

Key:

Purple – Introduction, Conclusion, Main Points, and Sermon Thread

Blue – Explanation/Exposition

Red – Application

Green – Illustration

Brown – Quotation

Yellow – Sermon Notes

“Why Delight in God’s Torah?”

Psalm 1:1–6

We are beginning a new series today entitled, “The Five Books of Psalms.” In this series, we will examine a handful of psalms in this great book of the OT. And we have specially chosen those psalms from each of the five books of the Psalter. If you don’t know what those five books are or how they are divided, stay tuned.

The book of Psalms as a whole is a fascinating book full of lots of raw emotion. If I were to ask you, “How are you doing right now? How’s your soul?” And you responded, “Things are going great, Pastor Tony! I want to praise God and express my thankfulness to him.” Well there’s a psalm for that in the OT book of Psalms. Some of you might say, “Things aren’t going so great, Pastor Tony. Life is hard right now. I want to lament before God.” Well there’s plenty of material for that in the Book of Psalms too.

In fact, the Psalms incorporate a wide range of themes and emotions. So much so that John Piper says that’s why Christians love the Psalms so much! Because “They give expression to an amazing array of emotions.”¹ And in his sermon on Psalm 1, Piper gives a short list of those emotions given in the Psalms including:

- 1) **Loneliness:** “I am lonely and afflicted” (Ps 25:16).
- 2) **Love:** “I love you, O Lord, my strength” (Ps 18:1).
- 3) **Awe:** “Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him” (Ps 33:8).
- 4) **Sorrow:** “My life is spent with sorrow” (Ps 31:10).
- 5) **Regret:** “I am sorry for my sin” (Ps 38:18).
- 6) **Contrition:** “A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise” (Ps 51:17).
- 7) **Discouragement and turmoil:** “Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?” (Ps 42:5).²

Also there’s shame, exultation, marveling, delight, joy, gladness, fear, anger, peace, grief, desire, hope, broken-heartedness, gratitude, zeal, pain, confidence, and many others. And throughout this series, what we want to do as a church is give voice to some of these wide-ranging emotions as we study this book.

And we want to see the ways that, scripturally, God’s people communicate the depths of their heart before the Lord. And there is something profound for us to learn here about that. And there are some profound things that we can learn about God as well as we see these prayers, these songs, and these laments uttered before the Lord so many years ago.

So, what we’re going to do for the next few weeks is we are going to look at specific psalms in the Psalter and vary the genre of those psalm so you get a good understanding of the types of psalms found in this book. Next week, Adam Casalino will preach Psalm 5 from Book I. In two weeks, Mitch Palermo will preach Psalm 51 from Book II. In three weeks, Andrew Hall will preach Psalm 88 from Book III. In four weeks, I will preach Psalm 96 from Book IV. In five weeks, Daniel Armstrong will preach from Psalm 127 in Book V. And then Anthony Alcorta will preach Psalm 150, the last psalm in the Psalter. And the psalms that we have chosen are remarkably diverse. There is a wide-range of emotions demonstrated in

¹ John Piper, “Songs That Shape the Heart and Mind,” 05-25-08: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/songs-that-shape-the-heart-and-mind>

² Ibid.

these passages, so I think this will be a good sampling for us to consider so we get a flavor of the diverse kinds of psalms that are found in this book.

Now today's message will be different than all the subsequent messages on the Book of Psalms. Today I want to overview this OT book and introduce some of its unique features. And then, before we're done, I want us to look at the message conveyed in first chapter of Psalms, Psalm 1.³

Here's how I want to structure our time today. I want to ask and answer for you...

Six Questions on the OT Book of Psalms (the Psalter):

Let's start with this...

1. What's the historical background to the book of Psalms?

Well, the Hebrew title of this book is *Tehillim*. And that word means "praise songs."

○ Hebrew title is *Tehillim*, or "praise songs"

And that shouldn't surprise anyone in this room, because it's in the Psalter where we find statements like this, "Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!" (Ps 106:1). It's in the Psalter where we find statements like this, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!" (Ps 103:1). And also there are statements like this, "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!" (Ps 150:6).

Also there are statements like this, "Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere" (Ps 84:10, NIV). And there are statements like this, "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Ps 27:1). And that's just the tip of the iceberg as far as praises go in the book of Psalms.

Now the book of Psalms isn't always cheery and optimistic. But even in times of sorrow and lament, the overriding concern of the psalmist is to praise the Lord. It's like Job says in the book of Job: "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (1:21). That's the sentiment that is expressed by the psalmist throughout the Psalms.

And speaking of the psalmist, you can write this down in your notes.

○ 73 Psalms are from David (דָּוִד)

And there's some debate about this, but I think that those Davidic psalms were actually written "by David" not "for David" or "for David's Kingship" or anything like that. Jesus attributed Davidic psalms to David, and I think we should too.

But that doesn't mean that David wrote all the psalms in the Psalter. Twelve were written by Asaph (Pss 50, 73–83). Ten were written by descendants of Korah (Pss 42, 44–49, 84, 87–88). Two were written by Solomon (Pss 72, 127). One was written by Heman the Ezrahite (Ps 88) and by Ethan the Ezrahite (Ps 89) and by Moses (Ps 90). And some, including Psalm 1, were written anonymously.⁴ Who wrote Psalm 1?⁵ I don't know. The Bible doesn't say.

³ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 15, TOTC, 63: "It seems likely that this psalm was specially composed as an introduction to the whole Psalter. Certainly it stands here as a faithful doorkeeper, confronting those who would be in 'the congregation of the righteous' (5) with the basic choice that alone gives reality to worship; with the divine truth (2) that must inform it; and with the ultimate judgment (5, 6) that looms up beyond it." Tremper Longman III, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, ed. David G. Firth, vol. 15–16, TOTC (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2014), 55 sees Psalm 1 in combination with Psalm 2 as "a two-part introduction to the Psalter." So also Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 75–6: "Psalms 1 and 2 are bound together by the opening (1:1) and by closing (2:12) with a blessing." VanGemeren adds as well (78), "In rabbinical traditions, the first two psalms were also united as one."

