

# Lyrics for Life

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## *Selected Psalms*

This inductive Bible study is designed for individual, small group, or classroom use. A leader's guide with full lesson plans and the answers to the Bible study questions is available from Regular Baptist Press. Order RBP1709 online at [www.RegularBaptistPress.org](http://www.RegularBaptistPress.org), e-mail [orders@rbpstore.org](mailto:orders@rbpstore.org), call toll-free 1-800-727-4440, or contact your distributor.

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## **The Doctrinal Basis of Our Curriculum**

A more detailed statement with references is available upon request.

- The verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures
- Only one true God
- The Trinity of the Godhead
- The Holy Spirit and His ministry
- The personality of Satan
- The Genesis account of creation
- Original sin and the fall of man
- The virgin birth of Christ
- Salvation through faith in the shed blood of Christ
- The bodily resurrection and priesthood of Christ
- Grace and the new birth
- Justification by faith
- Sanctification of the believer
- The security of the believer
- The church
- The ordinances of the local church: baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper
- Biblical separation—ecclesiastical and personal
- Obedience to civil government
- The place of Israel
- The pretribulation rapture of the church
- The premillennial return of Christ
- The millennial reign of Christ
- Eternal glory in Heaven for the righteous
- Eternal torment in Hell for the wicked

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# Preface

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**T**hough written over a 1,000-year period and compiled around 2,500 years ago, the book of Psalms is one of the most often visited books of the Bible. Written as poetic songs, the psalms are timeless in their appeal and valuable in their revelation of God and life. We can go to the book of Psalms and find encouragement and strength as well as instruction and challenge. Through them we can fathom the depths of God and learn to respond to Him in praise.

This course will present God's songs on subjects such as true happiness, God's provision, confession of sin, and singing to the Lord. As you work your way through this course, you will find that the psalms are truly Lyrics for Life.

## Lesson 1

# The Way of Happiness

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*Responding to situations according to  
God's Word brings happiness.*

## Psalm 1

**"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:1, 2).**

**E**very day we come into contact with various influences, and they shape our lives. People influence us. Our spouses and friends influence us. Financial considerations influence us. The media influence us. Advertising is such an important part of our culture that some people allow companies to put advertising on their cars and even on their bodies! One young man promised to wear any company's ad-bearing T-shirt every day for six months if the company would pay him \$1,500. Another young man made his arm available for any company's ad in the form of a tattoo if the company would pay him \$5,000. Someone else made his back available for a tattoo for \$7,000, while a car owner offered his car as a rolling billboard to any company that would give him \$8,000. Influences will never go away. So, to be successful Christians, we must determine which influences to accept and which to avoid.

## Getting Started

1. What are some subtle influences on your life?
2. Why is it important to recognize what influences you?

Psalm 1 helps us understand which influences we should avoid and which ones we should allow to mold us.

## Searching the Scriptures

Psalm 1 is an appropriate introduction for the book of the Psalms, for it summarizes the two ways, or courses, a person may choose: the way of the ungodly or the way of the godly. Consequently, this psalm can be classified as a wisdom psalm. It has remarkable similarity to the book of Proverbs and its description of the two ways a person may choose.

The first word in Psalm 1, “blessed,” sets the tone for the entire psalm. The word literally means “happy.” So we have here a divine prescription for true happiness.

3. How would you define true happiness?

True happiness is not merely a good feeling; it is an inward, deep-seated contentment and satisfaction in the life God has given to a believer, no matter what the circumstances.

4. The psalmist used a plural form of the word “happy,” which could be translated, “O the happinesses of the man” or “How completely happy is the man.” What do you think the psalmist was trying to convey in doing so?

**What to Avoid**

Blessed, or happy, individuals are first characterized by what they do not do—they do not allow unbelievers to influence them. Using poetic parallelism, the psalmist portrayed this concept in three statements, each showing a different level of influence.

5. Study verse 1 and complete the chart below, indicating the action involved, what to avoid, and the name for the ungodly.

Action	What to Avoid	Name for the Ungodly
1.		
2.		
3.		

6. What increasing levels of influence do you see in the words “walking,” “standing,” and “sitting”?

“Walking” indicates a casual influence from the ungodly, similar to a person’s walking and talking with someone in a relaxed atmosphere. This influence can be deceiving, since it may seem harmless. However, it can lead to listening to the advice of the ungodly or observing their waywardness and actively considering them. Watching television, particularly programs that encourage sinful lifestyles, is a subtle means of influence that believers often consider harmless. “I’m not living that way,” we might claim. But when we watch others sin, we can’t help but be influenced by them. Choosing to watch sin in action is to choose to walk in the counsel of the ungodly.

“Standing” involves more than simply walking and conversing casually; it portrays a person who has stopped to have a serious conversation with the unrighteous. The word conveys a fixed association and an



actual identification with the sinner's way of life. Choosing unbelieving close friends who are actively living in sin is a primary means of standing in the same path with sinners. Having unbelieving friends is not wrong, but when we allow them to set the tone for our lives, we are headed for trouble. For example, allowing them to swear, gossip, blaspheme God, and talk in a crude manner around us as if we approve their behavior is to stand in the same path with sinners. Those who stand with sinners are hiding their lights and trying to blend in with a sinful society (Matthew 5:13–16). This is a dangerous way to live. The unchecked, sinful influence of close friends can eventually drag a believer into sin.

