



# Heart Songs

A 6-Day Devotional  
on Psalms of Trust

by Dr. Robbi Francovich



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## Introduction

“In days of great trouble persons of faith--ancient and modern-- have turned to Psalms. The Psalms of Trust, which I read as on the other side of trouble, have been most meaningful.” Dr. Ron Cook, the director of my DMin at Truett Seminary, inspired me to meditate on these Psalms of Trust--Psalms 23, 27, 62, 63 and 91. He asked this hermeneutical question: “What had the psalmist gone through in life to respond to God in prayer in this way? When we look at how God has brought the writer through so much personal and political chaos and uncertainty, then we also can be encouraged that we are in Good and Loving hands.”



Dr. Robbi Francovich is a life-long learner of the cultures and peoples of the nations, having lived in India and China and traveled to over forty countries. She has mentored students as a campus minister at the University of Texas, Texas Tech University, Angelo State University, University of Mary Hardin Baylor, and City University in Hong Kong. Her calling is to live in Adventurous Obedience to Jesus Christ.

You can follow her blog here <https://robbijames.com/>

## Day 1: Heart Song

**Read.** Psalm 30

*Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name.  
For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime.*

*Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.  
By your favor, O LORD, you made my mountain stand strong.*

*You clothed me with gladness, that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent.*



On a long trip, I picked up a book a friend had in her apartment, "The Insanity of God: A True Story of Faith Resurrected," by Nip Ripken and was deeply affected by his stories of those who have been persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ. One story is about Dmitri, a man imprisoned in the former Soviet Union for 17 years for his faith in Christ. The authorities arrested him for the illegal activity of having a church in his house. Although the conditions were cruel Nik reports:

"Every morning at daybreak, Dmitri would stand at attention by his bed. As was his custom, he would face the east, raise his arms in praise to God, and then he would sing a HeartSong™ to Jesus."

At first the prisoners reacted with laughter, cursing and jeers, even though it was the only true light shining in that dark place. After all those years of physical torture and being told his family was dead, he decided to sign a document saying he was not a believer in Jesus. That night, the Holy Spirit allowed Dmitri to hear the voices of his family praying for him. The next morning, he said, "I'm not signing anything." The guards beat him and dragged him from his cell to be executed.

As he was dragged down the corridor in the center of the prison, the strangest thing happened. Before they reached the door leading to the courtyard, before stepping out into the place of execution—all the hardened criminals stood at attention by their beds. They faced the east and they began to sing...they raised their arms and began to sing the Song that they had heard Dmitri sing to Jesus every morning. Dmitri's jailers stepped away in terror. One of them demanded to know, "Who are you?" Dmitri responded, "I am a son of the Living God, and Jesus is His name!" Eventually, Dmitri was released and he returned to his family.

**Reflect.** What is your response to this story? Is it hard to believe in the miracle of God's presence in difficult or dark times? What songs or Bible verses would come to mind if you didn't have your Bible or internet? Psalms are heart songs of worship to God. Take time this week to consider your "heart song."

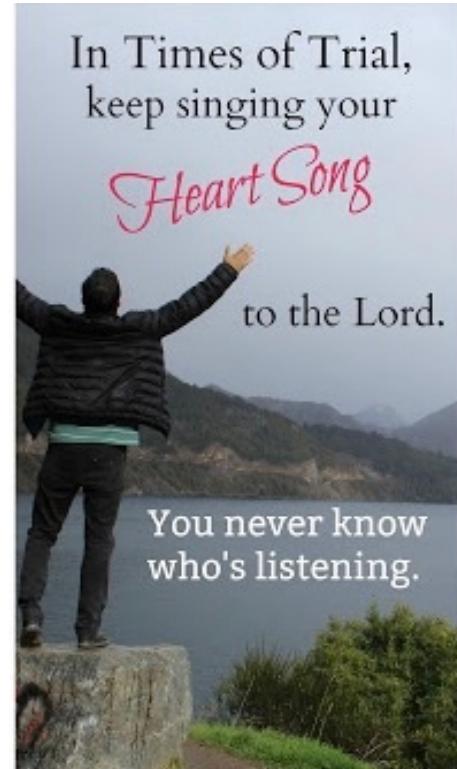
**Worship.** Listen to the song "Center of my Life." (Austin Stone Worship) or "Jesus Be the Center" (Hillsong).

