

Psalm 1 – Week 1 – Two Ways to Walk – Bible Study Helps

Title: Two Ways to Walk

Sermon Summary:

This exposition of Psalm 1 explores the foundational principles for living a blessed life in contrast to the path of destruction that awaits the ungodly. The sermon emphasizes that true blessing comes not from following worldly counsel, but from delighting in God's law and meditating on it day and night. Like a tree planted by rivers of water, the righteous person draws constant nourishment from God's Word, producing fruit in season and maintaining spiritual vitality. The message challenges believers to examine where they seek counsel, how they spend their mental energy, and whether they truly delight in Scripture or merely view it as an obligation. The sermon concludes with a sobering reminder that the way of the ungodly will perish, making evangelism and soul-winning the primary purpose for believers remaining on earth.

Key Points:

- The blessed man avoids three progressive relationships with sin: walking in ungodly counsel, standing in the way of sinners, and sitting in the seat of the scornful
- Christians must actively seek God's counsel for both major and mundane daily decisions, not relying on secular wisdom or advice
- Standing still while the world moves away from God is equivalent to moving backward; believers cannot remain neutral or halt between two opinions
- Adopting a scornful attitude toward the lost is sinful pride; our salvation is entirely God's work, not our own achievement
- True righteousness involves delighting in God's law, not merely feeling obligated to read Scripture
- Meditation on Scripture means dwelling on it, contemplating it, and turning it over in the mind day and night
- Believers are like trees planted by water—rooted, stable, and fruitful—while the ungodly are like chaff blown by every wind of doctrine
- The ungodly have no foundation and will not stand in judgment; their entire way will perish
- God knows His sheep intimately, a profound truth given the vastness of His creation
- The primary purpose for believers remaining on earth is to seek and save the lost

Scripture Reference:

- Psalm 1:1-6 (primary text)
- 1 Kings 18:17-21 (Elijah confronting Israel's divided loyalty)

Psalm 1 – Week 1 – Two Ways to Walk – Bible Study Helps

- Proverbs 3:1-8 (trusting in the Lord with all your heart)
- Joshua 1:6-9 (meditating on God's law day and night)
- Galatians 5:22-23 (fruit of the Spirit)
- Matthew 21:18-22 (Jesus cursing the fig tree)
- John 10:27 (My sheep hear my voice, and I know them)
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (pray without ceasing)
- Hebrews 9:27 (appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment)

Stories:

- Personal anecdote about VBS week creating heightened spiritual focus that should be the normal Christian experience
- Illustration of a busy New York sidewalk with people flowing one direction while Christians struggle upstream against the world's current
- The drowning man rescued by a lifeguard claiming to be like a famous swimmer—illustrating the absurdity of taking credit for our salvation
- Reference to son's Spider-Man enthusiasm and how genuine love responds to children's excitement
- Quote from C.S. Lewis's "The Screwtape Letters" about how modern people are influenced by jargon rather than argument, treating doctrines as trendy or outdated rather than true or false
- Imagery of a withering tree desperately in need of water compared to the spiritual state of the ungodly
- The fig tree without figs as an example of fruitlessness, even out of season
- Comparison of a rootless tree facing a tempest to the ungodly facing God's judgment
- Illustration of someone walking down a path that crumbles beneath their feet at judgment, referencing Jonathan Edwards' "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

Psalm 1 – Week 1 – Two Ways to Walk – Bible Study Helps

Discipleship Questions

The sermon describes a progression from walking to standing to sitting in relation to sin. In what areas of your life have you found yourself becoming too comfortable or 'sitting' with ungodly influences?

When making everyday decisions, do you genuinely consult God's Word first, or do you default to secular wisdom and worldly counsel? What would it look like to truly walk in godly counsel in your daily routine?

The passage warns against 'halting between two opinions' like the Israelites in Elijah's time. In what ways might you be standing on the fence between following God wholeheartedly and conforming to the world?

How does the warning against scorning others challenge your attitude toward unbelievers or those caught in sin? Do you approach them with pride or with humble recognition that you were once in the same position?

The sermon asks what naturally delights you during quiet moments. If someone examined your thoughts throughout the day, would they conclude that your delight is truly in God's law, or in other pursuits?

