

CALL OUT

WEEK 1

A STUDY OF THE PSALMS

CLOSE PROXIMITY

"Driver of the Century," Mario Andretti, said of racing at Daytona, "The most important thing at Daytona is, are you going to have friends willing to work with you during the race as far as drafting? You've got to have friends out there. You can't do it alone. You form those relationships as the race moves along."

NASCAR cars race at 200 miles an hour while sometimes only inches apart. Drivers use one another to draft, where one car follows closely to another to block the wind. Whether it's an auto race or the race of life, you can't do it alone and so much depends on those with whom you're surrounding yourself.

In today's study, we'll see the value of keeping God's Word and godly counsel close by. More than that, Psalm 1 provides a gateway to the rest of the *Psalms*. With each psalm we study over the next 12-weeks, we could look back at Psalm 1 and examine the kind of person I'm going to be.

As much as any other passage, Psalm 1 challenges us to respond. And as we look at every other passage, Psalm 1 shows us the results of what we hold close.

**Through Christ, when
God looks at us, he
doesn't see our sin. He
sees the righteousness
of Christ.**

PSALM 1

¹ Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. ⁴ The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; ⁶ for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

"I was blind, I was dead, I had failed... I've been blessed beyond all measure." The result for those who walk "the way of the righteous" is blessing. However, we don't just experience blessing at the end of the path, we begin experiencing it the moment we turn to the Lord and begin our Christian journey.

Scan the QR code and listen to Rend Collective's, *Counting Every Blessing*. As you listen to the lyrics, reflect on what God has done as you count your blessings.



DISCUSSION

Think about your average day over the Summer. If everyday were just like that day, would you be better or worse than you are right now?

1. What is the first promise given in this Psalm? To whom is it given? (1a)

2. What 2 things are true of the blessed person? (2)

3. What will happen to the ungodly at God's judgment? (5)

4. How does the godly life resemble the tree described in this psalm?

5. How does an ungodly life resemble chaff described in this psalm?

6. How has the world influenced your thoughts, practices, or values? What would change if those areas were more influenced by God's Word?

Which path are you walking and where is it leading? If you have any questions about your relationship with the Lord, don't wait, talk to your Coach today.

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

CALL OUT

WEEK 1

A STUDY OF THE PSALMS

STUDY NOTES

THE FORK

Famed baseball player, manager, and coach, Yogi Berra, was often better known for his misspoken proverbs than anything he accomplished on the field. One such “Yogi-ism” offered the sage advice, “When you come to a fork in the road, take it.”

We all know that a “fork in the road” isn’t referring to silverware, it’s a choice—this way or that way. While not all choices are completely binary (one or the other), our world is currently taking black and white truth and trying to make it gray. Commonly understood words and phrases are being redefined to mean something entirely different—and that always spells danger.

In this sea of undefined, and often confusing, reality you are being asked to discover who you are and find your life’s purpose. How on earth is anyone capable of doing that when even the most basic and simple agreed upon truths are being called into question?

Today’s passage offers wisdom to navigate the world in which we live. Although short, Psalm 1 uses terms, ideas, and promises that will be discussed in *much* greater detail as we continue our study. No matter where you are in your walk with God, this psalm meets you right there. It presents a fork in the road of life. Then it looks ahead, telling us where each road leads, enabling us to make a wise choice.

CALL OUT TO GOD

As we examine the fork in the road, we see that the end of one path leads to one who is **blessed**. This is not #Blessed, like what used to be all over social media. That “blessing” aimed at friends, food, and fun is simply aiming too small. The blessed person in the Psalms is one who lives untarnished, secure, and prosperous in every step of life and into eternity. That kind of blessing is to experience peace and joy in a way that cannot be tasted apart from calling out to the One who Created us to long for such goodness and satisfaction.

So how do we get there? The Psalmist begins telling us how *not* to get there—**not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers**. Like the Andretti quote in the introduction, a person wins or loses by who is around them. Surround yourself with losers, and you won’t fair much better. As one speaker famously said, “Show me your friends and I’ll show you your future.”

So what’s the future for wicked people? They **are like chaff** [unusable and unwanted part of grain

production] **that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.** Basically, if you want a meaningless life that ends in condemnation, surround yourself with wicked, sinners, and scoffers—people who mock the Lord and his promises. These people may not be “bad” according to our standards, but they aren’t “righteous” according to God’s standard.

The way of the righteous is exactly the opposite. First, notice the heart—**his delight is in the law of the Lord**. Second, notice his focus—**on his law he meditates day and night**. Third, notice the result—**He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.**

CALL OUT TO GOD RATHER THAN PURSUE SIN

At the end of both paths, **the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish**. Obviously, the Lord “knows” both “ways.” That must mean the word “know” means more than factual knowledge. It carries the idea of choosing and caring based on a special *personal* relationship. “*The Lord knows those who are his*” (2 Timothy 2:19). “*I know my own...As the Father knows me and I know the Father* (John 10:14–15). Christ tells the lost, “*I never knew you*” (Matthew 7:23).

For you and I, it’s this relational “knowing” that is found through a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. When we understand our sin and that our pathway leads to destruction, God offers us another way. We can call out to him for salvation (Romans 10:9–10, 13). We can surrender to our Savior, knowing there is no hope apart from him. Like the Father in Luke 15:11–32, God wants to clean us up, to restore us to who he created us to be. Through Christ, when God looks at us, he doesn’t see our sin. He sees the righteousness of Christ.

The path of the righteous isn’t walked by people who are “good enough.” It isn’t about doing the right thing. Too many people grow up knowing *about* the gospel, *about* God, *about* Christ, etc. People on the path to destruction know a lot *about* these things. The pathway of the righteous begins with *receiving* these things.

Has there been a time that you called out to God—a time when you repented of your sin? Why not today? Get off the path that you know isn’t working and get on the path leading to eternal blessing.