

The Life of David: Reaping the Results of Holy Habits Psalm 101

As we open to Psalm 101, may I remind you of a transformational truth?
Your habits are shaping your destiny, one little action at a time.

Habits are the default settings of our soul. When we do not consciously plan our behavior we are taken over by habit. It is easier to operate by habit, also sometimes called our instinct, than it is to consciously choose each act. Therefore perhaps the most powerful part of our lives is that box of mental auto-choices we call our habits. Be sure that you are choosing to reap the result of holy habits, not unholy ones.

Many things can become habits. Among the normal "good habits" are: neatness, responsibility, politeness, and so on. Among the "bad habits" are: smoking, being late, over eating, being messy, and many others. Most self-help organizations, secular counselors, and secular books agree on the idea of bad habits. Here is a standard statement of them:

Bad habits, addiction and healthy habits are subconscious behaviors formed through repetition.

It takes about 21 days of determination and discipline to change or form a new habit. Some of these that have been ingrained so deep in the brain will take a lot longer. This is why there are support groups and tools to help people with addictive behavior. Some people can't do it alone or have no willpower.

List of bad habits...

Nail biting; Smoking; Borrowing money; Procrastination; Overeating or food addiction; Desiring something for nothing ; Compulsive shopping; Binge drinking or habitual intoxication; Gambling; Drug addiction (<http://www.about-personal-growth.com/bad-habits.html>)

David had some of the most amazing habits: they were his chosen responses that reflected his devotion to God. These auto-choice habits were what we would call Holy Habits: habits that cultivated holy living, holy actions, and holy responses to everyday situations David faced.

Holy Habits

Much of David's world was so much like our lives today. God hasn't changed, nor will He. So if David's cultivated habits pleased God, they still will. If David's habits formed him

into a young man that caught God's attention so much that He said, "There is a man that does what I want done. David is following my heart's desires"—then shouldn't you and I want to cultivate similar habits?

David cultivated habits of personal conduct and consecration. These habits are captured in **Psalm 101** which can also be called David's Plan for Purity. He fled to the Lord as his refuge from sins of his youth.

This Psalm may be written in his youth as a record of his choice of "good habits" for his young years or later when he starts his career as King—as a testimony of God's faithfulness in the past and a reaffirmation of his consecration to the Lord.

But no matter when these words came to David, they are directly from God, inspired as a record from David's life that can transform our lives if we let them. Please stand with me and consider David's challenge to us for:

Reaping the Results Of Holy Habits

Psalm 101
A Psalm of David.

*1 I will sing of mercy and justice;
To You, O LORD, I will sing praises.*

*2 I will behave wisely in a perfect way.
Oh, when will You come to me?
I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.*

*3 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes;
I hate the work of those who fall away;
It shall not cling to me.*

*4 A perverse heart shall depart from me;
I will not know wickedness.*

*5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor,
Him I will destroy;
The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart,
Him I will not endure.*

*6 My eyes shall be on the faithful of the land,
That they may dwell with me;
He who walks in a perfect way,
He shall serve me.*

*7 He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house;
He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence.*

*8 Early I will destroy all the wicked of the land,
That I may cut off all the evildoers from the city of the LORD.*

In this Psalm David revealed a list of choices for his growing years, that became his habits—his pathway to a godly life. We could even say that *Psalm 101* was David's pact for purity. He fled to the Lord as his refuge from sins of his youth.

Habits start With Personal Choices

If you look carefully you can see the intensely personal nature of this Psalm. David speaks of his own internal workings of the will. He sets forth a *pathway to a life of godly habits starts with a series* of personal choices or resolves of holiness to God.

Note with me as you follow along in this Psalm the nine "I wills" (1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a, 4b, 5b, 5c, 8a).

*Psalm 101
A Psalm of David.*

*1 **I will sing** of mercy and justice;
To You, O LORD, **I will sing** praises.*

*2 **I will behave** wisely in a perfect way. [give heed to (NAS); ponder (ESV); careful to lead (NIV)] Oh, when will You come to me? **I will walk** within my house with a perfect heart. [integrity (NAS/ESV) blameless heart (NIV)]*

*3 **I will set** nothing wicked before my eyes; [no worthless thing (NAS); anything that is worthless (ESV); no vile thing (NIV)] I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me.*

*4 A perverse heart shall depart from me; **I will not know** wickedness. [I will have nothing to do with evil (NIV)]*

*5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, Him **I will destroy**; The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart, Him **I will not endure**.*

6 My eyes shall be on the faithful of the land, That they may dwell with me; He who walks in a perfect way, He shall serve me. 7 He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence.

