SESSION 1
GOD’S PROMISE OF FAITHFULNESS

The Point
God is faithful in every circumstance.

The Bible Meets Life
We live in a society in which commitments and vows are regularly broken. Circumstances and life situations change, and people walk away from commitments or agreements. Sometimes we “break faith” in a relationship simply because we’ve changed our minds or our feelings. Fortunately, God is not like us. God keeps His word to us, and Psalm 89 gives us cause to celebrate God’s faithfulness.

Psalm 89:1-2,5-8,15-18 (HCSB)
1 I will sing about the LORD’s faithful love forever; I will proclaim Your faithfulness to all generations with my mouth. 2 For I will declare, “Faithful love is built up forever; You establish Your faithfulness in the heavens.”

5 LORD, the heavens praise Your wonders—Your faithfulness also—in the assembly of the holy ones.
6 For who in the skies can compare with the LORD? Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD?
7 God is greatly feared in the council of the holy ones, more awe-inspiring than all who surround Him.
8 LORD God of Hosts, who is strong like You, LORD? Your faithfulness surrounds You.

15 Happy are the people who know the joyful shout; Yahweh, they walk in the light of Your presence. 16 They rejoice in Your name all day long, and they are exalted by Your righteousness. 17 For You are their magnificent strength; by Your favor our horn is exalted. 18 Surely our shield belongs to the LORD, our king to the Holy One of Israel.
OPENING QUESTION: *How has your confidence in the faithfulness of others increased or decreased over time?*

- Even the most well-loving and well-intentioned person can fail to keep a promise.
- Circumstances beyond our control can prevent us from doing what we promised to do.
- God’s faithfulness is nothing like our attempts at faithfulness.

**PSALM 89:1-2**

*God’s Faithfulness Is a Cause for Praise*

*We are moved to praise God when we consider His character.*

- Ask: What is it about God’s character that especially moves you to praise Him?

*The psalmist celebrated God’s promise to David.*

- Point class members to the paragraph “Though Psalm 89 laments …” (p. 10) and discuss the psalmist’s reason for praise.
- What does the background of Psalm 89 communicate about the psalmist’s faith?
- Review God’s covenant with David (2 Sam. 7:8-16).
- The psalmist understood God’s promise to David meant Israel would always exist as a nation.
- Even during a time of sorrow and confusion, the psalmist still trusted God’s faithfulness.

**The psalmist sang about God’s faithful love.**

- What does the phrase “faithful love” tell us about God?
- “Faithful love” is the Hebrew word *chesed*. It is a key word in God’s covenant with His people.
- It is a rich word often translated as “mercies,” “lovingkindness,” and “steadfast love.”

**PSALM 89:5-8**

*God’s Faithfulness Is Celebrated in Heaven*

*God’s wonders lead us to praise Him.*

- The heavenly beings praise God for the works of His creation.

*See OPTIONAL IDEA on the next page for a creative way to discuss God’s wondrous work.*

- In Hebrew, “wonders” is singular. This could mean the angels praise God for the wonder of who He is, His wondrous character.
- God’s wondrous character is reflected in the wonders of creation. Both His wonder and wonders are causes for praise

**No one compares to God’s faithfulness.**

- What three questions does the psalmist ask about God?
- Each question has a foregone conclusion. The answer is: no one compares to God.
- Lead class members to review the explanation behind each of these questions on pages 14-15.
- Only God can be praised because He is the only God and the only one who is faithful.
PSALM 89:15-18
God’s Faithfulness Is Experienced by His Followers

Walking in the light of God’s presence leads to joyfulness.

- What is the significance of walking in the light of God’s presence?
- Light refers to God’s holiness and the revelation of Himself.
- The fact that we can be in God’s presence points to the grace and favor He has poured out on us.

Since God’s children are exalted by His righteousness (v. 16), how should we view ourselves?

- Ask class members to respond based on the three paragraphs that begin “In addition …” on page 16.
- It is God’s righteousness that lifts us up, not our own.
- We are powerless; God is our strength.
- All we have is because of God’s favor on us.

Live It Out

What does God’s faithfulness mean for us?

- We may not understand all we are going through, but we can rest in knowing God is still faithfully watching over us.
- God faithfully imparts His righteousness, strength, and favor on us.

Share the story from DIG DEEPER on the next page.
OPTIONAL IDEA

Pass around a tennis ball and invite each person to give it a hard squeeze. Explain that the pressure exerted is the same amount of pressure the heart exerts to pump blood through the body. The heart does that 100,000 times a day, 35 million times a year, and 2.5 billion times during an average lifetime.

Where does all this blood go? Your body has about six quarts of blood that circulate through your body three times every minute. Over the course of a day, your blood travels 12,000 miles through the largest artery, the aorta (about the diameter of a garden hose), and through capillaries so small it takes ten capillaries to equal the thickness of a human hair.

Your heart does this amazing work without your awareness of it. Yet God knows. The God of all wonders, who created the complexities of a universe full of 300 billion stars, created our bodies with such finesse and detail that we have only scratched the surface in understanding how the body works.

Ask: What other features of our bodies (or in all creation) remind you that we are created by “the God of all wonders”?

Source: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/heart/heartfacts.html

DIG DEEPER

Thomas Chisholm never had an easy life. In 1866, he was born in a log cabin in Franklin, Kentucky, and he never received a formal education. He became a Christian as a young adult and began to pastor a church at age 36. But Chisholm was in poor health and his fragile health confined him to bed at times, unable to work.

Thomas Chisholm was not deterred. He found comfort in the faithfulness of God who was His strength even in illness. Toward the end of his life, Chisolm said, “My income has not been large at any time due to impaired health in the earlier years, which has followed me on until now. Although I must not fail to record here the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God and that He has given me many wonderful displays of His providing care, for which I am filled with astonishing gratefulness.”

You know of Chisholm’s reliance on God’s faithfulness in another way. In 1923, William Runyan set one of Chisholm’s poems to music, and today we sing the wonderful hymn “Great Is Thy Faithfulness.”

Great Is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father! 
There is no shadow of turning with Thee; 
Though changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not 
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.