

The Happy Man: Psalm 1

His company, his occupation, his appearance, and his work: a portrait of the truly blessed life

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; but his delight is in the law of the LORD.

PSALM 1:1-2

AT A GLANCE

BIG IDEA	Psalm 1 paints a picture of the truly happy person: careful about his company, delighted with God's Word, rooted like a tree by a river, and fruitful in everything he does. Jesus lived this psalm perfectly, and in Him we can too.
SCRIPTURE	Psalm 1 · Ephesians 5:11 · 1 Peter 2:2 · John 15:5-6 · 1 Corinthians 15:58
LENGTH	About 20 minutes
BEST FOR	Middle school and high school (works for older children too)
YOU WILL NEED	Bibles; a houseplant and a handful of chaff, dry grass, or dead leaves

Start here: what makes a person happy?

Ask the group: "What do most people think will make them happy?" Write the answers down: money, popularity, followers, freedom, a relationship. Then open to the very first song in the Bible's songbook.

Psalm 1 begins with the Hebrew word *ashrei*, translated "Blessed" in the NKJV. It can also be translated "Happy" or "Oh, how happy!" This psalm is the doorway to the whole book of Psalms, and it describes the truly happy person in four ways.

1 His company (v. 1)

Notice the downward slide: he does not **walk** in the counsel of the ungodly, **stand** in the path of sinners, or **sit** in the seat of the scornful. First you listen to their advice, then you hang around their ways, then you settle in and start mocking what's good.

This doesn't mean we avoid unbelievers; Jesus was a friend of sinners. It means we don't let them steer our lives. Paul says, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them" (Ephesians 5:11). Love people, but don't take your directions from those who ignore God.

2 His occupation (v. 2)

"But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night." The happy man isn't just avoiding bad influences; he's filled up with something better. God's Word isn't a chore to him; it's a delight.

The Hebrew word for "meditate" pictures quietly murmuring something to yourself, turning it over and over. Peter says, "as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2). A healthy baby wants milk all the time. A healthy Christian craves God's Word.

3 His appearance (v. 3)

"He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." In the dry land of Israel, a tree beside a stream stays green even in a drought, because its roots reach the water. The word "planted" suggests it was put there on purpose, like a tree set beside an irrigation channel.

Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Your roots are your secret life with Jesus. When they go deep, you stay strong when life gets hot and dry.

OBJECT LESSON

Hold up the living plant, then the handful of chaff. Toss the chaff in the air (or blow on it). Read verse 4: "The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away." A tree is rooted, alive, and fruitful. Chaff is light, dead, and blown wherever the wind goes. Ask: "Which one describes your life right now?"

4 His work (v. 3)

He "brings forth its fruit in its season... and whatever he does shall prosper." This doesn't promise that a believer will be rich or never have problems. It means that a life rooted in God produces lasting fruit in God's timing, "in its season." Paul says, "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). Nothing you do for Jesus is wasted.

Two ways, two endings (vv. 4-6)

Psalm 1 ends with a choice: "For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (v. 6). There are only two roads.

SEEING JESUS IN PSALM 1

Only one Man ever lived Psalm 1 perfectly: Jesus. He never followed ungodly counsel, He delighted in His Father's Word, and His life bore perfect fruit. We don't become "the blessed man" by trying harder, but by trusting Him. He forgives our failures and plants us by His river, and His Spirit makes us fruitful.

TALK IT OVER

1. What does our culture say makes people happy? How is Psalm 1 different?
2. What do you notice about the words walk, stand, and sit in verse 1?
3. What would it look like for God's Word to be your "delight" instead of a chore?
4. Are you more like the tree or the chaff right now? Why?
5. How does seeing Jesus as the perfect "blessed man" give you hope?

TAKE IT HOME

Read Psalm 1 every day this week. Each day, pick one phrase to "meditate" on: say it to yourself throughout the day and think about what it means. Then ask God to plant you deeper by His river.

Rooted in Him, fruitful in season, never wasted.

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