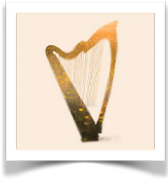


Study Guide for *Dangerous Songs: The Psalms and a Gloriously Disrupted Life*



Dread

Chapter 6

Pages 109-125

First Words of Dread

- The initial words from Psalm 69 are dramatic and intense. Whom do you know that might be feeling this way?

Fear in the Bible

- What is your relationship to fear?
- Have you ever felt “disqualified” from faith because of fear, doubt, or anger? What would the ancient psalmists say to you about that?

Reframing Anxiety with 119

- Listen to **Keep Our Steps Steady** (Psalm 119:129-136). Is there part of it that rings true to your experience?

The Worst With 88

- What do you think of the micro-prayers “O my God” or “Lord, have mercy” as ways to remember God’s presence?
- Listen to **O My God** (Psalm 88). Have you made prayers accusing God of giving you pain, like the psalmist does in Psalm 88? Why or why not?

Laments as a Holy Witness to Pain

- When is a time that a sad song or movie felt like good company for your mood? Make a list of songs and films that convey sadness, loneliness, or dread.
- Engaging your empathy, consider making a poem, song, letter, or picture on behalf of someone you know is suffering.

Moaning, Crying, and Yelling

- Do you have a character in the Bible you admire? In what way is your faith like theirs?

Alarm for a Toxic Future

- If you're a churchgoer, does your community do corporate confession? Does it lean more systemic or individualistic? What do you think about the opposite emphasis?
- Listen to **All Day Long (And Every Day)** (Psalm 44). Discuss the state of mind you hear here.

Reckoning with Trauma

- From the bottom of page 120: *"With trauma, if we're not careful, we may judge ourselves improperly as being weak and irrational. As American psychiatrist Dr. Bruce Perry says, we may wonder, 'What is wrong with me?' instead of asking the more helpful query, 'What happened to me?'"* What part of your life needs this grace?
- In the society to which you belong, what emotions are considered difficult? Why do you think that is?
- Read the description of Psalm 137, Parts 1-4, which includes the psalm text itself. What do you notice?
- Listen to **137** (Psalm 137) and reflect on the lyrical and musical interpretation. What style and texture of music for the four sections would you have done differently?
- Is there a loss in your life you'd like to talk about? If you're doing this study in a circle of people, consider taking turns to share around the circle. (This probably isn't for everyone, so decide as a group). As one person shares for three minutes, the rest are quiet, giving their full attention to that person's experience. No interrupting. No advice-giving. Only witnessing in love.

Where *Were* You?

- The author describes the psalmists' model of God as one very different than most Christians' today. What does this mean for you and how you read the Bible?
- Listen to **No Trace** (Psalm 77). Discuss what you notice in the tone and content of the song. Have you ever experienced the absence of Life?
- Page 124 may contain one of the deepest challenges of the book: Is our 21st-century model of God so far from that of our ancestors in faith that we need to examine the differences? How might this change what we expect of God? How might it change how we encounter scripture?

Embedding Hope with 23

- The author suggests that the expectation that faithful people shouldn't be scared may be "an obsolete idea of God if you want to live the abundant life." Do you agree or disagree?