

The Path of Spiritual Maturity

Psalm 1

MPS The life blessed by God becomes more like Jesus in His righteousness.

OBJ Every person should live under God's blessing to become more like Jesus because of four promises

READ Psalm 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; 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 that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. Psalm 1

How many of you would say, "2020 as my best year for spiritual growth and maturity ever"? How many of you would say, "2020 as my best year for *anything*?" I don't think many people would dare say 2020 was a "best year" for anything. As I consider all that is taking place in the world today, all the headache, heartache, and hurt, I can quickly begin to wonder, "where do we go from here?"

And yet, as Christians, we recognize that no amount nor type of trial nor test are outside of God's power to bring good to our lives. God works to bring glory through our lives when we look to Him. Psalm 1 makes abundantly clear, there are two kinds of people in this world; one, those who live under God's blessing; and two, those who do not. **Have you considered which one describes you? Have you considered which one you desire?**

There may remain some uncertainty about "where we go from here" in terms of direction, but how we move forward has no uncertainty to it. The aim of the Christian life remains regardless of what is taking place around us; we are called by God in salvation to become like His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is spiritual maturity. And the path of spiritual maturity has not changed; we are made into the likeness of Jesus Christ as the presence, work and power of God rest upon us. This is His blessing for us.

TRANS I want us to see today the path that the Psalmist sets forth for us and to know this:

The life blessed by God becomes more like Jesus in His righteousness.

The Psalmist does NOT attempt to deal with every issue or problem of life. But at the time of year when we make resolutions by which we aim to improve our life (and rightfully so), and in a year when this is needed more than likely any other time in any of our lives, we must address this one main issue for all of life. **Will you walk with God or will you live isolated from and neglecting God?**

The Psalmist begins, "Blessed is the man..." Blessed means to be favored in every way. No matter the situation, the area of life or the circumstance, blessing brings the favor of God to bear on life. Without this blessing, there is no growth, no maturity, and no transformation. To describe the blessing the Psalmist employs contrast between what it is and what it is not in three main areas of life; our primary influences, our practices and patterns by which we live, and the way we treat others in life.

First, consider the primary influences; "...walks not in the counsel of the wicked..." **Walk refers to the way a person lives, one's whole life.** The warning against living in such a way that is primarily influenced by worldly wisdom, human rationale, advice that fails or neglects to consider God's wisdom and give it first priority of influence in life. The person who wants to live under God's blessing doesn't ask first the question of "what makes sense?" Rather, they ask "what does God's Word say?" The way you walk in life will be determined by what you intentionally put into your life and what you unintentionally put up with in your life. **The person who wants to live under God's blessing walks by faith in God's wisdom by refusing to walk in the counsel of wickedness.**



APPL Take time to reflect and consider, “**what influences are directing, discerning or determining the way I think, relate to my spouse or kids, the live my life?**” Where your life does not align with God’s Word, you can know you are not walking in God’s counsel for your life.

Second, consider the practices and patterns of life: “...*does not stand in the way of sinners...*” **Stand means to stay in one place, to remain.** Stand determines perseverance, what you do or where you turn when trouble, trials or tests come. “*The way of sinners*” is opposed to God’s way, determined by sin and self-preference. Yes, all people sin and fall short of the glory of God. But this phrase references how we continually choose to disobey God, whether in His will or way, by neglecting or rebelling against His Word.

Paul counsels Christians to stand against the way that opposes God by standing in Jesus. We stand in Jesus when we stand on the finished work of Jesus Christ. (Gal 5:1) We stand in Jesus when we clothe ourselves in His spiritual armor. (Eph 6:13) And, we stand in Jesus when we give ourselves fully to His work in our lives. (1 Cor 15:58)

“*Stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*” **1 Corinthians 15:58**

“*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.*”

Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” **Galatians 5:1**

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. **Ephesians 6:13**

Christians who walk with God persevere by standing on God’s Word by faith in obedience.

APPL Are there any areas of your life where you are failing to persevere against temptation, trials or tests that you encounter? As Holy Spirit brings conviction to you, ask yourself how you are neglecting and rebelling against God’s Word that is causing you to fail to stand.

Third, consider the way we relate to other people in life: “...*does not sit in the seat of scoffers...*” “Seat” represents a place or source of strength and power, and a position of influence. The position the Psalmist refers to holds influence over others to steer or direct them in a certain way. This may be a formal place, such as one recognized in the public square, or more of a private place, such as the way in which a person can position themselves to look upon others.

I want you to ask yourself two questions.

1) “**Where is the seat from which I draw my strength?**” Now this may sound strange at first, but Christian, look to God’s Word for the answer. We are seated with Christ in the heavenly places, at the right hand of God. (Eph 2:5-6)

“*even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—*

and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” **Ephesians 2:5-6**

Christians draw strength from the only place that sustains us, the throne of God where we are seated with Jesus Christ.

2) “**Where am I seated?**” Are you sharing the strength and power that you have IN Christ with others? The power you share reveals the strength you live from! You will not share what you do not trust. **Sharing Christ as the power of our life, no matter what rages around us, draws from Him for our strength to stand!**

HOW you walk (live) and whether you stand (persevere) will always be determined by where you are seated (draw strength as your source).

