

# Psalms 1, 36

“Blessed is the man...” Ps. 1:1

“The Book of Psalms is, of course, the longest book in the Bible, certainly occupying a key position in the plan of God and the instruction of His people. It contains the Bible’s longest chapter (Psalm 119) and also its shortest (Psalm 117). There are numerous references to the primeval past and even more to the prophetic future, being especially rich in its foregleams of the coming Messiah. It is...the favorite Bible book of multitudes of ordinary believers because of its poignant insights into the needs and provisions, the sorrows and joys, of God’s people in every age.

Many of the psalms have inscriptions indicating their human authors. Thus David is listed as author of seventy-three psalms, Asaph of twelve, with one psalm each attributed to Moses, Heman and Ethan. That leaves sixty-two as anonymous; however, three of these (Psalms 2, 72, and 95) also are elsewhere identified as David’s. “The sweet singer of Israel,” as some have called him, wrote at least half the psalms.

...The book of Psalms has been called “The Hallal Book” and also “the Book of the Praises of Israel.” However, there are very few psalms (Psalms 67, 100, 133) which contain only the note of praise. Almost all the psalms sing of sorrow and suffering, opposition and persecution—yet always in the context of God’s redeeming love and the believer’s overcoming faith, redounding finally to the everlasting praise of our Creator and Savior.”  
- Henry Morris

## Day 1

### Read Psalm 1:1,2

#### The Godly Man

1. From the beginning phrase, what motivation did David give for his instruction?

IT’S HEBREW TO ME: **Blessed** Strong’s # 835 *'esher*; happiness; how happy! - Strong’s Concordance

2. List the verbs in 1:1. What progression do you see?

3. What progression do you see in the words:

- **“Counsel”** Strong’s OT:6098 *'etsah*; advice; by implication, plan
- **“Path” / “way”** Strong’s OT:1870 *derek*; a road; figuratively, a course of life or mode of action
- **“Seat”** - Strong’s OT:4186 *mowshab*; a seat; figuratively, a site; abstractly, a session; by extension an abode. Also translated KJV - assembly, dwelling, inhabited place

4. Do you see any differences in the terms “wicked” (ungodly), “sinners” and “mockers” (scorners)?

**FYI: counsel of the wicked.** “The word ‘wicked’ comes from a Hebrew word meaning loose or out of joint. In our modern vernacular, it refers to a person who ‘hangs loose about God.’ He doesn’t take God seriously and thus disregards God’s Word...To stand in the path of sinners means involvement with sinners in their sinful behavior. The word ‘sinners’ comes from a Hebrew word meaning to miss the mark. It refers to deviating from the standard of God as revealed in His Word.”  
- Steven Cole

“This is always the order. First, one is impressed by the high-sounding philosophy of ungodly intellectuals; then, having rejected God’s truth, he falls away from God’s standard of righteousness in practice, and, in the end, he assumes an attitude of scoffing superiority to all who believe God...”  
- Henry Morris (22)

5. What are some of the pitfalls of associating with evil? 1 Corinthians 15:33; Proverbs 13:

6. What point did Jesus make about the believer and the world? John 17:15-18?

7. Underline the key instructions (note the do's and don'ts) about dealing with the world:

- Exodus 23:2-3 "Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd, and do not show favoritism to a poor man in his lawsuit. NIV
- Psalm 101:3 I will set before my eyes no vile thing. NIV
- Proverbs 4:14-15 Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men. 15 Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way. NIV
- Isaiah 33:15 He who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity, He who rejects unjust gain And shakes his hands so that they hold no bribe; He who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed And shuts his eyes from looking upon evil; NASU
- Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. NIV
- 2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? NIV
- Ephesians 4:17-18 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. NIV
- Ephesians 5:8-10 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. NIV
- Ephesians 6:11-12 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. NIV
- Philippians 2:14-15 Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life NIV
- Colossians 3:12-14 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. NIV

- 1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. NIV

8. Where should the mind and heart of a godly man be focused? 1:2

- What do you think it means to meditate (ponder) on God's word day and night?