⁴ It is reasonable to assume that David wrote Psalm 1 since technically Psalm 2 is anonymous, but Peter attributes it to David (see Acts 4:25). But I appreciate the comments of VanGemeren, "Psalms," EBC, 76: "The placement of this psalm at the beginning of the Psalter is significant, for it invites anyone to delight himself or herself in the Lord and in his revelation. The Psalter democratizes the prayers of David, Solomon, and the other authors by encouraging anyone to take hold of the instruction (wisdom, laments, praise) of the Psalter." Perhaps this is why David's name was left off of the first psalm. Or maybe the first psalm was written and attached as an introduction to the book by a post-exilic compiler/collator.

Write this down as well. The Book of Psalms functioned as the...

- The **hymnbook** of Ancient Israel⁵

And there's good evidence to suggest that this hymnbook was edited and collated throughout the centuries. Because you have some Psalms that date back all the way to Moses (**Ps 90**). And then some of them are post-exilic (**Ps 126; 137**), that is they weren't written until the days of **Ezra** and **Nehemiah**, after the Israelites returned from exile in Babylon. Although I will say that most of them, including the Davidic psalms, were written in the tenth century BC. But the **Book of Psalms**, as we have it today, wasn't finalized until probably around the fifth century BC. But it functioned progressively throughout Israel's history as Israel's hymnbook.

And write this down as well. One of the reasons for its continued appeal to the ancient Israelites as well as throughout church history was its use of poetry and music.

- Utilizes **Poetry** and **Music**

The Psalms as Music and Poetry

- ❖ 55 Psalms use the Hebrew term *Mizmôr* ("psalm"), which indicates a song accompanied by instrumental music. *Mizmôr* derives from *zāmar* meaning "to pluck"
- ❖ 27 psalms are labeled *Shîr* ("song").
- ❖ 13 psalms are labeled *Maskîl* ("contemplative poem").
- ❖ 5 psalms are labeled *T^hillah* ("praise song").
- ❖ 57 Psalms are labelled *Lam-menaššēah* ("To the choir leader")
- ❖ 8 Psalms are labelled *Negînôt* ("With string instruments")
- ❖ 1 Psalm is labelled *Neḥillôt* ("With wind instruments")
- ❖ 2 Psalms are labelled *Šemînîṭ* ("With an eight-stringed lute or an octave lower than soprano")

All that to say that the book of **Psalms** is inherently a musical book. It was used widely for worship in the nation of Israel, and even more specifically for music and for singing.

Now I've spent a fair amount of time thinking about this, and I don't know if I've figured it out just yet. But for whatever reason, there are different ways in which truth is communicated and impacts our minds and our hearts. And there are unique ways that God has created the human psyche to be touched and impacted by poetry and music. And there are aspects of our being that are moved by poetry and music, that can't be moved by any other means. **Jim Croce wrote that song so many years ago. Some of you probably remember this. He said, "Every time I try to tell you the words just came out wrong, So I'll have to say I love you in a song." Y'all remember that?**

When I asked my wife to marry me twenty-five years ago, I wrote her a song. And I sang it to her. Now why did I do that? Could I have just spoken those words to her? Would she have said "yes" if I hadn't written her a song? Maybe? I guess we'll never know. But I wrote a song, I wrote poetry, in order to reach that part of her that God created, her emotions, her affections, so that she would be touched and moved. And I love the fact that the psalmist writes in such a way, with the medium of music and poetry, so that we likewise would be moved. And we likewise can express our deepest emotions and our heartfelt desires before the Lord.

That's actually one of the things that I love about the Bible. The Bible is a *unified* document, but it's not *uniform*. There's a varied use of style and genres utilized to communicate truth. It's not a list of rules. It's not a list of "dos and don'ts". It's a diverse collection of writings that communicate and move us in different ways.

So, let's move on here. Now that we know the historical background to the **Book of Psalms** and what the Book is about. Let's talk about...

2. How is the Book of Psalms structured?

- Five books of relatively equal **length**

⁵ FELIX PRATENSIS: "The first psalm has no title because, according to the teaching of a great number of men, it is an introduction to all the psalms; according to some of them, not David but Ezra himself composed this psalm." Quoted in Herman J. Selderhuis et al., eds., *Psalms 1–72: Old Testament*, vol. VII, RCS (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015), 8.

- Book 1 – Psalm 1–41
- Book 2 – Psalm 42–72
- Book 3 – Psalm 73–89
- Book 4 – Psalm 90–106
- Book 5 – Psalm 107–150

And these book divisions are ancient. And they probably go back to separate collections of **Psalms** that precede the present construction of the book.⁶ I'll give you some evidence of this. At the end of **Psalm 72**, in **verse 19 and 20**, there's a statement that says, "Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen! The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended." Now that's an odd statement right there because there are more Davidic Psalms after **Psalm 72**. But what that statement indicates is not the end of Davidic psalms in the Psalter, but the end of Davidic Psalms in Book II of the Psalter.

And that statement may, in fact, go back to a separate collection of **Psalms** that were added to other collections to make up the present-day collection. And there are similar concluding (or doxological) statements at the end of **Psalms 41, 89, and 106**. And when you put all that together, you have these five books of the Psalter, which many people assume to be an intentional mirroring of the five books of Moses: **Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy**. You can write that down in your notes...

- Parallel to the Five Books of **Moses**(?)

