might get a little inspiration, but take them as a whole library, and you suddenly see a portrait of the author: a man who knew suffering and knew joy, and kept close to God no matter what he was going through.

I want these Psalms to be a home for you. Each day, come to the words of Scripture. Learn a little. Soak a little. Write your own response. Let the truth come settle in your heart: God wants you to approach him every day, as you are. You're not too tired, too angry, too overwhelmed, too hormonal, too excited, too naive - too anything - to come converse with God. In the ups and downs of life, I hope the Psalms can be a daily resting place for you. Come spill your heart on these pages. Move slowly, move quickly, skip around, go in order - it's up to you.

Like David before you, you have a song in your heart (or a lot of them) that will honor God, no matter how you feel. He is waiting to hear you.

PS: Why flowers? Well, they're gorgeous, they're feminine, they're each different from the next, they're delightful - and God cares for you much more than he cares for them. If he clothes the lily, he will provide for you too. Trust Him.



HOW TO USE:

I don't like being boxed-in during prayer.

So this Prayer Companion is all about freedom.

Each Psalm has its own blank page. It's got some historic context, fun facts, and background information to help orient you to the Psalm. Enjoy that, if it helps, and then dive in - YOUR way. Read the Psalm from your Bible, and use the blank space in this booklet as your canvas.



Write Whatever Sticks Out to You

My Lectio Divina guide is as the back of this package and can serve as a great first few steps when praying with Scripture. (Trust me, it's thorough! You'll probably get an idea you haven't heard before!)

When I first approach a Psalm, I like a blank journal page before me. I just pull out the lines, phrases, and words that immediately stick out to me. I don't worry if they're "unrelated" to me or to each other. I just get them on my page. Then, I can start a conversation with God: why is this sticking out to me? What's this about for me?



Rewrite the Psalm in Your Own Words

When the words of a Psalm are foreign and nothing feels like it's "sticking out", I try to see it in a different perspective. Look up a different source to read it from (I enjoy the Passion Translation for this purpose, though it's absolutely not a recommended Catholic translation, it aims to have a more conversational language and can draw out meaning you didn't see.) I also like to write the Psalm in my own words, using a dictionary app if needed. When it sounds like ME not DAVID, suddenly it is more meaningful. Writing a response to the Psalm is also fun - treat it like you're "adding on" to the end, or like you're "writing back".



Go crazy!

Praying with poetry and song isn't like other mediums - it's expressive and metaphor-heavy. Sometimes it best relates to drawing and not writing! Draw what you're feeling! Doodle, let your pen start on the paper. Try "Scribble journaling". Sketch the scene you're imagining in your mind.

Or - take the musical route. These Psalms were once sung. Make up your own melody for them! Many worship songs were written from Psalms, and I included some in this packet. Make your own connections! Sing worship songs that remind you of the Psalm. Sing your own aloud freestyle song to the Lord - you might think it sounds crazy, but you're probably making David really proud and understanding the heart of the author better than you can silently!



Let the Psalm be a diving board

Just because you started praying with a Psalm doesn't mean you have to stay there. If you read a Psalm and you're reminded of a parable of Jesus, or a story of Moses, or a comforting line from Isaiah - go there! Hop around Scripture, making connections. The Psalm won't mind!

In one time of prayer, I have started in one place, hopped to another, moved to a worship song and prayed with the lyrics that related to the theme I'm on, and returned to the Psalm.

I also really enjoy writing the Psalm from God to me. That might sound a little wild, but we KNOW that God loves us infinitely more than we love him. We can take the David-to-God words of love and reimagine them as God-to-you words of love. It's a creative exercise, but it draws out the truth of God's love. It's really powerful!

EMOTIONS LIBRARY

SORROW

6, 13, 22, 30, 31, 32, 34, 38, 42-43, 51, 63, 77, 80, 90, 103, 106, 126, 130, 137

ANGER AT GOD

7, 13, 17, 44, 60, 80, 82, 94, 127, 129

ANGER AT THE WORLD

10, 12, 14, 35, 36, 40, 52, 55, 58, 64, 69, 83, 94, 109, 120, 129, 140

JOY

20, 21, 23, 30, 32, 33, 40, 45, 63, 66, 67, 84, 87, 92, 93, 96, 98, 100, 108, 119, 136

