

Proverbs Outline & The Psalms 1 Brief - Let's Go for a Walk

For the longest time I've wanted to take you for a walk through certain Scriptures, so I am really excited today! I think it's time. So here we go; let's go for a walk, first through Psalms, then later (not today) through Proverbs, two of the most amazing, beautiful wondrous books in the entire Bible.

What I think I love the most about these two books is that they are "geared", and this is my opinion, toward Spiritual preparation for an amazing, strong, unshakable personal Spiritual foundation. What the Psalms does, in my opinion, is to prepare our Spirit in much the same way law school classes prepared us intellectually and psychologically for the exams.

And just as law school laid a foundation for us to learn to think like lawyers, Psalms lays a foundation for the development of a Christ-centered outlook on all of life. It calms us, even amidst the most severe life-storms, just as law school helped us learn to determine a problem-solving legal course of action for each case, even for the complex ones. Likewise, Proverbs shows us how to think through and process everything with wisdom, Divine strength and courage.

Proverbs creates the "grid" through which we view the things that come our way, teaching us to see things and handle things the same way the Lord would, and that causes us to process things in radically different ways than most of the rest of the world does.

Up until now, we've looked at the ways of the Lord, how He might view and handle things that come our way. I've tried to share with you how I see and apply His Word to everyday things, events, problems, people, situations, etc., in the hope that you might internalize it all and begin to know how to apply it as well, and I've tried to do this via "legal" thought processes, which is a unique approach to Spiritual matters in my view, but one we are both well trained to employ. So I hope with all my heart & Spirit that it's been of value.

But now that we've laid that foundation, I think it may be time for something a little more advanced. So here goes. Let's start at the beginning. I really believe that the best place to start any Bible study is with either the Psalms, which comes first in Biblical sequence, or with Proverbs. There are, though, differing opinions as to where this process should start. Most people, I think, do it differently, but I firmly believe this is the best approach. Interestingly, many of The Psalms were written by David (David & Goliath; later King David; David the adulterer; David who God said was a man after His own heart (this in spite of his sins & weaknesses); David who had to learn to encourage himself; etc). Then, the Proverbs were subsequently written by his son, King Solomon, who many Biblical scholars consider to have been the wisest man who ever lived.

The first few verses (verses, not chapters) lay such an incredible foundation, it's probably my favorite parts of all the Psalms, maybe even all the Bible. Oh, and what I really like to do in this time is to read the verse first in the King James version, because I sooo love it's poetic, prophetic and Spiritual qualities. Then, either The Message or Amplified version, because I love the way they transform the original text, which can be really tough to understand sometimes, into contemporary prose.

Here goes:

Psalm 1 (KJV)

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. 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And 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. 4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

So now, think of this segment as the "Analysis" part of a case you've just read using the "IRAC" method of studying. Don't try to do anything with it except to let it calm your Spirit, especially if you may be restless or distressed about something. Just meditate on it for a few minutes if you can, and let it apply itself to anything you may need it to in order to gain perspective, or lead you down the righteous path where there may be a "fork" in the Spiritual road you're traveling. Don't try to "force" anything. Just let it flow however it flows.

A "ruling" on this verse might look something like this (we'll only do verse 1):

To be blessed, under these particular circumstances, you have to:

1. Not walk in the counsel of the wicked (wicked = people who don't know the Lord; don't take ungodly advice);
2. Not stand (go/ walk) in the ways of troublemakers (gossipers, critical spirited people, etc; let them go and don't follow them);
3. Not sit in the seat of the scornful (however you define scornful; my definition includes incessant complainers, naysayers, etc)...

And you can do likewise for verses 2 through 6. And then, other versions, like The Message, might be taken as "Hornbooks", or "Annotations".

So now for contemporary understanding (we're almost done, I promise). Here's The Message version:

Psalm 1 (MSG)

¹ How well God must like you—
you don't hang out at Sin Saloon,
you don't slink along Dead-End Road,
you don't go to Smart-Mouth College.

²⁻³ Instead you thrill to God's Word,
you chew on Scripture day and night.
You're a tree replanted in Eden,

bearing fresh fruit every month,
Never dropping a leaf,
always in blossom.

⁴⁻⁵ You're not at all like the wicked,
who are mere windblown dust—
Without defense in court,
unfit company for innocent people.

⁶ God charts the road you take.
The road they take is Skid Row.

I cannot even begin to tell you how much strife and anxiety this verse alone saved me from since I was a pre-teenager (not that I even fully understood it, because I didn't). When my friends wanted to go out and get into serious trouble (fighting, drugs, stealing cars, etc), I did NOT follow them. When people would counsel each other in ungodly pursuits, I didn't listen. When friends & relatives would express scorn, envy, gossip, etc, I closed an extremely deaf ear. And man did it all pay-off in the long run!

We've just covered the entire first chapter of Psalms! And now you know how the Lord would have you handle, inter alia, a "sticky" situation whenever you need to decide whether to go in one direction or another where doing what the Word considers the "right thing" v. what the Word considers doing something that may not be in your own best interest, nor that of someone else dear to you. It's a steadfast rule, grounded in the Spirit of the Word of the Lord, not under "black letter" Biblical scrutiny, as that misses the entire point of His teachings (which He tried to get the learned Biblical scholars of His day to understand, but, they never really got it, much the same way people now-days, even the so called learned, cannot seem to grasp Spiritual meanings). But, never-the-less, we have to keep trying, right...

I hope you have an incredible day!!!

- Jack