IT'S HEBREW TO ME: "**Delight**" OT:2656 *chephets*; pleasure; hence (abstractly) desire; concretely, a valuable thing;

"Why does David mention **the Law** here? Because in order to change our path of living, we need an absolute standard, clear direction...We understand the Law to be a reference to God's written Word the Bible (Ps. 119:9)"

- Charles Swindoll (7)

"To **meditate** means to think about what the Word says and how it applies to all of life...Whatever shapes your thinking will shape your life. The only way for a person to reject the counsel of the ungodly which bombards him from every side is to be continually meditating on, thinking about, chewing on in his mind, the Word of God and how it applies to life."

- Steven Cole

"The mind was the first bastion to defend...and is treated as the key to the whole man." - Derek Kidner (60)

"It is noteworthy that the Scriptures are set in direct confutation of the counsel of the ungodly. Ungodly counsel, sinful ways, and a scornful heart may be answered and corrected not by human wisdom and good resolutions, but only by the Word of God!"

- Henry Morris (23)

**Applying the Word:** What practices/habits help you keep your focus and thinking on the right things (on "the law of the Lord")?

## Day 2

### Read Psalm 1:3-6

#### The Godly Man

9. To what did David compare a man who focused on God? 1:3a (Compare Jesus' parable in Matthew 7:24-27)

10. What do you think the descriptions of this tree (1:3) convey about a godly person?

- *Planted (OT:8362 shathal; to transplant)*
- *By the streams of water*
- *Which yields its fruit (See John 15:5)*
- *Its leaf does not wither (See Colossians 2:6,7)*
- *Prosperous (See Proverbs 3:18; Romans 8:28)*

***Digging Deeper***

How is the "tree" of the wicked described in Psalms 37:35-36? (How does that compare to the tree in 1:3?)

Read Jeremiah 17:5-8 for a similar contrast made between the wicked and righteous.

**The Ungodly**

11. What does the image that David gave for the wicked (ungodly) convey? 1:4 (Compare Hosea 13:3)

12. What will the wicked be prevented from doing? 1:5 (Compare Isaiah 2:11)

13. What is the fate of:

- the righteous? 1:6a (See Psalm 37:18,28)
- the wicked? 1:6b (See Proverbs 11:7)

***FYI:*** (1:6) "This climatic verse of the first psalm thus becomes the key verse of the entire Book of Psalms. Though the heathen rage and earth's leader seek to break the rule of God and His Christ (Ps. 2), the way of the ungodly shall perish. Therefore, for all eternity...'Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him' (Ps 2:12)." - Henry Morris (24)

14. What else do the following teach about man's way?

- Proverbs 16:2,25
- Matthew 7:13

**Applying the Word:** *Examine the paths that your life has been on lately. What are some good decisions you've made that are leading to the blessedness of godly living? What are some ways that you have compromised your walk or stand? How can you change that?*

### Day 3

#### Read Psalm 36:1-4

#### The Way of Sin

15. What is a root cause of sinfulness? 36:1b (Contrast Psalm 16:8)

**FYI:** "There are difficulties in translating the opening words of this psalm. The original Hebrew has 'my heart', so the NIV translates it as *An oracle is within my heart*...meaning that what the psalmist has to proclaim is a word from the Lord. However, an ancient translation reads the Hebrew to mean 'their hearts', and thus the NRSV translates this as 'transgression speaks to the wicked deep in their hearts', meaning that the wicked choose to listen to the voice of evil rather than to the voice of God."  
-The Africa Bible Commentary (643)

16. How else is this unbelief described in the Psalms?

- Ps. 10:4
- Ps. 10:11
- Ps. 12:4
- Ps. 14:1a

#### ***Digging Deeper***

Why does Paul say in Romans 1:18-22 that men are without excuse when they reject God?