What does it mean practically to meditate on God's Word day and night, and how does this differ from the worldly concept of meditation that has infiltrated Christian thinking?

The righteous person is compared to a tree planted by water that bears fruit even out of season. What fruit of the Spirit is most lacking in your life, and what does this reveal about your proximity to the Source?

The sermon describes the ungodly as chaff blown by every wind of doctrine, believing things are 'contemporary' or 'strong' rather than true. How have you seen this pattern in modern culture, and how can you guard against it in your own thinking?

Jesus cursed the fig tree that bore no fruit. If Christ examined your life today, would He find the fruit He expects, or would He find mere leaves and religious appearance without substance?

The closing challenge asks you to identify one specific person walking in the way of the ungodly. Who is that person, and what concrete step will you take this week to point them toward Christ?

Small Group Guide:

Psalm 1 - The Way of the Righteous

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word and to help each person honestly examine their walk with Him.

Ice Breaker

Share a time when you received really good advice that changed your life. Who gave it to you, and why did you listen to them?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **The Blessing of Avoiding Ungodly Counsel** - The righteous person doesn't walk in the counsel of the ungodly, stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of the scornful.
 2. **Progression of Sin** - Notice the movement from walking (casual) to standing (halting) to sitting (comfortable) - showing how we can become increasingly comfortable with sin.
 3. **Delight in God's Word** - The righteous person's delight is in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night.
 4. **The Tree Metaphor** - Believers are like trees planted by rivers of water - rooted, stable, and fruit-bearing.
 5. **The Peril of the Ungodly** - Those without God are like chaff - rootless, unstable, and unable to stand in judgment.
-

Discussion Questions

Section 1: Walking, Standing, Sitting (Verses 1-2)

1. The Counsel We Follow

- What are the most common sources of advice or counsel in your daily life? (Social media, podcasts, friends, family, news, etc.)
- How often do you actually consult Scripture when making everyday decisions versus just the "big" decisions?
- Share an example of when you followed worldly counsel instead of biblical wisdom. What was the result?

Psalm 1 – Week 1 – Two Ways to Walk – Bible Study Helps

2. The Progression of Compromise

- The sermon described moving from "walking" to "standing" to "sitting" with sin. Can you identify this progression in your own life or in someone you know?
- What does it look like practically to "stand in the way of sinners"? How is that different from actively going against the flow?
- Why is it dangerous to simply stand still spiritually while the world moves further from God?

3. The Scornful Attitude

- Have you ever caught yourself looking down on "worldly" people with a scornful attitude rather than compassion?
- How can we maintain biblical convictions without becoming prideful or judgmental toward the lost?
- What does it mean that "the vilest sinner who ever lived is no different than you were whenever you weren't saved"?

Section 2: Delight and Meditation (Verse 2)

4. What Delights You?

- Be honest: When your mind wanders during quiet moments, where does it typically go? (Hobbies, entertainment, worries, people, God's Word?)
- On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your current delight in God's Word? What evidence supports that rating?
- What's the difference between reading the Bible out of obligation versus reading it with delight?

5. Meditation vs. Meditation

- How has the world distorted the concept of meditation? What is biblical meditation?
- What does it practically look like to "meditate day and night" on God's Word while maintaining work, family, and other responsibilities?
- Share a time when a Bible verse came to mind at just the right moment. How did that happen? Had you memorized it?

6. Writing on the Heart

- Discuss the concept of "writing God's law on the table of your heart" (Proverbs 3:3). What does this mean practically?
- How can we move Scripture from our heads to our hearts?

Section 3: The Tree and Its Fruit (Verse 3)

7. Planted by the Water

Psalm 1 – Week 1 – Two Ways to Walk – Bible Study Helps

- What does it mean to be "planted by rivers of water"? How does this contrast with trying to survive spiritually in a desert?
- How have you experienced God as your source of spiritual nourishment?
- The sermon mentioned that Jesus expected fruit from the fig tree even out of season. What does this say about our responsibility to bear fruit consistently?

