

Life 101

Lessons from Psalm 101

As we begin a new year, Psalm 101 provides a blueprint for us to follow in living a life that is passionately committed to the Lord. Take a moment to read the psalm and think through these key instructions that David emphasizes, and then evaluate whether or not each of them are consistently practiced in your life:

1. Sing

"I will sing of lovingkindness and justice, to Thee, O Lord, I will sing praises" (v. 1).

The story is told of a humble shepherd boy named Caedmon in 1st century England who dearly loved music, but was unable to sing or even to speak properly. One night a Man appeared to him in a dream and said, "Sing for me, Caedmon. Sing for me." "I can't sing", Caedmon protested. "Sing anyway. Sing for me", replied the Visitor. So Caedmon began to sing a song of praise to his Creator, and from that day forth was gifted with songs and poetry that continue to resonate through the ages. Sing freely and often to the Creator of your love for Him. He delights in it!

2. Live with integrity

"I will give heed to the blameless way...I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart" (v. 2).

The word "blameless" as used in this verse does not mean sinless perfection; rather it means "sincere, complete, having integrity." It is within the reach of each one of us to live a "blameless life", but it requires a careful commitment to walk a life of integrity and sincerity. It is noteworthy that the psalmist makes specific reference to having integrity "within my house." It is not only before the watching world that we must have integrity, but we must walk it out before the eyes of those closest to us, in our own homes...and that is often where it is the hardest.

3. Guard your eyes

"I will set no worthless thing before my eyes" (v. 3).

This becomes more and more difficult, as the world around us is increasingly filled with "worthless things." It therefore requires continual discernment and an attitude of prayer as we go through each day asking God, "Should I watch this show/movie?" or "Should I read this book/magazine?" or "Am I lusting after the worthless things in this store?", or any number of other questions. Each opportunity to make a choice is also an opportunity for growth.

4. Flee from evil

"A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will know no evil" (v. 4).

Take no part in activities that grieve the heart of God. Reject "perverse" ideas and flee from temptation (I Tim. 6:11, II Tim. 2:22). "Knowing no evil" also includes standing against evil practices within society whenever possible. In verse 1, David sings not only of the Lord's lovingkindness, but of justice. As the people of God, we must be careful that we do not neglect fighting for justice in the process of fleeing from evil.

5. Reject pride

"No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure" (v. 5).

Reject every form of pride and conceit. Recognize it for what it is and deal with it! See your life in the light of the reality of God's holiness, and humble yourself before Him...not only in your heart, but by physically kneeling, bowing, and lying prostrate before Him whenever possible. Remember that out of the "Top 7" sins that God hates, pride tops the list—above lying, fighting, and even murder (see Proverbs 6:16-19).

6. Don't tolerate deceit

"He who practices deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who speaks falsehood shall not maintain his position before me" (v. 7).

Proverbs 12:22 says, "The Lord detests lying lips, but delights in men that are truthful." My children all memorized that verse when they were young, through writing it out repeatedly when caught in an untruth! Do not model any form of lying or deceit, within the home or without, and set a strong standard for truth. Jesus IS the Truth, and we approach the Father only through that Truth.

If we make a commitment to live our lives by these guidelines, we will find 2010 to be a year of spiritual growth and blessing!