

# The Way of the Righteous & the Way of the Ungodly

by David Guzik

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a righteous life by avoiding the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the path of sinners, and sitting in the seat of the scornful, and instead delighting in God's word and meditating on it day and night.*

**Duration:** 29:02

**Scripture:** Psalm 1:1-3, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Righteous Living", "Spiritual Growth"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the fleeting nature of worldly prosperity and compares it to chaff that is driven away by the wind. He emphasizes the importance of delighting in God's word and hungering for it, as a measure of one's devotion. The speaker encourages the audience to confess any lack of hunger for God's word as sin and to ask God to touch their hearts. The sermon also highlights the blessings of the righteous, who are compared to a tree planted by rivers of water, bringing forth fruit and prospering in all they do. The righteous are urged to avoid the counsel of the ungodly, the path of sinners, and the company of the scornful.

---

## Transcript

OK, Psalm one and Psalm two this evening, open up your Bible to the book of Psalms. That's sort of in the middle of your Bible. And we'll take a look at these two outstanding Psalms, which I think were chosen to begin this great book of Psalms for a very important reason.

One of them, the first Psalm is said by some to be almost a summation of the entire book of Psalms, and the second one is one that glorifies the Messiah with incredible power and clarity. So let's take a look at it. Psalm one.

I'm just going to jump right into it. Verse one. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

You might have a hard time believing it, but the book of Psalms is a book full of songs or poetry, and when you read the book of Psalms, it doesn't sound very poetic, does it? I mean, it doesn't rhyme. It's not hickory dickory dock. The mouse ran up the clock, the clock struck one, and I don't know whatever

happened to the mouse in that nursery rhyme and such.

We're used to poetry that rhymes with rhythm and sound. Hebrew poetry is different. Hebrew poetry has a cadence and a rhyme, but it's a rhyme of ideas.

You can see this in the very first verse. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. It's really the same idea repeated three times.

Now, I'm not saying that each one of those is identical and they're not. We'll talk about the distinction between walking in the counsel of the ungodly and standing in the path of sinners and sitting in the seat of the scornful. We'll talk about the difference, but they're certainly very close.

The 25 cent word for this is parallelism. Now, you can be impressed that I read some commentaries before our study here tonight. Hebrew parallelism is a way that idea is stacked on top of idea, and it's a poetry where the thoughts are rhymed, where there's a cadence to the thinking and to the speech.

Now, the idea here in verse one is very plain. We have a man and he's a blessed man. He's blessed and we know that he's blessed.

It's translating the Hebrew word Esher, which has the idea of happiness or contentment. It comes from the Hebrew root word Ashar, which basically means to be straight or to be right. This is the man who is happy because he's straight with God.

And this man is blessed. I might add that it is an intensification in the Hebrew. You could almost say blessednesses go to the man.

It speaks of a plurality or multiplicity of blessing that goes to this man. Now, once you notice as well, isn't it great that says blessed is the man not to exclude any of the ladies here this evening, but it's just speaking of the common person. It doesn't say blessed is the king.

It doesn't say blessed is the scholar. Blessed is the rich. Blessed is the man that says blessed is the king.

I'm disqualified. Rich, not on my account. Scholar, forget it.

But blessed is the man. Every one of us can fit in there because we're all regular people. Every one of us can attain to this blessing.

I wonder how many blessings in the Christian life you disqualify yourself from just right off the bat. Say, well, that's not for me. That's for some kind of super saint.

No, no, no. This isn't blessed is the super saint. Blessed is the man.

But what do you need to do? Look at the character of this man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. The blessed man does not do certain things. There's a way in which he will not walk a path.

He will not stand in. And there's a seat that he will not sit in. This is very important, friends.

You can never make very much progress in the Christian life. Might I even broaden that? I'll just say there's not very many. You're not going to make very much, very much progress in life, period, until there's

some things that you will not do.

You just won't do that. A lot of times we fail to stop the leaking in our life. The life within us just trickles out through all sorts of open doors and portals that have no business being open.

But this blessed man says, I'm not going to walk in a certain place. I'm not going to stand in a certain place. And I'm certainly not going to sit in a certain place.

If you think about it, you can talk about it says walks not in the council of the ungodly that speaks of how you think walks not in the path of sinners that speaks of how you behave and sits not in the seat of the scornful that that speaks of who you belong with. You don't belong with the score for the scornful that the righteous man and the ungodly man are different. They're different in how they think and how they behave and how they belong.