I put a question mark after that statement because that's a reasonable inference, but there is some debate about it. Let me say it this way... I wouldn't take a bullet for that statement, but I think there is enough evidence to suggest that these five books of the **Psalms** were intentionally put together to mirror the five books of Moses. And if that's the case, then when the psalmist says in **Psalm 1**, "but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night," he's not just talking about "the law," namely the five books of Moses!⁷ He's talking about the law, which includes the five books of **Psalms** as well.⁸ I actually think that's the case no matter what you decide about the five books of **Psalms** being parallel to the books of Moses. We'll talk more about that and **Psalm 1** in a second.

Go ahead and write this down under #3.

3. What are the different types (sub-genres) of Psalms?

I'll give you six types of Psalms. Write this down as the first one.

- **Praise/Thanksgiving** (e.g. Ps 146-150) – Characterized by a tone of exuberant praise to the Lord

These are probably the **Psalms** that you are most familiar with. These are the **Psalms** that typically we turn into modern-day hymns and worship choruses. They are uplifting! They are adoration. And they are ascriptive songs of praise offered to the Lord. The book of **Psalms** closes with a group of these praise psalms bunched together in **Psalms 146–150**. Isn't it interesting that the Lord closes out this book with a string of praise psalms?

But the Psalter is more than just praise psalms. There is also lament.

- **Lament** (e.g. Ps 13, 88, 102) – Songs that express a mood of despair, abandonment, distress and suffering (typically ending in praise)

"Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?" (**Ps 43:5**). Does anyone ever pray a prayer like that to the Lord? Does anyone ever feel like that sometimes?

⁶ JOHN CALVIN: "Whoever collected the Psalms into one volume, whether Ezra or some other person, appears to have placed this psalm at the beginning by way of preface, in which he admonishes all believers to meditate on the law of God. The sum and substance of the whole is, blessed are those who focus on the pursuit of heavenly wisdom; but the profane despisers of God, although for a time they may consider themselves happy, shall eventually come to a most miserable end." Quoted in Selderhuis et al., eds., *Psalms 1–72*, RCS, 8.

⁷ AUGUSTINE: "As for myself, I meditate on the law of God, if not day and night, at least during the few moments of time that I can, and lest my meditations escape from me through forgetfulness, I hold on to them by my pen." Quoted in Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, eds., *Psalms 1–50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 7.

⁸ THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA: "One learns to be bound by the law through continuous meditation so that one shapes himself by it." Quoted in Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, eds., *Psalms 1–50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 6.

“How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?” (Ps 13:1). How about that? Anyone ever feel like that before the Lord sometimes? Well if you do, you’re not the first. David felt like that sometimes, and he cried out to the Lord in the midst of his pain. **And so should you! There’s a place for lament in the Christian life.**

How about this? Psalm 102:2–7 says, “Do not hide your face from me in the day of my distress! Incline your ear to me; answer me speedily in the day when I call! For my days pass away like smoke, and my bones burn like a furnace. My heart is struck down like grass and has withered; I forget to eat my bread. Because of my loud groaning my bones cling to my flesh. I am like a desert owl of the wilderness, like an owl of the waste places; I lie awake; I am like a lonely sparrow on the housetop.”

You might say, “Pastor Tony, that sounds like a country song.” “What do you get when you play a country song backwards? You get your house back, your wife back, your truck back, and your dog back.”

You might say after reading a lament in the OT, like Psalm 102, “Tony, that psalmist is depressed.” Yeah, he is depressed. He’s having a hard day. **And I’m glad he wrote about it. Because that encourages me when I’m depressed. That gives me something to think about and pray when I’m having a hard day or a hard year. So, the Psalms are not always sunshine, lollipops, and rainbows.**

But I will say this, typically, even with the most depressing laments in the Psalter, they still end in praise. The only exception to that is (probably) Psalm 88, which we’ll be addressing in a few weeks.

Here are a few other sub-genres in the Psalms. There is also something called imprecatory psalms.

- **Imprecatory** (e.g. Ps 58, 109, 137, 140) – Prayers against enemies or the invoking of judgment against an enemy

The question will come up when you read psalms like these, “Should I pray like the psalmist prays here? Should I utter judgment against my enemy like David does?”⁹ **Should we? And the answer to that, in light of the NT, is no. Jesus calls us to love our enemies and do good to those who persecute us. So, we can pray the lament psalms to the Lord, but not the imprecatory psalms. We leave the invoking of judgment to the Lord.**

Also there are royal psalms.

- **Royal** (e.g. Ps 18, 20, 45, 24, 145) – Songs of Praise to King David and to King Yahweh

Also there are Torah psalms.

- **Torah** (e.g. Ps 1, 19, 119) – Songs that espouse the glory of God’s Word (the Torah)¹⁰

And finally there are Messianic psalms.

- **Messianic** (e.g. Ps 2, 8, 22, 110) – Point explicitly to a coming Messiah

Here’s a brief list of Messianic psalms and their fulfillment in the NT.¹¹

Messianic Psalms

- ❖ Christ’s Ascension (Ps 68:18; Eph. 4:8)
- ❖ Christ’s Betrayal (Ps 41:9; Luke 22:48)
- ❖ Christ’s Death (Ps 22:1-21; Matt. 27)
- ❖ Christ’s Deity (Ps 45:6-7 Heb. 1:8-9)
- ❖ Christ’s Exaltation (Ps 8:5-6 Heb. 2:6-9)
- ❖ Christ’s Kingship (Ps 2:6; 89:18-19 Acts 5:31)
- ❖ Christ’s Lordship (Ps 8:2; Matt 21:15-16; Ps 110:1; Matt 22:44; Acts 2:34)
- ❖ Christ’s Priesthood (Ps 110:4; Heb 5:6)
- ❖ Christ’s Resurrection (Ps 2:7; 16:10; Acts 2:25-28; 13:33-35)
- ❖ Christ’s Sonship (Ps 2:7; Matt 3:17; Heb 1:5)
- ❖ Christ’s Sufferings (Ps 69:9; Jn 2:17, Rom 15:3; Ps 69:4; Jn 15:25)

⁹ See Russell Meek’s article “Should We Curse our Enemies?” at the TGC website, 05-18-23:

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/should-we-curse-enemies/>

¹⁰ Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 77 calls Psalm 1 as wisdom psalm because it shares so many characteristic with Proverbs. He adds the follow psalms to that list (Pss 34; 37; 49; 73; 111–12; 119; 127–28; 133).

