Psalm 101 • How to live a holy life

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Psalm 101, is listed as, A Psalm of David. And it's a vow to live a holy life and a life that is pleasing to God. I want to read it. Then we're going to look at it.

"1 I will sing of steadfast love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will make music.

2 I will ponder the way that is blameless. Oh when will you come to me? I will walk with integrity of heart within my house;

3 I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless. I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me.

4 A perverse heart shall be far from me; I will know nothing of evil.

5 Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly I will destroy. Whoever has a haughty look and an arrogant heart I will not endure.

6 I will look with favor on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; he who walks in the way that is blameless shall minister to me.

7 No one who practices deceit shall dwell in my house; no one who utters lies shall continue before my eyes.

8 Morning by morning I will destroy all the wicked in the land, cutting off all the evildoers from the city of the LORD." (ESV)

Now, David is talking in this Psalm, about living a holy life. But more than that, he's talking about how to live a holy life. And what he makes us aware of in this Psalm, more than anything else, is that living and... Okay, let's change it up. Okay, instead of a holy life, let's call it what you and I would call it under the new covenant. Let's call it, a Christ like life. Okay. And what David is making us aware of in this Psalm is that living a Christ like life, doesn't just happen.

Now, the Bible does say that He has given you everything you need for life and godliness. And that means, through His Holy Spirit, through His Word, and so forth, you and I have been given everything we need to walk out that holy life.

But as Christians, we also know something else. We can live the opposite of a holy life, if we choose to. Right? I'm always one choice away from going down my own path, doing my own thing. Right?

And so are you. We're not automatons. God allows us to make choices. God allows us to... He constantly puts a road in front of us. He says, I've given you everything you need for godliness. Now walk in the way. That's why Paul says that, we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. (Philippians 2:12) That means walk it out, live it out with fear and trembling. Right? It doesn't mean we work for our salvation. It means we walk it out.

David is making us aware of the fact that living the Christian life doesn't just happen because you show up to church a couple of times a month, and you read your Bible once or twice a month, and you pray occasionally. And what David is doing in this Psalm is, he's laying out a guideline of what he lays before the Lord, as he says to God, this is my heart. It's to live for You. I want to live for You.

And I want you to notice the things that he says here. And I'm going to outline these just briefly. And he lists... Different people have actually found different numbers, but I find like ten of them.

First of all, in verse 2, he says, *"I will ponder the way that is blameless. I will ponder the way that is blameless."* That means, I'll think about... Or let's put another word to it, I will meditate on the way that is right and good. Do you know what I find my human heart wanting to do? It wants to meditate on the other way. Right? Because that's the direction of my flesh. I have... There's a gravitational pull in my life toward unrighteousness, worldliness, and carnal thinking. It's just, it's my pull. Right? And I know it is with you, too.

What does David say that he's going to do to counteract that gravitational pull? He says, I'm going to set my mind to meditate on the right way to live. He's thinking about it. He's putting it into his mind and saying, I want to ponder this, first thing.

Number 2. Also in verse 2, he says, *"I will walk with integrity of heart within my house;..."* In other words, my house is going to be a place of integrity. We're going to... I can't control everything. I can't control the world. I can't even control my neighborhood. But you know what? In my home, in my home, there's going to be integrity. There's going to be integrity.

And that means we're going to follow the laws. We're going to do what we need to do. We're going to honor the Lord, the movies we watch in our home, the books we read in my home. I can't control what you do in your home. When I come over to visit you and you've got some trashy thing on TV, that's not my business. It's yours. But in my home, I can... I'm going to make a decision to live for You. Right?

Number 3, which is found in verse 3. He says, "*I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless."* And now, David talks about this life of holiness and the effort that he's going to put forth as being careful about what he puts in front of his eyes, understanding that the eyes have a direct connection with the heart. And what I look at can have a direct correlation with the heart, with the life that I'm living. I'm going to make a determination not to set before my eyes that which is worthless. And that's hard.

And you know what? It was hard for David in his day. It's probably doubly hard today with everything you and I got going on. You drive down the road and billboard after billboard of stuff you probably... It's worthless. But even in David's day, he's up walking around the top of his palace and there's Bathsheba. And he shouldn't be looking at another man's wife. And yet there she is. And he chose to keep looking. And you know the terrible tragedies that came about through all of that.

