

Counting Blessings instead of Beans

Introduction

This lesson is not specifically for folks who work in accounting/bookkeeping, but for all of us whose challenge it is to live *spiritually* in a *material* world- and to do so appreciatively.

It, therefore, applies to us all...both *individually* and *collectively*. Congregations that are constituted of a preponderance of *bean-counting* individuals can become “number-obsessed” in regard to accounting *physical* things such as dollars in the treasury, or totals for worship or bible-class attendance, baptisms, restorations, or even membership...it is a danger for us all.

But perhaps the biggest problem with becoming or allowing ourselves to become *bean-counters* is that it usually prevents us from *seeing*, let alone *counting*, our blessings.

Title Slide

Let's read David's psalm of praise together

Body Slide

- **Patience, v.1a-** David was never really “poor” monetarily, but he did have to learn to be “happy while you wait” in regard to the deliverance from his enemies, and even spiritual blessings from God. He had to learn to “wait patiently on the Lord” to solve his problems. Impatience causes us to number and obsess over our resources (or lack on them) in times of trouble, rather than merely continuing to *do good* and *not grow weary*, Gal.6:9.
- **Crying Out, v.1b-** This is not an indication of *impatience*, but one of *distress*, *recognition* of *reliance/dependence*, and *persistence*, cf. Luke 18:1-8; 11:5-13.
- **Willingness to be removed from Pit and Mud, v.2a-** God doesn't promise to *lift up from the pit* and *drag out of the mud* those who are perfectly content to remain there, or those who fight against being removed. In our context, there must be a measure of *dissatisfaction* with the mere accumulation and counting of *beans* to be able to have the opportunity to properly see and count *blessings*, cf. Col.3:1-2.
- **Willingness to Stand (once lifted from the pit/mud), v.2b-** Have you ever felt the frustration of helping someone *back on their feet*, financially or spiritually, only to have them jump right back into problems with both feet? This is surely how God feels! To really be able to *count our blessings*, we have to be willing to *stand in them* once God emancipates us- either *physically* or *spiritually*, 2Pet.2:20-22.
- **Singing & Praising God, v.3-** Note the *process* of being able to *count blessings*- 1) Patience; 2) Crying Out; 3) Willingness to be Removed; 4) Willingness to Stand once Removed; and then praising God for the removing/saving us so that others may see, *fear*, and *trust* Him also, cf. 1Pet.2:9-10; Ps.107:1-2,8,15.
- **Trust, v.4-** Ancient Israel and modern Christians had/have a problem with *trusting God*- they/we seemingly constantly look to *self*, *other men/nations*- looking to the *proud* or *profane* rather than truly trusting and relying on God, 1Cor.1:18-25. True *blessings* will never be *found*, let alone *counted* in this way. “*Trust in the Lord and do not lean on your own understanding*,” Prov.3:5.
- **Pay/Give Attention, v.5-** If we've prepared ourselves in the previous ways, then all we really have to do to be able to *count our many blessings* is look around and note them, cf. 71:15; 139:17-18.

Consider your life- *past*, *present*, and *future*, noting God's providential care and provision, and you will be unable to *count the blessings* God has bestowed!