¹¹ See Pastor Mike Morris’s series on “Songs of the Messiah” at MessiahBible.org: <https://www.messiahbible.org/psalms-songs-of-the-messiah>

And by the way, there are individual psalms which are Messianic, but there's a sense in which the entire book of **Psalms** is Messianic. And by that, I mean that the Book itself is structured in such a way that a longing for the Messiah is intensified as the Book progresses. For instance, at the front part of the **Psalms**, there are a lot of references to King David as the King of Israel in Books I, II, and III. And there are a lot of royal psalms that celebrate David as King. But in Book IV and Book V, there's less about David as King and more about Yahweh as King, as the people of Israel start to anticipate a "greater-than-David" Son of David, a Messiah who will rule as King of Israel. That's the trajectory of this book.¹²

Also, if you read the whole book of **Psalms**, you'll notice how the balance shifts from laments to praise **Psalms**. At the beginning of **Psalms**, the book is heavily weighted with laments. **Some of you who have tried to read the entire book may have noticed that. You read the book looking for something uplifting, but you get bogged down with a string of laments in Books I, II, and III.** But the balance shifts in Books IV and V. Those books are full of more praise songs than laments. Book V closes with a string of praise **Psalms (Pss 146–150)**. And there are more references to Yahweh and less to David, as the trajectory of the book points to something better and more praiseworthy than King David, a true and better King David.

So, let's synthesize here. #4.

4. What do the Psalms teach us about worship?
- God is **sovereign** and worthy of our worship
 - God deserves **worship** regardless of our emotional state
 - God gave us **music** and **poetry** to use for worship

And #5.

5. What are the theological themes in the book of Psalms?

Let me give you four quickly here, and then we'll turn our attention to Psalm 1. Martin Luther said once that "The book of Psalms is 'a little Bible,' and the summary of the Old Testament."¹³ So what we say here about Psalms, could be said about the entirety of the OT, but they are displayed in bold relief in the book of Psalms.

- God (Yahweh) is **King** and reigns over all the world
- God is in a dynamic, intimate relationship with his **people**
- God's people long for **salvation** and a **savior**
- God is a God of **mercy** and **salvation**

So, with all of that said... With all of that background to the Book of Psalms. #6.

6. Why Delight in God's Torah?

Or let me ask it a little more crassly, **"So what?" "Why does all this matter, Pastor Tony?" "Why is this even important for us?" "Why should we even take the time to study the book of Psalms or any part of God's Word?" "Why should we even care?"**

Those are fair questions for the skeptic who doesn't know God. And they are probably questions that you, even as a Christian, ask from time to time. Because studying God's Word is not easy, especially when you look at texts in the OT that are 3,000 years old and pretty far removed from our contemporary world.

And there are far more interesting and captivating things in this world. **There are things in this world that grab your attention and force you to pay attention: 1) the TV, 2) the newspaper, 3) the internet, 4) your phone, 5) your email inbox. You don't even have to work at being interested in those things. Those things just sucks you in as soon as you wake up. But studying the Bible, studying the OT, that's work.**

¹² I'm indebted to Willem VanGemeren for these insights which we explored in a doctoral seminar at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in 2009. Although, to be honest, I didn't appreciate those insights at the time.

¹³ Tremper Longman III and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), 256.

That's hard. That takes discipline and meditation and deep thinking.¹⁴ Why bother? Why delight in God's Word?¹⁵

Here's why. Because God wants you to be a tree. God wants you to be strong and immovable. God wants you to be like an oak tree planted by streams of living water, fertile and flourishing and strong with luxurious green leaves. God wants you to be a tree!

Not chaff! Not chaff that is blown about by the wind. You know what that is? A life that is addicted to TV, newspaper, the internet, and your phone. That's a chaff-life!¹⁶ Blown about by the different ideas circulating in this world. And easily swayed by the persuasive words of the wicked.

So here we go, three answers to that question, "Why Delight in God's Torah?" and then we're done. Come let's reason together from **Psalm 1**.¹⁷

Why Delight in God's Torah? Here's the first answer. Because...

1) God's Torah is the source of **blessing** (1:1–2)

The psalmist says...

¹ *Blessed is the man*¹⁸

The Hebrew for "blessed" is אֲשֶׁרִי.¹⁹ It can mean "blessed" or "happy" or "satisfied."²⁰ Leah's maidservant Zilpah gave birth to a son, and she named him Asher, because she was אֲשֶׁרִי. She was elated (Gen 30:13).²¹

¹ *Blessed is the man who walks not²² in the counsel of the wicked,²³ nor stands in the way of sinners,²⁴ nor sits²⁵ in the seat of scoffers;²⁶*

¹⁴ MARTIN LUTHER: "There is a difference between meditating and thinking. To meditate is to think carefully, deeply and diligently, and properly it means to muse in the heart. Hence to meditate is, as it were, to stir up in the inside, or to be moved in the innermost self; therefore, one who thinks inwardly and diligently asks, discusses, etc. Such a person meditates. Quoted in Selderhuis et al., eds., *Psalms 1–72*, RCS, 12.

¹⁵ JOHN CALVIN: "For you cannot feel pleasure in the diligent study of the law unless you are truly touched by the love for it." Quoted in Selderhuis et al., eds., *Psalms 1–72*, RCS, 13.

