

PSALM 1

While Psalm 1 may not be quite as 'popular' than Psalm 23, it is recognized by many people when quoted. I would like to look mainly at verse 1 of this psalm, and note the downward spiral which may occur if we are not 'standing firm' and 'grounded' in Him (Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 1:23).

Psalm 1:1 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. (KJV)

Psalm 1:1 Blessed--happy, fortunate, prosperous and enviable--is the man who walks and lives not in the counsel of the ungodly [following their advice, their plans and purposes], nor stands [submissive and inactive] in the path where sinners walk, nor sits down [to relax and rest] where the scornful [and the mockers] gather. (Amplified Version)

Let's look first at the action (or non-action) of this person, according to Webster's Dictionary.

Walk----to advance by steps; to make headway; to pursue a course of action or way of life.

Stand----to take up or maintain a specified position or posture; to occupy a place or location

Sit----to perch or roost; to remain inactive; to fail to take action.

Now let's look at the people with whom we should NOT walk, stand, nor sit.

Walk not in the counsel of the ungodly. OK, who is ungodly? It's amazing that as Christians (and as humans, in general), we place some things in the category of ungodly, while others are not placed there. Whom would you consider to be ungodly? A murderer? A rapist? A drug pusher? A liar? A thief? Someone who worships an idol? Someone who is envious? Someone who does not take time for God? Someone who ignores God, or pretends He does not exist? Do you know anyone who 'fits' any of these descriptions? Note that in God's eyes, the one who envies, or steals, or lies is listed in the same list of Ten Commandments as the person who kills. (Exodus 20.) Also, the person who lies is listed with the idolaters, sorcerers, etc., in Revelation 21:8 and 22:15. But, according to Psalm 1:1, we should not seek counsel from the ungodly----even if we know that person will agree with us! But, at least as long as we are walking, we place ourselves in a position to change directions! But, let's look more closely.

Stand (not) in the way of sinners. (In this case, standing 'in the way' does not mean that we are attempting to get in their way to change their progression and turn them from their current path.) But, now we are being reminded not to occupy that place or position with the sinner. While several Hebrew words are translated 'sin' or 'sinner', the one used in Psalm 1:1 denotes a person who misses the mark or a standard that is set by God. (My, how many times have we done that!) Of course, God's standard is righteousness----which we will never be able to attain on our own, so God has provided a means that is outside our human effort, and that is Christ's death and

resurrection. When we 'stand' we have now slowed to a stop, and are maintaining that posture, right there with the sinner. But, let's look even more closely.

Sit (not) in the seat of the scornful. Well, as long as we were standing, we were still in a position where we could (if we wanted to) begin to move one foot in front of the other, and thus walk away from the situation. But, oh no! We now decide that we are so comfortable, we will just 'sit down and rest awhile'. No longer are we active. And we are sitting with those who ridicule God and reject His law, openly and arrogantly. A scornful person resists correction. And, guess what? Scripture tells us to stay away from that person.

But, may we look at how the Scripture describes the action that is expected of Christians?

Several Scriptures mention a race. (Paul compared our Christian race with the Olympics.) Hebrews 12:1 states "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience, the race that is set before us..." (Verse 2 tells us why we are racing!)

But, if our running the race slows to a walk, we may find ourselves with some ungodly companions. If the lure of the worldly pleasures we see as we are walking causes our 'walk' to slow to a 'stand', we may begin to yield to that siren call. And when the 'stand' slows to a 'sit', our identification with evil has completed its downward spiral. An example from Scripture could be Lot, who when he separated from Abraham, he pitched his tent toward Sodom, and finally moved on into Sodom, and we even see him sitting at the gate with other leaders of the day. A regression to sin definitely has an effect on righteousness.

I hope that my intention has come through with this lesson. Let us not allow Satan to make us think we are "OK" because we go to church on Sunday-----yet we slow down during the week, and allow the allurements of the world to overcome us.

My prayer: So, if I am going to walk, stand, or sit, Lord, may I be walk humbly with You (Micah 6:8), stand in Your grace, (Romans 5:2), and sit in Your presence (Ephesians 2:6). And, I will then not be tempted by the ungodly, sinners, nor scornful, for You will be my fortress (Psalm 18:2). Amen.

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