

TWO WAYS TO LIVE

Psalm 1

Psalm 1 is a fitting introduction to the **Psalms** in that it summarizes the *two ways* open to mankind...the *way of the righteous* and the *way of the wicked*. It begins by describing the man who *seeks to walk with God*...one who desires to lead an *untarnished* and *prosperous* life in accord with the Word of God. In contrast, it describes the *ungodly man* as one who will *perish*.

I. **THE BLESSED MAN: (vs. 1-3)**

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! (vs. 1)...

Verse 1 states *three trilogies* of expression that the *psalmist* used to describe the *life* and *character* of the **blessed man**. By stating them in the *negative* he's emphasizing that the *righteous man* doesn't *believe like...behave like...or belong in* the *realm* of the *ungodly*.

How blessed...is in the *plural* form...*many blessings...richly blessed*. It expresses *the joyful state of contentment*...what it is to be *abundantly fulfilled*...to be *secure*.

Restating the *three expressions* in the *positive*...

- **Who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked...He seeks counsel from those who are godly**...and orders his life around it.

“Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”

~Proverbs 27:17

“The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, to turn aside from the snares of death.”

~Proverbs 13:14

- **Nor stand in the path of sinners...He seeks companionship** (intimate friendships) *with fellow believers*...not those who are *lost* and *influenced by the world*.

Path...Heb. *derek*, describes *a manner of action and behavior...a course or mode of life*.

“Do not be deceived: bad company corrupts good morals.”

~I Corinthians 15:33

- **Nor sit in the seat of scoffers...He seeks to surround himself with those who encourage and edify others**...not those who are condescending and always ridiculing others.

Seat...Heb. *moshab*, describes *a dwelling place...a place to stay*.

Notice...with each parallel unit...*walk...stand...sit*...the expression becomes more intense. This signifies a progression from a *casual influence* of ungodly people to *collusion with them* in their *scorn against the righteous*. The individual who is **not** characterized by this **wicked** influence is **blessed**...that is, he is *right with God* and *enjoys the spiritual peace and joy* that results from that relationship.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night (vs. 2)...

A godly person isn't influenced by unrighteous people...but by his *meditation* on the *Word of God*. He's committed to *knowing...defending...and depending on...truth*. The *Word of God* is his hallmark of *faith* and *practice*.

“...Continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them.”

~II Timothy 3:14

Delight...Heb. *chephets*, describes *something that's desirable...precious*...the *Word of God* isn't a *drudgery*...it's not *boring*.

Meditates...Heb. *hagah*, literally means *talk to yourself...to ponder over*. It's a picture of a cow *ruminating...chewing the cud...to chew over and over again*.

“Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.”

~Joshua 1:7-8

He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers (vs. 3)...

For all who take their *delight in living* according to *God's Word*, they will bear *fruit...much fruit*. Using the image of a fruit tree... the *psalmist* declared that whatever the righteous do will prosper.

“The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, he will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still yield fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green.”

~Psalm 92:12-14

- *He's firmly rooted and successfully withstands the storms of life.*

“Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.”

~I Corinthians 16:13

“Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.”

~Colossians 2:6-7

- *He lives a fruitful life.*

John 15

- *He's consistent...*not easily discouraged.
- *He prospers by following God's principles...*in his home...his family...his work...and his relationships.
- *He's content...*he understands God's sovereignty.

One thing needs to be noted. The **fruit**...that is *prosperity*...is produced **in its season**...not *immediately after planting*.

II. **THE WICKED MAN: (vs. 4)**

In contrast with a **blessed** person, is a **wicked** person. The **wicked** are *spiritually dead* and *guilty* before God.

The **wicked** are not so, but they are like **chaff** which the wind drives away (**vs. 4**)...

Wicked...Heb. *rasha*, describes someone who is *morally wrong*... *actively unrighteous*...*condemned*...it connotes *gross evil*. People

who are *described* by *rasha* are *not in covenant relationship with God*...they live and are driven according to their own passions.

They may not *appear to be ungodly*...they may even do *kind* and *charitable deeds*. But God's evaluation of them is that they are *without eternal merit*.

“The wicked will see the righteous and be vexed, he will gnash his teeth and melt away; the desire of the wicked will perish.”

~Psalm 112:10

“Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

~I Corinthians 3:12-15

The *psalmist* compared them to **chaff**...the worthless *husks of the grain* blown away by the **wind** in the process of *winnowing*. As the **wind** blows away the *fragments of straw* when the grain is *winnowed*, so the **wicked will not stand acquitted**...either *in this world* or *in the world to come*.

III. **THE JUDGMENT OF EACH: (vs. 5-6)**...

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous (vs. 5)...

On the basis of the contrast between the *godly* and the **wicked**, the *psalmist* wrote that God will **separate the righteous** from the **wicked in the judgment**. **John the Baptist** also stated this...

“As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

~Matthew 3:11-12

The **Parable of the Wheat and Tares**...**Matthew 13:24-30**.

The **righteous** are those who are *related by covenant* with the Lord ...those who *live by His Word*...those who produce things of *eternal value*...those who are *saved*.

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish (vs. 6)...

The *basis for this judgment* is the *Lord's knowledge*. The first half of the verse...**For the Lord knows the way of the righteous**...is best understood by the contrasting parallelism...**but the way of the wicked will perish**.

Way...means *lifestyle...desires...and ultimate destiny*...including *what directs it* and *what it produces*.

“In the way of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death.”

~Proverbs 12:28

“There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”

~Proverbs 14:12

Salvation in the *Day of Judgment* is equated with *being known* by the Lord (**Matthew 7:23**).

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- There is a **day of judgment** coming. We will all stand before God one day. And on that day, there will be *only two kinds of people*... those who are **blessed** (*children of God*...those who are *saved*)...and those who are **wicked** (*lost*).
- If a person **meditates on God's Word**, his actions will be godly, and his God-controlled activities will prosper. That is...they will come to their divinely directed fulfillment.
- The person without the Lord is **totally depraved**. He may not be *absolutely depraved*, but everything he does in this life *will not last*. The worthless life of the ungodly *will not endure*.