



THIS YEAR'S PRESCRIPTION FOR HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY

If we want to succeed in 2020, we need to pay attention to Psalm 1 where, in just six short verses, we learn the secret of the kind of life God blesses. As we study this Psalm, we will discover that this kind of happiness is not related to our circumstances but to the way we live and the choices we make. Blessings come not only from what we do, but also from what we don't do. We must avoid certain things as well as certain people and certain situations.

Moreover, this kind of happiness is attainable by all: the poor and the unknown, as well as the rich and those who are trumpeted by fame.

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.” (Psalm 1:1-3)

The way of the righteous: Psalm 1 surprises many people because it begins not with the positive, but with a negative. The blessing begins with **what the righteous person does not do**.

He does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, of the ungodly. With all the advice that comes to us, from so many different sources, the righteous man knows how to stay away from and *discern* the counsel of the ungodly. Many fail at this point and, when hearing advice or theories, do not take the time to consider, “Is this godly or ungodly counsel?”

nor stand in the way of sinners: Sinners have made lifestyle choices, they follow a certain direction in their life, and the righteous man is not traveling in the same direction. For him, God's Word is always the best counselor: “*Your testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.*” (Psalm 119:24) He knows this less-travelled road leads to blessings and happiness. “*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.*” (Matthew 7:13)

The righteous can have the confidence of Psalm 16:11: “*You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*”

nor sit in the seat of the scornful: it means to have close, intimate, long-term fellowship with those who openly reject the Lord and mock the things of God. The righteous man will not sit with them, he is not interested in their conversations and way of life!

Now we come to the positive side of the ledger: **What the righteous man does**.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. The word “delight” means to take great pleasure in. It has the idea of a consuming passion that controls your life. Everyone “delights” in something. Some people delight in food. Others delight in a job or a hobby or a career. Many people delight in money or the things money can buy. And some delight in

evil pleasures and wrong desires. But the righteous man finds his delight in the Word of God and in communion with Him. He hungers for those times. Mark this well: your “delight” determines your direction.

The righteous man *ponders* the Word of God. He is serious about it. He does not just hear it and forget it; he digests it thoroughly, he applies it to his everyday life, he lives it. Many are lacking because they only *read* and do not *meditate*. The righteous man only has God’s Word on his mind two times a day: day and night. That about covers it all!

How the righteous man is blessed.

He shall be like a tree, planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

That blessedness is marked by stability and fruitfulness. The idea of a “tree planted” by streams of water speaks of a mighty tree with large branches and deep roots that go far down into the soil. A tree by a river has a continual source of water. It will never wither away, because it is always getting what it needs. It is strong and stable, sinking down deep roots and bearing fruit. The life of the righteous man is marked by strength and stability as it is abiding in a life-source.

And whatever he does shall prosper: It isn’t that the righteous man has a “Midas Touch,” and everything he does “turns to gold” and makes him rich and comfortable. Don’t jump to the conclusion that prosperity refers only or mainly to material success (though that is not excluded). But in his life, God brings forth something good and wonderful out of everything, even tough circumstances.

No matter what happens, they find strength for the day and hope in the midst of the hardest difficulties. They bring forth godly fruit in good times and bad times. Finding constant nourishment therein, they can face whatever life throws at them.

(to be followed)