



PSALM 34

PRAISING AND PRAYING



The troubles of life should not overwhelm you, for through prayer you will be delivered out of them, and through praise you will teach others to live by faith and experience the goodness of God.

The main idea of the psalm: praise to God because He intervenes and rescues believers from troubles. Your praise ought to include exhortations for others to trust Him when trouble comes to them.

This praise psalm has many instructions and exhortations for the believer today.

Verse 8 gives the essence of the whole psalm,
“O taste and see that the LORD is good.”

The psalmist has experienced this, and it summarizes his instruction, for he wants others to trust the LORD and experience His goodness.

This psalm has two distinct sections:

Praise for deliverance (1–10)

The rationale for praise, along with instructions (11–22).

This psalm is a didactic or instructional poem. It reflects the psalmist's prayer, for he has experienced the goodness of the Lord; and it summarizes his instruction, for he wants others to trust the LORD and experience His goodness.

Psa 34:7: The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.

This verse forms the principle to be learned through the praise, that the LORD protects and delivers those who fear Him.

The Angel of the Lord (Yahweh)

1. The Angel of the Lord is a title for the 2nd member of the Godhead.
 - A. This title is used to indicate His ministry of visibly representing the character and authority of the Godhead to man.
 1. Angel: *mal'ak* = messenger, agent, representative.
 2. Yahweh: the personal name of God which emphasizes His absolute existence. Ex. 3:13-15; Psalm 90:3

- B. As the messenger of Yahweh, He bears the name and the character of Yahweh. Ex. 23:20-23
- C. As the messenger of Yahweh, He serves as the personal presence of God. Ex. 33:14; Deut. 4:37-38; Isaiah 65:9 with Deut. 9:3-6
- D. The Angel of Yahweh who appeared to Moses is identified as God and claims the personal title of Yahweh. Ex. 3:2 with 4:5.

E. The Angel of Yahweh is identified as Yahweh Himself.

1 Chron. 21:16; cf., 2 Chron. 3:1.

F. The Bible says that no one can see or has seen God.

John 1:18; 1 Tim. 6:13-16; 1 John 4:12.

G. This refers to God's pure essence which cannot be seen. Ex. 33:20. cf., John 6:46.

H. But there is a visible manifestation of the Godhead which does not threaten death to those who see it. That visible manifestation is the 2nd Member of the Godhead. John 1:18; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3

- I. Conclusion: any visible manifestation of God in the Old Testament was the pre-incarnate Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- J. In the New Testament, during the incarnation, Jesus Christ is the exact reflection of God's essence, God in the flesh. John 1:18; Titus 2:13; Col. 2:9; John 20:28-29; Heb 1:3
- K. After the birth of Christ, the Angel of Yahweh is never seen again.

Psa 34:7 The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.

those who fear Him יָרֵא (yare') *fear, be
afraid, revere*

FEAR OF THE LORD

Fear of the Lord

“The fear of the Lord” summarizes the believer’s godly way of life in relationship with the Lord—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit (Dt 31:12-13; Ps 19:7-9; Ecc 12:13; Ac 9:31; 2 Cor 7:1).

Definition

The expression *fear of the Lord* has been defined in various ways:

**“To honor God and order one’s life in accordance with God’s revealed will because of respect for Him. A loving reverence for God that includes submission to the commands of His Word”
(NIV Study Bible)**

Definition

**“A reverence for God expressed in submission to His will.”
(The Ryrie Study Bible)**

Definition

**“Reverential trust with hatred of evil.”
(The Scofield Study Bible)**

Definition

**“The fear of the Lord is a learned, volitional, faith commitment to the Lord.”
(Dr. Tod Kennedy).**

This gives four elements (with the implication of a fifth element of revelation):

1. Learned:

Intelligent and based upon revelation

This gives four elements (with the implication of a fifth element of revelation):

2. Volitional: decisions are necessary

This gives four elements (with the implication of a fifth element of revelation):

3. Faith: believe more than your sensory perception may encounter

This gives four elements (with the implication of a fifth element of revelation):

4. Commitment: first priority for living

Dr. Bruce Waltke, defines three elements in the expression:

- 1. An objective revelation of God's moral law
(Ps. 19:7-9; 34:11)**
- 2. Submission to that revelation (Pro. 15:33)**
- 3. Dread of the wrath and judgment of God
(Deut. 6:13-15; Job 31:23)**

The fear of the Lord, then, is obedience or submission to God as a response to His revelation of Himself, both in His works and regarding His character.

