

The Way to Happiness and Fulfillment Psalm 1*

Why does happiness in life seem so elusive? We can make the mistake in thinking that *happiness* is directly related to *happenings*. Perhaps one reason many people are unhappy is that, though they are busy pursuing happiness, they aren't sure what it is or where to really look for happiness. People who are free to pursue happiness will not find it if they don't know what it is, or if they chase after it where it isn't.

This first Psalm serves as the treasure map to guide us to the truly priceless and vast riches of happiness ('how blessed') that God gives us in His word. Will you seek God's treasures?

The way of life (1-3)

The happy person's path . . . (1)

The happy person's pursuit . . . (2)

The happy person's proximity . . . (3a)

The happy person's productivity . . . (3b)

The happy person's progress . . . (3c)

The happy person's prosperity . . . (3d)

The way of loss (4)

The parting of the ways (5-6)

Sustenance for Your Soul

Orientation to the Psalms

Most of the Psalms, as you know, were written by David, but not all. Some were written by his choir leaders in Jerusalem, and the names of Asaph, Jeduthun, Ethan, and others appearing in the Psalms are royal choirmasters. One or two were written by Moses, and one or two by King Solomon. There are several Psalms whose authors it is impossible to identify. The whole book is a collection that has been put together by the ancient Hebrews in order that we might understand what the people of God have gone through and how they found their way out.

Many of you may not know that the Psalms divide into five books which are similar in theme to the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy).

The first book of Psalms ends with Psalm 41 and echoes the theme of Genesis, an introduction to human life and a revelation of the needs of the human heart. It is the book of foundations.

The second book of Psalms begins with 42 and runs through Psalm 72. This corresponds to the book of Exodus. That is the book of redemption, the story of God's moving in human history to change and redeem people and save them from themselves.

The third book begins with Psalm 73 and goes through Psalm 89. It is like the book of Leviticus, the book in which Israel learned how to draw near to God, how to worship him through the provision God made for his people, the tabernacle.

Then Psalm 90 to Psalm 106 constitutes the fourth book which goes along with the book of Numbers, the book of wilderness wandering, of testing and failure.

Finally, the fifth book covers Psalm 107 to 150 and is like the book of Deuteronomy, the second law, i.e., the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which sets us free from the law of sin and death. It describes the way by which God finally accomplishes the redemption and sanctification of his people, the changing of human beings into the kind of men and women he originally designed.

—Ray Stedman, *Adventuring Through the Bible*

* These notes are prayerfully provided to aid, not replace, your personal study of God's Word.