*8 Early **I will destroy** all the wicked of the land, That I may cut off all the evildoers from the city of the LORD.*

From those repeated choices David was making formed a lifetime of habits. Be careful

what you cultivate because:

Habits are Powerful

William James (1842-1910) the pioneering American psychologist, in his classic *Principles of Psychology*, despite being a secular, unsaved psychologist observed some amazing truths that God has built into the chemical makeup of humans, put it this way:

Could the young but realize how soon they will become mere walking bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state.

We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, and never to be undone. Every smallest stroke or virtue or vice leaves its ever so little scar. The drunken Rip Van Winkle, in Jefferson's play, excuses himself for every fresh dereliction by saying, "I won't count this time!"

Well! He may not count it, but it is being counted nonetheless. Down among his nerve cells and fibers the molecules are counting it, registering and storing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes.

Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, wiped out. Of course, this has its good side as well as its bad one.¹

So here in Psalm 101 we can trace the six very powerful habits that David cultivated as his own choices to live before a Holy God in daily, personal life.

1. **Habit One:** David **sought personal integrity** as his goal v.1-2b. *1 I will sing of mercy and justice; To You, O LORD, I will sing praises. 2 **I will behave** wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when will You come to me? **I will walk** within my house with a perfect heart.* Joseph God sees me?

2. **Habit Two:** David **made a personal pact of purity** for his life and conduct v. 3a. Like the holy vows of marriage, like the promises to a friend or loved one: David said what God wanted from him. v. *3a **I will set** nothing wicked before my eyes;*

Remember how the other key versions translated these words: I will set no worthless thing (NAS); anything that is worthless (ESV); no vile thing (NIV)]

*Is that statement something that would please God? Yes or No? **YES!***

Is that statement a reasonable choice that a servant of God should make? Yes or No? YES

Have you said that yet to God? Why not now?

¹ William James, *Principles of Psychology* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 1952), p. 83.

Then look down at your Bible right now and read the first half of verse 3 aloud to God.

Now, bow and ask God for the grace to obey what you just promised to Him when you sit before a television, computer, movie, or game.

If it is wicked, get up and go away, turn it off, or whatever it takes to SET NOTHING WORTHLESS, VILE or WICKED before your eyes.

3. **Habit Three:** David had a **habit of scraping off anything displeasing to the Lord from his life** (like coming in from the horse barn; like barnacles on a boat; like taking a shower before a date) in v. 3b.

*v. 3b I hate the work of those who fall away; **It shall not cling to me.***

We can't stop sinning but we can stop wallowing, soaking, persisting in sin.

4. **Habit Four:** David **chose to limit his exposure to evil** and things that would displease the Lord in v. 4-5. He specifically says any sin I will not look at (v. 3 'nothing wicked before my eyes' and v. 4b 'not know [experience for myself] wickedness').

*4 A perverse heart shall depart from me; **I will not know** wickedness. 5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, Him **I will destroy**; The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart, Him **I will not endure.***

5. **Habit Five:** David **sought to always have proper heroes** to look up to and emulate in v. 6.

As Psalm 1 says, he did not want to walk, stand, or sit with evildoers.

6 My eyes shall be on the faithful of the land, That they may dwell with me; He who walks in a perfect way, He shall serve me.

6. **Habit Six:** David had a **lifelong plan to purge evil** from being around his life and acceptable in his presence v. 7-8. (Like Paul having the Ephesians burn anything to do with Satan—so we must not have pornographic or occultic books, videos, games, and music in our homes, cars, computers, lives or minds.)

*7 He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence. 8 Early **I will destroy** all the wicked of the land, That I may cut off all the evildoers from the city of the LORD.*

To apply this final habit, please turn with me to Acts 19:17-20.

Make a Habit of

Renouncing the Darkness

In Acts 19 we see the turning point of Paul's ministry in Ephesus. The power of darkness was broken. Satan's house was divided. Christ triumphantly opened the door to great ministry through this church.

*Acts 19:17-18 This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. 19 Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So **the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.***

The most remarkable facet of Paul's ministry to this church is that when Paul taught the Ephesian believers about the strategies of Satan, they collected and burned all of the objects associated with demonic and satanic contact.

