


STUDY 12

What Makes It All Possible?

PSALM 116

hen our little boy got stuck in a tree, he wasted no time calling for help. His plaintive shouts brought us to the rescue. Why did he yell for his parents? Because he was in a jam and he knew from past experiences that we loved him, that we were strong enough to get him safely out of the tree, and that we would respond immediately. Our track record was infallible as far as he was concerned.

Many times the Christian's walk with God follows the same pattern. God loves to hear from his children when we face life's challenges, because our cries prove our faith in him. Our cries really are a confession of our own weakness and of God's strength. Each difficulty we face tests what we believe about where our security lies—in our own strength and ingenuity or in God's love and power. The psalmist passed the test.

1. How do you respond to someone who really listens to you, who hears your feelings as well as your words?

READ PSALM 116.

2. What did the psalmist do when he faced trouble (verses 1-11)?
3. What did God do in response to the simple, honest cries of this hurting believer (verses 1-2,5-8)?
4. The psalmist didn't give details of the challenge he faced, but Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Job, Jonathan, David, Jeremiah, Daniel, Habakkuk, Peter, and Paul could have identified with him. With what part of the psalmist's experience can you identify?

5. The psalmist learned that God is gracious, righteous, and full of compassion (verse 5). Why do you need God to be all of these things?
6. Why do you think the simple-hearted qualify for God's protection (verse 6)?
7. How did the psalmist's experience of God change his attitude toward death (verses 3,8,15)?
8. How does an understanding of God's character relieve your fear of death?

9. Why did the psalmist's dismay tempt him to become cynical or bitter (verses 10-11)?

How have you handled this same temptation when facing difficulties?

- ✍ 10. Because God heard him, the psalmist joyfully responded to God in several ways. With which of his responses do you most closely identify (verses 1,7,9,13,18-19)?

- ✍ 11. Why are praising God, repeatedly calling on his name, and keeping your vows appropriate ways to repay him for his goodness to you (verse 12-14)?

12. What vows have you made to God (at your baptism, upon joining the church, in marriage, in private)?

13. You have examined eleven situations that challenged people in the Bible to grow in their faith through the way they faced specific difficulties. All of their testimonies could echo Psalm 116. What principles do you find in this psalm that can help you grow stronger through your challenges?

Pray the Bible into Life

- Thank God that he hears your cry for mercy and will deliver you from death, from tears, and from stumbling.
- Tell the Lord that you love him, and thank him for his good and gracious work in your life.
- If you are in a study group, consider the challenges currently facing the members of your group. Use parts of this psalm to pray for each other.