

Psalm 1

Psalm 1 is a short psalm but it is full of wisdom. It sums up for us the two ways in which people seek to live their lives: with God or without Him. And it reveals the ultimate destiny of these two ways of living life. Psalm 1 shows us that to truly live happily ever after we must build our lives on God and His Word.

Blessed is the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
(Psalm 1:1)

The first song in the Psalter begins with the word "Blessed." In the original Hebrew it is a plural of intensity. And it could accurately be translated as "Oh, how supremely happy" or "Oh, how completely fulfilled." Isn't that terrific? Who doesn't want to be supremely happy?

And doesn't it intrigue you that the first word of the entire book of Psalms should be "Blessed" or "happy"? Don't you think it would be more important for us to be obedient or righteous? It is, but from the very beginning of creation to God's final redemption of sinners, God's goal is for His people to be blessed, happy and completely satisfied. It is written in Psalm 34:8, "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed [supremely happy] is the man who trusts in Him!" In our happiness in God He is glorified.

But how do we gain real happiness? Some people measure their success at being happy by how many things they have. But things can never satisfy us. Even relationships can never satisfy us apart from God. So how can our lives be truly blessed? Here is the important answer: your happiness, both now and in the future, depends on who and what influences how you think and live. Where do you get your directions for living life? What drives you and moves you? What inspires you and what are the guard rails of your life?

And as if he had no concern for modern marketing techniques, our song writer begins with a negative. If you want to be truly happy don't take counsel, don't take directions for living life from the ungodly. Now it may surprise you who the ungodly are. The ungodly are not just those people who are grossly evil. The original Hebrew word refers to people who simply don't take God seriously.

Their lives may be decent and commendable in some ways, but these are people who care nothing or little at all about God. And so they base their lives,

their plans and hopes on the often false and deceptive values of the world. The ungodly have a way of thinking, a mindset that ignores God. Psalm 14: 1 tells us "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'" The dictionary defines a fool as someone deficient in judgment and sense. So why would you take counsel and seek direction for your life from a dupe?

And here's the slide: if you take counsel from the ungodly you will begin to agree with them on many issues, and then you'll begin to act like them. You will stand "in the path of sinners." And ultimately you may take your place with the scornful. The scornful or the scoffers are those people who are too smart to believe in God. They actively reject God and His law and teach others to reject it as well.

So the supremely happy person is not just an easy going person who goes along with the crowd. He or she deliberately chooses to reject worldly thinking for biblical thinking. Now, no one walks in the counsel of the ungodly out of duty. No one stands in the path of sinners or sits in the seat of the scornful out of a sense of duty or obligation. We walk and stand and sit there because we **want to**. And we want to because we have focused on them so intensely that what these people think and believe, and how they live is attractive to us.

That is why the contrast in verse 2 centers not on duty or obligation but on delight. And this is why the first word in the psalm is "Blessed" or "supremely happy" and not righteous or obedient. True happiness in life is built on love for God and delight in His Word.

Blessed is the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
(Psalm 1:1, 2)

The point is that the only hope against the deceiving pleasures of the world is delight in the Word of God. We are told in Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart."

Perhaps many of us can claim a negative righteousness about all of this, because we don't walk in the counsel of the ungodly. But do we delight in the law of the Lord, His instructions to us? What does it mean to delight in God's Word? The Hebrew word is used in the Old Testament of a man delighting in a woman. Ah-hah ! That tells us something!

Have you ever noticed that when a young man delights in a young woman he rearranges his priorities so he can be with her? And he rearranges his priorities not because he has to but because he wants to. The way to live a supremely happy life is to delight yourself in God's Word. It is to embrace His instruction and will with all of your heart and affection.

How do we do that? Well, if someone told you that a certain person was a delight to be with the only way you could discover this and experience that delight would be to spend time with that person. It is the same with finding delight in God's Word. The psalmist said that he meditated on the law of the Lord day and night. Here are wise words from another Psalm.