“Sitting” with the scorner is the strongest level of influence. It means a believer has become so influenced by the person that the believer has taken up permanent dwelling and has established his or her residence with the scorner. The believer now acts like those who despise God's ways. Believers who are sitting with the scorner act and speak like an unbeliever.

7. Read the following passages: Genesis 13:7–13; 14:11, 12; 19:1, 12–26, 30–38. Lot, Abraham's nephew, allowed himself to be affected by an increasing level of ungodly influence. What were the tragic results?

8. What are some examples of each level of influence in our lives today?

Walking—

Standing—

Sitting—

Righteous people who desire true happiness do not take the first step of walking with the ungodly lest they end up sitting with them.

9. What steps should believers take to start backing away from the ungodly influences of unbelievers?

10. What can you do to be a godly influence in the life of an unbeliever without being negatively influenced by that person?

### **What a Delight!**

In Psalm 1:2 the psalmist turned our attention to what a truly blessed, or happy, person does. This person is influenced, not by the ungodly, but by the Scriptures. The “law” is the familiar Hebrew word “torah.” This “law” is not just the Ten Commandments or even the Pentateuch. Rather it is any instruction from the Lord, no matter where we find it. Though the psalmist had in mind the Old Testament writings available at that time, we understand this word to embody all of Scripture.

11. a. What does it mean to delight in the Scriptures?

b. What are some evidences of delighting in the Scriptures?

12. What image do Psalm 42:1 and 2 contain that helps us understand about delighting in God’s Word?

Reading and studying the Scriptures is not a burden but a joy. We should look forward to our time in the Word each day.

13. What words describe the concept of meditation?

Some have compared meditating to a cow's chewing its cud, and that is probably a good analogy. That is the kind of action we are to take toward the law of God—mulling it over in our minds until we understand its full meaning.

14. What do the words “day and night” mean in relation to meditating on God's Word?

We often associate meditation with what we do in our daily devotional time. While our daily time with God is important, meditating on God's Word involves more than daily devotions. It involves something we should be doing “day and night.” If we read and study our Bible in the morning, we are to think about it whenever we get an opportunity to.

15. According to Joshua 1:8, what is the purpose or goal of meditating on God's Word?

We are to remember and ruminate on the Word throughout the day and night so we can apply the wisdom of Scripture to the events of our days and nights. Knowing and meditating on God's Word has little value if we do not let it influence our lives.

## **Fruit**

A believer who allows the law of God to influence him or her will be a spiritually fruitful person (Psalm 1:3). The psalmist illustrated this truth by comparing the believer to a tree.

16. Read Psalm 1:3. What four benefits come to the person who lets his or her life be influenced by the Word?

17. When have you seen the benefits of delighting in God's Word in your life or in the life of a friend?

### **Not So for the Ungodly**

Verses 1–3 of Psalm 1 describe in detail the blessing and prosperity of the righteous, but the way of the wicked receives only a terse and abrupt treatment. This abruptness can be seen in the literal translation of verse 4: “Not so the wicked.” It almost seems that that psalmist did not want to dwell on such an unpleasant subject.

He went on to compare the wicked to chaff. Chaff is debris—the husks and pieces of the grain plant separated from the seeds at harvest. A winnower would toss a mixture of chaff and grain into the air so the lighter chaff would blow away.

18. Why is chaff an appropriate analogy for unbelievers?

Using poetic parallelism again, the psalmist affirmed that the ungodly will not be able to stand before the judgment of God or have a standing in the assembly of righteous people. Unbelievers may think they are good enough to merit some favor from God, but they will soon learn that they cannot stand their ground. The ungodly will have to sit down or cower in shame and guilt. They will be alienated from the people of God.

19. Contrast the description of the unrighteous in Psalm 1:5 with the description of the righteous in Romans 8:1.

Psalm 1 concludes by contrasting again the godly and the ungodly. The Lord knows, or is intimately acquainted with, the righteous. "The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Timothy 2:19). But the ungodly will perish in Hell for eternity (John 3:18; 2 Peter 2:12; Revelation 20:13, 14).

20. Read Psalm 1:6. Why should knowing that God is intimately acquainted with us bring us happiness as nothing else can?

### **Making It Personal**

If we are to be truly happy, we must respond to every situation in accordance with God's Word. We must first delight in and spend time in God's Word. Then we are to meditate on the Word day and night so we can relate Biblical truth to every situation or problem we face. Review Joshua 1:8 to get a clear picture of what God wants from us.

21. What problems or situations are you facing right now? Take time to write three of them below.

1.

2.

3.

What Biblical truths should influence you in your response to those situations? Beside the problems or situations above, write the Biblical responses you should make.

22. Write a commitment to God to respond Biblically to the problems you are currently facing.

23. Take time to memorize Psalm 1:1 and 2.