

Home Group study week beginning 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020

## Psalm 1 Happiness is...

So what makes members of the group happy? (No 'spiritual' answers please!)

### Read:

#### Psalm 1

#### Understanding

What does 'blessed' mean? Is it the same as being happy?

What, according to v1, should we avoid if we want God's blessing?

In the second line of v1, the earlier version of the NIV refers to the man 'who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked' (the later version says 'who does not walk *in step with* the wicked', which is a rather weaker translation). What do you understand by the term 'the counsel of the wicked'? *(A few pointers if you need help with this: if you take counsel in a legal case you take advice on it. There is usually a strong element of confidentiality in 'counsel', whether legal counsel or in a counselling situation or relationship: which in turn suggests a level of intimacy and trust.)*

What does it mean to 'stand in the way of sinners'? Think too of ways we might 'sit in the seat of mockers'.

What does the man who wants to be blessed take 'delight' in?

Dave mentioned that the word 'law' is a rather narrow translation of the Hebrew. The word 'law' here is actually the Hebrew word תּוֹרָה, Torah. That great authority on theology, Wikipedia, tells us: 'The meaning of the word (Torah)... is 'teaching', 'doctrine' or 'instruction'; the commonly accepted 'law' gives a wrong impression.' It also includes God's covenant with the Jewish people, so is not just a one-side list of 'do's and don't's.

Jesus has brought us freedom from the law, and we think of the law as something which restricts us. Is it a contradiction then for the Christian to delight in the law?

Verse 3 likens the person who delights in God's law, and avoids being drawn into the ways of wicked people, to a tree planted by streams of water. It paints a glorious picture of what this tree is like: there is so much meaning in it. Spend some time discussing together the meaning of each little phrase in this description:

- a tree
- planted by streams of water
- which yields its fruit in season
- whose leaf does not wither
- whatever that person does prospers.

**Application**

Do we want to be 'blessed'? How do we avoid 'the counsel of the wicked', standing 'in the way that sinners take' or 'sitting in the company of mockers'?

Dave admitted to a tendency towards cynicism, which is a major form of mockery (there's a satirical programme on TV called 'Mock the Week'; and satirical programmes thrive on cynicism).

Are people in the group inclined towards cynicism?

Why might this be?

What drives our cynicism?

How can we deal with it?

Discuss together how we can delight in the law of the Lord, especially bearing in mind the wider definition of 'Torah'.

**Pray**

That we might take delight in God's ways and know his blessing.

Pray too for the Alpha course. We have one family of four who are showing considerable interest in the gospel and we are hopeful two more people may have joined the course this week.