

# PSALM 1: THE BLESSED LIFE

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## INTRODUCTION:

### **A. Many people are struggling in life to find purpose, meaning, fulfillment, and happiness:**

1. Often they are seeking this through job success, wealth, power, fame, personal accomplishments, relationships, hobbies, and even sports → These can even be very good things, but they are not very stable and at the end of the day what we find is that there's still something missing!
2. As Christians we understand that there is a greater purpose in life! That there's someone greater than ourselves who's will we seek & whom we serve! That by pursuing God's will and God's purpose for our lives that we can find true fulfillment, meaning, purpose, & happiness in life
3. As a we seek this kind of life what we discover is that the Christian life is truly the blessed life!

### **B. This brings us to the next Psalm we will study & probably the one I should have started with – Psalm 1**

## THE PATH TO THE TRULY BLESSED LIFE:

### **A. The psalmist begins this section with an exclamation: “How Blessed Is The Man”**

1. Many people want to read this, “How Happy” – but our typical view of happiness misses the idea:
  - a. Typically people think of happiness as this pleasurable response to our circumstances – It's often a feeling that comes & goes with the circumstances around us, it's excitement
  - b. If this “happiness” is the result of one's spiritual state, if it is because that person has placed their trust & confidence in God, if it is due to being forgiven... That works
  - c. But this “blessedness” does not depend on outward circumstances to make us happy... We are blessed because of who we know, what we are, and where we are going!
  - d. Blessed often describes those who weren't overly happy about their situation or what they were facing... Our typical view of happiness isn't deep enough! **(Lk 23:27-29; Js 1:12)**
2. The concept of being blessed here seems to be talking about our spiritual state **(Psalm 1:1)**
  - a. This psalm's description of the blessed man indicates this “blessedness” relates to how God sees me & what I am in my heart and in my life! Result of my relationship with Him!
  - b. This “blessedness” is so valuable because it is something no circumstance, no persecution, no amount of trouble can take away! Knowing this gives us TRUE joy & happiness!
3. This statement takes our minds back immediately to the Sermon on The Mount: **(Matt 5:1-12)**
  - a. Does Jesus mean these blessed ones will always be feeling the joy and happiness of a child who just got a new toy or a couple on their wedding day? It runs deeper than that!
  - b. Notice some of the terms – They are poor in spirit, they mourn, they hunger and thirst, and they are persecuted → Why are they called blessed – It's their spiritual state!
  - c. It doesn't mean there won't difficult times or sorrow – But that because of their spiritual state, their relationship with God, and their hope they are still blessed!
4. The blessed life is truly the greatest life of all! It's the life that brings us true fulfillment, hope, and purpose! It's the life that in the end leads us to Heaven... Now what does that life look like?

### **B. First let's consider the man who is not blessed – The wicked man:**

1. By implication the psalmist describes the wicked man based upon his relationships! **(Psalm 1:1)**
  - a. The ungodly – One who is morally wrong, ungodly, wicked... We usually see the ungodly as those who are grossly wicked – But this is anyone who is refuses to obey God's will!

- b. Stands in the way of sinners – It describes a person who is spending their life in sinful ways
  - c. Sits in the seat of the scornful – He takes sin to a whole new level! He mocks God’s will and maybe even God Himself! He doesn’t have any appreciation for spiritual things!
  - d. This is about going along with the crowd – He goes where they go, does what they do, and listens to what they say... He is being conformed to this world **(Rom 12:1)**
2. It may be that the psalmist is describing a closeness of association with those who are wicked:
    - a. Notice the progression of thought: Walks in the counsel of the ungodly, stands in the way of sinners, and then sits in the seat of the scornful → Walking, standing, sitting
    - b. It seems that initially there is a loose association by walking in their path, then the person lingers and draws closer to being part of the group by standing with them, and finally this person is absorbed into their group by sitting among them – He’s one of them
  3. Some, especially younger people, don’t seem to think that who they choose as friends matter:
    - a. I’ve seen too many blow off lessons on “evil companions” as being “old fashioned” and “out of touch with reality” only to be spiritually ruined by these relationships later!
    - b. We begin by desiring the approval and acceptance of the world, we begin associating with them too much, we begin to adapt their attitudes, soon we start acting like them, and it’s not long before we will be adapting their values, even in spiritual things!
    - c. It’s no wonder Paul gave such a stern warning concerning evil companions! **(1 Cor 15:33)**
  4. Peter, with his denial of Jesus, serves as a good example of this process: **(John 18:15-18)**
    - a. People have emphasized how Peter followed from “afar” during Jesus’ crucifixion but John stayed close by → I don’t know we can say Peter intentionally created distance between himself & Jesus – John got close because his family knew the high priest
    - b. But notice what we can observe happening → Peter is outside the door of the court of the high priest surrounded by servants and officers... He’s with the enemies of Jesus!
    - c. Notice how he’s standing there in their company warming himself by their fire! Another account shows Jesus sitting down amongst them → He’s walking, standing, & sitting!
    - d. His faith was weakened & he was confused and disappointed about these events... with all this going on in his head & this company surrounding him, his denial isn’t surprising!

