

Psalm 1 is the Psalm that the collectors chose to open the book of Psalms. It is one of the best known and best loved Psalms. Charles Spurgeon called it the “Preface Psalm” because he said it sends us a beginning notification of the contents of the rest of the book (*Psalms*, p. 13).

**This first Psalm basically summarizes two paths of life which present two options for the way people may choose to live their lives.** One path leads to happiness and the other to misery. There is the path of the righteous and there is the path of the wicked. Much of the Bible may be built around the concept of two different paths of life for people. There was the path of Cain and there was the path of Abel. There was the path of Ishmael and there was the path of Isaac. There was the path of Esau and there was the path of Jacob. There was the path of David and there was the path of Saul. There is the path of God and the path of Satan. There is the path of Christ and the path of the Antichrist.

Now Psalm 1 is one of only three legitimate “Torah” Psalms. The word “Torah” is a Hebrew word that is translated into English by the word “Law.” This particular word Torah came to refer to the first five books of the O.T., specifically with an emphasis on the Law of God. This word shows up in three Psalms—Psalm 1, 19 and 110. Although there are other Psalms that deal with the notion of the Torah, it is not the main idea.

Now the first word of **verse 1** is the word “blessed.” In Hebrew the word is plural and the word “man” is singular. Now the word “blessed” is a word that means to be happy because one is on the right path which would enable God to make the man the recipient of His blessings (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 88). The plural use of the word “blessed” refers to multiple blessings at a majestic level. **The Psalms begin by discussing the way to having happiness because one is the recipient of the majestic blessings of God.** Israel as a nation needed to understand this and so do we.

The noun “man” is singular. In the Greek Septuagint the word (ανηρ) refers to man as opposed to a woman. In Hebrew the word (iesh) refers to a man who is a valiant leader and individual. We know that in Christ both men and women are one, so this has application to both genders, but specifically is aimed at men. So the book of Psalms begins by presenting this thesis:

**THE MAN, WHO IS VALIANT AND HAPPY, IS ONE WHO WALKS ON THE RIGHTEOUS PATH, NOT A WICKED PATH, SO THAT GOD MAY POUR OUT HIS MAJESTIC BLESSINGS; AND THIS PATH IS KNOWN BY A CAREFUL STUDY AND APPLICATION OF GOD’S WORD .**

Now this is the kind of man you want leading. This is a David-type of leader who focuses on God’s Word. This is the kind of man that can literally bring the majestic blessings of God to a family, a company, a church and a nation.

The righteous person walks on a righteous path and therefore experiences many blessings of God, whereas the unrighteous person walks on an unrighteous path and experiences sorrow and destruction.

**DESCRIPTION #1** – The description of the happy person who will receive the majestic blessings of God in life. **1:1-3**

If any person will purpose to apply these qualities, he will be blessed by God.

**Blessing Factor #1** - The person who will be blessed by God will not do certain things. **1:1**

In this verse there are three specific actions that a person who will be blessed by God will refuse to do. You will notice that the three actions form a trilogy that go from bad to worse. There is a regression and deterioration and degeneration that spiral downward. The person who moves away from the blessings of God permits the negative influences to intensify. They go from one level (walking) to another level (standing and sitting) which takes the person farther away from the blessings of God and from happiness in their own lives.

**(Action #1)** - A person who will be happy and blessed by God will not walk in the counsel of the wicked. **1:1a**

Now the first action that leads to great blessings is that a man will not walk in the counsel of the wicked. The word “wicked” refers to people who willfully depart from God and persist in unrighteous things (Gesenius, p. 781).

The idea of not walking in the counsel is the idea of not listening to and following the advice of wicked people. **No person will ever find happiness or the blessings of God by listening to and following the counsel of people not right with God.**

No matter how logical or rational or reasonable the counsel may seem to be, the counsel of the wicked will only lead to misery and never to the blessings of God. Wicked people will try to advise you on what you should do. They will try to convince you that they have figured out the real key to your happiness, but the person who will actually be happy and be blessed of God will not follow the counsel of the wicked.

**(Action #2)** - A person who will be happy and blessed by God will not stand on the path of sinners. **1:1b**

Now we may see the progression in which one moves from walking to standing. Sin begins by walking down the wrong path and then instead of getting off that path, one stops, stands and falls. Walking is a casual movement, but standing means one has stopped moving and is in the sin.

We may observe the noun change from “wicked” to “sinner.” The sinner is one who misses the mark of God’s standards and could care less about it. John Calvin said this word describes one openly wicked and habitually lives life in a sinful way (*Psalms 1-35*, p. 4). No one will ever be happy or receive the blessings of God who stands on a path with people who could care less if they ever pursue the standards of God.

**(Action #3)** - A person who will be happy and blessed by God will not sit in the seat of scoffers. **1:1c**

Again notice the progression—it starts by listening to godless counsel that leads to standing right on the path of sinners, which leads to sitting with them. The idea of sitting is the idea of taking up residency with them, living with them and fellowshiping with them.

Notice also it starts by listening to the wicked and then standing with sinners which leads to sitting with scoffers. The scoffer is one who actually mocks God and makes light of the Word of God.

No one will ever be happy and will ever receive the blessings of God until one decides to get away from these kinds of people. Don't listen to them or their counsel. Don't stand with them. Don't sit with them. Get away from them.

