

# Psalm 1:1 Commentary

PREVIOUS [LIKE A TREE FIRMLY PLANTED...  
IN GOD'S HOLY WORD](#)

NEXT

Psalm 1:1 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!** ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of evil men.

**Amplified:** BLESSED (HAPPY, fortunate, prosperous, and enviable) is the man who walks and lives not in the counsel of the ungodly [following their advice, their plans and purposes], nor stands [submissive and inactive] in the path where sinners walk, nor sits down [to relax and rest] where the scornful [and the mockers] gather. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

**NET:** How blessed is the one who does not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of scoffers! ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB:** How blessed is anyone who rejects the advice of the wicked and does not take a stand in the path that sinners tread, nor a seat in company with cynics, ([NJB](#))

**Young's Literal:** O the happiness of that one, who Hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked. And in the way of sinners hath not stood, And in the seat of scorers hath not sat;

## BLESSING IN THE PSALMS

**Blessing** (bless, blessed) is a common theme in the Psalms (108 times in 98 verses - with approximately 47 referring to blessing the LORD and about 57 God blessing men, with the remainder difficult to classify - as an aside this makes for an interesting study, especially to see who it is that God blesses and how this blessing is manifested. [See all uses in "Wisdom" Literature - Job, Psalms, Proverbs](#))...

Bless\* in Job, Psalms, Proverbs - Job 1:10; Job 1:21; Job 29:11; Job 29:13; Job 42:12; Ps. 1:1; Ps. 2:12; Ps. 3:8; Ps. 5:12; Ps. 16:7; Ps. 18:46; Ps. 21:3; Ps. 21:6; Ps. 24:5; Ps. 26:12; Ps. 28:6; Ps. 28:9; Ps. 29:11; Ps. 31:21; Ps. 32:1; Ps. 32:2; Ps. 33:12; Ps. 34:1; Ps. 34:8; Ps. 37:22; Ps. 37:26; Ps. 40:4; Ps. 41:1; Ps. 41:2; Ps. 41:13; Ps. 45:2; Ps. 62:4; Ps. 63:4; Ps. 65:4; Ps. 65:10; Ps. 66:8; Ps. 66:20; Ps. 67:1; Ps. 67:6; Ps. 67:7; Ps. 68:19; Ps. 68:26; Ps. 68:35; Ps. 72:15; Ps. 72:17; Ps. 72:18; Ps. 72:19; Ps. 84:4; Ps. 84:5; Ps. 84:6; Ps. 84:12; Ps. 89:15; Ps. 89:52; Ps. 94:12; Ps. 96:2; Ps. 100:4; Ps. 103:1; Ps. 103:2; Ps. 103:20; Ps. 103:21; Ps. 103:22; Ps. 104:1; Ps. 104:35; Ps. 106:3; Ps. 106:48; Ps. 107:38; Ps. 109:17; Ps. 109:28; Ps. 112:1; Ps. 112:2; Ps. 113:2; Ps. 115:12; Ps. 115:13; Ps. 115:15; Ps. 115:18; Ps. 118:26; Ps. 119:1; Ps. 119:2; Ps. 119:12; Ps. 124:6; Ps. 127:5; Ps. 128:1; Ps. 128:4; Ps. 128:5; Ps. 129:8; Ps. 132:15; Ps. 133:3; Ps. 134:1; Ps. 134:2; Ps. 134:3; Ps. 135:19; Ps. 135:20; Ps. 135:21; Ps. 137:8; Ps. 137:9; Ps. 144:1; Ps. 144:15; Ps. 145:1; Ps. 145:2; Ps. 145:10; Ps. 145:21; Ps. 146:5; Ps. 147:13; Prov. 3:13; Prov. 3:33; Prov. 5:18; Prov. 8:32; Prov. 8:34; Prov. 10:6; Prov. 10:7; Prov. 10:22; Prov. 11:11; Prov. 11:26; Prov. 16:20; Prov. 20:7; Prov. 20:21; Prov. 22:9; Prov. 24:25; Prov. 27:14; Prov. 28:14; Prov. 28:20; Prov. 30:11; Prov. 31:28; Eccl. 10:17

**Donne** - How abundantly is that word **Blessed** multiplied in the Book of Psalms! The book seems to be made out of that word, and the foundation raised upon that Word, for it is the first word of the book. But in all the book there is not one Woe.

**Play this beautiful song...**then, enabled by the Holy Spirit, put the blessed truth of Psalm 1 into practice...you will never regret it beloved!

- [Planted By the Waters](#)

**Note:** In this song the words "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD..." are from the parallel passage in Jeremiah 17:7-8 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD and whose trust is the LORD. For (TERM OF EXPLANATION - WHAT IS HE

EXPLAINING?) he will be like a tree planted by the water, That extends its roots by a stream (cf John 7:37-39+) And **will not fear** when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it **will not be anxious** in a year of drought nor **cease to yield fruit.**" (HALLELUJAH!)

Let us take a moment to scan over some of the uses of **ble**ss, **ble**ssed and **ble**ssing in the Psalms as we prepare to study key to the blessed life in Christ...

**Ps 2:12** Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How **ble**ssed are all who take refuge (PUT THEIR TRUST) in Him!

Have we a share in this blessedness? Do we trust in him? Our faith may be slender as a spider's thread; but if it be real, we are in our measure **ble**ssed. The more we trust, the more fully shall we know this **ble**ssedness. We may therefore close the Psalm with the prayer of the apostles: -- "Lord, increase our faith." (Spurgeon)

**Psalm 5:12** For it is Thou who dost **ble**ss the righteous man, O LORD, Thou dost surround him with favor as with a shield.

This is a promise of infinite length, of unbounded breadth, and of unutterable preciousness. (Spurgeon)

**Psalm 24:5** (Ps 24:1-3,4 - Context for who "he" is) He shall receive **ab**lessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

**He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation** So that the saints need salvation; they receive righteousness, and the blessing is a boon from God their Saviour. They do not ascend the hill of the Lord (Ps 24:3,4) as givers but as receivers, and they do not wear their own merits, but a righteousness which they have received (2Co 5:21, 1Co 1:29-31). Holy living ensures a **ble**ssing as its reward from the thrice Holy God, but it is itself a **ble**ssing of the New Covenant and a delightful fruit of the Spirit. God first gives us good works (Eph 2:10), and then rewards us for them (Rev 22:12, 2Co 5:10). Grace is not obscured by God's demand for holiness, but is highly exalted as we see it decking the saint with jewels, and clothing him in fair white linen; all this sumptuous array being a free gift of mercy. (Spurgeon)

**Ps 32:1** How **ble**ssed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!**2** How **ble**ssed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit!

Blessed. Like the Sermon on the Mount (see notes Matthew 5:1ff), this Psalm begins with beatitudes. This is the second Psalm of benediction. The first Psalm (see notes [Psalm 1](#)) describes the **re**sult of holy blessedness, the thirty-second details the **ca**use of it. The first pictures the tree in full growth, this depicts it in its first planting and watering. He who in the first Psalm is a reader of God's book, is here a suppliant at God's throne accepted and heard.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven. He is now blessed and ever shall be. Be he ever so poor, or sick, or sorrowful, he is blessed in very deed. **Pardoning mercy is of all things in the world most to be prized, for it is the only and sure way to happiness.** To hear from God's own Spirit the words, "*absolvo te*" is joy unspeakable. Blessedness is not in this case ascribed to the man who has been a diligent law keeper, for then it would never come to us, but rather to a lawbreaker, who by grace most rich and free has been forgiven. Self righteous Pharisees have no portion in this blessedness. Over the returning prodigal, the word of **wel**come is here pronounced, and the music and dancing begin.

A full, instantaneous, irreversible pardon of transgression turns the poor sinner's hell into heaven, and makes the heir of wrath a partaker in blessing. The word rendered **for**given is in the original **ta**ken off or **ta**ken away, as a burden is lifted or a barrier removed. What a lift is here! It cost our Saviour a sweat of blood to bear our load, yea, it cost Him His life to bear it quite away. Samson carried the gates of Gaza, but what was that to the weight which Jesus bore on our behalf?

**Whose sin is covered.** Covered by God, as the ark was covered by the mercyseat, as Noah was covered from the flood, as the Egyptians were covered by the depths of the sea. What a cover must that be which hides away forever from the sight of the all seeing God all the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit! He who has once seen sin in its horrible deformity, will appreciate the happiness of seeing it no more for ever. Christ's atonement is the propitiation, the covering, the making an end of sin; where this is seen and trusted in, the soul knows itself to be now accepted in the Beloved, and therefore enjoys a conscious blessedness which is the antepast (a foretaste) of heaven. It is clear from the text that a man

may know that he is pardoned: where would be the blessedness of an unknown forgiveness? Clearly it is a matter of knowledge, for it is the ground of comfort.

**Verse 2. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.** The word **blessed** is in the plural, **oh, the blessednesses!** the double joys, the bundles of happiness, the mountains of delight! Note the three words so often used to denote our disobedience: transgression, sin, and iniquity, are the three headed dog at the gates of hell, but our glorious Lord has silenced his barking for ever against his own believing ones. The trinity of sin is overcome by the Trinity of heaven. Non imputation is of the very essence of pardon: the believer sins, but his sin is not reckoned, not accounted to him. Certain divines froth at the mouth with rage against imputed righteousness, be it ours to see our sin not imputed, and to us may there be as Paul words it, "Righteousness imputed without works." He is blessed indeed who has a substitute to stand for him to whose account all his debts may be set down. And in whose spirit there is no guile. He who is pardoned, has in every case been taught to deal honestly with himself, his sin, and his God. Forgiveness is no sham, and the peace which it brings is not caused by playing tricks with conscience. Self deception and hypocrisy bring no blessedness, they may drug the soul into hell with pleasant dreams, but into the heaven of true peace they cannot conduct their victim. Free from guilt, free from guile. Those who are justified from fault are sanctified from falsehood. A liar is not a forgiven soul. Treachery, double dealing, chicanery, dissimulation, are lineaments of the devil's children, but he who is washed from sin is truthful, honest, simple, and childlike. There can be no blessedness to tricksters with their plans, and tricks, and shuffling, and pretending: they are too much afraid of discovery to be at ease; their house is built on the volcano's brink, and eternal destruction must be their portion. Observe the three words to describe sin, and the three words to represent pardon, weigh them well, and note their meaning. (Spurgeon)

**Ps 34:8** O **taste** (imperative = not a suggestion but a command see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) and **see** (another imperative) that the LORD is good. How **blessed** is the man who takes refuge (places his trust) in Him!

**O taste and see.** Make a trial, an inward, experimental trial of the goodness of God. You cannot see except by tasting for yourself; but if you taste you shall see, for this, like Jonathan's honey, enlightens the eyes. That the Lord is good. You can only know this really and personally by experience. There is the banquet with its oxen and fatlings; its fat things full of marrow, and wine on the lees well refined; but their sweetness will be all unknown to you except you make the blessings of grace your own, by a living, inward, vital participation in them.

**Blessed is the man that trusts in Him** Faith is the soul's taste; they who test the Lord by their confidence always find Him good, and they become themselves blessed. The second clause of the verse, is the argument in support of the exhortation contained in the first sentence. (Spurgeon)

**Ps 40:4** How blessed is the man who has made the LORD his trust, and has not turned to the proud, nor to those who lapse into falsehood.

**Blessed.** This is an exclamation similar to that of the first Psalm, "Oh, the happiness of the man." God's blessings are emphatic, "I wot (know) that he whom Thou blesses is blessed," indeed and in very truth. Is that man that maketh the Lord his trust. Faith obtains promises. A simple single eyed confidence in God is the sure mark of blessedness. A man may be as poor as Lazarus, as hated as Mordecai, as sick as Hezekiah, as lonely as Elijah, but while his hand of faith can keep its hold on God, none of his outward afflictions can prevent his being numbered among the blessed; but the wealthiest and most prosperous man who has no faith is accursed, be he who he may. (Spurgeon)

**Ps 84:12** O LORD of hosts, How **blessed** is the man who trusts in Thee!

Here is the key of the Psalm. The worship is that of faith, and the blessedness is peculiar to believers. No formal worshipper can enter into this secret. A man must know the Lord by the life of real faith, or he can have no true rejoicing in the Lord's worship, his house, his Son, or his ways. **Dear reader, how fares it with thy soul?** (Spurgeon)

**What is the blessing associated with or "effected" by in this Psalm?** Trust (cp Jer 17:7, 8). Faith. Believing (see word study on verb pisteuo). For example, do you really believe God has granted you "everything (how much? Greek word *pas* = all without exception!) necessary for life (*zoe* = not just breathing, but life abundant which is Jesus' desire for us, Jn 10:10) and godliness through (preposition "dia" = the conduit through which "life and godliness" flow, so to speak) the true knowledge of Him (thus

the vital importance of daily "eating" His pure, unadulterated Word of Truth and Life - 1Pe 2:2-note, Mt 4:4, Dt 8:2, 3, 16, Php 2:16-note) who called us by His own glory and excellence" (2Pe 1:3-note)? Remember that trusting is not a passive mindset, but a reflects an active, volitional, submissive change in our thinking, which results in a change in our doing. If you truly believe, you will behave according to how, what and Who you believe. A disconnect in this dynamic is the essence of Pharisaical hypocrisy. Do not be deceived, beloved brethren (Jas 1:22-note, Jas 1:25-note; see related discussion re the NT phrase the obedience of faith)

**Ps 94:12 Blessed** is the man (Hebrew = **geber** = Hebrew root commonly associated with warfare and has to do with the strength and vitality of the successful warrior; relates to the male at the height of his powers) whom You chasten, O LORD, and whom You teach out of Your law;

**Blessed is the man whom Thou chastens, O LORD.** The psalmist's mind is growing quiet. He no longer complains to God or argues with men, but tunes his harp to softer melodies, for his faith perceives that with the most afflicted believer all is well. Though he may not feel blessed while smarting under the rod of chastisement, yet blessed he is; he is precious in God's sight, or the Lord would not take the trouble to correct him, and right happy will the results of his correction be (see notes Hebrews 12:5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 11). The psalmist calls the chastened one a "man" in the best sense, using the Hebrew word which implies strength. He is a man, indeed, who is under the teaching and training of the Lord. (Spurgeon)

**Ps 106:3 How blessed** are those who keep justice, who practice righteousness at all times!

Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times. Multiplied are the blessings which must descend upon the whole company of the keepers of the way of justice, and especially upon that one rare man who at all times follows that which is right. **Holiness is happiness. The way of right is the way of peace** Yet men leave this road, and prefer the paths of the destroyer. Hence the story which follows is in sad contrast with the happiness here depicted, because the way of Israel was not that of judgment and righteousness, but that of folly and iniquity. The Psalmist, while contemplating the perfections of God, was impressed with the feeling that the servants of such a being must be happy, and when he looked around and saw how the tribes of old prospered when they obeyed, and suffered when they sinned, he was still more fully assured of the truth of his conclusion. **O could we but be free of sin we should be rid of sorrow!** We would not only be just, but "keep judgment"; we would not be content with occasionally acting rightly, but would "do justice at all times." (Spurgeon)

**Ps 112:1 Praise the LORD!** How **blessed** is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in His commandments.

**Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord** According to the last verse of [Psalm 111](#), the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; this man, therefore, has begun to be wise, and wisdom has brought him present happiness, and secured him eternal felicity. Jehovah is so great that He is to be feared and had in reverence of all them that are round about Him, and He is at the same time so infinitely good that the fear is sweetened into filial love, and becomes a delightful emotion, by no means engendering bondage. There is a slavish fear which is accursed; but that godly fear which leads to delight in the service of God is infinitely blessed. Jehovah is to be praised both for inspiring men with godly fear and for the blessedness which they enjoy in consequence thereof. We ought to bless God for blessing any man, and especially for setting the seal of his approbation upon the godly. His favour towards the God fearing displays His character and encourages gracious feelings in others, therefore let Him be praised.

**That delighteth greatly in His commandments.** The man not only studies the divine precepts and endeavours to observe them, but **rejoices to do so:**

**Holiness is his happiness,  
Devotion is his delight,  
Truth is his treasure.**

He rejoices in the precepts of godliness, yea, and **delights greatly** in them. We have known hypocrites rejoice in the doctrines, but never in the commandments. Ungodly men may in some measure obey the commandments out of fear, but only a gracious man will **observe them with delight.**

**Cheerful obedience  
is the only acceptable obedience**

He who obeys reluctantly is disobedient at heart, but he who takes pleasure in the command is truly loyal.

If through **divine grace** we find ourselves described in these two sentences, let us give all the praise to God, for He hath wrought all our works in us, and the dispositions out of which they spring. Let self righteous men praise themselves, but he who has been made righteous by grace renders all the praise to the Lord.

**Ps 119:1** How **blessed** are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD.

**Blessed.** The psalmist is so enraptured with the Word of God that he regards it as the highest ideal of blessedness to be conformed to it. He has gazed on the beauties of the perfect law, and, as if this verse were the sum and outcome of all his emotions, he exclaims,

**Blessed is the man whose life is the practical transcript of the will of God.**

True religion is not cold and dry; it has its exclamations and raptures. We not only judge the keeping of God's law to be a wise and proper thing, but we are warmly enamored of its holiness, and cry out in adoring wonder, "Blessed are the undefiled!"—meaning thereby that we eagerly desire to become such ourselves, and wish for no greater happiness than to be perfectly holy.

This first verse is not only a preface to the whole psalm, but it may also be regarded as the text upon which the rest is a discourse. It is similar to the benediction of Psalm 1, which is set in the forefront of the entire book: there is a likeness between this Psalm 119 and the Psalter, and this is one point of it, that it begins with a benediction. In this, too, we see some foreshadowings of the Son of David, who began His great sermon as David (**Ed**: the author of Ps 119 is not stated but could be David. Some think Ezra the Scribe) began His great psalm. When we cannot bestow blessings, we can show the way of obtaining them, and even if we do not yet possess them ourselves, it may be profitable to contemplate them, that our desires may be excited, and our souls moved to seek after them.

As David thus begins his psalm, so should young men begin their lives, so should new converts commence their life of faith, so should all Christians begin every day. Holiness is happiness, and it is our wisdom first to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Mankind began with being **blessed in innocence**, and if our fallen race is ever to be **blessed** again, it must find it where it lost it at the beginning, in conformity to the command of the Lord.

**Ps 119:2** How **blessed** are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart.

**Blessed are they that keep his testimonies.** What! A second blessing? Yes, they are doubly blessed whose outward life is supported by an inward zeal for God's glory. In the first verse we had an undefiled way, and it was taken for granted that the purity in the way was not mere surface work, but was attended by the inward truth and life which comes of divine grace. Here that which was implied is expressed.

**Blessedness** is ascribed to those who treasure up the testimonies of the Lord: in which is implied that they search the Scriptures, that they come to an understanding of them, that they love them, and then that they continue in the practice of them.

We must first get a thing before we can keep it. In order to keep it well we must get a firm grip of it: we cannot keep in the heart that which we have not heartily embraced by the affections.

**God's word is His witness or testimony to grand and important truths which concern Himself and our relation to Him: this we should desire to know; knowing it, we should believe it; believing it, we should love it; and loving it, we should hold it fast against all comers.**

There is a doctrinal keeping of the word when we are ready to die for its defence, and a practical keeping of it when we actually live under its power.

Revealed truth is precious as diamonds, and should be kept or treasured up in the memory and in the heart as jewels in a casket, or as the law was kept in the ark; this however is not enough, for it is meant for practical use, and therefore it must be kept or followed, as men keep to a path, or to a line of business.

**If we keep God's testimonies  
They will keep us**

They will keep us right in opinion, comfortable in spirit, holy in conversation, and hopeful in expectation. If they were ever worth **having**, and no thoughtful person will question that, then they are worth **keeping**;

their designed effect does not come through a temporary seizure of them, but by a **persevering keeping** of them: "in keeping of them there is great reward."

We are bound to keep with all care the word of God, because it is his testimonies. He gave them to us, but they are still his own. We are to keep them as a watchman guards his master's house, as a steward husbands his lord's goods, as a shepherd keeps his employer's flock. We shall have to give an account, for we are put in trust with the gospel, and woe to us if we be found unfaithful. We cannot fight a good fight, nor finish our course, unless we keep the faith. To this end the Lord must keep us: only those who are kept by the power of God unto salvation will ever be able to keep his testimonies. What a blessedness is therefore evidenced and testified by a careful belief in God's word, and a continual obedience thereunto. God has blessed them, is blessing them, and will bless them for ever. That blessedness which David saw in others he realized for himself, for in Psalms 119:168 he says, "I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies," and in Ps 119:54-56 he traces his joyful songs and happy memories to this same keeping of the law, and he confesses, "This I had because I kept thy precepts." Doctrines which we teach to others we should experience for ourselves.