**C. Now let’s see what characterizes a blessed man:**

1. The blessed man does not find his pleasure in being associated with the wicked: **(Psalm 1:1)**
  - a. Peter argues that too much time has been wasted in that kind of living! A blessed person will arm themselves with the mindset of Christ & won’t run with them! **(1 Pet 1:1-5)**
  - b. There are certain things that just have no place in the life of a godly man! These words are very simple and obvious, “Of course he doesn’t!” → But some just don’t apply this!
  - c. Before making a decision, a simple question or two would solve a lot of trouble! Ask yourself, “Would a blessed person do that? Would a godly man go there? Would a righteous man say these words? Would a holy person participate in this activity?”
  - d. If we cannot answer yes to those questions then we have no business doing them if we really want to be seen as blessed by God, be spiritually strong, and reach heaven!
2. The man who is truly blessed finds his pleasure in the instructions of the Lord **(Psalm 1:2)**
  - a. We don’t know if David wrote this psalm, but his attitude toward God’s word fits what is being said → He loved God’s word & engulfed himself in it! **(Ps 19:7-10)**
  - b. This isn’t an occasional thing... the blessed man meditates on it day and night! This doesn’t mean he’s constantly reading it, but its always present in his mind! He’s

- regularly is thinking hard about what it says → We must know the word to do this!
- c. How much do we really “DELIGHT” in God’s word? Do you enjoy a good Bible study? During services do we anticipate the lessons or Bible classes or do we just wish they’d get over so we can sing? Do we like to read His word outside of church?
3. What is it about the law of God that should cause us to love and desire it so much?
    - a. Most of the time when people think of laws they think of restrictions... Even religious people when thinking of God’s law don’t see it with delight like they see grace!
    - b. We ought to love the law of God because it reveals to us how to live → The more we study & apply God’s word to our lives the better our lives become! (self help books)
    - c. Illustration: Marriage Book → Why would a person really love a good marriage book? It tells them how to be a better spouse... How to please the one they love! God’s word tells us how to be a better child of His and how to please Him who we love!
  4. The psalmist is making a contrast here that at first glance seems out of place: **(Joshua 1:8)**
    - a. If the wicked are described by their associations why do he describe the righteous by his delight in the word of God? Why not describe him by his associations as well?
    - b. The contrast makes sense when we realize that he is contrasting what motivates and guides one’s life – The wicked is guided by the influence of his sinful associations; however, the righteous is guided by his love for and pleasure in God’s word!
    - c. The more we learn God’s word and the more we keep it before us in our minds, chewing on God’s instructions, the more it will guide the way we live into the blessed life!

#### D. The results of the lives of the two men:

1. Psalm 1 is a picture of two paths we can take in life... The one we choose makes all the difference!
  - a. **Illustration:** It’s like Robert Frost’s poem... The Road Less Traveled → Which are you on?
  - b. Every day we make choices, little choices, that place us in one of the two categories... shows we watch, music we listen to, who we socialize with, places we go, vacations we plan, activities we engage in, websites we visit, books we read, what we wear, etc
  - c. These seemingly small decisions are placing us on one of the two paths! Which path is it?
2. Because of his life the wicked man is described as the chaff being driven by the wind **(Psalm 1:4)**
  - a. After describing the great stability & fruitful life of the blessed man it takes only two short words to describe the wicked – “NOT SO” – His life is nothing like the blessed man!
  - b. The chaff is what is left over after the “fruit” part of the wheat is harvested... Chaff is dead, lifeless, weak, and is quickly carried about by the wind – Picture blowing a dandelion
  - c. There’s nothing you can do with chaff... It’s utterly worthless... You can just blow it away
  - d. The wicked man’s life may look very good... It may appear for now like he is a mighty tree, that he is flourishing, and that he is blessed – But sooner or later the wind will blow!
3. In contrast, the blessed man is described as being the tree planted by the waters edge **(Psalm 1:3)**
  - a. Like a tree planted by the waters he yields his fruit at the proper season – This shows his life is producing righteous results & his life is functioning the way God intended
  - b. It’s leaf does not wither – Green leaves on a tree prove that it’s still alive and if it is alive it is growing... Spiritually we never stop growing, always getting stronger, & better
  - c. His life has depth, meaning, purpose, direction, & a future! No storm can take that away!
  - d. Sometimes the blessed man gets frustrated because he sees the wicked man and thinks his life is better → Only seeing the physical... The difference is below the surface!
4. The path we choose determines how God responds to us on the day of judgment **(Psalm 1:6)**