**Blessing Factor #2** - The person who will be blessed by God will do certain things. **1:2**

Now you will notice that **verse 2** begins with a sharp contrasting conjunction “but” which presents a sharp contrast between **verse 1** and **verse 2**. There are two specific steps one may take that will lead to happiness and the blessings of God:

**(Step #1)** - A person who will be happy and blessed of God will delight in God's Word. **1:2a**

The Hebrew word “delight” is one that means to delight in something in the sense of esteeming something as precious and desiring it and pursuing it (Gesenius, p. 296). Now when the Psalm was written, the Torah, which referred to the first five books of the O.T. and contained the Law, was the Word of God that people had available to them.

So what this Psalm is saying is that the person who will be happy and will receive the blessings of God is one who will highly esteem God's Word and desire to understand it and pursue it. In other words, the one who will be happy and blessed of God loves to hear God's Word so he may apply it to his life. One who will be blessed of God loves to learn the Bible and does not view going to church to hear it as some irksome interruption, chore or burden. The blessed person loves to have the Word of God taught to him. He loves to learn it so he may apply it. He delights in this.

Now many people go to church with the idea of what can they do, but the person who will be blessed by God goes with the idea of what may I learn from God's Word.

**(Step #2)** - A person who will be happy and blessed of God will meditate on God's Word. **1:2b**

In every situation of life a blessed person will think about the Word of God. The one who will be blessed of God will mentally reflect on God's Word day and night.

By the way, this is good instruction for churches. They need to offer services day and night that preach and teach God's Word so people may come to learn the Scriptures.

That word "meditate" is a very picturesque Hebrew word. It portrays the concept of one speaking to self in a low voice that others cannot hear (Gesenius, p. 215). The point of this is that a person who will be blessed by God is one who speaks to himself about the Word of God. Day and night he mentally thinks about and reflects on God's Word.

**It is impossible for one to be truly happy and have the great blessings of God apart from the Bible. God blesses individuals, homes, churches and nations who love His Word and seek to understand it and apply it.**

**Blessing Factor #3** - The blessed results to one who applies these godly things. **1:3**

The person who does not walk with godless people and does love God's Word will have a life characterized by four results:

**(Result #1)** - He will be a stable man. **1:3a**

The person who delights in God's Word will not only be happy, but stable. **The most stable people you will ever meet are those deeply rooted in God's Word.**

The most important part of a tree is the hidden root system. The roots draw up water and nourishment and feed the tree. The key to a strong, stable tree is its roots. So it is with a strong stable person. They have stability that comes from being rooted in the Word and ways of God.

**(Result #2)** - He will be a fruitful man. **1:3b**

Don't overlook the fact that this says one will be fruitful "in its season." No person instantly becomes fruitful. However, as one is pursuing an understanding of God's Word and as one is staying away from wicked, evil scoffers, God will use that one to bear fruit in His time and His way. To become a fruit bearer, one must know and meditate on the Word of God.

**(Result #3)** - He will not be a withered man. **1:3c**

The life of one right with God will never be dry or dead. It will never be an unproductive life. There may be drought times, but never a time when one right with God will wither.

**(Result #4)** - He will be a prosperous man. **1:3d**

God's hand of blessing will always be on one who gives himself to carefully understanding His Word and applying it to his life. God will always see to it that the one who loves Him and His Word will succeed in "whatever he does." There may be setbacks and hardships, but in the end God will see to it that one dedicated to His Word receives His blessings.

**DESCRIPTION #2** – The description of the miserable wicked person who will never receive the blessings of God. **1:4-6**

Now there are five statements God makes about wicked, sinful people who are not interested in understanding His Word or applying it to their lives:

**Statement #1** - The wicked people are not so. **1:4a**

What is meant by this statement is that wicked people are not happy and they will not ever be blessed by God. Wicked people listen to the counsel of other wicked people, they stand in the path of sinners, they sit with scoffers and could care less if they ever understand anything from God's written Word. They do not love the Word of God, they do not meditate in the Word of God, they do not have a fruitful life and they do wither and God never prospers them in anything. The wicked, deep down inside, are not happy.

**Statement #2** - The wicked people are like chaff. **1:4b**

Wicked people are in existence for awhile and then God will blow them away by His judgment. Chaff is used in Scripture to describe people who are wicked, weak and worthless. When God's judgment comes, they will be blown away. God will simply blow them out of existence like nothing more than chaff.

**Statement #3** - The wicked people will not stand in the judgment. **1:5a**

The word "stand" is one that means to stand up and stand fast (Gesenius, p. 727). When God's judgment comes, it will be too late for wicked people. There will be nothing they will be able to do to stand against it. There will be nothing they can do to receive the blessings of God.

**Statement #4** - The wicked people will not share in the assembly of the righteous. **1:5b**

Wicked people will not ever fellowship with God and they will not ever see heaven. They will not see the Kingdom of God.

**Statement #5** - The wicked people will perish. **1:6**

**Verse 6** says God knows the path that every person is on. The path of the righteous leads to blessing and the path of the wicked leads to eternal perishing.

**Key Parting Questions worth asking:**

1. Have I been listening to bad advice from those who do not know God?
2. Have I been hanging around godless people, or godless things or godless places?
3. Do I delight in coming to church to hear and study and learn God's Word?
4. Do I carefully think about biblical principles day and night in what I say, think and do?
5. Do I have a real God-developed stability about me?
6. Have there been seasons in life when I have bore fruit?
7. Do I sense God's hand of blessing on my life?