

**Why Is Singing Important?**

**Psalms Introduction and Psalm 1**

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**Do you love to sing?**

**We can't help but sing.**

**God made us to sing.**

**Do you know that there are scientific reasons why music is important to us?**

**What Does The Bible Say?**

His brother's name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute. (Genesis 4:21 NLT)

**On the night Jesus was betrayed, and after the last supper, Mark and Matthew record that Jesus and his disciples sang**

a hymn and went to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26).

Paul mentions singing a couple of times as though it was a regular practice for those early church services. See Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16, and 1 Corinthians 14:15.

When Paul and Silas were arrested in Philippians, beaten, and put in stocks in prison, around midnight, they began to sing (Acts 16:23-25).

The Bible is full of songs.

The book we know as 'Psalms' is called 'Praises' in the Hebrew scriptures. Our word 'Psalms' comes from the

**Greek word ‘psalmoi; which means ‘music played on instruments.**

**The Psalms were written and collected over 600 years.**

**The Psalms deal with all of man’s emotions and look to God within those emotions.**

**How Can You Obey?**

1 Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.

(Psalm 1:1 NLT)

8 But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. 9 Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. (Colossians 3:8–9 NLT)

**People of God don’t do certain things.**

2 But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. (Psalm 1:2 NLT)

10 Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. (Colossians 3:10 NLT)

**People of God do certain things.**

3 They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do. (Psalm 1:3 NLT)

16 Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. (Colossians 3:16 NLT)

**People of God reap the benefits.**

4 But not the wicked! They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind. 5 They will be condemned at the time of judgment.

Sinners will have no place among the godly. 6 For the Lord watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction. (Psalm 1:4–6 NLT)

**Lost people have no future and no present.**

**They will be eternally separated from God and currently are separated from God's people.**

**In which group are you?**

**Additional Notes:**

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at [www.crosswaveschurch.com/host](http://www.crosswaveschurch.com/host). Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

**Additional Notes:**

This week's Tough Questions is from Walter C. Kaiser Jr. et al., *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 79–81.

### **Explore:**

There are many kinds of psalms, written in different styles and for different purposes. Some psalms offer God praise and thanksgiving, while others cry out to him in despair. Some celebrate God's Law and wisdom; others recount God's saving work throughout Israel's history. And some are written for temple-entry rituals or corporate worship. Here are some examples of the types of psalms you will encounter:

- Praise psalm: Psalm 146
- Individual lament psalm: Psalm 22
- Corporate lament psalm: Psalm 44

- Torah psalm: Psalm 19
- Wisdom psalm: Psalm 49
- Royal psalm: Psalm 20
- Temple-entry psalm: Psalm 15
- Thanksgiving psalm: Psalm 84
- Historical psalm: Psalm 105
- Song of Zion psalm: Psalm 46

John D. Barry, Jake Mailhot, David Bomar, et al., eds., *DIY Bible Study* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

### **Explore:**

Psalm 1 is a wisdom psalm and focuses on God's Word, God's blessing on those who obey it and meditate on it, and God's ultimate judgment on those who rebel. Wisdom psalms also wrestle with the problem of evil in the world and why God permits the prosperity of the wicked who reject His law. Other

wisdom psalms include 10, 12, 15, 19, 32, 34, 37, 49, 50, 52, 53, 73, 78, 82, 91, 92, 94, 111, 112, 119, 127, 128, 133, and 139.

While this psalm depicts two ways, it actually describes three different persons and how they relate to the blessing of the Lord.

Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Worshipful*, 1st ed., “Be” Commentary Series (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications Ministries, 2004), 11–12.

### **Explore:**

The Book of Psalms is commonly divided into five groups or “books,” as outlined below:

- Book 1 (Psalms 1–41)
- Book 2 (Psalms 42–72)
- Book 3 (Psalms 73–89)
- Book 4 (Psalms 90–106)

- Book 5 (Psalms 107–150)

The division into five books is ancient. Portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls dating from the first century contain this division. Jewish tradition holds that Ezra compiled the collection of the psalms following the exile to Babylon. The psalms come from a variety of authors, including David, Moses, and others. We have no indication of who wrote some of them. David seems to have written more of them than any other individual. The Hebrew word for psalms means praise, so in Hebrew, the book is the Book of Praises. The word psalm comes from a Greek word that indicates songs accompanied by stringed instruments.

