

Psalm 101 • Dwelling with the Faithful

Introduction

Many of the Psalms can be categorized as being prayers or praises; this one should be thought of as a Psalm of personal application. That is, David is providing insight into the specific actions he desires to undertake that prove both his commitment to God's Word as well as to his personal relationship with God. It speaks of the quality of his personal, spiritual walk not just as to what he will do internally, but how he will deal with others who will have an effect on that walk. The biblical equivalent of "You are what you eat" might be, "You are whom you associate with".

¹I will sing of lovingkindness and justice,
To You, O LORD, I will sing praises.

²I will give heed to the blameless way.
When will You come to me?

I will walk within my house in the
integrity of my heart.

³I will set no worthless thing before my
eyes;

I hate the work of those who fall away;
It shall not fasten its grip on me.

⁴A perverse heart shall depart from me;
I will know no evil.

⁵Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor,
him I will destroy;

No one who has a haughty look and an
arrogant heart will I endure.

⁶My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the
land, that they may dwell with me;

He who walks in a blameless way is the
one who will minister to me.

⁷He who practices deceit shall not dwell
within my house;

He who speaks falsehood shall not
maintain his position before me.

⁸Every morning I will destroy all the
wicked of the land,

So as to cut off from the city of the LORD
all those who do iniquity.

[Read Psalm 101]

Q: What are the 9 "will" statements in this Psalm?

1. "I **will** sing of lovingkindness and justice" (v.1)
2. "To You, O LORD, I **will** sing praises" (v.1)
3. "I **will** walk within my house in the integrity of my heart" (v.2)
4. "I **will** set no worthless things before my eyes" (v.3)
5. "A perverse heart shall depart from me; I **will** know no evil" (v.4)
6. "Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I **will** destroy" (v.5)
7. "No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart **will** I endure" (v.5)
8. "He who walks in a blameless way is the one who **will** minister to me" (v.6)
9. "Every morning I **will** destroy all the wicked of the land" (v.8)

Q: What does "will" mean? Is it something he hopes to do? Something he wants to do?

A: It's best understood as a lifestyle choice. These are things which are part of everyday life, activities and choices which are perpetually engaged in and from which there is no deviation. They're not one-time actions with a beginning and end, but continual and open-ended.

Q: How can they be grouped in terms of their direction, their main focus?

1. Personal, but towards God
 - a. "To You, O LORD, I will sing praises" (v.1)
2. Personal, but internal
 - a. "I will sing of lovingkindness and justice" (v.1)
 - b. "I will set no worthless things before my eyes" (v.3)
 - c. "A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will know no evil" (v.4)
3. Personal, as an example to others
 - a. "I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart" (v.2)
4. In relationships with others
 - a. "Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy" (v.5)
 - b. "No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure" (v.5)
 - c. "He who walks in a blameless way is the one who will minister to me" (v.6)
 - d. "Every morning I will destroy all the wicked of the land" (v.8)

Point: By first applying God's Word to the point that it affects and changes behavior, what begins as changing the internal, invisible realm of the heart becomes visible in establishing a witness of faithfulness. It then becomes proactive in changing the very surrounding environment to weed out all the bad relationships and influences which would distract from or divert away from that commitment to spiritual faithfulness; it only allows those who are likewise committed to God's Word and ways "to minister to me".

Application: What influences – internal, external, personal, casual – do you tolerate which pull you away from God, even actively towards sin? Which people, things, or places do you need to isolate or remove if you're going to be wholly committed to Christ first and foremost in all things?

Q: What are the 5 “shall” statements of this Psalm?

1. “I hate the work of those who fall away; it **shall** not fasten its grip on me” (v.3)
2. “A perverse heart **shall** depart from me” (v.4)
3. “My eyes **shall** be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me” (v.6)
4. “He who practices deceit **shall** not dwell within my house” (v.7)
5. “He who speaks falsehood **shall** not maintain his position before me.” (v.7)

Q: How could these “shall” statements be characterized?

A: They describe personal choices that are going to be made each and every time these situations are encountered. In the cases of false believers (“those who fall away”), those who practice deceit, and those engaging in falsehood, they will be outright rejected if not removed. Only those adhering to God's Word and ways (“the faithful of the land”) will be retained and a personal relationship pursued.

Application: How discriminating are you when it comes to personal relationships? Is it possible to trace some of your struggles to the company that you keep? Or even the sources of spiritual strength and encouragement?

Q: This can begin to sound very judgmental, very cut-and-dried. But how does the opening verse to this Psalm provide guidelines for putting these things into practice?

A: “I will sing of lovingkindness and justice”. (v.1) It's the proper blend of grace and truth. It's not to be all mercy nor all judgment.

Point: Just because something tends towards the negative doesn't mean it needs to be immediately and permanently cut off. The issue really comes down to where such things are headed, as to whether or not they're responding to also being led into the light of Christ or not. It's the things that will not change or are even actively seeking to seduce us away which need to be permanently removed as opposed to those things which struggle and need our own example and encouragement to assist in their development.

Q: What is the single “hate” statement in this Psalm?

A: “I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I **hate** the work of those who fall away; It shall not fasten its grip on me.” (v3)

Q: What does it mean “to hate” biblically speaking?

A: It means to absolutely reject something, to completely isolate yourself from and never engage in it or with someone. It's taking the strongest possible actions to completely remove its influence from your life, to consciously avoid it.

[Continued on the next page.]

Q: In this case, who is this speaking of? Who or what is to be unequivocally removed or abstained from?

A: “Those who fall away” describes someone who was once a believer but is no longer. We would label them as “heretics” or “apostates”. Whereas “backsliders” describes someone struggling spiritually who may return to obedience, heretics and apostates go from working **FOR** the kingdom to actually working **AGAINST** the kingdom. They’re actively engaged in spreading false doctrines and false practices and are therefore to be completely avoided, completely removed.

Q: Who is specifically mentioned as warranting being destroyed?

A: “...all the wicked of the land”. These are people who are completely devoted to a life apart from God, actively trying to get everyone else to live in the world, to live just like they are.

Q: Who is specifically mentioned as needing to be “cut off”?

A: “...all those who do iniquity”. (v.8) The core meaning of “iniquity” is knowing God’s truth, but twisting it to fit your own behavior, of attempting to redefine God’s Word so as to actually justify one’s own, sinful lifestyle. They’re not struggling with sin, but embracing it while at the same time perverting God’s Word to somehow justify it.

Point: We are not to engage on any level nor be tolerant of those who are false teachers, false prophets, or false believers propagating what is contrary to God’s Word and ways. In fact, we’re supposed to actively expose and oppose them.

Overall Application

- *If our personal relationship to God is our highest priority, what is the number one duty we owe to ourselves? (Hint: Personal faithfulness) How should we deal with those influences seeking to undermine this? How should we seek those influences which support and enable this?*
- *How well do recognize that how someone treats others indicates the kind of spiritual influence they’re most likely to be? How well does the quality of our inner spiritual life reveal itself in our own treatment of others?*
- *What people, places, or things have we allowed to have sway over us which, in reality, are either completely devoted to the ways of the world or working actively against the kingdom? What are examples which should not just be avoided, but actively exposed and opposed?*