8. Examining Our Fruit

- Review the fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23 (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance). Which of these is most evident in your life right now?
- Which fruit is most lacking? What might that reveal about your current walk with God?
- How can the group help you cultivate the fruit that's lacking?

Section 4: The Peril of the Ungodly (Verses 4-6)

9. Chaff in the Wind

- The ungodly are compared to chaff - worthless, rootless, blown by every wind. How do you see this in our culture today?
- The Screwtape Letters quote described people having "a dozen incompatible philosophies dancing about together inside his head." Why is this so common today?
- How can we help people who are "tossed by every wind of doctrine" find stability in Christ?

10. Standing in Judgment

- Does the reality that "the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment" motivate you toward evangelism? Why or why not?
- The sermon asked: "Do we act like the unsaved people in our lives will be facing God's judgment without his help?" How would you answer this?
- What keeps us from taking the lostness of people more seriously?

Reflection Questions from the Sermon

Take 5-10 minutes of silence for personal reflection. Have each person write down their answers to these questions:

1. **Which of the three postures (walking, standing, sitting) is hardest for you to avoid right now?** What is standing in the way of you accomplishing this purpose?
 2. **Who is one specific person in your life who is walking in the way of the ungodly?** What's one step you can take this week to point them toward the way of the righteous?
-

Practical Applications

Individual Commitments

Have each person choose at least one action step for this week:

- **Audit Your Counsel:** Track where you get advice/input for 3 days. Write down every source (podcasts, social media, friends, Bible, etc.). Evaluate: Are ungodly voices drowning out God's voice?
- **Meditation Practice:** Choose one verse from Psalm 1 to memorize this week. Write it on a card and review it morning, noon, and night. Journal about what God shows you.
- **Delight Assessment:** Each day, note the first thing your mind goes to during idle moments. Ask God to increase your delight in His Word.
- **Fruit Inspection:** Ask a trusted friend or family member which fruit of the Spirit they see most in your life and which they see least. Receive this feedback humbly.
- **Evangelism Action:** Reach out to the person you identified in question 2 above. Take one concrete step this week (coffee, text, invitation to church, sharing your testimony, etc.).

Group Commitments

- **Accountability Partners:** Pair up and commit to checking in mid-week about your action steps.
- **Prayer Focus:** Spend time praying specifically for the lost people each group member identified. Keep a list and pray for them weekly.
- **Scripture Memory:** Memorize Psalm 1 together as a group over the next month (2 verses every other week).

Closing Exercise: Psalm 1 Prayer

Read through Psalm 1 together one more time, pausing after each verse to pray:

- **Verse 1:** Confess areas where you've walked in ungodly counsel, stood in the way of sinners, or sat with the scornful. Ask for God's strength to avoid these.
 - **Verse 2:** Ask God to increase your delight in His Word and help you meditate on it day and night.
 - **Verse 3:** Thank God for being your source of life and ask Him to make you fruitful for His kingdom.
 - **Verses 4-5:** Pray for specific unsaved friends and family members by name, that they would not perish but come to Christ.
 - **Verse 6:** Thank God that He knows you personally and that your way is secure in Him.
-

Before Next Week

- Read Psalm 1 every day this week
 - Complete your chosen action step
 - Be prepared to share what God taught you through this psalm
-

Additional Resources

- **For Further Study:** Read "The Screwtape Letters" by C.S. Lewis
 - **Worship Songs:** "I Want to Be Like a Tree" (VBS song mentioned); "It Is Well with My Soul"
 - **Memory Verse:** Psalm 1:1-2 or Joshua 1:8
-

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." - Psalm 1:1-2

5-Day Devotional: Walking in the Way of the Righteous

Day 1: Choosing Your Counsel

Reading: Psalm 1:1-2; Proverbs 3:5-8

Devotional: The blessed life begins not with what we pursue, but with what we avoid. Walking, standing, and sitting represent a dangerous progression toward spiritual complacency. Notice how casual encounters with ungodly counsel can lead to comfortable compromise. The challenge isn't just the big decisions where we naturally seek God—it's the mundane moments when our default thoughts reveal what truly counsels our hearts.

