

Two Pathways in Life

Psalm 1

Some folks think God is cold, harsh, and unforgiving, but nothing could be further from the truth! The psalms show God's heart. Sin results in judgment, but God desires us to experience fulfillment and joy in life. The choice is ours, as the 'doorway to the psalms' reveals.

The Happy Person

- Does NOT...
- Does...
- Result...

The Doomed Person

- They are like...
- Their coming judgment

The Righteous and the Wicked

- The righteous are watched over by God
- The wicked will come to ruin



1. The author of Psalm 1 is unknown; it was probably written as an “opening hymn” for the Hebrew hymnal, the Book of Psalms. The opening word in Hebrew, אֲשֶׁר (pronounced “ash-rey”), translated “Blessed,” has a range of meanings – *happy, bliss, fortunate*. The New Living Translation captures the spirit of the original: *Oh, the joys...!* People seem to be pursuing happiness now more and more, but experiencing it less and less. Why do you think this is?
2. The psalmist says that finding happiness involves *not doing* three things, and *doing* one thing (1-2). What do you think he means by ‘walking in the counsel of the wicked’? ‘Standing in the way of sinners’? ‘Sitting in the seat of mockers’? Is there a downward progression here? If so, how would you describe it?
3. The source of happiness in verse 2 is “the law” – a reference to the Pentateuch, the “Bible” for Old Testament Israel, but by extension, a reference to all God’s inspired Word. Do you “delight” in God’s Word, the Bible? What does it mean to “meditate” on it? “Day and night” is a figure of speech in which two contrasting parts are used to refer to the whole. How often do you meditate on God’s Word?
4. The person who avoids evil and meditates on Scripture is described with a simile in v3: What does this tree indicate will be the effects in his life? Contrast this with the life of a wicked person in verse 4; what does “chaff” indicate about his life?
5. Verse 5 opens with “Therefore,” and reveals the results of the way a wicked person lived his life. Hebrews 9.27 reminds us that after this life comes the judgment. What would it mean to “stand” in the time of judgment? To be “in the assembly of the righteous”?
6. In verse 6, the Hebrew word for “know” is יָדָע (yāda), and here indicates a ‘knowing concern’: God ‘watches over’ the righteous person. While God omnisciently knows all things, He particularly watches over those who pursue a pathway of righteousness. Does God “know you” in this way?