

A BLESSED LIFE

FALL NEWSLETTER



PA BIBLE TEACHING FELLOWSHIP

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A BLESSED LIFE

The book of Psalms is a treasure trove well worth delving deep within. It is perhaps the most human book of the Bible, as it reveals how human life can be lived well. Psalms is honest: the human condition is complex. Each of us is unique. Each of our lives will present individual challenges. Psalms shows us that our God understands. Our God intimately cares for us. Our God is always present. Our God is always good. Here in the very first Psalm, He shows unto us how we as humans can be truly 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.

The word for “blessed” in this verse is actually plural in a way often used in Hebrew as an interjection, and could be rightly translated as, “oh how happy!” Who doesn’t want to be happy? All seek after it and the want for it influences everything we do along the path of life. How wonderful that God in His wisdom in the opening Psalm reveals to man the great “secret” to happiness, so that His people don’t need to look far in our own individual pursuits of happiness.

Psalm 1 reveals that happiness comes as a result of making godly choices. The good in life comes from God and continually choosing His way. They are not the product of random chance or coincidental good fortunes. In fact, we can see this Psalm split in half structurally where verses 1 – 3 show the prosperous way of the righteous and verses 4 – 6 reveal the perishing way of the wicked. Blessedness or misery in life comes out of the decisions that we make to walk the way of the world or the way of the Word.

Interestingly, it starts explaining this happiness as a result of choosing not

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to do some things. Often in this world, we hear explanations of happiness as being unrestrained, with no boundary lines, and everything permitted. The Bible teaches much of the opposite. Titus 2 explains that the grace of God trains “us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions.” God’s grace teaches us to say “no” to wicked things. The repeating phrase through the Ten Commandments is “you shall not.” In fact, in the garden itself, the crucial command to man was regarding the one tree of which “you shall not eat.” The many “nots” of the Bible aren’t a result of being overly focused on the negative, but because choosing what to do often includes what not to do. God’s ways are right. The world’s ways are wrong. We need to be able to clearly see and know the difference.

WE WILL BE MOST FULFILLED, SATISFIED, AND YES, EVEN HAPPY FOLLOWING GOD’S WAY.

This blessed man is aware of a way he will not walk, a path he will not stand in, and a seat he will not sit in. Denying those things has not left his life empty and without pursuits. The next verse shows us how full his days and nights are with delight and activity.

PSALM 1:2

**But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law
doth he meditate day and night.**

Notice both here: delight, and meditation. One is a response, the other takes work and involves the will. Delight is a response of the heart to the beauty and value of something - in this case, to God’s Word. A delight is something that gives pleasure out of a fulfilled desire.

In contrast, meditation involves careful, directed, and persistent thought. It is a purposeful effort. The meditation of God’s revealed Word done well should serve to strengthen and sustain the delight of it. After all, as our

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Lord explained, part of the greatest commandment is to love the LORD thy God with all your mind (Matthew 22:37): by implication, this means with the deliberate exercise of your mind. You're loving God by applied thought and consideration, with time spent in critical contemplation; pondering Him and His truth.

GOD DOESN'T WANT US TO BE UNTHINKING IN OUR LOVE FOR HIM AND HIS WORD.

Meditation during the day and the night allows the Word to penetrate our minds, hearts, and wills more deeply. This means an applied effort to not only read the Scriptures but to take the time to consider their application in life. This sends our roots down deep, taking in more and more of the life-giving water of the Word and finding daily nourishment to grow. The next verse explains the lasting effect of making that continual choice.

PSALM 1:3

**And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,
that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall
not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.**

Meditation during the day and the night allows the Word to penetrate As we see, this planting is not a mistake. Day after day choices towards God, His Word, and His way have settled this happy man's life to take root there. There is contentment in his life. It's not difficult to trace God's good hand and His good graces all over this life.