Where does your mind drift during quiet moments? What voices influence your everyday choices? The righteous person doesn't merely avoid evil; they actively delight in God's Word, meditating on it day and night. This isn't burdensome obligation—it's joyful relationship. Today, examine what naturally pulls your attention. Is it a hobby, a worry, a relationship? Ask God to help you find greater delight in His truth than in anything else. Let Scripture become your first thought, not your last resort.

Day 2: The Heart That Keeps His Word

Reading: Joshua 1:6-9; Jeremiah 17:9-10

Devotional: God told Joshua that the Book of the Law should not depart from his mouth—not because he should literally hold it there, but because it should overflow from a heart saturated with truth. When Scripture is written on the table of our hearts, it flows naturally into our speech, decisions, and actions.

Your spiritual heart, like your physical heart, is central to everything. Without it, nothing else functions properly. What's written on your heart determines the trajectory of your life. Is it God's law, bringing life and direction? Or has dust settled there, leaving you with the deceitfulness Jeremiah warns about?

Success in God's economy isn't measured by worldly achievement but by obedient meditation on His Word. When you hide God's Word in your heart, you're preparing for battles before they arrive. Today, memorize one verse that addresses a current struggle. Write it down. Speak it aloud. Let it become so familiar that it's your reflex response to temptation.

Day 3: Rooted by Living Water

Reading: Psalm 1:3; John 4:13-14; Matthew 21:18-22

Devotional: A tree planted by rivers of water never strains for its needs—they're constantly at hand. This is the picture of a believer rooted in Christ, the fountain of living water. Deep roots mean stability when storms come and fruitfulness even in difficult seasons.

Jesus expected fruit from the fig tree even out of season. This wasn't unreasonable—it was the natural expectation for a tree with access to everything it needed. Similarly, when we're connected to Christ, bearing fruit isn't optional or seasonal; it's the evidence of genuine life.

The fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance—should characterize our lives consistently. People should recognize us not by our words alone but by visible evidence of God's transforming work. The world is desperately thirsty, withering away without the living water only Christ provides.

Examine your life: What fruit is visible? Where are you straining instead of resting in God's provision? Today, identify one area where you're trying to manufacture fruit through effort rather than abiding in Him.

Day 4: The Peril of the Rootless

Reading: Psalm 1:4-5; Ephesians 4:14; Hebrews 9:27

Devotional: "The ungodly are not so." Everything promised to the righteous is negated for those without God. They're like chaff—worthless husks tossed by every wind, with no substance, no roots, no stability. They chase whatever is new or pleasing rather than what is true.

Modern culture has trained people to evaluate ideas not as true or false, but as contemporary or outdated, practical or academic. Without absolute truth, people become philosophical chaff, blown about by changing opinions and cultural trends. How tragic to face judgment like a rootless tree before a tempest—utterly unable to stand.

This reality should break our hearts and mobilize our mission. The unsaved people in your life will face God's judgment without His help. Do you live like you believe this? Do your priorities reflect the urgency of their condition?

God is not willing that any should perish. He extends time and breath for one purpose: to seek and save the lost. Today, write down one specific person walking in the way of the ungodly. What is one step you can take this week to point them toward Christ? Don't delay—their path is perishing beneath their feet.

Day 5: Known by the Lord

Reading: Psalm 1:6; John 10:27-30

Devotional: "The Lord knows the way of the righteous." In an unfathomably vast universe, the Creator of all things chooses to know you personally. Not just know about you—He knows you. He formed you, sustains you, and intimately understands your path.

Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Notice: He knows them. The God who holds galaxies together cares about the details of your life. This isn't sentimental theology; it's astounding reality. The universe may be impersonal, but God is compassion personified.

The way of the ungodly perishes—not because God delights in destruction, but because any path apart from Him leads to ruin. Their entire way crumbles beneath them. But those who walk in righteousness? God knows their way. He guards it, guides it, and guarantees its end.

Never get over this privilege: the Ancient of Days knows you by name. You're not lost in the crowd, not forgotten in the chaos. Today, thank God specifically for knowing you. Then live like someone known, loved, and called by the King of the universe. Walk confidently in the way of the righteous, rooted in His love, bearing fruit for His glory.