Oh, how I love Your law!
It is my meditation all the day.
⁹⁸ You, through Your commandments, make me wiser
than my enemies;
For they *are* ever with me.
⁹⁹ I have more understanding than all my teachers,
For Your testimonies *are* my meditation.
¹⁰⁰ I understand more than the ancients,
Because I keep Your precepts.
¹⁰¹ I have restrained my feet from every evil way,
That I may keep Your word.
¹⁰² I have not departed from Your judgments,
For You Yourself have taught me.
¹⁰³ How sweet are Your words to my taste,
Sweeter than honey to my mouth!
¹⁰⁴ Through Your precepts I get understanding;
Therefore I hate every false way.
¹⁰⁵ Your word *is* a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.
(Psalm 119:97-105)

Who doesn't want to be wise and have great understanding? Who doesn't want to be safe from evil ways? Who wants to live life in the dark? No one! Therefore to be supremely happy we need to read the Bible. We need to understand the instructions of the Lord. We need to ask ourselves. "What does this section of Scripture mean? How do I apply this truth? Is there a commandment here for me to keep? Is there a promise for me to trust?"

When you read the Bible pray and ask for understanding. In Psalm 119:18 the psalmist prayed, "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law." Do you think God will answer that prayer? Sure He will, and not only for the psalmist but for you too. As you read the Word of God think about it and act on

it. The Word of God will nourish your life. It will enable you to make wise decisions. It will increase your faith and love and hope in God. It will warn you of danger and bring you joy and peace. The prophet Jeremiah said,

Your words were found, and I ate them,
And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart
(Jeremiah 15:16)

As you delight yourself in the law of the Lord your life will be blessed.

Blessed is the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
3 He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.
(Psalm 1:1-3)

If you delight in the Word of God and meditate upon it and believe it and obey it, you will be like a tree deliberately planted by a continual supply of water. Your life will be fruitful and you will prosper. I'm not saying that there will never be times of storms or drought. There will be, but your life will be strong and will endure.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said that the person who hears his word and obeys it will be like a person who builds his house on a rock. And when the winds and storms come the house will stand. But the person who rejects his word builds his house on the sand and the storms will wash it away. Continuing, the psalm declares,

He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.
4 The ungodly are not so,
But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.
(Psalm 1:3, 4)

Deep down in our hearts no one wants to chaff. No one wants to be rootless and useless. Everyone wants their life to be beautiful and string and fruitful. Supreme happiness comes from being rooted in the Bible.

But perhaps you are thinking, "Come on Chuck; get real. I know people who leave God out of their lives and they are handsome, powerful and exciting people. So what do you say to that?" What I say is this: yes, you are right. There are unbelievers and scoffers who seem to prosper greatly. But when Psalm 1 compares the value of walking in the counsel of the ungodly or delighting yourself in the law of the Lord, it measures the value finally by what happens on the final Day of Judgment. The Scripture says,

Do not let your heart envy sinners,
But be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day;
18 For surely there is a hereafter,
And your hope will not be cut off.
19 Hear, my son, and be wise;
And guide your heart in the way.
(Proverbs 23:17-19)

Anyone who envies the supposed prosperity of unsaved sinners needs to know that their prosperity is brief. There will be a judgment and their hope will be cut off; ours will not.

Do not fret because of evildoers,
Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.
2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,
And wither as the green herb.

7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him;
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,
Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.
8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;
Do not fret—it only causes harm.
9 For evildoers shall be cut off;
But those who wait on the LORD,
They shall inherit the earth.
10 For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more;
Indeed, you will look carefully for his place,
But it shall be no more.
11 But the meek shall inherit the earth,
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.
(Psalm 37:1, 2, 7-11)

A new world order is coming. Every breath we take brings us closer to Judgment Day when the wicked will perish and God will restore our world to Paradise. The Bible declares that “

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

(John 3:16)

Do not envy the prosperity of those who are chaff. One day they will perish eternally. But you will enjoy everlasting life and inherit a new earth. Let's return to Psalm 1.

Blessed is the man

Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,

Nor stands in the path of sinners,

Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

² But his delight is in the law of the LORD,

And in His law he meditates day and night.

³ He shall be like a tree

Planted by the rivers of water,

That brings forth its fruit in its season,

Whose leaf also shall not wither;

And whatever he does shall prosper.

⁴ The ungodly are not so,

But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,

Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

⁶ For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,

But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

(Psalm 1:1-6)

Supremely happy, abundantly blessed are those who delight in God's Word. They are nourished and fruitful. They live a life that is durable in the face of storms of drought. And their labor is not in vain for it leads to everlasting life in the kingdom of God. There are two ways to live life. The believer's life and the unbeliever's life are separated by what they love. Delight yourself in the Word of God and be supremely happy.