

THE PATH TO PROSPERITY

Week 2 – The Way of the Wicked

Primary Text: Psalm 1:1–6

Supporting Texts: Matthew 7:13–14; 1 John 2:15–17; 2 Corinthians 10:5; 1 Corinthians 15:33; 1 Timothy 6:10

BIG IDEA

Everyone is walking a path. Psalm 1 describes two:

- **The way of the righteous** – the path of blessing, stability, and true prosperity.
- **The way of the wicked** – the path shaped by the world’s thinking that ultimately leads to destruction.

God invites you to reject the world’s influence and intentionally walk the way of the righteous with Jesus.

1. PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before you start, take a moment to be still.

- Ask God to speak to you through His Word.
- Ask Him to show you honestly which path you are walking and where the world is influencing you.

Reflection:

In one sentence, how would you *currently* define a “prosperous” or “successful” life?

2. READ THE WORD

Read Psalm 1:1–6

Read it slowly. If possible, read it out loud.

As you read:

- **Circle/underline** every word related to *blessing*, *prospering*, and *righteousness*.

- **Circle/underline in a different way** every word related to *wicked, sinners, judgment, or perishing*.

Then read Matthew 7:13–14

Jesus speaks of a broad way that leads to destruction and a narrow way that leads to life.

Reflection:

- In your own words, what are the **two paths** described in Psalm 1 and Matthew 7?
- How would you describe where you are *today*—closer to the way of the righteous, or drifting toward the way of the wicked? Why?

3. TWO PATHS, TWO DESTINATIONS

Psalm 1 and Matthew 7 both make this clear:

- One way is **popular, broad, and easy**, but leads to **destruction**.
- The other way is **narrow and harder**, but leads to **life** and true prosperity.

Left to yourself, Scripture says you naturally move toward sin. The *first step* onto the path of the righteous is not self-improvement—it is **repenting of your sin and placing your faith in Christ**.

Reflection:

- Have you ever consciously taken that first step—confessing your sin and trusting in Jesus to forgive you and save you?
- If yes, briefly write when that became real for you.
- If not sure, write what you *do* believe right now about Jesus and your sin.
- What appeals to you about the “narrow way” (the way of the righteous)? What feels difficult or costly about it?

4. WHAT NOT TO DO – PSALM 1:1

“Blessed is the man who does **not** walk in the counsel of the wicked or **stand** in the way of sinners or **sit** in the seat of mockers.”

The psalm starts with a **negative**: a blessed person *avoids* certain influences.

- **Walk** – taking in the *counsel/advice* of the wicked.
- **Stand** – lingering, taking their path as your own.
- **Sit** – settling in, belonging to a group that mocks God and His ways.

Together this gives one big idea:

Don't put yourself around people, voices, and places that teach and influence you to believe and behave like the world.

Reflection:

- Think about *walk / stand / sit* as a progression:
- Have you ever seen this in your life—starting by casually listening, then hanging around, then fully joining in?
- Write a time when that happened (even if it's in the past).
- If you had to rewrite Psalm 1:1 in your own words as one sentence, what would you write?
- Where right now are you most tempted to:
 - **Believe** like the world?
 - **Behave** like the world?

Be specific (topics like money, sexuality, success, comfort, identity, etc.).

5. RECOGNIZING “THE WAY OF THE WORLD”

Read 1 John 2:15–17

John warns about “the world” as a system of desires and values opposed to God: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

In the sermon, four big ideas (“isms”) were used to describe the world’s way of thinking —like ingredients in a gumbo:

1. **Naturalism** – *There is no supernatural; only what we can see and explain.*
 - No God, no miracles, no meaningful prayer—just the natural order.

2. **Relativism** – *There is no absolute truth or morality.*
 - What's "right" depends on culture, preference, or personal feelings.
3. **Materialism** – *Possessions, money, and stuff are the key to happiness and success.*
 - Your value equals what you own or how much you make.
4. **Hedonism** – *Pleasure and comfort are the highest goals.*
 - Avoid anything hard or uncomfortable; do whatever feels good.

