



## **"REASONS TO REJOICE"**

**"Your Words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16**

### **"Series of Six" Lesson 4** **A selection of Psalms for meditation**

In the last few lessons, we have studied Psalm 1, Psalm 46, and Psalm 86. Our Psalm for this week is taken from book four of the Psalms, which corresponds to the book of Numbers. Psalm 101 is one of the two psalms from book four that are written by David. Many titles have been given to Psalm 101, such as "A Royal Code of Ethics," "A Pattern for an Upright Administration," or a "Kings Resolve." This is one of my personal favorites, because I find the first few verses so challenging. As I studied a bit deeper, I found my emotions going haywire, from being happily challenged, to angry, then on to a little defeated, and then encouraged. I pray that as you study this week, the Holy Spirit would stir up whatever needs to be stirred up in your own heart. And I pray that we would all study with "the intent" to obey!

#### **First Day**

1. Read Psalm 101:1-8. What are the facts? Are there any repeated words, phrases, or thoughts?
2. How would you title this Psalm? What would you say is the main theme?
3. How many times does David say "I will"? How many times does he say "shall"?
4. List the positives things David says; then write the negatives.

Psalms 101 declares David's intentions, as a king, to run his kingdom according to certain standards. It is his "royal resolve" to be the kind of king God wants him to be. Sadly, we know that David didn't always live up to his own standards, but we'll discuss that later. For now, let's look at what was happening at the time David penned these words.

Verse 2 holds a clue for us about what is happening at this time. When he says, **"When will you come to me?"** most scholars believe that he is referring to the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant was a small box or portable chest that contained the Ten Commandments (Deut. 10:4-5), Aaron's rod (Numbers 17:10), and a pot of manna (Exodus 16:33-34). It was the most sacred object in the tabernacle and the temple. It was a symbol of God's law and a memorial of God's provision. It was a symbol of God's holiness and His presence and covenant with Israel. It was set up in Shiloh and eventually moved to the House of God. Often the ark was brought to war because they believed it would protect them in battle. At one time the Philistines captured the ark but wanted to give it back because God sent them a series of plagues. Here is a brief sketch of the movement of the ark.

- A. Shiloh was the resting place of the ark until it was carried into battle. (1 Sam. 4:4)
- B. The ark was captured by the Philistines. (1 Sam. 4:1-11)
- C. The ark was placed in the Temple of Dagon until the idol collapsed. (1 Sam. 5:2-7)
- D. The men of the city were plagued with strange diseases while the ark was in their territory. (1 Sam. 5:8-9)
- E. Ekron was a brief lodging place for the ark until it was removed. (1 Sam. 5:10-11)
- F. After the Philistines returned the ark, it sat in a field near Beth Shemesh. (1 Sam. 6:13-18)
- G. The ark was taken to Kirjath Jearim and stayed there many years. (1 Sam. 7:1-2)
- H. The ark was moved to Jerusalem during David's reign. (2 Sam 6:1-11.)

The Levitical law gave very specific instructions on how to move this sacred box when they traveled. There was a time that David attempted to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem, but it didn't go as planned.

5. Read 2 Samuel 6:1-15. **Briefly explain the story.** Why did Uzzah die? What did he do wrong? What was David's reaction? (Read 1 Chronicles 13:1-14 for more details.)
  
6. When David finally did it right, how did he and the people of Israel react? (2 Sam. 6:13-15).

Psalm 101, along with Psalms 15 and 24, are believed to have been written to celebrate the bringing up of the ark to Jerusalem. David really wanted the ark of God to reside in Jerusalem, and this psalm was his resolve to run the kingdom in a way that would please the Lord, if and when He allowed that to happen. Uzzah's death was a reminder of God's perfect holiness and how seriously He viewed sin. David declares that David's court of rulers would uphold that standard of holiness.

7. Now that you know what was happening behind the scenes, reread this psalm. Do you have any additional thoughts or comments to share?

Let's wrap it up for today. May this week's lesson be a reminder to us that God has a standard that He desires us to adhere to. And may the Holy Spirit move in our hearts, causing us to have the desire to rise to that standard.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "I will behave wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." Psalm 101:2

### Second Day

**Review and meditate on your memory verse today.**

1. Read Psalm 101:1-8 again. What does he praise God for? Why are justice and mercy both important to David as a king, ruling a kingdom?

Mercy and justice are an important team. James Montgomery Boice said, "We need both if we are to manage other people well, whether in government, business, the church, the home, or whatever. Mercy and justice operate as checks on one another. Justice checks love that might otherwise be wrongly indulgent and therefore harmful. Love checks judgment that might otherwise be unduly harsh and therefore also harmful. David wanted his rule to be marked by both of these."

2. Would you say "justice and mercy" are two words that would describe how you typically live your life? How do you handle conflicts in the areas in which you lead? Do you allow both words to operate as checks to each other? (Read David's words in Psalm 103:10-11.)
  
