



# THE PSALTER

A SEASON THROUGH THE PSALMS

## *Psalm 1*

A Psalter, a word you may recognize but probably don't typically use, is a book containing just the Psalms. It might include additional material to lead people devotionally through their prayers and time of meditation. This series is devoted to these prayers, songs, and meditations found at the heart of the Scriptures. Our desire is that this series will inform, delight, and encourage you to worship God more faithfully.

Psalm 1 prepares the reader for the entire Psalter. It is a Torah Psalm, and like Psalms 19 and 119, it challenges us to consider the way of God as worthy of constant meditation. Meditation leads to obedience, which brings God's reward. Psalm 1 starts out with a blessing, *ashre* in the Hebrew, which the CSB translates to "happy." It is happiness that flows naturally from a sense of living faithfully (rightly) before God. There is an underlying peace and well-being for those who live according to God's direction.

It is important to see the instruction of Psalm 1, teaching us that how we live and who we choose to associate with in this life produce long-lasting and eternal consequences. It warns that those who enjoy the company of and seek advice from the wicked will ultimately be cut off from any association with the righteous. The Bible often compares the way of the righteous with the way of the wicked. Ultimately, it highlights their final destruction (the wicked) or reward (the righteous). Everyone is presented with a choice: you can choose the way God has directed and prepared for you, or the way of self-importance and pleasure. One finds peace with God while the other opposes his Word and his Way. The road of self-aggrandizement leads to eternal destruction.

Faithful followers of God's Word are compared in Psalm 1 to trees that are planted. They are not merely trees that find their place by happenstance from the blowing of seeds in the wind. Those who find joy in God's instruction are intentionally planted in a place where they receive the nourishment they need to live. This psalm describes a tree that is adequately watered and is provided with the appropriate protective climate. Therefore, its leaves never wither and it produces fruit continually.

This kind of living is contrasted with useless chaff, the husk surrounding a kernel of grain. You free the kernel from its husk by beating it and then the chaff blows away. The contrast between the righteous and the sinner is stark, powerful, and real.

God *watches over* the way of the righteous. This term can also be translated as *know*. In the Old Testament, it describes the kind of knowledge that is the end result of personal experiences in a relationship. Those who love God experience the joy of a relationship with Him. Those who seek a way of living absent from God and His direction ultimately fall under His condemnation and judgment. Their lives are empty and lived in vain and at the end there is only additional punishment.

This passage speaks evaluatively of life. It offers insight into the way God has prepared for His people and the way He opposes the proud and arrogant. It is hard to see all our decisions playing out as we live. It is important to remember that Psalm 1 is an invitation to believe that God's Word is God's assessment of our lives. The Psalms give us God's perspective of us. Those who recognize and respond with faith are those who are happy, fruitful, and eternally blessed.

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### *Discussion*

1. The sermon represented life as three trees. Can you explain what kind of life each tree symbolized?
  2. There are only two ways described in Psalm 1. Can you see your life clearly in the Psalmist's illustration?
  3. Are you someone that meditates on God's Word and finds delight in obeying it?
  4. How has this Psalm encouraged, strengthened, or challenged you?
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### *Our Corporate Prayer*

*Lord God, give me the ability to see my life as you see it and to know the path I am on. Lead me from the company and advice of the wicked and teach me to love your Word, meditate on it, and experience life from it. Give me the strength and nourishment that I need. Open my eyes to see you watching over and leading me. Care for me, protect me, and bless me. Guide my way to seek after you and the fellowship of your people. I ask all of this in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen!*