

Equipped to Counsel Unmet Expectations

Following the Model of the Scriptures

Psalm 116:5–11:

5 Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate.

6 The Lord preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me.

7 Return to your rest, O my soul, For the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.

8 For You have rescued my soul from death, My eyes from tears, My feet from stumbling.

9 I shall walk before the Lord In the land of the living.

10 I believed when I said, “I am greatly afflicted.”

11 I said in my alarm, “All men are liars.”

1. Speak Truth About the Lord (Verses 5-6)

“Believing this, let not your heart be troubled that you are in misfortune. Believe firmly that God’s tenderness watches over you, that His care will be sufficient for you in whatever place He chooses to take you. In whatever painful situation you may be placed, say, ‘It is the best place for me. Notwithstanding all that, I am safe, for He has brought me here.’” ~Christoph Von Schmid¹

2. Speak Truth to Your Soul (Verses 7-8)

“Whenever a child of God even for a moment loses his peace of mind, he should be concerned to find it again, not by seeking it in the world or in his own experience, but in the Lord alone.” ~Charles Spurgeon²

“No trial is so hard to bear as a sense of sin.”³

3. Speak Truth of Your Commitment (Verse 9)

¹ Christoph Von Schmid, *The Basket of Flowers* (first published Edinburgh: A. Hislop, 1870; republished Eirenikos Press, 2017) 59.

² C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 111-119*, vol. 5 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.) 68.

³ Arthur Bennet, “Confession and Petition,” *The Valley of Vision* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1975).

“He will live a life of devotedness to God (v. 9): *I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living*, that is, in this world, as long as I continue to live in it. It is our great duty to *walk before the Lord*, to do all we do as becomes us in His presence and under His eye, to approve ourselves to Him as a holy God by conformity to Him as our sovereign Lord, by subjection to His will, and, as a God all-sufficient, by a cheerful confidence in Him. *I am the almighty God; walk before Me* (Gen. 17:1). *We must walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing.*” ~Matthew Henry⁴

4. Speak Truth to Dismantle Wrong Thinking (Verses 10-11)

- a. Reject False Narratives
- b. Resolve to Thrive, not Merely Survive
- c. Refuse to Speculate
- d. Reject Withdrawing and Pulling Away

“The key to godly living is godly thinking, as Solomon wisely observed: ‘Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.’” (Prov. 4:23).” ~John MacArthur⁵

“Don’t be so eager to stay safe. Make pleasing and glorifying God your top priority regardless of what may come your way.” ~Wayne and Joshua Mack⁶

“True faith will trust God's heart—where it cannot trace His hand; and will lean upon God's promise though it has nothing in view.” ~Thomas Watson⁷

⁴ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994) 910.

⁵ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001) 290.

⁶ Wayne and Joshua Mack, *Courage: Fighting Fear with Fear* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002, 2014) 20.

⁷ Thomas Watson, *The Art of Divine Contentment* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, reprint from 1835) 147.

Equipped to Counsel Unmet Expectations

Questions for Reflection from Psalm 116:5-11

Day 1

1. As the psalmist writes his prayer, he reflects on how the Lord rescued him from his distresses. How bad was the psalmist's situation according to Psalm 116:3?
2. Everything the psalmist writes comes out of his fearful circumstances. This is helpful for us because the counsel we gain from this psalm is supplied from what the psalmist learned in the most dire of situations. What is the first step the psalmist takes in his trial? See Psalm 116:4.
3. The psalmist was in fear for his life, yet he knew the Lord was the only rescue. What do you learn about the Lord and His desire and ability to rescue you from Deuteronomy 33:26-27a; Psalm 18:16-19; 27:1-3; 32:6-7; 50:15; Proverbs 18:10; 2 Corinthians 1:8-10; 2 Timothy 3:11?

Day 2

4. The psalmist sought to anchor his fearful thoughts on solid, soul-comforting truths. What does he start with according to Psalm 116:5?
5. God is *gracious*, which means He is ready to render aid and come to our rescue. His graciousness shows up in His many mercies and favors toward us. What do you learn about God's graciousness from Psalm 41:4; 57:1; 67:1; 86:15; Isaiah 30:18; Ephesians 2:4-5; 1 Peter 1:3?
6. How would reminding yourself that God is gracious, strengthen you when you are way-laid and pressed down by trials?

Day 3

7. God is *righteous*, which means He never does anything wrong, nor can He be faulted or criticized for "not doing it right." What do you learn about God's righteousness from Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 11:7; 33:4-5; 92:15; 145:17; Romans 9:14; 1 John 1:5?
8. How would reminding yourself that God is always *right* and *righteous* in what He does, help you to think correctly about your circumstances?

"The combination of grace and righteousness in the dealings of God with His servants can only be explained by remembering the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the cross we see how gracious is the Lord and righteous." ~C. H. Spurgeon⁸

⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 111-119*, vol. 5 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 68.

9. God is also declared *compassionate*. The Lord's compassions are full of tender pity and a willingness to help the weak. What do you learn about the Lord's compassions from Psalm 25:6; 40:11; 51:1; 69:16; Isaiah 30:18; Lamentations 3:22, 32; James 5:11.
10. How would reminding yourself about the Lord's compassions strengthen your heart during seasons of difficulty and testing?

Day 4

11. The *simple* in verse 6 can be described as someone who is untrained, spiritually immature, childish, foolish, and tempted to sin. Yet, what do you see the Lord doing for the simple according to verse 6? See also Psalm 34:19; 97:10; Proverbs 2:8; 2 Timothy 3:11.
12. In the second half of verse 6, what does the psalmist say about how the Lord treats him? What do you learn about how the Lord deals with those who are distressed from Psalm 18:19; 23:4; 32:6-7; 50:15; 2 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Timothy 4:18; 2 Peter 2:9?
13. What counsel does the psalmist give his soul according to verse 7? Why (verse 7)?
14. Where can you find rest for your soul? See Psalm 131:1-3; Proverbs 3:5-8; Jeremiah 6:16; Matthew 11:29.

Day 5

15. What things should you consider and think on if you want your soul to be at ease? See the second part of Psalm 116:7.
16. Psalm 116:8 gives some examples of the Lord's bountiful dealings. What do you learn from verse 8?
17. What are some more ways the Lord has so generously dealt with you? See Psalm 103:10-14; 119:67; 145:17-18; Lamentations 3:21-26; Ephesians 2:4-10; Hebrews 12:6-7, 10.
18. Make a list of at least 5 ways the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.

Day 6

19. As a result of the psalmist considering the Lord's kindness to him, what response does it elicit in him? See Psalm 116:8.
20. What are you committing to if you walk *before the Lord*? See Genesis 17:1; Psalm 101:6; 119:1-3; Proverbs 28:18; Ephesians 5:8; James 4:6-10.
21. Why are some *motivations and ways* you can live your life in God's sight? See Genesis 39:9; Job 2:10; Psalm 16:8; Habakkuk 2:4; Hebrews 10:38-39; 11:6.

Day 7

22. In Psalm 116:10-11, the psalmist realizes the false narratives he's been telling himself have kept him from moving forward in faith. How would you counsel him to think rightly about his circumstances based on verses 10-11?
23. What false narratives are being spun in Psalm 25:16-17? What truths would you use to counter that unhelpful thinking?
24. We can all fall into unhelpful or wrong thinking about our circumstances. What false narratives have you discovered in your own thinking?
25. What steps must you take to correct wrong thinking? See Psalm 73:21-24; 92:15; Lamentations 3:19-24; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:8; 1 John 1:9.