**And that seek him with the whole heart.** Those who keep the Lord's testimonies are sure to seek after Himself. If His word is precious we may be sure that He Himself is still more so. Personal dealing with a personal God is the longing of all those who have allowed the word of the Lord to have its full effect upon them. If we once really know the power of the gospel we must seek the God of the gospel.

**"O that I knew where I might find HIM,"  
will be our wholehearted cry.**

See the growth which these sentences indicate: first, in the way, then walking in it, then finding and keeping the treasure of truth, and to crown all, seeking after the Lord of the way Himself. Note also that the further a soul advances in grace the more spiritual and divine are its longings: an outward walk does not content the gracious soul, nor even the treasured testimonies; it reaches out in due time after God Himself, and when it in a measure finds Him, still yearns for more of Him, and seeks Him still.

Seeking after God signifies a desire to commune with Him more closely, to follow Him more fully, to enter into more perfect union with His mind and will, to promote His glory, and to realize completely all that He is to holy hearts. The **blessed man** has God already, and for this reason he seeks him. This may seem a contradiction: it is only a paradox.

**God is not truly sought by the cold researches of the brain:  
We must seek him with the heart.**

Love reveals itself to love: God manifests His heart to the heart of His people. It is in vain that we endeavour to comprehend Him by reason; we must apprehend Him by affection. But the heart must not be divided with many objects if the Lord is to be sought by us (see Matthew 6:24-note; cp *one thing I do* - see Philippians 3:13-note). God is one, and we shall not know Him till our heart is one. A broken heart need not be distressed at this, for no heart is so whole in its seeking after God as a heart which is broken, whereof every fragment sighs and cries after the great Father's face. It is the divided heart which the doctrine of the text censures, and strange to say, in scriptural phraseology,

**a heart may be divided and not broken, and it may be broken but not divided;  
and yet again it may be broken and be whole, and it never can be whole until  
it is broken.**

When our whole heart seeks the holy God in Christ Jesus it has come to Him of Whom it is written, "as many as touched Him were made perfectly whole."

That which the Psalmist admires in this verse he claims in the tenth, where he says, "With my whole heart have I sought thee." It is well when admiration of a virtue leads to the attainment of it. Those who do not believe in the blessedness of seeking the Lord will not be likely to arouse their hearts to the pursuit, but he who calls another blessed because of the grace which he sees in him is on the way to gaining the same grace for himself.

If those who seek the Lord are blessed, what shall be said of those who actually dwell with Him and know that He is theirs?

**"To those who fall, how kind thou art!**

**How good to those who seek!  
But what to those who find? Ah! this  
Nor tongue nor pen can show:  
The love of Jesus -- what it is,  
None but His loved ones know."**

**Ps 146:5** How **blessed** is he whose help is the God of Jacob, Whose hope is in the LORD his God

Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help. Heaped up is his happiness. He has happiness indeed: the true and the real delight is with him. The God of Jacob is the God of the covenant, the God of wrestling prayer, the God of the tried believer; he is the only living and true God. The God of Jacob is Jehovah, who appeared unto Moses, and led the tribes of Jacob out of Egypt, and through the wilderness. Those are happy who trust him, for they shall never be ashamed or confounded. The Lord never dies, neither do his thoughts perish: his purpose of mercy, like himself, endures throughout all generations. Hallelujah!

Whose hope is in the LORD his God. He is happy in help for the present and in hope for the future, who has placed all his confidence in Jehovah, who is his God by a covenant of salt ([See Trumbull's Covenant of Salt](#)). Happy is he when others are despairing! Happiest shall he be in that very hour when others are discovering the depths of agony. We have here a statement which we have personally tried and proved: resting in the Lord, we know a happiness which is beyond description, beyond comparison, beyond conception. O how blessed a thing it is to know that God is our present help, and our eternal hope. Full assurance is more than heaven in the bud, the flower has begun to open. We would not exchange with Caesar; his sceptre is a bauble, but our bliss is true treasure.

In each of the two titles here given, namely, "the God of Jacob", and "Jehovah his God", there is a peculiar sweetness. Either one of them has a fountain of joy in it; but the first will not cheer us without the second. Unless Jehovah be his God no man can find confidence in the fact that he was Jacob's God. But when by faith we know the Lord to be ours, then we are "rich to all the intents of bliss."

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### **Psalm 1. The decisive contrast - J A Motyer - [New Bible Commentary - available to borrow from archive.org](#)**

Psalm 1 introduces the whole book of Psalms. First, it is a psalm of faith (3d). This promise of prosperity is not a pledge of good fortune in return for good behaviour—the Psalms know life too well for that! (see 42, 73). Rather, just as we continue to say 'I believe in God the Father Almighty' yet find that life often seems to deny both his fatherliness and his almightiness, so also v 3 professes a 'creed': this world is God's world and those who side with him will surely and ultimately enjoy blessing (6). Secondly, it is a psalm of commitment: to a distinct lifestyle (1) and to the word of God (2). Indeed 'distinctiveness' is the theme around which the poem is structured.

- A1 (v 1) The way of blessedness
- B1 (v 2) Continuance in the Lord's law
  - C1 (v 3) The enduring fruit tree
  - C2 (v 4) The impermanent chaff
- B2 (v 5) No standing in the Lord's judgment
- A2 (v 6) The way of perishing

1 The way of blessedness: present life. Depending on context Blessed can mean under God's blessing, happy or fulfilled, or intrinsically right. All three meanings suit here. But the blessing and happiness are by-products of commitment to the life that is right. Walk ... stand ... sit. Our distinctiveness must show in our lifestyle.

2 Continuance in the Lord's law. Law, 'teaching', such as a caring parent offers to a loved child (Pr. 3:1). Delight ... meditates. Behind the active obedience of v 1 lies the inward godliness of emotions and mind exercised day and night in the word of God.

3 The enduring, fruitful tree. Planted (lit.) 'transplanted', i.e. a new position into which one has been brought (80:8; cf. Col. 1:13).

4 The impermanent chaff.

5 No standing in the Lord's judgment. Judgment ... assembly. At the final divine assessment those who are right with God (righteous) contrast with those who followed their own counsel and, by implication, did not bring their lives within the parameters of divine revelation.

6 The way of perishing: ultimate destiny. Watches over (lit.) 'knows', enters into an intimate and loving care of. Perish, the last word, compare this with the initial blessed (1)—a decisive contrast indeed!

## A. The Two Ways. Ps 1:1–6

### **THEME: The secret of true happiness is found only in God and His Word.**

The Psalms, like our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, begin with a beatitude. Although not specifically written as an introduction to the Psalter, the first psalm provides a basis for all the psalms that follow. It compares the happiness found in the Lord with the sadness of those who do not know Him.

Ps 1:1. The unnamed psalmist describes the godly man, both negatively (vs. 1) and positively (vss. 2–3). Negatively, he lists three types of sinners, three expressions of sin, and three places of sin that are available to, but not frequented by, the godly man. In ascending order they are: Walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, i.e., his conduct is not shaped by worldly standards; nor standeth in the way of sinners, i.e., he does not make his association with evil men; and nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, i.e., he has no fellowship with those who scorn God.

Ps 1:2. Positively, the godly man is one who delights in the law of the LORD. The law (Heb tōrah) of the LORD is clearly to be understood as more than Moses' law. It is synonymous with the Word of God (cf. Ps 78:5; Josh 1:7; 2 Kgs 17:13; 21:8, etc.). Hence, it is in the Word of God he doth meditate day and night. To meditate means to discuss or ponder. As Thomas a Kempis quaintly put it, "I have no rest, but in a nook, with the Book." That's meditation.

Ps 1:3–4. Lastly, the godly man is described as a tree planted by the rivers of water. The verb planted (Heb shatal) indicates that the godly man did not accidentally, nor under his own initiative, take root. He is rooted fast in order that he may bring forth his fruit. The purpose of God's planting a man in the fertile soil of His grace is always the production of fruit (cf. Eph 2:8–10, Col 1:9–10). The ungodly are not so. The contrast here is striking. The character of the ungodly man is like the chaff. Those who are not planted by the rivers of water (i.e., the Word of God) are not saved and therefore are intrinsically worthless, without substance and easily carried away.

Ps 1:5. Positively, the ungodly are described as those who cannot stand in the judgment. When they are brought before the judgment bar of God, they have no retort to God's just condemnation of their ungodliness (see the comments on 130:3).

Ps 1:6. The secret of the godly man's success is not found in his godliness, but in that the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous. Our loving Lord attends to and provides for those who live godly lives before Him (101:6; Prov 12:10; Hos 13:5). In contrast, all the plans and hopes of the ungodly will end in disappointment and ruin (Ps 37:13; 146:9; Prov 4:19).

Two men, two ways, two destinies. One leads to life and blessedness; the other, without God and His Word, is a dead-end street, leading but to death. No one can seriously read this psalm and not examine his own destiny. If we're going to go to God's heaven, we have to go in God's way. Jesus Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn 14:6).

[KJV Bible Commentary](#) - Hindson, Edward E; Kroll, Woodrow Michael. Over 3000 pages of the entire OT/NT - no restriction on length of time one can use it. Well done conservative commentary that interprets Scripture from a literal perspective (pre-millennial) Has nice, readable maps. [See user reviews](#) - it generally gets 4/5 stars from users.

### **HOW BLESSED IS THE MAN:**

- Ps 2:12; Ps 32:1-2; Ps 34:8; Ps 84:12; Ps 106:3; Ps 112:1; Ps 115:12-15; 119:1,2; Ps 144:15; Ps 146:5; Dt 28:2-68; 33:29; Jer 17:7, 8; Mt 16:17; Lk 11:28; Jn 13:17; Jn 20:29; Rev 1:3, 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14)

**Related Passages:** May you be **blessed** as you read these holy words.

Psalm 2:12 Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How **blessed** are all who take refuge in Him!

Psalm 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good; How **blessed** is the man who takes refuge in Him!

Psalm 84:12 O LORD of hosts, How **blessed** is the man who trusts in You! (TRUSTS = TAKES REFUGE)

Psalm 106:3 How **blessed** are those who keep justice, Who practice righteousness at all times!

Psalm 112:1 Praise the LORD! How **blessed** is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments.



Psalms 115:12-15 (GREAT PRAYER TO PRAY FOR OTHERS ESPECIALLY VERSES 14-15 - I PRAY IT FOR YOU AS YOU READ THE TEXT) The LORD has been mindful of us; He will **bless** us; He will **bless** the house of Israel; He will **bless** the house of Aaron. 13 He will **bless** those who fear the LORD, The small together with the great. 14 May the LORD give you increase, you and your children. 15 May you be **blessed** of the LORD, Maker of heaven and earth.

Psalm 119:1-2 Aleph. How **blessed** are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the law of the LORD (PARALLELS OPENING WORDS OF PSALM 1). 2 How **blessed** are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart.

Psalm 144:15 How **blessed** are the people who are so situated; How blessed are the people whose God is the LORD!

Psalm 146:5 How **blessed** is he whose help is the God of Jacob, Whose hope is in the LORD his God,

## **BLESSED, BLESSED THE ONE WHO READS & HEEDS**

**Luke 6:46-49+** “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and **do not do** what I say? 47 “Everyone who comes to Me and **hears** My words and **acts** on them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49 “But the one who has **heard** and **has not acted accordingly**, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.”

**Luke 8:21+** But He answered and said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these who **hear** the word of God and **do** it.”

**Luke 11:28+** (Jesus said) **Blessed** (makarios) are those who **hear** the word of God, and **observe** it.

**John 13:17** (Jesus said) If you know these things, you are **blessed** (makarios) if you do them.

**James 1:22+** **Prove** (present imperative = as your lifestyle or regular practice - see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves **doers** (poietaes) of the **word**, and not **merely hearers** (akroates - like those who audit a course for non-credit!) who **delude** (paralogizomai = literally to reason alongside; present tense = continually in a state of spiritual delusion) **themselves**

**1 Samuel 15:22** (Samuel to disobedient King Saul from whom the "blessing" would be removed) Has the LORD as much **delight** (same Hebrew word chephets as in Psalm 1:2) in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in **obeying** the voice of the LORD? Behold, to **obey** is better than sacrifice, and to **heed** than the fat of rams.

At the outset note that the promise of blessing in Psalm 1 is not for the one who simply reads these beautiful words but who hides and heeds the words in his or her heart. As Jesus' Words emphasize in **Luke 11:28** obedience is the key to blessing in both the Old and New Testament. God desires to bless His children because they are as it were, His trophies of redemption, His re-creations in Christ, and as such He desires the lost world to see His glory through believing, obedient children. So as you read and meditate on this great psalm, ask God to open your heart to receive the Word implanted which is able to save your soul, not just the first time but every day as His Spirit takes the Word and sets us progressively more and more apart from the world and unto God. As we read and ponder these precious words let us have tender, even trembling hearts, that we might begin to experience, not just life, which all believers have in Christ, but even abundant life in Christ, the life which is blessed, blessed.

Observe in **Psalm 1** we encounter two men, two ways and two destinies. This contrast is especially dramatic when one observes words penned at the beginning (**blessed**) and the end (**perish**)! Take your choice!

In verse 1 we observe the practice of the godly man, in verse 2 the passion and in verse 3 his "permanence". This beatitude psalm describes the "be attitude" man, the one who is spiritually satisfied regardless of the circumstances!

You may have read in Spurgeon's comments above on the blessed state in **Psalm 32:1-2** ([Spurgeon on v1](#); [Verse 2](#)) where he notes that there is an association with the blessednesses in **Psalm 1**. And indeed there is for Psalm 32 speaks of blessings which are a result of God's forgiveness of sins. It is on such a firm foundation of God's imputation (reckoning, placing on one's account) of confessing sinners as forgiven sinners (who are saints!), that makes possible the accomplishment the **obedience** and **practical righteousness** called for in Psalm 1, especially Psalm 1:1. Forgiven people are blessed people and are in the position (in Christ) to experience even greater blessednesses from our gracious, giving Lord! Amazing grace indeed that not only does He save us but that His desire is then to even blessed us over and above the blessing of salvation!

Psalms 1 contrasts the two life styles set out in the wisdom literature and reminds the readers of the choices of life or death, of blessing or curse (cf. Deut 30:11-20).

**Steele** (1674) speaks of the value of the different components of the OT wisdom literature noting that...

**He that would be wise, let him read the Proverbs**  
**He that would be holy, let him read the Psalms.**

**Spurgeon** offer this overview of Psalm 1 - This Psalm may be regarded as the preface psalm, having in it a notification of the contents of the entire Book. It is the psalmists' desire to teach us the way to blessedness, and to warn us of the sure destruction of sinners. This, then, is the matter of the first Psalm, which may be looked upon, in some respects, as the text upon which the whole of the Psalms make up a divine sermon. This **Psalm consists of two parts**: in the first ([Psalms 1:1-3](#)) David (**Ed**: the author is actually not stated) sets out wherein the felicity and blessedness of a godly man consist, what his exercises are, and what blessings he shall receive from the Lord. In the second part ([Psalms 1:4-6](#)) he contrasts the state and character of the ungodly, reveals the future, and describes, in telling language, his ultimate doom.

Great title for Psalm 1

"Separated and Saturated"

-- Warren Wiersbe

**Warren Wiersbe** rightly states that "Two of the most popular words in the Christian vocabulary are **bless** and **blessing**. God wants to bless His people. He wants them to be recipients and channels of blessing. God blesses us to make us a blessing to others, but He has given us certain conditions for receiving blessings." ([Psalm 1 - Separated and Saturated](#)) (See Wiersbe's related works - [Meet yourself in the Psalms](#))

## **BLESSED IN DUPLICATE!** **BLESSED, BLESSED**

**Blessed** ([0835](#)) ('**esher**/'**eser** related to the verb '**ashar** = to go or be straight, to go on, to advance, to be right) and always refers to people but never to God. **Vine** writes that "Basically, this word connotes the state of "prosperity" or "happiness" that comes when a superior bestows his favor (blessing) on one. In most passages, the one bestowing favor is God Himself = Dt. 33:29. The state that the blessed one enjoys does not always appear to be "happy" = (Job 5:17-18). Eliphaz was not describing Job's condition as a happy one; it was "blessed," however, inasmuch as God was concerned about him. Because it was a blessed state and the outcome would be good, Job was expected to laugh at his adversity (Job 5:22). God is not always the one who makes one "blessed." = 1Ki 10:8."

**Gilbrant** on **esher** - Occurring only in the plural construct form, this adjective is used to introduce a word of "blessing" (Ecc. 10:17, etc.). It occurs in several different grammatical environments. It occurs before a participle (Ps. 2:12; 32:1; Isa. 30:18); before another noun (1 Ki. 10:8); with a suffix (Deut. 33:29); and before a relative clause without a relative particle (Prov. 8:32). ([Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource](#))

**Baker** on **esher** - A masculine noun meaning a person's state of bliss. This Hebrew word is always used to refer to people and is never used of God. It is almost exclusively poetic and usually exclamatory, "O the bliss of..." In Proverbs, this blissfulness is frequently connected with wisdom (Prov. 3:13; 8:32, 34). This term is also used to describe a person or nation who enjoys a relationship with God (Deut. 33:29; Job 5:17; Ps. 33:12; 146:5). In some contexts, the word does not seem to have any religious significance (1 Ki. 10:8; Prov. 14:21; Eccl. 10:17), and at least in one context, it has no religious significance (Ps. 137:8, 9). ([Complete Word Study Dictionary- Old Testament](#))

'**Esher** speaks of the inner contentment in the life of the man or woman who is right or "straight" with God. The man who practices righteousness will be a blessed man. 'Esher describes "a person's state of bliss (Ed: Webster = complete happiness. yjr highest degree of happiness; especially heavenly joys)" (Baker)

In Psalm 1:1, the Hebrew literally reads "blessed, blessed", the Hebraic way of indicating superfluity, a truth that we might attempt to translate as "blessednesses". The word **blessed** ('**esher**) conveys a deep sense of well-being.

'**Esher** - 42 OT uses (See notes above for more exposition of some of the Psalms that use **esher**) - Deut. 33:29; 1 Ki. 10:8; 2 Chr. 9:7; Job 5:17; Ps. 1:1; 2:12; 32:1f; 33:12; 34:8; 40:4; 41:1; 65:4; 84:4f, 12; 89:15; 94:12; 106:3; 112:1; 119:1f; 127:5; 128:1f; 137:8f; 144:15; 146:5; Pr. 3:13; 8:32, 34; 14:21; 16:20; 20:7; 28:14; 29:18; Eccl. 10:17; Isa. 30:18; 32:20; 56:2; Dan. 12:12. **NAS Usage**: blessed(41), happy(4).

**How blessed** - This phrase appears 23x in 22v in the Psalms - This makes an interesting devotional or

Sunday School study - What does God say about "how blessed"? - see Ps 1:1; 2:12; 32:1, 2; 34:8; 40:4; 41:1; 65:4; 84:4, 5, 12; 89:15; 106:3; 112:1; 119:1, 2; 127:5; 128:1; 137:8, 9; 144:15; 146:5. (And for "extra credit see the remainder of the 31v that use the phrase "how blessed" 2Ki 10:8, 2Chr 9:7, Pr 3:13; 20:7; 28:14; Isa 30:18; 32:20; 56:2; Da 12:12)

One person has written "The word **happy** is a good rendition of **blessed** ('esher), provided one keeps in mind that the condition of "bliss" is not merely a feeling. Even when the righteous do not feel happy, they are still considered "blessed" from God's perspective. He bestows this gift on them. Neither negative feelings nor adverse conditions can take his blessing away."

A number of the translations render 'esher with the English word "**happy**", but I prefer the word **blessed**. In modern use **happy** speaks more of a feeling. And in general feelings depend on our circumstances or on what happens! I'm happy if what happens is good. I'm not happy if what happens is bad. However that is not the promise of Psalm 1, which speaks more of one's state or condition rather than one's feeling. To be sure, the blessed person can certainly feel happy. The distinction is that when the blessed person of Psalm 1 encounters adverse circumstances, he or she still experiences a state or condition of blessedness. In other words, as the Psalmist promises, the blessed man of Psalm 1 will be like a tree firmly planted, sturdy, and steady and not like a tumble weed tossed about by every wind of circumstance. It is as if the blessed person has an inner strength, a supernatural source of strength, a state of blessedness regardless of the circumstances that one encounters.