He is like a strong and stable tree drinking deeply from a continual source of water. His life is without dryness and bears good fruit as a result of his continual nourishment. It's not that his life is without troubles, but because of his daily choices towards God and His Word, even challenging

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circumstances bring forth prosperous things. The seasons of heat still come, but trust in the LORD means his leaves stay green even in times of drought. (Jeremiah 17:7 – 8) This is how Psalm 1 reveals the ideal picture of human existence:

BLESSED BY GOD, SEEKING HIM DAILY, DELIGHTING IN HIS WORD, MEDITATING ON IT CONTINUALLY, ALWAYS NOURISHED, BEARING GOOD FRUIT, AND FLOURISHING WITH LIFE IN ALL SEASONS.

Oh, how happy is this man! However, there is another way to choose in life with a direction and results in quite the opposite. Happiness is certainly not a byproduct of this path. The next verse shows us that in contrast to the godly, the wicked are compared to a plant also...

PSALM 1:4

The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

While the life of the righteous was likened to a stable, nourished, and prosperous tree, the life of the ungodly are compared to chaff. Chaff is the useless shell around a kernel of grain, which much like the husk on an ear of corn, must be stripped away before the grain can be ground into flour. A frequent method in the lands and times of the Bible to separate the chaff from grain was by throwing a scoopful into the air and letting the wind carry it away. This is how intrinsically worthless, lacking in substance, and easily blown away the ungodly are.

As much as we saw the happiness, delighting, meditating, and planting of the righteous life was not by happenstance, the way of the wicked is not by accident either. Choices are made to live according to the world's words and not God's way. The problem with deception is that it

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is so deceptive and the god of this world dresses the course of this world to look like the right way (Ephesians 2:2). So at times, the wicked way appears to be the path of happiness, fulfillment, and prosperity (see the honest challenge of this in Psalm 73). However, Psalm 1 helps us clearly see the prosperity of the wicked is only fleeting - like chaff blown away by the wind.

BE THE TREE, NOT THE CHAFF.

Additionally, the way of the ungodly is not the easier way. Let's consider a few proverbs:

PROVERBS 4:19

The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

PROVERBS 13:6

Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.

PROVERBS 13:15

Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.

Don't be deceived. A darkened path leads to stumbling. Wickedness will be the overthrow of the sinful. The way of transgression isn't easier, it's hard. Rebelling against God will always be the more difficult path. Sin does not satisfy, vain deceits have no real reward, and as we move on to the last verses of Psalm 1 we see their ultimate end.

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PSALM 1:5-6

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish. .

The judgment of verse 5 is referring to the final judgment of men before God. One humbling truth that every created being must be sober to is that they have a creator and will all be ultimately accountable unto Him. As Solomon well concluded, the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep his commandments because “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14) The ungodly will not be able to maintain their cause before God. They will be found lacking on the day of judgment.

THE UNGODLY WAY MAY SEEM THE MORE COMFORTABLE CHOICE AND THE MORE POPULAR PATH, BUT THE INEVITABLE END IS PERISHING.

These may seem to be hard sayings at the end of Psalm 1. The lines are drawn very sharply. The outcomes are diametrically opposite. The Bible reveals there are only the righteous and the wicked. There is no middle territory. God knows (watches over or looks after) the way of the one and the way of the other will perish. However, in light of how complex human life can seem, how helpful for the leading Psalm to distill the intricacy down to ultimately one of two choices: the prosperous way of the righteous or the perishing way of the wicked

This is how the Psalm concludes with the reader left pondering the two

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paths. Though the rest of Psalms; (and certainly the rest of the Bible) adds more depth and detail, they add no more options. As much as God cares well for the righteous, God will also be the one to justly deal with wickedness. Psalm 1 clearly shows the end of both the righteous and the wicked are because of their own deliberate choices.

