

WEEK TWENTY-THREE
DAY TWO

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

Bless	בָּרַךְ <i>barak</i>	– to kneel, bless, or be blessed
the Lord	יְהוָה <i>Yĕhovah</i>	– the self-Existent or Eternal; Jewish national name of God —Jehovah, the Lord
O my soul	נֶפֶשׁ <i>nepesh</i>	– a breathing creature, soul
and all	כָּל <i>kol</i>	– all, the whole, altogether
that is within me	קֶרֶב <i>qereb</i>	– the nearest part, the center, among, inward, within self.
bless his holy	קֹדֶשׁ <i>qodesh</i>	– a sacred place or thing, hallowed
name	שֵׁם <i>shem</i>	– an appellation, by implication honor, authority, character; fame, renown

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This psalm is a great song of praise written by King David presumably in his later years after being delivered by God from a crisis, certainly not something unfamiliar to him. The tone indicates that David is deeply moved and wrought with emotion as he is conversing with himself on this occasion. With joy and exhortation to his own soul, David is reminding himself to bless the Lord! How do we bless the Lord? When one thinks of blessings, we think of what God has given us and done for us. God doesn't need anything from us, so how do we bless Him?

To "bless the Lord" means to delight His heart by expressing love and gratitude for all He is and all He does. Sometimes we get caught up in focusing on the struggles of life and forget we have a God who can and wants to supply all our needs. As we make our way through this Psalm, David will give many reasons to bless our Lord. But, in this verse, we can feel the deep affection and delight David has for his Lord as he reaches into the depths of his devout soul and all that is within him, to bless Him. "All that is within me," or the totality of our entire being, is a commitment to God: heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). We can almost envision David dancing, as he was known to do, while praising his God.

C.S. Lewis, in *Reflections on the Psalms* said, "The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God which made David dance."

There is no doubting David's commitment to his holy Lord, because true praise comes from a grateful heart that sincerely wants to glorify and please the Lord. Ask God to give you that same spirit of joy and delight as you realize His sufficiency to meet your every need. And then as David did, summon your soul to bless the Lord. Matthew Henry said of David, "He is no fool that thus talks to himself and excites his own soul to that which is good." God is good...all the time!

Heavenly Father, how we bless you and praise you, for you alone are worthy of all glory, honor, and praise. Open our eyes to see your hand at work in every area of our lives. Help us to delight in you, even in the storms of life, and to have peace, knowing you are truly all we need. In Jesus name. Amen!

~Vicki Halford

WEEK TWENTY-THREE
DAY FOUR

**Bless the Lord, O my soul,
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Psalm 103:1**

When I was in elementary school and visited my grandparents for a weekend, I would devotedly follow my grandmother around the house, watching her do laundry or clean the kitchen or make these terrible-smelling, green vegetable shakes in the mornings. What I quickly noticed was how she would quietly talk to herself during all of these tasks—she would mutter about how much detergent she needed for a load of dirty clothes, or she would comment on the amount of sun outside we were getting that day. I knew intuitively that she was not talking to me—every comment was the overflow of a thought of her own mind and meant for her alone.

Later on in life, I learned the term “preaching to yourself.” It was in the context of learning and applying the truth of Scripture to one’s life. Once you read truth from a page of the Bible, you must chew on it and then apply it. Sometimes, though, you forget, and you have to remind yourself in the midst of the battle that truth is still truth and still applies. You preach the gospel to yourself, that God the Father, loving and patient, still reigns supreme on His throne in heaven and that His glory is what is important.

Psalm 103:1 is a prime example of this, in my mind. David most likely wrote this psalm after the Lord had pardoned him for his adultery with Uriah’s wife, Bathsheba, but the consequences of his sin were still ongoing. And yet, David sought comfort in his heavenly Father instead of running from Him. He understood where his help came from—true peace, true comfort, true love. He preaches truth to himself, speaking directly to his soul (the immortal part of who he is) and everything within him, telling himself to bless the Lord in the midst of the storm, for His name is holy, set apart, worthy of praise.

When the battle rages either around me or within my own heart, it’s my deepest desire that this would be my prayer. I want to “consider it pure joy” (James 1:2) and “give thanks in all things” (1 Thess. 5:18), blessing the name of the King who is holy and perfect and deserving of all my praise... no matter what.

Lord, may it be so in us, Your beloved daughters.

~ Amber Wilson

WEEK TWENTY-THREE
DAY FIVE

**Bless the Lord, O my soul,
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bless his holy name!
Psalm 103:1**

I was walking down the beach one evening, thankful to be there and praising the Creator. His creation is magnificent. I asked Him to teach me how to live a life that honors Him. I have so far to go, and He is so patient.

I walked by a family that included a toddler still wearing his bib from dinner. Suddenly a seagull flew near him. He threw his hand in the air and screamed with delight. Not only was it adorable, but it hit me how blessed the Creator must be when from the mouths of babes, His creation is so appreciated. Matthew 21:16b says,

“Yes. Have you never read,
‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants
You have perfected praise’?”

I felt like He was reminding me that genuine gratitude and childlike faith are how we live lives that honor Him. He doesn't want us to outgrow childlike wonder but increase and abound in it. David, who was not opposed to throwing up a hand or dancing in public at the wonder of His God, could hardly contain himself with all he was about to share in Psalm 103,

“Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name!”

Maybe that would be the translation of that toddler scream. Makes me want to throw up a hand, too. Lord, keep us in awe and wonder at who You are and what You do. Bless the Lord, O my soul!

~ Charlotte Travis

