

# Two Paths In Life

John Oxenham, the famous British author and hymnwriter, wrote, "To every man there opens a way, and ways and a way, and the high soul climbs the high way, and the low soul grips the low, and in between, on the misty flats, the rest drift to and fro. But to every man there openeth a high way and a low, and every man decides the way his soul shall go." There are many different paths and choices before each person. But in reality there are only two paths- a high way and a low way. Every person's life and ultimately his destiny are marked by the choices he makes. Psalm 1 differentiates between these two paths of life. One road leads to blessing, the other to cursing. One leads to salvation, the other to destruction. There are only two roads in life- the way of the godly and the way of the ungodly. They lead to two opposite destinies- one to life, the other to death.

The first psalm is considered a wisdom psalm. It provides guidance for daily living. Psalm 1 focuses upon the way of the godly (verses 1-3) and the way of the ungodly (verses 4-6). Each of these paths contains three characteristics.

The way of the godly is described in verses 1-3. The first characteristic is that the godly person is satisfied in the Lord (verse 1a). "Blessed is the man..." In the original Hebrew the word blessed is repeated. It means "O, how very happy" or "the happinesses!" True happiness is experienced by all who trust in the Lord (Matthew 5:3-12). The righteous are genuinely satisfied in God (Philippians 4:4).

The second characteristic is that the godly person is separated from the world (verse 1b). "...who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly..." He refuses the secular philosophy and the evil values of the godless. He refuses the worldview that places man at the center of the universe and entices him to live by his own standards of morality and pursuits of pleasure. "...nor stands in the path of sinners..." Bad company corrupts good morals (1 Corinthians 15:33). He resists the lure of the crowd to participate in sensual living. "...nor sits in the seat of the scornful..." He does not associate with those who scoff at God. He avoids close relationships with blasphemers and infidels no matter how prosperous they may appear.

The third characteristic is that the godly person is saturated with the Word (verses 2-3). "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." He focuses upon Scripture. The Bible points him to Jesus the Messiah. He delights in and meditates on the Scriptures day and night. "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters..." He finds refreshment and strength in a reservoir that never runs dry.

The way of the ungodly is described in verses 4-6. "The ungodly are not so..." Are the ungodly blessed? No way! Are they happy? Certainly not! Successful? Not for a minute! Fruitful? Of course not! Again, three characteristics describe the ungodly.

The ungodly, first, are corrupted internally (verse 4). "...but are like the chaff which the wind drives away..." When the grain was harvested the chaff was thrown away. The wicked are useless, like chaff (verse 4a). The wicked are unstable, like chaff (verse 4b).

The second characteristic of the ungodly is that they are condemned judicially (verse 5). “Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment...” They will not have God’s approval when they stand before Him on the last day. They will be justly condemned for their sin and sentenced to eternal punishment in the lake of fire.

The third characteristic is that the ungodly will be damned eternally (verse 6). “For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.” God watches over the righteous. He has a personal, intimate relationship with the godly. He is involved with them in order to guard, guide and protect them. But the way of the sinner will perish. The wicked will suffer relentless torment in a real place called hell, always perishing, forever suffering the eternal wrath of God.

Every person must ask the soul-searching question, “What path in life am I traveling? Have I entered through the narrow path that leads to the way of the godly?” Jesus provides salvation. He paid for our sins. He died, was buried and rose again. Many people today point to a mystical feeling or emotional experience for the validity of their conversion. The Bible teaches that fruit is the test of salvation. This includes personal holiness (Romans 6:22), Christlike character (Galatians 5:22-23), good works (Colossians 1:10), ministry (Romans 1:13), stewardship (Romans 15:25-28), and praising God (Hebrews 13:15). Which road are you on today?

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