

REACHING YOUR POTENTIAL

(Going to a Whole New Level of Christian Living)

Psalm 141:1-10



The Key To...

- ◆ My Growth
- ◆ My Choices
- ◆ My Potential
- ◆ My Contentment

"If someone corrects me, it will be like medicine; don't let me refuse it." (Psalm 141:5)

Bill Kirk

“REACHING YOUR POTENTIAL”

Text: Psalm 141:1-10

Subject: How Humility Will Take Us To A Whole New Level

Introduction

1. Psalm 141 was written by David
2. David wrote the Psalm when his spirit was overwhelmed

Question: What was David dealing with?

Answer: Two Things:

1. There was David dealing with Absalom’s betrayal (his own son).
2. There was David dealing with Saul at the cave of Engedi (when David spared Saul’s life and only cut off his skirt – when David’s men wanted to kill Saul).

In Other Words

- David is processing all kinds of feelings and emotions.
- He doesn’t want to return evil for evil (and be chained to his past)!
- He doesn’t want to become bitter, angry and poisoned.

So much so, he prays things like:

“Oh Lord, bring my soul out of prison.”

“Lord, please hurry up.”

“Lord, rescue me from evil people.”

“Lord, hear my cry for I am very low.” (142:7)

Question: Why does God record David’s prayer in Psalm 141?

Answer: One reason – wisdom!!!

Wisdom for your life to be healthy, whole, balanced and strong!

Four Wisdom Discoveries

I. The Key To My Growth Is My Response To Conviction!

(v. 4) “Don’t let me drift toward evil or take part in acts of wickedness.”

Question: What’s this have to do with?

Answer: **My conscience!**

Question: What is David addressing?

Answer: “Drifting” because of refusing to keep moving forward in my spiritual growth.

Question: Why does David pray this prayer and why does God record it?

Answer: To show us the extreme importance of cooperating with God.

In Other Words

- David is fighting his feelings and temptations – to break out into retaliation!
- David has been greatly injured by Absalom and Saul!
- David has the opportunity to kill the one who has caused him so much pain!

- David has a choice to make – to obey or ignore his conscience.

In Other Words

1. Will I drift toward evil (because of my pride) and get even with those who hurt me? (Or)
2. Will I conquer my anger by forgiving those who have offended and wounded me?

In Other Words

- How will I respond to the invitation to exact revenge upon those who have caused me pain and sorrow?

Question: What's the only thing that breaks the chain of anger in my heart?

Answer: Forgiveness! (Which is...)

- Allowing God to render judgment.
- Releasing my inclinations to get even.
- Giving God permission to intervene.

Fact: When David prays here “Lord, don't let me drift toward evil”, he's asking God to help him remember some things about forgiveness.

1. Forgiveness is a **command** not an option!
2. Forgiveness is a **choice** not a feeling!
3. Forgiveness is for **my** benefit not the benefit of my offender!
4. Forgiveness is a **process** not an event! (Why?)

Fact: You are never any more like **Jesus** than when you are in the process of forgiving someone – because Jesus is always in the process of forgiving us.

Fact: Unforgiveness is the **poison** we drink while we wait for the other person to die!

Fact: Resentment is allowing someone you despise to live **rent-free** in the house of your mind!

Fact: Living with hurt feelings will never motivate you to right **decisions** or actions.

Fact: We dare not let the wrong choices of others determine who **we become!**

Fact: When we freely receive God's forgiveness and freely give it, something amazing happens; we remove ourselves from the **control** of others and we are released from the anger and pain that attached itself to those past painful events, trials, offenses and disappointments!

II. The Key To My Choices Is My Response To **Approval!**

(4b) “Don't let me share in the delicacies of those who do wrong.”

Question: What's this have to do with me (what aspect of life?)

Answer: **My companions!** “Don't let me ‘join in’ with those who do wrong.”

Question: Why is my environment (and who I hang around with) so important?