3. David moves on to describe the moral character he desires for his life. What resolve does he make in verse 2?

David knows that godliness begins in the home, so he invites God in for an inspection. The word "perfect" means "blameless" or "without blemish."

4. What do you think it practically means to "walk wisely with a blameless heart"?
  
5. If God were to inspect your heart and "home", what would He find? Would there be things you would want to hide or throw away before He came in? Would the conversations He hears be honorable? Would He be pleased with what you do with your time and talents? Are you walking within your house with a perfect heart?

David is talking about living a life characterized by integrity, honesty, and godliness. Character matters. It mattered to David because it mattered to the Lord. Our character matters as well.

David makes a commitment when he says, **"I will."** He's making a choice to live honorably. He's resolving to be an upright man, as well as a king. Just as the Israelites were required to bring an animal without blemish before the priests to sacrifice, David wanted to be like that perfect, unblemished sacrifice to the Lord.

6. Read verses 3-4. What other **"I will"** statement does David make?

The word "wicked" means worthless or "thing of Belial." David wants to separate himself from unholy and worthless things. Idolatry was a problem at the time, and perhaps David was including that in his resolve.

7. Are you setting anything wicked, worthless, or unholy before your eyes? What about the eyes of your children or friends? How do entertainment, books, TV, etc. fit into this?

David hated evil and the work of the wicked. He says it "shall not cling to me." He would not take part in or tolerate unholy things. If something fastened itself on to him, he would shake it off quickly before it could cling to him.

8. Are you "tolerating" anything that you shouldn't? Is God calling you to make a resolve and "shake off" anything that is trying to cling, or attach itself, to you?

9. Explain what "integrity" means. What's the definition? Describe a life with integrity. (David, Daniel, Job, and Paul are examples of men with integrity; Psalm 7:8, Daniel 6:1-5, Job 2:3, 9-10, 2 Corinthians 4:2) Do you think you are a woman of integrity? Are there any areas in which you can improve? (Are you honest, trustworthy, faithful, etc.?)

I pray that you invited the Holy Spirit to search your heart as you reflected on these questions. It's a hard thing to look at ourselves honestly. May we, like David, desire to walk within our house with a perfect heart.

### Third Day

**Work on memorizing, and obeying, your verse for the week.**

David praises God for justice and mercy, then declares his own personal commitment to live within his royal palace as well as he can. He will attempt to conduct himself blamelessly in his personal life. He now resolves to be blameless in his public life as well.

1. Read Psalm 101:1-8, focusing on verses 5-6. Who does he "not" want in his house, or court?
  
2. What does "slander" mean? Read the following verses and note what God's Word says about slander.
  - A. Proverbs 10:18-21
  - B. Psalm 52:2
  - C. Proverbs 16:27-29
  - D. Titus 2:3, 3:2
  - E. Ephesians 4:29-32
  
3. Have you ever been "slandered"? (Maybe you are right now.) Jesus certainly was more than slandered! (Matthew 27:39) What are we called to do, as believers? What did Jesus do? Read 1 Peter 2:21-23, Matthew 5:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 4:12
  
4. I have to ask ... are you slandering anyone? (Husbands, friends, neighbors, Church?) Maybe you didn't even realize it until now. Ask the Lord to search your heart for any such thing and confess it, repent, and receive forgiveness. 1 John 1:9

David vows to forsake the godless and have no part in their wicked works. He will take no part in their wicked words and won't tolerate liars and slanderers.

5. In verse 5, David also wants no part of those with a "haughty look and proud heart." What do you think that means? Read Proverbs 6:17-19.

God hates pride, which is also translated as arrogance. Arrogance can cause a person to think that they can do everything themselves, know everything, and are the best at everything. John Phillips describes arrogance as "supposing that we are able to handle everything in life by ourselves without either the help of God or other people, that we are entirely self-sufficient. People today think highly of this characteristic, but it is a terrible vice. It was the sin of satan, who thought he could take over the rule of the universe." Martin Luther said, "Everything is a vain sham and deception if God is not in it."

6. Is there even a hint of arrogance in your life? Are you a bit too self-sufficient in any area?
7. In verse 6, who does David want to surround himself with? Why was this important to him personally, as well as in the court of his kingdom?
8. Why is it important to surround yourself with people of integrity? (Proverbs 1:9-11 and 1 Corinthians 15:33) What kind of people have you surrounded yourself with? Are they encouraging you in your faith and challenging you to grow, or are they weighing you down and drawing you into their sinful habits and lifestyles?

9. Does this mean that you can't be friends with non-believers? How do we win them to Christ if we're not around them? What's the balance between evangelism of non-believers and having those who are like-minded as our closest friends?
  
10. David wants his kingdom to glorify the Lord. Let's look at our home as our "kingdom." Are you doing all you can to surround it with honor and integrity? What safeguards or hedges can you set up around it so the enemy won't be able to penetrate the walls of your home?