As **Spurgeon** so eloquently expresses **blessed** in the plural "**Oh, the blessednesses!** The double joys, the bundles of happiness, the mountains of delight!"

**John Piper** adds that the Hebrew word 'esher "means happy in the rich, full sense of happiness rooted in moral and mental and physical well being."

The other Hebrew word for **bless** is the verb **barak** which is the verb used of man blessing God and of God blessing man. In contrast, the verb 'ashar used only of God blessing man. Thus it is fitting that in Psalm 1:1, the noun chosen is 'esher, speaking of the blessing from the Most High God to mankind.

In the **Septuagint (Lxx)**, the Greek word for **blessed** is **makarios (see word study)** and can be summed up as describing **the man** who is fully satisfied (especially in the spiritual sense), independent of or regardless of circumstances. And so even though the winds and waves of affliction, testing and trial come against the "blessed man" (or "blessed woman"), fortified by the grace from Jehovah, he remains **strong, steadfast** and **satisfied** in the Lord. The blessed man knows that he is safe in "the Ark" of **Jehovah**, the One Who declares **I Am... I Am** anything and everything you will ever need (not **want** but **need!**)

See related passages - Php 4:19, Ps 23:1, Ps 84:11, Mt 6:33, Lk 12:30, 31, 32, Ro 8:32, 2Co 9:8, He 13:5, 6  
2Sa 22:7 Da 3:28, 6:22 Ps 116:4- ; Ps 120:1)

**Adam Clarke** - The word ashrey, which we translate blessed, is properly in the plural form, **blessednesses**; or may be considered as an exclamation produced by contemplating the state of the man who has taken God for his portion; O the blessedness of the man! And the word haish, is emphatic: **THAT man**; that one among a thousand who lives for the accomplishment of the end for which God created him. 1. God made man for happiness. 2. Every man feels a desire to be happy. 3. All human beings abhor misery. 4. Happiness is the grand object of pursuit among all men. 5. But so perverted is the human heart, that it seeks happiness where it cannot be found; and in things which are naturally and morally unfit to communicate it. 6. The true way of obtaining it is here laid down.

In context, the psalmist expands the meaning of **blessed** in Psalm 1, explaining in picture language that the **blessed man** is like a tree by water, a striking image in an arid land where water is sparse and greatly valued. And thus planted by the precious water (and not a stagnant pool but a stream of flowing water!). And too the **blessing** is pictured as like a tree that is fruitful in season with an unwithering leaf. And such a one prospers in all he does. He is blessed indeed! And finally the psalmist goes on to explain the greatest blessing of all, the blessing of being known by Jehovah and the privilege of standing in the assembly of the righteous of all the ages. The blessed man is stabilized in the storms by these truths regarding his present and his future.

**Martin Luther** comments that ""**blessed**" is a plural noun, ashrey (blessednesses), that is, all **blessednesses** are the portion of that man who has not gone away, etc.; as though it were said, "All things are well with that man who," etc. Why do you hold any dispute? Why draw vain conclusions? If a man has found that pearl of great price, to love the law of God and to be separate from the ungodly, all **blessednesses** belong to that man; but, if he does not find this jewel, he will seek for all blessednesses but will never find one!"

**COUNT YOUR  
BLESSINGS!**

## Spurgeon...

Those that trust in Him are blessed; and I would observe, first, that they are really blessed. It is no fiction, no imaginary blessing; it is a real blessedness which belongs to those who trust in God: a blessedness that will stand the test of consideration, the test of life, and the trial of death; a blessedness into which we cannot plunge too deeply, for none of it is a dream, but all a reality. Again, those that trust in Him have not only a real blessedness, but they oftentimes have a conscious blessedness. They know what it is to be blest in their troubles, for they are in their trials comforted, and they are blest in their joys, for their joys are sanctified. They are blest and they know it, they sing about it and they rejoice in it. It is their joy to know that God's blessing is come to them not in word only but in very deed. They are blessed men and blessed women.

"They would not change their blest estate  
For all the world calls good and great."

Then, further, they are not only really blessed, and consciously blessed, but they are increasingly blessed. Their blessedness grows. They do not go downhill, as the wicked do, from bright hope to black despair. They do not diminish in their delights, the river deepens as they wade into it. They are blessed when the first ray of heavenly light streams on their eyeballs; they are blessed when their eyes are opened wider still, to see more of the love of Christ; they are blessed the more their experience widens, and their knowledge deepens, and their love increases. They are blessed in the hour of death, and, best of all, their blessedness increases to eternal blessedness,—the perfection of the saints at the right hand of God. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

**John Trapp** - The psalmist saith more to the point about true happiness in this short Psalm than any one of the philosophers, or all of them put together; they did but beat the bush, God hath here put the bird into our hand.

**Richard Baker** - Where the word blessed is hung out as a sign, we may be sure that we shall find a godly man within.

**Ray Pritchard** - In biblical terms to be **blessed** means to be rightly related to God so that your life is fulfilled and you experience deep personal satisfaction. It's important to know that this sort of happiness is not related to our circumstances. And it doesn't come simply by seeking for it. You find happiness not by seeking it but by doing certain things (and not doing other things). The blessing comes as a side benefit of the choices we make. A wise man said that happiness is like a cat. Seek it and it will run from you. But go about your business steadily day by day and soon it comes and curls up at your feet. How true. The most miserable people on New Year's Eve are those who seek happiness by hopping from one party to another and from one bar to another. True happiness and lasting contentment simply cannot be found that way. ([Psalm 1: Trees Planted by the Water](#))

## WATCH THE FIRST STEP!

God delights to bless His children, but we must be **"blessable."** We must have discernment (discerning good and evil) which works itself out in avoiding the steps that lead to sin -- considering sin (walking), contemplating sin (standing), comfortable in sin (sitting). Watch your first step if you want to be blessed!

**Spurgeon** calls us to observe "how this Book of Psalms opens with a benediction, even as did the famous **Sermon of our Lord upon the Mount!** (see notes beginning with Matthew 5:3) The word translated **blessed** is a very expressive one. The original word is plural, and it is a controverted matter whether it is an adjective or a substantive. Hence we may learn the multiplicity of the blessings which shall rest upon the man whom God hath justified, and the perfection and greatness of the blessedness he shall enjoy. We might read it, "**Oh, the blessednesses!**" and we may well regard it (as Ainsworth does) as a joyful acclamation of the gracious man's felicity. May the like benediction rest on us!

And so this "**Beatitude Psalm**" opens with a **blessing** for the reader who heeds the truths therein, but closes with a "curse" (perish) for those who fail to heed these truths. Please do not misunderstand. All men in both the Old and New Testaments are saved by grace through faith in the Messiah, so the psalmist is not teaching salvation by works. But he is teaching blessing by obedience. In other words to hear and not to heed is to deceive one's self and to miss God's blessing. James warned his readers "**prove** (present imperative) yourselves doers (poietes) of the word, and not merely hearers who delude (see paralogizomai) themselves. (James 1:22-note)

The Greek word for **hearers** in James 1:22 is **akroates** which was used to describe one who sat passively and listened to a singer or speaker. This is a description applicable to one who audits a college course, but not for credit, with the result that little effort (usually) is expended on the course material. Such **hearers** or auditors of college courses are not held accountable for what they hear, which is where the analogy breaks down, for all who read Psalm 1 will be held accountable for the profound, eternal truths it

lays out in straightforward fashion.

**John MacArthur** - Tragically, most churches have many “auditors,” members who willingly expose themselves to the teaching and preaching of the Word but have no desire for that knowledge to alter their day-by-day lives. They take advantage of the privilege of hearing God’s Word but have no desire for obeying it. When followed consistently, that attitude gives evidence that they are not Christians at all, but only pretenders. Such people, who are merely **hearers** and not also **doers**, think they belong to God, when, in reality, they do not. Proclaiming and interpreting God’s Word are never ends in themselves but are means to an end, namely, the genuine acceptance of divine truth for what it is and the faithful application of it.

**Alexander Maclaren** - Its theme, the blessedness of keeping the law, is enforced by the juxtaposition of two sharply contrasted pictures, one in bright light, another in deep shadow, and each heightening the other. Ebal and Gerizim face one another.

**Wiersbe** emphasizes that "**First, we must be separated from the world** (Ps 1:1). The **world** is anything that separates us from God or causes us to disobey Him. Separation is not isolation but contact without contamination. Sin is usually a gradual process. Notice the gradual decline of the sinner in verse 1. He (**Ed**: Describes Peter - and note what resulted = denial of Jesus - Lk 22:56-58. Sin is valuing anything as more glorious than Jesus!) is walking (Mark 14:54), standing (John 18:18) and then sitting (Luke 22:55). Becoming worldly is progressive; it happens by degrees (**Ed**: Illustration = frog in the kettle, slowly increasing the cooking temperature!). We make **friends** with the world; we become **spotted** by the world (contrast James 1:27); we **love** the world (1Jn 2:15-17, James 4:4), become **conformed** to it (Ro 12:2) and end up **condemned** with it. Lot is an example of someone who became worldly. He looked toward Sodom, pitched his tent toward Sodom, lived there, lost everything and ended in sin (**Ed**: But he was a believer so he was not condemned (Ro 8:1) but he surely did suffer loss of reward (1Cor 3:10-15). When we seek earthly rewards, we often forfeit heavenly, eternal rewards! Mt 6:19-21 Be careful how you walk! Eph 5:15, cp 2Peter 2:6-9).

Lot was righteous and thus saved but he missed the blessing of Psalm 1 because he failed to be **separated** and instead "**assimilated**" with the world!

**THOUGHT**- Dear believer, could it be that we are missing the blessing of Psalm 1 because we are not willing to separate from the world and/or the passing pleasures of sin? And it follows that this leads to your lack of longing for the pure milk of the Word (1Pe 2:2+) because you have persistent, unconfessed sins such as "**malice...deceit...hypocrisy...envy..slander**" (See 1Pe 2:1+). Unconfessed sin will blunt your appetite for the Word, and this basic principle seen in Psalm 1:1 (if you are living in Ps 1:1, you won't desire Ps 1:2), in 1 Peter 2:1-2+ as just noted and James 1:21+ (where you need to put off wickedness).

#### **Alan Carr - THE PATH OF THE SUCCESSFUL BELIEVER**

A. The Successful believer is separated in his walk of life.

1. He doesn't Believe like the wicked – (Ill. He doesn't listen to their counsel and invitations to evil) His hearing is turned a little higher!
2. He doesn't Behave like the wicked – 2 Cor. 5:17 – (Ill. The old man has been put forever away!)
3. He doesn't Belong with the wicked – 2 Cor. 6:17 0 (Ill. He feels out of place when surrounded by the devil's crowd.

B. Ill. The downward progress – Walk, Stand, Sit. (Ill. This is the path Lot took – Gen. 19. It eventually led to his total downfall!)

C. The successful believer realizes that there is a vast difference between himself and the world he was saved out of, and he lives accordingly! ([Sermons and Outlines](#))

#### **WHO DOES NOT WALK IN THE COUNSEL OF THE WICKED:**

- Ps 81:12; Ge 5:24; Lev 26:27-28; 1Ki 16:31; Job 31:5; Pr 1:15; 4:14,15; Pr 13:20; Ezekiel 20:18; 1Pe 4:3

#### **Related Passages:**

Psalm 81:12 “So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart, To walk in their own devices. (ED: SO BE CAREFUL HOW YOU WALK!)

Genesis 5:24 Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Proverbs 1:15+ My son, do not walk in the way with them. Keep your feet from their path,

Proverbs 4:14+ Do not enter the path of the wicked And do not proceed in the way of evil men. 15 Avoid it, do not pass by it; Turn away from it and pass on.

## THE WALK OF THE GODLY PERSON

Note the psalmist does not speak of "talk" but "walk" because unless your walk matches your talk, you are a hypocrite. **Walk** of course refers to behavior, lifestyle, how you live your life day to day, where you go, what you say and do, etc. This is so important that Paul commands believers to "**Be careful** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) how you **walk** ([peripateo](#)), not as unwise men, but wise, redeeming the time for the days are evil." (Eph 5:15-16+) Notice that you will not be able to redeem the time (the divinely given opportunities that may quickly pass by if not grabbed hold of immediately!) if you are not walking carefully! And you will miss the blessing of the Lord!

**Does not walk** ([01980](#))(**halak**) is a common OT verb (1340 verses) which literally denotes physical locomotion meaning to go (426x), going (30x), goes (22x), walk (142x), act (5x), came (13x), come (82x), depart(14x), departed (55x), went (309x), flow(6x), led (14x), march (4)x, travel (3x). The basic idea of halak is that of movement of something - flowing of a river = Ge. 2:14, descending flood = Ge 8:3, crawling beasts = Lev 11:27, slithering snake = Lev 11:42, blowing wind = Eccl 1:6, tossing sea = Jonah 1:13.

**Halak** is often used (as in Psalm 1:1) as a metaphor to picture one's behavior or conduct. How one walks (eg, walking in sins 2Ki 13:11, follow the example - 2Chr 17:3) is how one lives his or her life (1Sa 8:3, Dt 28:9).

Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will **walk** in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name. (give me an undivided heart is the idea, cp Mt 6:24, James 1:6-7) (Ps 86:11)

The first use of **halak** is actually to describe the motion of a river (Ge 2:14), but the second use describes God walking in the Garden after Sin came into the world (Ge 3:8). The third use describes the curse to the Serpent (Satan) = "on your belly you will go (halak) and dust you will eat all the days of your life." (Ge 3:14). In the next use (Ge 5:22) we see halak with its metaphorical meaning (as it is used here in Psalm 1), where it speaks of one's conduct. For example, the phrase **walking with or before God** speaks of a close relationship to God (e.g., this positive use describes such men as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, David, all of whom were pleasing to God and all of whom experienced the blessednesses of Jehovah. Cp Ge 5:22, 24, 6:9, 17:1, 24:40, 48:15, Ps, 26:3, 56:13, 116:9 )

**Vine** - God is said to "walk" or "go" in three senses. First, there are certain cases where He assumed some kind of physical form. For example, Adam and Eve heard the sound of God "walking" to and fro in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8). He "walks" on the clouds (Ps. 104:3) or in the heavens (Job 22:14); these are probably anthropomorphisms (God is spoken of as if He had bodily parts). Even more often God is said to accompany His people (Ex. 33:14), to go to redeem (deliver) them from Egypt (2Sa 7:23), and to come to save them (Ps. 80:2). The idea of God's "going" ("walking") before His people in the pillars of fire and cloud (Ex. 13:21) leads to the idea that His people must "walk" behind Him (Dt. 13:5). Quite often the people are said to have "walked" or to be warned against "walking behind" foreign gods (Dt. 4:3). Thus, the rather concrete idea of following God through the wilderness moves to "walking behind" Him spiritually. Some scholars suggest that "walking behind" pagan gods (or even the true God) arose from the pagan worship where the god was carried before the people as they entered the sanctuary. Men may also "walk...after the imagination of their evil heart," or act stubbornly (Jer. 3:17). The pious followed or practiced God's commands; they "walked" in righteousness (Isa. 33:15), in humility (Mic. 6:8), and in integrity (Ps. 15:2). They also "walk with God" (Ge 5:22), and they live in His presence, and "walk before" Him (Gen. 17:1), in the sense of living responsibly before Him. ([Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#))

In Hebrew the verb **walk** is in **qal perfect** where perfect depicts one's walk or conduct as a whole, without necessarily any reflection on the duration of that conduct. The perfect can also speak of behavior that was started in the past and has continued into the present or which is started in the present and continues into the future. The point is "Don't take the first step into the seductive cesspool of the world's wisdom"! **James** paints a striking contrast between the world's counsel (wisdom) and godly counsel (wisdom)...

This **wisdom** (worldly) is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the **wisdom from above** is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (James 3:15-18)

To be a **blessed** person means that on one hand we do not do something and the other hand we do something. And so these wise words teach us how little by little we can step out of the place of blessedness and into the place of misery and cursing with

devastating consequences. This first step begins when we begin to listen to and agree with the worldview of the wicked. Are believers at risk? Indeed, they are at great risk of taking this first misstep.

Solomon in the so called **wisdom literature** repeatedly warns against wrong associations...

**Pr 1:15** My son, **do not walk** in the way with them. Keep your feet from their path,

**Pr 4:14-15** **Do not enter** the path of the wicked, and **do not proceed** in the way of evil men. **Avoid** it, **do not pass by** it. **Turn away** from it and **pass on**. (Read that verse again - count the admonitions! Those of us who are older know full well why such repeated warnings are necessary!)

**Pr 13:20** He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

**Dwight Edwards** gives the following suggestions to help us choose our **traveling companions** in our life journey...

Is this person's goal in life holiness or just happiness? Are they living for the things that will count for eternity, or for the decaying delicacies of this fading world? How serious is this person's commitment to the cause of Christ? Many believers give mental assent to the goal of Christ-likeness, but relatively few pursue it with a burning passion. The purpose of true fellowship is to "stimulate (lit. "create a fever for") one another to love and good works" (see Hebrews 10:24-note; Heb 10:24-note); not to huddle around worldly topics with other believers, under the guise of "Christian fellowship." One of the most moving illustrations of godly companionship is found in the relationship cultivated between David and Jonathan. Perhaps the best summation of their relationship is found in 1Samuel 23:16, "So Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods, and strengthened his hand in God." Who do we have to help us "strengthen our hand in God"? To whom do we do the same? (2 Timothy Call to Completion)

## **LOT'S EXAMPLE OF HOW NOT TO BE BLESSED**

First note God's assessment of **Lot** in 2 Peter...

He rescued **righteous** Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that **righteous** man, while living among them, felt his **righteous** soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds) (2Pe 2:7-8+)

What's the "**key word**" in these passages? Clearly it is the word **righteous** repeated 3 times! Peter is emphasizing that **Lot** was an authentic believer, one who genuinely believed in the Messiah (as much as was revealed of His Person and work at the time). Had Peter not recorded this truth we would have all seriously questioned his salvation (and thus the repetition of the description **righteous**). As an aside one of the best OT passages (one used by Paul also in Romans 4:3,9) that explains how Lot was saved is the description of Uncle Abraham's salvation, Moses recording that...

Then (see when or what "then" refers to by reading the preceding context -Genesis 15:1-5+) he **believed** in the LORD; and He reckoned it (imputed it - placed it on his "spiritual" bank account) to him as righteousness. (Ge 15:6+)

With this background read Moses' description of Lot in **Genesis 13**, keeping in mind the conditions of Psalm 1:1 which are to be fulfilled in order to experience blessing from the LORD...

And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere -- this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah -- like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled (Hebrew = yashab = to sit, a word that emphasizes a thoroughly settled state or condition. Lot had settled down in Sodom) in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. (Ge 13:10-12)

**Ge 13:10 - Lot Looks**

**Ge 13:11 - Lot Chooses**

**Ge 13:12 - Lot Sits**

**Lot** looked toward Sodom, then **choose** to go to Sodom, and finally **settled** in Sodom. Notice the parallel with Psalm 1:1 where the **blessed man** is careful about where he **walks**, **stands**, or **sits**. Needless to say Lot was the example to be avoided, the epitome of the righteous man who fails to enjoy the blessing of the Lord. In fact far from being blessed, Lot ended **greatly vexed** (2Pe 2:7-note)

and tormented (see 2 Peter 2:8-note). Look out! Yes, as Jesus said **"Remember Lot's wife"** (Lu 17:32 - her disobedience was a reflection of her unbelief), but also remember Lot's **choice!** Lot choose to enter Sodom, and eventually enough of Sodom entered him that he even found it difficult to depart from the **wicked...sinners...scoffers** so that the angels had to physically extract him from Sodom! **Lot** though a genuine believer (righteous) was hardly a **blessed** man! Sadly there is a lot of **Lot** in a lot of believers today for they like Lot are choosing to walk in **the counsel of the wicked** (Sodom) when they could be basking in blessing upon blessing from **Jehovah**, the great **I Am** (I Am whatever you need, not whatever you want).