The level of their desire to repent and follow the Lord was seen in this costly choice to rid their lives of anything that displeased Him. Their example recorded by God in His Word should stir us to ask, "Have we likewise carefully purged out of our lives anything that displeases the Lord?"

As you look back at v. 19, doesn't that verse amaze you? What did God lead Paul to do to prompt such a huge response in public with such great sacrifice involved?

God's Word records exactly what Paul told them that made them respond so dramatically to the evil around them. What Paul taught made them go home, search out, gather and BURN all of their expensive media.

Aren't you glad that the Holy Spirit has captured for each of us Paul's message that those saints heard and responded to? It is in the Epistle to the Ephesians, where Paul wrote down the messages God wanted them to remember and us to hear with them.

Turn with me to Ephesians 4:22-24, and remember again that we are called to--

Make a Habit of Shedding the Old Life

The heart of the message Paul taught in Ephesus, that prompted Acts 18 is captured in the words of Ephesians 4:22-24. That same message of Christ's Lordship must fill our lives, leading to the removal of any part of our lives that displeases God. There are three clear choices we must make!

Look again with me at Ephesians 4:22-24:

that you **put off**, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and **be renewed** in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you **put on** the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Three Powerful Habits

- First, Paul is asking believers **to start a habit of grace-prompted shedding**. This is “putting off” old habits like old clothes are so comfortable and fit us so well, that we often forget that we even have them on again—until the Spirit of God convicts us. Paul is reminding us that those who will live a life holy to the Lord must repeatedly put off the old ways.

If we struggle with anger, anger must be shed daily; and if we struggle with pride, pride must daily be shed. This is also the choice we must make for lust, greed, fear and any other byproducts of our flesh. Often believers fail to grow in their spiritual lives because they don’t understand the life-long need to shed or “put off” our old sins on a daily basis.

- Second, in v. 23 Paul is asking them **to start a habit of grace-prompted thinking**. Choices to put off old ways flow from our renewed minds. Just as Romans 12:2 says we are “transformed by the renewing of our minds”. When we think godly, we behave godly; or when we believe right, we behave right.

God’s plan for our minds always starts with us personally reading and studying His Word. Then from that flows our personal request to God’s Spirit, asking Him to renew our minds. As we prayerfully read we have in our minds God’s thoughts. As we submit to God’s desires through His Word—He infuses His mind into ours. Paul said that we can have the mind of Christ by this constant renewal process. A grace-energized mind comes as believers regularly, hopefully daily get God’s Word into their hearts and minds.

A simple goal would be to listen to God’s voice all the way through His Word once each year. This is an imperative for us, reading the Bible expectantly and asking God to speak to us by His Spirit each day in His Word.

- Lastly, in v. 24 Paul is asking them **to start a habit of grace-prompted wearing**. This is the putting on: “... and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (v. 24).

God makes it clear that it is not enough to merely put off old fleshly habits, they must be replaced with the newness of Christ in wearing His love, wearing His peace, etc. (Galatians 5:22). If I lose my temper with my wife or children, and

repent and put it off—that is not enough unless I also put on Christ's love and patience also!²

God is at work in us His children, and energized by His grace we must work at living out this new life Phil. 2:12-13). Our daily task is getting dressed in our divine clothes—spiritually speaking clothes do make the man, and the woman.

The Church Unleashed

One final point that is perhaps the most important one of all for each of us: when the church cleans house, when believers renounce hidden sins, when there is a banishment of all hypocrisy and pretense, and genuine holiness begins to permeate Christ's church—*unbelievers become attracted to this new way of life.*

The power of the early church was simply genuine holiness.

Energized by grace they magnified Christ, God's Word prevailed in them, and they lived consecrated lives. The Spirit of God moved unhindered, flowed unquenched and God got all the glory.

No one competed for the credit, no one sought to be in control.

God reigned, the Spirit moved, and Christ was magnified.

They had caught the message of Ephesians 4:22-24. They put off, renewed, and put on the new—just as God told them to do. The choice is still ours.

We must daily strip off any return of the rotting garments of the old life.

We must personally reject any hint of sensuality, selfishness, pride, materialism, and bitterness in our lives.

We must eat God's Word and ask for renewed minds by His Spirit.

We must work out our own salvation by choosing to do the disciplines that will develop a Biblical mind.

We must put on and wear our new, shining garments of light each day, and live the new us we became in Christ.

