

*Read also Romans 8:28-34. Check out the service at [www.fpcd.org](http://www.fpcd.org).*

Have you ever had someone try to persuade you to do something? Have you ever been admonished by someone?

*You are going to the gym today, aren't you? It's January 8—a new year, new goals! You can't give up already!*

That person is trying to get you to step up and take charge.

When I was a child and I did something wrong, my mother used to say, “Go into your room and give yourself a good talking to.”

What was she saying?

She was saying take some responsibility for doing the right thing. Self-govern. She wanted to shift the burden of my behavior from herself into my own hands. She knew that she would be around only for a short period of my life as the tutor. I would need to be able to control myself.

Our Scripture today begins with David, the writer, tutoring himself.

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits” (Ps 103:1-2).

*Bless the Lord, self!* God is magnificently helpful in life, so bless the Lord!

What are you doing to tutor yourself or to keep yourself on the right track for this New Year so that you do not fall away from close attachment to the Lord? What are you going to do to nurture your relationship with God so that it is vibrant, lively, and helpful to your daily life?

David believed that begins by recognizing and acknowledging all the benefits of being a believer. So he listed them. He talked about them to himself—he recites them to us! Let's hear it: (Ps 103:1-5)

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits—who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Consider your blessings over the past year. What did a friend do for you? What did you do for a friend? It's rewarding to count your blessings.

Take a look at the Red Hymnal, page 563. Let's read verse 1 together:

When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,  
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,

Count your many blessings, name them one by one,  
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
Count your blessings, see what God has done!  
Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

Take the sheet of paper in your bulletin and write down one blessing. Let David's blessings be your guide. Bring your card forward and place it in the basket when you take communion as your testimony. Next week we will look at some of our blessings.

This is why we should bless God.

*God forgives, again and again . . .*

*God heals . . .*

*God redeems your life and circumstances . . .*

*God crowns you with his personal love and compassion . . .*

*God satisfies you with good throughout your life . . .*

*God renews your youthfulness.*

You must notice that these are present tense, active verbs. That implies that living with God, being connected with God, relying on God every day means these blessings are continuous in your life.

But if you know David's story, you realize he did not always experience blessing. David was oppressed and threatened by King Saul. His life was often in danger. David's wife left him. His children had major problems.

David had an infant son who was deathly ill. David wept, prayed, and fasted for him. Yet the boy died. This was a child of adultery, so he could have blamed himself. But he recognized that every person's life is in God's hands, and that believers will meet again in heaven. So David got up, went to church, and worshipped. David's was a believer who knew the assurance of eternity.

These things would defeat most of us. David tells us how he handled all:

The LORD works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him. (Ps 103:6-13)

Can you trust God is at work in your life's circumstances and setbacks, that God works it all together for good, and redeems your life from the pit?

Paul calls our life struggles “momentary afflictions, which prepare us for an eternal weight of glory beyond measure.” He adds, “Look at what cannot be seen, because what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.” (see 2 Cor. 4:17-18)

We are God’s beloved. Moses wrote:

“The beloved of the Lord rests in safety-- the High God surrounds him all day long-- the beloved rests between his shoulders” (Deut. 33:12).

Have you ever been to a park or walking with a child who gets tired and they say, ‘carry me, carry me!’ and you squat down, pick them up on your back and give them a piggyback ride?

God says, “I will give my beloved—that’s you—a piggyback ride when you are tired.—you will be lifted up between God’s shoulders and He carries you through your difficult walk.

David wrote these words around 3,000 years ago.

For he knows how we were made; he remembers that we are dust. As for mortals, their days are like grass; they flourish like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments. (Ps 103:14-18)

Blessing. Is it a part of your life? What are you doing this year to help you connect with God’s incredible, healing blessings? What are you doing to bless God for God’s incredible, healing love? Keeping his blessings before you just might change your life.

“The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, obedient to his spoken word. Bless the Lord, all his hosts, his ministers that do his will. Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul” (Ps 103:19-22).

AMEN

**Romans 8:28-34** <sup>NLT</sup> <sup>28</sup> And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. <sup>29</sup> For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. <sup>30</sup> And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory. <sup>31</sup> What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? <sup>32</sup> Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? <sup>33</sup> Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one-- for God himself has given us right standing with himself. <sup>34</sup> Who then will condemn us? No one-- for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.