**Does not walk** - Does not go along with.

**Pr 1:10** "If sinners entice you, do not give in to them."

**Ps 119:115** Depart from me, evildoers, that I may observe the commandments of my God.

**Counsel of the wicked** - (Ps 64:2, Ge 49:6, 2Ch 22:3, Job 10:3, 21:16, Lk 23:51)

**Counsel** ([06098](#)) (**esah**) means counsel (52x), advice (11x), viewpoint or way of thinking, as when one thinks about a course of action (often including consultation with an advisor). It is a state of mind that affects the decisions that we make. Esah speaks of God's counsel (the best but not always followed) in Ps 73:24, 106:13, 107:11, 119:24, Pr 1:25, 30, 8:14

**Counsel** is advice; opinion, or instruction, given upon request or otherwise, for directing the judgment or conduct of another; opinion given upon deliberation or consultation. It is the act of telling someone what they should do based on a plan or scheme (2Sa 15:34)

**Advice** is an opinion recommended, or offered, as worthy to be followed.

The Septuagint translates counsel with [boule](#) which describes an inward thought process leading toward a decision. It is the result of inner deliberation leading to resolve, decision, purpose or plan. The implication is the wicked don't just "drift" into wickedness, but they plan their wicked deeds! Woe! Avoid them!

Psalm 1:1 instructs us to not listen to their **advice** especially in the moral/ethical realm, telling you how you should conduct your life. The first way to avoid evil is to refuse to be influenced by the ungodly.

**THOUGHT** - WHO influences you? Are you letting the world's way of thinking influence you? Suggestion - consider fasting from the news for a month and see what effect it has on your anxiety level, your ability to sleep rested, etc.

**Esah** - 85v -advice(11), consultation(2), counsel (52), counselor\*(1), counselors\*(1), counsels(1), designs(1), plan(8), plans(2), purpose(6), scheme(1), schemes(1), strategy(1). Dt 32:28; Jdg 20:7; 2Sa 15:31, 34; 16:20, 23; 17:7, 14, 23; 1Kgs 1:12; 12:8, 13f; 2Kgs 18:20; 1Chr 12:19; 2Chr 10:8, 13f; 22:5; 25:16; Ezra 4:5; 10:3, 8; Neh 4:15; Job 5:13; 10:3; 12:13; 18:7; 21:16; 22:18; 29:21; 38:2; 42:3; Ps 1:1; 13:2; 14:6; 20:4; 33:10f; 73:24; 106:13, 43; 107:11; 119:24; Pr 1:25, 30; 8:14; 12:15; 19:20f; 20:5, 18; 21:30; 27:9; Isa 5:19; 8:10; 11:2; 14:26; 16:3; 19:3, 11, 17; 25:1; 28:29; 29:15; 30:1; 36:5; 40:13; 44:26; 46:10f; 47:13; Jer 18:18, 23; 19:7; 32:19; 49:7, 20, 30; 50:45; Ezek 7:26; 11:2; Hos 10:6; Mic 4:12; Zech 6:13

**Wicked** ([07563](#))(**rasha'**) is an adjective meaning unrighteous, unjust, an evil person, wrong wicked, guilty (legally not innocent of a violation of the law - Ex 23:1, Ps 109:7), in the wrong, criminal, transgressor. **Rasha'** often describes unbelievers, who hate God and are habitually hostile toward Him. The **wicked/ungodly** conduct their lives as if God does not exist and with no regard for Him. **Rasha'** describes someone as evil with a focus on their being guilty or in the wrong (2Sa 4:11). **Rasha'** is the opposite of righteous (06662).

The majority of the uses of **Rasha'** occur in the Psalms (4x in Psalm 1) and Proverbs (see below), which would make an interesting study, which would give you a "descriptive" definition of one who is wicked or what characterizes their behavior (this would help us avoid such people!)

**Vine** writes that "**Rasha'** generally connotes a turbulence and restlessness (cf. Isa. 57:21) or something disjointed or ill-regulated. Thus Robert B. Girdlestone suggests that it refers to the tossing and confusion in which the wicked live, and to the perpetual agitation they came to others."

The Greek translates **rasha'** in Psalm 1:1 with **asebes** which means **ungodly** ([765](#)) (asebes from **a** = w/o + **sébmái** = worship, venerate) and describes one who expresses a lack of interest in the things of God and a behavior and lifestyle consistent with such an irreverent attitude. Click in depth study of the related word **ungodliness** (asebeia). **Ungodly** pertains to violating norms for a proper relation to deity, and in short means irreverent (lacking proper respect of God) or impious.

**Rasha'** - 249v - evil(1), evil man(1), evil men(1), guilty(3), man(1), offender(1), ungodly(1), wicked(228), wicked man(21), wicked men(2), wicked one(1), wicked ones(3). Ge 18:23, 25; Ex 2:13; 9:27; 23:1, 7; Nu



16:26; 35:31; Dt 25:1f; 1Sa 2:9; 24:13; 2Sa 4:11; 1Kgs 8:32; 2Chr 6:23; 19:2; Job 3:17; 8:22; 9:22, 24; 10:3; 11:20; 15:20; 16:11; 18:5; 20:5, 29; 21:7, 16f, 28; 22:18; 24:6; 27:7, 13; 34:18, 26; 36:6, 17; 38:13, 15; 40:12; Psalm 1:1, 4, 5, 6; 3:7; 7:9; 9:5, 16f; 10:2ff, 13, 15; 11:2, 5f; 12:8; 17:9, 13; 26:5; 28:3; 31:17; 32:10; 34:21; 36:1, 11; 37:10, 12, 14, 16f, 20f, 28, 32, 34f, 38, 40; 39:1; 50:16; 55:3; 58:3, 10; 68:2; 71:4; 73:3, 12; 75:4, 8, 10; 82:2, 4; 91:8; 92:7; 94:3, 13; 97:10; 101:8; 104:35; 106:18; 109:2, 6f; 112:10; 119:53, 61, 95, 110, 119, 155; 129:4; 139:19; 140:4, 8; 141:10; 145:20; 146:9; 147:6; Pr 2:22; 3:25, 33; 4:14, 19; 5:22; 9:7; 10:3, 6f, 11, 16, 20, 24f, 27f, 30, 32; 11:5, 7f, 10f, 18, 23, 31; 12:5ff, 10, 12, 21, 26; 13:5, 9, 17, 25; 14:11, 19, 32; 15:6, 8f, 28f; 16:4; 17:15, 23; 18:3, 5; 19:28; 20:26; 21:4, 7, 10, 12, 18, 27, 29; 24:15f, 19f, 24; 25:5, 26; 28:1, 4, 12, 15, 28; 29:2, 7, 12, 16, 27; Eccl 3:17; 7:15; 8:10, 13f; 9:2; Isa 3:11; 5:23; 11:4; 13:11; 14:5; 26:10; 48:22; 53:9; 55:7; 57:20f; Jer 5:26; 12:1; 23:19; 25:31; 30:23; Ezek 3:18f; 7:21; 13:22; 18:20f, 23f, 27; 21:3f, 25, 29; 33:8f, 11f, 14f, 19; Dan 12:10; Mic 6:10; Hab 1:4, 13; 3:13; Zeph 1:3; Mal 3:18; 4:3

**Guzik** - The righteous man knows where to find completely godly counsel: Your testimonies also are my delight and my **counselors**. (Psalm 119:24) ([See Spurgeon's note](#)) God's Word is always the best **counselor**, and godly **counselors** will always bring the truth of God's Word to help someone who wants counseling.

**William Heslop** - "Walketh, standeth, sitteth," reveals a growth in evil just as "ungodly, sinners, and scornful," shows a fearful downward trend.

From thinking like the world we begin to act like the world.

The righteous (by grace through faith as was Abraham in Genesis 15:6) are to be **in** the world but not **of** the world. This subtle but critical distinction can be illustrated by considering a submarine which functions **in** the water but not **of** the water. If it is on the ground (out of the water) it is of no purpose and it is unable to fulfill its purpose. But when it is in the water it must be insulated (not isolated) from the water. If the water gets into the submarine then there is cause for alarm and emergency. The godly man who seeks God's blessing must first be sure that his life choices are such that while not isolated from the world, he remains insulated from its seductive, destructive, evil influences, beginning with its evil counsel or advice.

**Gill** - "not to walk" herein is not to hearken to their counsel, to give into it, agree with it, pursue it, and act according to it; and happy is the man, who, though he may fall in the way of it, and may have bad counsel given him by ungodly men, yet does not consent to it, take it, and act upon it.

**Pastor Steven Cole** offers five guidelines for discerning the counsel of the wicked versus the wisdom of God...

**(1) The counsel of the wicked denies the sufficiency of Scripture for dealing with the problems of the soul.** The Bible claims to be adequate to equip the believer for every good work (see 2Ti 3:16+; 2Ti 3:17+) and to produce in us true happiness by dealing with the problems of the soul (Psalm 1). It provides answers for problems of guilt, anxiety, depression, anger, bitterness, and relational conflicts. "Christian" psychology brings the world's wisdom to bear on these problems, thus implying that the Bible is not sufficient and often stating "solutions" opposed to what the Bible prescribes.

**(2) The counsel of the wicked exalts the pride of man and takes away from the glory of God** The Bible humbles the pride of man and exalts the glory of God (Isaiah 42:8; 1Cor 1:31+). The world's wisdom builds the self and minimizes the need for absolute trust in God, whether for salvation or for daily living.

**(3) The counsel of the wicked denies or minimizes the need for the cross of Christ by asserting either the basic goodness of man or by downplaying the extent and impact of the fall.** The Bible teaches that we are all utterly wicked and self-seeking. None of us could or would seek God if left to ourselves (Ro 3:10-18+). The cross humbles human pride and wisdom and exalts Christ alone (1Cor 1:18-31+, 1Cor 2:1-5+).

**(4) The counsel of the wicked denies God's moral absolutes and substitutes relative human "goodness."** God is absolutely righteous and His standards of holiness as revealed in His Word are absolute (see 1Pe 1:16+). Worldly wisdom rationalizes away God's absolutes as being too "idealistic" or "harsh" and substitutes some human standard, such as "love." In other words, human wisdom makes a god in its own likeness, rather than submitting to the true God.

**(5) The counsel of the wicked focuses on pleasing self rather than on pleasing God and others.** The world's wisdom does not promote self-denial and love for God and others as of first importance (Mk 8:34+; Mk 12:29-31+). Often the world's wisdom provides "help" for a person (relief from the symptoms of his problem) without leading him to confess sin, depend on God, and live in obedience to God. The world's wisdom counsels you to live first of all for yourself. In "Christian" form, it tells you that if you don't love yourself, you can't love God and others. ([Psalm 1 How To Live Happily Ever After](#))

From [Grace Gems...](#)

**BEWARE OF THE COMPANY OF THE UNGODLY.** Of course, I would not dissuade you from necessary dealings with the ungodly, nor from helping them, and certainly not from endeavoring to draw them to God when you have opportunity. It is the unnecessary fellowship with the ungodly from which I would dissuade you. Chiefly to be avoided are the profane, the swearer, the drunkard, and the enemies of godliness. But they are not the only ones who will prove harmful companions to us. Too frequent fellowship with people whose conversation is empty, will also divert our thoughts from heaven. We need all the help we can get in living the heavenly life on earth.

A stone is as fit to rise and fly in the air, as our hearts are by nature to move towards heaven. You need not hinder the rocks from flying up to the sky. It is sufficient that you do not help them. Just as surely, if our spirits have not great assistance, they may easily be kept from soaring upwards even without great hindrances.

Consider this in the choice of your company. What help will it be to your spiritual life to hear about the weather or the latest news? This is the conversation of earthlings. How will it help to raise your heart to God, to hear about an excellent book, or an able minister, or of some petty controversy? This is mainly the best conversation you are likely to hear from the formal, dead-hearted church member. Can you have your hearts in heaven while among your roaring companions in a bar, or when you work with those whose common language is profanity, filthiness, foolishness, and dirty jokes? No, the plain fact is, fellowship will be a part of our happiness in heaven; and it is now either a help or hindrance in living a heavenly life on earth. ([Grace Gems](#))

#### NOR STAND IN THE PATH OF SINNERS:

- **Stand** Ps 26:12, Ro 5:2, Eph 6:13
- **Path** - Ps 1:6; 36:4; 146:9; Pr 2:12; 4:19; 13:15; Mt 7:13,14

### DON'T TAKE A STAND WITH SINNERS!

**Take a stand** is an idiom to publicly assert one's unyielding support of, defense of, or opposition to something. Psalm 1:1 says **DON'T** take a stand!

**Paul** gives believers a similar warning in the NT...

**Do not be deceived** (present imperative + negative = command to stop being led astray see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)): "Bad company **corrupts** (Note that use of the Present tense = continually! The verb **phtheiro** means to cause good morals to "decay," to "waste away") good morals." (1 Cor 15:33)

**Comment:** Stop believing their falsehoods such as "you only go around once, grab all the gusto you can get!!!" - lies such as this will lead to rotteness in one's life.

**Stand** ([05975](#)) **in the path** ([01870](#))- This means to avoid being in the places where sinners congregate to do their thing. If you are serious about keeping yourself morally/ethically pure and holy, don't put yourself in a **path** that will surely bring temptation.

**Sinners** ([02400](#)) (**chatta'/hatta'** see related word sin = [chattat/chattath](#)) is an archery term which meant "to fall short, miss the mark." (cp Judges 20:16-note). The mark is the will and plan of God as revealed in Scripture. Sin is the transgression of His will as He has revealed it. Sin is whatever misses the will of God for man doctrinally or morally. We are all sinners. We all miss the mark, and none of us are perfect nor will we ever be perfect in this life. This is why Christ had to die for our sin so we might have His righteousness.

**David Guzik** - Sinners have a **path** where they **stand**, and the righteous man knows he does not belong on that **path**. **Path** speaks of a way, a road, a direction, and the righteous man is not traveling in the same direction as sinners. The righteous man is not afraid to take a less-traveled road, because he knows it leads to blessing, happiness, and eternal life. "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it." (see Matthew 7:13-note) The righteous can have the confidence of **Psalm 16:11**: You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore ([See Spurgeon's note](#)). God has a **path**, and it is a good road to take.

**Steven Cole** - The **path of sinners** refers to their way of life or behavior. To **stand in the path of sinners** means involvement with sinners in their sinful behavior. The word "sinners" comes from a Hebrew word meaning to miss the mark. It refers to deviating from

the standard of God as revealed in His Word... If we run with worldly people in their godless way of life, we will be wrongly influenced by them. That is why a new Christian needs to cut off close relationships with many former friends: They will draw you back into the old way of life. You may not think so, but, "Do not be deceived"! On the other hand, we are not supposed to cut ourselves off completely from sinners (unless they make claim of being Christians). Otherwise, you would have to go out of the world (1Cor. 5:9-11+). Rather, your objective changes. Whereas before you associated with sinners as one of them to join in their evil deeds, now you associate with them as a sinner saved by grace to seek to bring them to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. ([Psalm 1- How To Live Happily Ever After](#))

Observe the progression in which patterns are forming and becoming entrenched. In other words we begin the downgrade by **listening** to the world's wisdom especially in the moral/ethical sphere ("It's okay to sleep together if you are engaged and soon to be married." = "counsel of the wicked!"). And from listening to their counsel we begin to **think** like the world and soon we **act** like the world, because what a man **believes** will always determine how he **behaves**. Sin's natural direction spiritually speaking is a sequential, seductive, downward drag. Words like regression, deterioration, degeneration, destruction come to mind. The writer of Hebrews warned that we should...

**encourage** (present imperative = command to make this your habit - Why? we are in continual need for we are bombarded by discouraging circumstances and news of this fallen world -- see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) one another (which implies [1] we need each other and [2] we need to be in contact, i.e., fellowship daily! No "lone ranger" Christians if you want to stay encouraged and be an encourager!) day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness (see study of apate) of sin. (see note Hebrews 3:13) (**Sin is deceitful** [Latin = *decipio* = to take aside, to ensnare] - cunning, stealthy, misleading, untruthful, beguiling, cheating, counterfeit, deceptive, dishonest, disingenuous, ensnaring, trickish, duplicitous, illusory, deliberately causing one to believe something that is not true, deliberately misrepresentative) **See Related Discussion: The Deceitfulness of Sin**

So the effect of sin is to bring about a gradual "build up of plaque" (using a medical analogy) producing spiritual "arteriosclerosis" or hardening of one's heart and this can happen to believers, especially to those believers who think "*That could never happen to me!*" ("*Therefore let him who thinks he stands **take heed*** [present imperative = command for continual vigilance against pride for we are continually vulnerable to its subtle nature see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)] *lest he fall.*" 1Cor 10:12) As an aside, an instructive "warning" study are several of the Biblical examples of overconfidence - Haman in Esther 3-5, Sennacherib and the angel of the Lord in Isaiah 37:36, 37, 38; Peter in Luke 22:33, 34, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, the churches at Sardis, Laodicea -- Revelation 3:1; 3:2; 3:3, 3:17 see notes [Revelation 3:1](#); [3:2](#); [3:3](#); [3:17](#).

## NOR SIT AT THE SEAT OF SCOFFERS:

- Ps 26:4,5; 119:115; Jer 15:17
- **scoffers**: Pr 1:22; 3:34; 9:12; 19:29

**Sit** ([03427](#)) (**yashab**) has sense of to sit, dwell, remain, abide and emphasizes a thoroughly settled state or condition. One has settled down and is comfortable and content with the world with its patterns. In the present context this verb pictures the idea of becoming comfortable with sin and of progression from casual influence of ungodly people to collusion with them in their scorn.

In **Numbers** we see an instructive use of **yashab**, Moses recording the tragic story of Israel...

While Israel **remained** (**yashab**) at [Shittim](#) (the last stop before Israel crossed the Jordan) the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab.<sup>2</sup> For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.<sup>3</sup> So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the LORD was angry against Israel. (Numbers 25:1-3)

**Comment:** Sit (Yashab) here in Numbers 25 is not the same word as '**camp**' which is what they should have been doing! See Nu 35:19 where camped (chanah) means to pitch a tent, which is quite a different action than from abiding or tarrying in the **seat of scoffers** (Idol worshipers in this case) and they forfeited the **blessednesses** of Jehovah! ([Read the full story in Numbers 25](#))

In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul wrote over 1000 years later...

Now **these things** (referring to Numbers 25) happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved...<sup>11</sup> Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have

come.

**Seat** ([04186](#)) (**moshab** from **yashab** = to sit, remain, dwell) means a seat (1Sa 20:18, 25), assembly, dwelling place, dwelling (a settlement, a place to live - Ge 10:30), dwellers, a site, a session; an abode (the place or the time). The idea is not only 'seat' or 'place of sitting down' but also 'session' or 'assembly.'" Zion is called the dwelling place of Yahweh (Ps 132:13). houses are sometimes called dwellings (Lev 25:29; Exo 12:20) and the people in them were called inhabitants, or dwellers (2Sa 9:12). In sum, moshab means a place where a thing (in this case a person) is settled or established.

**NAS Usage** - Usage: dwelling(3), dwelling place(1), dwelling places(5), dwellings(9), habitation(1), habitations(2), inhabited(3), inhabited places(1), lived(1), seat(8), seating(2), settlement(1), settlements(3), situation(1), time(1), where they lived(1), where you are to live(1).

