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If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, or aren't sure and would like to become one, then you need to believe that Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God, that he was God who became a man, that he lived a sinless and perfect life, keeping the Law of God perfect in every way, that he kept faith perfectly, and that he was crucified on that cruel cross for your sins, mine and the entire world- he died for our sins! His death on the cross paid the penalty fully, one time for all sins that we have ever committed and that we will ever commit. He died; he went down into the bowels of the earth, even into Hell, and was raised from the dead on the third day in a resurrected, eternal body. He ascended back into heaven, was seated at the right hand of God, and is now Lord over heaven and earth. He is coming again to judge the world, to raise the dead, where he will give an eternal, resurrected, glorified body to everyone that has believed on him as their Lord and Savior, and to establish his kingdom one earth.

You come become a Christian right now as you read this, by personally placing your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior; believing that he is God's only begotten Son, that he died on the cross for you and that he was raised from the dead and is now seated in heaven at the right hand of God the Father. *"Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."* Acts 16:31a And when you do trust Christ, and Christ alone, as your Lord and Savior, then go to God the Father in heaven in prayer and tell him so. Tell him that you have believed on his Son, thank him for his Son, and thank him for forgiving your sins and saving you! *"That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord", and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."* Romans 10:9,10 *"For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* Romans 10:13 *"Therefore, being justified by faith (declared righteous), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Romans 5:1

Psalm One

A. Separation from negative people. v.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.” Psalm 1:1

אשר־יהאיש אשר לא הלך בעצת רשעים ובדרך חטאים לא עמד ובמושב לצים לא ישב:

1. *Blessed is the man* – אשר־יהאיש

What we have given to us is a general plan from God by which the believer in Christ can be prospered and experience joy in the Christian life. It is not a complex plan, in fact, it is quite simple! But there are some things that the believer will have to do to implement it in his life. It is basically generalized into two categories. One, he is going to have to totally associate himself with God and his ways. And two, he is going to have to dissociate himself from the wicked and their ways!

Put at the beginning of a sentence it is used as an exclamation; the blessedness of this man, or **how blessed** is this man; and the man is blessed because he does certain things and there are other things that he doesn't do! And what was true three thousand years ago is still true today.

The word for *blessed* here, (sometimes also translated as happy), is *ashray* in the plural. *Ashray* was a synonym for *barach*; the difference being that *barach* was the more solemn term used in the blessing formula, blessings if you do this and cursings if you do that, while *ashray* was the more general, secular term applied to man in general of being blessed in his life here on earth.

Ashray can refer to happiness in certain contexts, but here it is not to be thought of as referring to some kind of bliss, but being blessed or prospered by God in your life, as the translators have brought out. Being blessed by God is one of his gifts of grace to his people, but one can be unhappy at any given time in his life, but still be blessed by God in his life, or still under the blessings of God.

One would expect to find three things under the blessings of God: success, prosperity and happiness. The first one, success, is never to be thought of in the light of society's definition of success: money, fun, material possessions, power, careers, prestige, position in the community, cars, boats homes, etc.. What's tragic is that virtually everyone who has these things, or are in pursuit of them, are not successful but tragic failures!

The basic definition of success is to be able to take a project and bring it to its desired conclusion or completion. If one desires to have a nice garden, the successful gardener is one who tilled the soil, planted the seed, weeded it, watered it and had a great harvest. The size of the garden, nor the size of the harvest are not issues in the matter.

Or a man and his wife have a cottage industry, profession, or business by which they support themselves. By which they are able to feed and clothe the family, pay for the home and take care of their family's needs. Even though they live modestly, they are successful! Some might think they're failures because they don't have a fancy house, cars, or jewelry, **but they are truly successful!**

Christians have got to stop equating success with money, fancy homes, fancy furniture, designer clothes and excesses of toys and stuff. They need to see that Biblical success, not worldly success, is being blessed by God at what you have chosen to do in life before God, whether it be a Pastor, or a teacher, or a millworker, or shopkeeper, or whatever! You can be extremely successful and dress modestly, live in an humble abode and have very little of these world's goods! But most Christians today have abandoned Biblical success to run after worldly success and in so doing have ended up being tragic failures in life and the plan of God.

