

=STORIES BEHIND THE PSALMS=

Lesson 7

Psalm 1

AIM: to teach my pupils the meaning of the 1st Psalm

POINT OF CONTACT: Ask the class members to tell you something that they have tried and failed. Discuss for a while something that is a real problem for them. Some people simply cannot fly a kite. No matter how hard they try, they cannot make a kite that will fly. There are some people who simply can't carry a tune. No matter how hard they try, they can't stay on key. Ask the class members to name some things that are really a problem for them.

Then ask them something at which they have succeeded. Then lead them to realize that Psalm 1 gives a way whereby success is guaranteed. Call their attention to Psalm 1:3, the last line: "...whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Here God gives a guaranteed recipe for prosperity. Let us see what the ingredients of this recipe are.

It would be wise, however, to look first at the word "blessed" in verse 1. "Blessed" means "to be envied," "contented" and "happy." Here is a happy, contented and prosperous man. How does a man become happy, contented, prosperous and envied?

- I. "BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT WALKETH NOT IN THE COUNSEL OF THE UNGODLY," Psalm 1:1a. Now this means that he does not follow the advice of ungodly people. The word "ungodly" here does not necessarily mean vile and wicked. It simply means "without God." It means the Christian should not seek nor follow the advice of people who are not Christians. This would apply to school counselors, psychologists, home counselors, etc. The person who is prosperous must not obey, nor seek, nor follow the advice of people who are not saved.

This would lead us to believe that Christian people should be in the right crowd. Stress here the danger of marrying unsaved people, the danger of running in the wrong crowd.

Each young person should have a cabinet. This cabinet consists of people to whom the person should talk before making any decision of consequence. The following people should be in that cabinet:

1. Godly parents.
2. The Pastor.
3. A friend (in the true sense of the word, friend).
4. One who has the gift of wisdom.
5. A Christian who is successful in the vocation the young person is choosing.

Over and over again, the wise man, Solomon, advised us to have many counselors. The danger is that we seek counselors who are smart, or at least we think they are. In other words, we set ourselves up as judges as to who should be our counselors. Naturally, we select people who agree with us, so we become our own counselors. To say the least, if one is to become successful, he must not walk in the counsel of the ungodly.

- II. "NOR STANDETH IN THE WAY OF SINNERS," Psalm 1:1b. Now this means that a Christian, if he is going to be prosperous, should not hang around with the wrong crowd. Notice the first point had to do with walking. Now one is standing. Hanging around is a dangerous thing.

Stress here the importance of young people not hanging around. They will get in trouble when they hang around some restaurant or some drug store just doing nothing. Someone has said, "An idle mind is the Devil's workshop," and certainly an idle group is an opportunity for the Devil.

List people in the Bible who got in trouble because they started hanging around the wrong crowd. Balaam did so. Peter chose to warm at the Devil's fire. Lot chose the well-watered plains toward Sodom.

It is vital, if a person is successful, that he not only refuse to seek the counsel of the ungodly, but also that he not run with the wrong crowd.

- III. “NOR SITTETH IN THE SEAT OF THE SCORNFUL,” Psalm 1:1c. For a person to be successful, he must not be critical. Notice—first the walking, then the standing, then the sitting. This is the progression. When one walks in the counsel of the ungodly, then he stands. In other words, he stops progressing. Then when he stands in the way of sinners, he sits down. Then when he sits down, he gets critical. It is always the sitter who criticizes. The “Monday morning quarterback” is the one who criticizes the game from the grandstand. It is always those who do nothing who criticize those who do something. If one is going to be successful, he cannot be critical, be hurtful, be a gossip or a backbiter. He certainly cannot sit in the seat of the scornful.
- IV. “BUT HIS DELIGHT IS IN THE LAW OF THE LORD,” Psalm 1:2a. Psalm 37:4 reminds us that if we will delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us the desires of our hearts. Do not just read the Bible, but delight in the Bible. Take pleasure in it. This is another one of the things one must do in order to be successful.
- V. “AND IN HIS LAW DOTH HE MEDITATE DAY AND NIGHT,” Psalm 1:2b. In other words, constantly we are thinking about the Word of God. The teaching of this Scripture has to do with a cow chewing the cud. A cow has more than one stomach. When one sees a cow grazing, he is “gathering.” He takes all of the grass he can and puts it in a storage place in a particular compartment of his stomach. Then he will sit in the field, pull up a portion, chew on it, and swallow it into another part of his stomach. This is what meditation means. We are to read the Bible, yes; but we are to have it stored in our minds, and day and night we are to be chewing on it as a cow chews on the cud, absorbing it, taking it in, letting it become a part of us.

Now these five things are the secrets. If one will not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful, but will delight himself in the law of the Lord and meditate therein day and night, God says, “...whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” Notice the qualities about such a man:

1. He is planted. Psalm 1:3a, “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.”
2. He is productive. Psalm 1:3b, “That bringeth forth his fruit in his season.”
3. He is perennial. Psalm 1:3c, “His leaf also shall not wither.”
4. He is prosperous. Psalm 1:3d, “And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

CONCLUSION: All of us want to be prosperous. We want to be successful, but there is a recipe. Success is never accidental; it is always on purpose. Following the above suggestions will bring prosperity and success to the child of God.