

Songs of the Heart - 2
“The secret of a happy life”
Psalms 1

The psalms are a collection; the product of a community of faith, written by various writers over a period of about 700 years, between about 1100BC and 400BC.

Psalms 1 is the introduction.

What do I allow to shape my life?

The ways of the wicked?

Blessed are those who do not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,

“The wicked” are people who live in a way that is contrary to God’s character.

“Sinners” are people who miss God’s mark.

“Mockers” are people who talk big about things they don’t understand, especially about God.

From time to time, we are all “wicked sinners and mockers.” But the question the psalm asks us is, “Do we make a habit of living that way?” and “Do we allow people who make a habit of living that way to be the primary influences in shaping our lives?”

Or the word of God?

...but who delight in the law of the LORD and meditate on his law day and night.

There are various ways to do this, but at the core we just need to be reading scripture. You can’t be shaped by words and ideas that you never read.

The results are very different, for today ...

Fruitfulness

They [those who are shaped by God’s instruction] are like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.

This is the norm; that things will improve when we follow God. It’s the norm, but it isn’t everybody’s individual experience.

Or sterility

Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.

Irrespective of how it looks, “the wicked” are really lightweight. They don’t amount anything. They’ll just blow away and leave no mark.

And for the future

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will be destroyed.

If this life is all there is then it makes sense to use and abuse people to get all you can for yourself, to “eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.” But this life is not all there is. In the eternal time scale it makes more sense to choose to follow God.