**Moshab** - 43v - Ge 10:30; 27:39; 36:43; Ex 10:23; 12:20, 40; 35:3; Lev 3:17; 7:26; 13:46; 23:3, 14, 17, 21, 31; 25:29; Nu 15:2; 24:21; 31:10; 35:29; 1Sa 20:18, 25; 2Sa 9:12; 1Kgs 10:5; 2Kgs 2:19; 1Chr 4:33; 6:54; 7:28; 2Chr 9:4; Job 29:7; Ps 1:1; 107:4, 7, 32, 36; 132:13; Ezek 6:6, 14; 8:3; 28:2; 34:13; 37:23; 48:15

**Scoffers** ([03887](#)) (**lis/luwts**) means to mock, to deride, to speak in a scornfully derisive or to boast so as to express utter contempt. The activity of the scornful is condemned as an abomination to people. The scoffer is one who shows contempt by mocking, sneering, or scorning. This verb frequently means to deride or boast in such a way as to express contempt (Pr 9:7, 8; 13:1; 20:1). "By extension the word is used to signify ambassadors (2Chr 32:31);, interpreters (Ge 42:23); and spokesmen (Isa 43:27)." (Baker) "To talk big, i.e., speak words which show no respect for the object, and make fun of the object, with a possible focus of speaking in the situation with confidence and authority." (Swanson)

**Walter Kaiser** - Fools scorn and mock at sin (Pr 14:9) and judgment (Pr 19:28). The scorner (Qal participial form) himself may be described as proud and haughty (Pr 21:24), incorrigible (Pr 9:7), resistant to all reproof (Pr 9:8; 15:12), and hating any rebuke (Pr 13:1). Wisdom and knowledge easily elude him (Pr 14:6). So despicable is the scorner that he may be labelled as odious to all men (Pr 24:9). Therefore he must be avoided (Ps 1:1) by all who would live godly lives. Further, he should be punished by hitting so that the easily persuaded naive fool may benefit from the lesson (Pr 19:25; 21:11). One good way to remove contention from a group is to eject the scorner, and then "strife and reproach will cease" (Pr 22:10). A prepared judgment awaits all such scorners (Pr 19:29), for their trademark of life has been "to delight" in their scorning (Pr 1:22). They shall be brought to nothing and consumed (Isa 29:20). ([Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament](#))

**Scoff** = To treat with insolent ridicule, mockery or contumelious language; to manifest contempt by derision; with at. To scoff at religion and sacred things is evidence of extreme weakness and folly, as well as of wickedness. To show contempt by derisive acts or language; stresses insolence, disrespect, or incredulity as motivating the derision

**Scorn** = open dislike and disrespect or derision often mixed with indignation; reject or dismiss as contemptible or unworthy; show disdain or derision; to regard as unworthy of one's notice or consideration & implies a ready or indignant contempt.

**Lis/luwts**- 26 v - Usage: carry on as scoffers(1), deride(1), envoys(1), interpreter(1), makes a mockery(1), mediator(1), mock(1), mocker(1), scoff(1), scoffer(10), scoffers(5), scoffs at the scoffers(1), scorner(1), spokesmen(1). Below are some representative uses...

Ge 42:23; 2Chr 32:31; Job 16:20; 33:23 (**lis/luwts** = intercessor, mediator, i.e., one who helps parties to come to an agreement); Ps 1:1; Ps 119:51; Pr 1:22; 3:34; Pr 9:7,8, 12; 13:1; 14:6, 9; 15:12; 19:25, 28f; 20:1; 21:11, 24; 22:10; 24:9; Isa 28:22; 29:20; 43:27

Ge 42:23 They did not know, however, that Joseph understood, for there was an **interpreter** between them.

2Chr 32:31 And even in the matter of the **envoys** of the rulers of Babylon, who sent to him to inquire of the wonder that had happened in the land, God left him alone only to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.

**Comment:** envoy, spokesman, go-between, i.e., a person who relates messages between parties, including language interpreting or a focus on the message's content (see also Isa 43:27)

Pr 1:22 "How long, O naive ones, will you love simplicity? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing, And fools hate knowledge?

Pr 3:34 Though He scoffs at the **scoffers**, Yet He gives grace to the afflicted.

**Comment:** Lxx translates scoffer with **antitasso** (in present tense = their habitual attitude/action) which means to resist, to oppose, to be hostile toward. **Antitasso** was a military term found in the papyri meaning "to range in battle against" and pictured an army arrayed against the enemy forces. It means to oppose someone,

involving a psychological attitude and also corresponding behavior. It means to "to be an enemy of" or "to resist with assembled forces."

Ps 119:51 The **arrogant** (Lxx = **huperephanos**) utterly deride me, Yet I do not turn aside from Thy law.

**Comment:** Note the implication - the arrogant have no desire for God's Law, His Word of Truth.

Isa 29:20 For the ruthless (Lxx = anomos = lawless, behaving contrary to the law) will come to an end, and the **scorner** (Lxx = **huperephanos**) will be finished (Lxx = [exolothreuo](#) = utterly destroyed, completely cut off from God's presence - cf 2Th 1:6-9) Indeed all who are intent on doing evil will be cut off. (More literally in Hebrew this last phrase is "and all the watchers of wrong will be cut off.")

Unlike the good man, who walks the path of wisdom, the **scoffer** is a wicked man who follows the path of folly, refusing to listen to the wisdom of others.

Whenever possible, avoid associating yourself with those who are antagonistic to God and His teachings.

**Solomon** records of God that

Surely he scoffs at the scoffer: but he gives grace to the lowly" (Pr 3:34).

God is opposed to the scornful, and He will scorn them. That's a frightful picture.

**Guzik** writes that...

The scornful love to sit and criticize the people of God and the things of God. The righteous man will not sit in that seat! When others are putting down Christians, it is easy to sit with them and criticize them. It is easy because there are many things to criticize among Christians. But it is wrong, because we are then sitting in the seat of the scornful. Instead, we should be proud to follow Jesus Christ.

"Be out-and-out for Him; unfurl your colours, never hide them, but nail them to the mast, and say to all who ridicule the saints, 'If you have any ill words for the followers of Christ, pour them out upon me... but know this – ye shall hear it whether you like it or not, - "I love Christ."'" (Spurgeon)

**Walk...stand...sit** pictures a process of spiritual "retrogression" which is the ever present danger if we are not growing in grace by taking in God's Word. The point is that believers never stand still in their Christian walk and the psalmist portrays the potential spiritual declension by three degrees of degeneration, describing our habit or conduct (walk, stand, sit) and three degrees of evil influence (counsel of the wicked, path of sinners, seat of scoffers). In short, the psalmist warns us how we are prone to wander as the hymn writer says, turning aside little by little, even imperceptibly becoming increasingly entangled in the web of sin. We need to remember that the writer Hebrews warns of the deadliness of sin...

But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (see note Hebrews 3:13) (**See Related Discussion: The Deceitfulness of Sin**)

Oh to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be;  
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.

He is easily influenced by the way of the world in its attitudes and actions, for actions follow attitudes.

**John Calvin** - The psalmist says it shall go well with God's devout servants whose constant endeavor is to progress in the study of his law. Most people derided the conduct of the saints as mere simplicity and regarded their labor as useless. So it was important that the righteous should be confirmed in the way of holiness. This is done, first, by considering the miserable condition of all men who are without the blessing of God. It is supported by the conviction that God favors no one but those who zealously devote themselves to the study of divine truth. Moreover, as corruption has always prevailed in the world to such a degree that the general direction of men's lives is nothing but a continual departure from the law of God, the psalmist admonishes believers to beware of being affected by the ungodliness of the multitude around them. Beginning with a declaration of his abhorrence of the wicked, the psalmist teaches us how impossible it is for anyone to meditate upon God's law without first withdrawing and separating himself from the society of the ungodly. This is surely a needful admonition, for we see how thoughtlessly men will throw themselves into the snares of Satan and how few there are who guard against the enticements of sin. To be fully apprized of our danger, we must remember that the world is fraught with deadly corruption. The first step to living well is to renounce the company of the ungodly, otherwise their conduct is sure to infect us with its pollution.

**Scott Grant** - In Psalm 1, the blessing first of all is on the one who does not engage in certain activities. A progression is in view

from two levels. First, three types of offenders are mentioned, with each group being more severe than the previous. Second, the words used to convey association with the offenders convey the potential for increasing involvement with them. The **wicked** are those who would be guilty in a court of law, even for one offense. The word **sinners** implies a repetition of evil deeds. **Scoffers** not only engage in illicit activities but also ridicule those who don't. ([Delighting in the Word](#))

**Paul** gives an apt description of scoffers in **Romans** that...

although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice (as their lifestyle) such things are worthy of death, they not only do (habitual practice) the same, but also give (continually) hearty approval to those who practice (continually) them. (see note Romans 1:32)

**Piper** - So, instead of finding his pleasures in the words or the ways or the fellowship of the wicked, the one who is truly happy finds pleasure in meditating on the Word and the ways of God.

The description of the godly begins with the negative which prepares his heart for the positive teaching in verse 2. As Wiersbe so aptly puts it, the "blessee" must first be separated and then saturated. He must be separated from the world (the root idea of holy) and saturated with the Word. The more we delight in the Word, the less we will desire the world.

**Solomon** gives us good advice for avoiding the 3 step declension in Psalm 1:1 exhorting us to...

**Watch** (An imperative - it is imperative that we continually guard our heart from "intruders" see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) over your heart with all diligence, (why?) for from it flow the springs of life. (Proverbs 4:23) (NLT conveys the point "*Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do*")

O child of God, guard well your eyes  
From anything that stains the heart;  
Forsake those things that soil the mind--  
Your Father wants you set apart. --Fasick

**John Flavel** very wisely observed that,

The greatest difficulty in conversion is to win the heart to God; and the greatest difficulty after conversion is to keep the heart with God.

**Pritchard** calls us to...

Consider the progression involved: **Walk ... Stand ... Sit**. First, the man is walking down the road. Then he stops to hang out with the sinners. Eventually they prove to be such good company that he sits down and has intimate fellowship with them. What started as casual contact in the end becomes a declaration of personal allegiance.

The "counsel of the wicked" means the advice of the morally unstable. It's a general term that describes the worldview of those who do not know the Lord. The "way of sinners" involves a series of lifestyle choices. The "seat of mockers" means to have close, intimate, long-term fellowship with those who openly reject the Lord. The progression goes like this:

**Thinking ... Behaving ... Belonging.**

**Worldly wisdom leads to  
Worldly action, which results in  
Worldly fellowship.**

Let us be clear on this point. Blessings come not only from what we do, but also from what we don't do. Blessed people avoid certain things. And they avoid certain people and certain situations. They don't hang out just anywhere and they don't quickly buy into every line of thinking. And they are very careful not to join themselves to the company of those who do not love the Lord...

Sin never stands still. It always moves to control us. What starts as casual contact leads on to increasing closeness and permanence of association. Eventually, there is increasing boldness of evil accompanied by a lowering of our own inhibitions. We laugh at jokes that once would have seemed crude to us. We compromise our values in ways we never would have thought possible. We consent to things that would have greatly troubled us in the past. ([Ibid](#))

**Adam Clarke** sees Psalm 1:1 as a picture of the seen in this a progression of sin commenting that...

The great lesson to be learned from the whole is, sin is progressive; one evil propensity or act leads to another.

He who acts by bad counsel may soon do evil deeds; and he who abandons himself to evil doings may end his life in total apostasy from God.

**Steven Cole** comments...

Scoffers have rejected God and His Word. They now seek to justify themselves by openly deriding that which they've rejected. Scoffers think they know more than God. They're too smart to believe in the Bible. Many scoffers come from church backgrounds, but they've cast it off as too "repressive." Although they almost always hide under an intellectual smoke screen, invariably scoffers have cast off the Bible because they want to be their own god so that they can follow their own lusts. They don't want God interfering in their sinful lifestyles.

**The seat of scoffers** refers to the assembly or place where such men gather to reinforce their godless philosophy. Birds of a feather flock together. Those who scoff at God love to get together to reinforce their prejudices. To sit in their seat means to belong to such a crowd. Take note: How truly happy is the person who does not sit in the seat of scoffers!

Before we leave verse 1, please note the downward progression in the life of sin. Satan doesn't cause a person to fall away and spurn the faith all at once.

There are degrees of departure from God, as implied in three sets of three words:

**(1) Walk > Stand > Sit.** First, you **walk**--you're still moving, but now in the wrong direction. Then, you **stand**--you're lingering in sin. Finally, you **sit**--you're at ease in the company of scoffers.

**(2) Wicked > Sinners > Scoffers.** First, you're with the **wicked**--those who hang loose about God. Then you're with **sinners**--those who openly violate God's commands by missing the mark. Then you're with **scoffers**--those who openly reject the truth.

**(3) Counsel > Path > Seat.** First, you listen to **counsel**--you begin thinking wrong thoughts. Then, you stand in the **path**--you engage in wrong behavior. Finally, you sit in the **seat**--you belong to the wrong crowd and have adopted the fatal attitude of the scoffer. And Satan's got you!

**Two lessons:**

**(1) Guard your mind!** Satan begins there, as he did with Eve ("Has God said ...?"). Wrong thoughts lead to wrong behavior which leads to rejection of God and His truth. Guarding your mind doesn't mean that you become a non-thinker. It means that you critique everything by the unchanging standard of God's Word of truth.

**(2) Guard your friends!** Those whom you choose as close friends should be committed to the things of God. "What fellowship has light with darkness?" (2Co 6:14). Bad company will corrupt good morals. In my fourth year at Dallas Seminary, Dr. Howard Hendricks said, "The two factors which will most influence where you will be ten years from now are the books you read and the friends you make." Guard your mind! Guard your friends! ([Psalm 1 How To Live Happily Ever After](#))

**Thomas Brooks** has an interesting Biblical analysis of **wicked men**...

Always look upon wicked men, under those names and notions which the Scripture describes them, such as: lions for their fierceness, bears for their cruelty, dragons for their hideousness, dogs for their filthiness, wolves for their subtleness, scorpions, vipers, thorns, briars, thistles,

brambles, stubble, dirt, chaff, dust, dross, smoke, scum.

**You may know well enough what is within them,  
by the apt names which the Holy Spirit has given them.**

By looking upon them under those names and notions that the Scripture sets them out by, may preserve the soul from frequenting their company and delighting in their society. Such monsters are wicked men--which should render their company to all who have tasted of the sweetness of divine love, a burden and not a delight.

**Wiersbe** writes...

Two of the most popular words in the Christian vocabulary are bless and blessing. God wants to bless His people. He wants them to be recipients and channels of blessing. God blesses us to make us a blessing to

others, but He has given us certain conditions for receiving blessings.

**First, we must be separated from the world** (v. 1). The world is anything that separates us from God or causes us to disobey Him. Separation is not isolation but contact without contamination. Sin is usually a gradual process. Notice the gradual decline of the sinner in verse 1. He is walking (Mark 14:54+), standing (John 18:18) and then sitting (Luke 22:55+). Becoming worldly is progressive; it happens by degrees. We make friends with the world; we become spotted by the world; we love the world, become confirmed to it and end up condemned with it...

**Second, we must be saturated with the Word** (v. 2). Whatever delights us directs us. We saturate ourselves with the Word by meditating on it. Meditation is to the spirit what digestion is to the body. When we meditate on the Word, we allow the Spirit of God within us to "digest" the Word of God for us. So not only do we delight in the Word, it becomes a source of spiritual nourishment for us.

Enjoy the blessings God has for you and allow Him to make you a blessing to others. (A third condition, being situated by the waters, is the topic of our next devotional.)

God desires to bless us, but we must meet His conditions for receiving blessings. By staying separate from the world and keeping saturated in the Word, we may expect God's blessings. Resolve to meditate on the Word of God and obey it. He will make you a blessing to others. (see Matthew 5:3+) ([Psalm 1 - Separated and Saturated](#))

**Alexander Maclaren** explains the order of negative preceding positive...

It is usually taken as an exclamation, but may equally well be a simple affirmation, and declares a universal truth even more strongly, if so regarded. The characteristics which thus bring blessedness are first described negatively, and that order is significant. As long as there is so much evil in the world, and society is what it is, godliness must be largely negative, and its possessors "a people whose laws are different from all people that be on earth." Live fish swim against the stream; dead ones go with it.

The tender graces of the devout soul will not flourish unless there be a wall of close-knit and unparticipating opposition round them, to keep off nipping blasts. The **negative clauses** present a climax, notwithstanding the unquestionable correctness of one of the grounds on which that has been denied — namely, the practical equivalence of "wicked" and "sinner."

**Increasing closeness** and permanence of association are obvious in the progress from **walking** to **standing** and from **standing** to **sitting**.

**Increasing boldness** in evil is marked by the progress from counsel to way, or course of life, and thence to scoffing. Evil purposes come out in deeds, and deeds are formularised at last in bitter speech. Some men scoff because they have already sinned. The tongue is blackened and made sore by poison in the system. Therefore goodness will avoid the smallest conformity with evil, as knowing that if the hem of the dress or the tips of the hair be caught in the cruel wheels, the whole body will be drawn in. But these negative characteristics are valuable mainly for their efficacy in contributing to the positive, as the wall round a young plantation is there for the sake of what grows behind it. ([Psalm 1 - The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Maclaren** goes on to make a very important point, lest the reader think that holiness is manifest first and foremost by what one avoids or from that which one abstains. He writes that...

these positive characteristics (in verse 2), and eminently that chief one of a higher love, are the only basis for useful abstinence. Mere conventional, negative virtue is of little power or worth unless it flow from a strong set of the soul in another direction. (Amen. And I would add lest it become legalism which is powerless against the powerful pull of the world, the flesh and the devil.)

**Spurgeon** writes that...

He is a man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. He takes wiser counsel, and walks in the commandments of the Lord his God. To him the ways of piety are paths of peace and pleasantness. His footsteps are ordered by the Word of God, and not by the cunning and wicked devices of carnal men. It is a rich sign of inward grace when the outward walk is changed, and when ungodliness is put far from our actions. Note next, he standeth not in the way of sinners. His company is of a choicer sort than it was. Although a sinner himself, he is now a blood washed sinner, quickened by the Holy Spirit, and renewed in heart. Standing by the rich grace of God in the congregation of the righteous, he dares not herd with the multitude that do evil. Again it is said, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. He finds no rest in the atheist's scoffings. Let others



make a mock of sin, of eternity, of hell and heaven, and of the Eternal God; this man has learned better philosophy than that of the infidel, and has too much sense of God's presence to endure to hear His name blasphemed. The seat of the scorner may be very lofty, but it is very near to the gate of hell; let us flee from it, for it shall soon be empty, and destruction shall swallow up the man who sits therein. Mark the gradation in the first verse:

He walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,

Nor standeth in the way of sinners,

Nor SITTETH in the SEAT of SCORNFUL.

When men are living in sin they go from bad to worse. At first they merely walk in the counsel of the careless and ungodly, who forget God -- the evil is rather practical than habitual -- but after that, they become habituated to evil, and they stand in the way of open sinners who wilfully violate God's commandments; and if let alone, they go one step further, and become themselves pestilent teachers and tempters of others, and thus they sit in the seat of the scornful. They have taken their degree in vice, and as true Doctors of Damnation they are installed, and are looked up to by others as Masters in Belial. But the blessed man, the man to whom all the blessings of God belong, can hold no communion with such characters as these. He keeps himself pure from these lepers; he puts away evil things from him as garments spotted by the flesh; he comes out from among the wicked, and goes without the camp, bearing the reproach of Christ. O for grace to be thus separate from sinners. ([The Treasury of David](#))

**Adam Clarke** writes...

Mark certain circumstances of their differing characters and conduct.

1. The ungodly man has his counsel.
2. The sinner has his way; and
3. The scorner has his seat.

The ungodly man is unconcerned about religion; he is neither zealous for his own salvation nor for that of others; and he counsels and advises those with whom he converses to adopt his plan, and not trouble themselves about praying, reading, repentance, etc., etc.; "there is no need for such things; live an honest life, make no fuss about religion, and you will fare well enough at last." Now "blessed is the man who walks not in this man's counsel," who does not come into his measures, nor act according to his plan.

The sinner has his particular way of transgressing; one is a drunkard, another dishonest, another unclean. Few are given to every species of vice. There are many covetous men who abhor drunkenness, many drunkards who abhor covetousness; and so of others. Each has his easily besetting sin; therefore, says the prophet, "Let the wicked forsake HIS WAY." (Isaiah 55:7) Now, blessed is he who stands not in such a man's WAY.

The scorner has brought, in reference to himself, all religion and moral feeling to an end. He has sat down -- is utterly confirmed in impiety, and makes a mock at sin. His conscience is seared, and he is a believer in all unbelief. Now, blessed is the man who sits not down in his SEAT.

**Thomas Adams** wrote of the scoffers that...

when a wicked man comes to the depth and worst of sin, he despiseth. Then the Hebrew will despise Moses (Exodus 2:14), "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" Then Ahab will quarrel with Micaiah (1Kings 22:18), because he doth not prophecy good unto him. Every child in Bethel will mock Elisha (2Kings 2:23), and be bold to call him "bald pate." Here is an original drop of venom swollen to a main ocean of poison: as one drop of some serpents' poison, lighting on the hand, gets into the veins, and so spreads itself over all the body till it hath stifled the vital spirits. God shall "laugh you to scorn," (Psalms 2:4), for laughing Him to scorn; and at last despise you that have despised him in us. That which a man spits against heaven, shall fall back on his own face. Your indignities done to your spiritual physicians shall sleep in the dust with your ashes, but stand up against your souls in judgment.