TRUST/FEAR

1, 3, 4, 9, 11, 12, 16, 18, 22, 23, 25, 27, 32, 37, 46, 56, 62, 71, 91, 101, 110, 119, 131, 139

THANKSGIVING

9, 18, 21, 30, 34, 40, 48, 66, 92, 107, 111, 116, 118, 126, 138, 146-150

CONFUSED

5, 25, 27, 32, 37, 39, 61, 73, 90, 119, 143

DISCOURAGEMENT

9, 13, 22, 26, 29, 31, 38, 41, 42, 62, 63, 69, 74, 77, 88, 90, 102, 139, 142

DISTRESS/NEED

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 17, 28, 35, 41, 43, 54-57, 61, 69-71, 77, 86, 91, 108, 123, 144

MONICA'S FAVES TO FEEL GOD'S LOVE

8, 18, 23, 27, 34, 46, 62, 85, 91, 121

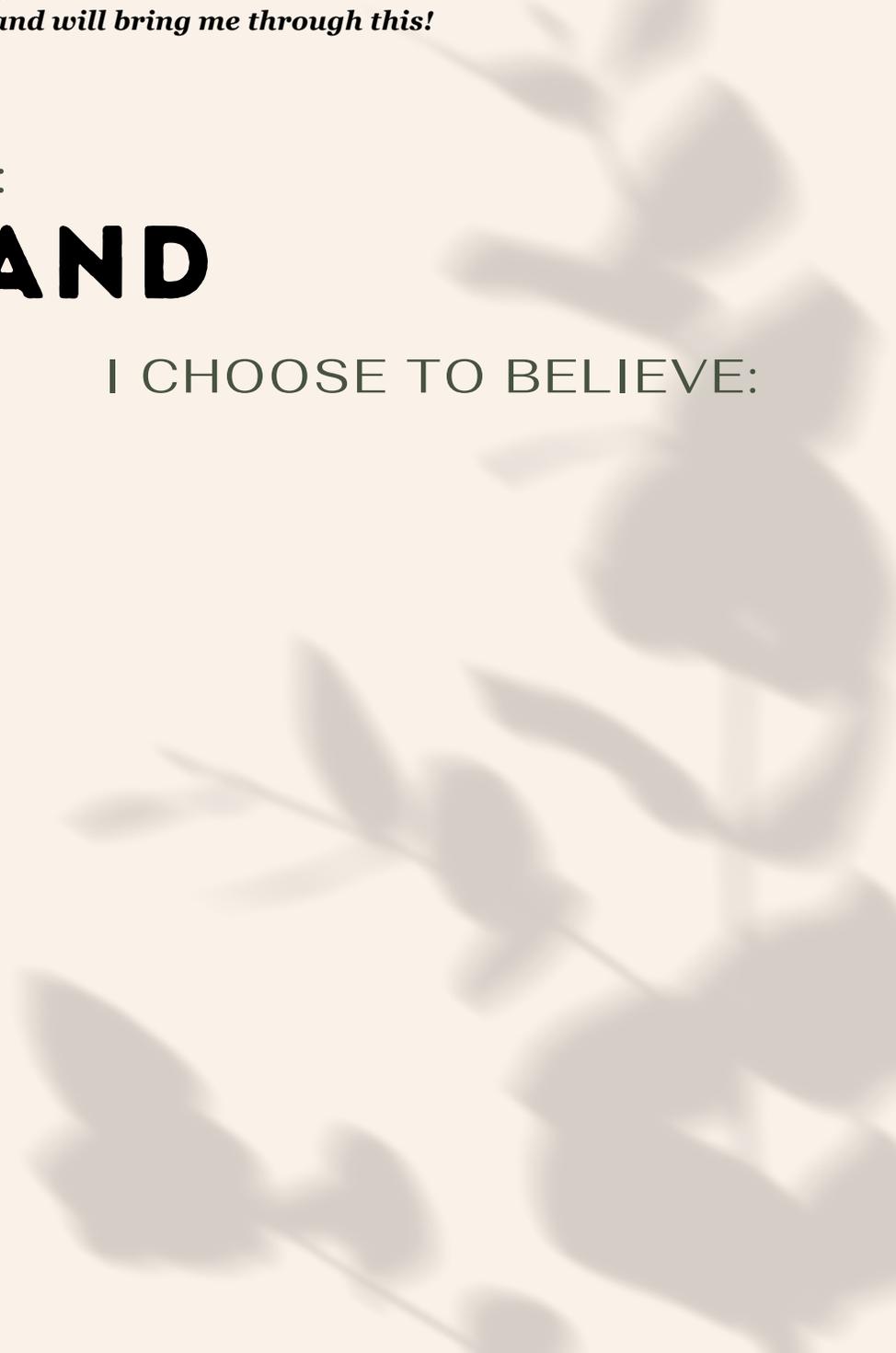
DECLARATIONS

Seeing your emotions reflected back in the psalms can be helpful, but to borrow a strategy from the Psalms themselves, it's not enough to simply declare the feeling. We need to praise God through it, and speak his truth, even to ourselves. We call this DECLARING God's truth. Making your own DECLARATIONS of God's goodness can be the beginning of your own psalm-making in your heart. Follow the formula below as a daily practice. Fill this page, or any page in your journal, with your declarations. (I recommend the page at the end of this prayer companion for writing your own psalm!) *Example: I am feeling downcast and discouraged, AND I choose to believe that my God loves me and will bring me through this!*

I AM FEELING:

AND

I CHOOSE TO BELIEVE:



DECLARATIONS OVERFLOW

TRACKER

I mean, who doesn't want to bubble in whatever Psalms they've already prayed with, creating a visually satisfying reminder that you've been diligent & gone after it?! If I were you, I'd use different colors so it looks like M&M's, but maybe that's just me. Mark one off whenever you've worked on that page, but keep in mind you can "double dip" as many times as you want:)

1	21	41	61	81	101	121	
2	22	42	62	82	102	122	
3	23	43	63	83	103	123	
4	24	44	64	84	104	124	
5	25	45	65	85	105	125	
6	26	46	66	86	106	126	141
7	27	47	67	87	107	127	142
8	28	48	68	88	108	128	143
9	29	49	69	89	109	129	144
10	30	50	70	90	110	130	145
11	31	51	71	91	111	131	146
12	32	52	72	92	112	132	147
13	33	53	73	93	113	133	148
14	34	54	74	94	114	134	149
15	35	55	75	95	115	135	150
16	36	56	76	96	116	136	