But the important thing to remember is that Biblical success is not about what you are doing, but if you are doing the will of God for your life! If you are doing God's will for your life, regardless of what it is, and regardless of whether you have **any** of this world's goods, then you are successful! You won't be in society's eyes, but you will in God's eyes. And remember also, it is God who will make you a success in life, but it comes from doing what he tells you to do.

The second concept found in God's blessing is prosperity. But remember, prosperity is never to be defined by the number of things that one has, or how rich they are, but in a different light in five areas: finances, our bodies, social life, soul life and personal happiness.

In the area of finances, or economics, true prosperity means first of all that you are **out of debt!** If you have debt, then you are not only not prosperous, but you are a slave. Secondly, prosperity is the money you have left over after being on a **cash basis**. To put it simply, if you are completely out of debt, have the money to pay for your dwelling, food, clothes, necessities of life, etc., and have money left over in your pocket, then you have prospered!

The third area of prosperity is in our social life. Instead of having *friends* and relatives who use us for their own personal gratification, God surrounds us with people who love us and care for us; people who love our souls and want the best for us. One of God's greatest blessings is being around doctrinal grace believers who love the Word of God. The unsaved, and believers who are not grace oriented and who do not love the Word, do not care for our souls. If they say they do, they are lying, for they do not have the capacity to love at all, let alone love **our** souls. We are wanted by them only to supply them with some ego-gratification, or lust-gratification concept. In otherwords, to be used by them. But God's blessing is to surround us with people who truly care about us. As the believer grows in grace and the knowledge of the word of God, God will surround him with doctrinal friends, who will be a source of great comfort, encouragement, fellowship and prayers. Even though personal friendships can carry their own brand of testing because of the flesh nature, they are a source of real blessing from God.

The fourth area of prosperity from God is in our soul life. When the believer starts walking with the Lord once again, where he's taking in the Word of God on a daily basis, doing what God wants him to do in life and staying away from those who do not walk with the Lord, then God starts to bless his soul. The removal of scar tissue from the soul, the healing of the soul's diseases (mental illness), getting rid of guilt complexes, failure indexes, worries, fears and all the rest. These are all signs of God prospering the soul of that believer.

And the fifth area of prosperity is the matter of personal joy. Not a happiness based upon pleasant external circumstances, or getting your way in life, but the spiritual dynamic of joy in the inner man that comes about as the result of us mixing our faith in the promises of God under the filling of the Holy Spirit. The believer, who is walking in the spiritual life dynamic, can experience the joy of God in his soul, even though he may be suffering some form of adversity.

2. "That walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly" - אשר לא הלך בעצת רשעים

The word for *walk* is *halak* and was a metaphor for the path that one takes in life. It looks at the decisions he makes, where he goes, what he does, his goals, his pursuits, the people he associates with, what activities he is involved in, the things he stays away from. It summarizes not only his lifestyle, but the path he has chosen to take in life.

But, like so many of us, before we make our decisions in life, especially important ones, such as a job, getting married, buying a house or car, where to live, what to do, the path we want to take, or the one that we are thinking about taking in life; we either try to get all the information we can about it, or the approval of family and friends, so that we can know we are making the right decisions, or at least hope that we are. (It always amazes me that we look to others in making our decisions, **when it's we that have to live with the consequences!**)

And here's where the problem comes in for us. Instead of looking to the Lord in prayer and his Word regarding our lives, we look to other people! And the overwhelming majority of people on earth are wicked in God's eyes! So what does God want us to do so he can bless us? To not live our lives according to the advice of the wicked!

The word for *counsel* is *etsah* from the root *yaats* and it refers to an opinion or advice that one would have on a subject. It's the faculty of forming plans or giving advice to someone concerning what they should do, what decisions that should make. (They wouldn't be giving you advice, though, if you hadn't let them get close to you).

