

SOUNDTRACK: Encountering Jesus in the Songs of Scripture

Week 11: Psalm 34

Introduction: A question that I often ask those who come to me for counsel is, “Do you want God’s blessing in your life?” On the surface, it sounds like a no-brainer. “Duh! Of course I want God’s blessing in my life! Do you think I’m stupid, or what?” But answering yes to that question commits you to an often-difficult way of life. God does not bless those that ignore His commandments and live to please themselves. He blesses those that fear Him and walk in His ways, turning from their sins. Now, do you really want God’s blessing in your life?

David did. In spite of his many failures and sometimes flagrant sins, he kept coming back to the Lord, repenting of his sins, and seeking God as his chief joy and treasure. David wasn’t just, as so many do, trying to milk God for His blessings, but continuing to live for his own selfish ends. Rather, David saw God Himself as the supreme blessing.

Sometime after David recovered from an array of difficult trials caused by his own panic and deception, he penned Psalm 34. He realized that deception and trickery are not the way to the good life. Rather, living fully engaged in relationship with God is the way to full life Jesus promised (John 10:10).

The Big Picture: Living in right relationship with God is living the good life!

Discussion:

Share:

- What does the good life look like to you?

Discuss:

Sermon Review:

- Re-read Psalm 34.
- Review the sermon from this week. Write down any questions or thoughts that stand out to you as you review the sermon together. Discuss them as a group.
Link: <https://www.cornerstonecrystal.org/messages/>
- David wrote this Psalm after living a quite opposite example. See 1 Samuel chapters 19 thru 27 for more on David’s exploits.

Describe a time when you learned a better way to do life in spite of a worse way you might have been living.

How did the bad experience point you to the better way?

How do you experience God's grace when you remember this time?

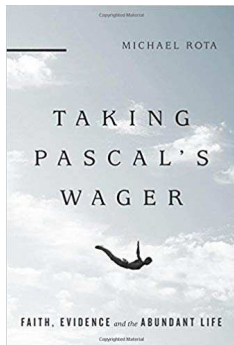
- Pastor Jeremy discussed three ways that we enter into and experience relationship with God:
 - Taste and See
 - Fear the Lord
 - Refuge in God

Based on what you heard in the teaching, which of those three aspects of relationship with God do you find the most relatable to your life? What do you think this?

Which seem furthest from the way you relate with God?

Based on what you have experienced through Psalm 34, how do you sense God inviting you to relate with Him?

Further Exploration on this Topic:



Taking Pascal's Wager: Faith, Evidence and the Abundant Life by Michael Rota

From the Publisher: Since we can't know with absolute certainty that God exists, each of us in a sense makes a bet. If we believe in God and are right, the benefits include eternal life. If we are wrong, the downside is limited. On the other hand, we might not believe in God. If we are right, then we will have lived in line with reality. If we are wrong, however, the consequences could be eternally disastrous.

This was the challenge posed by the French philosopher Blaise Pascal over three hundred years ago. But Michael Rota contends that Pascal's argument is still compelling today. Since there is much to gain (for ourselves as well as for others) and relatively little to lose, the wise decision is to seek a relationship with God and live a Christian life. Rota considers Pascal's wager and the roles of uncertainty, evidence, and faith in making a commitment to God. By engaging with themes such as decision theory, the fine-tuning of the universe, divine hiddenness, the problem of evil, the historicity of the resurrection and the nature of miracles, he probes the many dynamics at work in embracing the Christian faith.

In addition, Rota takes a turn not found in many books of philosophy. He looks at the actual effects of such a commitment in three recent, vivid, gripping examples—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Jean Vanier and Immaculée Ilibagiza. Like Pascal, Rota leaves us with a question: What wager will we make?

NOTE: Christianity Today's 2017 Book of the Year Award of Merit - Apologetics/Evangelism;
WORLD Magazine's Best Books of 2016 Short List

Link: <https://www.amazon.com/Taking-Pascals-Wager-Evidence-Abundant/dp/0830851364>