

## Talks – Psalm 101 – myfishbites.com

### Psalm 101

I will sing of your love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will sing praise.  
I will be careful to lead a blameless life— when will you come to me?  
I will walk in my house with blameless heart.  
I will set before my eyes no vile thing.  
The deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to me.  
Men of perverse heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with evil.  
Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret, him will I put to silence;  
whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, him will I not endure.  
My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me;  
he whose walk is blameless will minister to me.  
No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house;  
no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence.  
Every morning I will put to silence all the wicked in the land;  
I will cut off every evildoer from the city of the LORD.

### PDF Worksheet / PowerPoint

[This session comes with a worksheet...](#) (2 A5 sheets on an A4 sheet), containing Psalm 101 and 5 questions challenging us about our Christian life.

[There is also a PowerPoint file, downloadable as a zip file...](#) (double click to 'extract' the file once downloaded)

### Intro – Character above gifting

Make a decision today who you will follow. Will you follow God today? A true story is told of a young Christian in a village in an Eastern country. He was a new Christian when a new group arrived in the country, with a new communist ideology. One day, the young Christian went to them and told them that he wanted to believe in what they believed in. They replied asking, 'aren't you a Christian?' He replied, 'Oh yes, but now I've decided I want to follow your ideology.' The communists replied, 'if you can't stick to your Christian ideology, then you won't stick to ours and we don't want you' and shot him in the head.

Psalm 101 keeps on saying, "I will..." It's about a personal choice that you have to make daily. Will you follow Jesus..?

### Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts are important, really important. But more important still is your character. God won't ever 'promote' you beyond your ability to handle things in a Godly way. 1 Corinthians 13.1-3 is quite telling..

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all

mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.”

We can have all kinds of spiritual gifts and characteristics but if we do not show and have a deep love for people, we miss out and miss the point. The Bible says without love we gain nothing. So be challenged about who you are and who you want to be.

## Points

Our focus is first and foremost on God – verse 1. Our life is one of praise, of singing to God, of love and of justice. Job was a man perfect in these areas and God wants us to do the same. Who are you singing to? You? Others? Or God? We are singing, living lives to God. If you feel a deep dis-satisfaction inside you, it's time to re-focus to God.

Jesus says, 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'

People through the ages have called this 'dying to self'. This simply means that Jesus must be put first in all that happens in your life, even when the price you have to pay is not doing the things you want to do. I can't say what that cost will be for you, that will be between you and Jesus. But there will be a cost. Many times we think following Jesus is a bit of a doddle, some people even slag off Christians for using their faith as some kind of crutch to lean on. But Jesus is very up front and warns there will be a cost (see also Luke 14). But this cost will be well worth paying.

Think about the 2 parables in Matthew 13.44-46 where men sell all they have to buy something incredibly valuable. This is what the Kingdom of God is like, so valuable that it is worth a whole life to get it. Jesus carries on, 'For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.' So here Jesus appears to be saying that the way to live a life is to lose it for him. Is this a line for religious martyrdom in order to 'get in' to the Kingdom of heaven, like the Islamic extremist terrorists do (for selfish gain). No way. This is about a life dedicated so fully to God that life itself is completely sold out to Jesus, for him to use you to see his Kingdom come. For some, this may mean death and being killed (although we don't go round trying to get killed).

Instead, we live lives of sacrificial love and obedience to Jesus. One question that's always vexed and stressed me has been, 'does this mean we have to give up doing what we're gifted by God to do.' The answer is no. God said let your light shine, he says in Psalms that if you put him first he'll give the desires of your heart (as your heart aligns with his desires for your life). God has given you gifts, skills and passions unique to you. What he's saying is 'will you lay these things down to me, for me.' Some things may go, but much more will take its place. You see, it can be hard, lonely and tough being a Christian (we all know that). But a life given over to God is a great life.

## We need God's help – verse 2

When will you come to me? Our position is that we need Jesus. The more I go on, the more I realize how broken I am and how I need Jesus in every area.

The Bible talks about seeing ourselves as we truly are, about when the imperfect goes the perfect comes. If we look at ourselves in the light of Jesus, his Bible and God's standards, we realize how much we need God. I watch other musicians and see how much better, so I look to learn. Look to God.