How it generally goes down is one person will approach another person, generally a friend, relative, or coworker, and tell them about what you're thinking of doing, such as, making a move, buying a car, getting another job, etc.. Now you're either doing it to brag about yourself, which is wrong, or you're doing it to seek their advice or opinion on the matter, which is wrong as well!

Remember, that the content of the words that come out of people's mouths is determined solely by the condition of their soul! If their souls are full of doctrinal wisdom, then their opinions or advice will be generally sound! But if there is not doctrine in their souls, then their advice is worthless and can be disastrous for your life! **What kind of advice or opinion would you expect to receive from someone who is anti-grace, anti-faith and anti-doctrine???**

Now the Psalmist tells us that we will be blessed and prospered if we do not listen to, nor follow the advice of the *ungodly*, the plural form of *rasha*. And that includes relatives, friends, or associates, if they're in that category. **We need to be aware that it is only those that we let close to us that are in the position to give us advice or counsel!**

There are two categories of ungodly; all unbelievers and those believers who are negative to Bible doctrine. So, if they are not believers in Christ sitting under the sound teaching of the Word of God, then we are not to solicit their opinions, nor are we to listen to their advice on how we are to live our lives or decisions we have to make. Why? Because they do not have the mind of Christ!

Some people have the wrong idea about what it means to be ungodly. They equate it solely with being a moral reprobate, which it can be, and other heinous crimes, which it is also. But it is more comprehensive than just those ideas.

Suffice it to say, that the ungodly, in the case of believers in Christ, are those believers who are negative to the teaching of the Word of God, they are not under the true filling of the true Holy Spirit, and are not metabolizing Bible doctrine by faith, which constitutes the spiritual life dynamic. The result of which means that the sin nature resident in the flesh is now affecting their souls causing them to deteriorate thus destroying them. (The destruction of the soul is not the loss or death of the soul, but the loss of its well being). The soul's condition goes from bad to worse in an ever downward spiral to the place that the believer becomes incapable of doctrinal rationale, even rational thought! And, if not corrected, can end up in various forms of mental illness.

That defines what is going on inside of them, but the wicked know no rest, so in the deteriorated condition of their soul they act out their wickedness and **seek to bring others down to their level!** The ungodly seek, whether they are consciously aware of what they are doing or not, to bring other people's souls down to the level of their sick souls. And, at the same time in their pride, think that they're helping other people out!

The ungodly seek to branch out to impact those around them in society, and depending upon their old sin nature traits, you will find them actively at work in government, economics, religion and other areas. And always in their homes and circle of family and friends.

When a person casts truth aside, then the only thing that will be circulating in their stream of consciousness will be their own flawed rationalism, human viewpoint and Satanic viewpoint. So when they give out advice or opinion, it will be the viewpoint of other people, their own viewpoint, (affected by their mental illness), or the viewpoint of Satan. Obviously the believer is not to listen to them.

If a Christian does listen to their advice, he is doomed to failure, for they are not getting the mind of God on a matter, but the mind of one who is mentally dysfunctional, and more that likely, the mind of Satan. You can be sure that whatever advice they have for you will be in direct opposition to what God's will is for your life is and you will not be blessed by God.

The ungodly or wicked believer is one who is arrogant and has refused spiritual authority over them, and has been exposed to the truth and rejected it, or one who has been under the teaching of the truth and has walked away from it. It does not look so much as to whether one is saved or unsaved, but their negative attitude toward the truth of God's Word and the condition of their soul. Whatever advice, counsel, opinions, suggestions, or ideas that they have for you are to be disregarded.

Some of the characteristics of the ungodly are, other that rejecting Bible doctrine: their souls are in a state of confusion, agitation and turmoil; and not being satisfied with that in themselves they seek to cause agitation in others. They not only reject the teaching of God's Word, they reject true spiritual authority over them. They are proud, arrogant and usually braggarts. They have much resentment and anger in their souls and seek to tear down the doctrinal believer, who only wants to go on with Lord and his Word. They are willful and stubborn and very much into money and material things. They have no peace or stability in their souls and the effect of their existence on other people's lives and society in general, in time, brings about the same disturbed, unsettled, angry, agitated condition of soul that they have. You will find the materialistic types flocking the malls to shop, or there will be those who go after the money, or there will be the party types with booze, drugs, etc., there will be the criminal types, and the crusaders or social reformers, the self-righteous legalists. You will find them in schools, in their homes, in government, in business, in the bars, in every area of society working the evil of their souls out on the unsuspecting and the ignorant.

