



## Psalm 96 Small Group Discussion Questions

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- Have someone read Psalm 96. What sticks out to you about this psalm? Are there any phrases or words that seem especially important?
- Someone read 1 Chronicles 16:1-7. This is the event that happens immediately before David sings this psalm. How does this context help us understand what Psalm 96 is about?
  - Michael pointed out that this Psalm is a *celebratory* psalm; it's a celebration! What aspects of this psalm demonstrate that David is celebrating?
  - What role should celebration play in the life of the believer?
  - Why is celebration something that should characterize the believer's heart?
- David begins the celebration in verse 1. What do you think it means to sing a "new song" like David says in verse 1?
  - Why does David want the people to sing a "new song" specifically?
  - Michael said that the new song is something that arises out of affection for God. What role should emotion and affection for God play in the life of the believer?
  - What happens if emotional affection for God doesn't exist in the Christian's life?

- What does it look like when our faith rests *too much* on emotion?
- How do we strike the right balance between our emotions and our intellect as we direct our affections in a new song to the Lord?
- What should Christians do in seasons when it's hard to feel affection for God?
- What does it look like practically to cultivate affection for God? How can you do that this week?
- What's going on in verses 3-6? After David sings a new song, what does he tell the people to do in their celebration?
  - What do you think David means when he tells the people to "declare God's glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples"?
  - Why does David want the nations to know about the glory and marvelous works of God, do you think?
  - If David wants the nations to give glory to God, why does he insult their gods in verse 5?
    - Michael said that David speaks the truth to the nations to help them see that their gods are not as great as his God. What does it look like to speak the truth to people about their "gods"?
    - How should Christians balance grace with truth when confronting others about their gods?
    - How do we balance 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, where Paul instructs believers to live quiet lives and mind their own affairs, with the call to speak the truth to people who believe lies?
    - If someone you knew was worshiping a "worthless idol," how would you approach them and speak to them? How

would your approach differ between a believer and an unbeliever who's believing lies?

- How does verse 6 relate to verse 5, do you think? Why does this verse follow David's confrontation in verse 5?
  - Michael said that David in verse 6 isn't just content to tell the nations that they're wrong, he tells them that His God is better. What does it look like to help unbelievers see that our God is better for them than their gods?
  - Of the 4 qualities that David uses to describe God in verse 6, which do you see unbelievers in your life seeking after most?
  - Based on what you answered above, how can we demonstrate to people that what they really seek is found in God?
- What happens in verses 7-9? How do the nations seem to react to David's efforts to bring them into the celebration?
- Re-read verses 10-13. How would you describe the feeling of this part of the psalm?
  - Why is this part of the psalm so celebratory?
  - What is it that David—and the fields, seas, and trees—are celebrating in this section?
  - When people talk about the final judgment, what comes to mind for you?
  - Why does David seem so excited about the judgment? Why is it cause for rejoicing?
  - Michael said that David sees the judgment of God as meaning that everything is going to be alright for the believer. How does the final judgment mean that everything will be alright?
  - What are the two criteria by which God judges in verse 13? Why are these two criteria good news for the people of God?

- Why should we be glad that God judges in His *righteousness*?
- Why should we be glad that God judges in His *faithfulness*?
- For those who do not feel like celebrating because of the difficulties of life, how does the judgment provide comfort and cause for celebration?
- How should Christians read this psalm? David didn't have a full understanding of God's plan of salvation in Jesus, but we do. How should that understanding clarify the psalm for us?