**ARE YOU  
BLESSABLE?**

**Warren Wiersbe** sums up Psalm 1:1 noting that...

God enjoys blessing your life, but you must be “blessable.” That means having discernment (v. 1), avoiding the steps that lead to sin: considering sin (walking), contemplating sin (standing), being comfortable in sin (sitting). **Watch that first step!** ([Wiersbe, W: With the Word: Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Handbook, Nelson](#) - available for borrow from [archive.org](#))

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## **John Butler - Sermon Starters - HOW TO BE HAPPY Psalm 1:1**

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful” (Psalm 1:1)

The word “Blessed” in our text means spiritual prosperity and pleasure. It could well be translated, “Happy.” Therefore this first Psalm which opens the book of Psalms tells us how to be happy. This chapter in both a negative and positive way tells us what to do and not to do if we want to be happy. Our verse is in the negative and says there are three things one must not do if he expects to be happy.

### **FIRST—UNGODLY COUNSEL**

“Blessed is the man that walked not in the counsel of the ungodly.”

The world’s counsel is unholy and will destroy happiness. If you listen to the advice of the world you will end up in more trouble and less happiness than when you started. The world is ready to give counsel. The Ann Landers and astrology columns in the newspaper give much advice. But this advice is seldom, if ever, in accordance with the Word of God. Ungodly counsel does not include the Word of God. It is counsel that the Word opposes. If you want true happiness in life, do not listen to worldly advice in character matters. Worldly advice will not bring you happiness but regrets and sorrow. And in many cases it will deplete your pocketbook as well.

### **SECOND—UNGODLY CONDUCT**

“Nor standeth in the way of sinners.”

This means to not do as the sinner does. It means to not act as the sinner. The world has their standards and they are certainly not God’s standards. They are immoral, corrupt, and defiled in their conduct. Yes, there is pleasure in sin, but it is only for a season (Hebrews 11:25) then comes the eternity of sorrow. Political correctness and cultural are only clever terms for worldly conduct. Such conduct is not advocated in the Scriptures. The key to happiness is holiness. The world scorns that fact but scorning does not change the fact. If you want to be happy, be holy. There is no true happiness apart from holiness.

### **THIRD—UNGODLY COMPANIONS**

“Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”

Our text says at least two things about scorners who make bad company.

- The character of scorners. “Seat” indicates that scorners often have high and respected position. Spurgeon said, “The seat of the scornful may be very lofty, but it is very near the gate of hell.” The scorner is irreverent, and does not respect the things of God. The scorner does not bring happiness to the world. But honoring God does.
- The company of scorners. “Sitteth” speaks of keeping company with scorners. Choose your companions with care. Unholy companions have a bad influence upon you. Keeping company with the foul mouthed and those who scorn God will not bring happiness, but much sorrow to your life. A sanctified mouth is not a scornful mouth. ([Sermon Starters](#))

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**A W Tozer** - It is my judgment that too many of us go to church on Sunday for the same reason that a child climbs into its mother’s arms after a fall or a bump or a fright—the child wants consolation!

We have fallen upon times when religion is mostly for consolation—for we are in the grip of the cult of peace. We want to relax and have the great God Almighty pat our heads and comfort us with peace of mind, peace of heart, peace of soul. This has become religion!

According to my Bible, there should be a people of God, a people called of God and subjected to a spiritual experience by God. Then they are to learn to walk in the way of Truth and the way of the Scripture, producing the righteous fruit of the child of God no matter what world conditions may be.

But there is a great misunderstanding among us. Too many tend to think that we get the flower and the fragrance and the fruit of the Spirit by some kind of magical shortcut, instead of by cultivation. Meanwhile, our neighbors are waiting to see the likeness of Christ in our daily lives!

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**Henry Blackaby** - It is no accident that some people consistently experience God's blessing on their lives and others do not. Is it because God loves some people more than others? You already know the answer to that one. What is the difference then? It all depends on people's choices.

The Bible says there are things we can do and things we can avoid doing that will determine God's blessings in our lives. One extremely important factor is the friends we choose. If we allow sinful people to influence us, we shouldn't be surprised when God doesn't bless our lives. It's impossible to spend prolonged time in the company of ungodly people without being affected by their sinful attitudes. Even if our motivation is to provide a positive influence on them, we need to have our eyes wide open and be extremely cautious of the dangers, or the influence will end up going the wrong way. When we sit down with mockers, it takes great effort to avoid being dragged into a cynical, sinful spirit ourselves.

On the other hand, if we choose the friends we know God wants us to have, we'll find our lives overflowing with blessings. As we spend time with those whose lives please God, we'll find strength and encouragement to live pure, meaningful lives ourselves. When we make the effort to seek direction from his Word, we'll not wander down dangerous roads that lead only to despair. We'll know where we're headed, and we won't be lured off the right path by others. God does not arbitrarily choose to bless one person and not another. We determine, by our own choices, whether we'll open our lives up to the good things God has in store for us.

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### **The Man Who Is Careful**

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. PSALM 1:1

It is not for you to be seen standing, much less to be found sitting down with men of loose manners and lewd converse. You may have heard the story—but it is so good it will bear repeating—of the lady who advertised for a coachman and was waited upon by three candidates for the situation. She put to the first one this question: "I want a really good coachman to drive my pair of horses, and therefore I ask you, how near can you drive to danger and yet be safe?" "Well," he said, "I could drive very near indeed; I could go within a foot of a precipice without fear of any accident so long as I had the reins." She dismissed him with the remark that he would not do. To the next one who came, she put the same question. "How near could you drive to danger?" Being determined to get the place, he said, "I could drive within a hair's breadth and yet skillfully avoid any mishap." "You will not do," said she. When the third one came in, his mind was cast in another mold, so when the question was put to him, "How near could you drive to danger?" he said, "Madam, I never tried. It has always been a rule with me to drive as far off from danger as I possibly can." The lady engaged him at once. In like manner, I believe that the man who is careful to run no risks and to refrain from all equivocal conduct, having the fear of God in his heart, is most to be relied upon. (At the Master's Feet)

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### **Gregg Laurie - 58 THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF A HAPPY LIFE**

To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness. Ecclesiastes 2:26

Life in the kingdom of God isn't about all the trappings of a so-called happy life. But that doesn't mean it's a miserable, restricted life either. Psalm 1:1 speaks of how to live a happy life: "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers." The word "blessed" can also be translated "O how happy." So if you want to be a happy person, you need to do what this psalm encourages. Psalm 1 begins not with the power of positive thinking but with the power of negative thinking. It's telling us that if we want to be happy, we can begin by avoiding certain things that make it impossible for happiness to flourish. These things are poisonous and counterproductive. "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked. . . ." Happiness is found in what we don't do.

#### **PRACTICING HAPPINESS**

But it is also found in what we do. Psalm 1 continues, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers" (verses 2–3). The happy person of Psalm 1 stays in God's Word.

Amazingly, at the time this psalm was written, "the law of the Lord" consisted only of the first five books of Moses. So how much more should we Christians today practice meditating on God's Word? After all, we have sixty-six books to read! Keep in mind too that this verse doesn't say "his drudgery is in the law of the Lord," or "his dread is in the law of the Lord," not even "his duty is in the law

of the Lord,” although one could make a case for the dutiful study of Scripture. Instead, it is our delight and privilege to read the words of our God each day.

#### **FOUR SIMPLE QUESTIONS**

A number of Christians I know have a hard time reading the Bible. They don't quite know how to apply its truths to their lives today. I encourage people to learn how to read the Bible in a methodical, meaningful, meditative way, asking certain questions as we meditate on God's Word:

- Is there any sin here for me to avoid?
- Is there any promise for me to claim?
- Is there any victory to gain?
- Is there any blessing to enjoy?

This psalm tells us that happiness is found in being both reactive and proactive, resisting what's wrong and embracing what's right. If we do this, the Bible says, we will find happiness.

#### **THE TRUE GOSPEL**

This is the great Christian paradox. In fact, if this element is not present, then it is not the authentic gospel, because the gospel begins with a cross. If you hear a so-called gospel proclaimed from a pulpit, on TV, or on the radio, and that gospel does not begin with a cross and the fact that some part of you has to die, then it is not the true gospel. If it tells you to believe but not to repent, then it is not the true gospel. If it promises heaven but does not warn of hell, then it is not the true gospel.

There is the so-called prosperity gospel of today that says you can have it all. You don't have to be sick or in debt. But Jesus says that if you are living to please yourself, you will lose yourself. This means we must see ourselves for what we really are. We need to realize that living for ourselves never will supply what we want out of life.

Remember, Jesus said, “The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life” (John 12:25). Only when Jesus Christ is in total control of your life, only when God becomes your everything and your self becomes nothing, only when your love for God is so great that your self-love seems like hate in comparison, only then will you truly find yourself.

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#### **Abraham Kuyper - DEFINITELY BLESSED**

That man is blessed who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked. Psalm 1:1

Isn't it wonderfully profound that our Psalm collection dares to begin with a sinful, lost, no-account man who is struggling in misery, dying in his distress, and mouthing one complaint after the other, but who is still blessed? No, blissful! Even praised as definitely blessed!

Not only definitely blessed in the hereafter, but already now. Not that that man will be definitely blessed, but that that man is already definitely blessed.

Everyone knows very well that we yearn for happiness in our hearts. All human striving and endeavor is directed to that end. They are attempts to remove the hindrances that impede the way to our happiness. We don't and we can't rest until we are able to say that we are blessed.

“To be a blessing to the poor” is the approach taken, the promise made, and the prophecy announced by every form of idolatry. It's the same with every reformer, crusader, philosopher, and world conqueror. And the afflicted masses turn away from such people after they see that the promised blessedness hasn't arrived. Then the sting of discontent produces even stronger unrest in their hearts.

But now consider your Bible, God's Word. It also makes an approach, offers a promise, and announces a prophecy of blessing to you. But it is much stronger and more powerful in tone than the longing created by the crusader's approach. This Word doesn't only promise less suffering and to ease pain but offers an infusion of real blessedness. And that happiness is so complete that it can even be called “definite blessedness.” You can drink that kind of blessedness in such deep drafts that even the term “definite blessedness” is inadequate. That language can't begin to capture the full richness of the peace and joy involved here.

But how and in what way does the Bible promise that kind of definite blessedness?

To understand that, simply open the book of Psalms and notice how in many places the man who doesn't want to walk in the counsels of the wicked is wasting away.

You would think that God would deliver him from all his illnesses. But notice how he complains in his chains, calls out from the deadly dangers he faces, and simply moans in the bottom of some pit where there is no water.

You would think that his cup is brimming over with prosperity and wealth, but instead you see that he is hunted down like a doe in the mountains and that all the waves and breakers of the Almighty are crashing over him.

You would expect that he would be surrounded by a circle of faithful companions. But notice that all his acquaintances have abandoned him, and that the man who ate his bread has repaid him with affliction.

If then all these earthly blessings continue to be threatened, you would at least imagine that this most blessed of men would walk in quiet peace before the face of the Lord and enjoy uninterrupted holiness and devotion. But you find just the opposite, for over and over again his lips complain about his sin, and he prays for forgiveness. What rumbles from the bottom of his heart are the struggles that leave him a broken man and a contemptible sinner in his own eyes.

You might ask how it is possible that Scripture still calls such a person “definitely blessed.” My good reader, here is the key to that wonderful secret.

That man is the most miserable of all people in every other respect. No one has said it better than Paul did: “O miserable man that I am. Who shall deliver me?” But in one respect the page is completely turned, and that’s precisely where salvation emerges. That man knows that it’s not he who possesses God, but God possesses him! He lives by and with that faith. That’s all he needs. He doesn’t desire more. Now the pit without water becomes God’s pit. God put him there. God is working in him there. God wants to lift him out of it, and he will.

So do you understand now?

Definitely blessed because God possesses him, God upholds him, and God wraps his soul in the bonds of his divine will. Those bonds tie him securely to Christ, the Son of his love. God is present in his Son and present in himself.

This is truly a miracle. All those other proposals, plans, and strategies for making people happy have long ago been discarded, mocked, and then forgotten, and the multitudes in their inflamed bitterness have stopped following those who made them false promises. Then the plan in the book of Psalms for finding definite blessedness emerges once more. It’s three thousand years old now. But in every land and among every people you still find living examples of which the Holy Spirit describes: “Look over there! There’s the kind of definitely blessed person I’m talking about!” And if you were to take the entire world together, there would be a whole multitude that would be celebrating and saying in unison: “Yes, I’m one of those who have experienced that glorious grace!” You’d be able to hear over and over again how those people who are hunted and hounded are still singing. Sometimes they are lying in a deep pit. Sometimes the lions are growling around them. That’s when they sing their way through their fears and even rejoice in their pain and oppression: “As far as my situation goes, it’s good for me to be near to God.”

Is that how it is with your soul, my sister and my brother? Are you being definitely blessed like this? (Honey from the Rock)

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**Lawrence Richards** - There are two moral paths, each with its own destination (Ps. 1). Resistance to the Messiah, God’s Son, is futile, for He is destined to rule earth (Ps. 2). David found peace when fleeing from his rebel son Absalom by remembering God (Pss. 3–4). David was confident that his merciful God would bless him even though he had to wait for his prayers to be answered (Ps. 5).

Understanding the Text

Psalm 1: “Two Moral Paths.” There are only two moral paths a human being can take. This psalm graphically describes each.

“**Walk . . . stand . . . sit**” Ps. 1:1. Conformity to worldly morality has three stages. Walking “in the counsel of the wicked” is listening to their views. Standing “in the way of sinners” is acting as the wicked do. Sitting “in the seat of mockers” is adopting their hardened, immoral attitudes.

My wife and I have been shocked just this week to review some of the TV “comedy” shows that our nine-year-old Sarah wants to watch between 7 and 8 P.M. Their innuendos and often explicit statements clearly deny biblical morality, and we’ve had to declare such programs off-limits. The progression from walking, to standing, to sitting, reminds us that it’s dangerous to take even that first step away from godly moral thought. (The 365 Day Devotional Commentary)

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**Joni E Tada - God Bless You**

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.— PSALM 1:1

When you open the Bible, you realize the first thing God does in relation to man is to bless him. When you dig a little further, you'll find the first psalm is also about blessings. Follow the lead to the New Testament, and the most famous sermon Jesus ever preached centers on blessings (Matthew 5:3 – 12). It is God's disposition to bless us. A blessing is an act of declaring or wishing God's favor and goodness upon others. The blessing is not only the good effect of words; inspired by the Spirit, it also has the power to bring those words to pass.

Dr. John Piper puts it this way: "When God blesses us, it is what he really loves to do. God is not acting in a generous manner in order to cloak some malicious motive. God is not saying inside, 'I will have to be generous for awhile, even though I don't want to be, because what I really want to do is bring judgment on sinners.' God is truly acting out his deepest delight when he blesses. His joy, desire, his want and wish and hope, pleasure and gladness and delight is to bless . . . to give the kingdom to his flock."

It is the true inclination of God to shower his favor on our dry, shriveled souls. It is not God's duty nor his obligation to bless us. It's something he does out of the greatness of his heart. He blesses you with instruction, gentle persuasion, health, comfort, and consolation in times of hardship. He blesses you with friends, intellect, eyesight, and hearing. He blesses you with grace upon grace. Today, cultivate a personal disposition to bless others; let it be the measure of your character and heart as you shower favor and mercy on those who need his touch.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

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### **The Voice of the Lord - David Rudolph**

How blessed are those who reject the advice of the wicked, don't stand on the way of sinners or sit where scoffers sit! (Ps. 1:1)

Sometimes we look at life as a choice between following Messiah or being happy, but it's really not that way at all. In fact, we cannot be truly happy without following the Lord. When Yeshua gave the derash (sermon) on the Mount, he said, "How blessed are the poor in spirit.... How blessed are the meek.... How blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.... How blessed are those who make peace" (Matt. 5:3–9). That's a lot of blessedness. The word in Hebrew for "blessed" is ashrey. It doesn't just mean "blessed"; it also means "happy," or literally, "How happy!"

Ashrey is derived from the Hebrew word for "straight" or "right." For in the end, the way of happiness and the way of righteousness always turn out to be the same path.

Do you want to be happy? Stop seeking happiness. Seek righteousness instead. Seek what is right, believe what is right, receive what is right, do what is right, walk in what is right, live by what is right. All the rest will be added unto you. God's way is the way of true joy. Follow it and you'll be blessed, and not only blessed, but happy ... and not only happy, but you'll arrive at that state in which you'll say, "Ashrey!" (How happy!)—with an exclamation point!

Today I Will

... remember that the way of righteousness and joy are the same path.

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### **Charles Dyer - The One Who Is Blessed**

PSALM 1 Every January 1 we wish friends and loved ones a "Happy New Year!" But how would you like to go one step better next year and have a blessed New Year? The difference in wording might sound slight, but the change in our lives can be profound. To see what that change looks like, we need to head to Israel to visit the author of Psalm 1.

Psalm 1 was apparently not written by David. Instead, it serves as an introduction to the entire book of Psalms. If Psalms were a regular book, we would call Psalm 1 the foreword—the introduction that helps explain what the book is all about. We're not told who wrote the psalm, and that's okay because we know God is the ultimate Author.

Psalm 1 helps us see more clearly that there are only two roadways in life we can choose to follow. One leads to prosperity and blessing, the other to judgment and destruction. And we're responsible for the pathway we choose.

In Israel, roads developed over time following the path of least resistance. Through trial and error people discovered the pathway with the least number of obstacles or that traveled the shortest distance. It's not that you couldn't try a different route, but doing so usually resulted in more difficulty and hardship.

And perhaps that's why the writer of Psalm 1 begins by picturing the two roadways available to each person journeying through life. He first announces to his readers that the person who is truly blessed is the one who chooses not to follow the roadway running counter to the plan and purpose of God. "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!" (1:1).

Don't miss the progression. The person on this wrong pathway starts by listening to the counsel of those who don't follow God. The person then begins acting like those walking along that same pathway. And the final destination is a life that scornfully rejects all that God has said is right. But apparently this way of rebellion becomes progressively more treacherous. We find this traveler walking ... then standing ... and finally sitting or ceasing his journey altogether to make this place of scoffers his final destination. He might not have started out with this destination in mind, but it's where the pathway ultimately leads.

If that's the path leading to destruction, then what's the path that leads to blessing? The writer gives the answer in verse 2. The path of blessing is the path that leads to God's Word. The person who spends time in God's Word, finding pleasure in it and thinking through what God has said, is the person who discovers the pathway leading to God's blessing.

The writer then changes metaphors as he turns from the two pathways we can choose to focus on the two different destinations we'll reach. And he uses agricultural imagery to make his point. Those who choose to focus on and follow God's Word are like the fruit-bearing trees in Israel that are fortunate enough to be "planted by streams of water" (1:3). They produce the proper results in the proper season, and when times of heat and drought come, they're connected to a source of nourishment that sustains them.

The psalmist's word picture was striking because of the relatively small number of streams in Israel. Most fruit-bearing trees in Bible times—whether date palms, figs, olives, or pomegranates—were not planted by streams of water, because such streams didn't flow through the plots of land owned by most farmers. Any farmer with a stream or other water source on his land was indeed fortunate! Water from such a stream would nourish his trees during the six months of every year when no rain falls on the land.

Stop and look closely at the fig tree next to us. It's early October, and it hasn't rained for nearly six months. Yet this tree is thriving. I would let you try one of the figs, but it looks like other visitors have already "harvested" all the ones in reach! While much of the land is brown and dry, why is this tree so full of life? The secret is the ever-flowing stream of water right next to its trunk.

The psalmist now turns to a second agricultural image to complete the sad contrast between the righteous and those now specifically identified as the wicked. Those who choose the other pathway will not experience the same results. Rather than being fruitful and nourished, they're as parched as the dry seed coverings that fall from the wheat. They have nothing of substance to hold them firm when the scorching winds of life blow in, nothing to keep them rooted and nourished. Like the "chaff which the wind drives" (v. 4) from the wheat, they have little of substance or value to hold them firm.

As the writer draws his comparison to a conclusion, he returns to where he began. The person who chooses the pathway of the wicked will not stand in the assembly of the righteous at the time of God's divine judgment. That's the time when God will eternally separate the wheat from the chaff.

In contrast, God says that He "knows the way of the righteous" (v. 6). And the word for know has the idea of personal, intimate knowledge. The word is sometimes used as a euphemism for sexual relations between a man and a woman (Gen. 4:1). If you choose to follow the path of God, you not only come to know God, but you discover He also knows you in a deep, personal way. Sadly, the other pathway leads only to heartache, loss, and ruin.