<https://youtu.be/vJnDAxOGPXI>

*Ohhh, my God, forever You reign  
Here and now, hear the sound of Your Name  
Jesus, there is none more beautiful than  
Jesus, there is none more powerful  
The risen Christ, lifted high, Jesus now be glorified.  
Center my life on Your name.*

**Practice.** One day Dmitri found a scrap of paper in the prison yard. He wrote down Scripture verses and posted it in his cell as an offering of praise. What verses come to mind to help you center your heart and mind on Christ? Go through the Psalms and highlight prayers that are your "heart songs." Memorize one and repeat it today as a prayer from your heart.

*"You O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head." Psalm 3:3*



Centering Prayer: O Lord Center My Life on Your Name

## Day 2: Restore

**Read.** Psalm 23



*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

*He makes me lie down in green pastures.*

*He leads me beside still waters.*

*He restores my soul.*

*He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me;*

*your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me*

*in the presence of my enemies;*

*you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

With great anticipation and joy, we made our way to the beach, to the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Glorious walks and swims and seafood filled our souls. Our last early morning, the tide was high and had washed away all notice of humans, plastic garbage, and footsteps of fun in the sun.

Walking in the waves, the clouds partially blocking the rising sun, I recited Psalm 23 and found cleansing from my arrogance, my impatience, my sadness. The ocean is a picture of the Power and Beauty of the Spirit of God hovering over the waters with relentless, faithful love. Yet it is not the Psalmist's scene of "green pastures" and "still waters," so I rewrote and offered these words as my own prayer:

*The Lord is my Life. I want for nothing but you.*

*You walk with me down sandy beaches. You lead me beside the relentless waves of your love.*

*The Lord my Savior washes away my sin and restores my soul.*

*You lead me to the light of your glory for your purposes. Even though I live in a world of sadness and pain. I don't fear death.*

*Your Presence O Spirit is always with me. Your Word guides me.  
Oh, what Goodness and Grace have filled my days.  
With hope I look to your kingdom forever and ever. Amen.*

**Reflect.** *The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.* (NIV) Reflect on this strong statement of trust. What does it mean personally to you? Can you say this with confidence? Because of who God is, I lack nothing. Everything is provided for me as He leads me, refreshes me, and guides me. Even when I am in the dark valleys, I do not have to fear because God is with me.

**Worship.** May your cup overflow today in the confidence and healing of the Lord's anointing-- even if you sit at a table among your enemies, even if you walk in the darkest valleys. You do not have to fear, for God is with you! Worship along with these songs or one of your own choosing.

<https://youtu.be/u3mStisSrt0>

<https://youtu.be/nbqkY6yz25E>

**Practice. Write your own Psalm.** Spend some time rewriting each verse using your own words for your current challenges or expressions of gratitude. Share it with your family or friends over a meal or post on social media.

Memorize Psalm 23 and let the words spill out of you as a prayer while taking a walk, driving, or as you have space in your day.

*"You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows." Psalm 23:5*

Centering Prayer: O Lord Restore My Soul

## DAY 3: Beauty

**Read.** Psalm 27

*The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?  
The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?  
One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after:  
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,  
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.*



In 2018 Nik Ripken heard that Dmitri had died. Through a Russian website he connected with Dmitri's son who assured them that his father was alive. He related that his father awakes every morning celebrating the fact that his story did not die in his prison cell. As the phone call ended Dmitri's son said, "Hold on Nik, I have something important to share with you. I am now the chaplain in the prison that held my father for all those years."

Our God bestowed on him a crown of beauty instead of ashes. (Isaiah 61:3)

**Reflect.** Read through the Psalm and list the character qualities of God and his dwelling place that show the beauty and protection of God's presence. How does singing the Psalms increase your level of trust in God? What picture do you see when you imagine dwelling in the house of the Lord and gazing on beauty? (Ps 27:4). Think about your heart need of seeking God's face in worship. Close your eyes and use your imagination to enter the house of the Lord.

