

FINDING HOPE

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Psalm 71 was written at a low point in David's life. He was getting older and people were plotting to take the throne from him. He wrote: *"For my enemies are whispering against me. They are plotting together to kill me. They say, "God has abandoned him. Let's go and get him, for no one will help him now."* (Psalm 71:10-11)

In spite of this real danger—despite the circumstances of his life, despite the fact that people are plotting to kill him—David made a choice.

Processing Life

We have been trained to process life based on the way we FEEL. We think we must feel love for love to exist. We think we must feel wanted to truly be chosen. We think we must feel God's presence for Him to really be close. But God never meant for us to *feel* our way to Him. He wants us to TRUST Him.

God wants us to stand on the absolute truth that He is with us, because He *promised* He would be, no matter how our feelings may betray that reality. "When I process life through my feelings, I am left deceived and disillusioned. When I process life through God's truth, I am divinely comforted by His love and made confident in His calling on my life." (Lysa TerKuerst)

Whatever times I didn't feel close to God, I used to think God must not be close to me. Now, I say to myself: "God *is* close, and if I choose to be close in response, He'll rearrange my feelings."

An Act of the Will

David acted on the same principle. We can see it in his six "I will's":

Psalm 71:14 "But I will keep on hoping for your help;

I will praise you more and more.

¹⁵ *I will tell everyone about your righteousness.*

All day long I will proclaim your saving power,

for I am overwhelmed by how much you have done for me.

¹⁶ *I will praise your mighty deeds, O Sovereign LORD.*

I will tell everyone that you alone are just and good.

David did not always FEEL like praising God; nevertheless, he CHOSE to.

Some folks equate an act of the will with “self-will” or New Age religion. About this, I have two things to say.

1. Your will—your ability to choose how you will act—may be the part of you that most closely expresses the image of God.

For most people, “image” is tied to visible things, like size, shape, and color. God made all that is visible, AND all that is invisible (that is, invisible to the naked eye, or at least, remaining, for the time being, unseen, or perhaps, out of sight).

However, God’s image in each of us is invisible to the natural eye. It has neither size, nor shape, nor location (as we usually think of these things), yet it can be recognized by the spirit of those who belong to Christ, who are familiar with God.

Animals act by instinct and feeling. People can do more.

God has feelings, but His feelings do not dictate His actions. Deeper than His feelings is His heart. God is holy. God is just. God is love. These are not feelings; we shall call them principles. Guiding principles of the heart.

God may act according to these principles, without regard for His feelings. For instance, the Bible says (Psalm 7:12): “[God] is angry with the wicked every day.” Yet, He does not destroy the wicked every day, but He judges them righteously. He acts according to righteousness.

When we act by our volition—our power to choose and our will—as guided by heart principles we have learned from God’s Word, then we are acting like the children of God.

2. God, in His infinite wisdom and love, has given us the freedom to choose—our will. When you use your will appropriately, in sync with God’s will for your life, you will not dishonor God—actually, you will honor Him.

When you act according to your will (instead of your feelings, or even your reason), based upon the principles of God’s heart as revealed in the Scriptures, you are acting in faith—and you honor the Lord. And this pleases Him.

When circumstances have arrayed themselves against you, you need a breakthrough! You have prayed for God to intervene. You have trusted Him for the victory. Now *you* must do *your* part so that He may accomplish that victory for you.

Your breakthrough will come when you stop allowing how you FEEL determine how you will ACT and what you will DO.

David felt FEAR, but he chose to act in FAITH.

What about you? What are the circumstances of your life doing on the inside of you? Are they generating fear, anxiety, uncertainty, worry, withdrawal, or acting out? You can do better.

Ask Jesus Christ to strengthen you, so that you may act according to the principles of God's heart, as revealed in His Word. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you so you may set aside those feelings that are contrary to right actions.

I urge you to CHOOSE the six "I will's" that David chose.

- I will keep on hoping.
- I will praise you more and more.
- I will tell everyone about your righteousness.
- I will proclaim your saving power.
- I will praise your mighty deeds.
- I will tell everyone that you alone are just and good.

Keep on Hoping

Don't toss aside your hope! When you hope in God—in what He has promised, even if it takes time—you will not be disappointed. God keeps His word.

And even the interim is not wasted time, for God shapes and strengthens us through our waiting.

James 1:4 For when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

Praise Him More

No matter how much you praise God, you can praise Him more. If the praise you are accustomed to offering is not lifting you today, praise Him more. You may have thought to yourself, "Praise isn't working today," but actually you need to be at a new level; you need to praise God more.

Look for more opportunities, in the ordinary things of life, to acknowledge God, to give God thanks and praise.

Tell of His Righteousness

It may not be “politically correct,” but God’s truth is absolutely right. Don’t be intimidated. If God’s people are silent, who will tell others of God’s righteousness? Do so appropriately, and considerately, but DO IT!

People need to hear it. And you need to tell it.

Proclaim His Saving Power

Do you know someone who is hurting, confused, frustrated, lost? Who will tell them that there is a Savior who cares and who can help? Why not you?

Romans 10:14 *But how can they call on Him to save them unless they believe in Him? And how can they believe in Him if they have never heard about Him? And how can they hear about Him unless someone tells them?*

People are looking for such a Savior. Would you be one who tells others about Christ’s saving power?

Praise His Mighty Deeds

Whenever you see a “mighty deed” that God has done—a miracle of protection or provision—stop and give Him praise.

Don’t just say, “Wow!” Any fool can do that. Acknowledge God! Point others to Him as the Author of that deed, and give Him praise.

Tell that He is Just and Good

We often think of “justice” and “goodness” as opposites. Among humans, they usually are mutually exclusive, but God can manage *both!* His acts of justice are good, and His acts of goodness are just. That’s what He does!

Help others to see this. And help them to understand that “He *alone*” works life that way. In this way, you will exalt God as the wonder-worker that He is, and help others to trust Him more.

Practice Makes Progress

If you practice David's six "I wills," I predict an amazing spiritual turnaround inside of you! Your thoughts and feelings will begin to conform to the truth of God's Word. What God has said about you will begin to become your reality.

It will not fall on you like ripe cherries off a tree. *You* have a part in it. God has promised and provided everything you need. Now do your part to obtain it: trust and obey.

Don't let the circumstances of your life determine the course of your life... You get to CHOOSE!
That's God's gift to you.