



# The Right Way

Psalm 1

- ❑ Psalm 1 serves as an introduction to the whole book of Psalms. It is a psalm of wisdom, presenting two ways of life: the right way (the way of the righteous) and the wrong way (the way of the wicked). Blessed<sup>1</sup> is the person who follows the right way. Read Psalm 1.

## The Right Way - Not This

- ❑ The person who follows the *right way* does *not*...
  - ✗ “walk in the counsel of the wicked” (ESV, NIV<sup>84</sup>)
  - ✗ “stand in the way (manner of life) of sinners”
  - ✗ “sit in the seat (company) of mockers”<sup>2</sup> (verse 1)
- ❑ These parallel statements “draw attention to the realms of thinking, behaving and belonging, in which a person’s fundamental choice of allegiance is made and carried through.”<sup>3</sup>

## The Right Way - But This

- ❑ The person who follows the *right way*...<sup>4</sup>
  - ✓ has “delight... in the law of the LORD”<sup>5</sup>
  - ✓ “meditates<sup>6</sup> on his law day and night”<sup>7</sup> (verse 2)



📖 “Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” (Joshua 1:8, NIV)<sup>8</sup>

## The Right Way - Fruitful & Enduring

- ❑ The person who follows the *right way* is like...
  - ✓ “a tree planted by streams of water<sup>9</sup>...” (verse 3a)

<sup>1</sup> ‘blessed’ (Hebrew *’ashrê*) – ‘conveys the idea of happiness that flows from a sense of well-being and rightness’ (Gerald H. Wilson, *The NIV Application Commentary, Psalms Volume 1* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002], 93-94). Jesus used the equivalent Greek word (*makarios*) in his ‘Sermon on the Mount’ (Matthew 5:3-11).

<sup>2</sup> ‘mockers’ refuse to seek or accept instruction or correction. ‘They actively seek through their mockery to express disdain for right living and seek to belittle and undermine those who want to be righteous’ (Wilson, 95).

<sup>3</sup> Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), 47. Wilson says the order of the verbs ‘may indicate a gradual descent into evil, in which one walks alongside, then stops, and ultimately takes up permanent residence in the company of the wicked’ (Wilson, 94). Others see the statements as synonymous.

<sup>4</sup> After the negative examples of verse 1, verse 2 begins with ‘but’ (or ‘but rather’) indicating a strong contrast.

<sup>5</sup> ‘law’ (*tôrâ*) – often means *the Law*, but in wisdom contexts, it usually has the more general sense of ‘instruction, guidance’ given through God’s written revelation. Thus it applies to the Bible (God’s written word) in general.

<sup>6</sup> ‘meditate’ (*hāgāh*) – reflects ‘the sound of low voices murmuring or muttering as one reads Scripture in a low voice’ (Wilson, 96), but here emphasizes the habitual thinking about what Scripture says and how to apply it.

<sup>7</sup> ‘day and night’ – constantly, consistently, regularly.

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that God is the one who defines and determines true prosperity and success.

<sup>9</sup> ‘streams of water’ (*palgê māyim*) – water channels made for irrigation. Jeremiah 17:7-8 says, “...blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.” (NIV)

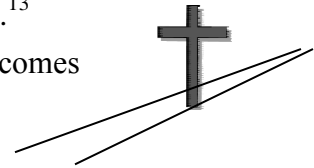
1. In what ways is the person who delights in God's word like "a tree planted by streams of water?"<sup>10</sup> (*Psalm 1:3; Jeremiah 17:7-8*)

## The Wrong Way - Useless & Blown Away

- ❑ The person who follows the *wrong way* is like...
  - ☞ "chaff<sup>11</sup> that the wind blows away" (*verse 4*)

## Two Ways - Two Results

- ❑ The *right way* is watched over by the LORD.<sup>12</sup> (*verse 6*)
- ❑ The *wrong way* leads to judgment and destruction. (*verses 5-6*)
- ❑ Jesus also talked about two ways and two results (*Matthew 7:13-14*).<sup>13</sup>
  - 📖 *And Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father (God) except through me" (John 14:6).*<sup>14</sup>



## Discussion Questions

2. In what ways do people "walk in the counsel of the wicked, stand in the way of sinners, and/or sit in the company of mockers?" Think of examples. How can Christians avoid these things without withdrawing from society?
3. In what ways can we "delight" in God's word? How can we "meditate" on God's word "day and night?" What are some practical ways to make God's word our delight and continual guide?

## Reflection/Application

- The Bible says there are *two* ways. What do you think about this? Assuming it is true, which way are you following? Do you want to follow the way of blessing? Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life" (*John 14:6*). Do you need to trust in Jesus and follow him?
- As a believer, are you allowing yourself to be influenced by the world's ways of thinking and behaving? Do you truly delight in God's word and continually think about it and apply it? Reflect on this lesson and apply the answers to questions 2 and 3.

<sup>10</sup> The person who trusts in the LORD and delights in his word is firmly rooted in 'the spring of living water' (*Jeremiah 2:13*). God is the eternal source of life, fruitfulness, and every blessing; and his Word conveys life-giving, life-nurturing, life-transforming truths. Jesus (the Word in flesh) said, 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing' (*John 15:5*).

<sup>11</sup> 'chaff' – the seed coverings and debris separated from the grain in the threshing process (i.e., the process in which the edible part of the grain is separated from the inedible part). Wilson says, 'The contrast is acute: between fruitful tree and useless chaff; between well-watered stability and dry, dusty, windblown impermanence' (Wilson, 98). It should be noted that the chaff metaphor does not mean the 'wicked' cannot have useful functions in our world. But their good works cannot save them from God's righteous judgment. Their path still 'leads to destruction' (1:5-6).

<sup>12</sup> 'watch over' (*yāda* – know). The word 'know' may be used in the sense of God's love and care for those who trust in him. In Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven and we are eternally secure in God's hands (*Romans 8:31-39*).

<sup>13</sup> He said, 'Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.' (*NIV*)

<sup>14</sup> While there are certainly right and wrong ways of thinking and behaving, we are *not* saved by our efforts to do better. We are saved through faith in Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and was raised from the dead. Our salvation is based on *his* righteousness. Thus ultimately, the 'right way' is Jesus. Followers of Jesus follow the way of Jesus.