

Psalm 63

The demands and pressures of life are an inescapable reality. If you are a student there is the pressure of getting all your assignments done well and on time. In the work place you often have to juggle several projects at one time. Sometimes it feels like you have three days of work to accomplish in one day. And then there are the concerns of relationships, our spouses, children, finances, unexpected car and home repairs and on and on.

There is one thing that will help determine the course of your life in the midst of all these concerns—our priorities. If you don't have clear and noble priorities and if you don't keep them in the midst of life's pressures, you'll be washed down river by the flood of everything around you.

Our most important priority in all of life should be God. To know Him, love Him, obey Him in all things and to find delight in Him is the most important priority of all. All of us want so much out of life and there is nothing wrong with this. But the key to getting the most out of life while not being crushed by life's demands is to set first things first. Our Lord Jesus Christ said,

The first of all the commandments
is:

*"Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God,
the LORD is one. 30 And you shall
love the LORD your God with all
your heart, with all your soul, with
all your mind, and with all your
strength."*

This is the first commandment.

(Mark 12:29, 30)

He also said, "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and [all that you need] shall be added to you."¹ This is the main theme of Psalm 63; putting God first in our life. Many of the psalms are inspired by the demands and battles of life. The psalmist is engulfed in some problem, overwhelmed and pushed beyond his ability to cope. And so he cries out to God to know Him more intimately and to see His power. The psalms reveal much about God's

¹ Matthew 6:33

character. We see His mercy, loyal love, faithfulness, His righteous judgment on sin and His readiness to help His people in times of need.

Psalm 63 was written by David when life's demands and troubles were pressuring him. His own son, Absalom, led a rebellion against David and wanted to kill him. So David fled to the wilderness of Judah and there he wrote this psalm. The very fact that David wrote this particular psalm while fleeing for his life is important. Instead of writing "God get me out of this trouble" David's number one priority is to know and love God more. And so he sang,

O God, You are my God;
Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.
(Psalm 63:1)

Fleeing a rebellion and a rebellious son who wants to kill his father, David prays not for mere protection, but for fellowship with God Himself. He longs for God the way a wanderer in the desert longs for water. He sings to God "Early will I seek You." In other words, the first priority in his day was fellowship with God. David knew that if his heart was focused on God and the things of God, he could handle the pressures of life.

Years before as a teenager David sang, "The LORD [Yahweh] is my shepherd; I shall not want."² He had entered into a personal relationship with God as a young man and then made that relationship stringer over the years. Let me share a word with all of our young people. The wise King Solomon said "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come."³ As young adults life is before you and full of adventure. You desire to experience all of life. You have big dreams and goals. All of this is great—go for it! But make sure God is the foundation of your life.

Today we come to God through faith in Jesus Christ.⁴⁵ Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through

² Psalm 23:1

³ Ecclesiastes 12:1

⁴

⁵ Peter 1:20, 21, Romans 10:9, 10

Me.”⁶ So set your heart to learn about Christ and to follow him so that he leads you to know God more deeply. Read the Bible, daily, systematically, because the Bible reveals Christ and God to our hearts.⁶ This is what David did.

O God, You *are* my God;
Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.
² So I have looked for You in
the sanctuary,
To see Your power and Your glory.
(Psalm 63:1, 2)

The sanctuary was the holy place where Old Testament believers went to learn about God and worship Him. The New Testament does not stress a particular place, it stresses that we purpose in our hearts to gather together for worship. Acts 2:42 tells us that the early Christians “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” And Hebrews 10:24, 25 says,

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,
²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, *as is* the manner of some, but *exhorting one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day⁷ approaching.

There is nothing as important or as refreshing than to be with other believers to learn about God and to help one another to be faithful. Every day, life has its challenges. And God has given us His written Word and other believers to instruct us and encourage us, therefore we should devote ourselves to Scripture and fellowship with believers.

⁶ John 14:6 One of the best ways to begin to immerse yourself in the study of the Bible is to participate in The Powerful Christian Living Class. This class is available free of charge at the “Teachings” section of the web site www.graceministryinternational.org. The class is available in an audio version with syllabus, plus there is a written version of the class as well.

⁷ The “Day” is the day of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every day brings us closer to this blessed event.

Because Your lovingkindness *is* better than life,
My lips shall praise You.

⁴ Thus I will bless You while I live;

I will lift up my hands in Your name.

