

1. LifeLines on 5/22 will be Ephesians 4:27.

2. We'll meet the month of June, break for July & August, & resume September 11, after Labor Day.

## LifeLines May 15, 2023

Today's Scripture: 1 Verse

### Psalm 34:1

**I will bless the Lord at all times;  
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.**

### WHY WE'RE HERE

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All scripture is inspired by God & is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, & for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

### CONTEXT

Most Bibles begin Psalm 34 by explaining that David wrote this psalm of thanksgiving after a dangerous encounter with Abimelech (the Philistine king). David had fled his own country because of king Saul's rage & went to the land of the Philistines. When he was recognized, David pretended to be crazy so Abimelech wouldn't suspect him of being a spy. The plan worked, & thinking David was mad, Abimelech drove David off, allowing him to escape. David recognized he had been in great danger & was grateful to God for delivering him from harm once more. His escape from such a dangerous situation probably motivated him to write this psalm. David was determined to extol (praise enthusiastically) & magnify God.

In our LifeLine's study, we'll pay particular attention to the term *bless*. It differs a bit from other words we usually use to compliment, honor & show appreciation for our God. We also want to acknowledge the *subject* of the sentence. *Who is doing the blessing? We are! We are blessing God!* It's usually God who does all the blessing. He has blessed us, in Christ, throughout our lives "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:3, below). It's our turn to do the blessing!

## **DIFFERENT VERSIONS** (Versions not listed are similar to the NRSV.)

### **AMP, ESV, KJV**

Each says the exact same thing.

### **ASV** (American Standard Version)

Says, “Jehovah” instead of, “the Lord.”

### **CEB** (Contemporary English Bible)

I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise will always be on my lips.

### **CEV** (Contemporary English Version)

I will always praise the Lord.

### **GNT**

I will always thank the Lord; I will never stop praising Him.

### **GW**

I will thank the Lord at all times. My mouth will always praise Him.

### **MSG**

I bless God every chance I get; my lungs expand with His praise.

### **NIV**

I will extol (praise highly & enthusiastically) the Lord at all times; His praise will always be on my lips.

### **NLT** (New Living Translation)

I will praise the Lord at all times. I will constantly speak His praises.

### **NLV**

I will honor the Lord at all times. His praise will always be in my mouth.

### **TLB**

I will praise the Lord no matter what happens. I will constantly speak of His glories & grace.

### **SELAH**

## **BREAKING DOWN THE VERSE**

*I will bless the Lord...* To bless can be as simple as offering thanks, but in our context it means to consecrate as holy, give credit to or for divine favor, honor, praise & glory for every imaginable & generous spiritual act of mercy, prosperity...the list continues. In our verse blessing means *barak*, or to kneel down, adore with bended knee. David says he will kneel before the Lord, worship, adore, praise, obey & love his God. This kind of blessing & praise indicates humility & submission.

*at all times...* How is it *possible* to do this *at all times*? It means no matter what, under any circumstances, good or bad, because God is always good. Remember Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 5:17 to “*Pray without ceasing.*”

*His praise...* This is praise *of* God. He is the recipient of blessings for all that is due Him – perfection of His very nature, for life itself, for our own lives, for providence, grace, salvation, eternal life, & so much more.

*shall continually...* This kind of *continually* becomes an intrinsic (or internal) as well as external thing. When a desire to devote & commit ourselves fully to something becomes this important to us, it becomes part of *who we are*. We internalize its importance. It also reflects knowledge of our dependence. It’s an internal manifestation of gratitude, devotion, dependence & love. If we ever find ourselves *not* blessing & praising the Lord continually, we need to confess, repent & remember not only all *we* owe Him, but also how obedient *Jesus, our Savior*, was to His Father & what He did for us on the cross.

