

THE DECISION IS YOURS #2

“The Decision to Praise”

Let me state the message right up front...

Your decision to praise the Lord will bring you many blessings and break many curses.

Review

The quality of your life is in direct proportion to the quality of your *decisions*.

Your choices determine your present condition as well as your eternal destiny.

Your decisions determine your destiny.

I remember walking through a large boarding tunnel for an international flight and coming to a point where turning left would take me to a plane heading for Tokyo (where I was going); but 2 steps to the right at the junction would put me on a plane going to London. I remember thinking how...

Small decisions can have big consequences!

One small turn in an airport determines where I end up!
(in this photo: Dubai or Shanghai?)

One small choice that can make a huge difference in your life is the decision to praise the Lord; to become a Praiser not a complainer. We found this expressed in 2 decisions of David in Psalm 103.

I. The 2 Decisions of David

A. The 1st Decision

Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
Psalm 103:1

1. David is literally talking to himself! As we learned last time, his spirit is speaking to his soul.

2. Man is a trichotomy; we consist of 3 parts:

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

- a. God is a Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit; one God in 3 Persons.
- b. God made man in His own image and likeness; we are not 3 persons, but we have 3 parts: spirit, soul, and body.

The Trichotomy of Man

- Our body is our outer wrapping-it connects us with the physical world
- Our soul is made up of the mind, the will, and the emotions
- But our born-again spirit is God-conscious; the heart of us.

3. David's *spirit* was aware of God and that He is worthy of praise; in his heart, he wanted to praise God; but the problem was in his *soul*.

- **The soul is the "middle man" between the spirit and the body; where decisions are made.** The soul is often in a conflict between the spirit and the emotions.

4. My born-again spirit has a *desire* to praise the Lord; but if I do not command my soul to bless or praise the Lord, my *emotions* will rule; this is the difference between being led by the soul instead of by the spirit.

a. **This is what Jesus meant when He said, "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41);** the spiritual "me" is willing to praise the Lord but the flesh (the carnal/soulful) side of me seeks the upper hand.

b. We can never understand the decision-making process until we can discern the difference between our soul and our spirit.

5. And the only way we can know soul from spirit is by the Word of God!

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12 NASB

- a. Only the living Word can divide soul, spirit, and body
 - b. Only the Word of God can separate the soul and the spiritual.
- The desire to praise the Lord is SPIRITUAL; the resistance to that desire is SOULICAL

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:1

1 Corinthians 3:1 New American Standard Bible

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ.

c. This is why so many never move on to maturity; they are in Christ, but they are led about by their emotions and feelings instead of by the Spirit.

6. The decision to praise must be made by the soul but it will only come from the soul that is in submission to the spirit! If your flesh (emotions) is in charge, you cannot be a consistent Praiser!

7. David's 1st decision was his spirit commanding his soul to make the choice to "bless the Lord at all times".

B. David's 2nd Decision

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

Psalm 103:2

1. David's 1st decision was to command his *will* to choose to bless the Lord; his 2nd decision was to command his *mind* on what to think.

a. The will and the mind are functions of the soul: so in both verses David's spirit is commanding his soul; what to choose and what to think.

2. The negative expression is "forget not"; the positive expression would be "remember". Either way, the decision to praise involves the will as well as the mind which are both functions of the soul.

“The decisive element is the will.”

Derek Prince

3. It may shock you to learn that the Bible says that you have a CHOICE as to what you will think about!

4. The decision to praise must include choosing what you will think about; what you are praising God for. Here is a good place to begin!

5 Things to “Forget Not”/5 Things to Remember

Psalm 103:2-5

Bless the Lord/Praise the Lord...

- (1) Who *forgives* all your sins
- (2) Who *heals* all your diseases
- (3) Who *redeems* your life from destruction
- (4) Who *crowns* you with lovingkindness and tender mercy
- (5) Who *satisfies* you with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagles!

5. Let me pause right here and make this message very practical and personal; the verb “bless” involves speaking or singing:

a. When your spirit commands your soul to “Bless the Lord” and praise Him for all His benefits; your body must act: you have to open your mouth and “bless the Lord”. Let’s do this right now. Say this out loud...

I will bless you Lord right now because you forgive all my sins; you heal all my diseases; you redeem my life from the pit; you crown me with love and mercy; you satisfy my life with good things; and you renew my youth like the eagles!

6. Did you feel something? Did you not? It doesn’t matter! The decision to praise is an act of the will; feelings often come later. Either way...