You might even say that there's a progression of sin, right? First, you're walking in the council of the ungodly. Then you find yourself standing in the path of sinners. And all of a sudden, you're making your seat with the scornful.

Now, it says first that he walks not in the council of the ungodly. Do you know that the ungodly have counsel for you? They do. Ungodly people will love to counsel you and tell you how to live your life.

Now, the righteous man will not walk in that council. And there's all sorts of advice that comes to us from all different sources. But the righteous man knows how to stay away from the council of the ungodly.

Now, first and foremost, that means that the righteous man knows how to discern the council of the ungodly. Many people fail at this exact point. They don't even consider if the council is godly or ungodly.

They hear all sorts of theories or advice about their problems. And they find themselves agreeing or disagreeing with it without stopping to think, is this godly or is it ungodly? Now, the righteous man is also discerning enough to know that the council of ungodly can of the ungodly can come from an unexpected source from the self. Sometimes I'm giving myself the counsel of the ungodly.

Do you know what I mean? You're thinking in defeat and discouragement or or unbelief. Man, that's the counsel of the ungodly. And sometimes I'm feeding it to myself, our own conscience, our own mind, our own heart.

Those can be the sources of ungodly counsel. The righteous man also knows where to find completely godly counsel. You find it from God's word.

There is no counselor like the word of God. Godly counselors will always bring the truth of God's word to somebody who wants counsel. Next, if you notice in verse one, it talks about standing in the path of sinners.

Now, sinners have a path where they stand. And the righteous man knows I don't belong on that path. A path speaks of a road, a direction.

And the righteous man is not traveling in the same direction as sinners. If you're just floating down the stream and just flowing with all the other fish, if you're not swimming upstream against the current, against the tides of the world, then you're probably standing in the path of sinners. You're just going along with the road.

The righteous man, he's not afraid to take that less traveled road because he knows that it leads to blessing, happiness and eternal life. This idea of the two roads is a very important one. You know, that great poem by Robert Frost about the two roads, two roads diverged in the middle of my life.

I took the one less traveled by and that's made all the difference. Well, Jesus said the same thing. He said it even better, of course, than than a poet like Robert Frost.

Jesus said in Matthew 7, 13, enter by the narrow gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to this destruction. And there are many who go in by it. You can take the easy road, the road where the path of the sinners is.

But the righteous have the confidence of Psalm 16, 11. It says you will show me the path of life in your presence is fullness of joy. And at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

God has a path for us, and it's the right way to take. So he doesn't stand in this, excuse me, he doesn't, as it says there in verse one, he doesn't walk in the counsel of the ungodly. He doesn't stand in the path of sinners.

But third, he doesn't sit in the seat of the scornful. Well, the scornful love to sit and criticize the people of God and the things of God, don't they? The righteous man will not sit in that seat. Now, when other people are putting down Christians, it's easy to sit with them and criticize them.

Because sometimes we know that their criticisms are true, don't we? And it's easy to go in and sit in the seat of the scornful with them. But friends, it's wrong because sitting in the seat of the scornful is not the way to be the righteous man or the blessed man. We should be proud to be followers of Jesus Christ.

You know, there are certain people on television who often, in my opinion, and I suppose my opinion is worth just about that much. It's worth about as much as my opinion is. But some of the folks on popular Christian television, I think sort of make Christianity look ridiculous.

You know, the sets of their television program, I think are extremely poor taste-wise. And perhaps their makeup and hairdos and just their whole kind of manner and everything. It's like, I wouldn't want to be associated with that at all.

If there's ungodly folks criticizing them, my temptation is to jump on the bandwagon. Because it's not my cup of tea either. But you know, that's an ungodly response.

A godly response is to say simply this. No, I'm out and out for Jesus Christ. And if these people are followers of Jesus, I am too.

I don't look like they look and I don't talk like they talk. But you know, we serve the same Lord. And if you're going to criticize Jesus and followers of Jesus, put me down among them.

That's the way to come out for it. Now, in contrast, we saw what the righteous man does not do. Look at what he does.

It's in verse two. But his delight is in the law of the Lord. And in his law, he meditates day and night.

