

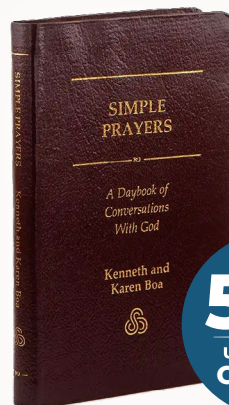
✦ Important Update!

Our ministry is committed to stewarding resources wisely and embracing new opportunities to serve our community more efficiently. As the publishing world becomes increasingly digital, we are excited to announce our intention to transition from mailing physical copies of our teaching letter to providing a digital version instead to those who would prefer this delivery method. This thoughtful change allows us to reduce printing and mailing costs and helps us direct more of your generous gifts toward ministry programs and outreach. Additionally, digital delivery offers several benefits: immediate access to each teaching letter, the convenience of reading on any device, and the ability to revisit resources at your own pace.

We understand that receiving a physical newsletter has been a special tradition, and we greatly appreciate your continued support. Our goal is to make this transition as seamless and beneficial as possible for everyone. By moving to a digital format, we hope to deepen our connection with you and ensure that every gift reaches its greatest potential in advancing our shared mission.

To let us know you're ready to receive a digital copy of the teaching letter by email, will you please send us an email to info@kenboa.org including your name and email address? Thank you!

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GOD'S PROMISES

NO MORE TEARS

Read Revelation 21:2–5

Living in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve enjoyed God's presence and proximity (see Gen. 2:15–23; 3:8–9). Revelation 21:2–5 tells us that we will one day enjoy God's companionship as well. God's people will live with Him in the New Jerusalem, the centerpiece of a new heaven and new earth. Between these two historical bookends, God has lived two other times with humankind.

The first was with the people of ancient Israel. The Israelites, while enslaved in Egypt, had not known God personally for 400 years. They *knew of* the God of their fathers, but they did not *know* Him. As slaves, their tears and cries for freedom went seemingly unheard until God sent Moses to deliver them. As desert nomads, however, they received startling visible evidence of God's personal presence in the tabernacle (Ex. 13:21; 40:34–38) and saw similar evidence later in the temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 8:10–11). But their tears returned often as God judged them for their sin. Finally, the glory of the Lord departed from them (see Ezek. 10 for a symbolic description).

Another 400 years passed before God lived with His people again. Jesus, God's only Son, came and lived on earth, showing God's glory once again to Israel (John 1:14). In spite of God appearing to them as a human, most of the Israelites did not recognize Him in their midst. And this time, Jesus Himself, rather than the people, wept over the pain of sin, the confusion of His people, and the reality of death. While He knew no sin Himself, God's Son knew its consequences and its sting—eternal death. So He died to cover our sin and

was resurrected to bring us new life. He defeated everything that causes men and women to hurt, cry, mourn, and die.

The next time God comes to dwell with us, it will be for good and forever. "There will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things [will] have passed away" (Rev. 21:4). If you have wiped away a tear or massaged an ache or pain in recent days, take heart. Those who know Jesus are destined to live with the God who wipes away every tear and soothes every pain—and keeps the tears and pain away for all eternity.

God's Promise:

Those who live in the New Jerusalem will never cry again.

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SEPTEMBER 2025

REFLECTIONS

A teaching letter encouraging believers to develop a clear mind and a warm heart

THE WELLSPRING OF WISDOM

Father, You have loved me and called me to be Your loyal follower, and to find my true pleasure in Your revealed will. You have given all humanity great personal worth and have called us to a high and holy life of others-centered love. As I pursue You, may I also pursue the best interests of the people You have sovereignly placed in my life, so that I will be an agent of reconciliation and of Your grace. You are the eternal wellspring of wisdom, and I want to drink from the water of Your Word and be satisfied. Keep me from being a stumbling block to others, and empower me to treat people according to their true dignity in Your image rather than according to the world's distorted view of status and worth. Let my love and service of others be an expression of my love and service to You.

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Psalm 103: “Bless the Lord, O My Soul”

O God, I know that if I do not love Thee with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength, I shall love something else with all my heart and mind and soul and strength. Grant that putting Thee first in all my lovings I may be liberated from all lesser loves and loyalties, and have Thee as my first love, my chiefest good and my final joy.

—George Appleton,
Oxford Book of Prayer

Any good that takes first place in our hearts is an idol if it is not the Supreme Good, the living God. We were created to have a relationship with Him, and no other person, possession, or position will ever fully satisfy our deepest longings. The Psalter frequently underscores this truth, and Psalm 103, the first of a group of psalms of praise (Pss. 103–107), reminds us with skill and beauty that God’s lovingkindness is the source of our greatest satisfaction.

