

II. Group discussion *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”*

Read Psalm 103 aloud.

1. What is the mood of this Psalm?

What is the theme of this Psalm?

2. The praise is not generic (“God is great”), but it describes God’s actions. What had God done for the writer?
You could find something in nearly every verse.

Which of the blessings in this Psalm have you experienced?

Which of the blessings from Psalm 103 have you not experienced?

3. What does verse 8 say about God? *Look at each of the 4 items.*

What are some ways that these traits were true of Jesus?

When you love God, you become like God. Which of these four traits would you like to develop in the coming weeks?

4. What does verse 10 say about God?

If God treated us like our sins deserve, what would happen?

When you have been treated fabulously better than you deserve, how do you respond? How strong is the tendency to be grateful and how strong is the tendency to take advantage of the giver?

5. What does verse 11 say about God’s love?

How well does verse 11 express your experience of God’s love? Has it really been as high as the sky?

6. When verse 13 describes God as a compassionate father, how do you respond?
- I hope God is nothing like my dad.*
 - My dad had some good points, but my mom was the compassionate one who understood me and helped me.*
 - My parents’ lives gave me a good picture of who God is.*
 - I didn’t know my dad that well.*

Why do you think the Bible uses family images to describe God? Don’t the comparisons fall short because God is so much better than any parent?

How does this verse give you ideas for being a better parent?

7. It has been said, “there is no grace in the Old Testament.” How might Psalm 103 challenge that statement? *See verses 4 & 12.*

In what ways has God’s grace been revealed more fully in Jesus? *God became one of us (incarnation), Jesus’ teaching and healing, the cross, the resurrection, the invitation for all people to believe. Yet the psalmist could still praise God for thousands of other blessings!*

Ila. Group discussion alternative *Instead of the “normal” discussion, try this exercise to promote better hearing of the scripture. Spend time in quiet reflection on this passage. Select three readers to read the entire text out loud slowly, with a minute or two of silence between each reading. It would be best if the readers used different translations.*

After the third reading followed by a period of silence, use the following questions as a guide for discussion.

What did you hear in this passage that you had not heard before?

What are some of the key themes from this passage?

What are some ways this passage connects with your life?

† **The big question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It’s okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

What is one way that God’s unconditional love has changed you?

III. Other resources

The point – God’s unconditional love changes us into better people.

Prayer ideas

Offer Psalm 100 as a prayer.

Thank God for what he has done in our lives.

Praise God for who he is.

Ask God to help with specific struggles, and ask for confidence to trust that he will provide richly in every way.

Pray for God to guide the Lockes, our leaders and our congregation through the preacher transition.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Play a game of reverse Hide & Seek – kids & adults

Everyone stay inside while the person who is “it” goes out to hide. Everyone go look for the hidden person. As you find that person, join him or her.

The last person to find the hiding place gets to be “it” the next round.

What makes a good hiding place? How good a hiding place would it be if you could be on the opposite side of the world from the other person?

Read Psalm 103:11-14 aloud.

What is sin? Can kids sin?

What does this say God for us? Where does he put our sins?

What kind of person is God, according to these verses?

How can we show our love for God?



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LIFE Group Guide

Psalm 103 – God’s Love

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: God’s unconditional love changes us.

Sunday morning’s service with Keith Lancaster focused on praising God for who he is and what he has done. Psalm 103 is an incredible passage that fits with that theme. The beautiful language describes a few of the profound blessings that God gives his people.

God knows us better than we know ourselves, yet he loves us just the way we are. And that unconditional love motivates us to become more like him. He loves us so much, he refuses to leave us in our mess!

Leadership tip: Recognize the value of a relationship with God. Spend quiet time talking & listening to God every day. You will be amazed how a consistent connection to God calms your spirit, prepares you for whatever may come, and brings unexpected blessings into your life.

Talk about your walk with God. Ask your group to pray for you. Encourage them to draw closer to God.

I. Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone’s spiritual pulse, and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

❖ What was positive about worship this morning?

Avoid this question if you suspect worship was negative for group members. This question could turn into a critique of worship, rather than applying scripture to life.

❖ When someone describes God as a father, how does your experience with your dad affect the way you hear that phrase?
Depending on the response, you might skip to question 6 on the inside.

❖ What has been happening in your relationship with God lately?

❖ What is your favorite vegetable?