**Explore:**

## **Believers Who Avoid Ungodly Influences and Delight in God's Word Are Happy, Blessed, and Spiritually Prosperous (Psalm 1:1-3)**

The psalms represent a wide variety of human experience and emotion. They describe suffering, betrayal, victory, defeat, faith, doubt, and much more. But the word that launches the entire book is blessed. Some translations use the word happy, but our common understanding of happy is too weak for this word. It is not the fleeting emotion of just feeling good, at ease, or just shy of giddy. It does not even rule out being sad or in pain. It refers to deep contentment that comes from a deep source. In this case, the source is the special relationship with God only the redeemed experience.

Verses 1 and 2 describe this relationship as a series of actions that build on each other. These are actions in which the blessed person does not engage:

- Walking in the counsel of the wicked: The wicked are full of advice and influence they are happy to share, especially if they can turn the child of God away from justice and righteousness. The blessed person pays no attention to such counsel.

- Standing in the way of sinners: From walking to standing, the picture here is someone who has slowed down enough to “hang around” with those who are in rebellion against God. This is not the way to blessing.

- Sitting in the seat of scoffers: From walking, to standing, now to sitting, we see someone who has gradually joined himself to those who have no regard for God or His ways, mocking them. This is not the blessed person!

We want to exclude no one from the gospel. However, we must exclude ourselves from the kinds of entanglements with the lost that will result in our being influenced by them.

If this is what the blessed person does not do, what then do we expect him or her to do? The blessed person delights in the law of the Lord. Law is literally the Torah, or the books of Moses, but it often extends its scope to include all of God's recorded revelation. We must keep in mind of course that not all of the Old Testament existed when this psalm was written. Delight describes more than a "well, this is what God said, so I'd better obey or else" kind of attitude. Fear-based, begrudging compliance is not delight. Delight operates differently: Oh, look at this! Look what I have discovered! Look at what God does! See what He is like! The blessed person delights in God's law; the person who delights in God's law is blessed.

This delight causes those who are blessed to spend time in God's Word. They read and study it. They meditate on it. It is always on their minds. They think about it and dwell on its meaning and consider how to put it into practice.

Verse 3 displays a beautiful word picture: a flourishing fruit tree planted near streams of water. Streams of water included rivers or creeks, but could also include irrigation canals. Ancient Israel and the Middle East were, and remain, very dry. Access to water is vital. The tree representing the life of the blessed obedient person does not lack for water. The nearby stream ensures a good supply of groundwater under the surface. The result is that the tree grows well and thrives. It produces fruit (See also Jeremiah 17:5-8).

Spiritual stability deserves our pursuit, but it is not a mechanical process. It is organic, akin to the growth and fruitfulness of a tree. Our delight in God's Word and ways helps us to put down roots, to draw in spiritual nourishment, and to pass it along as fruit for the benefit of others.

**Explore:**

the Bible is God's Word to us. We will be blessed if we delight in it, learn it, and live it out.

### **Explore:**

For many in our society, meditation has come to mean practices affiliated with eastern religions. It often assumes a non-Christian worldview. For many, there is no ultimate reality beyond what the individual can bring or create within. For others, there is no essential self, but merely the great "nothingness" they will rejoin at death. This is not biblical meditation. Biblical meditation assumes a Christian worldview. It sees ultimate reality as God and what He has made, said, and done through the years. The purpose of biblical meditation is not to discover one's self. It is to discover God's ways and learn better how to live in them. It does not seek to empty us of any- thing but sin. It seeks rather to fill us with the knowledge of God's ways. It does not seek for us

to disappear into some void. It seeks instead to nourish us that we may grow, abide, and produce fruit for the benefit of others.

## **Explore:**

### **The Ungodly Are Headed for Judgment and Eternal Destruction (Psalm 1:4-6)**

Verse 4 paints the situation of the wicked. In contrast to the righteous, they produce no fruit helpful to others. Chaff is the outer husk that farmers separated from the kernels of grain. Once the chaff was ground out and removed from the grains, farmers used wind to separate them. As the mixture of grain and chaff was tossed into the air, the heavier grain fell back down, but the lighter chaff blew away on the wind. So it is with the wicked. God will separate them from His people. They disappear like chaff in a stiff breeze.

It is clear that the influences described in verses 1 and 2 make a

difference in the kind of life that follows. Delighting in the law of the Lord brings fruitfulness and durability. Scoffers do not remain, driven away on the dry wind.

Therefore (verse 5) provides an important clue: what follows is the logical conclusion of what the psalmist had already described. The psalm contrasted the two distinct ways of approaching life: 1) scoffing and rebellion, and 2) delighting in God's law. The last two verses contrast the eternal outcomes those two approaches produce.