SO WHAT'S THE LESSON for us as we begin this thirty-day journey into the book of Psalms? Let me offer two practical suggestions, each based on the two pathways available to us. Do you want to discover God's blessing in your life through this study, to come to know Him in a deep, personal, and intimate way? Then resolve right now to begin reading and meditating on His Word every day. You'll discover a living source of blessing that will sustain and nourish you through whatever may come your way in the coming weeks.

But as you start this study, what if you realize you've been walking down the wrong pathway of life? The good news is that it's never too late to return to God. Psalm 103:11b–13 says, "Great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him." Why not make this the moment when you begin a personal relationship with God? Place your trust in Jesus as your personal Savior, your Deliverer from sin who brings you to a forgiving Father. Then find a church that believes and teaches the Bible where you can go and learn more about this pathway to spiritual blessing that God has available for you! (30 Days in the Land of Psalms)

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Charles Swindoll - [Living the Psalms](#) - several devotionals on Psalm 1

### Day 1: Psalm 1 Compromise and Erosion

The Hebrews' ancient hymnal begins with a song that addresses one of life's most common grinds: compromise. Please understand, I'm not referring to those give-and-take times so necessary for living in harmony with one another. Without that healthy kind of compromise, nations could never find a meeting ground for peaceful coexistence and family members would forever be at

each other's throats.

I'm thinking, rather, of compromising with wrong, allowing the slow-moving tentacles of evil to wrap themselves around us, squeezing the joys and rewards of obedience from our lives. It happens so silently, so subtly, we hardly realize it's taking place. Like an enormous oak that has decayed for years from within and then suddenly falls, those who permit the eroding grind of compromise can expect an ultimate collapse.

I recall reading years ago of the construction of a city hall and fire station in a small northern Pennsylvania community. All the citizens were so proud of their new red brick structure—a long-awaited dream come true. Not too many weeks after moving in, however, strange things began to happen. Several doors failed to shut completely and a few windows wouldn't slide open very easily. As time passed, ominous cracks began to appear in the walls. Within a few months, the front door couldn't be locked since the foundation had shifted, and the roof began to leak. By and by, the little building that was once the source of great civic pride had to be condemned. The culprit proved to be a controversial coal extraction process called "longwall mining," deep in the earth beneath the foundation. Soil, rock, and coal had been removed by the tons so that the building sat on a foundation that had no support of its own. Because of this man-made erosion, the building began to sink.

So it is with compromise in a life. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, one rationalization leads to another, which triggers a series of equally damaging alterations in a life that was once stable, strong, and reliable. That seems to be the concern of the psalmist as he composes his first song, which encourages us to resist even the slightest temptation to compromise our convictions.

### The Passage and Its Pattern

The First Psalm is brief and simple, direct and profound. Even a casual reading of these six verses leads us to see that it is filled with contrasts between two different walks of life—the godly and the ungodly. A simple yet acceptable outline of Psalm 1 would be:

- I. The Godly Life (vv. 1–3)
- II. The Ungodly Life (vv. 4–6)

Written between the lines of this ancient song is evidence of the age-old battle in which all of us are engaged: compromise—the erosion of our good intentions.

### Making It Strong in Your Soul

Take just a few moments now to review your priorities. Family. Career, vocation, or calling. Job (not necessarily the same as career, vocation, or calling.) Health. Finances. Possessions. Friends. Spiritual development. Feel free to expand the list. As your eyes landed on each word, did your conscience react to anything? Did you mentally flinch or cringe? Compromise occurs when our behavior fails to reflect our priorities. In what ways have you compromised, and how can you get back on track?

## Day 2: Psalm 1 The Godly Life

In the first three verses of Psalm 1, the psalmist describes the one who chooses to live a righteous life, the one who consciously resists the subtle inroads of compromise. He envisions a person who remains wary of anything that might erode commitment to a godly life. His song begins with three negative analogies to illustrate the importance of resisting compromise with evil, lest the evil become a habit of life. Then, in verse 2, he shows the positive side of godliness and the means by which it may be attained. Verse 3 describes the benefits of a righteous walk. Now let's do some in-depth analysis.

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! (v. 1)

The first word, "blessed," is somewhat bland in our English language. The Hebrew term is much more descriptive, especially with its plural ending. Perhaps a workable rendering would be, "Oh, the happiness, many times over. . . ."

What is it that causes such an abundance of happiness? It is the uncompromising purity of a righteous walk with God. We see this by analyzing the three categories of remaining terms in this verse.

walk ..... counsel ..... wicked  
stand ..... path ..... sinners  
sit ..... seat ..... scoffers

The psalmist has spiritual erosion in mind. The word pictures illustrate how easily our intentions toward righteousness slow to a standstill or a complete stop as they are worn away by the company we choose to keep.



## Walk

“Walk” is a term that suggests passing by or “a casual movement along the way.” With its entire phrase, it implies the idea of one who does not imitate or “go through the casual motions” of wickedness. The word translated “counsel” comes from the Hebrew term meaning “hard, firm.” Here, it means a definite, firm, planned direction. Consider this paraphrase of verse 1:

Oh, the happiness, many times over, of the one who does not even casually go through the motions or imitate the plan of life of those who live in ungodliness.

It is not uncommon to flirt with the wicked life, periodically imitating the motions of those without Christ. We may, in jest, refer to the fun and excitement of ungodliness or chuckle at our children’s questionable actions. David warns us against that. He tells us that we will be abundantly happier if we steer clear of anything that could give the erosion of spiritual compromise a head start.

## Stand

The Hebrew word for “stand” has the idea of coming and taking one’s stand. The word “path” comes from the word meaning “a marked-out path, a certain and precise way of life.” Can you see the progressive deterioration toward more involvement in sinful living? The casual passerby slows down and, before you know it, he takes his stand.

On the other hand, by taking a firm stand for righteousness, we will be “like a tree firmly planted by streams of water”—one that cannot be eroded by the winds of wickedness and unrighteousness.

## Sit

The next word the psalmist emphasizes is “sit.” This suggests a permanent settling down, an abiding, a permanent dwelling. It is made even clearer by the use of “seat,” meaning “habitation” or “permanent residence.” Don’t miss this: the way of life is in the sphere of “the scoffer,” the one who continually makes light of that which is sacred—the blasphemous crowd.

Can you see the picture in the writer’s mind? We shall be happy many times over if we maintain a pure walk, free from even the slightest flirtation with evil. If we begin to “walk” in “the counsel of the wicked,” it is easy to slip slowly into the habitation of the scoffer.

## Making It Strong in Your Soul

Mentally review the past twelve months paying special attention to your “walk.” How has your manner of life changed from years past? Is your walk more pleasing to God, or less? Consider your willingness to take an unpopular “stand.” Can you be firm? And what about your attitude? Have you taken a comfortable seat among those who do not value the Word of God?

## Day 3: Psalm 1 An Uncompromising Walk

As I read Psalm 1, three illustrations from the Bible flash into my mind. Two men flirted with evil, then fell; but there was one other who refused to begin a “walk in the counsel of the wicked.” The first two illustrations involve Lot and Samson; the third is Joseph. People the world over are familiar with Samson, whose life is best described in Proverbs 5:20–23:

For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress,  
And embrace the bosom of a foreigner?  
For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD,  
And He watches all his paths.  
His own iniquities will capture the wicked,  
And he will be held with the cords of his sin.  
He will die for lack of instruction,  
And in the greatness of his folly he will go astray.

Most people are not as well-acquainted with Lot, Abraham’s nephew. With Psalm 1:1 in mind, note Genesis 13:

So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. (v. 11)

Lot “walked in the way of the ungodly.”

Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD. (vv. 12–13)

He “came and took his stand among sinners.”

And in Genesis 19:

Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. (v. 1)

He now lived among them with his dwelling in “the seat of the scoffers.”

How different was Joseph! He refused to allow the daily grind of compromise to take its toll even though Potiphar’s wife continued to make her sensual moves. Please stop and read Genesis 39:1–12. The man literally ran from her alluring advances. I find it most significant that every time sexual sins are mentioned in the New Testament we are told to “flee.” Psalm 1:1 assures us we will be happy many times over if we check the first signals of compromise with evil. Happiness is maintaining unblemished, moral purity.

The ancient song goes on: “But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night” (v. 2).

This verse begins with “but,” a word of contrast. While the first verse was negative, this is positive. In contrast to compromise and erosion, the godly believer occupies himself with God’s Word.

Why does David mention the Law here? Because in order to change our path of living, we need an absolute standard, clear direction. God’s Word gives us that sense of direction. We understand the Law to be a reference to God’s written Word, the Bible (Ps. 119:9). The psalmist claims that the godly person “delights” in the Lord’s Word. He doesn’t look upon the Word as irksome or a burden or an interruption in his day. Rather, day and night he meditates on it.

Verse 1 of Psalm 1 gives us a promise of happiness; verse 2 provides the means for experiencing it. Now verse 3 declares the end result:

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.

I am impressed that we shall be something rather than do something as a result of delighting in and meditating on God’s Word. Without any fanfare, yet surely as the rising of the morning sun, we shall become treelike in four specific ways. We will be:

1. Planted—fortified, stable, rooted, solid, and strong
2. Fruitful—production naturally follows being planted and growing
3. Unwithered—even during days of difficulty, the treelike soul is undaunted
4. Prosperous—fulfills the goals God has designed for his life

I have said for years: “The roots grow deep when the winds are strong” (cf. Jer. 17:5–8). Let me encourage you today to maintain a pure, uncompromising walk; delight yourself in His Word, and you’ll grow into a stable, reliable “spiritual tree.”

There is no shortcut to spiritual growth. Like physical growth, it occurs on a daily basis, depending upon the food and proper surroundings. With the right kind of spiritual diet and climate, you can experience “happiness many times over.” And best of all, the daily grind of compromise and its erosive effects can be checked.

#### Making It Strong in Your Soul

As you consider your own circumstances, what does “walking in the counsel of the wicked” look like in practical terms? What choices are involved? On the other hand, what practical steps can you take to cultivate a “delight” in God’s Word? List them and establish some specific deadlines.

#### Day 4: Psalm 1 The Ungodly Life

A key observation in Psalm 1:4–6 is contrast. Don’t miss the many things that are quite the opposite from the preceding verses. “The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away.”

“Not so!” That is exactly how verse 4 begins in the Hebrew Bible. It is an emphatic negative assertion. Literally, it says, “Not so, the wicked!” It refers back to the three preceding verses describing the righteous, godly believer, who:

- is happy many times over (but “not so, the wicked!”)
- delights and meditates in the Word (but “not so, the wicked!”)
- is like a tree (but “not so, the wicked!”)
- is fruitful and prosperous (but “not so, the wicked!”)

Instead, the psalmist uses a single term that portrays the life of the ungodly—“chaff,” the paper-like skin of the grain seeds which separates at the time of threshing. Chaff is completely worthless. In contrast to the firmly rooted, fruit-bearing tree, chaff blows away during the winnowing process. The Hebrew word for “blow” means “to drive asunder, disseminate, diffuse, strike, or beat.”

After comparing the lives of the “godly” and the “wicked,” David considers the fate of those who reject the Lord. “Therefore the

wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous” (v. 5). The first word connects this verse with the previous verse—“Therefore (or on account of their inner worthlessness and instability) . . . the wicked will not stand in the judgment.”

The Hebrew verb translated “stand” is not the same as the previous term rendered “stand” in verse 1. This particular Hebrew term means “to stand erect, to arise.” The idea in the mind of the songwriter is an inability to stand upright before God’s judgment. A parallel statement follows: “nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.”

The one who has never come by faith to the Lord and trusted Him alone for eternal life and a position of righteousness in God’s eyes has no part among the assembly of believers. Again, let me remind you of yet another contrast. In destiny, there is a great difference between the godly and the ungodly. But so many unbelievers live healthy, moral lives . . . even sacrificial and dedicated lives. How can anyone say they won’t be among the eternal assembly of the righteous? Verse 6 answers that question: “For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”

You’ll observe it is the Lord who does the judging. He alone sees the heart. He alone; not man. Only God is capable of being just and fair. But doesn’t the first part of this verse bring a question to your mind? Doesn’t He know the way of the ungodly as well? He certainly does! But this sixth verse is explaining why the ungodly will not be able to stand up under judgment nor stand among the righteous assembly (v. 5). Why? Because the Lord takes special interest in the righteous. Because the Lord is inclined and bound to the righteous by special love. He will not allow an intermingling between the righteous and the unrighteous. That is not His plan. The verse concludes with the severe reminder that the way of the unrighteous will perish. What a jolting climax to the psalm! Again, another vivid contrast. Instead of prospering, the ungodly will ultimately perish just as the little red brick city hall was ultimately condemned.

#### Making It Strong in Your Soul

God doesn’t demand perfection from believers; all of us fail from time to time. Fortunately, grace abounds. Nevertheless, at least one indication that our faith is genuine is a sincere desire to obey. If you do not “delight” in pleasing God by obeying His Word, perhaps now is a good time for some soul searching. Go there.

#### Day 5: Psalm 1 A Life beyond Compare

The central lesson in Psalm 1 is this: there is not the slightest similarity between the spiritually accelerating life of the righteous and the slowly eroding life of the wicked. Take time to ponder the bold contrasts:

<b>Godly</b>	<b>Ungodly</b>
Happiness many times over	Not so!
Uncompromised purity	Driven by the wind
Has a guide—Word of God	No guide
Like a tree	Like chaff
Stands erect before God	Unable to stand erect
Special object of God’s care	No right to stand among righteous assembly
Destiny secure, safe, prosperous	Perish

Let’s bring this week’s study of Psalm 1 to a close with an expanded paraphrase:

Oh, the happiness, many times over, of the man who does not temporarily or even casually imitate the plan of life of those living in the activity of sinful confusion, nor comes and takes his stand in the midst of those who miss the mark spiritually, nor settles down and dwells in the habitation of the blasphemous crowd. But (in contrast to that kind of lifestyle) in God’s Word he takes great pleasure, thinking upon it and pondering it every waking moment, day or night. The result: He will become treelike—firm, fruitful, unwithered, and fulfilling the goals in life that God has designed for him.

Not so, the ungodly! They are like worthless husks beaten about and battered by the winds of life (drifting and roaming without purpose). Therefore, on account of their inner worthlessness without the Lord, the ungodly are not able to stand erect on the day of judgment, nor do they possess any right to be numbered among the assembly of those declared righteous by God, because the Lord is inclined toward and bound to His righteous ones by special love and care; but the way of the one without the Lord will lead only to eternal ruin.

#### Making It Strong in Your Soul

Read Psalm 1 again, this time aloud. Pay close attention to the “walk . . . stand . . . sit” picture in the first verse. Honestly now, have you begun to tolerate a few compromises you once rejected? What will it take to get that cleared up? Never doubt the dangers brought on by spiritual, ethical, or moral erosion. (**Charles Swindoll** - [Living the Psalms](#))

Psalms 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

This is a fascinating passage. At first, it appeared that the saint of the writer was sleeping on the job. In most cases whenever you run into any blessings, the blessings come at the end but never at the beginning. Before a diploma, you must first finish school. Before retirement, you must first work. The blessings normally come at the end. But this Psalmist was so excited that he issued out blessings at the beginning. Saints are like that. We actually get our blessings on the front end. When we accepted Christ, He gave us the package deal up front. Most of us just don't know it. We think we have to wait and wait and wait to be blessed. But I'm already blessed. When I accepted Christ as my personal savior, He gave me right then everything I needed. He just knows how to issue it out at a given time. Picture a saint as a blessed person.

I like it because God himself uses math differently from the way we use it. God counts differently from the way we count. Man says one plus one plus one equals three. God says one plus one plus one equals one—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We say two multiplied by five equals ten. The Lord says two multiplied by five equals 5, 000. Two fish multiplied by five loaves of bread fed 5000 men plus women and children.

We say in order to get you must add. The Lord says, "No, in order to get you must divide." The rich young ruler asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" The Lord told him to go and sell all he had and divide it among the poor. We say in order to get up you've got to go up. The Lord says, "No the way up is down. The way to become rich is to become poor." Jesus came down for us to go up. He became disgraced for us to have amazing grace.

### October 9 Path Of A Saint

Psalms 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Here we are shown the path of the saint. A saint does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, which means a saint doesn't listen to sinners. Don't get advice from the ungodly. Most of us have a very small perception or a short vision of ungodly people because we put the ungodly in one little basket. We say ungodly people are pimps, prostitutes, gamblers, dope addicts, whoremongers, and a few liars. They are ungodly, but they are not the only ungodly. You might sit next to an ungodly person in church and never know. You just might be living with an ungodly person. An ungodly person is a person that isn't walking in the will and in the way of the Lord.

Don't stand in the way of the sinners. Not only should we not listen to the ungodly, but we shouldn't linger with the ungodly. Don't hang around with sinful folk. You have other things to do when you are around them. Try to win them to the Lord. But don't be buddy buddy with ungodly people. We don't want to laugh at their mess. Don't laugh when you see a drunkard or a person strung out on drugs because without the grace of God, it would be you or me. Be separated from the world.

A saint should be satisfied with the word. Psalm 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. A saint is satisfied with the word. It fills him up. When sinners spend time together, they come home empty. A saint can be home alone, yet still be satisfied because the sincere milk of the word is comfort when you are lonely. It lifts your burdens when your load is heavy. It can be food for you when you're hungry. It can be a battle ax in the time of war. That's why the writer said, "I hide his word in my heart that I might not sin against God."

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**C Ridley Pearson** - Let me ever avoid the fear of contamination, "the pestilential chair of the scornful" (Ps. 1:1, Septuagint). Let me beware of contracting a habit of thinking lightly of sin. Not to strangle evil thoughts at once is to cherish them, and from conniving at wickedness to deriding goodness is no great step. Once let that step be taken, and I forfeit not God's favour alone, but that of all men who are not themselves scorers.

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**Richard Hawker** - It is blessed to read every portion of scripture which speaketh of perfection in our nature, as referring to the person of the God-man Christ Jesus; and then, from our union with him, and interest in him, to mark our connection as his people, and our concern in all that is said or written of him. In the book of Psalms, particularly, there are numberless passages, which say that of holiness, which can be said of none among the fallen sons of men with the smallest shadow of truth. Who is the man, and where to be found, that hath never walked in the counsel of the ungodly; nor yet, which is more than walking, hath stood, as one not distressed at it, in the way of sinners; nor yet sat down, which is worse than all, in the scorner's chair? None of the children of men could ever lay claim to the blessedness of such a conduct from his own personal holiness in it. But if we read the words with reference to the ever-blessed and ever-holy Jesus, all this, and infinitely more, is true; for such was the spotless purity of the Redeemer, that his whole nature was altogether clean; yea, the law of Jehovah was in his very bowels. (See the margin of the Bible, Psalm 40:8.) My soul! behold, in this account, the true character of thy Lord; and in it behold the holiness and purity of that nature, in

whose holiness and purity alone thou canst ever see the face of God, in grace here by faith, and in glory hereafter by sight in open fruition. Thus read, and thus accepted, the passage in this Psalm becomes blessed indeed. In his righteousness, his people are made righteous; and by virtue of an union with him, and interest in him, and in all that concerns him, being joined to the Lord by one spirit, the souls of the redeemed walk as he walked, avoid the society of the profane, and sit not in the counsel of the ungodly. Precious Spirit of all truth! do thou thus glorify the Lord Jesus to my view; take of the things of Christ, and show them to me; and grant me daily fellowship and communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ!

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### **James Smith - STANDING IN THE WAY OF SINNERS PSALM 1:1**

We clearly see the reason why we should not walk in the counsel of the ungodly by a study of the context. But we must go further. Here we are told not to stand in the way of sinners.

I. Standing in the Way with Sinners. Some do this to get them to Christ, and that is right. But the idea here is that of making acquaintances and friends and confidants of the ungodly. Walking out with them. This we must not do. Instead, make friends with God's children.

II. Standing in the Sinner's Way and Not God's Way. This is a further thought. We should not travel in the way of the ungodly. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but——." That is not the way we must go.

III. Standing in the Way of Sinners Coming to Christ. Hindering sinners coming to Christ. What a tragedy! How can we be hindrances? We can do so by being very bad samples. Bad samples do not commend the goods. No commercial traveller would ever be guilty of such conduct. Don't be thankful for new light and not walk in it. What a hindrance is an inconsistent life.

