

**Introducing
the Psalms
(Psalms 1-2)**

Psalm 1 is well-placed as a general introduction to the entire Book of Psalms. People are looking for 'blessedness'. They want to be happy. If they have any spiritual understanding they want God to bless them. There are two ways through life, the blessed way and the doomed way. The first psalm tells us how to find 'blessedness' in God.

¹*Blessed is the person who walks not in the counsel of the wicked
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
²but his or her delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law they meditate day and night.
³He is like a tree planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.
⁴The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
⁶for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.*

**The Blessed
Life**

(a) *Negatives to avoid*

- *Advice of wrong people*

- *Hanging around with sinners*

- *Settling with scoffers*

- *Determination to avoid and fight sin*

- *Careful about what company we keep*

1. **We are invited to consider the secret of 'blessedness'.** We notice (a) **that the blessed life involves some negatives.** There are some things which the godly person refuses to do. He will not go through life listening to the advice of the wrong people ¹. 'Counsel' is advice. If you want to be a blessed person, you must not be taking the advice of sinful people. When people are giving you bad advice, you will never be blessed in God.

¹ 1:1a

He will not hang around ('stand') in pathways that are well-known as the pathways of sin. He recognizes the 'scoffer' - the person who ridicules godliness while knowing nothing of it, walking to his own doom. The godly man or woman refuses to settle down in that style of life.

We notice a progression here. It goes from walking to standing and then on to sitting. A man is walking along the road listening to a friend. Then he meets some sinners and hangs around with them. Finally he sits down and settles with them! If you start on this lifestyle it is likely to grow. You move from walking, to standing, and on to sitting. A person trying to be healthy does not visit places where there is cholera! Do not be hanging around people and places and activities which are not going to help you much in the life of knowing God.

¹ 1:1

We could put it like this: the first mark of the godly man is determination, spiritual energy. 2 Peter 1:5 says we are to add to our faith 'energy' - determination. *For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with energy...* It is not self-centred determination (making resolutions, promising oneself to be better!); this would be 'living under the law'. It begins with a determination to rejoice in God. The joy of the Lord is our strength. But then it becomes a determination not to give way to sin, a determination to fight it, a determination to be careful what company we keep.

If you wish to be happy you have to **not** do certain things. This man begins with something negative. He says: 'Before I tell you what to do I must tell you what **not** to do'. It is of no value wanting to be a blessed person if there are certain things in your life which are **damaging** your happiness. Some things must be cleared out of the way.

(a) Positives to choose

- Delighting in scripture
- Meditating on scripture
- The result – stability and fruitfulness

(b) **Positively his life is marked by much preoccupation with the written word of God.** His delight is in the law of the Lord - the written Scriptures. 'Law' does not simply mean the 2000-or-so verses of Mosaic legislation. It means the entire written Scripture, coming as 'teaching' from our Father, as much as was written when the psalmist wrote, and the Scripture that has been written since that time. He spends much time with these written scriptures, meditating 'day and night'. He asks 'What does this scripture actually say?' 'What does this scripture mean? What is its significance?' 'What is God the Holy Spirit saying to me through it?'

We are told (c) the result of such a life. It leads to stability, fruitfulness and success in the calling of God upon one's life.

The Doomed Life

- Unsubstantial chaff
- Judgement
- Removal from the congregation of the righteous
- Happiness comes indirectly - from seeking Jesus – not happiness itself.

2. **Next we are invited to consider the life that is doomed.** (a) Such people are unsubstantial: chaff. They are doomed to disappear ('that the wind drives away'). (b) They will be brought to judgement but will not be able to give any good account of themselves ¹. (c) They will be removed from the final 'congregation of the righteous' and will miss its many joys.

¹ 1:5

The godly person is like a tree; the ungodly person is like a pile of chaff - worthless remnants of corn. The tree is planted, alive, fruitful.

The chaff is useless, lifeless, doomed, the remainder of what was once useful but now is ruined. It has no roots. It will never grow. Nothing good will ever come of it. Soon the difference between tree and chaff will become obvious. Be planted in Jesus Christ. It is the secret of happiness.

You never find happiness simply by going after it. Some of the most miserable people on planet earth are people who are always trying to be happy! Such people never find it. That is not the way. If you want to be happy, you see something else! Sometimes the way to get something is not to go at it directly but to go for it indirectly! You go at it in a roundabout manner. This is the way it is with happiness. It is not a case of ¹*Blessed is the person who seeks for blessedness...!*

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