

PSALM 1

# A HAPPY SONG



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**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

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# INTRODUCTION

The Psalms are perfect psychology. What is psychology? The scientific study of how people behave, think, and feel. It investigates the connections between feeling, thinking, and doing. It's more focused on the inner life but it does explore how the inner relates to the outer and vice versa.

That's what the Psalms are. They explain the connections between feeling, thinking, and doing. But whereas psychology makes mistakes, often proposing theories that don't match the data, or can't explain the data, the Psalms are perfect psychology.

Of course, psychology isn't just about explaining. It's also about healing, fixing what's broken in the inner life and the out life. That's what the Psalms do also, again perfectly. Psychology often goes wrong in its diagnosis of the problem, in its idea of perfection, and in its plan for how to get there. The Psalms never do that, because although they are penned by human authors, they are also inspired by God and therefore perfect expressions of the human psych which he made. Psalm 1 answers the most common question in psychology, **"How can I be happy?"**

While we're going to be looking at psychology in the Psalms by looking at individual Psalms, we need to step back and see the big picture of praise throughout the Psalms. In that songbook we have 150 reminders that praising God is key for a healthy psychology. The Psalms are perfect psychology and perfect our psychology.

## BACKGROUND

The book of Psalms begins with the word "Blessed" and ends with the word "Hallelujah" and there are many uses of each word throughout the book. "Blessed" means more than happy (it can mean that), it means accepted and approved. We are being reminded that the key to a healthy psychology, a healthy self-understanding, a healthy relationship with God, is praising the Lord. If we want to be psychologically healthy and whole, worship is the foundation. God has made us in such a way that without worship of God we will break down psychologically, but worshipping God promotes psychological health and wholeness.



How can I be blessed/happy?  
It starts with a happy friendships.



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# 1. WE HAVE HAPPY FRIENDSHIPS (1)

**There are fatal friendships.** The person who walks with the wicked will soon stand with the wicked, and will eventually scoff with the wicked. There's an unavoidable worsening: walk > stand > sit. We see that regression also in that those who listen to the wicked's counsel, will sooner or later be with the wicked in their sinful ways, and will finally scoff at what they once were and believed. Such friendships bring God's curse upon us.

**There are flourishing friendships.** While wicked friendships are fatal to happiness, good friendships fertilize happiness. The opposite of this verse is also true. If we walk in the counsel of the godly, follow the ways of the godly, and join in godly praise and encouragement of good, then we will be truly blessed.

## CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

**Who is a fatal friend in your life?** He or she is not only damaging you today but forever.

**Find a friend that will grow you.** A true friend is someone who heals and helps you spiritually.

BAD BUDDIES  
SAD SOUL



Happy friendships are great, but where do I get happy feelings?



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# 2. WE HAVE HAPPY FEELINGS (2)

**Delighting in the truth.** 'The law of the Lord' is not just the ten commandments; it refers to the whole of God's teaching. This believer doesn't just read the Bible; he or she enjoys the Bible. It's a pleasure to them. It excites them and therefore they love to think upon it throughout the day and when they wake up at night. They look forward to reading it like they look forward to a *Ruth's Chris* steak.

**Meditating on the truth.** 'Meditating' means chewing or sucking. It's similar to how we savor the last candy in our packet. We take our time and try to relish every last atom of flavor. The Bible's words don't just pass through our eyes or ears, we grab them and feast upon them. She has a quiet time, but doesn't stop there. She carries her quiet time with her into the day.

## CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

**Truth comes before feelings:** When you pick up God's Word or listen to a sermon, don't look primarily for happy feelings. Look for the truth, and let the feelings come.

**Feelings help the truth:** When we delight in the Word, we meditate upon the Word. When the Word makes us happy, we want to meditate more. It's a blessed circle.

GOOD FACTS  
GOOD FEELINGS



What do happy feelings produce?



