

## **Psalm 1:1-6**

### **Finding True Happiness**

**Psalm 1:1-6** – Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. 4 The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

It might seem crazy what I am about to say  
Sunshine she's here, you can take a break  
I'm a hot air balloon that could go to space  
With the air, like I don't care baby by the way

Here come bad news talking this and that  
Yeah, give me all you got, don't hold back  
Yeah, well I should probably war you I'll be just fine  
Yeah, no offense to you, don't waste your time, here's why:

Because I'm happy  
Clap along if you feel like a room without a roof  
Because I'm happy  
Clap along if you feel like happiness is the truth  
Because I'm happy  
Clap along if you know what happiness is to you  
Because I'm happy  
Clap along if you feel like that's what you wanna do

Blaise Pascal - "All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves."

### **I. The Desire for Happiness is Given by God**

Psalm 1:1 – Blessed is the man

אֲשֶׁר (as-re) – happy. It appears in the OT 44 times, most often in the Psalms.

(other word translated "blessing" or "bless" is בָּרַךְ which refers to pronouncing a blessing on someone or wishing them well. It carries more of the idea of the source and action that bring happiness than the state of happiness)

Psalm 2:12 – Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

Psalm 32:1-2 – Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

Psalm 33:12 – Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.

Psalm 40:4 – Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust, And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

Psalm 41:1 – Blessed is he who considers the poor; The LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.

Psalm 65:4 – Blessed is the man You choose, And cause to approach You, That he may dwell in Your courts.

Psalm 84:4-5, 12 – Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; They will still be praising You. Selah 5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, Whose heart is set on pilgrimage. O LORD of hosts, Blessed is the man who trusts in You!

Psalm 89:15 – Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your countenance.

Psalm 94:12 – Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O LORD, And teach out of Your law,

Psalm 106:3 – Blessed are those who keep justice, And he who does righteousness at all times!

Psalm 112:1 – Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who delights greatly in His commandments.

Psalm 119:1-2 – Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD! 2 Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart!

Psalm 127:4-5 – Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. 5 Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them;

Psalm 128:1-2 – Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, Who walks in His ways. 2 When you eat the labor of your hands, You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.

Psalm 144:15 – Happy are the people whose God is the LORD!

Psalm 146:5 – Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope is in the LORD his God

And that is just this particular form of the word

There is a way of seeking happiness that is not only futile, but eternally damning. There are two types of people indicated in this Psalm and they seek happiness in two different ways.

## **II. Avoid the Way of the Ungodly**

Psalm 1:1, 4-6 – Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

### A. The character of the ungodly

Notice the progression of pursuit – walks, stands, sits  
Notice the description – ungodly, sinners, scornful

### B. The end of the ungodly

Chaff driven by the wind  
Won't stand in the judgment  
Shall perish

Solution to this is the gospel

## **III. Pursue (and Delight in) the Word of God**

Psalm 1:2-3 – But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

### A. Benefits (name off all three first, then go back and cover each)

Be like a tree planted by the rivers of water who...

#### 1) Bring forth fruit in its season

You will be fruitful. If we pursue the Word of God as we are going to describe later, we will be the type of Christians that produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives and will draw people to Jesus. We will be those who encourage and strengthen others in their faith. We will be agents of peace and mercy and healing rather than spite and anger and fighting. We will be the type of church described in Ephesians 4 that does the work of the ministry for the building up of the body of Christ until we all come to the unity of the faith, each of us supplying what is needed so that we all grow up. This is who we will be! Our lives will bring forth love, joy peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness,

faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control! Oh, how good it is to be around those types of people! And we can be that type of person, if we pursue and delight in the Word of God!

## 2) Leaf shall not wither

No matter what comes at you, you will be able to endure. When the drought comes and other trees are fading, your leaf will not wither. And the drought will come. The dry winds will blow. Floods will rise and storms will surge. But your roots will be deep because you have a lasting source of strength.

## 3) Whatever he does shall prosper

Now, this promise we have to be very careful about. If we don't understand both the context of this promise within this passage and within the entirety of Scripture, we can get a lot of crazy teaching that not only misrepresents the nature of salvation but also, considering the history of God's people, makes God a liar. Some suggest that this is a promise that, if you read and obey God's Word, God will make you succeed at everything you try. You will be successful in business or sports or personal finance or romance.

But, what the Psalmist here is saying is so much more enduring and important than temporary success. Notice the contrast that he makes between those who are ungodly and those who are righteous. The ungodly, in verse 4, are like the chaff which the wind drives away. They won't stand in the judgment and verse 6 tells us their way shall perish. In other words, the "prospering" of verse 3 is not contrasted with temporal problems, but with eternal destruction. This prospering is not a temporal success, but an eternal prospering in God's kingdom.

## B. How to get those benefits (how to be happy)

1. Delight in the Word (Law) of God (mention this but go to #2 first)
2. Meditate on it day and night

מַדְבַּר mutter quietly. To ponder by talking to oneself. The idea here is to take the Word of God and to study it and to memorize it and to think about it beginning in the morning and ending in the evening.

## APPLICATION

1) Read through the Bible in a year. Last night I set up a group reading plan in the You Version app and invited everyone who is a member or regular attender of Grace Baptist Church to be a participant. If you do not have the YouVersion app, you can download it on either Apple or Android products and or go to the website if you use Microsoft. In this plan, there is a daily video which give more information about the structure and message of what we will be reading

for that day. There are usually about 3 chapters and a place for comments. If you have questions you can put them there and we can all discuss. The goal of this type of reading is to get through large portions of Scripture so you understand the big picture better.

