

Living a Righteous Life

“Suppose there is a righteous man who does what is just and right. . . . He follows my decrees and faithfully keeps my laws.” (Ezekiel 18:5, 9)

Scripture: Ezekiel 18:5–9

Song: “Lord, I Need You”

Three of my former co-worker’s children were in the navy. Each day she’d take a pen from her desk and write them letters. After a few years, she gave notice she was leaving. As she tied up loose ends, I saw her take a bundle of pens from her purse and put them in her desk drawer. When I inquired about it, she shared she had often distractedly popped the pens from her desk into her purse after writing notes. They weren’t hers to keep, and she was returning them to the company. That small act of honesty impacted me greatly. She was a righteous woman who knew that integrity—even when it involved returning a few pens—was of utmost importance.

In today’s passage, the Lord shares the behaviors of a righteous person—someone who does what is just and right in every aspect of their life, great and small, a person who follows God’s decrees and faithfully keeps His laws.

While no one can keep every law (which is why Jesus died as a sacrifice for us), we are called to be faithful—even when it comes to small things like returning pens.

Father, thank You for examples of righteousness that show me how to honor You. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

June 8–14. **Toni Campbell** is a speaker, award-winning author on church outreach, and serves as Benevolence Director at her church.

Trusting a God Who Sees

She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: “You are the God who sees me.” (Genesis 16:13)

Scripture: Genesis 16:1, 4–16

Song: “God Is With Us”

One night I sat alone in my car crying out to God. In frustration, I compared Him to the moon, saying He was immense and beautiful but a million miles away. I laid out specific laments and eventually got out of my car. A neighbor drove up with her sister, whom I’d never met, saying God led them to come pray for me. The sister spoke no English but prayed over me while my neighbor translated. Everything I’d cried out to God in my car, her sister addressed in her prayer—to the word. I wept anew, knowing this was no coincidence. Through a stranger, God let me know He saw me and heard my cry.

Hagar was feeling abandoned and abused as she ran into the desert. The angel of the Lord met her where she was and let her know she had been heard. There’s no indication that her circumstances were any different when she went back, but now she had hope. God had seen her and given her the strength to face her hardships.

If you are feeling unseen today, know that God sees you and hears every prayer. Psalm 56:8 says, “You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book” (NLT).

Father, thank You that I don’t have to face this world and my hardships alone. You are the God who sees and cares for me. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Keeping Wise Counsel

My son, keep your father's command and do not forsake your mother's teaching. (Proverbs 6:20)

Scripture: Proverbs 6:20–22

Song: “The Blessing”

As a child, I was basically a rule-follower. But as an older teen, I challenged my parents in one particular area, thinking I was mature enough to know what was best for me. In the end, going against their instruction led to years of difficulty and heartache for me that could have been avoided.

This passage implores children to keep their parents' teaching so close that it is bound on their heart and fastened around their neck, never to be forgotten. The guidance is not given to weigh children down or burden them. It's not done in a “because I said so” manner but provided out of care and concern. Verse 23 says, “For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life.”

God has tasked parents with the job of raising their children to love Him, respect others, and to exercise good judgment. When we ignore these teachings, we do so at our own peril. As much as we may think we're mature enough to know what is best, others have seen more of life and want to spare us grief when it's within their power to do so.

Father, thank You for the gift of people who care enough to teach, discipline, and love me even when I disagree. Help me to respect their wise counsel. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Praising the Lord

Let the name of the LORD be praised, both now and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the LORD is to be praised. (Psalm 113:2–3)

Scripture: Psalm 113

Song: “From the Rising of the Sun”

I once heard a challenging question—what if you woke up tomorrow with only the things you thanked God for today? It’s a sobering thought, and I’m guessing we might find ourselves devoid of things like jobs, creature comforts, and even people when the sun rose. Today’s passage begs a similar question—what might our attitude be like if we praised God every minute of every day?

