

PSALM 136

A 3-Day Bible Study on Remembrance, Identity & the Faithfulness of God

*"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.
His love endures forever."*

— **Psalm 136:1**

This study is designed to be taken at your own pace — one section at a time, one day at a time, or straight through. Each day includes **Scripture reading, devotional reflection, key truths, reflection questions,** and a **prayer starter**. Bring a Bible, a pen, and an open heart.

Before You Begin

There is a man sitting under a juniper tree, exhausted and afraid. He has just outrun a chariot. He has just called down fire from heaven. He has just watched 450 false prophets defeated in a single afternoon — one of the most dramatic displays of divine power in all of Scripture. And now... Elijah is hiding. Because a queen sent him a letter.

One letter. One threat. And the man who had just witnessed the living God rattle the heavens with fire and wind and earthquake — that man forgot. Not slowly. Not gradually. Almost instantly. He sat under a bush and said: *"It is enough. I want to die."*

I don't say this to mock Elijah. I say it because I've been him. And maybe you have too. **We forget fast.** We are wired to normalise grace, to grow accustomed to mercy the way you stop noticing the hum of a fan — or the way someone who lives near an airport stops hearing the planes entirely. What was once remarkable becomes background noise.

This study is built on one ancient song's answer to that problem: **Psalm 136**. A call-and-response psalm, sung in community, rehearsing the faithfulness of God until it sank beneath the noise — until it became the ground you stood on when everything else felt uncertain. Three days. One psalm. A discipline that could change the way you walk into every hard thing you'll ever face.

**1 Kings
19:3–4**

Elijah was afraid and ran for his life... He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, Lord,' he said. 'Take my life...'

Remembrance is not for God. He was there. He did it. He doesn't need reminding. Remembrance is for us — because we forget, we drift, and we need our minds renewed.

How to Use This Study

- **Go at your own pace.** Each "day" is a guide, not a timer. Take a section at a time if you need to.
- **Read the Scriptures out loud** where possible — this psalm was meant to be spoken.
- **Use the reflection spaces.** Write honestly. God already knows what you're thinking.
- **Pray the prayer starters** and then keep going in your own words.

- **Consider doing this with family or a small group** — the call-and-response format comes alive in community.

DAY 1

The God Who Signed His Name in a Number

Who God is changes everything about how we face what's in front of us. Before we look at what He has done, we must first remember who He is.

Today's Passage

Psalm 136:1-9	<i>Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords. His love endures forever. To Him who alone does great wonders... who by His understanding made the heavens... who spread out the earth upon the waters... who made the great lights... the sun to govern the day... the moon and stars to govern the night. His love endures forever.</i>
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The King Above All Kings

The psalm doesn't begin with a story. It begins with an identity statement — and it does this on purpose. Before you are taken through the history of what God has done, you are first reminded of *who* He is:

Above every power, every throne, every authority — seen or unseen.	The sovereign ruler over every kingdom that has ever stood.	The one to whom every ruler answers and every knee bows.

This is the overseer of all. The creator of everything that exists looked at empty nothing and spoke light into it. And here is what makes that foundation so important for us practically: *"His thoughts are not our thoughts. His ways are not our ways"* (Isaiah 55:8-9). He sees the end from the beginning. He holds the whole picture while we hold one corner of it.

And yet — and this is the miracle — this same God is genuinely happy to *teach* us. To take the yoke with us. To stoop down into our confusion and our fear and our limited understanding and walk us through it.

You know that television show where the CEO of a massive corporation goes undercover? They disguise themselves, show up at one of their own stores, wash dishes, listen to actual employee

stories — and by the end they're usually in tears because for the first time they've come down to ground level. God is the CEO of every CEO who ever lived. And He didn't just go undercover — He came all the way down. Flesh and bone and splinters in His hands. He sat with the sick and the ashamed. He washed feet.

<p>Matthew 11:28–30</p>	<p><i>"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."</i></p>
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So when we walk into our problems —

His love endures forever.

We walk in knowing: we have *that* God by our side. The Giant Slayer. The Sea Splitter. The one whose wisdom makes the wisest human look like a child drawing maps of a country they've never visited.

The Number That Changes Everything

The refrain — *"His love endures forever"* — echoes exactly **26 times** in this psalm. That is not an accident. In Hebrew, every letter carries a numerical value. The sacred name of God — ■■■■, the Tetragrammaton, the name revealed to Moses at the burning bush and considered so holy that observant Jews would not even speak it aloud — adds up to exactly 26.