The Psalmist’s contrasts show what the person who is blessed does NOT do, and in turn, DOES! The Psalmist meditated on the law and loved it because through it He knew the Lord. **Blessing flows through an ever-increasing, all-consuming, day-by-day, moment-by-moment, overflow of walking with Jesus in His Word.**



Reading, studying, memorizing and meditating on God's Word is THE single greatest practice, discipline, a Christian can do. The Psalmist outlines four promises of God's blessing when we love the Lord more completely through His Word.

OBJ Four promises of God's blessing for your life to become more like Jesus.

1. God's blessing means provision. "He is like a tree planted by streams of living water"

The Psalmist's imagery here is one of never-ending provision for all the demands of life, just as the river provides the full necessity of life for the tree. Jesus tells the woman at the well (John 4) that He is the living water, from which when one drinks will never thirst again. When your soul finds rest in Jesus, it finds the only one that completely satisfies every longing. This is not to say that we will not have need in this life. **This is to say that in every need, Jesus will show himself faithful and true to meet our needs.**

APPL Are you living out of the eternal well of living water?

2. God's blessing means our life is productive. "that yields its fruit in its season"

The life planted deeply and sourced with full provision always produces fruit. I never cease to be amazed at how expensive and consuming sin really is in life. Sin makes all things futile and meaningless. Ecclesiastes reminds us of this, that the wisest and richest man in the history of all mankind could only look at a life fully consumed with self and label it 'meaningless'. **Nothing provides lasting meaning without God's hand of blessing touching it. When God blesses, everything produces its fruit in season.**

Few things bring meaning to life like productivity. But in a year like 2020, productivity can seem faint and fleeting, non-existent. And this is a most important lesson for us to learn: Only God is the One who causes the growth, who brings the harvest. ^{1Cor3:6-7} Nothing says "God I trust you" like gratitude with what you have and rest from what you do. Every season is NOT THE season of fruit, but EVERY season has a work / labor so that fruit gets produced in HARVEST season. The spiritual harvest is not always perceived as valuable in this world, but it is NEVER without worthless in God's eyes! **When God blesses your life, all you do serves to produce what you need when you need for all your needs and much for the needs of others.**

APPL An Invitation to Resolution **Are you investing your life in the labor through which God can bring the harvest?** 2020 can either be a total waste for you, or it can become a year of labor unto harvest in you. I resolve NOT to waste one second, one lesson, one hardship, one headache, or one heartache; I resolve not to allow anything that occurred in my life in 2020 to get wasted, but for it all to bring glory to God. I invite you to join me in this resolution.

3. God's blessing means we can persevere. "and its leaf does not wither."

God's blessing comes even in test and trial, hardship and suffering. How powerful to know that God sustains us in every season. Persevering in life by walking with Jesus means remaining in His Word. The ONLY thing you can put in your life on this earth and KNOW that it will not wither or fade away is God's Word; *the word of our God will stand forever.* (Isa 40:8) When you feel weakest, do not run to the places of the world, to the wisdom and rationale of the world, don't even run to the world. Your Social Media Newsfeed will NEVER provide the strength you need to accomplish God's purpose for your life! **Run to the only place where eternal and divine strength and power resides, where you are already seated, in Jesus Christ! Strength and power to persevere comes from a regular consumption of God's Word.**

APPL Do you have a plan remain in God's Word this year?

4. God's blessing means prosperity. "In all that he does, he prospers."

Prosperity seems a tricky thing today. We don't use the word much because so many overuse it in wrong ways. The truth of the matter is simply this, God's will is to prosper you. **God's blessing means prosperity in all that you do.**

"Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established." **Prov 16:3**



Prosperity formed God's promise for His people before any false prophet began to use it as a message. Our problem is that we have a broken understanding of success. We need not fear prosperity as long as we recognize it as a benefit of God's blessing and not the result of our own doing. We faithfully recognize and receive God's blessing when we take what we have and steward it for God's glory by God's direction in order to produce greater glory for Him and good for others, and all while experiencing His abundant blessing in life. [Faithful stewardship is the ongoing recognition of God's blessing.](#)

Do not fear success. Rather, fear thinking and believing that success and prosperity were all because of you. This is how the wicked interpret prosperity. **The wicked do NOT recognize God's blessing** and are driven away like by the wind. The righteous recognize that all is from God's hand, and bless Him from the blessing they have received from Him.

Finally, let me close with this final, motivating truth. **One, simple, comprehensive statement describes the one who is blessed;** *"for the Lord knows the way of the righteous."* Friend, following Jesus may not be easy, and no one ever said it would be. But take comfort and find strength in this; God knows your way. He sees you and He cares. He is with you. God knows. [The reward of God's blessing is NOT that you get FROM God, but that you get God.](#)

[The life blessed by God becomes more like Jesus in His righteousness.](#)

CLOSE We need a hard reset on so many of our preconceptions and notions of following Jesus. We need a hard reset for the new year. [Are you ready to 'hold the button' to bring that hard reset in your life in this new year?](#)