### **SITTING IN THE SEAT OF THE SCORNFUL PSALM 1:1**

This is the last step in wickedness.

Sin is Progressive. I begin by walking in the counsel of the ungodly. Then I am found in the way of sinners. At last I am sitting in seat of scornful.

The Three Degrees of Sinfulness.

1. Simply ungodly—not godlike—sin by not doing.
2. Then sinners—those who step over—sin by action.
3. Then scornful—the contemplation—sin by ridiculing.

The Last State is Worst. That one who turns sacred things into ridicule has got as low as he can possibly get. He is a murderer. George M'Donald says: "Contempt is murder committed by the intellect, as hatred is murder committed by the heart."

The Seat of the Joker in Holy Things is as bad as the seat of the scornful. Never use the Word of God irreverently.

See the Connection of Scornful with the delight in the Word of God. Note Jer. 15:17. Who was this one who sat not in the assembly of mockers? One who finds God's Word the joy and rejoicing of his heart.

Questions.

1. Do you delight in the Word of God?
2. Do you meditate upon it day and night?
3. Is it the joy and rejoicing of your heart?

**THE HAPPY MAN PSALM 1** This First Psalm is a fitting introduction to the sacred Psalter. It constitutes almost a perfect epitome of the whole book. Like the sermon on the mount, it begins with the word "Blessed." The word is in the plural, and has been rendered, "O the happinesses of the man," etc. He is not only blessed, but blessed with all spiritual blessings. This happy man comes before us in a twofold aspect:—

I. His Negative Character. There are some things that he will not do; not because law and judgment dares him to do them, but because he has got something better to enjoy, and a positive hatred in his heart for ways and things that are at enmity with the mind and will of God.

1. HE DOES NOT WALK IN THE COUNSEL OF THE UNGODLY. He knows that "the way of the ungodly shall perish," and he keeps out of it. The counsel of the ungodly is to walk in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. His manner of life is not directed by the wisdom of this world, but by that wisdom which cometh from above.

2. HE DOES NOT STAND IN THE WAY OF SINNERS. The ungodly may mean those who live in ignorance of God, but sinners are those who deliberately transgress against the light. To abide in their way of doing things is to show an attitude that is more at home with the way of sinners than merely walking in the counsel of the ungodly.

3. HE DOES NOT SIT IN THE SEAT OF THE SCORNFUL. Those who begin to walk in the counsel of the ungodly are in danger of

ending in the seat of the scornful. This seat is the chief seat in the kingdom of Satan. There is no promotion beyond this. In a few hours, the Apostle Peter ran through all this experience, from walking in the counsel of the ungodly to the seat of the scornful. He sat by the fire and denied the Lord with oaths and curses, but when he was converted he strengthened his brethren. Those who scorn at the things of God and His Christ walk after their own lusts (2 Peter 3:3).

II. His Positive Character. He is—

1. JOYFUL. He has many blessings, but “his delight is in the law of the Lord” (v. 2). The Christian life is not one merely of giving up this or that, but it is entering into a new and happy inheritance in the Word of God. True, the prodigal had to give up some things ere he could possess the best robe and enter into the joys of a happy home. But what were they? The swine troughs and his rags. The Word of the Lord is a land flowing with milk and honey. “Here everlasting streams abide, and never withering flowers.” It is indeed a “delightful land.” All who love the Lord will find delight in His Word.

2. THOUGHTFUL. “In His law doth he meditate day and night.” In the day of prosperity, and in the night of adversity, he makes the Word of God the man of his counsel. Meditation on the word of truth is as needful to our spiritual health and strength as mastication is for the physical. Like Elijah’s servant, we may need to look again and again before we see the cloud like a man’s hand. “What think ye of Christ?” The Lord expects us to think deeply into these things which He hath caused to be written for our learning. There is no book in all the world that yields such a harvest of blessing to the humble student as the Bible. The testimony of Thomas à Kempis was, “I have no rest, but in a nook, with the Book.”

3. HOPEFUL. “He shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water” (v. 3, R.V.). He is full of expectation, because his circumstances are so very favourable. He is “like a tree that spreadeth out her roots by the river.” While other trees are being starved and stunted by drought, his roots are being fully satisfied; buried in the streams of God’s truth, and mercy, and grace. He has a meat to eat that others know not of. All whose delight is in the law of the Lord are as trees planted by streams of living waters. The roots of faith and love feed in these life-giving streams.

4. FRUITFUL. “That bringeth forth its fruit in its season.” The fruit is according to the character of the tree, and is always in season. Men do not gather grapes of thorns. His roots being in the rivers of God, he has abundance of life, so that fruit-bearing is the natural and simple result. Being filled with the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is manifested (Gal. 5:22, 23). The man who is ready, as opportunity offers, to bear testimony for Christ, will bring forth fruit in his season. Being filled out of the river of life, he will be filled with the fruits of righteousness (Phil. 1:11).

5. BEAUTIFUL. “Whose leaf also doth not wither.” There is a vital connection between the root and the leaf. Dry roots soon bring the dry rot into the leaf. Men cannot see the roots of the Christian character, but they can see the leaf, and the hidden condition of the roots may be judged by the outward appearance of the leaf. The outward life will be fresh and green when the inward life is pure and full. Withered leaves are signs of a withered life. When our testimony for Christ and His truth loses its freshness and power, we may be sure that there is something wrong with the roots, for the streams never run dry. It is the Spirit’s purpose to put the beauty of the Lord our God upon us.

6. SUCCESSFUL. “Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper;” or, whatsoever the tree produceth shall come to maturity. The bud, and the blossom, produced by the Spirit of life, will come to perfect fruition. “All cry and no wool,” does not belong to the sheep of His pasture. The purposes of God begotten in the heart of Joseph, ripened into perfection, for the Lord was with him and made it to prosper (Gen. 39:23). Our Lord could say, “I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do.” And He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. If it be God who worketh in us both to will and to do, then what soever we do shall prosper, for He who hath begun the good work will carry it on, until the day in which it is perfected.

III. The Contrast. “The ungodly are not so” (v. 4). No, they are far from it. The ungodly are the lawless ones who have no delight, or reverence for the law of the Lord; They are a law unto themselves, and the fruits of their own character and deeds shall be reaped by them. They are not likened to a tree planted, but to chaff driven. They have neither root, nor life in themselves. Chaff had once a close connection with the wheat, and may, in its outward aspect resemble it, but it is a dead worthless thing, to be burned with unquenchable fire (Matt. 3:12). “The way of the ungodly shall perish” (v. 6). The chaff has no power to resist either the wind or the fire. The lawless, like chaff, are driven about with every wind of doctrine, popular opinion, or worldly success; they have no connection with, or capacity for receiving of those streams of life, that flow so copiously in the hidden Kingdom of God. They shall not stand accepted in the judgment nor be numbered with the congregation of the righteous (v. 5). Only “he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:17). How helpless the empty chaff is before the driving force of the wind. There is no refuge for it. “The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death.” “Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up” (Matt. 15:13). The way of the ungodly must perish, because it is the way of pride, pleasure, unbelief, and Christ rejection. It is the way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end is death. “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

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## **Joe Stowell - ENJOY!**

BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO DOES NOT WALK IN THE COUNSEL OF THE WICKED.—Psalm 1:1

As we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, not only do we conform our lives to what He intends for us to do but we find unspoiled joy as well. While it is tempting to be diverted periodically toward the distracting pleasures offered to us along the way, those who stay the course experience the kind of happiness and joy that only God can give. The psalmist declared that God desires to bestow pleasure on His own. Psalm 16:11 says, “You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.” In Psalm 36:8, David said of God’s faithfulness to men, “They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights.”

The themes of happiness and joy as outgrowths of a faithful, obedient life are underscored in Christ’s words to His disciples in John 15:10–11: “If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

The pleasure that is a by-product of living to please God is not simply a package of quick thrills. It is, rather, the deep satisfaction that comes to a life that is “straight,” or “correct.” Not straight in the sense of strict or stoic but clean, without pretense or hypocrisy, and free from the clutter of shame, loss, and regret.

Satan appeals to our pleasure instinct with momentary highs that are fraught with devastating downsides. True pleasure is experienced in the rightness of a life committed to God’s glory and gain.

The righteous laugh more heartily, enjoy more fully, and find good times more lasting because their pleasure is ultimately pure and centered in Him.

J. I. Packer writes, “God values pleasure, both His and ours, and it is His pleasure to give us pleasure as a fruit of His saving love” Have you been looking for pleasure in the wrong places?

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## **No Shortcuts - Charles Swindoll**

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked . . . but his delight is in the law of the LORD. PSALM 1:1, 3

Years ago I read of the construction of a city hall and fire station in a small Pennsylvania community. The citizens were so proud of their new red brick structure—a long-awaited dream come true. Not too many weeks after moving in, however, strange things began to happen. Several doors failed to shut completely and a few windows wouldn’t slide open very easily. As time passed, ominous cracks began to appear in the walls. Within a few months, the front door couldn’t be locked . . . and the roof began to leak. By and by, the little building that was once the source of great pride had to be condemned. An intense investigation revealed that deep mining blasts several miles away caused underground shock waves that subsequently weakened the earth beneath the building foundation, resulting in its virtual self-destruction.

So it is with compromise in a life. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, one rationalization leads to another, which triggers a series of equally damaging alterations in a life that was once stable, strong, and reliable. (Living Beyond the Daily Grind)

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## **David Jeremiah - TRUE HAPPINESS**

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. MATTHEW 5:8

Blessed means “happy, blissful, joyous, ecstatic.” Those characteristics the Lord lists are like an explosion on His lips, a description of the inner joy we can experience. This expression was commonly seen in the book of Psalms. “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,” says Psalm 1:1. Anyone who has ever been burned by ungodly counsel will attest to the fact that a man who doesn’t get mixed up with ungodly counsel is happy. “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,” we read in Psalm 32:1. We are to be blissful and ecstatic over the fact that the Lord has taken away our sins. That’s the same expression Christ used when He began talking about the Christian life. Blissful, happy, joyous—these are the words that describe the Christian walk.

Matthew 5:1–12 describes nine characteristics of the happy Christian life. If you want to know what happiness is all about, search through this “happiness manifesto” from the Lord Jesus. He’ll explain to you what true happiness is all about.

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## **Stewart Custer - COUNSEL**

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful” (Ps. 1:1). A good man must avoid the thinking processes and habits of the wicked. Instead he should be delighting in God’s

Word (v. 2). "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever" (Ps. 33:11). "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Ps. 73:24). The inspired description of Messiah shows His wisdom. "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11:2). The Lord Jesus promised the guidance of the Holy Spirit for believers. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

#### GOLDEN THOUGHT

The Spirit will guide us into all truth.

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#### **BENEDICITE! - F B Meyer**

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly .... But his delight is in the law of the Lord."--  
Ps 1:1, 2.

THE THEME of this first Psalm is the Blessedness of keeping "the Law," which is the transcript, of the mind and will of God. David was never weary in its praise-- How I love Thy law; it is my meditation all the day!"

What we all need to-day is a passionate love for the will and commands of God. Docility to learn, and faith to fulfil are the two qualities by which our heart may be kept pure and childlike, and through which we shall come to understand the Bible, nature, and human life. Well may the Psalter, which enshrines obedience to God's Law, begin with Blessed and end with Hallelujah!

Here are, first, the negations of the loyal and true soul. If we refuse to walk in the counsel of the wicked, we shall never sit in the seat of the scornful. But these negatives are chiefly valuable as contributing to the positive, as the wall protects the plant that grows behind it. Our religious life must be fed from hidden springs, as the rootlets of the tree creep under the soil to drink of the stream (Psa 1:3). Such a life becomes fruitful and beautiful. It is also prosperous, because it abides in the will of God. It cannot be really injured by evil, and in the deepest sense it realizes the purpose for which God commissioned it.

Any life which refuses reverence and obedience to God's will must resemble the rootless, fruitless, and lifeless chaff, which is scattered by the winnowing wind.

Which type does your life resemble? Are you the deeply-rooted tree, yielding beauty and fruit and shelter to many, or is your life being frittered away like the worthless chaff?

PRAYER Open to me, I pray Thee, O Spirit of Truth, the treasures of Thy Word, that my soul may be continually enriched, and that I may abound in every good word and work, to Thy honour and glory. AMEN.

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#### **A PSALM OF BLESSEDNESS - F B Meyer**

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked. But his delight is in the law of the Lord."--  
Psa 1:1-2 .

THE BLESSED, or Happy, man is described negatively (Psa 1:1 ). There is a gradation in the attitude, the sphere of influence, and the condition of his companions. In attitude, we may begin by walking, advance to standing, and end by sitting. If we would avoid the sitting, let us guard against walking or standing. In the sphere of influence, the beginning of backsliding is when a man listens to counsel; he then drifts into the path trodden by sinners, and finally is hardened enough to sit where scornful talk surrounds him on every hand. The condition of evil companions. We should be repelled if we were to be plunged suddenly into contact with the scornful, but our moral interests may not be specially outraged by the counsel of the wicked. Indeed, the advice which wicked men give sometimes resembles closely what our heart suggests and our taste prefers. It is so specious, so apparently sensible and natural, that we are captivated by it. Only gradually do we slide from those who forget God to those who set His law at defiance or openly blaspheme Him.

Our motive in going amongst ungodly men must be carefully considered. If it is to help and save them, as our Lord did, no harm will come to us. But if we go into the way of sinners for our own amusement, need we be surprised if the bloom pass off the fruit, and the fine edge from the tool? Let us examine ourselves. Are we startled and shocked now, as we used to be, by an indecent illusion or a blasphemous word? Is there a coarsening process at work? Even where we are not injured by worldliness, we may suffer by contact with the low ideals of our fellow-Christians. Let us watch and pray; let us consider one another and exhort one another day by day, lest any be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Heb 3:13 ).

The Blessed, or Happy, man is also described positively (Psa 1:2 ). This delight comes as naturally as appetite for food, when the soul is in a healthy condition. Under the inspiration of that delight, we shall meditate on God's Word continually, storing it in the



heart, and reciting it when travelling, or in darkness.

Remember that the Lord knows the way you take. He is sensitive to every jolt and lurch, to the stony hills and the easy valley, to the foes that lie in wait. In His keeping you will never become as the light chaff, or the perishing way of the wicked written in the dust.

PRAYER We commend ourselves, and those we love, to Thee, dear Lord. We put our hand in Thine, that Thou shalt lead us by the untrodden" way. AMEN.

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### John Henry Jowett - GOOD AND BAD ROADS Psalm 1:1- 6

THERE is nothing breaks up more speedily than a badly-made road. Every season is its enemy and works for its destruction. Fierce heat and intensest cold both strive for its undoing. And "the way of the ungodly" is an appallingly bad road. There is rottenness in its foundations, and there is built into it "wood, and hay, and stubble," How can it stand? "The Spirit of the Lord breatheth upon it," and it is surely brought to nought. All the forces of holiness are pledged to its destruction, and they shall pick it to pieces, and shall scatter its elements to the winds.

"I am the way!" That road remains sound "in all generations." Changing circumstances cannot affect its stability. It is proof against every tempest, and against the most violent heat. It is a road in which little children can walk in happiness and in which old people can walk in peace. It is firm in the day of life, and it is absolutely sure in the hour of death. It never yields! "Thou hast set my feet upon a rock and hast established my goings." "This is the way, walk ye in it."

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PSALM 1:1 READ: Genesis 13:1-13

TOURISTS are now welcome to visit Chernobyl, the site of the 1986 Russian nuclear accident that released deadly radiation throughout the area. The tourist bureau has invited travelers to tour the city of Chernobyl, the radioactive waste dump at Kopachi, and the concrete sarcophagus around the reactor. All visitors will be given a free radiation test at the beginning and end of the tour. Medical treatment, if needed, will be provided at no extra charge.

Most of us would think twice before taking advantage of an offer like that. We value our lives too much to set foot in a place that could expose us to deadly radiation.

But wait. Are there places we visit that might do great spiritual harm? In the Old Testament, Lot moved to Sodom even though it was a place of sin and degradation. Like Lot, some Christians accept invitations to places that expose them to spiritual danger. The hazard is not nuclear radiation but the influence of ungodly people. It could be anywhere: a bar, an apartment, a restaurant, a casino, a gym. Those invitations we must firmly decline.—MRDII ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, I am quick to believe my own lies, quick to fall for my own deception. How can I honestly claim to believe that I will be strong enough to resist the temptations I will face in certain places when I am not even strong enough to resist the temptation to go there in the first place? How foolish! May I resist the first temptation so I will never have to face the second one.

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Buster Keaton looking expectantly  
"The Navigator" 1924

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly. —Psalm 1:1

To improve efficiency, a company hired a consultant, who called a meeting of all shop personnel. Stressing the need to listen to experts, he said, "Imagine you're on the Titanic, and it's sinking. You climb into a lifeboat. Which direction would you row?" Then he asked, "What if you had the ship's **navigator** with you? Now which way would you go? You'd row the way the **navigator** told you to, right?"

There were murmurs of agreement until one fellow in the back piped up, "Well, I don't know. He's already hit one iceberg!"

The book of Proverbs urges us to get advice from the wise (Pr 1:2-7). Wisdom in the Bible is the "skill for living." The Hebrew word translated "wisdom" is the same word that's translated "skill" in reference to the detailed work of Bezalel and Aholiab in constructing the tabernacle (Exodus 31:1-11). God gave them and others skill for artwork, building, weaving, and carving.

Today, wise men and women have a valuable skill—"the skill for living." Don't take your lead from others until you take a look at their lives. If they have crashed into a lot of icebergs, they may cause your life to sink as well.

The "blessed" person delights in God's Word, "not in the counsel of the ungodly" (Psalm 1:1-2). —HWR ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When you're in need of wisdom,  
Be careful to whom you go;  
Make certain they are godly,  
And that God's Word they know.  
—Fitzhugh

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Robert Neighbor - The Marks of the Blessed Man

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

"But his delight is in the Law of the Lord; and in His Law doth he meditate day and night" (Ps. 1:1, 2).

The blessed Man of these verses primarily is Christ. He is the only One Who never walked in the counsel of the ungodly; Who never stood in the way of sinners; Who never sat in the seat of the scornful. He is the only One Who delighted perfectly in the Law of the Lord; Who brought forth fruit in its season; and Who prospered in all His ways. The first Adam walked in the counsel of the lawless one. He had a posterity that is in the way of sinners; he became a party to and took his seat with the scornful.

The first Adam refused either to delight himself in, or to obediently follow after the Law of the Lord. He was a tree with withered fruit, and certainly he did not prosper in his way. What is true of Adam is true of all his seed, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Men are certainly guilty; they are no better than their fathers were; they walk according to the counsel of the prince of the air; they stand in the lineage of sinners, and are partakers in the seat of the scornful.

We readily grant that the three verses before us may refer to the saved; but, they are true of the redeemed only, because they are true of the Redeemer. The words speak first of all of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then of those who are hid with Christ in God.

The only Blessed Man, Who came in line of Adam's race,  
Yet never walk'd, or stood, or sat in sinners' way or place,  
But always did delight in God, and did His Law embrace —  
Was Jesus Christ, God's only Son, all filled with truth and grace.

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**The happy man** (Lachlan MacKenzie, "The Happy Man")

The happy man was born in the city of Regeneration in the parish of Repentance unto Life. He has a large estate in the county of Christian Contentment.

He was educated at the School of Obedience —and often does jobs of Self-denial.

He wears the garment of Humility, and has another suit to put on when he goes to Court, called the Robe of Christ's Righteousness.

He is necessitated to travel through the world on his way to heaven—but he walks through it as fast as he can. All his business along the way—is to make himself and others happy. He often walks in the valley of Self-Abasement, and sometimes climbs the mountains of Heavenly-mindedness.

He breakfasts every morning on Spiritual Prayer, and sups every evening on the same. He has food to eat, which the world knows nothing of—and his drink is the sincere milk of the Word of God.

Thus happy he lives—and happy he dies.

Happy is he who has . . .

Gospel submission in his will,

the love of God in his affections,  
true peace in his conscience,  
sincere Divinity in his breast,  
the Redeemer's yoke on his neck,  
the vain world under his feet, and  
a crown of glory over his head!  
Happy is the life of that man who . . .  
believes firmly,  
prays fervently,  
walks patiently,  
labors abundantly,  
lives holily,  
dies daily,  
watches his heart,  
guards his senses,  
redeems his time,  
loves Christ, and  
longs for glory!