

## A Quiet Time Guide

### THOUGHTFULNESS: Psalm 111

1. Read through the Psalm, slowly and thoughtfully. What two or three things impress you most upon your first reading? Now read it again. Are there any changes in your brief list of first impressions?
2. The psalm's structure offers important insight into its meaning. What note is struck in the beginning and at the end of the psalm? Make a list of the qualities of the LORD that give rise to this expression of praise? Now, frame a prayer of your own (preferably in writing) that offers your own expression of praise to the LORD.
3. Psalm 111 is an acrostic (as the notes in your Bible probably observe), that is, each line begins with the 22 successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Think for a few moments about what is required to produce such a poem. What are the challenges of this form? How would producing this prayer of praise be different than your efforts above? What impresses you about our author's accomplishment here? How are the ideas expressed in the poem related to the literary form of the poem?
4. Make a list of the verbs in the psalm that relate to the life of the mind? How do they describe "thoughtfulness?" How are they related to praise? What are the challenges for us in contemporary culture as folk who aspire to be thoughtful?
5. Focus your close attention on verse 10. How is thoughtfulness related to "wisdom," the LORD's "precepts," and "praise?" Contrast this view of their relationship with that put forward by Leon Kass in our pre-course reading, especially what Kass says on pp. 103-105. How might you, as a faithful follower of the LORD, respond to Kass.
6. Return to your thinking about the challenges presented by contemporary culture to the life of thoughtfulness presented to us in Psalm 111 (see #4 above). Pray about these matters, committing yourself to God's way, seeking new ways to shape your life or to encourage the faculty you know on campus. Write a brief, pointed prayer based on these reflections to offer yourself to the LORD.