Letter	Hebrew	Value
Yod	■	10
He	■	5
Vav	■	6
He	■	5
Total	■■■■	26

The letters of YHWH also encapsulate the three tenses of the Hebrew verb *"to be"*: **He was. He is. He shall be.** His name is not a label. It is a declaration of eternal, unbroken existence across all of time.

So when this psalm echoes that refrain 26 times — the number of repetitions *is* the name of God. The congregation wasn't just singing a song. With every response, they were inscribing His name into the room. Into their memory. Into their bones.

"His love endures forever" — spoken 26 times. YHWH — the sacred name — carried the numerical value of 26. The psalm signed the name of God into every single response.

The Key Word: ■■■■■■



Covenant loyalty • Steadfast love • Relentless, unflinching commitment Not 'God feels loving today.'
But 'God is bound to His people in enduring faithfulness.'

This is the love that absorbs your worst days and does not revise the terms. Here is an image worth sitting with:

Imagine a pair of handcuffs. When God declares *I am faithful* — a cuff goes on. When He says *I will never leave you* — another cuff. When He says *I am with you always, even to the end of the age* — cuff. *I have loved you with an everlasting love* — cuff. *My mercies are new every morning* — cuff.

He is cuffed to you. He cannot contradict His own nature. He cannot uncuff Himself from His promises. So wherever you go, He goes. Into the hospital room. Into the job interview. Into the worst conversation of your life. The cuffs come with you.

If you genuinely believed — in your bones, not just in your theology — that God was physically beside you in every moment of every day... would you live differently?

More Scriptures for Today

Isaiah 55:8–9

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Revelation 19:16	<i>On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.</i>
Deuteronomy 7:9	<i>"Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping His covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments."</i>
Lamentations 3:22–23	<i>Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.</i>

◆ **Reflection Questions**

- What is one title of God — God of Gods, Lord of Lords, King of Kings — that you need to hold onto most right now? Why?
- Where in your life have you been treating God as smaller than He is? What situation needs to be reframed through who He actually is?
- Write out the handcuff image in your own words. Which of God's promises feels most important to 'cuff on' today?
- If you truly believed God was physically present beside you right now — what would you do differently today?

My response to Day 1...

◆ **PRAYER STARTER**

Lord, today I choose to start with who You are before I bring You what I need. You are the God of gods. The King above every king. The one who spoke light into nothing. And You are here — with me — right now. Help me to live today as if I actually believe that. Cuff me to Your faithfulness. I don't want to forget who You are. Amen.

DAY 2

The God Who Keeps Showing Up

Remembrance is not an emotion — it is a discipline. Today we trace the timeline of God's faithfulness and learn why rehearsing the past is the most powerful thing we can do before facing the future.

Psalm 136:10–22	<i>To Him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt... and brought Israel out from among them... with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm... To Him who divided the Red Sea asunder... and brought Israel through the middle of it... but swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea... To Him who led His people through the wilderness... who struck down great kings... and gave their land as an inheritance... an inheritance to His servant Israel. His love endures forever.</i>
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A Timeline of Faithfulness

After establishing who God is, the psalm does something brilliant — it walks through history. Not randomly, but in order. Creation. Exodus. Wilderness. Promise. It's a family timeline. And here is what that structure quietly teaches:

Your story didn't begin with you. You inherited a faithful God.

The same God who parted water and provided manna and delivered Israel from every enemy that looked unbeatable — that's the God you woke up with this morning. So when you walk into your problem, you are not walking in blind. You are walking in with a track record.

Creation	Exodus	Wilderness	Promise Land
Sky, earth, sun, moon — God was faithful before Israel existed.	Plagues, Red Sea, deliverance from impossible captivity.	Manna, water, pillar of fire — provision in the between season.	Every enemy defeated. Every promise kept. Every generation.
<i>His love endures forever.</i>	<i>His love endures forever.</i>	<i>His love endures forever.</i>	<i>His love endures forever.</i>

We Forget On Purpose

Here is an honest observation: God knows we drift. And I mean *drift* in the most ordinary, slightly embarrassing way. We drift the way you drift during a church service — someone is preaching something genuinely important, and somewhere between the second point and the closing illustration, your hand has quietly found your phone and you are checking a notification. Or planning dinner. *Do I want pasta tonight? I think pasta. Wait — what was the sermon about?* No judgment. I've done it too.