Answer: Because the apostle Paul said: “Bad company corrupts good morals”

Question: Is it really that important? (Psalm 1:1)

“Oh the joys of those who do not hang around with sinners or join in with those who mock God.”

Question: What causes us to be addicted to approval from other people?

1. Deception (and) 2. Insecurity
 - Deception blinds us to the fact that when rebels suffer the consequences of sin (those with them suffer also).
 - Insecurity results in the need for people's approval and adoration so that we can't confront and anger the people we love if that is what is best for them.

Tim Keller says

"If you love a person so selfishly that you cannot risk their anger, you won't ever tell them the truth they need to hear." (Pg. 114 "Galatians For You")

Remember This About Approval

1. When we live to please people, we lose ourselves and drift away from God!
2. When we live for people's approval, we cannot live to please God!
3. To the degree we live to please God above man, to that same degree we will not be shaken by disapproval or rejection.
4. Being overly obsessed with what others think is an open door to torment.
 - So remember – the key to my choices is my response to approval.

III. The Key To My Potential Is My Response To Correction!

(V.5) "Let the godly strike me; it will be a kindness; if they correct me, it is soothing medicine; don't let me refuse it."

Question: What's this have to do with?

Answer: **My Correctableness!** (David prays)

"If someone corrects me, it will be like medicine; **don't let me refuse it.**"

Question: What causes us to refuse correction? (Pride!)

Question: Why is it foolish to refuse correction and resent those in authority?

Answer: Because no one is perfect, we all make mistakes and those who correct us are gifts from God (like medicine).

David prays this way:

"Let the godly correct me and it will be a kindness and a medicine."

- "But what about my feelings, and my ego and my image?"
- Do you want to look good and feel good? Or be good and be changed?

Question: Why do people resent correction and accountability?

Question: Why is it rejected by the majority?

1. Because fragile egos can't handle it.
2. Because prima donna types won't tolerate it.
3. Because individualism is the spirit of the age.
4. Because flesh wants to look good and make a good impression.

Question: Why does David pray, "Lord don't let me refuse it when someone corrects me?"

Answer: ♦ Because we all have blind spots!

- ◆ None of us can see the whole picture!
- ◆ Nobody is an island to themselves!

Plato Said

“The Life which is unexamined is not worth living.”

Solomon Said

- ◆ “Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction, but he that regardeth reproof shall be honored.” (Proverbs 13:18)
- ◆ “Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge, but he that hateth reproof is brutish.” (Proverbs 12:1)
- ◆ “He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul, but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.” (Proverbs 15:32)
- ◆ “Hear counsel and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.” (Proverbs 19:20)

Never Forget This

Feedback is the breakfast of champions, and only a fool knows everything!

IV. The Key To My Contentment Is My Response To Distraction!

(V. 9) “Lord, keep me from the traps they have set for me, from the snares of those who do wrong.”

(V. 10) “Let the wicked fall into their own nets, but let me escape.” (Escape from what?)

- ◆ David mentions three things he needs to be aware of in life:
 1. Traps
 2. Snares
 3. Nets

Question: Why has God given us this?

Answer: Not to be suspicious or fearful.

- ◆ But to be watchful, careful, cautious, alert and focused!

Question: What’s our greatest distraction?

Question: What’s the #1 trap to distract us from our potential and gospel centered living?

Question: What’s the purpose of the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life?

Our #1 Distraction

- ◆ Is to look for peace, rest, significance and purpose in created things.

Question: Why so dangerous?

Answer: Because it leads us to the “If Onlys”

“IF ONLY”

We’ve all heard the “If onlys”

- | | |
|--|--|
| ◆ “If only I was married, I’d be happy.” | ◆ “If only I was younger.” |
| ◆ “If only I was skinnier.” | ◆ “If only I could afford a vacation.” |
| ◆ “If only I had that job.” | ◆ “If only I didn’t have to work.” |
| ◆ “If only I had more money.” | ◆ “If only I had a bigger house.” |
| ◆ “If only I could live in the country.” | ◆ “If only my kids were closer.” |

- ◆ “If only my boss was nicer.”
- ◆ “If only I could sing.”
- ◆ “If only my teeth were whiter.”
- ◆ “If only the preacher wouldn’t preach so long
- ◆ “If only I had a new car.”
- ◆ “If only I was smarter.”

