

Psalms 34:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man
that trusteth in him.

Analysis

O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. This verse issues a beautiful invitation to experiential knowledge of God's goodness. The Hebrew ta'amu (טַעֲמוּ, "taste") is an imperative urging immediate personal experience—not secondhand information but direct encounter. Taste requires intimate contact; you cannot taste from a distance. This metaphor suggests that knowing God's goodness demands personal engagement, not mere intellectual assent.

"And see" (וּרְאוּ, u're'u) adds visual confirmation to the sensory experience. Together, "taste and see" appeal to experiential verification—come and find out for yourself that God is good. The Hebrew tov (טוֹב, "good") encompasses goodness, pleasantness, kindness, and moral excellence. God's character is not just theoretically perfect but experientially delightful to those who draw near.

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in him" connects experiential knowledge with ongoing trust. The word ashrei (אַשְׁרֵי, "blessed") describes a state of happiness, flourishing, and wellbeing—not mere circumstantial pleasure but deep spiritual satisfaction. Yehesah (יִהְיֶה, "trusteth") means to take refuge, to flee for protection—suggesting both the danger we face and the safety God provides. This verse offers a gracious invitation: test God's faithfulness, experience His goodness personally, and find that trusting Him leads to true blessedness. It refutes both skeptical distance ("taste and see") and presumptuous demands (trust precedes

full understanding). The New Testament applies this to Christ, the embodiment of God's goodness (1 Peter 2:3).

Historical Context

Psalm 34 is attributed to David "when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed" (superscription). This refers to 1 Samuel 21:10-15, when David fled from Saul to Achish king of Gath (called Abimelech, likely a royal title). Fearing for his life in Philistine territory, David feigned madness, prompting Achish to dismiss him. This humiliating episode—Israel's champion warrior reduced to drooling and scratching walls—became an occasion for praising God's deliverance.

The context makes the psalm's testimony remarkable: David invites others to taste God's goodness immediately after experiencing desperate fear and degrading behavior. His ability to testify to God's character amid such circumstances demonstrates genuine faith tested by adversity. Ancient readers would have recognized the irony—David sought refuge among Israel's enemies, yet found true refuge only in the LORD.

The acrostic structure (each verse beginning with successive Hebrew letters) suggests careful composition for memorization and teaching. This wisdom psalm served to instruct covenant community members in trusting God through difficulties. The invitation to "taste and see" reflected ancient hospitality customs where sharing food created relationship and obligation. Applied spiritually, it suggests God invites us into intimate covenant relationship where we experience His faithful provision firsthand, not as distant observers but as beloved guests at His table.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What would it look like for you to "taste" God's goodness this week rather than merely believing He is good theoretically?
2. How does David's testimony from a place of fear and humiliation challenge our tendency to wait for favorable circumstances before praising God?
3. In what ways is trusting God like taking refuge—acknowledging both danger and dependence?
4. How does the experiential invitation of this verse address both those who are skeptical and those who claim faith without genuine encounter?
5. How does Jesus fulfill this invitation as the Bread of Life, inviting us to taste and see God's goodness embodied in Him?

Interlinear Text

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|---------------|---------|-------|---------|---------------|---------|------------|
| וּטַעַם | וּרְאוּ | כִּי | טוֹב | יְהוָה | אֲשֶׁר | יְבָרֵךְ |
| O taste | and see | H3588 | is good | that the LORD | blessed | is the man |
| H2938 | H7200 | | H2896 | H3068 | H835 | H1397 |
| | | | | | | |
| יְחַסֶּה | בּוֹ: | | | | | |
| that trusteth | H0 | | | | | |
| H2620 | | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 119:103 (Parallel theme): How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Jeremiah 31:14 (Good): And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD.

Psalms 63:5 (Parallel theme): My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:

Psalms 84:12 (Faith): O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

Psalms 36:7 (Faith): How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

Zechariah 9:17 (Good): For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.

Psalms 36:10 (Parallel theme): O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

Psalms 2:12 (Faith): Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Song of Solomon 5:1: I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

Song of Solomon 2:3: As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.