

Problem-Solving Chapters of the Bible

LIFE PROBLEMS: Psalm 1

Many people are just having problems with life itself! It seems things never go right. They never seem to succeed at anything. Life is a series of dead-end roads. Some of these people are Christians, and not merely nominal Christians either. Certain born-again people find it hard to make life work. They are frustrated, unhappy folks, but the Bible says that they don't have to be this way.

The Bible speaks of people that God makes to “*prosper*” all the time. See what it says about Joseph in Genesis 39.

“His master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand.” (verse 3)

When Moses was about ready to give the first written scriptures to the people of Israel, he said, “*Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.*” (Deuteronomy 29:9)

Notice in I Kings 2:3 what King David said to his son Solomon on his death-bed.

“Keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself.”

Why do certain people have the blessing of God, and others don't seem to have it very much? The first chapter of Joshua speaks of having success (especially verses 7 and 8) and spells out the conditions of blessing that were given to Joshua, but probably the best place to look for solutions to “life problems” is the First Psalm. This opening song of the great collection of divinely-inspired hymns found in the middle of our Bibles contrasts the lives of the righteous and the ungodly (Read it). It also shows us how a righteous person can see success on every hand. Note the promise in verse 3.

“He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

Before considering two steps we must take in order to be successful, let's notice the Bible definition of success. The ungodly are never truly successful, according to verses 4 through 6.

“The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

See here that the life of the ungodly, sinful person can only see temporary prosperity. He is “*like the chaff which the wind driveth away.*” He shall not be “*in the congregation of the righteous.*” His way “*shall perish.*” Success in life, therefore, means living in a way that has eternal value. It is fulfilling God's will for you. The only place where the word “*success*” is found in the King James Bible is in Joshua 1:8. Studied in its context, this verse can be shown to promise success to Joshua in accomplishing what God called him to do. Every believer has a calling, a purpose. To fulfill the purpose (and purposes) of our life and to please the God who made you is to succeed. God has promised to prosper and bless those who are doing His will. You will become such a person as you *follow* two simple principles.

I. Reject the Bad.

See this principle in verse 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.”

Verse 1 is a *negative* verse. Usually we must act negatively before we can move ahead positively. Look up Jeremiah 1:10 to see this. Also remember how many of the Ten Commandments begin, “*Thou shalt not.*” The righteous man of Psalm 1 must reject (1) “*the counsel of the ungodly,*” (2) “*the way of sinners,*” and (3) “*the seat of the scornful.*” these are (1) bad ideas, (2) bad actions, and (3) bad attitudes. We must consciously reject *all three*. Friend, you don't need the “*counsel of the*

ungodly"! The word "*counsel*," both in English and in the Hebrew here, means advice. Ungodly advice gets you into trouble. Some keep on stumbling because of the wrong ideas they allow into their minds. Ungodly counsel can come to us through television, radio, books, magazines, and friends. Start down the road to success by *rejecting wrong ideas* and looking for truth. The Book of Proverbs speaks often (as in 11:14, 12:15, 15:22, and 24:6) about the value of good counsel. See what it says in Proverbs 19:20-21.

"Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end. There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand."

Saved people can learn "*the way of sinners*," but if they do, they will not succeed in fulfilling God's will. Take a look at what the prophet Jeremiah said about God's people learning "*the way of the heathen*":

"A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the LORD their God . . . they know not the way of the LORD, nor the judgment of their God . . . Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein . . . Learn not the way of the heathen . . . return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good." (3:21, 5:4, 6:16, 10:2, 18:11)

Not only must we reject bad ideas and forsake evil ways, we must also give up bad attitudes. The attitude of the "*scornful*" or "*scorners*" is thoroughly rebuked in the Book of Proverbs. The Hebrew word from which this term is translated has the idea of mocking, deriding, scoffing, or making faces. That people with a "*scornful*" attitude have a hard time in life is obvious from Proverbs 3:34, 13:1, 14:6, 19:29, 22:10, and 24:9. Reject a bad, rebellious, unteachable, self-centered attitude.

Taking care of the negative is well worth the unpleasantness involved. Confess your sins and change your ways. It will have a positive effect on your whole life. Notice in verse 1 another thing. The path downward is gradual. Look at the verbs: "*walketh . . . standeth . . . sitteth*." First we walk with the ungodly. Then we stand with sinners. Finally we are sitting with scorners. It's gradual. It's easy to get on the wrong road. Now make the decision to get on the right road.

II. Absorb the Good.

Verse 2 gives us step two on the road to success!

"But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

The word "*delight*" here has the idea in Hebrew of pleasure or desire. The "*law of the Lord*" is an Old Testament term for God's written Word, the Bible (See Psalm 119:18 and 72). The verb for "*meditate*" in Hebrew indicates pondering, or thinking about something. So the righteous man desires and gets pleasure from the Bible, and he ponders its words day and night. The practice of Bible delight and meditation has the promise of prosperity (verse 3).

Verse 2 is not just talking about reading the Bible. It is calling for the saturation of the mind with the Word of God! We should read scripture daily, memorize portions, and meditate on what we have read and memorized "*day and night*." Here is one way to do it:

- (1) Read 1 or 2 chapters in the morning.
- (2) Pick a verse to memorize each week.
- (3) In the evening, go over your weekly verse, and review scriptures you have learned in the past few weeks.
- (4) Before going to bed, read 1 or 2 more chapters.
- (5) Think about any scriptures you choose as you go to sleep.

As you follow this plan, it is easy to meditate on scriptures during the day while you drive or work. Read systematically through Bible books in this way. Fill your mind with God's word. Practicing Bible meditation is the key to success. See how this connects with what is said in Joshua 1:8.

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Go back and look at the statements made in Deuteronomy 29 and I Kings 2 mentioned at the beginning of the lesson. Saturation with God's Word gets the mind ready to direct the life down the path of God's blessing.