¹⁶ James A. Johnston, *Preaching the Word: The Psalms: Rejoice, the Lord Is King—Psalms 1 to 41*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 30: "Nothing could be farther from the picture of the blessed man. Instead of a solid tree, the wicked is a hollow shell. He doesn't produce fruit; his life is a husk. He has no roots to hold him steady and reach the water. He is blown by the wind. The wicked are rootless, weightless, useless, worthless. In fact, chaff is in the way; you have to remove it to find the useful grain."

¹⁷ BASIL THE GREAT: "Like the foundation in a house, the keel in a ship and the heart in a body, so is [Psalm 1 as a] brief introduction to the whole structure of the Psalms." Quoted in Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, eds., *Psalms 1–50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 2.

¹⁸ DESIDERIUS ERASMUS: "The psalm uses the word *man*, but does this exclude woman from a share in bliss? Not at all. In the kingdom of heaven sex and status count for nothing." Quoted in Selderhuis et al., eds., *Psalms 1–72*, RCS, 10.

¹⁹ James A. Johnston, *Preaching the Word: The Psalms: Rejoice, the Lord Is King—Psalms 1 to 41*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 23: "This blessing means being supremely happy or fulfilled, a deep sense of well-being. His Word carries much joy, and some versions translate these words, 'How happy is the man ...' This is not superficial happiness that comes and goes but a deep sense of joy from God's grace in my life... The blessings God pours out are so beautiful and compelling that any sane man or woman would want them."

²⁰ Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, TOTC, 64: "Preferable to Blessed, for which a separate word exists, is 'Happy', or 'The happiness of ...!'. Such was the Queen of Sheba's exclamation in 1 Kings 10:8, and it is heard twenty-six times in the Psalter."

²¹ Tremper Longman III, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, ed. David G. Firth, vol. 15–16, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2014), 56–7: "The psalmist pronounces those who avoid such evil associations as *blessed*. The Hebrew term used by the psalmist ('šr) 'stresses a state of happiness' and is not to be treated as a strict synonym for another word often translated 'blessed' (*brk*), which 'speaks more of being empowered or favored as the recipient of blessing from the Lord' (NIDOTTE 2: 763). That said, the two words might overlap, in that one who is blessed (*brk*) may respond by being happy ('šr)."

²² BASIL THE GREAT: "Not to attach ourselves to evil is a request worth praying for." Quoted in Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, eds., *Psalms 1–50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 5.

²³ HIERONYMUS WELLER VON MOLS DORF: "The world preaches that the blessed are those who flourish in this life and abound in all life's comforts. The Holy Spirit, however, proclaims that those who are truly blessed and forever joyous are those who embrace the Word of God in earnest and count it among their delights, and who regard it as their greatest treasure. They love to hear God's Word!" Quoted in Selderhuis et al., eds., *Psalms 1–72*, RCS, 10–11.

Notice the movements here.²⁷ Walks with... stands with... sits with.... A blessed man, a happy man, doesn't associate intimately with the wicked... the sinners... the scoffers.²⁸

Now obviously Jesus walked with, stood with, and sat with sinners and scoffers. Think Matthew and Zacheus, the tax-collectors, and their friends (see Matt 9:9–13; Luke 19:1–10). But that's not what the psalmist is talking about here. There's an intimacy that is intimated with these images of walking, standing, and sitting. A blessed man doesn't become intimately acquainted with sinners and their sinful ways. What does he or she do then? What's the contrast? Should he walk, stand, and sit with righteous people? Well, yes. That's clear from the book of **Proverbs**. But that's not the contrast the psalmist is going for here.

Look at **verse 2**.

² but his delight²⁹

The blessed man... the blessed woman... the happy woman... the happy man...³⁰

² his delight is in the law of the LORD,³¹ and on his law he [or she] meditates³² day and night.³³

So, do you want to be blessed, Christian?³⁴ Do you want to be happy? Don't meditate on sinners and sinful things. Don't obsess over wickedness. Don't obsess over movies and politics and current events and video games. Obsess over God's Word.³⁵

²⁴ DIDYMUS THE BLIND: "The devil himself may be called the way of sinners. Let the one who stands in this way be warned lest he tarry there. Recall what the Scripture says: 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.' For the one who will not stand in the devil's way will come to the Lord, who says, 'I am the way.' Truly the one who follows this way, traveling the way to the end, will receive a reward." Quoted in Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, eds., *Psalms 1–50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 5.

²⁵ Longman, *Psalms*, TOTC, 56: "The psalm opens with a tricolon that pronounces blessing on people who distance themselves from evil. As is typical of parallelism, each colon adds to the thought of the first colon (A, what's more, B, what's more, C; see Introduction: Parallelism). The first colon describes one who does not walk in step with the wicked. To walk with someone is to be associated with them, but not as deeply as to stand with them (colon 2) or sit with them (colon 3). Each colon intensifies the relationship with evil and also uses more forceful terms for evil (wicked, sinners, mockers). Mockers are the most egregiously evil people, since they not only sin, but they also turn around and mock the innocent."

²⁶ Longman, *Psalms*, TOTC, 56n2: "Proverbs vilifies the mocker in Prov. 9:7, 8, 12; 13:1; 14:6."

²⁷ James A. Johnston, *Preaching the Word: The Psalms: Rejoice, the Lord Is King—Psalms 1 to 41*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 24: "There is a downward spiral in these three negative descriptions. A man or woman settles into sin by stages—he walks, then he stops and stands, and finally he sits down... Sin will take you from bad to worse. First, you will be influenced; you start by listening to what the wicked say. You laugh at sin on talk shows and movies. You look up to an ungodly woman at work. You admire a celebrity who is far from God. You spend more and more time with a questionable friend. You listen to music that makes sin sound appealing. As you listen to sinners, you want to be like them."

²⁸ ATHANASIUS: "If you wish to declare someone blessed, you learn how to do so and whom to call upon and the words to say in Psalm 1." Quoted in Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, eds., *Psalms 1–50*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 1.