It is not limited to the act of worship but is a willful response to the essence of God which motivates one to godly living.

**The fear of the Lord is foundational to wisdom
(Ecc. 12:13).**

**The book of Proverbs indicates that the fear of
the Lord is the basis for practical holiness and
successful living.**

**“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of
knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and
instruction” (Proverbs 1:7).**

Summary:

- 1. The fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom (Prov. 1:7; 9:10)**
- 2. Requires understanding (Prov. 2:5)**
- 3. Involves a choice (Prov. 1:29; Gen. 20:11; Neh. 5:15)**
- 4. Demands obedience (Gen. 22:12)**

Summary:

5. **Demands departure from evil (Prov. 3:7; 16:6; Job 28:28)**
6. **Results in a prolonged life (Prov. 10:27)**
7. **The terror of being destroyed by God (Job 31:23) motivates godly living.**

Psa 34:7 The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.

The “angel of the Lord,” is the Lord Himself who will defend and deliver those who fear Him.

In Joshua 5:14 He is identified as the captain of the Lord’s army; He is the leader of a host of angels (2 Kings 6:17), which explains how He encamps around those who fear Him.

When it says He “encamps” around them, the image is of a military camp (an implied comparison).

That the angel “encamps around” the people of God indicates the ever-present protection of the Lord.

In reporting the answer to his prayer, the psalmist keeps the focus on the Lord.

And delivers them חָלַצָם (chalats) rescue, pull out of danger

The Psalmist is in trouble and calls on the Lord to rescue or deliver him, pull him out of his distress.

C. Individual praise should exhort the congregation to experience the goodness of God for themselves (8–10).

Praise is designed to be edifying: other people may hear the praise report from an individual, and they may even join in the praise; but the praise should also encourage them to trust in the LORD so that they too will experience the goodness of God.

Psa 34:8: Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good; Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!

They have heard his praise, but now they are told to taste and see that the LORD is good!

The two imperatives, “taste and see” are figurative. Tasting means experimenting with food, trying it. Here the word introduces an implied comparison. It has the concept of experiencing something and then deciding.

The psalmist wants them to discover the goodness of God by acting on their faith in the LORD, i.e., seeking Him and praying to Him, submitting to His will.

They may never have experienced an answer to prayer, or a provision of blessing, because they never asked (lack of faith. cf., Jas 4:2; John 16:24). The idea in tasting is to enter into an experience (cf., 1 Pe 2:3)

And *if* they do experience (“taste”) in this way, they will “see” (realize by experience) that the LORD is good. **Taste** (and as a result) **see**. What they will see is that the LORD is good.

good טוב (tov) good

This word, “good,” embraces everything that is beneficial for life, pleasing to life, and harmonious with life. Here it is an attribute of God. In what way is God good? How would people see that He is good?

They will experience the Lord’s provisions for life that demonstrate He is good. He is good because what He creates and what He gives is all good. See Jas 1:17

Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!

To enjoy the goodness of God is a blessed life; therefore, he adds, “Blessed (אַשְׁרֵי) is the one who takes refuge in him.”

This is the word in Psalm 1:1. People who trust the Lord and experience the goodness of God will also enjoy the comfort of knowing they are right with God.

trusts in Him חָסָה (chasah) to seek refuge, flee for protection.

This is not simply waiting for something to change, but it indicates that you are looking to God for deliverance.

Psa 34:9: Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints!

There is no want to those who fear Him.

The second exhortation is for the congregation to fear the LORD.

They are addressed here as “his saints” (קְדוֹשִׁיו) holy ones, set apart ones, people who belong to the Lord.

There is no want מַחְסוֹר (machsor) need, poverty

The word is most frequently used to express the sufficiency of God's grace to meet the needs of His people. They never lack. In the wilderness, when the people followed God's command, they never lacked manna (Ex 16:18). Moses reminded them of this just before they entered Canaan (Deut 2:7) and this became their basis of hope in Canaan (Deut 8:9).

This is the word found in Psalm 23:1: “I shall not want” = I shall not lack anything.

On the other hand, lacking bread or other necessities may indicate God’s disfavor because of lack of faith or sinful living (Isa 32:6; Ezek 4:17).

The saints are told to fear the Lord, which is a call for obedient devotion, rather than simply an emotional response, because those who fear have no lack. They lack nothing, because fearing the Lord means trusting him, obeying him, and worshiping him.