But think about what the Sabbath actually is. It's a date. A standing weekly appointment. God saying: *this time is set apart for us*. And we show up, sit down across from Him at the table... and check our phones. Imagine doing that on a first date. Imagine doing it on your anniversary dinner. The person who loves you, right there, wanting your attention — and you're scrolling. We'd be mortified.

He knows we stop hearing what we hear every day. You grow up near the ocean and stop noticing the waves. Someone who lives near an airport stops hearing the planes entirely — you might only think about them once every two months when one comes in lower than usual and rattles the windows. But a guest visiting for the first time? They hear every single one. What the resident has normalised, the guest still notices.

That is what we do with grace. What we do with mercy. What we do with the staggering reality of being loved by the God who made everything. It arrives, day after day, and we stop hearing it. And so He says — *remember. Rehearse. Repeat it until it sinks below the noise.*

Deuteronomy 6:12	<i>"Be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."</i>
Psalms 103:2	<i>"Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all His benefits."</i>

The Mindset That Goes In First

There is a difference between facing a storm having forgotten who God is, and facing a storm with your mind already made up.

Elijah forgot. So when Jezebel's letter arrived, all he could see was the threat. He didn't see the God who had just answered by fire. He saw only the crisis in front of him.

But imagine if he had sat down under that bush and, instead of asking to die, he had said:

"You dried up the Jordan." — His love endures forever.

"You sent fire from heaven." — His love endures forever.

"You fed me by ravens in the desert." — His love endures forever.

"You have not failed once." — His love endures forever.

The circumstances wouldn't have changed. Jezebel would still be furious. But Elijah's *feet* would have been on different ground. That is what regular remembrance builds — not a life without trouble, but a **posture** that doesn't collapse under it.

Romans 12:2

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — His good, pleasing and perfect will."

**Philippians
4:8**

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things."

◆ Reflection Questions

- What is a moment in your own life — or your family's life — where God showed up when things looked impossible? Write it down specifically.
- Where are you most prone to "check out" spiritually — to let grace become background noise? What would it look like to tune back in?
- Think about the Elijah moment: when have you forgotten how big God is in the middle of a crisis? What would you have told yourself?
- What "track record" truth do you most need to rehearse before a situation you're currently facing?

My Day 2 reflections...

◆ PRAYER STARTER

Father, I confess that I drift. I normalize Your grace and forget Your faithfulness. Forgive me for the times I have sat at Your table and checked my phone — distracted by everything except You. Today I choose to remember. I choose to rehearse what You have done — in my life, in my family, in Scripture. Renew my mind. Help me to walk into what's ahead with the track record already settled in my heart. Amen.

DAY 3

Building a Family Song

Worship is not performance for God — it's the language of relationship. Today we discover how remembrance becomes a living inheritance, and how to build a rhythm of gratitude that passes faith to the next generation.

Psalm
136:23–26

He remembered us in our low estate. His love endures forever. And freed us from our enemies. His love endures forever. He gives food to every creature. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever.

Worship Is About the Relationship

For a long time I thought worship songs needed to be entirely about God — pure, upward declarations. I'd feel almost guilty when a song I was writing turned inward, when it said *I need you* more than *You are great*. Like I was being self-focused.

But God has been teaching me something through songwriting: **worship is relational. It has two sides.** The most honest, most powerful worship often comes from that place of need, of reaching, of saying *without You I am nothing and I know it*.

God doesn't need our worship to feel validated. He doesn't need us to remind Him of what He's done. In some ways, that's almost a strange thought — that the Creator of the cosmos, who holds stars in place and calls each one by name, would want our small voices lifted back to Him. But that's precisely it: He doesn't ask it for Himself. He asks it *for us*.

God doesn't need our worship to know who He is. But we need the act of worship to remember who He is — and who we are in relation to Him.

Because something happens in us when we declare it aloud. The shame lifts. The fear quiets. The grief doesn't disappear, but it gets reframed inside a bigger story. We remember we are not alone. We remember He is not distant. We remember He has been here before, in harder places than this.

John 4:23–24	<i>"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."</i>
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He Makes It So Easy — And We Still Forget

Here is what moves me most. God knows exactly how forgetful we are. He knew it when He designed this psalm. He knew it when He instituted the Sabbath. He knew it when He said *take this bread and this cup — do this in remembrance of Me*. He has built remembrance into the architecture of the faith.

