

## Awesome Love of God

### Psalm 136

Psalm 136 is the last of the Hallel Psalms (songs that would have been sung on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem). Psalm 136 was especially focused on the Passover feast. The Psalm repeatedly points to God's involvement and faithfulness to His people through the Exodus as well as the conquests. This psalm reminds us that God's love is never limited, and that He is unbelievably wonderful in all that He does.

You'll notice that every verse ends with the refrain, "his love endures forever." The most amazing truth is not all the wonderful things that God has done, though His works are remarkable, but the truth that His love endures forever. His creation is majestic. His work in history is powerful. His graciousness is astonishing. However, the most awesome thing that the psalmist keeps drawing back to is the covenantal love of God.

Verses 1-3 call the people to thank the Lord who is supreme and good. He alone is great, mighty, and powerful. Verses 4-9 list some of the reasons that God is supreme and good – His amazing creation! Verses 10-22 go through the miracles that God performed during the Exodus, as well as the time of wandering in the wilderness, and the final arrival at Canaan when the land became the inheritance for the people. Verses 23-25 reminds the people of God's faithfulness – even in their suffering. He remembered them in their weakness and failure. His covenantal love is not based on how "good" we act. His love and faithfulness endure forever. Verse 26 ends on a note of utter thanksgiving to God. The phrase "God of Heaven" only occurs once in the entire book of Psalms, and is understood to be a term to recognize the Great King (Ezr. 1; Da. 2:44). God is our good, wonderful, mighty, awesome God who is so incredibly worthy of our praise. He has done so much for His people since the beginning of time, and He is worthy, worthy, worthy. *His love endures forever.*

### Additional Texts:

Psalm 103:14 \* Psalm 106:1 \* Psalm 118:1-4 \* Isaiah 43:10 \* Jeremiah 33:11 \* Jeremiah 51:15 \* 1 Timothy 6:15 \* James 1:17

### Activity: Thanksgiving Psalm to God:

1. Take a moment (if you haven't already) and read through the entirety of Psalm 136.
2. Encourage your group to make **three** "thankful lists". Give about 2-4 minutes each for you all to individually write as many items as you can think of. For the **1<sup>st</sup> Section:** write characteristics about Who God is that you are thankful for (ex.- His love, kindness, generosity, joy...). For the **2<sup>nd</sup> Section:** write things that God has created (or that man has made through God's creativity in us) that you are thankful for (ex. – mountains, the sea, trees or showers, or a clean bed, safe house...). For the **3<sup>rd</sup> Section:** write things that God has done for you in your life that you are thankful for (ex. – saved you, brought you out of depression, led you gently through grief...).

3. After the list has been made, go around your group and write your own “psalm” of praise to the Lord with your “thankful list”. You can go in rounds by section, or just by what people feel compelled to share. Start your phrase with “give thanks to the Lord who...” and finish it out. After the phrase has been spoken, the person sharing (or as a group) can chime in with “*His love endures forever.*” Your psalm of thanks might sound something like the following:

“Give thanks to the Lord who is always forgiving” – *His love endures forever.*

“Give thanks to the God of Gods who is powerful and mighty in all that He does” - *His love endures forever.*

“Give thanks to the Savior who was willing to take on my sin” - *His love endures forever.*

“Give thanks to the God who made the beautiful fall weather” – *His love endures forever.*

“Give thanks to the Loving God who has made creation for us to enjoy” - *His love endures forever.*

“Give thanks to the King of Kings who has made all on this earth fall under His power” - *His love endures forever.*

“Give thanks to the Lord who has blessed our family with a safe home to live in” - *His love endures forever.*

“Give thanks to the God who has given me a wonderful spouse” - *His love endures forever.*

“Give thanks the King of Kings who brought me out of my addiction” - *His love endures forever.*

“Give thanks to the Lord who gave me children when I couldn’t have any”- *His love endures forever.*

“Give thanks to the gracious God who was gentle with my family when we lost my uncle” - *His love endures forever.*

“Give thanks to the Lord who turned my sorrow into dancing” - *His love endures forever.*