



THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD

WHO SHALL ASCEND?

STUDY GUIDE

Psalm 24:1-10

Series: Open Heaven

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VERTICAL TAMPA

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide walks back through Sunday's message, "The Mountain of the Lord: Who Shall Ascend?", so you can dig deeper on your own or with your group. Read each section, sit with the Word Study and Key Line boxes, and let the questions move you from information to reflection. You do not have to answer every question in one sitting.

A suggested rhythm: read the Opening and The Tension on day one, then one Movement per day across the next three days. On day five, return to the Big Idea and The King of Glory to reset before moving forward.

BIG IDEA

An open heaven is not only an invitation for heaven to come down. It is an invitation for us to come up.

God is not merely inviting you into a moment of His presence. He is forming you into a life that can stand there.

CENTRAL TENSION

God is calling me higher, but there is a law working in me that is trying to pull me lower.

PSALM 24:3-4, NIV

Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god.

REFLECT BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. When you hear God say, "Come up here," what is your honest first response: excitement, hesitation, or resistance?
2. Have you been waiting on heaven to come down when God may be waiting on you to come up?

OPENING · THE HEAVENS ARE OPEN, NOW COME UP

REVELATION 4:1, NIV

After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

Throughout this series we have celebrated what happens when heaven comes down. Psalm 24 introduces another dimension. The question is no longer, "Will heaven come down?" It is, "Will you come up?" John did not have to open heaven. He only had to respond to the invitation.

WORD STUDY · HEBREW

עלה ('alah) "ascend"

To go up, rise, climb, or move from a lower place toward a higher place. David deliberately uses mountain language because you do not accidentally climb a mountain. Elevation requires movement, intention, endurance, and the willingness to leave one level in order to occupy another. Notice David's progression in verse 3: first ascend, then stand.

Getting there is one thing. Becoming the kind of person who can stand there is another.

The Seven Mountains of Influence. Family, Religion and Faith, Education, Government, Media, Arts and Entertainment, Business and Economy. People spend their lives climbing these mountains, and influence itself is not the problem. But you can ascend the mountain of business and never ascend the mountain of God. You can have millions of followers and no sensitivity to His voice.

Success is not proof of spiritual altitude.

Isaiah sees the same mountain: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord... He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths" (Isaiah 2:3, NIV). Go up, be taught, then walk. The mountain is not merely a place where I shout. It is a place where I learn His ways.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of the seven mountains of influence are you climbing most intentionally right now?
2. Where have you been tempted to measure your spiritual life by your success, platform, or visibility?
3. What is the difference between visiting God's presence and having a life that can stand there?

THE TENSION · ANOTHER LAW IS AT WORK

ROMANS 7:21-23, NIV

So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.

David says, "Come higher." Paul says, "There is something working in me trying to keep me lower." When Paul uses the word *law* here, he is not only talking about a written commandment. He is describing an operating principle, something that repeatedly produces a predictable result. Think about gravity. It consistently pulls downward, and you do not have to believe in it for it to operate.

Wanting higher is not the same thing as living higher. You can sincerely want God's will and still have habits pulling against it. You can love God and still have appetites pulling against Him. You can have a calling and still have flesh.

God is calling me higher, but there is a law at work in me trying to pull me lower.

ROMANS 8:1-2, NIV

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

God does not call us higher and then leave us powerless against what has been pulling us lower. The answer to the law of sin is not simply more human willpower. The answer is life through the Spirit.

There is a law pulling me down, but there is a greater law lifting me up.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where do you most feel the gap between wanting higher and living higher?
2. What "predictable result" keeps showing up in your life that reveals a law at work?
3. Where have you been relying on willpower instead of the life of the Spirit?

MOVEMENT 1 • LIVE BY THE HIGHER LAW

MATTHEW 16:24, NIV

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”

I cannot ascend while continually surrendering to the thing pulling me downward. At some point I have to recognize the pull: this desire, this bitterness, this relationship, this appetite, this compromise, this need for approval is pulling me lower. Ascension begins when I stop allowing the lower law to govern my decisions and begin living under the law of the Spirit.

This is not about earning salvation. Salvation is a gift. But discipleship requires surrender, and the key word in Jesus’ invitation is *deny*. Higher is not merely a location. Higher is desire. What I hunger for, I move toward. Hunger creates pursuit, and pursuit determines direction.