17. What kind of blindness does a rejection of God produce? 36:2 (Compare Jesus' teachings in Luke 6:42; 18:9-14)

**FYI:** "Those eyes that have turned away from God...have lost any true point of reference." - Derek Kidner (164)

"The sinner is blind to what everyone else plainly sees, namely, that his sin is repugnant. Or, it may mean that sin flatters the sinner so that he cannot see his own sin or hate it for how evil it is. He is so deluded by his sin that he thinks he is right, or at least that he is no worse than everyone else."  
- Steven Cole

18. To what thoughts and actions does this deception lead? (*Compare the downward path in Romans 1:28-32*)

**FYI:** "Wickedness [36:3] is crookedness and perversity."

- The Nelson Study Bible (913)

19. List the thoughts, actions, and attitudes of this person. 36:4

**IT'S HEBREW TO ME:** "commits/sets himself" OT:3320 *yatsab*; to place (any thing so as to stay)...to station, offer, continue"

- Strong's Concordance

20. What do you think the words "*even on his bed*" indicate about his thought life? (See Prov. 4:16)

- What does the phrase "*does not reject what is wrong*" indicate about how far evil has taken him? Vs. 4:c (See also Isaiah 5:20)

**FYI:** "Psalm 36:1-4 is a snapshot of the fallen human heart, apart from God's grace in Jesus Christ. It unfolds a progression, showing that sin begins in the heart and expresses itself in words and deeds." - Steven Cole

"The biblical teaching on depravity is not that each individual is as evil as he or she could possibly be, but that sin is present in every individual (Romans 3). Since no one is perfect, all must ask God for His forgiveness-something He freely gives to those who place their trust in His Son Jesus." - The Nelson Study Bible (888)

**Applying the Word:** *Can you identify any ways that you have been deceived about sin or evil? What opened your eyes to the truth?*

## Day 4

### Read Psalm 36:5-12

#### The Way of God

21. What do you think caused David's abrupt change of thought between 36:4 and 36:5?

22. What do the word pictures in 36:5,6 indicate about God's character?
- *Your love reaches to the heavens, faithfulness reaches to the skies:*
  - *Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains:*
  - *Your justice like the great deep: (See Romans 11:33)*

**FYI:** "From the depths of depravity, David leaps to the heights of God and His abundant blessings towards those who seek Him... David shows us in stark contrast two ways to live—in the deceitfulness of sin or in the delightfulness of God... David mentions God's lovingkindness three times in this psalm: in verse 5 with regard to its immensity; in verse 7 with regard to its value; and, in verse 10 as a prayer that the Lord will continue dispensing it." - Steven Cole

23. How do those who recognize God's love respond? 36:7 (For other references to "wings" see Psalms 17:8,9; 91:4; Luke 13:34,35.)

**IT'S HEBREW TO ME** **Priceless/precious/excellent** *yaqar* Strong's #3368. "precious; rare; excellent; weighty; noble." - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"The word *precious* establishes at once the change of scale from the immense to the intimate and personal. *Steadfast love*...of verse 5 as too great to grasp, and of verse 7 as too good to let slip." - Derek Kidner (165)

**refuge/trust** "OT:2620 *chacah*; to flee for protection; figuratively, to confide in" - Strong's Concordance

24. What does trust in God yield? 36:8 (Compare John 10:10)

***Digging Deeper***

For descriptions of life-giving water see: Jeremiah 2:13; John 4:13-14; Revelation 22:1-2.

- By contrast, what does Solomon say about trusting in our own efforts/achievements? Ecclesiastes 1:14; 5:10; 6:7

25. What does God give? 36:9 (Compare John 1:4,9)

**FYI:** "**Life** means not only that physical life comes from God, but also spiritual life...Jesus is the source of eternal life for His chosen ones. The *fountain* of life suggests an unending supply. He never runs dry!" - Steven Cole

"**Light**, here, mainly suggests joy...though it cannot be isolated from its other connotations of purity, clarity and truth." - Derek Kidner (165)

26. List David's prayer requests in 36:10,11. How would you summarize his concern?

27. What victory did David claim? 36:12

- How does that compare to the victory we can claim in Christ? Colossians 1:13,14; 2:15

**FYI:** "The evil which David portrayed in the first stanza he was ready to fight; the grace which he praised in the second he was ready to invoke; and, once invoked, to accept as given and as settling the matter." - Derek Kidner (166)

**Applying the Word:** Steven Cole asks "Is this your concept of God towards you? Do you see His lovingkindness and faithfulness as immense? Do you think of His righteousness and judgments as impressive and awesome on the personal level, because He cares for you? Is His love precious and inviting to you? Do you see His provisions as abundant and delightful?"

To what extent can you say yes to those questions? What do you think is keeping you from believing and experiencing these things? (What is keeping you from believing that God's grace and love toward you is a settled matter?)