A Personal Hymn of Thanksgiving (vv. 1–5)

In the first stanza, David recounts several reasons to praise the Lord from his personal experience of walking with Him:

Bless the LORD, O my soul;
And all that is within me,
 bless His holy name.
Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget none of His benefits;
Who pardons all your iniquities,

Who heals all your diseases;
Who redeems your life from
 the pit;
Who crowns you with
 lovingkindness and
 compassion;
Who satisfies your years
 with good things,
So that your youth is
 renewed like the eagle.
(Ps. 103:1–5)

Over and over again, the Scriptures exhort us to approach God with praise and gratitude for the many benefits He has bestowed on us. But our natural tendency is to forget what He has done in our lives and to focus instead on our problems, pains, and disappointments. When this happens, we view God in light of our circumstances instead of viewing our circumstances in light of His character. We become proud and autonomous (see Deut. 8:12–14, 17–18; 2 Chron. 32:25), or angry and embittered, because we have forgotten that we lay hold of our hope through faith and patience (see Rom. 15:4; Heb. 6:10–11, 18–19; 10:35–36). “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and *forget none of His benefits.*”

A Communal Hymn of Praise (vv. 6–18)

Psalm 103 shifts in the second stanza from an individual thanksgiving to a communal hymn of praise around the theme of God’s loyal love (vv. 6–18). Recalling the exodus and wilderness experience, David writes, “The LORD performs righteous deeds and judgments

for all who are oppressed. He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the sons of Israel” (vv. 6–7). The Israelites knew God’s works, but Moses was intimately acquainted with God’s ways. If we’re honest, many of us, too, know God only through His works, but few of us engage often enough in the disciplines necessary to draw us into an intimate knowledge of His ways. Moses dared ask to see God’s glory, and when the Lord passed by in front of him, God manifested the glory of His presence and character, using words similar to those in the next verses of this psalm (which are, incidentally, also similar to those in Ex. 34:6–7):

The LORD is compassionate
and gracious,
Slow to anger and abounding
in lovingkindness.
He will not always strive
with us;
Nor will He keep His
anger forever.
He has not dealt with us
according to our sins,
Nor rewarded us according
to our iniquities.
(Ps. 103:8–10)

In contrast to humans, who nurse grievances and are quick to quarrel but slow to forgive, “God, infinitely wronged, not only tempers wrath but tempers justice—though at what cost to Himself, only the New Testament would reveal,” as one commentator put it.¹ The loyal love of the Lord and the forgiveness He offers knows no limits: “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (Ps. 103:11–12). The “breadth and length and height and depth” of the love of Christ surpasses knowledge (Eph. 3:18–19).

Turning from spatial to relational imagery, the psalmist adds: “Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him” (Ps. 103:13; cf. Isa. 49:15). The best moments of warmth, affection, and security of unconditional belonging experienced in earthly families—however wonderful—are imperfect and shadowy images of the loyal love of God toward those who know Him.

In language reminiscent of Moses’ words in Psalm 90:1–6, David next contrasts the brevity of human life with the timelessness of God:

For He Himself knows our
frame;
He is mindful that we are
but dust.

As for man, his days are like
grass;
As a flower of the field, so
he flourishes.
When the wind has passed
over it, it is no more;
And its place acknowledges
it no longer.
(Ps. 103:14–16).

By contrast, God’s covenant love and grace give us a hope and a purpose that will never fade away, because “the lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him” (v. 17a). Notice that this is the third time the expression “those who fear Him” appears in this psalm. Our response to God’s great love and mercy should be that of respectful awe, ongoing gratitude, and willing obedience. He extends “His righteousness to children’s children, to those who keep His covenant and remember His precepts to do them” (vv. 17b–18). Our Father wants us to prove ourselves doers of the word, not merely hearers who delude ourselves (James 1:22).

A Creational Hymn of Greatness (vv. 19–22)

The final stanza of Psalm 103 transports us from the individual (vv. 1–5), to the community of God’s people (vv. 6–18), to the entire created order (vv. 19–22):

The LORD has established His throne in
the heavens;
And His sovereignty rules over all.
Bless the LORD, you His angels,
Mighty in strength, who perform
His word,
Obeying the voice of His word!
Bless the LORD, all you His hosts,
You who serve Him, doing His will.
Bless the LORD, all you works of His,
In all places of His dominion;
Bless the LORD, O my soul!
(Ps. 103:19–22)²

The meditation moves from God’s grace to God’s greatness as the psalmist invokes the myriad angelic and heavenly hosts to bless the holy Name. Just as these glorious beings and works serve the Lord in perfect obedience, so we whose lives have been redeemed from the pit and crowned with lovingkindness and compassion should order our steps before the Lord in humility, awe, love, and obedience. The wisest investment of time you will ever make is the time you spend in getting to know Him better, because to know Him is to love Him, and to love Him is to enter into the joy and pleasure of His service.

1. Derek Kidner, *An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 16 of *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 399.

2. Cf. 1 Chron. 29:10–13.

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