Remember, that what constitutes the idea of being **ungodly** or **wicked** is not whether they are a believer in Christ or not, but one who has no doctrinal content in their soul, which results in the soul being in a state of constant unrest or agitation as the sin nature continually works on it, and these types are always going about seeking to cause unrest in the lives and souls of others.

They have tremendous **pride**, "*The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.*" Psalm 10:2 They are **braggarts**, "*For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth.*" Psalm 10:3 They are **agitators**, "*There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.*" Job 3:17 They have tremendous internal **anger** and **plot** against believers who walk with the Lord, "*The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.*" Psalm 37:12

They often have a degree of **prosperity** in the community, and because they are lifted up with **pride** they think they're an expert on everything and quick to give out **advice**. They feel it is their place to go around and advise other Christians on how to live their Christian lives and on what they can do to prosper to be like them! And because the humble, doctrinal believer is often down at the end of the economic scale he or she will start to listen to them. After all, they say, they must be doing something right because "look how God is prospering them!"

These types put themselves above Bible doctrine and above the spiritual authority that God has established where every believer in Christ is to be under the authority and teaching of a Pastor-Teacher. They know all the right words to say, but their hearts are in rebellion against God and his Word.

It was this group of believers that *Asaph* reacted so strongly over in Psalm 73. Here he was taking in Bible Doctrine, serving the Lord each day, his heart right before God, but under the guiding hand of God, (which could be painful at times), all to keep him on the right track. But as *Asaph* looked around he saw that the wicked didn't have any of that!

He saw the prosperity of the wicked, that they had no struggles; that their bodies were healthy and strong, that they were free from the burdens common to man; that they were not plagued by human ills, that pride was their necklace; they clothed themselves with violence, their callous hearts produced iniquity, that the evil conceits of their minds knew no limits, they scoffed, and spoke with malice; and in their arrogance they threatened oppression. They were always carefree and prospered in the world system increasing in wealth.

Over a period of time *Asaph* began to get his eyes on the wicked, (and on himself), and reacted to the place where he became overwhelmed with bitterness, anger and self pity. He felt that it was for no purpose that he had invested his life in walking with God. He even got to the place where he was like a beast and couldn't talk to God any more.

Why the chastening every day? The wicked didn't have to go through it and look at how they're prospered! The more I try to walk in the path God wants me to walk in, the more struggles I have! But the wicked don't and look at their lives! And when he tried to figure it out in his own mind – nothing! Until he went into the sanctuary of God and got the answers. And the same for us today. How often have we tried to reconcile our lives of struggle with the carefree prosperous life that the wicked have. Many of us even lapsing into bitterness and self pity at times with what we have to go through, until we go to church and get the teaching of doctrine, then we orient to the Lord's grace and love for us all over again realizing how much he loves us and that he will be taking us into his glory.

3. "Nor standeth in the way of sinners" - ובדרך חטאים לא עמד

We have three concepts that are used here, walking, standing and sitting, that are metaphors used to denote the totality of the believer's life. They should not be necessarily thought of an ascending idea, but to reflect the whole of a believer's life in different situations. Other than laying down in bed sleeping, (unconscious), the believer is either walking, standing or sitting, (conscious). So the second thing we have to avoid to have God's blessings on us is not stand in the path of sinners.

The first word we want to consider is the word *sinners*, the plural form of *chatta*. The emphasis on this word is the **sinful activity of an individual**, not on their legal standing with God as to whether they are a believer or not. Many take the word sinner and think that it speaks only of people who are unsaved, when it actually looks at the sinfulness of their lifestyle.

