

Psalm 1  
The Purpose of the Book of Psalms

Introduction: Daily we are bombarded and brainwashed into thinking that true and lasting satisfaction is found by indulging in the pleasures of the flesh and the world. But is this claim really true? People have wrestled with it for centuries. The Psalms are part of God's instructions for both happiness and holiness.

**The righteous person will be blessed (note the plural)—1:1-2**

- 1) Described negatively: He avoids guilt by association with the world—1:1
  - A state of well-being with the resultant feelings of satisfaction
  - But how is this blessedness/well-being with satisfaction attained?
  - a) A holy person does not flirt with the world—*does not walk* [Qal pf.] *in the counsel of the wicked* [רשע] (those judged spiritually guilty before God)
    - i) Thus, the **basic progressive movement** of a believer's life must be progressively lived according to an absolute standard, taking advice and deriving purposes based on those absolutes.
  - b) A holy person does not deliberately stop along the way—*does not stand* [Qal pf.] *in the way of sinners* [חטא] (those habitually inclined to sin)
    - i) Thus, the **basic posture** of a believer's life must be characterized by spiritual wholeness and not settling for anything less than pleasing God.
  - c) A holy person does not take up permanent residence—*does not sit* [Qal pf.] *in the seat of scoffers* [Qal act. ptc.] (those who mock and are openly hostile to what is righteous )
    - i) Thus, the **basic position** of a believer's life must be with those who humbly submit to those things that honor God.
  - Did you notice the progression from casual involvement to settled corroboration? The blessed/happy individual is a real friend to the unsaved but is not a partner with them.
- 2) Positively: He wholeheartedly embraces God's Word—1:2
  - a) Your emotions and affections are engaged—*His delight* [חפץ] *is in the instruction* [תורה] *of Yahweh*
    - i) He is attracted to it and takes pleasure in it because of its inherent qualities.
    - ii) Instead of delighting in his entanglement with the unsaved, he delights in the things of God.
  - b) Your mind is consistently engaged—*and in His instruction* [תורה] *He meditates* [Qal impf. הנהג] *in it day and night*
    - i) He talks to himself about God's Word and its meaning and application.
    - ii) He takes a text and carries it with him through the day and into the night.
  - God's Word is the absolute standard of what is right, what spiritual wholeness really is, what are the values we ought to have. God's Word must be the main influence in our lives.

### The righteous person is like a tree, rather than chaff—1:3-4

- 1) Positively: what is the righteous tree like?—1:3
  - a) Living—*planted* [Qal pass. ptc.] (transplanted) *by streams of water*
    - i) This is no wild tree, but one that has been wisely planted near the irrigation canals and carefully cultivated and tenderly nurtured.
    - ii) No matter how great the drought, no matter how strong the sirocco winds, he will prosper because of where his roots are. He possesses a never-failing supply of nourishment and refreshment.
  - b) Enduring
    - i) *yields* [Qal impf.] *its fruit in its season*
      - (1) Takes the water and converts it into something beneficial and timely to others. Fruit comes at an expected time. Thus a person who has the right focus will not habitually disappoint the expectation of others.
      - (2) He displays the graces of the Spirit of God to those around him.
    - ii) *its leaf does not wither* [Qal impf.]
      - (1) Green leaves indicate good health and habitual inner renewal.
      - (2) He is not transitory like the world (1<sup>st</sup> John 2:15-17).
  - c) Significant—*and all that he does* [Qal impf.] *he prospers* [Hiph. impf.]
    - i) He accomplishes satisfactorily what is intended. He comes to his divinely directed fulfillment.
- 2) Negatively: the wicked ones [רשע] are not like that (the blessed person)—1:4
  - ❖ Literally “*Not so the wicked!*”
  - a) *They are like chaff that the wind drives away* [Qal impf.]
    - i) The winds during harvest blow the unwanted chaff away from the pile of the desirable grain.
      - (1) The chaff is prey to the slightest wind on the threshing floor.
  - b) They are... (in contrast to 1:3)
    - i) UNSTABLE—in contrast to being firmly planted, chaff has no root below
    - ii) TEMPORARY—in contrast to leaves not withering, chaff is void of all life and freshness
    - iii) ULTIMATELY BENEFICIAL TO NO ONE—in contrast to bearing fruit in its season, chaff has no fruit at all
    - iv) ACCOMPLISHING NOTHING—in contrast to whatever he does shall prosper

### The end of both the wicked and the righteous—1:5-6

- 1) Negatively:
  - a) *The wicked ones* [רשע] *will not stand* [Qal impf.] (maintain oneself, endure) *in the judgment* (the exercise of government)
    - i) They will not stand approved, either by the king or by God. They will not survive the judgment.
    - ii) God will judge them at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15). The dead are the “rest of the dead” in Revelation 20:5 who are not resurrected.

- iii) Like the chaff that has no anchor in the wind, so the wicked have no anchor in the judgment.
  - iv) Sinners can no more live in heaven than a fish can live in a tree.
  - b) *Nor the sinners* [חַטָּאִים] (those in who miss the mark in 1:1b) *in the assembly of the righteous ones* [צַדִּיקִים] (those conforming to the standard of right and wrong)
    - i) They will not be accepted according to the absolute standard
      - The wicked have not accepted God's evaluation of them throughout their life (Psalm 10:3-4, 11-13).
- 2) Explanation
- a) *Because Yahweh* (the self-existing One) *knows* [Qal ptc.] *the way* (see 1:1b) *of the righteous ones* [צַדִּיקִים]
    - i) More than mere mental acknowledgement because God knows everything.
    - ii) Indicates a personal intimacy and involvement
  - b) *And the way* (see 1:1b) *of the wicked ones* [רָשָׁעִים] (those who do not think and live according to absolutes) *come to nothing* (Qal impf. אָבַד)
    - i) Vanish like chaff in the wind, instead of bearing green leaves and producing fruit in its season.
    - ii) The lifestyle of the wicked is not able to endure because God has set himself against it.

### Summary and applications

- 1) God, not the world, is the standard of right and wrong, spiritual wholeness, and right values. What will be your standard?
- 2) God's Word, not the world, is the genuine source of delight. Where will you seek your pleasure?
- 3) God, not the world, provides what we need to mature, benefit others, and accomplish His purpose. How will you evaluate the successfulness your life?
- 4) The ungodly have an entirely different relationship with God than believers do. But this is not always visible.
  - a) Like chaff and the kernel of grain, they appear united until the winnowing (judgment). Then the reality will be made known.
  - b) Like the chaff derives some benefit from being near the wheat kernel, so the ungodly derive some benefit from being near the godly. For the ungodly, this life is the best existence they will ever know.
- 5) God says there are only 2 ways to live your life. Which way are you on?
  - a) Jesus said, "I myself am the way and the truth and the life. No one is coming to the Father except through Me." John 14:6