Question: What do the “if onlys” reveal? (Two things)

1. Created things have no power to make our hearts content.
2. Our hearts will only rest content when they find their rest in God alone!

God’s three great “Heart Protectors”

1. **Romans 1:25**
“For people traded the truth about God for a lie, for they worshipped and served the things God created instead of the Creator Himself.”
2. **Ecclesiastes 3:11**
“God has planted eternity in every human heart.”
3. **Isaiah 55:2**
“Why do you spend money on what’s not bread and labor for what doesn’t satisfy?”

Question: How do these three truths protect us?

Answer: They protect us from shopping horizontally for what only God can give us.

- ◆ **Romans 1:25** protects us from worshipping created (physical) things.
- ◆ **Isaiah 55:2** protects us from misplaced affections on things that cannot produce contentment.
- ◆ **Ecclesiastes 3:11** protects us from searching in the wrong places to satisfy the longing in every human heart.

In Other Words

- ◆ Created things can create good feelings, but they cannot leave you **full** and **satisfied**.
- ◆ Created things provide **short-term** fulfillment – but you have to go back again and again and again.
- ◆ Created things are not meant to be the thing that you look to for **life and ultimate joy**.
- ◆ Created things are meant to point you to **God** – who alone can do two things:

1. **Satisfy** your heart (and) 2. **Transform** your heart.

In Other Words

Trying to find peace and rest and joy and significance in creation (physical things) is never a pathway to life.

(In fact, it leads us in the opposite direction)

Why? Because...

1. Physical things get old and break down.
2. Relationships and people fail.
3. Our bodies deteriorate.
4. Flowers die.
5. Food spoils.
6. Cars rust.

7. Clothes wear out.
8. Silver tarnishes.
9. Super Bowls and World Series are forgotten.
10. Curtains fade.
11. Vacations end.
12. Applause stops.
13. Even chewing gum gets old.

Question: What's it all teach us?

Answer: That physical things are enjoyable but they cannot give us what we long for (which is eternal life, rest, peace, meaning and purpose).

In Other Words

- ◆ God created all the world to **point** to Him – not to **replace** Him!
- ◆ The physical world has no capacity to make your heart content!
- ◆ Every created thing is meant to point us to the Lord, who alone can pour out grace into our hearts.

Question: Why is this all such a big deal?

Answer: Because truth protects us from spiritual adultery.

- ◆ We'll keep creation in its proper place!
- ◆ We'll keep ultimate love and allegiance for God and God alone!
- ◆ We won't catastrophize normality's when things break.
- ◆ We won't awfulize it when there is backup on the highway because of road repairs.
- ◆ We won't grumblize when our favorite cookies are out of stock at Wegmans.

Why?

- ◆ Because ultimate joy is only found in intimate fellowship with God (through Jesus) and nowhere else!!!

Question: Why is all this so important?

Answer: Because forgetting it makes life all about us!

- ◆ And self-centeredness is a recipe for disaster.
- ◆ Self-absorption leads me to grumble and complain.
- ◆ Self-preoccupation makes me angry over other people's sins – but ignore my own.

(But Amazing Grace)

- ◆ Doesn't point the finger and blame other people!
- ◆ Doesn't get side-tracked from the presence of Jesus!
- ◆ Doesn't become distracted with non-essentials!

(Instead, Grace)

- ◆ Rescues me from myself!
- ◆ Reminds me of God's goodness at Calvary!
- ◆ Transforms me and produces a humble, broken, self-examining heart!
- ◆ Grace delivers me from me (it decimates my defenses, leads me to confession and makes me run to our Redeemer for forgiveness and delivering power).

Nuf Sed!
Bill Kirk