

# AMITY BIBLE CHURCH

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*"To Know God and To Make Him Known"*

## SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY NOTES

— July 29, 2018 —

*Pastor Leslie Smith*

**SERIES: Praise Your Way Through**  
**SERMON: Praise Your Way Through**  
**TEXT: Psalm 34:1-10**

### Introduction:

To be human is to struggle and to struggle means that we are human. The disconcerting truth is that none of us are exempt. We will all endure suffering at some point in our lives. But, as believers, we can find joy and solace knowing that when we share our testimony with other believers, our burdens feel lighter. When we share how God kept us in the midst of our challenges and brought us out by His mighty hand, our praise becomes encouragement to other believers and they are able to praise their way through their circumstances.

Have you ever thought about where you would be if you woke up one morning and all you had was what you praised God for the day before? We tend to forget God when things are going well for us but we can always find time to pray when the going becomes difficult. If you only call upon God when you are distressed, you will quickly learn that God does not always respond to our struggles, but He always responds when we pray and when we praise. Our lives will become less stressful if we can learn to praise God in the hallway while we wait for God to open the next door.

### Central Message:

Psalm 34 is David's testimony of a time when he ran from Saul to save his life, took refuge in the land of the Philistines, and ended up having to play crazy because of

his fear of King Achish, the king of Gath (1 Samuel 21:10-12).

After God has delivered us from a difficult and problematic situation, the least we can do give Him the praise that is due Him. There is an added blessing when we can also share what God has done for us in the congregation. When we give our testimony in the presence of other saints, the saints are reminded of what God has done in their lives. When that happens, a single praise turns into a concert of praise. That is exactly what happened with David in Psalm 34. There are five observations that I will make from the text that I hope will be an encouragement to you to praise your way through any circumstance.

**Observation #1: David was able to praise his way through his situation because his praise was intentional, and if we want to be able to praise our way through, our praise also needs to be *intentional* (34:1-3)**

In the church today, we often speak of praise and worship as if they are the same thing. In fact, they are not and the distinction is important. Anybody can praise but only those who know God personally can worship. They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Worship is an attitude of the heart and is an acknowledgement of who God is. We cannot know who God is unless He reveals Himself to our hearts. Jesus said that the essence of eternal life is “knowing” the one true God and Jesus Christ who was sent by Him.

Praise, on the other hand, is an act of the will. Praise is a decision. Praise is a declaration of our intent to speak well of God.

David declared, “I will bless the Lord”. In other words, his intent was to speak well of God because of what God had already done. This is a great lesson for us. If we intentionally praise God for what He has done, we bless ourselves because it is

difficult to complain at the same time you are praising.

**Observation #2: David was able to praise his way through his situation because not only was his praise intentional, it was also *continuous*. (34:1-3)**

David said, “I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.” David also made clear that his praise was authentic praise when he added that his soul would make its boast in the Lord.

God called David “a man after His own heart”. This is a remarkable statement when we consider that God knew that David was not only an adulterer but he was also a murderer. But God does not look on the outside. He looks on the inside, and when He looked at David’s heart, He saw a man who was completely devoted to Him, even with his many flaws. God does not ask us to be perfect; He asks us to be committed.

**Observation #3: David was able to praise his way through his situation because not only was his praise intentional and continuous, it was also *contagious*. (34:1-3)**

David, in declaring his praise to God, said that his praise would be unending. But, he did not praise God in a vacuum. He praised Him in the midst of the congregation of the saints, and he did this deliberately because he knew that others would hear his praise and give God praise themselves. He even invited the congregation to give praise with him. His individual praise became a concert of praise.

**Observation #4: David was able to praise his way through his situation because not only was his praise intentional, continuous, and contagious, it was also *intense*. (34:4-7)**

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We sometimes wonder why God allows us to struggle, and if we really want the answer, it is right there in Scripture. James tells us, *“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”* (James 1:2-4)

Struggles can have a therapeutic effect when we cooperate with God during the test. When we suffer, God is testing us to bring out the best in us. When we have endured the trials, God will have purified our character and our motives. The challenge for us is to continue to praise God while we are enduring the trials... to praise Him in the midst of the pain and not just when we have been delivered. That is why David's praise was intense...because God had already brought him through a test.

In 2 Samuel 12, Nathan the prophet confronts David over his adultery with Bathsheba and the untimely death of her husband. Nathan tells David that the child that had been born to his union with Bathsheba was going to die. David fasted and prayed during the entire time that the child was ill. He refused to eat...he refused to wash himself...he lay prostrate before the Lord interceding for the child. When David received word that the child had died, in the midst of his grief and in the midst of his pain, he got up, he washed himself, and he went into the presence of God to worship. That is intense praise because it is the fruit of intense pain. David was able to praise his way through because he trusted in the goodness of God. We know that because of the next statement that he declared in Psalm 34.

**Observation #5: David was able to praise his way through his situation because not only was his praise intentional, intentional, continuous, and contagious, and intense, but it was also an *inspiration*. (34:8-10)**

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“O taste and see that the LORD is good;  
How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!  
<sup>9</sup> O fear the LORD, you His saints;  
For to those who fear Him there is no want.  
<sup>10</sup> The young lions do lack and suffer hunger;  
But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing.”

David used a sensual and powerful metaphor to refer to his conviction that the Lord is indeed good. Despite his fears and despite his struggles, God had delivered him from them all. When we experience God’s goodness, it makes us desire more of his presence and desire that experience for others.

It has been said that the world has not forsaken God because they found Him to be unsavory, but because they were already satiated with other things. I compare it to having a good meal. My favorite part of the meal is dessert. I cannot wait until the tray of goodies is passed around when the meal is finished. But there is a problem. I am prone to gorging myself on bread and salad and other things as I enjoy the fellowship with family and friends. When the dessert comes...when my favorite part of the meal comes, I am already full. I fear that believers today are so blessed with the things of the world that there is little room for praising God. We are already full. As you go through this next week, I encourage you to take inventory of that which you are consuming every day. If you are unable to “taste and see that the Lord is good”, you may need to go on a “spiritual diet”.