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CFBC. . . “*Summer in the Psalms*”

“BLESSED OR CURSED?”

Psalm 1:1-6

In the movie *Braveheart*, William Wallace made this statement...

**Every man dies; not every man
really lives!**

What does it mean to really live? Is true life defined by a shiny new car or truck? Is it defined by chasing hard after riches, pleasure, fame, or success? For the next 30 minutes or so, I want to show you how you can really live. Take your Bible and turn to Psalm 1.

The book of Psalms contains Jewish songs and prayers. The first psalm serves as an introduction to the rest of the Psalms. It presents two ways to live . . .

Option #1—You can live for the Lord.

Option #2—You can live life your way.

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This concept of two ways was highlighted by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount . . .

Matthew 7:13–14... "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. **14** "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Here's the truth I want you to remember...

LIVE FOR THE LORD AND BE BLESSED!

This Psalm can be divided into two parts. . .

1. THE GODLY (1-3)

Psalm 1:1... How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

The Separation of the Godly Person

Blessed describes a happy, joy-filled, and rewarding life. What kind of person lives this kind of life? The Hebrew word is a plural, therefore it refers to the many blessings God releases into the life of a godly man or a godly woman.

The counsel of the wicked. The word "wicked" refers to the person who is loose and unstable. **The godly person who chooses to live for the Lord does not govern his/her life on the basis of bad advice from bad people.**

The advice of those who are wicked crops up in personal conversations, in magazine articles, in movies, in television shows, and in podcasts and social media. Their voices cry out in unison. . .

- **It's foolish to be religious**
- **You can't trust the Bible**
- **Jesus is not the only way to heaven**
- **You don't have to go to church to be religious**
- **Sin is fun and pleasurable**

■ You have the freedom to live your way

It's all a lie. If you want to live for the Lord and to be on the receiving end of His amazing blessings, don't get bad advice from bad people!

The path of sinners. This conveys the idea of hanging out with those who have chosen to reject the Lord and His Word. The word path describes the way one lives. Seeing this, the godly person avoids it.

The seat of scoffers. Scoffers are those who hold nothing sacred. They ridicule God and all that is associated with him. To "sit" with such people suggests remaining with them, enjoying their company, and joining them in their ridicule of God and His Word. Spurgeon said that there is an obvious movement from bad to worse in this text. He referred to them as "*Doctors of Damnation.*"

Psalm 1:2... But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

The Dedication of the Godly Person

His delight is in the law of the Lord. The “law of the Lord” refers to the whole truth of God as it is revealed in the Word of God.

The godly person takes his *advice* from the Word of God. The Bible is his delight. He finds it to be immensely interesting and relevant. It brings him joy and satisfaction to read it and study it.

What does it mean to delight in the Word of God? As a husband, you are to love your wife as Christ loves His church. That means you find great delight in spending time with her. You listen to her and look for ways to help her be the best she can possibly be. That’s the way it should be for the godly person and his/her Bible.

In His law he meditates day and night—The godly person ponders over the Word of God and studies it consistently. When he/she is depressed or distressed, the godly calls to mind the great promises of the Bible. When he/she is uncertain

and perplexed, he looks for its clear direction and guidelines. When his/her sins loom before him/her like evil monsters, he rehearses its glorious proclamation of the forgiveness and love of God through Jesus Christ. **He finds that the Word of God has a joy for every sorrow and a truth for every situation.**¹

Joshua 1:8... "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success."

What comes to your mind and fills your heart when tragedy strikes and disappointment comes?
In a 24-hour day, 10,080-minute week, 2,592,000-second month, how much time do you

¹ Roger Ellsworth, [*Opening up Psalms*](#), Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 31.

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spend memorizing and meditating on God’s Word? ²

LIVE FOR THE LORD AND BE BLESSED!

There is by necessity the separation of the godly person and the dedication of the godly person.

Now I want you to see. . .

Psalm 1:3... He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

The Inspiration of the Godly Person

He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water. The godly man delights in the Word of God and meditates on it consistently. He receives spiritual nourishment from it like a tree’s root

² J. Josh Smith and Daniel L. Akin, [*Exalting Jesus in Psalms 1–50*](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2022), 7.

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system draws its nourishment from streams of water. What does the tree suggest? Strength, stability, beauty, prosperity, vitality, and refreshing shade!

Which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither. All of these things are found in the one who delights in the Word of God. Here's a simple truth I want you to lock into your mind and heart . . .