17	37	57	77	97	117	137	
18	38	58	78	98	118	138	
19	39	59	79	99	119	139	
20	40	60	80	100	120	140	

NOTES ABOUT PSALMS

The name Psalm comes from the Greek word meaning “to pluck” since they were poems sung to stringed-instrument music.

Catholic and Protestant Bibles sort psalms differently, so the citations may NOT be the same! The Protestant Bible splits psalm 9 into two, making it 9 and 10. It then combines psalms 146 and 147. The result is a difference in the numbering of the psalms in between.

Psalms are split into five books.

- Book 1: Introduction and Laments of David (Ps 1-41)
- Book 2: The Rise of the Davidic Kingdom (Ps 42-72)
- Book 3: Fall of the Davidic Kingdom (Ps 73-89)
- Book 4: Reflections on the Fall of the Kingdom and Exile (Ps 90-106)
- Book 5: Rejoicing and Restoration of the Temple (Ps 107-150)

A lot of the Psalms are prophetic meaning they point forward to Jesus. (Check out Psalm 22 to see what I mean.) These are called Messianic psalms. 2, 72, 89, 110, 45, 22, 31, 69 - these are all Messianic as well.

Most of the Psalms were written by David, but other named authors include Moses (90), Solomon (127), Heman (88), Ethan (89), Asaph (a bunch of them), and an ancient Israelite choir (the Sons of Korah.) David appointed these men as song writers and put together the choir (according to the book of Chronicles) to continue worship of God.

Jesus prayed the Psalms! He grew up faithfully praying the Psalms - this is pretty much the only prayer Jesus would have prayed that we continue to pray today!

The Psalms are active in the daily prayer of the Catholic Church! They are read aloud at every Mass and incorporated thoroughly in the Divine Office, which is the daily prayer of the Church! A great way to read them more is to focus on the Responsorial Psalm of the daily readings, to pray the Divine Office, or to simply read through them chronologically (5 per day) to get through them all in a month!

Whenever you see a note to the choirmaster, you know it's a liturgical song!

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MY PSALM

Your own Psalm, compiled line by line intermittently or all at once, in your own words!

