

I. Two Ways to Live

“The Gateway to the book of Psalms.”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.

Proposition: There are only two ways to live.

Life is binary.

One person listens to all the wrong voices. What’s popular shapes them. The zeitgeist, i.e. the “spirit of our age,” is their major influence. The majority opinion shapes them. (The majority is almost never right).

The spirit of our age comes to us through mediums that are not inherently evil—our High Schools and Colleges, sit coms, Novels, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Blogs, Podcasts, ESPN, and the Network News. A steady diet of “the spirit of our

¹ ESV Study Bible

age” will drag you slowly and imperceptibly into the pit and away from God. You will become “chaff.” You’ll “perish.”

Psalm one says there is another way to live. It’s to delight in God’s law, to “meditate” on it morning, evening, and in between.

The message of Psalm one is that these two ways lead to radically different results— The way of Blessing or the way of Perishing.

We have two points. 1st The Two Ways, and 2nd The Two Consequences.

A. Vs 1-2 TWO WAYS

1. The Way of the Perishing

1 “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the way of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers.”

Verse 1 uses three terms to describe the perishing. “wicked, sinner, scoffer.” They are all synonyms for the man who is influenced by everything but God’s law/ word/ instruction.

Let’s pause to define this man.

1st He is his own God. He goes his own way. He makes up his own rules for life. Whoever makes the rules is your real god. He constantly argues with the Bible.

2nd He is a man of the world. Yes, he goes to church on Sunday. He gives lip-service to religion. But he is thoroughly worldly. He thinks the same way our fallen world thinks. He is motivated by the same things that motivate the world. His life goals are the same as the world around him.

3rd His motives are worldly. He goes to church because he is afraid of going to Hell, not because he is passionate to know and love the living God.

He rarely reads, let alone studies, the Bible. He doesn’t read spiritual books. They don’t interest him. He can go for weeks without reading God’s Word, and doesn’t really miss it or long for it.

2. The Way of the Righteous

1 "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the way of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers. 2, But his delight is in the law (instruction) of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night."

The righteous doesn't focus on the spirit of our age.

Vs 2, "Delight in the law (instruction) of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night."

Vs. 1 says that this man is "blessed" = Happy, Mt 5:3ff

The two verbs that describe his relationship to God's word/instruction are "delights" and "meditates." A person who delights in God's law is not annoyed by it. He or she is not bored by it. They are not generally apathetic about it. In fact, they get anxious and depressed when deprived of it. Fearing God is a synonym for delighting.

"Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments" (Ps 112:1)

When we delight in something we focus on it. We think about it. We center our life around it. We meditate on it day and night. We teach it to our children. We focus our family on it.

God does not suggest that we delight in his word. He commands us to delight in his word.

(Deuteronomy 6:6–9) "6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

(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 good success."

Delight, not duty, should be the mainspring that drives all of our Bible reading. Delight comes from the HS. In addition, the more we read God's word, the more we will delight in reading his word.

Those who delight in God's word don't have enough time to read it. 30 minutes is not long enough. An hour is not long enough. They become agitated when busyness keeps them from their daily reading of God's word. That is because God's word/law is the water that nourishes their soul. Without it they get dry and thirsty. They get cranky.

By contrast, reading God's word makes the wicked cranky.

Those are the two ways. What about the two consequences?

We've looked at "the way of the righteous," and "the way of the wicked."

B. Vs 3-6 TWO CONSEQUENCES

1. "Blessing"

Delighting & Meditating on the Word also produces Fruit.

"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.

He is a "tree" not a bush or grass.

Fruit is what God wants. John the Baptist, "Bear fruit in keeping with repentance" (Matt 3:8).

In Matthew 7 Jesus warned us, "You will know them by their fruits" (Matt 7:15ff). The fruits that God seeks are Love, conversions, God glorifying local churches, God-glorifying families, children that grow up loving and serving the living God.

Patience is needed. Fruit grows slowly. This tree "yields its fruit in its season."

How do we get fruit? It is a byproduct of the normal means of grace.

- Pruning (Jn 15), Jesus prunes us to produce more fruit).

- Watering, (Jn 4), Jesus promised the woman at the well “living water.”
- Fertilizer: Fertilized by God’s word.

Why is this man fruitful? His roots are sunk deep into God’s Word. He is a self-irrigating Christian.

Anecdote: Napa valley’s self-irrigating Vines.

3b “In all that he does he prospers.” The prosperity is always spiritual, but only sometimes material. Think about—Job, Jeremiah, Jesus, etc.

2. "Perishing"

Delighting and meditating on the World also produces fruit.

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.”

Who are the wicked? In the context of this Psalm the “wicked” is the person who does not “delight” in God’s law/word. Therefore, he does not meditate on God’s law/word. Rather, his mind is at home in the spirit of our age. Therefore, he is not fruitful.

Fruitfulness requires more than the Bible. The Pharisees memorized big chunks of the Bible, but were not fruitful. Why? They were the ancient world’s hypocrites. They related to God and the Bible for the wrong reason—to feel and look important.

The right reason is to know and relate to the Living God.

Besides right motives, fruitfulness requires the Word and the Spirit.

Verses 4-6 tell us three things about the wicked.

1. Vs 4 They are like chaff which the wind blows away.
2. Vs 5 The wicked will not stand in the judgment or in the congregation of the righteous
3. Vs 6 The way of the wicked will perish.

First, the wicked are like chaff

The consequence of putting your mind on worldliness is obvious. It turns one into chaff.

Chaff is the outer husk on a kernel of grain. It is very light. It has no food value. The chaff must be removed before the grain can be eaten. It is removed by threshing.

Therefore, the contrast is between fruitful trees and chaff.

All non-Christian celebrities are chaff. Britney Spears, Tom Brady, A.O.C., Donald Trump.

Trees are fruitful. They are useful to others. Trees are useable, stable, unmovable.

But chaff is worthless. It can't be eaten. It has no useful value.

Trees live for decades, but the chaff is immediately jettisoned.

Second, the wicked will not stand in the Judgment or in the Congregation of the righteous.

Third, the way of the wicked will Perish.

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" (Matthew 7:21–23).

C. APPLICATION: CHRIST

For Jews this Psalm was about Orthopraxy.

For Christians this Psalm is about Orthodoxy.

John 15 is the New Testament restatement of Psalm 1. IT is about orthodoxy. Jesus is the word of God. The focus changes from delighting in the law to delighting in a person, who is the Word.

(John 15:1–6) "1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned."

What does it mean to abide? It's the New Testament equivalent of "delighting" and "meditating."

Anecdote of the baby quail abiding in their mothers.

What does abiding practically look like?

We abide by exercising the means of Grace. But now we abide in a Person by delighting and meditating on the written word.

"Beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Why orthodoxy rather than orthopraxy?

- No one measures up to Psalm one.
- Therefore, we need a Savior.
- Christ fulfilled this Psalm. He delighted. He meditated day and night. He was fruitful. In all that he did he prospered.
- Through our union with Christ his fulfilment of Psalm one applies to us.
- Because of our union with Christ the justice that we deserve for not "delighting" and "meditating" has been satisfied. He took the "perishing," and the "judgment" that Psalm 1 says we deserve.

In other words, we see and know Christ through the gospel of grace.

However, this grace should not produce laziness, but renewed zeal to know God through his word.

Your reaction should be love and gratitude. *Christ is the word of God.* We delight in Christ and meditate on Christ through the gospel, and the gospel then produces a new “delight” in him motivating more study and meditation.

Are you doing this?

Do you delight in Christ and meditate upon him day and night?

Are you being transformed as you behold the glory of the Lord?

What needs to change to facilitate this?