

SONGS FOR ALL SEASONS FROM THE PSALMS

A Song of Single-Mindedness

Psalm 1



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Among all the books of antiquity, none has touched the human heart more profoundly than the *Psalms*. The title in the Hebrew Bible is *Tehillim*, which means “praises.” This title clearly reflects the prevailing theme of 150 inspired songs. With intense passion, the psalmists composed lyrics that reflect the full spectrum of emotions . . . from the soaring heights of ecstasy to the dregs of despair and grief. From the joys of forgiveness, gratitude, celebration, and triumph to the opposite extremes of shame, fear, disappointment, and defeat. Amazingly, there is a psalm for nearly every mood and circumstance. Small wonder the psalms have found lodging in the lives of peasants and kings, patriots and traitors, presidents and prisoners, scholars and children, sinners and saints.

The first psalm extols the virtues of single-mindedness by emphasizing the danger of compromise. The godly life is placed in bold contrast to the ungodly . . . one leading to true happiness and the other to tragic destruction. Single-mindedness keeps the believer on the right track.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. Our Age-Old Struggle

Before we plunge into the psalm, let's understand that it addresses one of our longtime battles in life: *our tendency to compromise with wrong*, which is seldom a quick plunge. More often, it's a slow, quiet, unnoticeable erosion. So what's the solution? To remain single-minded, focused. To refuse the tendency to rationalize and overlook even the first seeds of sin that drop into the soil of our lives.

As we open the Lord's songbook, a wonderful word greets us: *blessed*. “How blessed is the man” begins the lyric in Psalm 1. This simple word invites us into the book of Psalms and lays out the only two paths we can take in life: the path of righteousness or the path of wickedness.



Quotable

*We are
to remain
God-centered
and God-focused.*

*He is to
remain the hub
of our hearts.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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2. The Life of the Godly (Psalm 1:1–3)

As we journey into this wisdom psalm, we discover that it contrasts the godly (blessed) and the ungodly (wicked). The *godly* are those who live in right relationship with God through faith. The godly love the Lord and His way and have made an unswerving commitment to live by God's Word. The *ungodly*, or "wicked," on the other hand, reject the Lord and His righteous decrees and live as if God didn't exist at all.

In verse 1, the psalmist began by explaining that God blesses the godly for what they *don't* do: they don't walk in wicked counsel, stand with sinners, or sit with scoffers. In these three lines, the psalmist used a form of parallelism that intensifies the level of involvement with the ungodly, from casual involvement to actively conspiring with the ungodly. God blesses the godly for steering clear of even casual involvement with the wicked.

In verse 2, the psalmist emphasized two elements of the godly life: the godly delight in God's Law and meditate on it at all times. The godly flood their minds with the living words of Scripture; they read, memorize, and apply God's Word each day.

In verse 3, the psalmist likened the godly to a flourishing tree with roots digging down into the soil of Scripture, nourished by a thriving relationship with God. Even in old age, the godly person who has invested his or her life in what is eternal will still bear fruit for God.

3. The Life of the Ungodly (Psalm 1:4–6)

The last half of Psalm 1 paints the grim portrait of the life lived apart from God. The ungodly are like chaff with no roots, no value, no eternal contribution (Psalm 1:4). They float from one fleeting pursuit to another and eventually blow away.

The ungodly may have some material success, but they won't experience genuine, lasting fulfillment. And those who turn their backs on God will face judgment in the life hereafter.



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A CLOSER LOOK

A Godly Mind-set

The descent into fruitlessness doesn't happen all at once. It takes place slowly, one step and one decision at a time. Watch the progression in Psalm 1. Walking day after day in wicked patterns will lead to standing still. And the longer we stand for sin in our lives, the more useless we'll become—like a dried up vine in parched soil. On the other hand, we can live a thriving, fruitful life by following God's ways. And it all begins in our minds. As we read, study, pray, and memorize God's Word, He will begin to renew our minds. As we sink our roots down deep in biblical soil, our actions and attitudes will begin to bear evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives. Like a strong oak tree, we will be prepared to withstand the trials and temptations that will come our way.



LET'S LIVE IT

What is the message of Psalm 1 in a nutshell? *Multiplied happiness comes from being single-mindedly committed to the Lord.* Genuine happiness comes from wise, God-centered living. Have you been on a lifelong search for happiness? Listen to the psalmist. He has pointed all of us to God's Word to find the key to a blessed life. Following God's plan leads to blessedness, no matter the circumstances.

Which of your attitudes, priorities, actions, or feelings do not honor the Lord? How much time do you spend meditating on God's Word?



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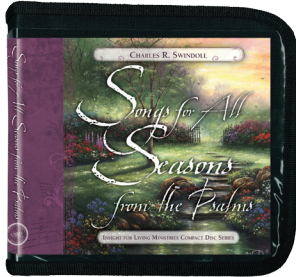
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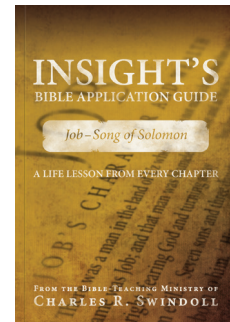
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