²⁹ James A. Johnston, *Preaching the Word: The Psalms: Rejoice, the Lord Is King—Psalms 1 to 41*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 26: "You will only delight in God's Law if you already delight in God himself."

³⁰ BASIL THE GREAT: "Why, you say, does the prophet single out only man and proclaim him happy? Does he not exclude women from happiness? By no means. For the virtue of man and woman is the same, since creation is equally honored in both; therefore, there is the same reward for both. Listen to Genesis: 'God created humankind,' it says, 'In the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them.' They whose nature is alike have the same reward." Quoted in Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, eds., *Psalms 1–50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 2.

³¹ Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms 1–89: Commentary*, vol. 1, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2011–2013), 189: "In general the psalmist is thinking of meditation on divine revelation, beginning with the Law."

³² James A. Johnston, *Preaching the Word: The Psalms: Rejoice, the Lord Is King—Psalms 1 to 41*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 27: "The word 'meditate' means to murmur or to mutter. This has the sense of talking to yourself, speaking under your breath as you ponder God's Word. This is also an imperfect verb, which suggests that this is an ongoing action; we ponder God's Word 'day and night' (v. 2) like a program running constantly in the background on a computer. The Word of God releases its flavor as we chew on it over time."

³³ ATHANASIUS: "Great good comes to people who, enlightened by the grace of God, make it their habit to apply the truths of holy Scripture to their lives. They receive just such a blessing as the psalmist describes." Quoted in Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, eds., *Psalms 1–50*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 7.

³⁴ James A. Johnston, *Preaching the Word: The Psalms: Rejoice, the Lord Is King—Psalms 1 to 41*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 29: "In God's economy, the work he gives us often prospers through our own

And that doesn't make movies and politics and current events and video games wrong. It just means that your meditations need to be on God's Word. You need to see movies and politics and current events and video games through the prism of God's Word, not God's Word through the prism of those other things. Does everyone understand that? That's where blessedness is found. That's where joy is found.

I think we've all been guilty of being obsessed about things other than God and his Word. And every time I look back on that in my life it has led to misery and disappointment. And that's because those things, those replacements for God and God's Word, can't satisfy like God can. They can't deliver the joy and the hope that is only found in him.

Here's a second reason to delight in God's Torah. Because....

2) God's Torah provides **security** (1:3-4)

Look at **verse 3**.

³ He [The one who delights in the law of the LORD... the blessed man... that guy]

³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water³⁶ that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.³⁷

Like a tree! I love trees. Several years ago, Sanja and I bought a house in central Illinois. And it was in an Amish part of the country where they had cut down most of the trees to build furniture and create farmland. And I told my realtor before we bought that house, "I don't care about much, but I want a house with a tree in my yard." So we got a house with a tree in the yard.

And that tree on my property even started to cause us problems. It was a big and strong and beautiful maple tree. But the roots of that tree went down into our basement and started tearing up our drainage system. We had to call Roto-Rooter every summer to cut back the roots of that tree in the basement. But that just proves the point of this author in **Psalm 1**. A tree is strong, powerful, and immovable. It is rooted and secure. And if you want to be like that tree, you hold fast to God's Word. You chew on it. You meditate on it. And you think about it. And you study it, like some people study for the SATs when they're trying to get into college!

And by the way, don't be thrown off by this word "law" here in **Psalm 1**. That word "law" in Hebrew is the word תּוֹרָה (the "torah") which means also "teaching" or "instruction."³⁸ And that word, תּוֹרָה, is used as a title for the first five books of Moses. But it's also used as shorthand for all of the teaching and the instruction in the Bible. This is a figure of speech called "synecdoche" meaning a part for the whole.³⁹

And the psalmist uses תּוֹרָה to describe the entire "Word of God" or all of the "instructions of God." If you don't believe me, take a look at **Psalm 119** where the psalmist writes 176 verses espousing the beauty and

suffering and humiliation. The blessing, though, is that this pain and confusion is not pointless. The work God gives us to do in the place he plants us will prosper as we faithfully turn from sin, delight in God's Word, and meditate on the Word."

³⁵ Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms 1-89: Commentary*, vol. 1, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2011-2013), 195: "Jesus prayed, 'Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth' (John 17:17). James stressed that by studying and doing the word of God people would be blessed in what they do (Jas. 1:22-25)."

³⁶ THEODORET OF CYR: "The streams from the divine Spirit resemble watering by rivers: just as they cause trees planted near them to flourish, so the spiritual streams are the cause of bearing divine fruit." Quoted in Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, eds., *Psalms 1-50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 8.

³⁷ James A. Johnston, *Preaching the Word: The Psalms: Rejoice, the Lord Is King—Psalms 1 to 41*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 29: "Prosperity preachers read this verse with dollar signs in their eyes. But the Hebrew verb translated 'prosper' means 'to succeed, to accomplish the work you set out to do.' Jesus, the truly blessed man, accomplished his work through the cross; he succeeded through suffering and death."

³⁸ Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, TOTC, 65: "Law (tôrâ) basically means 'direction' or 'instruction'; it can be confined to a single command, or can extend, as here, to Scripture as a whole."

³⁹ Longman, *Psalms*, TOTC, 57: "There is some ambiguity as to what is meant by law (torah) here. It could be the Ten Commandments and the 613 laws that follow them. It could be the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. It could be the book of Deuteronomy (Block, 2011). Based on Deuteronomy 27-28 where blessing is contingent on following the covenant law, it seems best to understand that the reference is to delight in obedience to divine requirements."

the glory of God's Word, God's תּוֹרָה. So that's why I'm using "God's Law" and "God's Torah" and "God's Word" interchangeably here.

Now what about the person who ignores God's תּוֹרָה? How does the psalmist describe them? He says they are like chaff. **I want to be a tree; I don't want to be chaff.**

Look at **verse 4**.