**Worship.** "And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me...I will sing and make music to the Lord" (Ps 27:6).

Sing the hymn, "The Lord is My Light and Salvation." If you can, play the piano or guitar or sing along with a favorite musician such as Psalm 27 (One Thing) by Shane and Shane. <https://youtu.be/ndZsEDuCVAQ>

Focus your worship on the beauty of the Lord:  
“*Your Glory, Nothing but the Blood*,” All Sons and Daughters.  
<https://youtu.be/eQssA0HKYxE>

*Your glory is so beautiful  
I fall onto my knees in awe  
And the heartbeat of my life  
Is to worship in your light  
'Cause your glory is so beautiful*

**Practice.** Write out or pray out your heart concerns, especially things that seem hopeless in your family or the nation. Then go back through the Psalm and notice or underline the heart prayers of the Psalmist. Look for the goodness of the Lord, and allow the Spirit to encourage you with a heart prayer.

I believe in the goodness of the Lord: “*Wait for the Lord, be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord.*” (Psalm 27:14)

Centering Prayer: I gaze on your beauty O Lord!

## Day 4: Strength

### Read. Psalm 62

*For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.*



*He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.*

*On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.*

*Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.*

We often live full throttle, run on empty, and end up burned out and tired. We vacation and play hard in order to get away, yet still find rest and retreat to be elusive. Then the breaking news shakes our world and causes fear, anxiety, and hatred. Where is the safe place, the peaceful hideaway?

“*God alone is my rock...I shall not be greatly shaken*” (Psalm 62:1). Our renewal comes in waiting, in trusting, in the steady, unshakable, quiet strength of the fortress of refuge which is our God.

**Reflect.** Think about a time you stood on a mountain. What feelings and images do the words rock, fortress, and refuge bring up in you? The prophet Elijah in 1 Kings 19 stood on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, a presence described not as wind or earthquake or fire, but as a gentle whisper. In the scene of strength, God speaks in a gentle whisper. Are you listening?

Isaiah 30:15 is a picture of the quiet power of trust: “*In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.*” However, the next verse is not so idyllic: “**BUT, YOU WERE UNWILLING.**” God is there, but it is always an act of trust to live out this declaration: “God is my fortress, I will never be shaken.”

**Worship.** *Pour out your heart before God.* Psalm 62:8

The well-known hymn “*It is Well With My Soul*” has a tragic back story of great loss. Yet it is a testimony of unshaken faith. With these lyrics, take time to confess any mistrust that may be shaking the wellness of your soul:

*My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought  
My sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to His cross*

*And I bear it no more  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul  
It is well, it is well with my soul*

<https://youtu.be/T0dIWJ4t4Jg> Kristene DiMarco

Praise God as your Strength. “*Your Love is Strong*” by Jon Foreman <https://youtu.be/G-g4uwQIXKw>

**Practice.** Be intentional in setting aside some unhurried time to listen for the voice of God. Turn off the noise and voices and move toward deeper intimacy with God. Try fasting from media and entertainment. Go on a personal retreat of silence even if it is just taking a walk alone where you can be present with God, your rest, rock, and refuge.

For the world events that are stealing your peace: Spend time praying, “*Your kingdom come, your will be done.*”

“*One thing God has spoken, two things I have heard; that you O God are strong, and that you O Lord are loving.*” (Ps 62:11)

Centering Prayer: **My soul finds rest in God alone**

## Day 5: Steadfast Love

### Read. Psalm 63

*O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.*

*Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands.*



Worship happens when we intentionally give God honor and adoration. Coming into God's presence is like being satisfied with "fat and rich food" and thirst-quenching drink. Paul in Romans 12:1 urges us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, as a spiritual act of worship:

*"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God." (Rom 12:1-2 Msg)*

### Reflect. Pray through each verse of Psalm 63 using your own words as a response. (this is an example to get you started:

God, YOU are MY GOD...O God you are so personal...  
Earnestly I seek YOU...stir up passion in me to...  
My soul thirsts for...  
Your steadfast love is better than...  
Satisfy me with...

