



Hello! This guide is provided to help facilitate a clear understanding of the Bible passage, with a focus on applying God's truths to our lives individually and corporately. As such we encourage you to spend at least half your time pondering and discussing questions that are application focused. While the guide has been bulked up, we still need to prepare by praying through the passage, reviewing the guide on our own, and thinking about how our group might answer questions.

Psalms - Alive to God

The goal of this series is to show and cultivate a sense in our people of being alive to God, walking with him, engaging with him and having our hearts enlarged by him.

Background of Psalm 1

Like the gateway to a sanctuary, one of the relatively few wisdom psalms introduces the whole collection. Before having close conversation with God, the reader's attitude toward the law of God has to be considered. The righteous person loves and studies it, the wicked person hates it.¹

Christ in Psalm 1

Reading and meditating on the Word of God is a delight instead of being a mere formalistic duty when we have Christ in our hearts. Christ is our perfectly Righteous and Blessed One, who makes full our joy in the Word. Meditating on and delighting in the Bible is the secret to a relationship with God and to life itself.²

Big Idea of the Text

This Psalm provides the purpose of the book of Psalms as a manual for living the blessed life.³ Such a blessed life consists in prioritizing and meditating on the law of God, applying one's heart in the pursuit of heavenly wisdom.

Goal of this Study

For us to love God's words as we love God himself, and understand that the life of blessedness only comes from being joined to Christ, the fountain of living water.

¹ Background taken from R.C. Sproul, ed., *The Reformation Study Bible: New King James Version* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2016), 867.

² Timothy Keller and Kathy Keller, *My Rock My Refuge* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2015), 1.

³ Sproul, *The Reformation Study Bible*, 867.

Icebreaker Question

What is the “blessed life” according to the world we live in?

Read Psalm 1:1-6

¹ Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
² but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
³ He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.
⁴ The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
⁵ Therefore the wicked will 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 wicked will perish.

The Blessed Way of the Righteous

Individuals and the community are encouraged to live for God’s glory. Living in fellowship with God is a condition of blessedness, evoking joy and gratitude for God’s freely given grace. In this sense, blessedness is not deserved or achieved but a free gift of God. It is God who declares sinners righteous and grants them newness of life protected from the full effects of the world under judgement (see Genesis 3:15-19). Blessedness is not a transient feeling of bliss but an experience and anticipation of fulfilment of God’s promises. A blessed person reflects on God, meditates on his law, and delights in doing God’s will in life-giving ways in all his/her daily activities. ⁴

Questions:

1. What does it really mean to be “blessed”, according to the Bible?
2. What is the law of the Lord?

⁴ Paraphrased from Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, rev.ed, vol 5. of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary 2008*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2008), 78-80.

3. How do we meditate on God's law day and night?

4a. What is the illustration used to describe the blessed man?

4b. What does this mean?

The Perishing Way of the Wicked

The tree is a familiar metaphor for the godly believer's life of blessedness, with leaves and fruit signifying blessings and enjoyment of life as gifts of God. The godly enjoy blessing as a by-product of wise God-centred living. In contrast, the wicked is compared to chaff, suggesting their uselessness and the ease with which they will fade away. God's judgement takes place throughout redemptive history and comes to an end in the day of the Lord. The congregation of the righteous as God's people will experience his presence both now and in the life to come.⁵

5a. What illustration is used to describe the wicked?

5b. What is the meaning of the illustration? (Mat 3:12)

5c. What is the final destiny of the wicked? (v5-6)

6a. What does it mean that God knows the way of the righteous? (John 10, 1 Cor.8:3, Exod. 2:23-25)

7. What is the dilemma in this Psalm?

8a. What is the solution to the dilemma in the question above? Verse 5 describes the destiny of sinners. Romans 3:23 says that we are all sinners. How do we obtain righteousness? (John 4:13-14)

8b. How does Jesus' righteousness relate to God's blessings?

9. How has the understanding of being known and blessed by God helped you deal with life's difficult situations? (e.g suffering, sickness, hardship)

10. How does Psalm 1 instruct us to live?

11. How can we teach each other to delight in and meditate on God's law?

⁵ See VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 82.

Apply practically: Pray for and deeper love for God's law, and to walk in intimacy with God.

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