Now, throughout the Psalms, this phrase, the law of the Lord, is used to describe God's entire word. Sometimes the first five books of the Bible are referred to as the law, the first five books of Moses. But

when the book of Psalms uses this phrase, the law of the Lord, it's referring to the entire word of God.

The righteous man is delighted with the word of God. And I want you to think about that. Does the word of God delight you? What makes you happy? What gets you excited? You know, that's a good way to tell what is important to you.

You know, if you're taking up golf and golf gets you happy, you're excited about going out and playing around. And, you know, you'll wake up early to go play golf, won't you? You'll drive long distances to go play golf. You'll plunk down big money for the green fee, and Lord only knows how much you paid for that new driver that you're hiding from your wife.

You'll do all those things because you delight in golf, right? Well, do you delight in God's word? If personal pleasure is the only thing that makes you happy, then you're a selfish, self-centered person. Let's cut away the fat and just get down to the bone here, right? If personal pleasure is the only thing that gets you happy, then you're a selfish, self-centered person. Don't feel too bad about it.

We all start there. Well, Jesus Christ wants to come and rescue you from your pit of selfishness and self-centeredness. If being with your family or friends, if that delights you, that's better.

That's better than being just a selfish or self-centered person. But it still falls short. The righteous man finds his delight in the law of the Lord.

Martin Luther said something remarkable. I love this quote from him. He says, I could not live in paradise without the word of God, but I could live well enough in hell with it.

That's what he needed. His delight was in the word of God. And you might say that man must have some delight.

You must have some supreme pleasure. God's heart was never God's heart for you is to never have a vacuum inside of you. God wants to fill you with the best things.

And if you don't fill your heart with the best things, then it'll be filled with unworthy and disappointing things. You know, if a person delights in something, you don't have to beg them to do it. You don't have to beg them to like it.

Our silly illustration a moment ago about the fellow who likes to play golf. What do you have to beg him to play golf? Oh, please, please. I need to beg you.

Please play golf this week. Won't you, please? How important is it for you to play golf? He delights in it. You don't have to beg him to do it.

There's an inward desire within him to do it. You can measure your delight for God's word by how much you hunger for it. Now, let me just pause right here and say.

Honestly speaking. Many of us would look at our hearts this evening and you would say, you know what? I don't have much hunger for God's word. But I say that tonight, tonight, you should confess that as sin before God and ask him to touch your heart.

Really, because, you know, you should have this hunger. Well, why not just be real before God and say, God, you know what? Honestly, I don't I don't think I have the hunger for your word that I should. Won't

you touch my heart and change it? I don't want it to be like that.

And God, who is so rich in mercy, God who loves you so much. God will be honored by your honesty before him and he'll say, oh, I'm going to work in that dear child's heart and give them a greater love for my word. Now, if you notice, it also says in verse two that in his law, he meditates day and night, the righteous man ponders the word of God.

He doesn't just hear it and forget it. He thinks about it. As Christians, we should meditate on God's word.

Now, meditation is very important for Christians. You know, in Eastern meditation, the goal is to empty the mind. You sit there with the incense burning and in the lotus position and your fingers a certain way and you just, you know, or whatever you're doing.

And the goal is to empty your mind. That is not Christian meditation. As a matter of fact, I would say that's dangerous meditation because an empty mind may present itself an open invitation to deception or to a demonic spirit.

But in Christian meditation, the goal is to fill your mind with the word of God. And this can carefully be done by thinking about each word, each phrase in the word of God and applying it to oneself and praying it back to the Lord. You come here and you say a blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly.

Oh, Lord, as I think about it, just last week, I walked in the counsel of the ungodly. You think about the words, you apply them to your life. Lord, I don't want to walk there anymore.

Won't you forgive me? I want to be. Won't you forgive me? I want to be the blessed man, Lord. You understand what I'm saying? You think it, you chew it over, you chew the cud, so to speak, just like the cow chews the cud over and over again and just ekes out every bit of nutritious value that it can from the grass.

That's what you do with the word of God. Now, many people lack because they read the Bible, but they don't meditate on it. They read it without thinking on it.

All right. Got to read my chapter for the day. All right.

I read it. All right. Let's move on.

You know, I just don't get much when I read the Bible. We've got to stop and read it. It's not just the reading that does good, but when the soul inwardly feeds on God's word and digests it, Charles Spurgeon told a story about a preacher who once came to him and he said, I've read the Bible 20 times through on my knees and I never found the doctrine that you're preaching about in it.