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

Verse 10 continues the theme of divine protection, showing that those who fear the LORD seek Him and lack no good thing. This is in contrast to “the young lions” that do lack food and go hungry.

If the reference is to the wicked who were afflicting him, then the figure (an implied comparison) describes them as dangerous and destructive. But they go hungry, i.e., the predators do not get what they want, whereas the people of God lack nothing. The difference is that they seek the LORD, and He provides for them.

Seek דָּרַשׁ (darash) to seek with care, inquire, search carefully, an intense seeking for a solution.

Same word as in Ps 34:5: “I sought the Lord and He heard me.” Seeking the Lord in prayer.

II. People who are strong in the faith must include instruction for the congregation when they praise the LORD (Ps 34:11–22).

A. Exhortation for people to learn how to achieve a long and blessed life (11–12).

Psa 34:11 Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

The first verse of this section is an exhortation for people to learn. They are addressed as “children” They are exhorted to come and listen, meaning to respond to the teachings, to obey, and not just give a hearing; (cf., Ps. 45:10).

Come, הָלַךְ (halak) go, walk. Here it is simply an invitation to Bible class

you children, בֶּן (ben) son, grandson, member of a group, (literally, “sons,” meaning younger, less experienced dependents or learners).

listen to me; שָׁמַע (shama‘) hear, listen to, obey. pay attention, “understand”

I will teach you the fear of the LORD לָמַד

(lamad) learn (Qal), teach (Piel).

As one of the twelve words for teaching in the OT, *lamad* has the idea of training as well as educating.

What he will teach them is the fear of the LORD.
The earlier call to fear the LORD will now be detailed step-by-step.

Ps 34:12 Who *is* the man *who* desires life, and loves *many* days, that he may see good?

“Many days” means length of days, a long life (see Prov 3:2; 10:27).

Who *is* the man *who* desires life?

This is a rhetorical question: “Who is the man who desires life,” meaning, if people desire life, as opposed to the way of death and destruction, they should follow these teachings. Here wisdom is presented as a reasoned question.

desires חָפֵץ (chāpets); take delight in, be pleased with, desire; to experience delight.

Do you desire to be pleased with life?

life חַיָּ (chay) life. The OT speaks of life as the experience of life rather than as an abstract principle of vitality. Life is the ability to exercise all your abilities to the fullest; death is the opposite.

The verb “to live” involves the ability to have life somewhere on the scale between the fullest enjoyment of all the senses and abilities of one’s being, with health and prosperity on the one hand and descent into trouble, sickness, and death on the other.

and loves *many* days. The basis for a long life with God's blessing of good things is the fear of the LORD (Prov. 1:7). Why do you want a long life?

love אָהַב ('ahev) love, like, be in love. People may love things concrete or abstract., E.g., silver (Eccl 5:9), and gifts (Isa 1:23). The Psalmist “loved” God’s commandments (Ps 119:47), law (v. 97), testimonies (v. 119), and precepts (v. 159).

Men can “love” evil (Ps 32:3), or death (Prov 8:36), vanity (Ps 4:2), cursing (Ps 109:17). Or they can “love” good (Amos 5:15), truth and peace (Zech 8:19), salvation (Ps 40:16), and wisdom (Prov 29:3).

Days – the idea here is that you want to live many days, a long time. But why? Do you want to experience God's blessings or just live life according to your own desires?

that he may see good טוֹב (tov) good: various concepts:

- 1) practical, economic, or material good,
- 2) abstract goodness such as desirability and beauty,
- 3) quality or expense,
- 4) moral goodness, (in contrast to evil in verse 14)
- 5) philosophical good.

The good in this verse is talking about experiencing the good things that are God's blessings which come from obedience to the Lord.

This might include material things or prosperity, for God does bless us with those things. See for example Leviticus 26:3-10.

But it also includes peace of mind, satisfaction with life, knowing that God is sovereign, the blessing of experiencing spiritual realities in your life.

B. There are five basic lessons to be learned (13–22):

1. Do not follow evil in word or deed but pursue goodness and peace (13–14).
2. Live righteously because the LORD honors this and not evil (15–16).
3. Pray to the LORD in times of trouble because He is compassionate (17–18).
4. Remain true to the LORD because He delivers the righteous unharmed (19–20).
5. Take refuge in the LORD because those who do will not be condemned (21–22).