

SESSION ONE

The God Who Gives True Happiness (*Psalms 1*)

“God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there.
There is no such thing.” ~ C. S. Lewis

I. Overview

Psalms 1 and 2 are often seen as the introduction to the Book of the Psalms. Psalm 1 recognizes the instructive nature of the Psalter as Scripture for the individual. Psalm 2 addresses the people of God collectively.

Reflecting the language of the Book of Proverbs (cf. Prov 2:12-15, 20-22), Psalm 1 is classified as a wisdom psalm. Wisdom is characterized in Scripture as “the capacity of judging rightly in matters relation to life and conduct.” It is the skill in living. It is not so much what the learner is to know or what the student is to do but rather what the learner is to be. Character formation is at the heart of true wisdom.

II. The Content

A. The Blessed Man (vv. 1-3)

v. 1 – “Happy” or “Blessed” – occurring 26 times in the Psalms, this term conveys true joy and contentment.

The psalmist first identifies what must be avoided in order to be happy. The verbs, “walk – stand – sit “ may indicate a progression of causal association to complete identification. Note that this evil company is identified as wicked, sinners, and arrogant fools (i.e., one who refuses instruction – cf. Prov 13:1).

v. 2 – “Instead” stresses the contrast between the happy individual versus the wicked individual. True happiness originates from what is pursued.

- “delight” (Ps 112:1)- refers to having pleasure in, aspiration (This term is also used in the pursuit of women, gold, or earthly treasures.).
- Key implications from this exhortation are:
 - (1) The reference to Torah speaks of correct attitudes and behaviors resulting from studying God’s Word. Obedience is clearly understood in this context.
 - (2) The psalmist speaks of a continual study, not an occasional or sporadic event.
 - (3) The Torah is seen as the source of long life, peace, and prosperity (Prov 3:1-2).
 - (4) Presupposes that wisdom and understanding are available (Prov 2:1-5).

v. 3 –Three things are stated concerning the metaphor of the “tree”: (1) planted by continual water source; (2) yields fruit; and (3) leaves never wither, lush.

Several important items to note concerning this metaphor:

- (1) The source of life is found outside of one’s self.
- (2) A healthy tree produces fruit in its season, not necessarily immediately after planting or continually bearing.
- (3) The fruit is a natural result, not a reward (e.g., John 15).
- (4) The reference to prosperity speaks of a person controlled by the Lord—godly actions and actions which are divinely directed.

B. The Wicked Man (v. 4)

v. 4 – the term “wicked” was used in v. 1 – individuals not in a relationship with God, but living according to their own passions.

- note again the reference to “instead”. The psalmist once again stresses stressing this contrast between the righteous and unrighteous

Based upon Psalm 1:1-3, contrast the “happy individual” and the wicked:

RIGHTEOUS	WICKED

C. The Judgment (vv. 5-6)

v. 5 Note that the wicked have their own assembly (v. 1) and the righteous have theirs (cf. Ps 37:12-17, 28-29).

v. 6 – The reference to “way” indicates one’s manner of life.

III. Intersect

- A. True happiness is available to all; whereas, the world's false sense of happiness is exclusive (e.g., wealthy, famous, athletic, talented).

Psalm 34:8 -

- B. True happiness is rooted in something other than ourselves or what this world can offer. The Lord is the only source.

Psalm 40:4 –

- C. True happiness is found in an active, on-going study of God's Word.

Psalm 119:1-8 -

“How sweet all at once it was for me to be rid of those fruitless joys which I had once feared to lose! . . . You drove them from me, You who are the true, the sovereign joy. You drove them from me and took their place, You who are sweeter than all pleasure.” ~ Augustine