

Position Yourself

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Key Scripture

Psalm 1:1-3 (ESV) 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.

Sermon in One Sentence

To experience God's blessing and fruitfulness, we must intentionally position our lives in accordance with His divine counsel, not the world's.

Introduction

Have you ever noticed how some people seem to consistently thrive, not just materially, but in their spirit, character, and influence? They weather life's storms with grace, demonstrate remarkable resilience, and radiate a quiet confidence that transcends circumstances. It's almost as if they possess a secret formula for flourishing. Conversely, we've all witnessed those who seem to stumble from one difficulty to the next, perpetually unmoored, searching for stability and purpose, but rarely finding it. What distinguishes these two paths? Is it merely luck, genetic predisposition, or something more profound?

The Bible suggests it is often a matter of intentional positioning. Just as a plant needs the right soil, sunlight, and water to flourish, so too do our souls require specific spiritual environments and orientations to bear the fruit God desires. Many Christians spend their lives praying for blessings, fruitfulness, and prosperity, yet overlook the crucial preliminary step: positioning themselves correctly to receive and sustain those blessings.

Today, we dive into one of the most foundational passages in all of scripture, Psalm 1, to understand the dynamic relationship between our choices, our location, and God's blessings. It's a call to honest self-assessment and strategic alignment with God's will.

Historical & Biblical Context

Psalm 1 serves as the gateway to the entire Psalter, setting the stage for the rest of the 150 psalms. It presents two distinct paths, two types of humanity, and two ultimate destinies: the righteous and the wicked. The psalm was likely compiled and placed here by later editors to serve as an interpretive lens through which to read the subsequent psalms, many of which express the struggles, laments, and triumphs of the righteous in a fallen world. It contrasts the fleeting, chaff-like existence of the wicked with the deeply rooted, ever-fruitful life of the righteous.

Written at a time when the Israelites were often tempted to assimilate with surrounding, idol-worshipping cultures, Psalm 1 underscored the necessity of separation and devotion to God's Law (Torah). It's not merely a moralistic teaching but a profound insight into spiritual ecology. For us today, living in a similarly diverse and often antagonistic cultural landscape, Psalm 1 holds immense relevance, reminding us that true blessedness is found not in conformity to the world, but in intentional, joyous conformity to God's revealed truth. It teaches us that our choices of association, attention, and affection directly impact our spiritual health and ultimate prosperity.

Main Point I — Choose Your Company Wisely

Scripture: Psalm 1:1a 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.

The psalmist begins by painting a vivid picture of negative positioning, using a progression of verbs and nouns to illustrate a downward spiritual spiral. "Walks not in the counsel of the wicked" speaks to our active submission to ungodly advice, our willingness to let the world's wisdom dictate our steps. It's about the philosophies and ideologies that shape our worldview. Then, "nor stands in the way of sinners" suggests a lingering, a willingness to participate in ungodly practices, moving from merely listening to actively engaging. Finally, "nor sits in the seat of scoffers" depicts a settled, comfortable identification with those who mock God and His ways, a deep-seated contempt for reverence and truth. This progression—from walking, to standing, to sitting—shows increasing levels of immersion and identification.

To be blessed, we are called to *not* walk, stand, or sit in these positions. This isn't about isolation from humanity, but about critical discernment concerning our influences and associations. Who are the voices you permit to speak into your life? What kind of content are you consuming? With whom do you spend your leisure time? These choices, often seen as inconsequential, are profoundly formative. They shape our thinking, our desires, and ultimately, our destiny. Neglecting this crucial aspect of positioning is like a gardener planting a fruit tree in contaminated soil – no matter how much water or sun, it will struggle to thrive.

Main Point II — Delight in God's Revealed Truth

Scripture: Psalm 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Having explored what the blessed individual *doesn't* do, the psalmist now shifts to what he *does*. The counter-balance to avoiding ungodly influences is actively embracing God's truth. The word "delight" is crucial here; it's not a grudging obligation or a legalistic adherence, but a genuine pleasure and affection for God's "law" – which here refers to His entire revealed will and Word. This delight fuels a continuous engagement with Scripture: "on his law he meditates day and night." Meditation isn't merely quick reading; it's a deep, reflective chewing on God's Word, allowing it to sink into the mind and heart, transforming our thoughts and desires.

