

# Psalm 1 (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;

<sup>2</sup>but his delight is in the law of the LORD,

and on his law he meditates day and night.

<sup>3</sup>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.

<sup>4</sup>The wicked are not so,

but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

<sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,

nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

<sup>6</sup>for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,

but the way of the wicked will perish.

# Psalm 1 – Only One Way

**Definition:** “Blessed” (*esher*), with 3 possible meanings: 1) under God’s blessing, 2) happy’ or contented in what one is doing or how he is placed, or 3) ‘doing what is morally justified/right, what is deserved.’

**Digging Deeper:** Using a concordance look up the word “blessed” to create a list of the Psalms’ beatitudes. How does this book describe the blessed life? How does it compare to Jesus’ beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-12?

**Definitions:**  
**Wicked:** evil or mischievous in nature.  
**Sinners:** one who is guilty of committing sin, morally wrong  
**Scoffers:** one who openly derides, mocks, scorns the things of God

**Application:** Which of the two descriptions best describes your life today?

**Study Skill: Parallelism**  
 Noticing correspondence of terms between lines of a psalm can yield more insights. Instead of thinking of it as needless repetition, ask yourself how the term in the second line extends the idea in the first. Though related, it’s not exactly the same. Ask yourself, *how are these two ideas similar? How does the second term extend, complete, or supplement the first?*

Often books begin with a prologue, and the book of Psalms seems to follow this structure. Psalms 1 and 2 open with a picture of the blessed life, much like Jesus opens his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount with his beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-12). These two psalms provide the foundational understanding needed to live a life of righteousness—one that honors God as the true King and pleases Him through obedience to His Word. In this study, we will focus on Psalm 1.

## Study Questions

Read Psalm 1 at least three times to get the general idea of the psalm. The psalm describes two kinds of people. Use the chart below to organize your thoughts. What does each section focus on? Write a title or phrase to capture it. List the description of the contrasts you see in the two parts.

Type of person	_____	_____
Primary influencer (vv. 1, 2)		
Similes of comparison (vv. 3, 4)		
End results (vv. 3, 5)		

**Read verse 1.** Learn about the study skill of parallelism in the sidebar to the left. Can you identify the triple parallelism in this verse? “Blessed is the man who...”

Action Verb	in the ...	of the ...

Describe the progression in the terms used.

## Psalm 1—Only One Way

**Read verse 2.** This verse begins with a contrasting conjunction “but,” which signals a contrast in direction. The word “meditates” is a “murmuring” or ruminating that is constant, day and night. If this is the description of a righteous person, would you qualify? Why or why not?

### Study Skill: Similes

If you recall, similes join two different things together using “like” or “as.”

**Read verse 3.** Take some time to imagine this tree. List the specific descriptions included. If you desire, sketch this tree in the margin at right.

**Digging Deeper:** This is not the first time the image of the green tree appears in Scripture. Compare this with Jeremiah 17:5-8. What additional insights do you glean?

**Read verse 4.** How does this image contrast with the previous verse? What does this suggest about the wicked and their ultimate end?

### Tree of Ps. 1

**Read verse 5.** This verse starts with the word “Therefore,” which tells us that what follows connects to what has come previously. How does verse 4 lead to verse 5?

### Definition: Chaff

“the seed coverings and other debris separated from the seed in threshing grain.” (Merriam Webster)  
To separate the grain from the chaff, winnowers toss the whole lot in the air. The heavy and valuable grain falls to the ground while the worthless chaff is carried off by the wind.

**Read verse 6.** The word “for” here suggests the **reason** behind something. What is highlighted about God’s character? How does it connect to verse 5?

**Application:** Our approach to life is really our approach to God. What does your lifestyle, way of thinking, decisions, and behaviors reveal about your relationship or posture towards God? What is the basis of your life, God’s Word or your own?