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## 3. WE HAVE HAPPY FRUIT (3)

**A fruitful tree.** A fruitful tree is planted near water, bears fruit, and is evergreen. It's an idyllic scene and a beautiful sight to God and others.

**A prosperous life.** This kind of person prospers in all that he does. This doesn't mean financial prosperity but spiritual prosperity. Everything that he does or that is done to her prospers and grow them.

### CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

**Accept God's description.** You may not feel like a fruitful tree, but if you are planted in the soil of God's truth, you are a fruitful tree. Whether you can see fruit or not, God can see it, and he's a better judge than you.

**Grow a fruit.** Why not look at the descriptions of spiritual fruit in Galatians 5:21-23, pick one and cultivate it over the next year with sermons, books, articles, and podcasts on the subject. More fruit = more happiness.

RICH SOIL  
RICH FRUIT



I'm happy now, but will I be happy in the future?



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## 4. WE HAVE A HAPPY FUTURE (4-6)

**A sad future.** The person who lives in the opposite way, will have the opposite results (4-5). They have no happy friendships, feelings, fruit or future. They are like chaff, useless and worthless to God, therefore rejected by God. They are excluded from the congregation of God's people.

**A happy future.** The person who follows God's formula for happiness will be happy forever. They will stand in the congregation of the righteous because Christ has made them righteous.

### CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

**How can you live happily in the present if you have a sad future eternity ahead of you?** The only way you can be happy in the present is by trying to forget the future that's hurtling towards you.

**That happy future helps us to live happily in the present.** Whatever our present, one day we will be happy forever with happy friendships, happy feelings, happy fruit, and a happy forever future.

**Jesus is the happy man of this Psalm.** As Wisdom incarnate, as THE wise man, Jesus lived a separated life, loved the Word of God, and is a fruitful evergreen tree. He is also the great judge who will eventually make the present spiritual division clear and permanent. He is the all-knowing God who will keep his people all the way to heaven.

OUR PRESENT  
IS OUR FUTURE

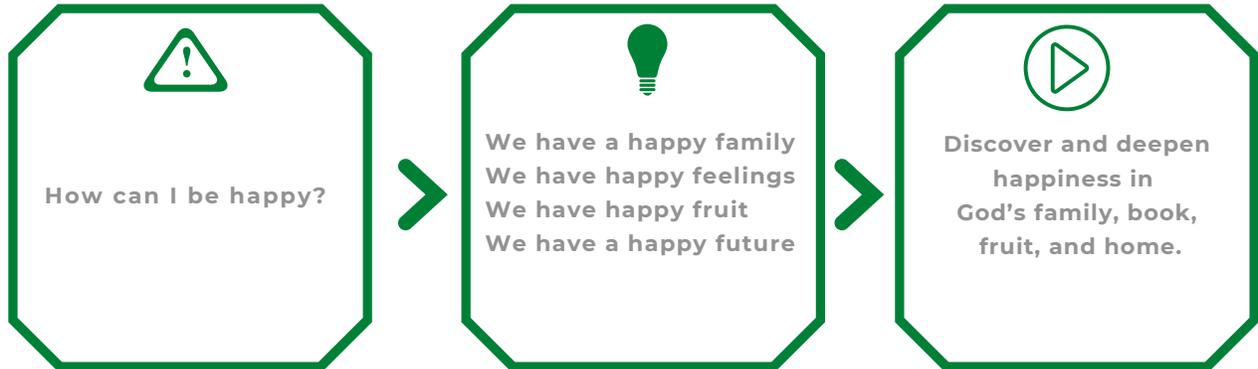


Hear God's Story > Change your story > Share your story > Change others' stories



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# CONCLUSION



**PRAYER:** Blessed Savior, I worship you as the happy man.  
Please share your happiness with me and through me.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what way have the Psalms helped your psychology?
2. Where do you try to find happiness?
3. Who are your happy friends? Why do they make you happy?
4. How does the Bible make you happy?
5. What fruit will you cultivate in the coming year?
6. What makes the saints in heaven so happy?

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