*be in my mouth...* David felt this profuse appreciation so deeply, he refused to keep it to himself. Beginning with verse 11, he compelled others to join with him. (Consider reading verses 11-22 for *extra credit!*)

## **SELAH**

**RELATED VERSES** (Add other related verses as you think of them.)

Deuteronomy 8:10, You shall eat your fill & bless the Lord your God for the good land that He has given you.

Nehemiah 9:5b, “Stand up & bless the Lord your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be Your glorious name, which is exalted (glorified/ elevated) above all blessing & praise.

Psalm 9:1-2 (of David), I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your wonderful deeds. I will be glad & exult (rejoice) in You, I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.

Psalm 22:3 (of David), Yet You are holy, enthroned on (inhabiting) the praises of (Your people) Israel.

Psalm 29:1-2 (of David), Ascribe to the Lord (credit the Lord), O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory & strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory of His name; worship the Lord in holy splendor.

Psalm 68:26 (of David), “Bless God in the great congregation, the Lord, O you who are of Israel’s fountain!”

Psalm 69:30 (of David), I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify Him with thanksgiving.

Psalm 86:8-10 (of David), There is none like You among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like Yours. All the nations You have made shall come & bow down before You, O Lord, & shall glorify Your name. For You are great & do wondrous things; You alone are God.

Psalm 86:12 (of David), I give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, & I will glorify Your name forever.

Psalm 100:4, Enter His gates with thanksgiving, & His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name.

Psalm 103:1-2 (of David), Bless the Lord, O my soul, & all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, & do not forget all His benefits. (In subsequent verses, David lists these as reasons to bless the Lord: He forgives, heals, redeems, crowns us, satisfies us, renews our youth, works vindication & justice, is merciful, slow to anger, abounding in love, will not always accuse, won’t keep His anger forever, removes our transgressions, & has compassion.)

Psalm 103:14 (of David), For He knows how we were made; He remembers that we are dust.

Psalm 103:21-22 (of David), Bless the Lord, all His hosts, His ministers that do His will. Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Psalm 104:1a (probably of David), Bless the Lord, O my soul, O Lord my God, You are very great.

Psalm 134:2, Lift up your hands to the holy place, & bless the Lord.

Psalm 135:19-20, O house of Israel, bless the Lord! O house of Aaron, bless the Lord! O house of Levi, bless the Lord! You that fear the Lord, bless the Lord!

Psalm 138:2 (of David), I bow down toward Your holy temple & give thanks to Your name for Your steadfast love & Your faithfulness; for You have exalted (glorified/elevated) Your name & Your Word above everything.

Psalm 145:21 (of David), My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, & all flesh will bless His holy name forever & ever.

Daniel 2:19-20, Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night & Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel said, “Blessed be the name of God from age to age, for wisdom & power are His.”

Matthew 5:16, In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works & give glory to your Father in heaven.

Matthew 6:9, “Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” (Hallowed: holy, sacred, consecrated, revered & honored.)

Luke 1:47, My soul magnifies the Lord, & my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

Luke 1:68, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has looked favorably on His people & redeemed them.

John 4:23, But the hour is coming, & is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit & truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship Him.

John 12:13b, “Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord – the King of Israel!”

Ephesians 1:3, Blessed be the God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

Ephesians 5:20, Giving thanks to God the Father at all times & for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 4:4, Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Hebrews 12:28-29, Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence & awe; for indeed our God is a consuming fire.

1 Peter 1:3, Blessed be the God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Revelation 4:11, “You are worthy, our Lord & God, to receive glory & honor & power, for You created all things, & by Your will they existed & were created.”

Revelation 5:12, Singing with full voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power & wealth & wisdom & might & honor & glory & blessing!”

Revelation 5:13b, “To the One seated on the throne & to the Lamb be blessing & honor & glory & might forever & ever!”

## SUMMARY

Most of us desire to be a blessing to others. We do special things for others because we want to bless them, show appreciation, show them we're thinking of them, care about them, even eager to go out of our way to do a kindness for them. We look for ways to bless other people, but do we ask ourselves how we can bless God? How *can* we bless God?