**Worship.** Sing the Hymn "Thy Loving Kindness." Try to practice offering your body as a living sacrifice by lifting your hands in praise. Loving Kindness is Steadfast Love in ESV. <https://youtu.be/vdjV6Tt7oyM> (Really old, but still great!)

*Thy loving kindness is better than life. 2x*

*My lips shall praise thee, thus will I bless Thee  
I will lift up my hands unto Thy name.*

Choose another song such as Shane and Shane *Psalm 63 Better than Life* or *Thirsty*:

<https://youtu.be/UdS6fFDf170>

<https://youtu.be/9JqFYctseZo>

Louie Giglio in “*The Air I Breathe*” says, “Worship is a verb: Shout to God. Sing a new song. Dance before God. Clap your hands. Bow down. Lift up your heads. Tell of God’s might. Stand in awe. Meditate on Truth. Walk in God’s ways. Still your heart. Cast down your idols. Run to him. Make a loud noise. Lift your hands. Strike up the band. Clash the cymbals. Praise God with trumpet sound. Seek his face. Tell the nations.”

**Practice.** Are there any of these verbs of praise that Louie mentions that you can put into practice in your everyday, walking around life? Think about fixing your attention on God through creation, creativity, seasons, senses, commutes, art, music, and more. Choose one as a way to embrace God today.

*My mouth will praise you with joyful lips, when I remember you on my bed and meditate on you in the watches of the night; for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.* Psalm 63:6

Centering Prayer: **Your steadfast love is better than life!**

## DAY 6: Rest

**Read.** Psalm 91

*Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place  
—the Most High, who is my refuge—  
no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.  
For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.*

*Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;  
I will protect him, because he knows my name.  
When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble;  
I will rescue him and honor him.  
With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.*

True rest comes when we pull back from daily life to a sacred and safe place to delight in God's presence. This involves stillness--stopping from working, doing, and planning. It is "sacred space" where you are free from the need to be seen or productive. Creation in all its forms can provide space for the sacred: crashing waves at the beach, mountain tops, parks, or even your back yard.

In my back yard I have "sacred space" to spend time in contemplation. As a bird watcher, I love to observe the beauty of parent birds caring for their babies. Birds build strong, protected nests to house their babies and spend all day and night feeding and guarding new life. The baby birds wait expectantly with their mouths open wide. Birds help their young to learn how to fly, standing by to guard and guide. The baby birds try their wings, but in the safe presence of their parents. As the Psalmist says:

*"Dwell in the shelter of the Most High  
Rest in the Shadow of the Almighty  
He will cover you with feathers under  
his wings."*



**Reflect.** The Psalmist declares that because God is our Shelter and Refuge there is no need for fear of any kind. What fears or concerns do you need to lay before God? The Lord God says, "*Because he loves me, I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he*

*acknowledges my name.”* (Ps 91:14) Pray through how you can reverence the name of Jesus today.

**Worship.** Sing the Hymn—Under His Wings

<https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/565>

*Under His wings—oh, what precious enjoyment!  
There will I hide till life’s trial are over;  
Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me.  
Resting in Jesus, I’m safe ever more.*

[https://youtu.be/L6XvkDR\\_01Q](https://youtu.be/L6XvkDR_01Q) Hillsong: Hide Me Under Your Wings

**Practice.** Entering into rest involves a holistic balanced attention to our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs. This practice involves honoring God by living a healthy rest-filled life by curbing our addictions to busyness, hurry, and draining relationships and adding restful intentional rhythms. Consider whether your tiredness is from your body, mind, soul and or spirit. Try out the practice of centering breath prayer:

Set aside 3 minutes and settle into a comfortable position. Intentionally place yourself in the center of God’s love and protection.

Say quietly to yourself, “Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10. Then repeat the prayer removing the last word each time. Repeat slowly.

Be still and know that I am God.  
Be still and know that I am.  
Be still and know.  
Be still.  
Be.

What is your Heart Song? After meditating and praying through these Psalms and singing hymns and songs, I came away with this thought: JESUS is my HEART SONG! What about you?

Centering Prayer: **My heart sings the name of Jesus!**