⁴ *The wicked are not so,*

In other words, the wicked are not a tree. What are they then? **They are like a tree that has just been chainsawed and put in a woodchipper.**

⁴ *The wicked are not so, but are like chaff⁴⁰ that the wind drives away.*

Ladies and gentlemen, that is not a flattering description. You probably knew that already, so I don't have to tell you that. **When I lived in central Illinois, the entire countryside was farmland. And driving around you would see corn fields and soy fields everywhere. And you would get a vivid depiction of chaff every October when the combines started to harvest the precious corn, wheat, and soy in the area. And the combines would gather the valuable stuff. And all that miserable worthless chaff got spewed out the backside of the combine and filled the air with hazy debris.**

In the ancient world, like what we see in the book of **Ruth**, the harvesters would take the grain stalks and wrap them up with a blanket. And then they would beat them with a rod to separate wheat from chaff. And the heavier wheat would stay in the blanket or in the basket, but the chaff would escape into the air and be blown away.⁴¹ What a picture, huh? **I don't want to be chaff!**⁴²

So the psalmist is saying, **"What do you want to be? Which metaphor describes you? Are you a well-rooted tree or are you wind-driven chaff? What's it going to be?" A Torah-meditator, a Bible-reader is a tree. That person is secure. That person prospers and produces fruit. Otherwise, you're just going to be blown away and tossed about to and fro like chaff, like the pulverized debris of grain-husks. I don't want to be that.**

So, the person who delights in God's Torah is blessed. The person who delights in God's Torah is secure. The person who delights in God's Torah is *also* directed to eternity. Write this down as #3.

3) God's Torah directs us to **eternity** (1:5–6)⁴³

Look at **verse 5**.

⁵ *Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,⁴⁴ nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;⁴⁵*

⁶ *for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.⁴⁶*

⁴⁰ Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, TOTC, 65.

⁴¹ Longman, *Psalms*, TOTC, 58: "Chaff is the opposite of a tree. While a tree has an abundance of life-giving water, chaff is dry. The tree is deep-rooted and productive; chaff has no connection to the earth, but rolls as the wind blows it, and is useless."

⁴² CHRYSOSTOM: "Even as chaff lies exposed to the gusts of wind and is easily caught up and swept along, so is also the sinner driven about by every temptation; for while a sinner is at war with himself and bears the warfare about with him, what hope of safety does he possess; betrayed as he is at home, carrying with him that conscience that is a constant enemy?" Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, eds., *Psalms 1–50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 9–10.

⁴³ Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 77: "The future belongs to the godly, even when the wicked are enjoying temporary power and prestige."

⁴⁴ Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, TOTC, 65: "Before the Judge they will have, in our similar phrase, not a leg to stand on, and among his people no place."

⁴⁵ Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms 1–89: Commentary*, vol. 1, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2011–2013), 190: "[I]f true believers are in the word, they will produce righteousness (see Paul's discussion of the "fruit that the Spirit produces" in Gal. 5:22–23)."

⁴⁶ Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 79: "Revelation comes from God for the purpose of helping human beings live in harmony with God's will, whereas religion is a human attempt to order one's path and explain the surrounding world. The godly in every age live in accordance with revelation. The contents of the revelation may vary and Christians may dispute how the OT laws relate to the church today; but there should be an earnest search for and delight in doing the will of God as set forth in Jesus' teaching."

I'm going to close this message by allowing this passage to point us to Christ in the NT.⁴⁷ We can't escape reading the OT with NT lenses when we read the text on this side of the cross, and with a realization that righteousness only comes to us through the blood of Jesus Christ. But even an OT reader of this passage would read this passage with an understanding of their own sinfulness and their need for blood. It's the Torah of the OT, the five books of Moses, which records all those blood sacrifices that atones for sin and makes OT saints righteous.

So how are we made righteous? How are we *known* by God in the sense of being made righteous by God, escaping the punishment of sin and avoiding the way of the wicked that leads to perishing? Well according to the psalmist that comes from delight in God's Law or God's Word.

And obviously, delight in God's Word alone doesn't lead to salvation, not directly. We are not saved by reading our Bibles. And our Bibles didn't die on the cross for our sins. But indirectly, this is the תּוֹרָה, this is God's revealed Word, that testifies to what Christ has done for us on the cross. The Word of God (the Scriptures) testifies to the WORD of God (the Savior). And by the way, Jesus is the only truly "blessed" man who was never tainted by sin.⁴⁸ He is the perfect fulfillment of **Psalm 1** as well as the rest of Scripture!⁴⁹

And this Bible is God's instrument of revelation that makes known to us how our sins are paid for by that perfectly righteous and blessed man. He has made a way for us to be made righteous, escaping eternal punishment and receiving eternal life. This is God's way of making known to us his plan of salvation, so that we might be "known by God" as a child of God.

Paul says it this way in the NT: "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21).⁵⁰ **Do you know this plan of salvation revealed in his Word?**⁵¹ **Have you been made righteous through faith in Christ?**⁵²

⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,⁵³ nor sinners in the congregation⁵⁴ of the righteous;

⁴⁷ Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 77: "The apostolic reading of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ in the light of the Psalter helps the modern reader see how the Psalter witnesses to Jesus as 'the human' who alone has pleased God and by whom alone redemption, happiness, and peace are secure."

⁴⁸ James A. Johnston, *Preaching the Word: The Psalms: Rejoice, the Lord Is King—Psalms 1 to 41*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 31: "Jesus Christ is the true righteous man of Psalm 1. God blessed him and prospered him as our sinless Savior. If you belong to him, the blessings of Psalm 1 are yours through him. If you belong to him, Psalm 1 will be the pattern of your life."

⁴⁹ MARTIN LUTHER: "The first psalm speaks about Christ—literally—thus: *Blessed is the man*. He is the only blessed One and the only Man from whose fullness they have all received that they might be blessed and men and everything that follows in this psalm." Quoted in Selderhuis et al., eds., *Psalms 1–72*, RCS, 9.