Think of this. God is goodness & love, always, constantly. Malachi 3:6a says, "For I the Lord do not change," & Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday & today & forever." He is always good, loving & all-powerful; consistent even when the world around us changes. Even in dire circumstances (when we take the time to notice), we see His hand of grace & mercy. He comforts us & helps us withstand every adversity. He gave His life for us! He gave His Spirit to live in us! He deserves to be blessed *by us!*

An effective prayer life is essential for a relationship with our God. It is the essence & intimate nature of our communication with our Creator. Most of us include praise & thanksgiving in our prayers along with our petitions. That's good, but something's lacking if that's all we do. It may seem like a fine line, but in addition to thanks & praise, we are to *Bless God!*

God created all things in a predetermined order, saving His creation of mankind for the very last. He set the universe in order & thought of absolutely everything. He provided an atmosphere in which we could live & thrive; established the seasons; set a rhythm for the days; provided water, sea life, plants & animals for our sustenance & pleasure. He gave us bodies that have certain self-healing properties & operate with very little effort on our part. Yes, He thought of everything, & behind it was His great love for us.

As a good Father, He wanted His Creation to be perfect before He introduced it to His family. From the beginning, He created us for His pleasure, fellowship, & relationship with Him, & He *longs* for each of His children to respond by *longing for* a beautifully fulfilling relationship with Him. He went to so much effort & trouble to prepare something so truly special for us that our immediate response should be, "*Bless You!*"

God deserves this response from us for *all* He's done. As the Creator of all that is, He is worthy of our devotion & praise, to be exalted & exulted. When we thank Him & praise Him, let us also *Bless Him!*

## CONCLUSION

David, loved by God, was still a flawed individual. Like us, he sometimes fell short, forgot God & pursued his own interests, but the pattern of his prayer life was to continue remembering & turning back to God. David blessed God by worshiping Him. He was confident that the Lord protects & delivers *all* who fear/revere Him. He was surely a man after God's own heart. We can be men & women after God's own heart, too.

Our relationship with God should be a priority. Blessing Him gives us great purpose. It has the power to change us & others by *letting our light shine*. Blessing our Maker & Creator *fulfills our existence!*

God is a prayer away, a breath away. Today believers have the new covenant & direct access to the Father through the Son, by way of the Holy Spirit. 1 Timothy 2:5 says, "For there is one God; there is also one Mediator between God & humankind, Christ Jesus, Himself human." We bless God through sincere worship, praise & thanksgiving, and we bless God through the relationship we have with Jesus Christ, His Son. We bless Him through our thoughts, words, & actions; through prayer & meditation; by being still in His Presence; when we proclaim His glory in the presence of others; when we exhibit Christ-like behavior; when we stand up for the weak & oppressed; when we offer mercy to others; & when we declare our trust in Him. The more time we spend in His Presence the more we'll discover the benefits of blessing Him *at all times & continually* praising His holy name.

When we bless God & His holy name, the focus of our attention is totally removed from our personal predicaments & cares. This gives our life balance & enhances the fellowship we were created to enjoy with the Creator of the universe. Our self-centered attitudes fall away when He becomes our focus. He deserves to be the center of our life. He intends for us to look to Him & *His* power at work in us, knowing He is our Source & everything we need. His grace is sufficient.

Everything starts & ends with God. We look to Him & to "Jesus the pioneer & perfecter of our faith" (Hebrew 12:2). Life in Christ is *our* ultimate blessing & the ultimate blessing we *offer* to God. God is blessed when His people remember they were made by Him & are nothing without Him. He is more than a friend & helper. God Almighty is King & Sovereign Lord of all.



**When is the last time you...**

- **told God you love Him?**
- **told God how good He is?**
- **gave Him a kiss?**
- ***blessed Him?***

**Why not do so *today?***

Let this verse be a *LifeLine* for you!

Let's Continue Learning!

**SCRIPTURE IS OUR –**

***LifeLine!***