

Praying the Psalms

Zoom Bible Study | Lesson Five

October 10, 2023

Praying the Psalms of Commitment

When you became a Christ-follower, you began a spiritual journey, and the purpose of this journey is for you to do the good works God has planned for you to do:

Ephesians 2:10:

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

As you are on this journey, you are growing to be more like Jesus, to be mature in your faith:

2 Corinthians 3:18:

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Ephesians 4:15:

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

James 1:2 – 4:

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.



On our journey in this world, we are told to walk by faith and not by sight. The Bible is full of directions for our lives here on earth, how we should live, how we should talk, how we should think. And all of that is so that we can be more like Jesus, bless more and more people, and bring honor and glory to our Savior. But it won't just happen!

Many psalms give us prayers and principles of commitment and dedication.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20:

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

We do not own ourselves; we have been bought with a price.

We will look at several passages in the Psalms that teach us how to pray for the commitment we need in order to do the good works God has planned for us to do.

Psalm 37

In verse 25 David tells us he is old as he writes this Psalm:

*²⁵ I was young and now I am old,
yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken
or their children begging bread.*

So, this Psalm is insight from King David as he is looking back on his life, which was anything but perfect.

*³ Trust in the Lord and do good;
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
⁴ Take delight in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.
⁵ Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him and he will do this...*

The first part of verse 3 is a prayer we can pray for ourselves. You might pray:

*Lord, today I want to trust in you no matter what happens to me. Today I commit myself to do good.
Show me how to do good this day.*

Then you might pray verse 4, dedicating yourself to take delight in the Lord all day long.

Suppose you started your day by committing to the Lord that by his grace, you would delight yourself in him. Then:

- Your husband asked/told you to do something you really didn't want to do.
- Your co-worker didn't show up for work and left you holding some bags! More work!
- Your sister called and told you your Mom is not feeling well and could you please go over there asap?
- Your teenager brings home a report card with a D in English!

In other words, you started your day right with really good intentions, and then life happened. Can you keep that commitment to "delight yourself in the Lord" even then? And if so, how?

This is when you really must learn the spiritual discipline of bringing every thought into captivity:

2 Corinthians 10:5:

*We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God,
and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

Any of these "life happenings" can steal your joy, cause you to worry, make you imagine the worst, and pretty much ruin what started out to be a good day.

Here are some "thought chasers," things you can do or think or say to drive out your wrong thoughts:

- Ask yourself: What difference will this make in 24 hours?
- Think: The world has not crumbled; God is still in control; I am not harmed; life goes on.

- You can choose to give a “sacrifice of praise” – even though you don’t feel like it. Praise is the fruit of your lips—so praise God with words for his goodness to you.
- Recite five things you are thankful for, out loud if possible. Or write them somewhere.

Paul wrote to Timothy:

But godliness with contentment is great gain. (1 Timothy 6:6)

Contentment with your life doesn’t mean you approve or like every aspect of your life, but it means that you have chosen to be content. When that is coupled with godliness, you are wealthy.

Another prayer from this psalm is verse 5: Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this.

Think about your day ahead, what you will be doing, who you will be with, and commit your way for that day to the Lord. With that kind of commitment early in the day, you are prepared for whatever happens.

The next two verses of this psalm address days that can be fretful. Fret means to be constantly or visibly worried or anxious.

*⁷ Be still before the Lord
and wait patiently for him;
do not fret when people succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.
⁸ Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;
do not fret—it leads only to evil.*

Once again, praying that prayer of commitment before the day begins prepares you for whatever happens, good or not-so-good. Whatever opposition you face, commit your way to the Lord, trust in him, and be found righteous because of Jesus.

Maybe you could decide to pray Psalm 37 for a week or two, and every morning you include this Psalm in your prayers.

Psalm 91

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

² I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.”

Psalm

⁴ He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

⁹ If you say, “The Lord is my refuge,”
and you make the Most High your dwelling,

¹⁰ no harm will overtake you,
no disaster will come near your tent.

¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways;

¹² they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

This Psalm is often referred to as the Psalm of protection.

These verses highlight the importance of living in the presence of God—practicing the presence of God. We must learn to cultivate the presence of God.

It is a choice you make to “dwell in the shelter of the Most High,” to “rest in the shadow of the Almighty.



He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

His faithfulness will be your shield, and God is faithful.

2 Timothy 2:13:

If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

Who do you turn to when you are in need? Can you truthfully say: “The Lord is my refuge”? Learning to make the Most High your dwelling has enormous benefits:

- No harm will overtake you.
- No disaster come near your tent.
- God will send his angels to guard you.

Psalms 101

I will sing of your love and justice;
to you, Lord, I will sing praise.

² I will be careful to lead a blameless life—
when will you come to me?

I will conduct the affairs of my house
with a blameless heart.

³ I will not look with approval
on anything that is vile.

David speaks of his determination to rule righteously, to live a blameless life. Then David commits to leading a blameless life. . . to be careful to lead a blameless life. What happened?

He was always a “man after God’s own heart,” but he was a man with a fatal flaw.

2 Samuel 5:

³ Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord. And they anointed David king over Israel. ⁴ David was thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* he reigned forty years.

¹⁰ So David went on and became great, and the Lord God of hosts *was* with him.

¹² So David knew that the Lord had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted His kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.

¹³ And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. Also more sons and daughters were born to David.

All of us have something in our personalities and characteristics which can be fatal to us. Certainly David has been a great encouragement to many through the ages, but his life is also a warning that fatal flaws can attack anyone, even the strongest Christian.

David also committed to God that he would conduct his affairs at home blamelessly and he would not look on anything vile.

In this culture you may need to make a commitment to clean up what you look at—the movies and TV you watch that are full of sinful behavior, even condoning sinful behavior.

Are you allowing a fatal flaw in your life to continue, thinking that you can control it? Don't be deceived; if you don't face it and deal with it biblically, like David it will lead you further and further into sin.

What are some other fatal flaws you may be dealing with in your life or have dealt with?

Don't you think, if David had it to do over again, he would make sure that his fatal flaw was under control?

Proverbs 4:25 - 27

²⁵ *Let your eyes look straight ahead;
fix your gaze directly before you.*

²⁶ *Give careful thought to the [cl](#) paths for your feet
and be steadfast in all your ways.*

²⁷ *Do not turn to the right or the left;
keep your foot from evil.*

It's the first step you take off the right path that puts you on the wrong road. PONDER the path of your feet. That means think about what you're doing.

David said he would be careful to lead a blameless life, but he took that first step off the right path. And that fatal decision caused great unintended consequences.