MONDAY HANDLE

Before I make the decision, I need to ask: **Can this go where God is taking me?** Can this relationship go? Can this attitude go? Can this habit go? Can this business practice go? Can this version of me survive the altitude God is calling me into?

You cannot answer a call to come higher while insisting on holding on to everything from the lower place.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Name one specific pull in your life right now. What is it pulling you toward, and what is it pulling you away from?
2. If your hunger determines your direction, what does your current direction reveal about what you are hungry for?
3. Apply the Monday Handle to one real decision in front of you this week. Can it go where God is taking you?

MOVEMENT 2 · CLEAN HANDS: CHANGE WHAT YOU DO

JAMES 4:8, NIV

Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Hands represent my actions, conduct, behavior, and what I participate in. God does not only care about what I profess. He cares about how I live. The closer I get to God, the more aware I become of things I could tolerate at a lower altitude that I cannot continue to tolerate as I ascend. Some things may not be holding you in hell, but they are holding you down.

We celebrate elite athletes for what they accomplish, but underneath the accomplishment is an extraordinary ability to say no. We celebrate what they did publicly without recognizing what they refused privately.

Winners quit all the time. They quit whatever threatens the assignment.

***Some of your greatest victories will not be what you started.
They will be what you finally became disciplined enough to stop.***

PSALM 37:25, NIV

I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.

David is not speaking as a young man who has never seen consequences. He has lived long enough to watch roads reach their destinations. Psalm 24 is almost an invitation from your future. God already knows where the road ends, and Isaiah 30:21 promises a voice behind you saying, “This is the way; walk in it.”

***God is not trying to keep something good from you. He is trying
to keep you from an ending He has already seen.***

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are you participating in that cannot accompany you where God is calling you?
2. What weight (a relationship, appetite, environment, or habit) is not destroying you but is still holding you down?
3. Where have you watched a road reach its destination in someone else's life? What did it teach you about your own?

MOVEMENT 3 · PURE HEART: CHANGE WHAT DRIVES YOU

PSALM 51:10, NIV

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Clean behavior with corrupt motives is still not purity. People see what I did. God sees why I did it. People see the preaching, the generosity, the post, the kindness. God knows whether it came from love or manipulation. A pure heart is not merely an emotional heart. It is an undivided heart, a heart without mixture, whose ultimate allegiance belongs to God.

Clean hands deal with what people can see. A pure heart deals with what only God can see.

The man asking, “Who may ascend?”, was not flawless. David sinned and made terrible decisions. What set him apart is that he knew where to return. He did not pray, “God, make me look clean.” He prayed, “Create in me.” Change the source, the motive, the desire. And this is not a one-time altar call. Paul said he faced death every day. **You don’t ascend once. You keep choosing the direction of your life.**

MATTHEW 5:8 · 1 CHRONICLES 12:32, NIV

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. . . . from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do.

Purity affects perception. Sometimes the greatest problem is not the chaos around me. It is that **I can’t locate God in the chaos.** When my heart gets clear, my vision gets clear. When my vision gets clear, my direction gets clear. When my direction gets clear, my decisions get clear. When my decisions get clear, my destiny gets clear.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If nobody applauded or even knew, would you still do what you are doing for God? Where is that hardest to answer?
2. Do you want God’s will, or do you want God to endorse yours? Where is that question most real for you right now?
3. Where are you struggling to locate God in the chaos, and what might be clouding your perception?

CLOSE · THE KING OF GLORY

PSALM 24:7-8, NIV

Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

WORD STUDY · HEBREW

כבוד (kavod) "glory"

Weight, weightiness, honor, importance, splendor, majesty, and substance. Something glorious is something weighty. The King of Glory is the King whose presence, authority, and word carry ultimate weight, whose opinion weighs more than culture, and whose will weighs more than my flesh.

The law of sin has a pull, but the King of Glory has greater weight.

Psalm 24 does not end with us. It ends with the King. The goal of ascension is not platform, influence, celebrity, or simply success. At the top of the mountain David does not introduce us to another opportunity. He introduces us to the King of Glory.

PSALM 139:23-24, NIV

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

THIS WEEK

1. Pray Psalm 139:23-24 every morning. Ask God to show you what is pulling you lower and what has divided your heart.
2. Identify one thing that cannot come with you. Say it out loud to God: "This can't come with me," and take one practical step to release it.
3. Write out what it would look like to pursue the King Himself rather than the blessing, the platform, or the moment.

I do not merely want to visit the mountain. I want a life that can stand there.