II. The Decision to Praise Brings Many Blessings!

A. David in Psalm 34

1. Consider the context of this Psalm in the prelude:

A Psalm of David when he pretended to be insane before Abimelech who drove him away...

a. David wrote this when he was at his lowest place: he was on the run from Saul who was trying to kill him; his men had deserted him; the only place he could hide was in the camp of the Philistines, his greatest enemy!

b. To save his life, he was reduced to pretending to be mad; he let his beard grow; he let spittle run down his beard; he scratched on doors with his fingernails; he had to convince them he was not a threat. But then he writes this:

Psalm 34:1-2

**I will bless the Lord at all times;
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul shall make its boast in the Lord.
The humble shall hear *of it* and be glad.**

a. I love the New Living Translation of v.2:

Psalm 34:2 NLT

I will boast only in the Lord; let all who are helpless take heart.'

2. The decision to praise will bring you hope when you are helpless!

a. Praise can bring you out of your prison! I think of Paul and Silas:

Acts 16:23-26

**23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:
24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.
¶ 25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.
26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.**

b. What an amazing testimony to the power of praise!

3. Notice their circumstances; severely beaten; cast into prison, even the “inner prison”; feet locked in the stocks; in the very middle of the night. But they made a decision to praise the Lord; then came an earthquake; the foundations of the prison were shaken; the prison doors were opened and their chains fell off-of them and all the prisoners around them!

4. If David could praise; if Paul and Silas could praise; how much more ought we to make the decision to praise!

(Back to Psalm 34)

B. The Blessings of the Decision to Praise

1. David is at his lowest but makes a decision to praise the Lord at all times and he invites us into the blessings: He begins with this...

O magnify the Lord with me...

2. He says magnify the Lord; do NOT magnify your problem! Whatever you choose to think about or “magnify” gets bigger!

3. When I make the decision to praise the Lord it brings at least 5 blessings!

#1 Praise will deliver us from all our fears

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**4 I sought the Lord, and He heard me,
And delivered me from all my fears.**

It is impossible to praise the Lord and be afraid at the same time.

#2 Praise will restore the joy on your face!

**v.5 Those who look to Him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.**

Complainers show it on their face; as if they were “baptized in pickle juice”!

#3. The Lord saves the praiser out of all his troubles!

v.6 This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard *him*,

And saved him out of all his troubles.

“Cried out” is all in the context of v.1; I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise will continually be in my mouth.

#4 Praise will bring the angels around us to deliver us.

**v.7 The angel* of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him,
And delivers them.**

I have never (knowingly) seen an angel; but I have had many testify of seeing them; almost all of them came during worship services.
I personally believe that what comes out of our mouth attracts spiritual beings;
Our praise and worship invites angels all around;
But a complaining, ungrateful spirit attracts demonic spirits.

#5 Praise delivers us from want so that we lack no good thing!

**V8 Oh, taste and see that the Lord *is* good;
Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!
9 Oh, fear the Lord you His saints!
*There is no want to those who fear Him.***

a. This brings to mind the famous Psalm 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want! Here in v.10 David says...

**The young lions lack and suffer hunger;
But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.
Psalm 34:10**

And one more big blessing...

C. Deliverance from Soulical Depression

1. I include this because so many are dealing with depression; even thoughts of suicide; what's the solution? To make the decision to keep a praise appointment with God...

Isaiah 61:3

3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, **the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness**; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

2. Your spirit must “get hold of your soul”! When you feel depressed; when you feel discouraged; speak to yourself!

a. In Psalm 42, we once again find David talking to himself!

Psalm 42:5-6

**5 Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And *why* are you disquieted within me?**

**Other versions: Why am I discouraged?
Ps 42:5 Message Bible
Why are you down in the dumps, dear soul?**

b. The solution is clear:

**Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him
For the help of His countenance.***

**Your decision to praise the Lord will bring you many blessings and break
many curses**

3. The decision to praise is just that; a decision. It is making a choice. It is not based on the emotions; it is an act of your WILL in obedience to your SPIRIT. And it will bring many blessings; but finally, it will also break many curses.

So let me close with...

III. A Personal Word of Warning

A. The Withholding of Praise is a Serious Sin

1. Many of God’s people struggle with many things they can never seem to overcome; chronic sickness; clinical depression; insufficient finances; serious troubles with their children; a lack of spiritual growth.

2. These problems can come to any Christian; the presence of any one or two of them does not necessarily indicate a deficient kind of Christianity.

3. But many of these problems are found in a long list of curses in Deuteronomy 28; v. 47 gives one cause for why these curses come...

**Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, therefore you shall serve your enemies...
Deuteronomy 28:47-48**

4. The choice is clear: complainer or praiser? Grateful or ungrateful? The result is clear: Serve God or serve your enemies.

5. Let us make the decision to praise; and hate the sin of withholding it:

**“Nothing is a greater stranger to my breast, or a sin that my sin more abhors, than that black and detestable one, ingratitude.”
George Washington**

CHOOSE WISELY!

Closing Prayer and Song

Psalm 134:1-2

**Behold, bless the Lord, All *you* servants of the Lord,
Who stand by night in the house of the Lord! Lift up your hands *in* the
sanctuary, and bless the Lord.**