This deliberate choice to center our lives on God's Word is the active component of positioning ourselves for blessing. It means prioritizing Bible study, prayer, and worship. It means shaping our daily rhythms around seeking God's wisdom, much like a hungry person delights in a nourishing meal. When God's Word

becomes our chief delight and constant meditation, it acts as an anchor in a turbulent world, providing clarity, guidance, and spiritual nourishment. This inward saturation with divine truth inherently reorients our desires and discernment, protecting us from the allure of the world's fleeting promises.

Main Point III — Expect God's Fruitfulness and Prosperity

Scripture: Psalm 1:3 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.

The psalmist culminates with a beautiful, rich metaphor illustrating the outcome of proper positioning. The blessed person is compared to a "tree planted by streams of water." The imagery is deliberate: not a tree that merely *grows* near water, but one *planted* – signifying intentionality and permanence. This tree has a never-failing supply of life-giving water, ensuring deep roots and consistent nourishment. As a result, it "yields its fruit in its season" (a natural outpouring of life, not forced production) and "its leaf does not wither," indicating vibrant, enduring life even in harsh conditions. This speaks to spiritual resilience and unwavering vitality.

The concluding promise, "In all that he does, he prospers," is not a guarantee of material wealth or an easy life, but of *spiritual prosperity* and enduring well-being in the truest sense. It speaks to a life that fulfills its God-given purpose, bears lasting fruit for His glory, and enjoys a deep, abiding peace regardless of external circumstances. This is the promised blessing for those who faithfully position themselves away from the world's counsel and towards God's truth. It's God's covenant promise: right alignment brings right outcome.

Illustration

Consider the majestic Giant Sequoias of California. These towering giants can live for thousands of years, reaching immense heights and widths, making them amongst the largest living organisms on Earth. What's often overlooked, however, is their root system. Unlike many trees that have deep taproots, Sequoias have surprisingly shallow, wide-spreading roots, often only six to twelve feet deep. Yet, what gives them their incredible stability and ability to withstand massive winds and floods? It's not just the individual root, but how these roots intertwine and interlock with the root systems of other Sequoias in the grove. They support each other, creating an immense, collective foundation. Furthermore, they thrive in specific, unique environments – high altitudes with specific moisture and soil conditions. They didn't just *happen* to grow there; they are perfectly *positioned* for their incredible longevity and strength. Our spiritual lives are similar: our ability to endure, grow tall, and bear fruit is directly proportional to how we position ourselves – away from corrupting influences, intertwined with God's people, and deeply rooted in God's life-giving Word.

Practical Application

1. Curate Your Input: Honestly assess the "counsel of the wicked" in your life. This week, identify one source of ungodly influence (a TV show, a social media feed, a friendship, a type of music) and intentionally reduce or eliminate your exposure to it.

2. Prioritize God's Word: Make a concrete plan to meditate on God's Word. This could be committing to reading a Psalm each morning, memorizing a verse daily, or listening to a sermon podcast during your

commute. The goal is consistent, delightful engagement.

3. Seek Godly Accountability: Identify a mature Christian friend or mentor whom you can trust to speak biblical truth into your life. Arrange to meet with them regularly for prayer and counsel, intentionally positioning yourself under godly influence.

4. Reflect on Your "Streams": What are the life-giving "streams of water" in your life? Are you actively plugged into a vibrant church community? Are you regularly partaking in corporate worship and sacraments? Commit to deepening your involvement in one of these areas.

5. Journal Your Progress: Keep a simple journal this week, noting when you feel drawn away by ungodly influences and when you feel uplifted by God's Word. This awareness will sharpen your discernment and reinforce your commitment to proper positioning.

Discussion Questions

1. In Psalm 1:1, what's the difference between "walking in counsel," "standing in the way," and "sitting in the seat," and what does this progression teach us about how ungodly influences take root?
2. How does "delight" in God's law differ from merely "obeying" God's law? What role does delight play in our spiritual positioning?
3. What does it concretely look like for a 21st-century Christian to "meditate day and night" on God's law amidst the demands of modern life?
4. Psalm 1:3 promises that the righteous person "prosper." How do we reconcile this promise with the reality that Christians often face hardship and suffering? What kind of "prosperity" is the psalmist referring to?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Word, a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Grant us discerning hearts, that we may recognize and reject the deceptive counsel of the world. Inspire in us a true delight for Your law, that we might meditate upon it day and night, allowing it to transform our minds and hearts. Help us, by Your Holy Spirit, to intentionally position our lives in You, that we may be like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in every season for Your glory. Amen.

Benediction

Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.