

# THE PSALMS IN HUMAN LIFE

## PART 1

Philip Powell

### PSALM 1

Although the first song from this collection we are going to consider is ***Psalm 1***, it is not my intention to go through these songs in numerical order. The reason I would like to give some attention to this particular *Psalm*, is because it has so much in it which relates to the blessedness of human life. I believe the key to possessing a happy state in life and a settled spirit, lies in this *Psalm*.

An analytical study of the whole book of Songs will reveal that the first *Psalm* is what is known as a prologue to the whole book. This means that even though it is only short in its content, most of what is read in the *Psalms* is about people who are blessed or otherwise.

If we look closely at the *Psalm* it reveals the positive and the negative state of someone. By analysing the *Psalm* it soon becomes very clear that it is referring to two types of people, whose main characteristics are outlined for us.

Let us read this *Psalm* for presented here is a picture of two people. One is blessed, the other is not, and the reason why is clearly stated. Two comparisons are made, one positive the other negative. It clearly states the reason why one is blessed, and the other is not.

Let me say here that I believe that one is advantaged by being godly, and one is disadvantaged by being ungodly. This may not be reflected in the present, but will be in the future. The *Psalm* conveys to us that the way we live, talk and behave, has an effect on the physical and moral condition of our lives.

The song reveals that blessedness is the result of having done certain things, and at the same time not having done the opposite.

**Perowne** in his Commentary writes the first two verses as follows. *“Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the council of the wicked, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of scoffer. But in the law of Jehovah is his delight, and in His law doth he meditate day and night”*.

By looking at how this song is written I can see that if a person is to know what it is to be blessed, their passed action and their present behaviour has to come into the picture.

If we are in the habit of doing a certain thing, then it means we have done in the past what we are doing in the present. The habit of not walking in the council of the ungodly, or standing in the way of sinners, or sitting in the seat of the scornful means that my past behaviour has a bearing on my present condition. My past and present habit adds to my good. For as **Perowne** says: “This is not an exclamation, but the recognition of a fact”.

As we apply this *Psalm* to human life, it is clear that the outcome for the righteous is inevitable; if the *Psalm* is not applied the consequences will be unavoidable. If an apple is thrown upwards the outcome is a fact, it will come back down. The law of gravity demands it.

There are things which are inevitable, that are stated clearly in this song, in fact the whole *Psalm* is about what happens if certain things are done, and the inescapability of what will happen if they are not. With regard to the habit of doing the right thing, **A.F Kirkpatrick** says: *“The law of the Lord is his rule of conduct; it is no irksome restriction of his liberty, but the object of his love and constant study”*.

This *Psalm* is about the things that shape the way we are, what we do as an individual, and what our spirit, demeanour and attitude to life is. For me, true happiness is found in the will of God. The law is an expression of what the will of God is for man, and the purpose of the law of the Lord is to make us happy.

We shall now consider certain points, which I feel will be of benefit in applying this *Psalm* to our lives.

## 1. CHOOSING THE RIGHT COMPANY

I think it is vital to choose the right company; otherwise there is a danger of being influenced in a wrong way. There are instances in scripture of individuals who chose the wrong company, and the consequences were catastrophic. There was Samson, Ahab, Lot, Solomon, Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab, Pethahiah a Levite who married a foreign wife. To illustrate the point, I will use Samson, who chose the wrong company with whom to associate.

If we follow the Biblical biography of his life, it can be seen, as the story of his life unfolds, that he openly, and willingly with open eyes, entered into an association that was both detrimental and destructive.

His association led to involvement, involvement to compromise, and by compromising he lowered his guard which then weakened his moral stand. He opened himself up to the enemy who discovered the secret of his strength and then robbed him of it. The historical account of Samson can be read in the O.T. book of **Judges Chapters 13 to 16**.

On the positive side of choosing the right company, I would like us to think about Ruth, and the account of her life can be Read in O.T. Book of Ruth. It was her association with Naomi that influenced her to the good. Naomi was a godly woman. When Ruth was bereaved of her husband, Naomi told Ruth and her other daughter in law that they were free to go back to their families.

Let us read **Ruth 1 vs 12 to 18**

*12 Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons—*

*13 would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the*

*LORD's hand has gone out against me!"*

*14 At this they wept again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but Ruth clung to her.*

*15 "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her."*

*16 But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.*

*17 Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me."*

*18 When Naomi realised that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.*

Ruth was blessed and she prospered. It is always to ones own advantage to choose the right company.

In the **Acts of the Apostles** we read in **chapter 8 v 29** *“Then the Spirit said Unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot”*.

The N.I.V. says: **v 29** *The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it”*.

This is very sound advice that is given to Philip, for if we view this story in an allegorical way, we will see the chariot figuratively, as meaning: join or attach yourself to the right company and the outcome will be good.

## **2. CONTEMPLATING ON THE RIGHT COMMANDS**

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

**Psalm 19 v 7** *“The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.”*

It is believed that this reference to *“the law of the Lord”* is meaning the whole word of God, and not just the Ten Commandments. It is meditating on all that God says. Applying this to our own lives means that we are to accept unreservedly everything God’s word says because this will produce the right kind of result in us.

Paul saw the value of this even when in prison in Rome. He wrote to the **Philippians** a letter, and says in **chapter 4 verses 8 & 9** *“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you”*.

**Psalm 19 v 14** says: “*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my strength and my redeemer*”.

We do not require any further evidence regarding the benefits that arise from contemplating on God’s word. For if you think right, then you will act in accordance with what is good. However, we have to face up to the fact that very often our moods are affected by what we hear; we are also affected by what we contemplate on, and therefore, the reason why this *Psalm* is so important is because it relates to what shapes our conduct.

### **3. CULTIVATED IN THE RIGHT CONDITIONS**

Look what the outcome is of meditating on the law of the Lord. There will be stability, for the song says, we will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. There will be success, we will bring forth fruit, there will be satisfaction, and whatever we do will prosper. Nothing can be more encouraging or uplifting than this.

There is a consistency about anything that is cultivated in the right conditions. The person who follows the advice of this *Psalm* will show the godly characteristics of an individual whose life is rooted and being cultivated in the right conditions. There will be the evidence of the fruits of godliness and righteousness in their life.

The *Psalm*, apart from showing the advantages of allowing our conduct to be shaped by the company we keep, and contemplating on God’s word, which means we are cultivated in the right ground, also shows the folly of those whose habits are not toward God, and what their end will be.