The fourth thing is also, found at the end of verse 3. And he says, *"I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me."* And basically, what David is saying here, is that he determined that he was not going to come under the influence of those who had walked away from the Lord's calling, and from walking with the Lord. That doesn't mean you don't have anything to do with those people.

If there's somebody you work with, or somebody who used to be a believer and now they've just fallen away, by all means, love them, pray for them, encourage them, as best you can. But be careful about coming under their influence. That's what David is talking about here, I'm not going to let them influence; and he says, it's not going to cling. Because you see, influences cling to us. Don't they? People can influence us very, very negatively. And it clings like a bad thing.

The fifth one is in verse 4. He says, *"A perverse heart shall be far from me; I will know nothing of evil"* And, if..., he says, if I'm dealing with somebody whose heart is perverse, I'm just not going to be around that sort of a person, and I'm not going to let perversity in my own heart.

The sixth is in verse 5. He says, *"Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly I will destroy."* And I'm going to cut this person out of my life. I don't know if you have any people who love to talk about others and just slander them. And just talk negatively all the time. He says, I'm not going to have that in my life. I'm going to cut that out of my life. Because man, that is... Remember what it talks about gossip in the Book of Proverbs. It says, it's like juicy morsels. We love it. We love gossip and it's very tempting. David has to act very ruthlessly to get it out of his life.

Verse 5, the end of verse 5, is the seventh one. He says, *"Whoever has a haughty look and an arrogant heart...*(I'm not going to endure.)" And you guys know what that's all about. He's basically talking about somebody who has just this overwhelming, prideful attitude, which David knows that, bad company corrupts good character. We see that in the New Testament. He says, I'm going to be very careful about hanging around with somebody who has an evil heart. Not going to endure it in my presence. Because I'm not strong enough to stand up under that constant, prideful sort of a thing.

Number 8 is in verse 6. He says, *"I will look with favor on the faithful in the land,* (and) *that they may dwell with me; he who walks in the way that is blameless shall minister to me."*

Now he's using a positive reference to talk about surrounding himself with godly people. And this is also critical, you guys, to holy living. If you want to live a life that's pleasing to the Lord, surround yourself... And you can't do it all the time. I know. I got that. You got to go to work. I get it. Surrounding yourself with believers who are going to build you up, pray with you, help you to be accountable, call you on things when things aren't right, which is that iron, sharpening iron, that we all need in our lives.

This is critical you guys. David lists this as his effort toward holiness because it is crucial. We need one another in the body of Christ. Don't try to go it alone. You are not meant to go it alone. That's why in the New Testament we are called, a body. And bodies don't work well when they're disconnected from the body. Or, I should say, members don't work well. You cut your hand off, it's going to be useless. And if you're a cut off hand, you're not going to be getting the life giving supply that we give to one another in the body of Christ. Who in your life do you have that challenges you positively, in a spiritual way?

The ninth one is verse 7. He says, *"No one who practices deceit shall dwell in my house; no one who utters lies shall continue before my eyes."* And David knew that deceitful liars are just... can drag us down so quickly.

And then the 10th one, in verse 8. *"Mourning by mourning I will destroy all the wicked in the land,"* which means to cut off, as he talks about, out of his life. But he says, *"cutting off all the evildoers from the city of the LORD."* And this means, to cut out everyone from your life who is walking contrary to the Lord, as far as their place of influence in your life.

And again, I know that you go to work and you have unbelievers around you. I know that maybe even in the home you live in, you have unbelievers around. You can't cut those people out of your lives. But you can minimize their influence. And that's what David is talking about here, minimizing the influence.

All of these things that we've listed in this Psalm are all about helping us walk in a Christ like way. And we all need help. And it doesn't just happen automatically. We have to make a determination. We have to make a decision to cut certain things out of our lives. Bring other things into our lives that we might be strengthened and not weakened in our day-to-day life.

That's where we'll stop. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank You so much for the exhortation of the Psalms. We thank You, Lord, for the richness that fills our souls. And equips us for the life that is only found in Christ.

Continue, we pray Father, to speak to us about what it means to live for You. You are a Holy God and You're worthy of our lives. You're worthy of our very existence. And we pray that You would strengthen us to walk uprightly in a very dark and corrupt world.

And may we walk, Lord God, with joy knowing that You have a purpose and a plan. And You are carrying out Your plan. And one day we will see it unfold. Meanwhile, by faith, we rejoice in the plan of our Savior. In Jesus name we pray, amen.