

# Psalm 16:7-8

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/ps/ps-16/psalm-167-8/>

*David is focused on the Lord and through that focus he experiences the continual presence and instruction of the Lord. His refuge in the Lord also comes through this focus.*

David continues his declaration that God is who He says He is and that there is no other place, person, or god that can provide real refuge. David is living in the “pleasant” reality that “I have no good besides You” (v. 6, 2). This prompts him to begin to praise the one and only God as he says, *I will bless the Lord who has counseled me.*

One may ask, is it truly possible for man to *bless* God? A number of translations use the word “praise” rather than *bless*. While either would be a proper response in our contemplation of who God is and what He has done and is doing for us, they are not necessarily the same, particularly in the Hebrew language of the Old Testament.

In Psalm 103, for example, David uses the phrase “Bless the Lord” six times. In that Psalm, he calls on our “soul,” or innermost being to “bless” the Lord, but he also calls on “His angels,” “His hosts,” and “all you works of His” to bless the Lord.

How do we *bless* the Lord? We are not given specific instructions as to what a blessing may or may not be, but in this instance (v.7) it seems to be a response to the preceding verses with the recognition of the “Lord who has counseled me.” We might get an idea what it means to bless the Lord from looking at another verse that uses the Hebrew word “barak” (translated here as *bless*):

“He made the camels kneel down (“barak”) outside the city by the well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water.”  
(Genesis 24:11)

To *bless the Lord* then, could be to “kneel down” before God. To recognize the reality of who He is. Not to merely say “I have no good besides You” but to truly recognize that “I have no good besides You.”

We can praise many things—people or events in the world we live in—but we should not “kneel down” to them. To *bless* in this manner would only apply in the context of God himself. We might call this a “sanctified” praise. The word “sanctify” as used in the New Testament is that something or someone is “set apart for sacred use” (John 17:17-19). To *bless*, for the Psalmist, would be to recognize that the living God is truly God. He is the source of all that is. It is in Him that all things consist (Colossians 1:16-17). It is only from and through God that we have anything that is good (Psalm 16:2).

David then recognizes that it is God who *counsels* him. In the contextual setting in this Psalm, it would be that God continues to provide *counsel* and give advice. *Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night*. It perhaps would be easy for us to just keep going here, thinking that David had some kind of special relationship with God. He did, of course, but then we all do according to John 1:12, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” We are “a new creature, or creation” in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17).

While most of us who are followers of Christ would acknowledge our relationship with God as His children from these verses, how many of us would say that God *counsels* us? Could we, with David, say that *my mind instructs me at night*? It is a mistake for believers to imagine God as someone who is eagerly waiting for us to mess up so He gets to discipline us for it. God does discipline, as His word declares (Revelation 3:19). But God’s desire for us is for us to succeed (Romans 8:31).

We need to begin with the love of God, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16). God loves us, first, foremost, and forever. As David has discovered and continues to discover, God’s *counsel* and *instruction* always begins with His love for us and He knows what is best for us. He is always available to us and for us, *Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night*.

David has learned the skill of meditation. He thinks of the things of God and the ways of God sufficiently that his *mind* continues to guide him, even in the *night*. This is instructive for New Testament believers, who are told to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:1-2). A good way to renew our mind is to dwell upon what is true and real, so that our mind adopts new frameworks based on God’s ways (Philippians 4:8).

*I have set the Lord continually before me*. David has already declared that he will not run after other gods or sing their praises. For him, and us, that is easier said than done. There are many things in our world that shout for our attention, our allegiance, our loyalty. Here we come to a crossroads that sometimes becomes difficult: intentionality.

Notice the intentionality in the wording in this phrase; *I have set*. It is a conscious act of the will for him to *set the Lord continually before me*. This is what Jesus is talking about in Matthew 6 when He describes laying up treasures in heaven in contrast to storing up for yourselves treasures on earth (Matthew 6:19-21). The act of laying up treasure in heaven, instead of on earth, requires intentionality.

David explains that we must be intentional in order to follow in God’s ways: *I have set the Lord continually before me*, so that we might take the right path (God’s path). Jesus says that we must be intentional to seek God’s ways in Matthew 6:33,

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33)

Seek is a strong word, a word of action, not dissimilar to David's words, *I have set the Lord continually before me*. The phrase *I have set* indicates David's premeditated action. These action words and phrases go well beyond our feelings and sometimes our circumstances. The intentionality of David's pursuit of God and His ways is likely a major reason why David's *mind instructs him in the night*.

David's confidence comes from God's faithfulness. *Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken*.

The phrase *right hand* appears thirty-eight times in the Psalms. The phrase *right hand* often refers to strength, as the *right hand* is the dominant hand for most people, so in general it is the hand that gripped the sword or spear. The phrase *right hand* can also refer to a place of positional authority.

The phrase *right hand* also appears in verse 8, where David says, *I have set the Lord continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken*. This seems to refer to God being the source of His strength. David has stability because of his trust in God. David recognizes that he needs a constant reminder to trust God rather than what he sees with his eyes. That is why he needs to *set the Lord continually before* him. It is because of his constant focus on God that he will *not be shaken*. His trust is in the strength of God, whose power is almighty.

David knew he could count on the Lord's "refuge," "portion," "inheritance," "lines," "heritage," "counsel," and "instruction." No matter what he faced, David could continue in God's path and direction, not because of his own wisdom or strength, but because of the Lord's power. It was because the Lord *is at my right hand, I will not be shaken*.

The good news for us, as followers of Christ, who is the Son of God and Son of David, is that we can live and walk in the same confidence.

- God is our ever present help in times of need (Hebrews 4:16).
- God desires that we cast our cares upon Him, because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:17).
- The path to blessing is through trusting in the Lord (Psalm 34:8).
- God cares for even our everyday problems (Luke 12:28).

Perhaps we have not seen God move in our life as much as David did. But we have the promises of God to lead us.

- We have His word, as the Psalmist says in Psalm 119:105, "Your word is a lamp to my feet

And a light to my path."

- Jesus says in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."
- We are assured of His presence as He says to us, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20).
- Jesus gives us His Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

- Paul says in Colossians 1:27 that we have “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

As we stand and move on the promises of God, we will know, *Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.*

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>7</sup> I will bless the Lord who has counseled me;  
Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night.**

**<sup>8</sup> I have set the Lord continually before me;  
Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.**