

Made for Praise

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When things get out of focus, we squint and strain to make out detail, to see things clearly. This psalm brings our entire purpose into focus. In her devotional commentary on this psalm Lydia Brownback says, *Here we find no requests; there is nothing but praise.* Nothing but praise. It's not pie in the sky faith. There are many psalms that address hardship. But here admiring gratitude shines through every single line (Kidner). This psalm is a reminder *we are made for praise.* David begins [Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits](#) (1-2). Why should we bless the Lord? Let's take a look and see.

Redemptive Benefits

When we use the word bless today we often mean to well-wish or add benefit. I just want to bless you, but when David says *Bless the Lord* he's not giving God something he lacks. He uses the word not to *confer blessing but to recognize the source of blessing, not to give God what he lacks but praise him for what he has...in abundance!* What reasons do we have to praise God? David spends the rest of the psalm elaborating on these, and in the next five verses we see two kinds of benefits: redemptive and royal. **Redemptive.** First, he [forgives all your iniquity](#). It's a benefit we often take for granted. Of course God forgives. It's in his nature. Precisely! It's *not* in ours. In Anglo-Saxon society humans didn't forgive; they took revenge. It was called bloodfeud. *It wasn't until the Christian gospel took root that forgiveness become a principle in conflict.* We forgive others because God has forgiven us. But, even with God's forgiving grace operative in our worldview, it can take days, weeks, years before we're willing to forgive. And that's just the offence. The text says God forgives our *iniquity*. Iniquity isn't just the offence but it's accompanying guilt. If you snap and yell at someone, they can forgive you but they can't relieve your guilt. It's up to you to deal with that, which drives many people mad. We're meant to turn to God who forgives *all* iniquity, offence and guilt: "[he does not repay us for our iniquities.](#)" He doesn't punish us for our guilt. And what's truly stunning is that God could *justly* punish us for our sins, but chooses to relate to us with love in his eyes and in forgiveness his heart. How?! With a wave of the hand? That would be a miscarry of justice. We are guilty. And we love to see the guilty

punished. If don't believe it, just consider the copious commentary on Amber Heard's guilt for slandering Johnny Depp. How much more should a holy Judge condemn sinners like us? And yet he desires to clear the guilty. How? V.17: [the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to those who keep his covenant](#). He forgives because of his covenant, a covenant Israel could not keep, so God kept it not by blood feud but by blood sacrifice, not by taking our lives but Jesus giving his life. He does not repay us but becomes the payment! He does not compound guilt but relieves guilt. Do you find yourself weighed down by guilty thoughts? How much relief? By [removing our transgressions as far as the east is from the west](#). How far is that? When does east meet west? Polar opposite directions. Never! Because Christ kept the covenant we are clothed in God's forgiving, steadfast love! *Church, forget not his benefits. Bless the Lord who forgives all our iniquity!* Second, he [heals all your diseases](#). This refers to physical illness or pain that comes from suffering or age. Psalm 147 *he heals the brokenhearted*. God cares about your heartache. Do you find yourself burdened by broken relationships or suffering loved ones? Healing begins as we open up our wounds and invite God in until one day we are healed entirely, head to toe. That poor eyesight, those back aches, that broken heart, depressive thoughts, and traumatic memories will be no more! He *heals all your diseases!* Third, [he redeems your life from the pit](#). The pit was typically a place of death (Ps 30:10) which means God undoes death, a veiled promise of new life in a new world where [death will be no more](#) (Rev 21:4). *Bless the Lord! Why? Redemptive benefits!*

Royal Benefits

If that wasn't enough to praise God, next we find **royal** benefits? He [crowns you with steadfast love and mercy](#). Steadfast love is the Hebrew word *hesed*. It is a complex word rich with meaning: comprehensive, limitless, undying, flawless, unbreakable love. God crowns the soul with what it cries for most. What we want when we walk in a room, what we desire on lonely nights, what we envy on IG, or pine for when we date or marry. Longing for *hesed*. And God *crowns* us with it. To crown is to encircle, surround, adorn as in the crowning of king. A blessing fit for a monarch. I recently saw the British Crown Jewels. They are stunning in size and majestic in quality. The queen's scepter contains the largest cut

diamond at 530 carats, and her crown cradles a 317 carat diamond front and center. Both came from a diamond that when first cut, broke the blade! You are crowned with God's unbreakable hesed. The Lord of space and time adorns you with the crown jewels of his steadfast love and mercy. Next [he satisfies you with good](#). The word satisfies refers to being filled up with drink and food at a feast! God's heart is not merely to redeem you *but to satisfy you with royal blessing*. His desire is to bless you with things so good your youth is renewed like the eagle's. What does he mean? An eagle soars. This is a vision of being so uplifted by the goodness of God that we soar, unhindered by criticism or self-doubt. In fact, *it's possible to become more vibrant and youthful the older we get*. Something the Scriptures repeatedly emphasize. A helpful correction to our society's preoccupation with physical youth. Don't dedicate yourself to: skin care, injections, implants, super fitness. That youth fades. Instead, occupy yourself with the goodness of God. Be lifted by him. Revel in his hesed love and you will glow.

Talking to the Soul

But we often forget these benefits don't we? Despite the fact that we're made for praise, it doesn't always come naturally or easily. That's why David **summons** himself to praise the Lord: *Bless the Lord, O my soul*. He exhorts himself to bless the Lord three times! It's a kind of spiritual discipline in the psalms, used *especially when things bleak*: [Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God](#) (42:5). Instead of being pushed around by despair, David talks back to himself, *Why are you cast down? Why are you in turmoil?* We're often led by what we feel, which can be authentic, but also leads to thoughts that trap us in an internal, emotive loop. You ever get down and feel like you can't get out? Find yourself stuck in emotion or feeling of hopelessness? Secular counselors treat their clients using CBT. Cognitive behavioral therapy is a way of speaking back to negative emotion. Example. You walk away from a conversation thinking: *why did I say that. They probably think I'm an idiot*. CBT: *I'm human and make mistakes. Plus people don't care as much as I think they do*. Speak back to the internal feed. But David was way ahead of CBT. *How does he breakout of the loop? Not just by talking back but by telling his soul to look beyond himself*. By summoning himself to take in something greater than his feelings: *Hope in God*. Not hope in

CBT, not hope in a better marriage, hope in better kids, a better job, city, country, or world. Hope. In. God: *redemptive benefits, royal benefits*. He blesses *God's holy name*, focusing on God's holy character no matter how hard things get. He reminds himself to *forget not his benefits* not obsess over disappointments. He snaps the internal, emotive loop by focusing outward on God's awesome truth. He breaks free with praise. So, journal God's royal benefits; go for a walk and recount his redemptive blessings; memorize Scriptures that point to his beauty, glory, and grace. Read edifying books. Meditate on this psalm! Praise often begins as a choice, but the more we choose to praise God the more we sense his praiseworthiness. Why? *We're made for praise*. So focus your attention on your God! Who *forgives iniquity, heals diseases, redeems your life from the pit, crowns you with steadfast love, and satisfies you with good things* so you can glow. Church, let's soar on the benefits of God and bless him with all that is within us. *We were made for praise*.