See you tomorrow, ladies. And may you "watch over the ways of your households." (Proverbs 31:27)

#### **Fourth Day**

**What's your memory verse?**

1. Read Psalm 101:1-8. What vow does David make to the Lord in verse 8?

The word "early" in verse 8 literally means "morning by morning." Day by day, morning by morning, David would hold court and see that justice was done. He would keep the land pure and purged from the wicked, because Jerusalem was to be the city of God. He understood that not only was he accountable to God in his private life, but in his public life as well. Everyone in leadership would do well to take heed to this chapter in Scripture.

Most of David's life, he kept his resolves. But sadly, at one point he failed. Godliness begins in the home, yet within his home was David's worst "betrayal." The last years of his reign were marked with personal sin and conflict within his own family.



No human, however great they are, will ever be perfect. (That's why we needed Jesus!) As I read this Psalm, I was saddened at how far David had strayed from his vows to the Lord. But the Lord very quickly reminded me how many vows I myself have broken, how many promises to Him I have failed to keep.

2. Read about David's fall in 2 Samuel 11:1-27. Explain David's progression of sin.
  
3. What vows did he break from Psalm 101?
  
4. Now read 2 Samuel 12:1-15. Who did God use in David's life to show him his sin? How did David respond? Was he repentant? Angry?
  
5. Has God ever used a "Nathan" in your life to bring your sin to your attention? How did you respond?
  
6. Has God ever asked you to be a "Nathan" to someone? Did you do it in love and humility? How was it received?
  
7. Read Psalm 51:1-19. David wrote this Psalm after he was confronted by Nathan. Pick out some words that reflect the attitude of David's heart.
  
8. Read Acts 13:22 and 1 Samuel 13:13-14. What affectionate title is David given? What is he willing to do? After what he did, why do you think he could still bear that title?

9. How does that encourage you? If you have a "past" and think that God can't forgive you or use you, how does the story of David prove you wrong?
  
10. Does a woman "after God's own heart" mean that she is sinless? Write a character sketch that you think describes a woman "after His heart."
  
11. Do you fit that character sketch? Are you a woman after God's own heart? Are you willing to do His will, whatever the cost? Is following His will your passion and desire?

I pray that the example of David's obedience, as well as his repentance when confronted with sin, is an example to you. May we always desire to be that woman that would please the heart of God.

### Fifth Day

**Write out your memory verse.**

Although it's very sad that David failed at times, there is hope for us. Because he was quick to repent and get back on the right track, he can still be called a "man after God's heart." It encourages me, because I fail miserably, and often; yet if I confess my sins and ask Him to forgive me, He makes me white as snow (1 John 1:9, Isaiah 1:18). But the best news of all is that there is one who does not, and will never, fail. His name is Jesus Christ, and He will reign perfectly -- and forever (Revelation 11:15)! David had lofty resolutions about how he would live and reign, but Jesus will make them a reality and fulfill every one.

Being a woman or man after God's heart is a beautiful compliment that should characterize every person who wears the name of "Christian." Let's look at some things that characterized the life of David. We notice that the same things characterized the life of Christ as He walked on earth. And if we want to be "after His heart", they should be seen in our lives as well.

### David

**Loved the Word:** Psalm 119:97

**Loved to pray:** Psalm 116:1-2

**Loved to praise God:** Psalm 119:164

**Loved unity among the brethren:** Psalm 133:1

**Hated every false way:** Psalm 119:104

### Jesus

**Loved the Word:** Matthew 4:4, 7, 10

**Loved to pray:** Luke 5:16, Matthew 26:36-44

**Loved to praise God:** Matthew 11:25-26; 26:30

**Loved unity among the brethren:** John 17:20-23, Ephesians 2:13-22

**Hated every false way:** Matthew 23:13-36; 21:12-13

### You and Me

1. How much do you love the Word of God? Do you study it on a regular basis, morning by morning? Do you, like David, delight in its precepts?
  
2. Do you love to pray? Do you pray? Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and Philipians 4:6-7. How can you improve your prayer life?
  
3. Do you love to praise God? Do you often give Him praise and thanksgiving for who He is and what He's done in your life?

4. Do you love unity among the brethren? Are you willing to make sacrifices, put differences of opinion aside, and let go of grudges, to keep the unity among the brethren?
5. Do you hate every false way? Are you unwilling to tolerate sin and refuse to compromise on the things of the Lord? Do you do whatever it takes to keep sin from "clinging" to you?
6. Let's ask ourselves again, are we women "after God's own heart"? Are these traits a pattern in our life?
7. Read Psalm 101:1-8 again. What ministered to you the most from this Psalm?
8. What challenged you the most?
9. Are there any changes that you plan to make in your life as a result of studying this Psalm?
10. Write a prayer of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord for who He is and what He's done in your life.