The flesh nature, that we possess in our fallen Adamic state, has in it the desire to sin against God. And all that these fallen natures want to produce, and do produce, is sin in one category or another. Some people have a natural trend to sin in the areas of lasciviousness, partying, drinking and the rest. While other people have a trend to sin in the areas of self righteousness and legalism. Some are given to a life of crime, while others to gluttony. Some go after money and material things, while others become ascetics. The point is that we are all sinners, we just sin in different areas.

Believers in Christ can operate outside the pull and influence of the flesh nature, if they are filled with the Holy Spirit and are operating in their new nature. If they aren't, then they are just as capable of sinning, and do sin, like any unbeliever. But what we see so much of today is believers totally involved in the world system, but operating under self righteous human good.

The word for stand is *amad* and combined with the word for path with the preposition *be* before it, had the idea of persisting in something, or persevering in it. It had the idea of not following down the same path in life of sinning that other people have taken.

A path, *derek*, is a trampling down, a making of a trail in the landscape. All creatures that walk on earth leave tracks, and if enough of them follow the exact same route, their feet, paws, or hooves will so trample the ground that it leaves a path. But this passage is not about creatures, but about people who have made sinning a way of life for them. Their path in life that they have chosen is one of sin in one area of sin or another.

A path is a path because it is the thing that connects point A to point B. And with the sinners it speaks of their lives as they go from one form of sin to another. It's a path they take because they have certain lusts they want to gratify. They go from the malls, to the stores, to the bars, or whatever. Driven by their desire to gratify their egos, or their lusts, or their emotions, they go from one activity of the flesh to another into moral or immoral degeneracy.

For some it might be into drugs, so they go down the path from point A to point B to buy their drugs. For others it might be booze and the party life, so they go down to the bars to drink and party so they can have fun. And for others it might be the path of temporal success, fame, fortune, glory, material possessions, so they follow that path in their life. But for the child of God, if we want to have God's blessing on our lives, then we can not stand in the path, that is, follow down the path of old sin nature gratification that so many on earth take. For us, we are to be taking the path of Bible Doctrine and its application to our lives.

It's like what the Apostle Paul is telling believers in Ephesians 4:17 that they're to stop living like the Gentiles do, "*This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,*", which reveals that Christians can and do live their lives just like the unsaved do. The unsaved live in the *mataiotes* of their minds, due to a hardening, *porosis*, of their hearts, which causes them to indulge in every form of impurity, (OSN activity), with a continual lust for more. The OSN itches, you scratch it, but it keeps on itching. You can temporarily gratify the lusts of the flesh, but they will still keep on lusting!

Mataiotes is the illusions or delusions of the mind. It causes a distorted perception of reality, similar to the man wandering in the desert driven on by the mirage of water as he wanders from one dry spot to another thinking there will be water there, (the illusion of satisfaction), only to find no water, no satisfaction. From there he finds himself being driven on to the next mirage, to the next illusion in life, which has no satisfaction for him either!

In the same way the sinner is driven on in life by his lusts going from one dry hole mirage in life to the next. The desires or lusts of his flesh drive him on, and even if he is able to gratify what he is lusting for, there is no satisfaction for him either; it's another dry hole, another non soul satisfying experience. But then his lusts drive him on to the next thing, only to find no satisfaction there either!

What this produces for him is an aimlessness, purposelessness and uselessness in life as he wanders from one lust gratification experience to another. Purposelessness because his life served no purpose in life. Uselessness because his life was useless. All he did was live his life to gratify one lust after another. And such is the life experience of all unbelievers and many believers on earth.

As the mirage is to the eyes so *mataiotes* is to the mind. The lack of the spiritual life dynamic of metabolized Bible doctrine, under the filling of the Holy Spirit, creates a calcification in the soul similar to barnacles on a ship's hull, or tartar on the teeth, or plaque in the blood veins, which in turn creates a condition of the soul where one is not able to perceive life as it is, but has a distorted perception of reality.

