

Week Five: *When Life Is Good?*

Psalm 34

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Of the 150 psalms, only 34 lack superscriptions of any kind. Psalm 34's subtitle indicates it was written by David after his escape from Saul and his subsequent escape from the Philistine king of Gath by feigning insanity. The historic context for each Psalm was added after the Psalms were written and compiled but is nevertheless ancient and existed several hundred years before the time of Christ. What value do you feel is added by the editorial notes?
2. Read the historic setting in 1 Samuel 21:10-15. What insight(s) does that story provide into the character and nature of King David?
3. We know of David's courage through the account of the time he faced and defeated the giant Goliath. What lesson can we learn from his actions in this account? (1 Samuel 17)
4. Bible students treasure the Psalms because they provide eloquent expression of David's feelings in both good and difficult times of life. What quality of the Psalms do you find most appealing?
5. Read Psalm 34. How does the historic context of the Psalm help explain the emotions of the author?
6. What verse jumped out as you read it? Have you heard it before? In what circumstance is that verse most applicable?
7. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for a more accepting and less judgmental spirit when observing the behavior of Christian leaders.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. Read Psalm 34:1. How does David begin this Psalm? Is that possible, even in difficult times? Do you share David's spirit, or are you more inclined to be confused by His apparent lack of faithfulness in difficulties?
9. Do you think it is easier to be faithful in difficult or good times? Explain the reason for your answer.
10. When people get married, they pledge to be faithful in good times and bad. Someone has said that hard times force you to dig deep and strengthen your bond of marriage. Do you agree?
11. Why do you suppose God doesn't always spare those He loves from the difficulties of life?

12. What is the inherent danger to a person's faith during good times?
13. Are you more or less inclined to be in worship, read the Bible or pray in times of blessing or times of struggle? Why?
14. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be more faithful in prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. Historically, it has been said that faith is for weak people who can't solve their own problems. In your experience, are the Christians you would consider strong in faith mainly people of strong dispositions?
16. Read Psalm 34:4. David admits to being fearful when facing a potentially life-threatening situation. Do you believe fear demonstrates lack of faith? If not, how is it a helpful emotion?
17. Is it a good or bad thing for a Christian leader to admit their own fears, doubts and struggles? Explain.
18. Read Psalm 34:7. The angel of the Lord is a common term found in the Old Testament but not the New Testament. Who is the angel of the Lord? Check your Bible's footnotes if it has them or Google the term. What is unique about this title?
19. Again, looking at Psalm 34:7, what kind of fear is David talking about? Is it a good thing to have a healthy "fear" of God?
20. Have you ever heard the phrase, "There is nothing left to do but pray"? What do people mean when they say that? What does it subtly suggest?
21. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be more transparent and vulnerable to others as you demonstrate your Christian walk in the sight and hearing of others.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

22. Read Psalm 34:8. What does it mean?
23. Compare verse 8 of this Psalm to Malachi 3:10-12. Do you think God is actually inviting you to take faith for a test drive? Explain.

24. In Psalm 34:9, David states that those who fear the Lord lack nothing. We know that faithful Christians are not without trouble and sometimes lack all they need to provide for their families. What do you think David meant?
25. Read Psalm 34:13-17. What do those verses suggest regarding the Lord's favor? Whether you are a parent or a child, how important is it to know that in times of favor families stick together? Can hardship be a blessing in a person's life? How so?
26. Do you think it is better to be "delivered out of trouble," or to never experience trouble? Explain your answer. See verse 17.
27. Psalm 34:16 says that the memory of the godless is soon forgotten. Read Psalm 37:37-38. What is the difference David predicts between the godless and the godly? (The word "future" mentioned in that passage actually means posterity.)
28. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray that when people remember your legacy it would be one that honored God and helped others.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

29. Do you sense the nearness of God when things are going well as strongly as in the midst of struggle? Explain.
30. Read Psalm 34:19. What is the relationship between faithfulness and hardship?
31. Do you think most people expect God to protect faithful Christians from hardships and setbacks despite the statement of verse 19? Is it human nature to question God's faithfulness or concern when Christians encounter difficulty?
32. Read Psalm 34:21. What is the cause of the death and destruction of the godless?
33. Read John 3:18-20. How would you describe the judgment that awaits the wicked? Would it be fair to say, "God allows the wicked to experience the consequence of their own choices" rather than say, "He punishes them for their errors"? What do you think?
34. In the last verse of Psalm 34, what does David say God will do? What price was paid for the soul of His servants? How does this make you feel?
35. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to better understand why God allows His own to suffer hardship and then comes to their assistance in answer to prayer. Pray to be less critical and more trusting of God in hard times.