⁵⁰ James A. Johnston, *Preaching the Word: The Psalms: Rejoice, the Lord Is King—Psalms 1 to 41*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 26: "God gives us Jesus' righteousness—his obedience is counted as ours. And since Jesus' righteous obedience is imputed to us, then all the blessings of Psalm 1 are ours as well. Not only so, but if the Spirit of Christ is living in us, Christ himself will help us turn away from sin, delight in his Word, and meditate on his Word. To live out Psalm 1, we need to become like Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit."

⁵¹ James A. Johnston, *Preaching the Word: The Psalms: Rejoice, the Lord Is King—Psalms 1 to 41*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 25: "All the blessings of Psalm 1 become ours through his obedience. We have been joined together with Jesus by trusting in his death and resurrection. If you are in Christ, your life is wrapped up in him, and his life is wrapped up in yours."

⁵² Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms 1–89: Commentary*, vol. 1, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2011–2013), 192: "Because Psalm 1 announces the separation of the righteous and the wicked in the expected judgment, it seems best to understand it as the final judgment. Besides, final retribution is a major theme in wisdom literature (Pss. 49; 73), namely, that at the end of the age the righteous will stand before God in glory, but the ungodly will not."

⁵³ KONRAD PELLIKAN: "In the judgment of divine justice and in the great general council of the saints ... the wicked and licentious will not stand at all, but will fall condemned on account of their own impiety and faithlessness; they will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, the supreme Judge. And they will soon receive the sentence pronounced on them; more correctly, they will be violently dragged off into eternal fire and punishment prepared for the devil and his angels." Quoted in Selderhuis et al., eds., *Psalms 1–72*, RCS, 14.

⁵⁴ Longman, *Psalms*, TOTC, 58: "The wicked will not stand in the congregation, which is the setting for the use of the Psalms in worship."

⁶ for the LORD knows⁵⁵ the way⁵⁶ of the righteous,

Are you on the way of the righteous?⁵⁷ Are you known by God?⁵⁸
but the way of the wicked will perish.⁵⁹

I'll close with this. Look at the picture below. If I could depict Psalm 1 for you, here it is.



This is an AI generated picture. And this is what's called a "trope" in many movies or paintings. The travelers have reached a fork in the road. There are two paths before them. There's the sunny safe path of tranquility. And then there's the dark, dangerous, ominous path of perilousness. Which way are they going to go?

Typically as part of this trope, there's one character who says, "Let's go this way," pointing to the dark, dangerous path. Then the other person says, "Are you crazy? No! Let's go this way."

Psalm 1 is a lot like that.⁶⁰ The two options are clearly stated. There's the way of God-fearing and Torah-reading. And then there's the way of God-defying and wickedness. There's the way of security, the way of the tree. And then there's the way of danger, the chaff.

There's the way of the "congregation of the righteous" (Ps 1:5). In ancient Israel, that was the place of worship. You didn't want to be excluded from that. In eternity, that's the New Jerusalem, where we worship Christ for eternity because we have trusted him for our righteous standing before God. There's

⁵⁵ Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms 1–89: Commentary*, vol. 1, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2011–2013), 193: "[K]nows' is the opposite of 'will perish.' Thus it is a knowledge that saves. If the LORD knows them, they will not perish; if he does not know them, they will. And this is the language the New Testament says that Jesus will use in the coming judgment: 'I do not know you' (Luke 13:27) and 'I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me' (John 10:14)."

⁵⁶ AUGUSTINE: "The Lord knows the way of the just but does not know the way of the ungodly. This does not mean that there is anything the Lord does not know, but he did say to sinners, 'I never knew you.' However, to say 'the way of the ungodly will perish' is substantially the same as saying, 'The Lord does not know the way of the ungodly'; but it makes the point clearer that to be unknown to the Lord is to perish, and to be known by him is to remain. Thus being corresponds to God's knowledge and nonexistence to not being known." Quoted in Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, eds., *Psalms 1–50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 7.

⁵⁷ Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms 1–89: Commentary*, vol. 1, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2011–2013), 182: "Psalm 1 then begins by reminding the reader that those who order their lives by God's word will find success in this life and in the life to come, but those who reject God's word have no hope of escaping his judgment."

⁵⁸ James A. Johnston, *Preaching the Word: The Psalms: Rejoice, the Lord Is King—Psalms 1 to 41*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 31: "When it comes to God's blessing today and in eternity, the question is not, 'Do I know God?' but 'Does God know me?' Does he know your way?"

⁵⁹ Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, TOTC, 66: "So the two ways, and there is no third, part for ever."

⁶⁰ Longman, *Psalms*, TOTC, 59: "Psalm 1 introduces the Psalter by contrasting the righteous and the wicked. The righteous are those who delight in God's law and thus spend considerable time studying it. The righteous will prosper, while the wicked will perish. Jeremiah 17:5–8 utilizes the same imagery of the flourishing tree to describe the person who trusts in God."

that way. But then there's the way of perishing... the way of Torah-rejecting, God-defying, Christ-denying, wickedness. Which way are you going to go?⁶¹

⁶¹ NIKOLAUS SELNECKER: "Almighty and eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from my heart I ask that you through your Holy Spirit would create and maintain in me a longing and love for your holy Word—to pray and cry out to you always. For I am certain of this: aside from your Word there is no comfort, faith, life or salvation, instead everything is only the way of sinners, the seat of scoffers, and it must, like chaff, be blown away by the wind! Sanctify me in your truth; your Word is the truth. Let me have and sustain true faith and a good, peaceful conscience, so that I would remain eternally green and fruitful like a palm tree by water and that my leaves—either in this life or in eternal life—would not wither. Lord God, hear me and let me be and remain yours. Amen." Quoted in Selderhuis et al., eds., *Psalms 1–72*, RCS, 16.