I would be remiss at this moment to not mention God's desire for all men to choose:

ISAIAH 55:7

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

PROVERBS 28:13

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

PSALM 25:7 - 8

Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD. Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

This has always been God's kind heart towards mankind because in truth all humans are wicked and sinful. No man on his own is truly righteous. (Romans 3:10) All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), but God's Son - Jesus Christ came to save sinners. (1 Timothy 1:15) At the cross of Calvary God's righteous servant, who knew no sin, gave himself as sacrifice for sin so that we might be made the

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righteousness of God in him. (2 Corinthians 5:21) The confidence of the righteous is not in strict justice but in God's great grace and mercy shown toward us in Jesus Christ.

THE CHRISTIAN STANDS IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, NOT BECAUSE OF THE RIGHTEOUS WORKS THAT HE HAS DONE, OR THE RIGHTEOUS PATH THAT HE HAS KEPT, BUT BECAUSE OF THE RIGHTEOUS SACRIFICE THAT WAS OFFERED ON HIS BEHALF.

The truth of this gospel reveals that God doesn't want the ungodly to perish and be unable to stand in the judgment. He wants all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4) His great love for all people was shown when He gave His only begotten Son, opening up the only way to become righteous, live righteously, and stand in righteousness in the judgment.

Again as Psalm 1 shows, people make one of two choices, but Jesus Christ came as the Savior of the world. (1 John 4:14) He blazed a path of life for us to follow in his steps and live unto righteousness. (1 Peter 2:21 - 24) Just as Psalm 1 showed us the great "secret" to happiness for every man, woman, and child is to choose the godly way and to not choose the ungodly. Delighting and meditating in the Word of God leads to a continuance along the path of righteousness. This is the simple way, pioneered for us by our Lord Jesus Christ, for all humans to grow strong, bear good fruit, and prosper in life.

THE BLESSED LIFE IS ONE OF DEPENDENT DELIGHT IN DIVINE INSTRUCTION LEADING TO STABILITY, FRUITFULNESS, AND FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD NOW AND FOREVER.

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At the time of this writing, we are coming to the close of what I trust will prove to be one of the strangest years in our lifetimes. I doubt any of us will miss 2020. As we look back on this year, it's not hard to list the many challenges and trials, but overwhelming and surpassing the hardships is God's abundant goodness to lead, care, and provide. Sure, many new dangers, toils, and snares arose this year, but don't fail to also see that through it all God was always good.

DON'T ALLOW TEMPORARY ADVERSITIES TO CAST A GLOOMY SHADOW OVER ALL OF YOUR LIFE

LIFE WITH GOD IS GOOD.

There have always been, and until our Lord returns there will always be trials and hardships, but in sum it is still an overwhelmingly good life because we have an exceedingly good God. Look through your Bible and see if you can find one individual who had an easy life. I'm sure you can name many who despite the heat still had a very blessed life. In fact, they stand as our heroes because of what they choose in some of the most difficult moments of life. In courageous defiance to all opposition, they chose to believe God and the world was not worthy of them. (Hebrews 11:38) I don't think any of them would say their life was easy, but I'm sure all of them would say they were blessed because they trusted in Him.

PSALM 34:8

O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed (how happy!) is the man that trusteth in him.

I'm sure at many times you've felt overwhelmed this past year, but despite it all the LORD is still good. Come what may, we are always blessed as we trust in Him. As you close this booklet I ask you to please just take a quiet moment to consider your life. Look at all the instances that God has been unspeakably good to you. Think of all the times that everything

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seemed to hang in the balance, but God still came through. Reflect on how He has always been there to strengthen, comfort, and tenderly care for you over this past year and every year. Take this moment to give Him worthy thanks and praise.

YOUR LIFE WITH YOUR GOD IS A BLESSED LIFE

TUESDAY STUDY NIGHT

7:30PM

ZOOM ID: 180-268-392

**SUNDAY SUNDAY AFTERNOON
FELLOWSHIP**

1:00 PM

ZOOM ID: 109-514-326



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