You know what Spurgeon told him? He said, I don't doubt that you never found that doctrine because you're reading the Bible in a very uncomfortable position. If you were to sit in the easy chair and read it, you'd be able to understand it better on your knees. You're not paying attention.

You know, you're not you're not meditating. We'll sit down in an easy chair and read your Bible. That's your problem.

You're not digesting it. You're not thinking about it. I think what's great about this is verse two tells us that the righteous man only has God's word on his mind two times a day, just two times a day, daytime and nighttime.

That's it. That's when his mind is on God's word. Now, look at how the righteous man is blessed.

Verse three, you should be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither and whatever he does shall prosper. A tree that's by a river has a continual source of water. It'll never wither away because it's always getting what it needs.

If we're constantly needy, it's worth examining if we're planted by the rivers of water or not. And that makes that tree strong and stable, too, right? Because those roots sink down deep into the soil. Friends, we need this.

We need this constant reliance upon the Lord and his word. We need that consistency of just growing and being fed and letting it sink down deeply and then notice bringing forth fruit. That's the result.

You might say, well, look at this tree. It's great. Man, is it healthy? Deep roots.

There's the water running by. Boy, what a great tree. But where's its fruit? Now, the righteous man is going to bear fruit.

He's going to bear the fruit of the spirit, isn't he? Love, joy, peace, kindness, long suffering, the whole gamut of it. And the fruit is going to come naturally from the tree because it's planted by the rivers of water. It's abiding in a life source.

Jesus said that if you abide in me and my words abide in you, you'll ask for it. Everyone, it shall be done to you. You will bear fruit unto him.

But if you notice as well, it'll says it'll bring forth fruit in its season. I've seen this many times. People will begin to walk the steps of a righteous man.

They will do it. They'll realize the folly of the way that they've gone on. But when they don't bear fruit immediately, they get discouraged and give up.

I'll tell you what Satan wants to do is he wants to get you discouraged before the fruit comes forth on the tree. But look at what it says. Fruit will come forth in its season.

There are no barren trees in God's orchard, yet they bear fruit in their season. The leaves don't wither brown, dead, withered leaves. Those are signs of death and dryness.

The righteous man doesn't have those. Instead, look at the end of verse three. Whatever he does shall prosper.

It isn't that the righteous man has the Midas touch and everything he does makes him rich and comfortable. But the life of the righteous man, God brings forth something good and wonderful out of everything. Even tough circumstances bring forth something that shall prosper.

You know, I've been thinking about it as as I work over a commentary that I'm working on on Second Corinthians and oh, how I love that book. Oh, I love the book of Second Corinthians. How it shows us the

Apostle Paul and the difficulties that he went through.

You know, the Apostle Paul lived with a great burden, and the burden was that to many people, to many Christians, to churches that he founded. We're talking about the great Apostle Paul. I mean, we consider to him be something, you know, above President Lincoln and President Washington, right? I mean, this is the Apostle Paul.

In his own day, many Christians looked at Paul and sniffed and said, What a loser, man. Oh, man. What is that guy ever going to get his act together? And Paul struggled with this before the Corinthians.

Now, he didn't struggle with it for his own sake. It's not like Paul was the pouty guy whose pride was offended. I'm not a loser.

I'm not a loser. But Paul knew that the things that they despised in him, the weakness that they thought they saw in Paul, those were things that they really despised about Jesus. Paul knew how God's strength was made perfect in his weakness.

I think you could look at the life of the Apostle Paul and say whatever he does shall prosper. I didn't always look at like that at the time. Oh, but the test of history has proven.

Well, look at the contrast here in verse four. Here's the way of the ungodly. The ungodly are not so, but are like chaff, which the wind drives away.

Now, everything that was true about the righteous man, he's stable as a tree. He has continual life and nourishment. He bears fruit.

He's alive. He's prosperous. Those things are not so regarding the ungodly.

Now, isn't it funny, though? Let's be honest. It oftentimes seems like the ungodly have those things. And sometimes it seems like they have them more than the righteous.

But it's not so. All of those things are fleeting in the life of the ungodly. It can be said that they really don't have them at all.

Well, there you are today. You're the president of a big CEO. You're your CEO of a big company.