⁵ My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness,

And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.

(Psalm 63:3-5)

When we are in trouble sometimes we try to use God like a genie lamp. We rub the Bible and cry out to God to help us. But when our troubles are over we go on with our lives and forget about God. If you think you've reached a place in life where you can coast on the left over gas fumes of your faith, you are in trouble!

The holy men and women of the Bible always wanted more of God. They longed for Him and they sought Him day and night. And they were willing to give up everything in life, even life itself, if they could have more of God.⁸ Life is good. Life is the most precious thing we have. But sadly without God in our lives we will fall prey to just about anyone or anything to protect our lives.

Satan knows this all too well. When Satan contended for Job and tried to prove that Job's love for God was weak he said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life."⁹ But look at what David said when robbed of his palace and wealth and while his son sought to kill him.

Because Your lovingkindness *is* better than life,
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David loved God more than life and because he did he knew his heart would be satisfied with marrow and fatness. This is a metaphor comparing the spiritual and emotional satisfaction that comes with God, with the satisfaction of a rich food banquet.

⁸ A great example of this is Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego who said that they would rather burn to death in a fiery furnace than to dishonor God (Daniel 3:16-18) ⁹ Job 2:4

Isn't it strange that we spend so much time trying to find meaning and purpose, peace and joy and satisfaction in the things of the world when God would fill our hearts with joy beyond belief? David found fulfillment and contentment in God and so he sought for Him not only early in the morning but at the end of the day as well.

When I remember You on my bed,
I meditate on You in the *night* watches.

⁷ Because You have been my help,

Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.

8

My soul follows close behind You;

Your right hand upholds me.

(Psalm 63:6-8)

The Hebrew word translated “follows” in verse 8 has the nuance of loyal love. It refers to being close to someone because of tender affection and commitment. The Hebrew word was used of Ruth clinging to her mother-in-law, Naomi, rather than leaving her alone. ⁹ And it was used in Genesis 2:24, where we read that a man should “be joined” to or cleave to his wife.

Marriage is a relationship where feelings of love and the decision to commitment and faithfulness are intertwined. Sometimes love alone will suffice. But at other times commitment carries you through tough times when feelings may temporarily fade. Keeping romance and passion alive in a marriage takes work. It means saying “No” at times to work, outside interests, hobbies and even friends, and “Yes” to your husband or wife.

In the same way, nothing, not work or friends, not even your marriage should come before God. Here is David, his kingdom is falling apart. He is running for his life. It would be understandable if the things of God were put on hold for a while. But no, David stays close to God and because he does, God's right hand upholds him. It is when we are close to God that we fully experience His power and provision.

My soul follows close behind You;
Your right hand upholds me.

⁹ But those *who* seek my life, to destroy *it*,
Shall go into the lower parts of the earth.

⁹ Ruth 1:14

10 They shall fall by the sword;
They shall be a portion for jackals.
11 But the king shall rejoice in God;
Everyone who swears by Him shall glory;
But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped.
(Psalm 63:8-11)

Some commentators and Bible teachers think that the last three verses are a blemish on an otherwise beautiful psalm. They are not. It is good and right to ask God to cause evil to fail and to punish wickedness. These verses root us in reality. They show us that true passionate, committed love for God can exist in the real world. And that this love for God is the source for confidence, hope and peace.

David is in the wilderness. Absalom is out to kill him. His kingdom is in chaos. Life has its demands and pressures. But it is the unbelievers who shall fall and fail. David, the king, shall rejoice in God. He knows that ultimately all will be well for him. The New Testament tells us the same truth.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.
²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.
(Romans 8:28-30)

Ultimately, no matter what happens in life, those of us who have come to God through faith in Jesus Christ will inherit everlasting life and glory. But how are you doing now? All things work together for good to those who love God. If you don't know God, come, "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!"¹⁰

¹⁰ Psalm 34:8

But to the rest of us I also say this: its fine to say, "I am a believer and I am serving God." But you can also be involved in full time ministry and not seek to love God. I know it can happen; I have been there. So let us review our lives. Does our lifestyle, our schedule, our activities show that seeking God is our number one priority?

The demands and pressures of life reveal the true treasure of our heart. The Spirit of God spoke through David to us and encourages us to say,

O God, You *are* my God;
Early will I seek You...
Because Your lovingkindness is better than life