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Psalm 1

1. Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.
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, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.
4. Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.
5. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
6. For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

What the godly person refuses (v. 1)

Ours is a time in which those who have no room for God are ever ready and eager to offer advice to those who are living for God. The advice of the godless is all around. It crops up in personal conversations, in magazine and newspaper articles, in movies and television shows. All of these — and others too — join their voices in the incessant, pounding cry: ‘Live like this! It’s fun! You’ll be glad you did!’

The godly person does, from time to time, give heed to godless advice, but he always does so to his own hurt. The principle of spiritual life that has been placed within him will not allow unqualified and ongoing consent to such advice. The spiritual person will inevitably see that his wholeness is directly tied to his wholeheartedness. The more wholeheartedly he rejects evil advice, the more whole (in the sense of being happy) he will be.

THE PATH OF SINNERS The focus shifts from the advice offered by the godless to their lifestyle or pattern of behaviour. It is one which does not conform to the laws of God. Seeing this, the godly person avoids it. He does not stand in this path, lingering with those who tread it.

It is not contact with the godless that the godly seeks to avoid. It is rather camaraderie.

THE SEAT OF THE SCORNFUL Scornful people are those who hold nothing sacred, scoffing at God and all that is associated with him. To ‘sit’ with such people takes us a step further than walking and standing. It suggests remaining or abiding with them and enjoying their company.

The godly person always feels out of place and unhappy around those who make sport of God.

What the godly person chooses (v. 2)

The godly person finds happiness in ‘the law of the LORD’. The word ‘law’ itself means ‘teaching,’ ‘instruction’ or ‘direction’. Psalm 119 makes clear, the term (law) also refers to the whole truth of God as it is revealed in the Word of God. It is surely this broad sense that the author of Psalm 1 had in mind.

DELIGHTING IN GOD’S WORD The author has affirmed that the godly person does not take counsel from the wicked. Now he states it positively. The godly person takes his counsel from the Word of God. This Word is his delight. He finds it to be immensely interesting and relevant. It brings him joy and satisfaction.

What does it mean to delight in the Word of God? Here is a man who is in love with a woman. He delights in her. He yearns to spend time with her. And when he is with her, he drinks in every word she speaks. He is intoxicated with her beauty. So it is with the godly person and the Word of God!

MEDITATING ON GOD’S WORD The psalmist goes a step further. The godly person also meditates on the Word of God ‘day and night’. The word ‘meditate’ means ‘to murmur’ or ‘to mutter’. It means ‘speaking to one’s self in a low voice’.

What the godly person realizes (v. 3)

The outcome of the godly person’s refusing and choosing is not left in doubt. He will be ‘like a tree’. What does the tree suggest? Strength and stability! Fruitfulness! Beauty! Refreshing shade!

All of these things are found in the one who delights in the Word of God. And the degree of the delight is the degree to which they are found. The delighting person has strength and stability in the storms of life. He manifests the virtues and qualities that are called the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23). And such a life makes him beautiful and refreshing to others.

Jesus himself drew the same distinction in terms of two builders. He likened those who refused to heed his word to one who built on sand and those who heeded his word to one who built on a rock. When the storm came, the house on the sand fell while the house on the rock stood firm (Matt. 7:24–27). The difference, again, was in the response to the Word of God.

The wretchedness of the ungodly person (v. 4–6)

The psalmist’s mention of chaff takes us back to the farming techniques of that time. The farmer would place the wheat he had harvested on a stone threshing floor and drive his oxen around 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.

The chaff represents those whose lives are not rooted in the Word of God.

The Bible tells us that a day of separation is coming. John the Baptist had this to say regarding the Lord Jesus Christ: ‘His winnowing fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his threshing floor, and gather his wheat into the barn; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire’ (Matt. 3:12).

The ungodly ‘shall not stand’ on that day of judgement. And they will have no place ‘in the congregation of the righteous.’ Those who choose to live apart from God and his people in this life will find that they will have no part with them in eternity. Those who stand with the ungodly in this life will not be able to stand with the righteous at that time.

Is there wisdom in this psalm? Indeed, there is. There is no greater wisdom than ordering our lives according to the Word of God. The central truth of that Word is the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the major part of that ordering lies in receiving that work.



Samson
Reign in me
Reign in me
Sovereign Lord, reign in me
Reign in me
Sovereign Lord, reign in me
Captivate my heart
Let Your Kingdom come
Establish there Your throne
Let Your will be done.

