

Psalm 1

How to Be Happy and Blessed in Life, Psalm 1:1-6

What Do You Do When You Come to a Fork in the Road? (The Blessed Person Is the Righteous Person)

Psalm 1:1-6 NKJV

The Way of the Righteous and the End of the Ungodly

¹ Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

² But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.

³ He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

⁴ The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

⁶ For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalm 1:1-6 AMP

The Righteous and the Wicked Contrasted.

¹ Blessed [fortunate, prosperous, and favored by God] is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked [following their advice and example], Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit [down to rest] in the seat of scoffers (ridiculers).

² But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And on His law [His precepts and teachings] he [habitually] meditates day and night.

³ And he will be like a tree *firmly* planted [and fed] by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season; Its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers [and comes to maturity].

⁴ The wicked [those who live in disobedience to God's law] are not so, But they are like the chaff [worthless and without substance] which the wind blows away.

⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand [unpunished] in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

⁶ For the Lord knows *and* fully approves the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked shall perish.

Opening Prayer **Gracious Father,**

We come before You today with hearts longing for Your blessing and Your presence. Your Word tells us that true happiness and joy are found not in the ways of the world, but in walking with You. As we open **Psalm 1**, we ask that You teach us what it means to be truly blessed: to separate ourselves from ungodly influences, to delight in Your Word, and to stand firm in righteousness.

Lord, clear away distractions and prepare our minds to receive Your truth. May Your Spirit guide us into wisdom and convict us where change is needed. Let us see the difference between

the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked, and may we choose the narrow path that leads to life. We pray that this time in Your Word will not only inform us, but transform us, so that we may walk in joy, peace, and fruitfulness. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Only then can we be gloriously blessed in the presence of the Lord. This is, *How to Be Happy and Blessed in Life*, **Psalm 1:1-6**.

1. Separate from the wicked (v. 1).
2. Be devoted to God's Word (vv. 2-3).
3. Understand the unhappy and wicked (vv. 4-5).
4. Trust the Lord and be righteous (v. 6).

1. **(Psalm 1:1) Separate from the wicked.**

Psalm 1:1 NKJV

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This beloved, oft-memorized psalm teaches us how to meet one of the most urgent needs of our lives: how to be happy and *blessed* (see below **Deeper Study #1**).

Note that the Hebrew word for *blessed* (*esher*) is plural. It means many happinesses; abounding in blessing; experiencing the full measure of joy, peace, and prosperity with nothing withheld.

Who would not want to live in the realm of the blessed? What must we do in order to receive this favor and dwell in this state?

First, we must not associate with ungodly people. Three postures are described in this verse: *walking*, *standing*, and *sitting*. These different terms are used as poetic language, and together they represent the overall life choices and activities—the day-to-day lifestyle—of the blessed individual. At the same time, each expression relates to the specific type of vile person who is to be avoided.

Kidner says that these phrases describe three degrees of departure from God and three different levels of conformity to this world. **(Psalm 1:1) Blessed:** the best synonym the English language offers for this Hebrew word (*esher*) is the word *happy*. Yet *happy* falls short of beginning to express all that is contained in what it truly means to be blessed.

DEEPER STUDY #1

Being **blessed** means...

- joy
- contentment
- peace
- satisfaction
- fulfillment
- protection

- calmness
- assurance
- provision
- prosperity

Blessed is both an inward and outward state: we enjoy this happiness in our spirits, and also in our relationships with others. It is a joy, peace, and assurance that transcends circumstances. **“Even when the righteous do not feel happy, they are still considered ‘blessed’ from God’s perspective.”**

This blessing is a gift from God. It is the result of His approval, acceptance, and favor upon an obedient believer’s life. This gift, however, is conditionally received. While God’s favor is always undeserved due to our sinfulness, this blessing is the result of some action on our part. **16** Throughout ***Psalms*** we are said to be blessed because we...

- do not associate with the ungodly (**Psalm 1:1**)
- trust in the Lord (**Psalm 2:12**; **Psalm 34:8**; **Psalm 40:4**; **Psalm 84:12**)
- confess and receive God’s forgiveness for sin (**Psalm 32:1-2**)
- live in a nation that worships the Lord (**Psalm 33:12**)
- are the descendants of the righteous (**Psalm 37:26**)
- are generous to the poor (**Psalm 41:1-2**)
- dwell in God’s house (**Psalm 65:4**; **Psalm 84:4**)
- find our strength in the Lord (**Psalm 84:5**)
- are chastened by the Lord (**Psalm 94:12**)
- maintain justice and live righteously (**Psalm 106:3**)
- fear the Lord (**Psalm 112:1**; **Psalm 128:1, 4**)
- are undefiled and keep God’s law (**Psalm 119:1-2**)

a. Their counsel (v. 1).