2) Take 1 or 2 verses and ponder those verses for a few days, maybe for the whole week. For instance, you can take Psalm 1:2-3 and consider what it means to “delight in” God’s Word. Pray for more godly desires. Seek to reorient your actions to reflect more desire for His Word. Think about how God’s Word causes you to be more stable during troubling times. How does His Word make you more fruitful, or beneficial, to others? Think about this for a few days, throughout the day. Go a little deeper than just reading.

3) In order to do something like that, you have to memorize. Its great that we have our Bibles on our phones now, so we can take it with use wherever we go, but we have to get the Bible into our minds so that it can get into our hearts. The Psalmist does not say, “I will take my Bible app with me wherever I go so that I might not sin against You.” He says, “I will hide God’s Word in my heart”.

In all of this, we are striving to get ourselves into the Word of God so that the Word of God gets into us.

NOW, BACK TO POINT #1. That word “delight”. The Psalmist tells us that the one who wants to be happy **delights** in the Word, or in God’s Law. It’s not enough to read. The goal is not meditation or even memorization. The goal is delight.

That’s one of those rich words that should really make you think. What does he mean by “delight”? The word is used throughout the Old Testament to indicate a strong desire for something because of the pleasure it brings. It is a word that carries very strong emotion. As parents, we take delight (or great pleasure) in watching our children grow up, compete in athletics, perform on stage, do well in school, learn how to drive. Some of us take great pleasure in particular foods. For instance, I like many different types of desserts, but I take great pleasure, or delight, in cherry cheese cake. If you’ve every been to an amazingly beautiful scenic area, like Niagara Falls or the Grand Canyon, you could probably describe your experience there as “delight”.

So, in much greater measure, we are to not just read the Scripture, but to delight in it! Now, at this point, if you are a thinking person... and I want you to be thinking people as you approach these eternal matters... you should be asking a few questions. One question that might pop into your head could be, “Why...should I delight in the Bible?” What is it about these words on the pages of Scripture that make them different from the words that, say, William Shakespeare wrote? You see, we’re never commanded to “delight in” the words of William Shakespeare. And some of you are very glad of that!

Well, let me try to answer that question, which is a very important question, in two ways. First, we are to delight in the Word of God because of its source. The very name of it tells us why it is important! It is not the words of man, but the very Word of God. It is God’s divine revealing of Himself to His creation! Apart from the Word of God, we have a very limited understanding of

who God is. If all we had was creation, we would know a little, but it would not be enough. But, God has chosen to declare Himself to us, to reveal Himself, even to come directly to us, through His Word. And, so we are to “delight in” God’s Word because it is the revelation of God Himself. Through it we know God.

Verse here?

The second reason we are to delight in because of its results, or what it does for us. I gave this reason second because it is not and should not be as important to us as the first reason. The primary reason we should delight in the Word is because it brings us God and we delight in God! But the benefits of the Word flow directly from that first reason. The Word is powerful and good and a blessing precisely because God is powerful and good and a blessing. What are some of these blessings? We’ve already mentioned one

It keeps us from sin

Psalm 119:11 – Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.

It brings us to salvation

1 Peter 1:23 – having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever

It guides us in our Christian walk

Psalm 119:105 – Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

It strengthens us when we are struggling with life’s problems

Psalm 119:28 – My soul melts from heaviness; Strengthen me according to Your word.

It brings us joy

Psalm 119:111 – Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever, For they are the rejoicing of my heart.

It brings us peace

Psalm 119:165 – Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble.

There are many more benefits that come from pouring yourself into God’s Word and pouring God’s Word into you. So, we are to delight in the Word because it reveals God to us and provides us with innumerable, eternal benefits.

BUT, from the very first time I mentioned the word “delight” a deeper, more problematic, questions should have begun tugging at you. And, I would be a terrible preacher if I didn’t deal with this question that is going to be screaming at you by tomorrow morning when you think about opening your Bible to read Genesis 1-3. “What if I DON’T delight in God’s Word?” What if I find myself making excuses not to read it? What if I feel like I have to force myself to get out of bed or struggle turning off the TV or just read it but don’t feel like I’m getting anything from it? Is there something wrong with me?!?

The short answer to that last question is yes...and no. Yes, there is something wrong with all of us that causes us to love that which is less than the best. We content ourselves with entertainment and sleep when God has the words of life! We have access to the mind of the creator, sustainer, and sovereign King of the universe who at the cost of the life of His Son brought us into fellowship with Him, forgiving our sins and giving us life forever. And we would rather watch football?!? So, yes, there is something wrong with us. But, no, you are not abnormal. We all struggle with that, myself included. It doesn't excuse it, but don't for a second think that the greatest Christian in the world doesn't face that same struggle you do. Even the Apostle Paul said he had to beat his body into submission in a figurative sense and discipline himself for the purpose of godliness. So, take heart, dear Christian, you are not alone! We are all engaged in this battle together!

So, how do we fight this battle? We don't delight in the Word as we should. Do we give up? Do we just forget about it and float downstream like some dead fish? What do we do when we don't find ourselves wanting to read God's Word?

My answer to that is read it anyway. Keep reading. Don't give up on the power of the Word to transform you into what God wants you to be. Battle against the distractions. Remind yourself of the reasons for reading the Word. Speak Psalm 1:3 to yourself over and over – "He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper." Tell yourself that you want to be that tree with roots planted deep by the water so that when drought comes, you stand strong and keep growing. Keep reading.

And...

Pray. In your reading, as you are struggling with desires that are less than ideal, pray that God would give you delight in His Word. Pray that God would cause you to love His Word and to love Him more through it. Pray that the Holy Spirit would do His work of renewing your mind using His sword – the Word of God.

Psalm 119:35-36 – Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it. 36 Incline my heart to Your testimonies, And not to covetousness.