He washes us clean. Takes our shame. Gives us new mercy every single morning. He tells us to renew our minds, to focus on what is true, to think about whatever is pure and lovely and praiseworthy. He has made the path clear, the yoke light, the burden manageable. And *still* we drift. Still we normalise grace. Still we forget.

And yet — our God even knows *this*. So He urges us to remember. Not vaguely, not emotionally, but specifically and regularly:

Remember who He is	→ <i>so we can rely on Him</i>
Remember how big He is	→ <i>so we won't be scared</i>
Remember how much He loves	→ <i>so we don't feel unloved</i>
Remember His mercy	→ <i>so we don't feel abandoned</i>
Remember His faithfulness	→ <i>so we don't lose hope</i>

Psalm 103:2–5	<i>"Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all His benefits — who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."</i>
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Write Your Family's Song

What if we made this a weekly rhythm? Once a week. Around a table. In the car. On a walk. Just pause and ask: *What has God done? What can we name?* And then name it — specifically, personally, out loud.

A Living Psalm — Psalm 136 for Your Family

"He carried our family through that season..."

His love endures forever.

"He provided when we genuinely had nothing..."

His love endures forever.

"He brought you back when you were lost..."

His love endures forever.

"He healed what the doctors had given up on..."

His love endures forever.

Imagine if families built this into their story. A living Psalm 136 — not borrowed from ancient Israel, but written in your own handwriting, with your own names in it. Generation by generation, each verse added to the last.

Your grandparents' verse. Your parents'. Yours. Your children's. A song that grows longer every decade because the God it's about keeps showing up.

Imagine your grandchildren one day singing it — not because someone told them to believe, but because the evidence is right there, written into the family song. The testimony spans four generations. The refrain never changed.

That is how faith is passed on. Not just as doctrine. As testimony. As song.

Psalm 78:4–7

"We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done... so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget His deeds but would keep His commands."

**Deuteronomy
11:19**

"Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

◆ **Write Your Own Verse**

Complete these lines with something real and specific from your own life or your family's history:

He _____

His love endures forever.

He _____

His love endures forever.

He _____

His love endures forever.

He _____

His love endures forever.

◆ **Reflection Questions**

- What is one thing you have stopped noticing about God's faithfulness — something that used to move you but has become background noise?
- If you were writing a family Psalm 136, what would the first verse be? What is the most significant moment of God's faithfulness in your family's story?
- How could you build regular remembrance into your week — personally, and with your family or community?
- What do you want the next generation to know about who God has been in your life?

My Day 3 reflections...

◆ PRAYER STARTER

Lord, I don't want to be someone who experiences Your faithfulness and then forgets it. I want to be someone who rehearses it — who tells the story to my children, who builds remembrance into the rhythms of my life. Today I name what You have done. I say it out loud. I choose to interpret everything in my life through the lens of Your enduring love. Whatever I am walking into — I walk in knowing: His love endures forever. Amen.

A Final Word

Psalm 136 isn't a poem for people who have it all together. It's a song for people who forget. Who get scared. Who wake up one morning feeling like they're under a juniper tree with nothing left to give.

It reaches back across every hard season and says: *look what He's done*. And then it asks you — not God — to say it out loud, one more time.

Because when you walk into whatever is waiting for you today, what you believe about God in that moment will shape everything.

Enter with your mind already made up. Enter knowing who holds the other side of the cuff. Enter as someone who has read the family record and seen how this God operates.

His love endures forever.
He is good.

Read the Full Psalm

Take time to read all 26 verses of Psalm 136 out loud — ideally with someone else, in call-and-response. Let the refrain land 26 times. Notice how it feels different by verse 26 than it did at verse 1.

Further Reading

Psalms 103, 105, 107	Other great 'remembrance' psalms in the same tradition.
1 Kings 18–19	Elijah's victory and subsequent flight — the power of forgetting.
Deuteronomy 8	Moses urging Israel to remember before they enter the Promised Land.
Lamentations 3:19–26	Finding hope through active remembrance in the darkest season.
Hebrews 11	The 'hall of faith' — a biblical family timeline of God's faithfulness.
Revelation 5:9–13	The eternal song — where all of history's refrain finds its home.