In just nine verses, this psalm directs us seven times to praise or exalt the Lord. We’re reminded there is no one like Him, no one else deserving of our praise. And while God is enthroned in the heavens, He still stoops down to see our needs and care for us all. Psalm 113 gives us one simple command with no end—now and forevermore from daybreak to sunset—praise Him because He is worthy of our praise.

It may sound daunting to always praise, but let’s start today. Each time you’re tempted to complain, praise God for all He has done and all that He is. Then praise Him with gratitude each time you see or hear something that brings you joy. When we praise God in all things, we’ll quickly develop an attitude of gratitude.

Father, I praise You for who You are. I’m grateful You love and protect me through every circumstance. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Comforting like a Mother

“As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 66:13)

Scripture: Isaiah 66:9–13

Song: “In Christ Alone”

Charles Spurgeon once made an astute observation. He said, “A father can comfort, but I think he is not much at home in the work. When God speaks about His pity, He compares Himself to the father. But when He speaks about comfort, He selects the mother. There is placed in the mother’s tender heart a power of sympathy, and very soon she finds the word or gives the touch that will meet her darling’s case and cheer its troubled soul.”

Anyone who can harken back to their childhood and remember a time when their mom was able to take the sting out of a hurt—emotional, relational, or physical—can understand the picture this Scripture is painting. There is something special about a mother’s love for her child and the comfort it brings.

God is speaking to Israel, and by extension, to us today about His protection, peace, and great love. He is also reminding us that He is faithful and true to bring His promises to fruition. When He sets things in motion, He brings them to completion. He not only provides but does so with overflowing abundance, like a mother who pours out all her love and attention on her child.

Father, thank You for lavishing Your love and comfort upon Your people Israel and for grafting me into Your greater family. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Rejoicing in God's Deliverance

And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.” (Luke 1:46–49)

Scripture: Luke 1:46–55

Song: “Blessings”

We see it all over social media: #blessed. We say we're “blessed” when we get a new job or car, go on an exciting vacation, or even eat a fancy meal at a nice restaurant. *Blessed* has become an over-used and misinterpreted word.

Mary was poor, unmarried, and pregnant in a culture that stoned women for being in that situation. At best, she'd be an outcast looked upon with suspicion by anyone doing the pregnancy math. Yet, despite the personal cost, she considered herself blessed because she was chosen to give birth to the Messiah. She rightly considered that a great thing. Mary was thankful to God because she knew her child would bring the deliverance His people had been praying for over hundreds of years.

Blessings aren't always wrapped up as financial windfalls and nice things. Often blessings come when we surrender our will even if things are uncomfortable and there's a personal cost. God can take what appears to be a hardship on the outside and create for us a beautiful blessing that showcases His glory and power.

Father, help my spirit to rejoice in You when I'm called to a hard task. I know You'll bless me when I surrender my life to Your perfect will. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Praying for Provision

And she made a vow, saying, “LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and . . . give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD.” (1 Samuel 1:11)

Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:9–20, 25

Song: “Standing on the Promises”

Years ago, I stopped making New Year’s resolutions. Frustrated by my inability to keep well-meaning vows to lose weight or get organized, I prayed God would give me a meaningful word to pray over and meditate on during the coming year. He provided words like *consistency, delight, abundance, and trust*.

Hannah wanted a child so badly she was willing to make a seemingly impossible vow . . . not to herself but to God, and she was faithful to keep it. She promised to give that child back to God *forever*. As a mom of two who prayed her kids would serve God, I don’t think I could have handed them off as veritable babies, seeing them just once a year.

We need to be mindful that promises to God should never be made lightly. The typical “God, help me, and I promise to go to church every day for the rest of my life” vow is not practical, sustainable, or advisable. God doesn’t make promises to us that He doesn’t keep, and He wants us to measure our words carefully. Hannah weighed the cost, and God remembered her sincere prayers, providing the desire of her heart.

Father, help me not to make promises lightly, but to sincerely seek to align my will with Yours as I trust You to provide. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.