God’s blessing will be ours when we ***do not walk in the counsel of the ungodly***. Note the significant words in this statement:

⇒ ***Walk (halak)*** is most frequently translated as *go* in the Old Testament. It refers to our natural activity or movement. As used here, it applies to our behavior in daily life.

17

Psalm 1:1 NKJV

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Psalm 1:1 AMP

¹ Blessed [fortunate, prosperous, and favored by God] is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked [following their advice and example], Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit [down to rest] in the seat of scoffers (ridiculers).

⇒ ***Counsel (etsah)*** generally means advice or guidance. However, it sometimes refers to purposes, plans, or schemes.

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⇒ *Wicked (rasha)* is usually translated as wicked. It is the opposite of righteous and speaks of a person who is guilty of wrongdoing and stands condemned before God.

18

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Psalm 1:1 AMP

¹ Blessed [fortunate, prosperous, and favored by God] is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the **wicked** [following their advice and example], Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit [down to rest] in the seat of scoffers (ridiculers).

Scholar H.C. Leupold notes that its root means loose, and it refers to those who have loosed themselves from God and have fallen into evil. In this context it is accurately understood as people who have cast off the restraints of God's Holy Word. They have chosen to live according to their own sinful purposes rather than God's righteous commands.

b. Their sinful way (v. 1).

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Path (derek) is the road or path we choose to travel. According to Scripture, only two ways exist in life: the way of righteousness that leads to life and the way of wickedness that leads to death and ends in destruction. There is no middle road (**Mt. 7:13-14**).

Matthew 7:13-14 NKJV

The Narrow Way

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Matthew 7:13-14 AMP

The Narrow and Wide Gates

¹³ "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad *and* easy to travel is the path that leads the way to destruction *and* eternal loss, and there are many who enter through it.

¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow *and* difficult to travel is the path that leads the way to [everlasting] life, and there are few who find it.

Sinners refers to those who are guilty before God because they disobey God. They miss the mark defined in God's Word.

Classic commentator Adam Clarke notes the distinction between the **ungodly** or wicked person of the first statement and the sinner of this statement: the wicked person is without God and is uninfluenced by Him. The sinner, however, rebelliously lives outside of God's limits and willfully transgresses against God's law.

This path of disobedience to God's commands is the way of those who do not have a relationship with God. Its end is death and eternal separation from God in hell. If we truly desire to be blessed by God, we do not stand in this sinful way of the wicked, much less travel it. As true followers of the Lord, we have chosen the way of life over the road that leads to destruction. We are no longer traveling the foolish way of transgression against God.

However, it is possible for us to **stand** in that road, or to return for a visit to the way of sinners. If we return, we backslide and forfeit God's blessing upon our lives. In making that choice, we willfully depart from the blessed state of joy, peace, and contentment. The result: we will painfully experience God's loving but firm hand of discipline (**Heb. 12:5-11**).

Hebrews 12:5-11 NKJV

⁵ **And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;**

⁶ **For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."**

⁷ **If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?**

⁸ **But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.**

⁹ **Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?**

¹⁰ **For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.**

¹¹ **Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.**

The way of sinners is the exact opposite of the blessed life. Those who live sinful lives do not know lasting joy, satisfaction, or contentment. They never experience the deep-seated and lasting peace that God alone can give. Instead, their experience is a continuous flow of unsettling conflicts with others. As a result, they are plagued with guilt because of their transgressions and the hurt they bring to those who love them. They are selfish, and their sin often leads them to an isolated, lonely life that is cut off from others. Habitual sinners are prone to turn to substances—drugs and alcohol—to numb their nagging consciences and ease their pain.

c. Their mockery (v. 1).

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Scoffers mock everything that is holy. They have no respect for God and His Word. The Hebrew verb form of this word literally means to make mouths at. Through continued rejection of God's Word, they have become hardened toward sin and toward God. The *scorner* (*luwts*) is thoroughly discussed in *Proverbs*.

Scoffers are marked by their pride (Proverbs 3:34; Proverbs 21:24).

Proverbs 3:34 NKJV

³⁴ **Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble.**

Proverbs 21:24 NKJV

²⁴ **A proud and haughty man— “Scoffer” is his name; He acts with arrogant pride.**

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for the truth of Psalm 1, which shows us the path of blessing and the path of destruction. Lord, we confess that too often we are tempted by the counsel of the ungodly, the ways of sinners, and the mocking voices of this world. But tonight, we renew our commitment to separate ourselves from the wicked, to delight in Your Word, and to trust in You with all our hearts.

Strengthen us by Your Spirit to live as trees planted by rivers of living water, bearing fruit in season, prospering in all that we do according to Your will. Help us to remember that true happiness is not found in possessions or worldly success, but in walking with You in holiness and obedience. Lord, may we leave this place with renewed courage, deeper devotion, and steadfast faith. Keep us from drifting toward the path of sin and anchor us in Your truth. And when trials come, remind us that the righteous are known and kept by You forever.

We ask all of this in the precious name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.