The more you delight in obeying God's Word the more fruitful you will be. On the other hand, the more you are influenced by the ungodly, the more you will be depleted of the spiritual nourishment you desperately need. If you want God's blessing and favor on your life, spend time with those who love the Lord and His Word. He will make sure you have the strength and stability to withstand the storms of life!

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What is this fruit that the Lord will produce in you and through you? Well, it's the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal. 5:22–23**). Keep this in mind. Trees bear fruit so that others are blessed and refreshed.

LIVE FOR THE LORD AND BE BLESSED!

We've acknowledged the separation of the godly person and the dedication of the godly person and the inspiration of the godly person. Now I want you to see. . .

2. THE UNGODLY (4-6)

The man whom God blesses prospers because he puts God first in his life and he seeks to live within the framework of God's will, God's Word, God's wisdom, and God's way. The author of this psalm sets before us a startling contrast. . .

Psalm 1:4... The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.

The Futility of the Ungodly Person

They are like chaff which the wind drives away.

The psalmist's mention of chaff reminds us of how the Jewish farmer would place his wheat on a stone threshing floor and drive his oxen over it so that their hooves would separate the grain from the husks. He would then use a kind of fork or shovel to pitch the grain and the chaff in the air. The grain would fall to the floor to be preserved, and the chaff would be blown away.³

The ungodly are spiritual lightweights. They have no roots, no foundation, and no substance. It's the picture of a useless and meaningless life. John the Baptist prophesied about the Messiah's ministry. . .

Matthew 3:12... "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His

³ Roger Ellsworth, [*Opening up Psalms*](#), Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 32.

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wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Psalm 1:5... Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

The Destiny of the Ungodly Person

The wicked will not stand in the judgment. These last two verses distinguish between the destiny of the godly and the destiny of the ungodly. Judgment Day is coming. . .

2 Corinthians 5:10...For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

Those who stand with the ungodly in this life will not be able to stand with the godly in eternity.

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Psalms 1:6... For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.

This verse sums up all that has been said. We've already seen the futility of the ungodly person and the destiny of the ungodly person. Finally, I want you to see...

The Penalty of the Ungodly Person

This verse highlights the fact that the basis for God's judgment is His "knowledge."

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous.

Judgment will be based on your response to the Word of God and the gospel it champions. Will you choose to believe in Jesus and to live a godly life that puts you in a position to be blessed by God?

But the way of the wicked will perish. Hear the words of Jesus. . .

Matthew 7:24–27... "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man

who built his house on the rock. **25** "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. **26** "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. **27** "The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall."

CONCLUSION

Are you getting bad advice from bad people? Have you rejected the Lord and His Word? Jesus can save you and open up the floodgates of heaven's blessings for you. Turn from your sin and place your faith in Him! I want to encourage you to really live a life that has substance and significance now and for all of eternity!

LIVE FOR THE LORD AND BE BLESSED!

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Harry Ironside, the Bible teacher, told of a visit to Israel years ago by a man named Joseph Flacks. He had an opportunity to address a gathering of Jews and Arabs and took for the subject of his address the first psalm. He read Psalm 1 and then asked this question . . .

"Who is this blessed man of whom the psalmist speaks? This man never walked in the counsel of the wicked or stood in the way of sinners or sat in the seat of mockers. He was an absolutely sinless man."

Nobody spoke. So Flacks said:

"Was he our great father Abraham?"

One old man said, "No, it cannot be Abraham. He denied his wife and told a lie about her."

"Well, how about the lawgiver Moses?"

"No," someone said. "It cannot be Moses. He killed a man, and he lost his temper by the waters of Meribah."

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Flacks suggested David. It was not David.

There was silence for a long while. Then an elderly Jew arose and said. . .

"My brothers, I have a little book here; it is called the New Testament. I have been reading it; and if I could believe this book, if I could be sure that it is true, I would say that the man of the first Psalm was Jesus of Nazareth."

Jesus is that man, of course. He is the only perfect man who ever lived, and he is the sinner's Savior. It is he who stands at the portal of this book to show us the way to live and help us do it.⁴ This morning He's inviting you to commit your life to Him, to obey His Word, and to be blessed and highly favored by God. Believe me. You won't be disappointed if you accept His invitation!

⁴ James Montgomery Boice, [*Psalms 1–41: An Expository Commentary*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 19.

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