

Psalm 71 is a Psalm of lament. It expresses the concerns of the author regarding the situations and adversaries he faces. While the language used throughout is that of grave concern, the response the author brings to his situation is one expressed as praise.

Psalm 71

Fear

Moves

Man

I. COMPARING OUR STORIES

MY EXPERIENCE...

YOUR EXPERIENCE...

Fear is an incredible motivator. In some cases it might force retreat, an instinct to flee or isolate from a perceived danger or enemy. In other situations it might compel someone to respond in defense, causing them to fight and protect themselves or others. Then there are those scenarios when fear moves us to make decisions out of respect or a healthy acknowledgement of honor, putting our trust in a place where it ought to reside.

II. CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

WHAT are things you fear the most in life?

ARE there particular enemies in your life that you fear?

HOW do you typically respond to those things that cause you fear?

CAN you share of an experience when fear moved you to respond either positively or negatively?

HOW has God used fear to motivate you in your walk with Him?

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Read Psalm 71

OBSERVATION

According to vs. 1, where does the Psalmist take refuge?

In vs. 2, what plea does the Psalmist make, and for what apparent reason (vs. 4)?

Where does the author find hope in his circumstances (vs. 5-6)?

What comparison do you notice in vs. 5 and vs. 9?

How do those rising up against the author speak of the Lord in vs. 11?

What is the connecting word that begins vs. 14?

In vs. 15-18, 22-24, what does the author say he will do, despite the efforts of those rising up against him?

What does the Psalmist recognize, or appeal to, in vs. 19-21?

What can you observe about how the Psalm ends in vs. 22-24?

INTERPRETATION

What is a *refuge*, and what does it mean in the context of vs. 1?

What does it mean to “incline” your ear to something (vs. 2), and who/where is the author making this specific request?

In vs. 3 and 5-8, what do you notice about the consistent nature of God’s presence in the Psalmist’s life? What impact does this have on God’s availability to the author’s situation?

Describe the urgency of the Psalmist’s voice revealed in vs. 12-13, then consider how the connecting conjunction seen in vs. 14 (*But*) brings a perspective shift to us, the reader.

In vs. 20, who seems to be responsible for the situation the author faces? How is this often necessary for God’s purposes, and why is this sometimes hard for us to receive? Consider Romans 8:28.

In fear of his situation, where does the Psalmist go? Where else do we see this in God’s Word? Consider Psalm 34:18, 73:25-26, 121:1-2, Ecclesiastes 12:1 for starters.

APPLICATION

What are the things you’re currently up against that are causing fear in your life?

Where do you *naturally* tend to go when you encounter those things that cause you fear?

What would it look like to respond to fearful things in your life the way the Psalmist does in Psalm 71?