Together, they end up saying something like:

"There is no God. There is no absolute standard of right and wrong. Just get everything you can to make yourself comfortable and happy. Avoid hard things until you die."

Reflection:

- Of the four (naturalism, relativism, materialism, hedonism), which one do you see **most clearly** in the culture around you right now? Give 2–3 concrete examples (ads, shows, school, work, social media, etc.).
- Which one do you personally feel **most pulled toward**? Why do you think that is?
- According to 1 John 2:17, what happens to "the world and its desires"? What happens to "whoever does the will of God"? How does that verse challenge the way you're currently living?

6. THREE PRACTICAL WAYS TO RESIST THE WORLD'S INFLUENCE

The sermon ended with three practical steps:

1. **Drink with a filter.**
2. **Guard who influences you.**
3. **Walk the right path.**

A. DRINK WITH A FILTER

To "drink with a filter" means:

- You do not mindlessly absorb every idea, video, book, podcast, post, or conversation.
- You hold every thought up to Scripture.
- You ask, *“Does this lead me toward Christ or away from Him?”*

Reflection:

- What sources of information (social media, news, entertainment, conversations, podcasts, etc.) influence you the most **daily**? Are they leading you more toward the way of the righteous or the way of the wicked?
- Are there any “inputs” you may need to limit or eliminate for a season? Write one practical change you can make this week.

B. GUARD WHO INFLUENCES YOU – 1 Corinthians 15:33

“Bad company corrupts good character.”

Influence is powerful. The people closest to you shape your:

- values
- behavior
- habits
- desires
- direction

Guarding influence does **not** mean isolating yourself from non-Christians. It means choosing carefully who speaks into your heart.

Reflection:

- Who are the people with the strongest influence on your decisions, emotions, and priorities? Do they help you walk closer with Jesus—or away from Him?
- Is there someone you may need to create gentle boundaries with? What would that look like?
- Who could you intentionally bring *into* your life that pushes you toward Christ? (A mentor, a wise friend, a godly couple, etc.)

C. WALK THE RIGHT PATH — DAILY

Psalm 1 is not only about *avoiding* the wrong path—it's about *choosing* the right one.

You cannot walk both paths at the same time.

Walking the way of the righteous requires:

- daily decisions
- intentional habits
- a renewed mind
- a heart set on obedience

Reflection:

- Where do you see yourself “drifting” rather than choosing the righteous path?
- What is one area of obedience God is calling you toward right now?
(Prayer, purity, generosity, forgiveness, Scripture, service, etc.)
- What next step will you take this week to walk intentionally with Jesus?

7. PERSONAL EXAMINATION: WHICH PATH ARE YOU ON?

Slow down and honestly evaluate. Psalm 1 presents two ways:

The Way of the Righteous:

- rooted
- fruitful
- enduring
- watched over by the Lord

The Way of the Wicked:

- rootless

- unstable
- easily blown away
- ending in destruction

Reflection:

- If someone observed your habits, choices, priorities, and thought life over the past 30 days, which path would they conclude you are walking?
- What path do you *want* to be on?
- What needs to change for that to happen?

8. FINAL REFLECTION WITH GOD

Spend a few quiet minutes:

- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas where the world is shaping your thinking.
- Confess anything God brings to mind.
- Ask Him to help you delight in His Word and walk the way of the righteous.

Write a short prayer:

Thank God for showing you the two paths.
Ask Him to help you choose the path of life.

CLOSING PRAYER

*Father, thank You for showing me the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked.
Where my mind has been shaped by the world, renew it.
Where my steps have drifted, correct them.
Give me wisdom to see what influences me, courage to reject what pulls me away,
and strength to walk the narrow way with Jesus.
Plant me beside Your living water so that my life will bear fruit that lasts.
Lead me in the path of life. Amen.*