Psalm 103 Study Guide

Sunday, September 25, 2016


Intro:

Narcissistic personality disorder: A mental disorder in which people have an inflated sense of their own importance; a deep need for admiration and a lack of empathy for others.

Like David, we may not have a narcissistic personality disorder, but we all live somewhere on the spectrum of having an inflated sense of our own importance along with a fragile self-esteem.

Talk therapy ...means just that...talking with someone who has some understanding to help a person’s life (thoughts?) get in touch with what is true and real.

In Psalm 103, we can see David using “Talk Therapy”.

Question: Have you ever heard of talk therapy before? Have you ever used it for yourself?

Have you ever used self talk in the same sense that David did in Psalm 103? Did you use it to talk to yourself, to talk to God, or to listen to God as you speak to Him? Would you be willing to share the conversation?

Note: You could use this to get your members involved with the study. For the sake of time, have one or two share their story.

Study Guide Objective: To show how David used “Talk Therapy” speaking to his own soul...telling himself to worship, to reorient to God, and how we can apply the same tactics to our own life’s.

Read / Understand:

Note: Use this section to walk through the passage with your group members. The comments and questions in this section are there to highlight points made in the sermon and intended to help you make personal application for your group members. You don’t have to cover all the passage or questions. Use as little or as much as you want and tailor it to fit your group.

Psalm 103:1-2

“Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name. 2 Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits”

David is talking to himself—his inmost being—he’s telling himself to praise the Lord! David is
remembering who the Lord is and telling himself “Don’t forget.”

**Question:** Can you remember to not forget? What is David getting at here?

**Question:** What is David reminding himself to not forget?

**Question:** Should we do this same thing? What can be gained from it?

Psalm 103:3-5

“3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, 5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

In this passage, David looks to the specifics of what God does in the lives of people. These are benefits to walking with God, but not all of them are necessarily permanent benefits. We all will die at some point and we are not guaranteed a pain-free life. There is one benefit that David includes that is permanent; it’s the first benefit listed. **Who ___________ ____ _______ ____ .**

David also remembers how God has moved through history.

**Question:** How does remembering what God has done in history—not just your own life, but in the lives of those who have walked faithfully with Him—encourage you?

Psalm 103:6-8

“6 The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. 7 He made known His ways to Moses, His deeds to the people of Israel: 8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.”

*This is what David is remembering...what he is telling himself to not forget.*

*He is essentially telling himself the Old Testament Gospel.*

Psalm 103:9-19

“9 He will not always accuse, nor will He harbor His anger forever; 10 He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him; 14 for He knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust. 15 As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; 16 the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. 17 But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD’s love is with those who fear Him, and His righteousness with their children’s children — 18 with those who keep His covenant and remember to obey His precepts. 19 The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.”
We see David’s declaration of God’s character and actions toward us.

**Question:** How can reflecting on God’s character and His attributes bring us back to what is real and true?

David says that God does not treat us as our sins deserve because His love is as great as the heights of the heavens above the earth...endless, limitless.

Keep the analogies going...our sins are removed as far as the east from the west. Impossibly far...east and west cannot meet.

**Question:** How do these analogies encourage you in your own walk with God? Why?

Psalm 103:20-22

“20 Praise the Lord, you His angels, you mighty ones who do His bidding, who obey His word. 21 Praise the Lord, all His heavenly hosts, you His servants who do His will. 22 Praise the Lord, all His works everywhere in His dominion. Praise the Lord, O my soul.”

David concludes like he began...speaking to his soul...but now he has expanded his cry to include the heavenly hosts, all of creation.

**Question:** How does speaking objective truth to our inmost being, our soul, reorient us to God? Why does it work?

**Question:** How is what David has shown us in this Psalm an antidote for both an inflated sense of ourselves as well as a fragile self-esteem? How does it impact how we relate to others?

Apply:

1. **Talk to yourself, to your soul.**

   Tell yourself about the benefits of walking with the Lord.

   This takes work—ongoing work and effort—and most of the time it’s going to go against what we feel.

2. **What do I talk to my soul about?**

   We must never forget that we have been forgiven!

   Never forget that He cast your sins as far as the east is from the west!

   We should remember what he has done for us in the course our lives...but our fixed reference point...our north star is the gospel.

3. **Reorientation creates expansion in our hearts and minds...our souls.**
Remember that by the time David has looked at God in his life and in the larger scope of history, he is seeing more than himself...much more.

Take time now to share how these three steps have played a role in your own life to reorient you back to God.