It is the element of sin in all mankind's flesh, (the OSN), that produces a phenomenon in the soul where they have illusions about life and things. And at the same time convinces the individual that their perception of life is correct! It's not that they're seeing things with their eyes, but that they perceive things in a different way than the reality of it.

The illusion they have is that this thing or that thing, or this person or that person, is somehow what their soul needs. They may not put it like that, but what they're looking for is something, (or someone), that will fill the void we all have in our souls. A void that only Jesus Christ can fill! And we are deceived by it! And pride enters into the picture assuring us that this is not the case because we're smart or whatever, so we go off to pursue our elusive, illusive dreams.

The devil, who is the god of this age and the present ruler of this world, capitalizes on our deceived, sinful natures and provides of myriad of things that will occupy our time and our lives as we follow after our sinful desires with the result that we will end up with wasted lives, and for the unbeliever, not only a wasted life, but Hell will be waiting at the end of his life. Only faith in Jesus Christ and living in the spiritual life dynamic will save the individual out of that matrix. For the believer in Christ, if he wants God's blessing on his life and home, then he cannot stand in the sinner's path, that is, he must not follow after the same lifestyle of those who live to gratify their lusts.

4. "Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." - ובמושב לצים לא ישב:

The third category of people that we are to distance ourselves from, if we want to have God's blessings on our lives, are the scorers or mockers. We need to avoid being around negative people in general, but even more so those who despise the Lord and his Word.

The *seat of mockers, yashab*, denoted sitting and *moshab* spoke of a place for sitting. *Moshab* didn't refer to the actual act of sitting, but a place of sitting, or a place where people gathered or congregated. It could be a restaurant, a bar, their home, any place where people gather to talk, eat, etc.. It's not talking about working at the same place they do, or passing them on the street, but going to the places they hang around, whether a lodge hall, restaurant, or bar, or whatever. So it takes on the character of associating with them, or being in their company!

To *scorn* or to *mock, luts*, referred to denying, to scoff, to make fun of, to ridicule, to speak contemptibly of the Lord or his Word. It is not speaking of an unbeliever or a believer who doesn't know the truth, but wants to, but one who has been exposed to the truth and rejected it. But more than just rejecting it, he's arguing the points of Bible doctrine to see if he can trip you up in some way to make fun of you and the Word and to put you down.

The word *luts* covers a wide variety of manifestations, but it speaks of one who has had Bible doctrine communicated to them by you or someone else and denies it, scoffs at it, or mocks it. And this isn't directed only at those who mock or scoff at the concept of God in general, but includes those who have had biblical doctrines communicated to them over and over, but have rejected them and treat them with contempt. With the result that any further communication of the truth to them, whether the gospel or sound doctrine, ends up being scoffed at, or a point of argument. Which they will do visibly, vocally and often publicly.

Such people we are to avoid. That means we are not allowed to associate with them. We are not to go over to their homes and they certainly aren't to be allowed in our homes. If they have a place in town where they like to gather, then we even avoid that place. If they belong to some lodge or community organization, then we are to stay out of it altogether! **What business does a doctrinal believer have associating himself in public with people who mock God's Word!**

This word doesn't apply itself only to the unbeliever, who has had the Gospel presented to them but have rejected it and mock it publicly, but also to those who call themselves believers in Christ who mock or put down the teachings of God's Word. A common expression they use goes along the line that you don't need to be studying the Bible all the time.

Mockers is in the qal participle, which shows that they practice this as a way of life. When does a person become a mocker? Not the first time he hears it Bible doctrine, but after hearing the truth on one or more occasions, and rejecting it over a period of time, somewhere along the line his arrogance causes him to be vocal about it to the place where he scoffs about it all the time. And now in this state of mind and practice he begins to associate with those of like mind. That's why they like to gather together in the same places, (birds of a feather flock together), certain restaurants, bars, lodges, meeting-halls, social gatherings, community organizations, etc.. But for the believer in Christ, who wants God's blessings in his life, **he is not only not allowed to associate with them, but he's not allowed to even hang around the places they like to hang out at!** It goes back to the idea of the doctrine of separation.