God's Word explains to us what makes Christ's church powerful in any culture. It is when:

² All of this is through God's grace. Works have no place in obtaining salvation or in gaining merit in the Christian life. The Christian life is sola gratia, grace alone. Nevertheless, the Apostle Paul said, "continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Philippians 2:12b, 13). Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Ephesians—The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books) 1997.

- **God's Son is magnified, and**
- **God's People are consecrated, then**
- **God's Word prevailed.**

Jesus was magnified and God's Word prevailed in this group of consecrated people in the New Testament church at Ephesus. What a combination to have for the Lord in any generation. That powerful ministry was the result of a purged and obedient local church.

One dear pastor wrote these words:

"What would be burned today if the Spirit's conviction swept this church?

I think some DVD's, magazines, and videos would be quietly removed from out-of-the-way desk drawers or certain novels from the family bookshelves.

Perhaps some television shows, movies, web sites, radio stations, and video games would be boycotted.

Some people would ask others to pray that they would be set free from whatever is dragging them down.

And many would come to Christ for forgiveness of sin and deliverance from the eternal wrath of God³".

As you bow before the Lord, and prepare your heart for the rest of this new week we started today—why not rid your life of anything displeasing to God?

³ Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Ephesians—The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books) 1997.

Psalm 101 (NKJV)	Psalm 101 (NASB)	Psalm 101 (ESV)	Psalm 101 (NIV)
<p>¹ I will sing of mercy and justice; To You, O LORD, I will sing praises.</p> <p>² I will behave wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.</p> <p>³ I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me.</p> <p>⁴ A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will not know wickedness.</p> <p>⁵ Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, Him I will destroy; The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart, Him I will not endure.</p> <p>⁶ My eyes <i>shall be</i> on the faithful of the land, That they may dwell with me; He who walks in a perfect way, He shall serve me.</p> <p>⁷ He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence.</p> <p>⁸ Early I will destroy all the wicked of the land, That I may cut off all the evildoers from the city of the LORD.</p>	<p>¹I will ^(A)sing of lovingkindness and justice, To You, O LORD, I will sing praises.</p> <p>²I will ^(B)give heed to the ^(a)blameless way When will You come to me? I will walk within my house in the ^(C)integrity of my heart.</p> <p>³I will set no ^(D)worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who ^(E)fall away; It shall not fasten its grip on me.</p> <p>⁴A ^(E)perverse heart shall depart from me; I will know no evil.</p> <p>⁵Whoever secretly ^(G)slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; No one who has a ^(H)haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure.</p> <p>⁶My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; He who walks in a ^{(b)(I)}blameless way is the one who will minister to me.</p> <p>⁷He who ^(I)practices deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who speaks falsehood ^(K)shall not maintain his position before me.</p> <p>⁸^(L)Every morning I will ^{(c)(M)}destroy all the wicked of the land, So as to ^(N)cut off from the ^(O)city of the LORD all those who do iniquity.</p>	<p>¹I will sing of^(A) steadfast love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will make music.</p> <p>²I will^(B) ponder the way^(C) that is blameless. Oh when will you^(D) come to me? I will^(E) walk with^(E) integrity of heart within my house;</p> <p>³I will not set before my eyes anything^(G) that is worthless. I hate the work of those who^(H) fall away; it shall not cling to me.</p> <p>⁴^(I) A perverse heart shall be far from me; I will^(J) know nothing of evil.</p> <p>⁵Whoever slanders his neighbor^(K) secretly I will^(L) destroy. Whoever has a^(M) haughty look and an^(N) arrogant heart I will not endure.</p> <p>⁶I will look with favor on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; he who walks in^(O) the way that is blameless shall minister to me.</p> <p>⁷No one who^(P) practices deceit shall dwell in my house; no one who utters lies shall^(Q) continue before my eyes.</p> <p>⁸^(R) Morning by morning I will destroy all the wicked in the land, ^(S) cutting off all^(T) the evildoers</p>	<p>¹ I will sing of your love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will sing praise.</p> <p>² I will be careful to lead a blameless life— when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with blameless heart.</p> <p>³ I will set before my eyes no vile thing. The deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to me.</p> <p>⁴ Men of perverse heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with evil.</p> <p>⁵ Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret, him will I put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, him will I not endure.</p> <p>⁶ My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; he whose walk is blameless will minister to me.</p> <p>⁷ No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence.</p> <p>⁸ Every morning I will put to silence all the wicked in the land; I will cut off every evildoer from the city of the LORD.</p>

		from ^(U) the city of the LORD.	
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PERIOD 1: DAVID FROM THE LONELY DAYS OF HIS YOUTH WRITES THREE INCREDIBLE PSALMS (8, 19, 23).