As long as there is life and breath, there is hope for the scoffer's repentance. We must not assume, however, that all options remain forever open. They do not! Those who enter eternity as scoffers will suffer the fate they have ridiculed in this life. Earlier we saw that the blessed person would not stand in the way of sinners nor sit in the company of scoffers. Now, we read that the

wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sit in the company of God's righteous people.

We have here a clear case of self-exclusion. The blessed exclude themselves from entanglements with the wicked in this life. The wicked exclude themselves, by their actions, from the blessed in the next life.

How is this possible? How can the psalmist be so sure of this result? Verse 6 tells us: God knows. Knowing, in this case, signifies much more than just knowing about something. For instance, if we do not care anything about a given sport, we may know the result of a recent game or match, but its results leave us largely unaffected. However, the results of a game for a team that we support, in a sport we enjoy, will affect us much more. That is the kind of knowledge verse 6 describes. God knows the way of the righteous. He has been following the match very carefully, pulling for His righteous ones. God's care and concern

ensure victory for the blessed. They just as surely spell doom for the wicked. We dare not neglect this life. This is where we obey or disobey, believe or doubt. Yet, we must remind ourselves that this life is not the end. God sees. God wants us to win the spiritual race. There is more to come!

We must take seriously our relationship with God, turning away from evil and living according to His Word. We must not, however, focus only on our own relationship with God. We must also consider how the ungodly are excluding themselves from fellowship with God and His people, both now and in eternity. We must look for opportunities to warn the wicked and share with them the love of Christ.

**Explore:**

Hebrew poetry, such as we find in the psalms, deals not so much with rhyming sounds as with similar or contrasted ideas. This psalm provides a good example of such poetic treatment:

Parallelism — Verse 1: walking in...standing in...sitting in, with a building construction of sin: the wicked...sinners...scoffers; verse 3: planted...yields fruit...does not wither.

Contrast — Verse 2: but his delight; verses 3 and 4: like a tree...like chaff; verse 6: the Lord knows...the righteous, the wicked will perish.

Consider the parallel of not standing or sitting both in verses 1 and 5.

**Explore:**

**KEY TRUTHS:**

1. Believers Who Avoid Ungodly Influences and Delight In God's Word Are Happy, Blessed, and Spiritually Prosperous.
2. The Ungodly Are Headed for Judgment and Eternal Destruction.

**HOW IT FITS: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the**

**Bible:** The Psalms were written by various authors and come from various periods of Israel's history from Moses to the postexilic times. They were set to music and used in the worship of God. Many were written by David. Psalm 1 set the stage for the rest of the Psalms and focused on learning and applying God's Word to life.

**Explore:**

## **Explore:**

Christianity is about more than going to church and living a good moral life. Being a Christian is about having a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every Sunday School teacher or Bible study leader should want to see each of his or her learners enter into this relationship—their eternal destiny depends on it. As you work toward this goal, keep the following in mind:

Following Christ is about more than a mere decision; it is about a lifelong relationship. Jesus called us to make disciples, not mere decision-makers. Aim for long-term faith, not momentary emotion.

Salvation is a matter of grace, not works. Our works do not save us (Ephesians 2:8-9), nor do they keep us (Galatians 3:2-6).

Good works are a product of salvation, not a prerequisite to it.

Don't confuse sanctification with salvation. Holiness follows salvation; it doesn't precede it. Don't try to impose "Christian" expectations on men and women who don't know Christ.

- Keep it simple. Being born again is not complicated. Here's a simple way to explain it:

- Acknowledge your sinfulness and your need for a Savior (Romans 3:10, 23).

- Trust in Christ's sacrifice for your sins and in His resurrection (Romans 10:9-10).

Surrender your life to God's transforming power (Romans 12:1-2).

Most of all, remember that your job is to tell the truth in a way others can understand, answer their questions, and give them an opportunity to respond. If you do that faithfully, some will respond and join the band of Christ-followers. When they do, Heaven will rejoice!

### **Question 1 of 5**

Did Jesus cast out demons or heal sick people? Please justify your answer.

## **Question 2 of 5**

What would indicate that we delight in God's Word?

## **Question 3 of 5**

How do we warn the wicked without coming across as people who think they are better than others?

## **Question 4 of 5**

What sinful influence do you need to set aside to walk with God more closely?

## **Question 5 of 5**

What are some negative or sinful influences that affect adults in our culture?