

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

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Psalm 101 — To Cleanse a Kingdom, Begin in the Palace

1.0 Introducing Psalm 101

- In Book 4 there are only two psalms attributed to David: Psalms 101 and 103. The previous Davidic psalm was Psalm 86.
- Psalm 101 is the king's commitment to morality and ethical administration in his palace and in his kingdom.
 - ✓ Having a royal theme, Psalm 101 fits well with the theocratic Psalms 93–100.
- Martin Luther's exposition of Psalm 101 is 80 pages long.
 - ✓ Martin Luther, "Psalm 101," trans. by Alfred von Rohr Sauer, in *Selected Psalms II*, Luther's Works 13, ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), 143-224.

2.0 Reading Psalm 101 (NAU)

101:1 A Psalm of David.

I will sing of lovingkindness and justice,
To You, O LORD, I will sing praises.

101:2 I will give heed to the blameless way.
When will You come to me?

I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart.

101:3 I will set no worthless thing before my eyes;
I hate the work of those who fall away;
It shall not fasten its grip on me.

101:4 A perverse heart shall depart from me;
I will know no evil.

101:5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy;
No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure.

101:6 My eyes shall be upon **the faithful of the land**, that they may dwell with me;
He who walks in a **blameless** way is the one who will minister to me.

101:7 He who practices deceit shall not dwell within my house;
He who speaks falsehood shall not maintain his position before me.

101:8 Every morning I will destroy **all the wicked of the land**,
So as to cut off from the city of the LORD all those who do iniquity.

3.0 Understanding Psalm 101

3.1 Outline

- I. The King's Integrity in His Home (vv. 1-4)
- II. The King's Integrity on His Throne (vv. 5-8)



3.2 Notes

- **v. 1** “lovingkindness and justice”
 - “Loyalty” and “justice” are the principles that must be evident in the best of human life and government.
 - ✓ “Loyalty” (also, “steadfast love”) speaks of one’s relationship to the covenant. All are bound to fulfill the covenant in relationship to one another and to God.
 - ✓ “Justice” is best described in Peter’s reference to governmental leaders appointed by God “for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right” (1 Peter 2:14).
 - ✓ See Hosea 12:6; Micah 6:8; and Matthew 23:23.
 - “How far he [David] was to fall short of this in his own acts and in his appointments is told in 2 Samuel. But it was an inspired pattern, remaining to challenge him and his successors. . . . The psalm is doubly moving: both for the ideals it discloses and for the shadow of failure which history throws across it. Happily the last word is not with David nor with his faithful historians, but with His Son. There, there is no shadow.”—Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975), 358, 359.
- **v. 1** “To You, O LORD”
 - When the Lord is the object of worship and the focus of one’s life, true loyalty and justice are possible.
- **v. 2** “I will give heed to the blameless way”
 - “Give heed” is a wisdom term that speaks of gaining wisdom or insight.
 - ✓ See Nehemiah 8:13; Psalm 119:99.
 - “The blameless way” refers to the unblemished living of an imperfect believer in an imperfect world.
 - ✓ See Psalm 119:1.
 - ✓ *Is there such a thing as living without sinning?*



- v. 2 “When will You come to me?”
 - David’s question about the Lord coming to him may reflect the time during which the ark of the covenant remained outside Jerusalem.
 - ✓ See 2 Samuel 6:1-11, especially verse 9: “How can the ark of the LORD come to me?”
- v. 2 “I will walk within my house”
 - Private life within one’s own house must be as moral as the way one lives in public.
 - Accountability begins at home.
- v. 3 “no worthless thing before my eyes”
 - To keep the heart, guard the eyes. What we see and look at can have effects on the condition of our spiritual life.
 - Note that this is exactly where David failed later in life (2 Samuel 11:2).
 - Cp. Psalm 119:37.
- v. 5 “Whoever secretly slanders”
 - “The secret slanderer, seeking to ingratiate himself into his prince’s favour by pulling down others, and the haughty, over-bearing noble (ver. 6), would be no uncommon characters in any court, least of all an Oriental court.”—J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2 vols. (reprinted; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 2:215.
- v. 5 “him I will destroy”
 - David, as king, is committed to the reformation of Israelite society by ridding it of criminal elements.
 - Corrupt officials produce a corrupt government, regardless of the integrity of its king, president, or prime minister.
- v. 5 “a haughty look and an arrogant heart”
 - Pretension and presumption plague people perpetually. They are obviously nothing but sin (Proverbs 21:4).
 - Discord, conflict, squabbling, and even war are the products of arrogance.
- v. 6 “the one who will minister to me”
 - One who “ministers” is a servant, one who waits on someone, or one who is an attendant or assistant.
 - This term describes all who serve in a king’s court.
- v. 8 “Every morning”
 - In the ancient Near East kings customarily held court in the mornings.
 - ✓ See 2 Samuel 15:2; Jeremiah 21:12; Zephaniah 3:5.

4.0 Singing Psalm 101



Create in Me a Clean Heart, Oh God

Create in me a clean heart, Oh God,
And renew a right spirit within me.
Create in me a clean heart, Oh God,
And renew a right spirit within me-

Cast me not away from thy presence, Oh Lord.
Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me, the joy of Thy Salvation
And renew a right Spirit with-in me.

— Keith Green

Holiness

Holiness, holiness, is what I long for.
Holiness, is what I need.
Holiness, holiness, is what You want from me.

*So take my heart and form it.
Take my mind — transform it.
Take my will — conform it,
To Yours, to Yours, O Lord.*

Faithfulness, faithfulness, is what I long for.
Faithfulness, is what I need.
Faithfulness, faithfulness is what You want from
me.

*So take my heart and form it.
Take my mind — transform it.
Take my will — conform it,
To Yours, to Yours, O Lord.*

Brokenness, brokenness, is what I long for,
Brokenness, is what I need.
Brokenness, brokenness, is what You want from
me.

*So take my heart and form it.
Take my mind — transform it.
Take my will — conform it,
To Yours, to Yours, O Lord.
To Yours, to Yours, O Lord.
To Yours, to Yours, O Lord.*

— Scott Underwood

5.0 Praying Psalm 101

- Let me sing Your praises, Lord. [v. 1]
- Father, give me the power to be blameless at home. [v. 2]
- Help me control my eyes and choose carefully what I watch. [v. 3]
- Oh God, keep me from slander and arrogance, deceit and lying. [vv. 5, 7]
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6.0 Applying Psalm 101

- People who practice loyalty and justice will choose leaders who do the same.
- What I do in private is as important as what I do in public.
- Blameless eyes contribute to a blameless heart.