And there, you know, big, oh, man, you're fancy. You're on the cover of all these business magazines and articles are written about you. Aren't you fancy? Wow, you're really a success.

You're applauded. Everywhere you go, they admire you. What do you know? The next day, you and your kids are taken away in handcuffs.

I'm not commentating on whether or not the people who had that happen to them just recently, whether they're godly or not. But that's how it is with so much of the prosperity of the ungodly. It's fleeting.

Matter of fact, look at what it says about them in verse four. They're like the chaff which the wind drives away. You know what chaff is? Chaff is that light shell around a kernel of grain that has to be stripped away before the kernel of grain can be ground into flour.

Now, chaff was light enough that it could be separated from the grain by throwing a scoop full of grain into the wind and letting the wind drive away the chaff. How they would do it is they take a bunch of grain with

the chaff on it. The husks are intact and they would crush it a lot of times by just having an animal walk over it, maybe by grinding with a stone, but they would crush it up and then they would take scoop fulls of it and toss it up into the air with a breeze blowing and the breeze would blow away the chaff because the chaff was like, well, it was lighter than even confetti.

The chaff is just blown away, just carried away by the wind. You know what kind of substance chaff has? None. It is nothing.

That's how unstable, how lacking in substance the ungodly are. Chaff is intrinsically worthless. It's dead.

It has no use and it's easily carried away. Now, look at the contrast. You can be like a tree or you can be like the chaff.

Which one? Look at the dangerous future of the ungodly. Verse five. Therefore, the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

You see, because the ungodly are like chaff, they have no weight. They're going to be found lacking in the day of judgment. And sinners won't stand in the congregation of the righteous.

It's true in the future. They're not going to share the same glorious, eternal destiny. But it's true also in the present because they're sinners.

They sense that they don't belong in the congregation of the righteous. You know what my heart's desire is for us as a church? My heart's desire for us as a church is that we would have a congregation where a rank sinner could come here and feel comfortable when they come. Feel welcomed.

Feel that people don't judge them. People don't look at them and say, oh, man, you are disgusting. You know, you have no business here.

And they they would sense a love and a warmth and openness like Jesus would extend to them and that they would feel that for a while. But my hope is that we would have a church that if a sinner remains a sinner, they could not keep coming back week after week after week without saying, I got to change my life and get out of here. There's just too much conviction here.

There's just something here that tells me so strongly that my life has to change before God and Jesus Christ that I just can't keep it coming back here. And the prayer would be that they would change and that they'd no longer stand in the way of the ungodly, but they would stand in the congregation of the righteous. And that's a good balance between the way that a church should be.

Have a great, great welcome to anybody. Oh, but you know, there's a sense that there's a righteousness, that there's a that there's a holiness here that that if you're going to stay, if you're going to be a part of this group of people that you know, you're going to want to pursue righteousness right along with them. Look at the summary here in verse six.

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the godly shall perish. You know, the righteous have peace because a loving God in heaven knows their way. He protects them and preserves them.

I like it. You could say more literally that the Hebrew says the Lord is knowing the way of the righteous. He's constantly looking at their way.

It's a continual thing. God knows your way, but the way of the ungodly shall perish. It leads to destruction.

They're on a broad path that gives them a lot of company right now. But in the end, they shall perish. Look at how it describes it there in verse six.

It's two ways, right? The Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish. You know, at least four times in the book of Acts, Christianity is called the way. Not a great way to describe the Christian life.

It's the way the way you should go. Certainly, it's the way of the righteous, not the way of the ungodly. Now, listen, if somebody were to follow you around day by day, 24 hours a day and look at you and the way you live your life, would they say this man is on the way of the righteous or would they say this man's on the way of the ungodly? Or I like a phrase that was popular when I was a young Christian.

I think it's a very powerful phrase. Maybe it should be brought back to more common currency. They would say if you were put on trial for being a follower of Jesus Christ, would there be enough evidence to convict you? They would interview your co-workers and say, well, this person is accused of being a Christian.

Is it true? Your co-workers say, I don't know. You know, interview your family. Was this person a Christian or not? I don't know.

They got a Bible. Sometimes they go to church. I didn't ask that.

Are they a Christian? I don't know. But it's the way of the ungodly or the way of the righteous.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/10/SID10735.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-guzik/the-way-of-the-righteous-the-way-of-the-ungodly/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**