From his hours out in the wilderness watching sheep and the long nights guarding them under the stars as a young shepherd boy, David was inspired (after the Spirit came upon him in I Samuel 16:13), to write the Spirit prompted lessons of his life we have now in the book of Psalms.

Psalm 19:
Pleasing God, not pleasing myself.

Psalm 23:
Following the Good Shepherd for all my Life.

Psalm 8:
Living for the Glory of His Name not mine.

PERIOD 2: FROM HIS LONELY, STRUGGLING, YEARS AS A FUGITIVE DAVID WRITES TWENTY-THREE DIFFERENT PSALMS (4, 7, 11, 13, 16-17, 31, 34-36, 39-40, 52-54, 56-57, 59, 63-64, 70, AND 141-142).

The context of these dark and lonely days puts a beautiful frame around each of these Psalms. The prayers, the cries for help, and the affirmations of God's faithfulness are clearer, dearer, and more memorable from those dark and lonely hours in David's life. David repeats in as many ways as possible that: "All the time God is good"; and "God is good, all the time". Before we read the story, practice with me the message. I'll say: "God is good" and you say: "All the time". And then I'll say: "All the time" and you say: "God is good". Ready?

**All the Time (God is good)
God is good (All the time).**

PERIOD 3: FROM THE LONELY YEARS OF HIS GREAT CAREER: PSALMS 15, 18, 24, 32, 38, 51, 68, 101, 132...

II Samuel 5/1st Samuel 16.13: Next we find David's testimony of God's closeness during life as David was in his peak or his strong years/career. David becomes King (II

Samuel) and **David explains his habits as a young man that fortified him for Goliath, a life of hardship and for being so useful to God.** He explains this in

- **David also had made some vows for personal conduct and consecration.** These resolves (much like Jonathan Edwards) are captured in **Psalm 101** which can be called David's pact for purity. He fled to the Lord as his refuge from sins of his youth. Also probably written when he starts his career as King—as a testimony of God's faithfulness in the past and a reaffirmation of his consecration to the Lord. Some key truths from this Psalm are: The *pathway to a godly life* contains personal choices or resolves of holiness to God. Note the seven "I wills" (2a, 2b, 3a, 4b, 5b, 5c, 8a). David **sought personal integrity** as his goal v.2b. David **made a personal pact of purity** for his life and conduct v. 3a. David had a **habit of scraping off anything displeasing to the Lord from his life** (like coming in from the horse barn; like barnacles on a boat; like taking a shower before a date) in v. 3b. David **chose to limit his exposure to evil** and things that would displease the Lord in v. 4-5. He specifically says any sin I will not look at (v. 3 'nothing wicked before my eyes' and v. 4b 'not know [experience for myself] wickedness'). David **sought to always have proper heroes** to look up to and emulate in v. 6a. David had a **life long plan to purge evil** from being around his life and acceptable in his presence v. 8. (Like Paul having the Ephesians burn anything to do with Satan—so we must not have pornographic or occultic books, videos, games, and music in our homes, cars, computers, lives or minds.)

II Samuel 6: **David feels the loneliness of those struggling years of unending work in his career.** David writes of his desires to serve the Lord as he enters his career as King David over Israel. He writes:

- **Psalm 15, 24, 68** in this time. II Samuel 6. One special note on the Psalms is the usage of the Psalms in the daily Temple worship from Solomon's time through the time of Christ. Here are the Psalms that were sung⁴ each day at the Temple: Sunday—Psalm 24. Monday—Psalm 48. Tuesday—Psalm 82. Wednesday—Psalm 94. Thursday—Psalm 81. Friday—Psalm 93. Saturday—the Sabbath Psalm 92. Psalm 15 seems to be the outline Jesus used for the Sermon on the Mount. That sermon follows quite closely⁵ the flow of this Psalm.
- **Psalm 101** was David's pact for purity. He fled to the Lord as his refuge from sins of his youth.
- **Psalm 132** may be David's confession after being anointed King by Samuel and looking back and remembering God's Hand on his life.

⁴ John Phillips, Exploring the Psalms, vol. 1, page 180.

⁵ John Phillips, Exploring the Psalms, vol. 1, page 121.