## **We have to avoid looking at wickedness – verse 3**

At one time I thought that I had found my identity in football hooliganism. But it's wicked, evil and I had to steer away from it. Fortunately God moved in my life and changed me. What are you into, what do you watch, read, listen to? Whatever you drink in to yourself, will come out. If you watch bad TV and violence, then it will come out. If you read the Bible, Godly stuff like Christian CDs and books – then Jesus and his life will pour out of you..

I was sat outside, chilling with a lemonade with a few friends recently (yep, it's a wild life I lead..). The conversation was funny, but at times it wasn't the kind of talk I wanted to hear. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 27:19 that, *"As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man."* We know that whatever is in our heart will come out of our mouths. So when we speak words and think thoughts that don't honour God, it is our heart and our minds that we need to check. We wouldn't feed a baby the wrong food, or poisonous food. Yet so often, we feed our hearts and minds with trash from movies, TV, other people or music. But we must challenge ourselves.

What kinds of things does the Bible tell us to think about? After making sure we set our eyes on Jesus and seeking his Kingdom first, Philippians 4.8 tells us:

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." In addition, we need to think about the lost, the lonely, the orphans, the widows, the downtrodden and disheartened, the needy, the poor. In a world where time is short and God urges us to make the most of every opportunity, we need to make sure we fill our minds with Christ and follow him obediently, not get ourselves messed up with the world's values.

## **Look away from evil people – verse 4**

Many young people look up to drug dealers. They seem to have money, sweet cars, nice things and are tough and seem to be respected. But people preying on others and robbing them are evil – no other word for it. There are many evil people around. We should not aspire to be like them. One day they will reap the consequences of their actions. As a Christian, you will one day be rewarded for the good you have done. Be aware that there are evil people in our nations, people whose hearts are only looking to do evil things.

As a Christian it's like you are from an alien planet, visiting the earth. You have a different culture, a different way of thinking and speaking, different priorities. That is why the world hates Christians. It's because Christians (through God's Holy Spirit) challenge the evil in this world, and people don't like it – whether they realise it or not. Your thing is to stand for God, obey him and let his life pour out of you to others.

## **Look away from slander and every deceit and lies – verses 5 & 7**

What is slander? It is disrespecting others in and out of church. How can blessing and curses come out of the same place says James? Speak life, choose life.

If we think about metal, we think about how it is purified. It often has to be heated up, be put into the fire, into the water, it has to be hammered and re-shaped. We are like this. The Bible talks about God being the potter and about us being like clay. What does this mean? It means we allow God to shape us – to knock all the rubbish out of our life and become something pure and amazing.

When Michaelangelo was painting the roof of the Cistine Chapel in Rome, he made sure it was perfect in every way. Other people came in and looked at it, thinking it was amazing. But Michaelangelo saw the imperfections and where things needed improving – and did the improvements. God sees our character on the inside, knows the areas we need changing and helping – and loves it when we obey him and let him work in our lives to be more effective for him (and be more satisfied)!

## **Turn away from pride – verse 5**

In Proverbs 6.16-17:, God says above everything he hates is pride...

There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood..In sermon on mount, Jesus blesses poor in spirit. We should know that we are human and only enabled by a great God. This life is not about you. It is about Jesus and his Kingdom. We are part of his army, following him.

## **Must keep our eyes on the ‘faithful in the land’**

This means faithful to God and his Word. Dwell with you – who are your friends? He whose walk is blameless will minister to me. Who do you listen to?

Big Brother has become a massive game show. We watch on as people’s lives are exposed on TV. In a way it’s like a voluntary Truman Show. We also have X-Factor where people’s hopes and dreams are made or broken. But there is a God in heaven that watches us, angels recording.

When I went to Derby with my church leader, he asked me whether I was the kind of person who was prepared to step up and be counted. I was so aware of angels watching on keenly, almost with pens and pads at the ready – to record what I said. I said yes and have never looked back since. That was a really defining moment in my Christian life and it’s a decision we’re all confronted with..

I do reviews for Cross Rhythms and listen to Christian music mainly.. Why? Because whatever goes in comes out – like a drink..!

## **There is a duty that lies within us**

In verse 8, it says every morning I will put to silence all the wicked in the land, cut off every evildoer in the land. Many times, the Psalm says, "I will..." The responsibility is often ours, not just God's. We can take action and make a decision.

## **Worship songs to play**

Play some worship songs and get people to sit there and reflect for a couple of minutes – if you want a theme, use songs about giving all you have to God.