

=FAVORITE BIBLE CHAPTERS=

Lesson 4

Psalm 1

INTRODUCTION: Every person wants to be prosperous and successful. There is a way that this can be done. God has a guaranteed recipe for prosperity. Notice the last words of Psalm 1:3, "...and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." It does not say "...and whatsoever he doeth may prosper, could prosper, or should prosper," but "shall prosper." If there is any chapter in all the Bible that should be examined carefully by the Christian, it is the first Psalm. There are five simple prerequisites for prosperity and success. If these are followed, success must come in order for God to be truthful. We can count on it; success will come. The Christian can prosper in his job; he can prosper in his work for God; he can prosper in his Sunday school class, his department, his church. Let us look at these five steps and the success which comes as a result.

- I. THE PROSPEROUS PERSON MUST NOT WALK IN THE COUNSEL OF UNCONVERTED PEOPLE. In Psalm 1:1a, notice the words, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." Solomon tells us in Proverbs 11:14, "...in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." Here in Psalm 1 we find that those from whom we get counsel should all be Christians. Certainly the Christian should seek advice, but it should be advice from God's people, especially those to whom God has given the gift of wisdom.

This does not mean that the Christian should not love sinners and try to win them. It does mean, however, that he should not walk in their counsel or their advice.

Often in our church we discuss the subject of the Christian's cabinet. (It might be wise to discuss this with the pupils at this point.) It has been suggested that the young person should have a cabinet of people to whom he can go for advice about his future and his decisions. This cabinet should consist of his parents, his pastor, someone who is a true Christian friend, someone who he believes has the gift of wisdom from God, and someone who is successful in the field he wants to enter. (Teacher: Lead the pupils to make their cabinet. Ask them to think of someone who is a real friend, someone who is gifted with wisdom, and someone who is successful in the profession they want to enter. Add to this the name of a spiritual parent and a pastor. Lead them to seek counsel from these people in every great decision. What a blessing this could be to anyone's life!)

- II. THE SUCCESSFUL PERSON MUST NOT STAND IN THE WAY OF SINNERS. Notice the progression of the verse. "...walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Notice how the person leaves the will of God. He walks, then stands and then sits. When one quits walking, he must stand. When one quits standing, he must sit. When one walks in the counsel of the ungodly, invariably he will then stand. When one stands around sinners, invariably he sits down. The secret is to keep walking, keep moving for God and keep serving Him.

One of the grave dangers the Christian faces is running with the wrong crowd. Whether a Christian businessman is yoking up with an unsaved businessman, whether a Christian family goes places with people who are unconverted, whether a Christian young person dates an unconverted person, or whether it is children running with the wrong children, running with the wrong crowd always turns out bad! (Lead the class to discuss together the people in the Bible who got in trouble because they ran with the wrong crowd.)

III. THE PROSPEROUS MAN CANNOT SIT IN THE SEAT OF THE SCORNFUL. In other words, the successful and prosperous man cannot be found to be a critical person--one guilty of judging, condemning, criticizing, slandering, etc. The prosperous person must not be easily offended. Psalm 119:165 says, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." (Discuss with the class here the opportunities that the age group of the class will have in which to gossip or be critical. Stress again and again the fact that a critical nature robs one of prosperity and success.) Unless criticism, gossip, etc. are forsaken, the Christian cannot travel the road to real success.

IV. THE PROSPEROUS MAN MUST DELIGHT IN THE WORD OF GOD. Notice the words in Psalm 1:2a, "But his delight is in the law of the LORD." The word "law" here is a synonym for the Bible. Originally the word "law" referred to Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, but it came to mean the entire Bible. It is not enough for a man to believe the Bible; he must delight in the Bible, be refreshed in the Bible, have fun in the Bible, rejoice in the Bible, love the Bible, etc. Just believing it will not bring prosperity. The devils believe and tremble. One can be orthodox in doctrine and yet not meet this qualification. In other words, the prosperous man does more than read the Bible, believe the Bible, and study the Bible; he enjoys the Bible and delights to read it. He doesn't read it because he has to; he reads it because he wants to do so. It is not a mathematics book; it is a love letter.

God wants our heart's devotion about the Bible. Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 15:16a, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." The Psalmist said in Psalm 19:8a, "The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart." In Psalm 19:10 David, speaking of the words of the Lord said, "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."

(Teacher, ask the members of the class if they have ever received a letter of good news, a letter they delighted to read. Ask them what the letter was about. Tell them that this is the way the Christian should love the Bible.)

V. THE PROSPEROUS MAN MUST MEDITATE IN THE BIBLE DAY AND NIGHT. In Psalm 1:2b the word "meditate" is a word which is likened to a cow chewing a cud. A cow has two stomachs. When we see a cow in the field eating, she is actually not eating; she is gathering food and placing it into one of her stomachs. Then she sits down, takes a bit of the "gathered" food, chews it, and transfers it into the other stomach for digestion. This is what meditation means. We are to take the Bible and read it, reread it, and enjoy reading it. Then we are to take it back up and chew on it like a cow chews her cud, so it will do us the most good. This is necessary for a prosperous man.

VI. THE PROSPEROUS MAN WHO DOES THE ABOVE FIVE THINGS HAS THE FOLLOWING PROMISES:

1. He is planted. Notice the words in Psalm 1:3a, "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." He is like a tree that soaks up the water all the time. He is not easily moved. He is stable. He knows where he is going.
2. He is fruitful. In Psalm 1:3b notice the words, "...that bringeth forth his fruit in his season." His roots are down in the water just soaking it up. Because of this, he can bring forth fruit; he can be a soul winner. In other words, one who does the five things listed above can be a soul winner. There is no excuse for not being a soul winner. He is fruitful.
3. His leaf shall not wither. Notice the words in Psalm 1:3c, "...his leaf also shall not wither." In other words, he will be happy. He will not be a withered-leaf Christian. He will be a joy to others, providing shade, comfort and solace to other people.
4. He will prosper. Notice the final words of Psalm 1:3, "...and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

WORD STUDY:

1. In Psalm 1:1a, “blessed” means “completely happy.” It involves the possession of all of the positive traits of happiness, such as peace, joy, assurance, satisfaction, etc.
2. In Psalm 1:1a, “counsel” means “advice.”
3. In Psalm 1:2a, “delight” means “pleasure.”
4. In Psalm 1:2b, “meditate” means “to chew over and over again.”
5. In Psalm 1:4a, “ungodly” means “without God.” The one who lives without God, who goes about his activities without God, who does not love the Word of God and meditate therein, who walks with ungodly people, etc. is called “ungodly” in this Psalm.
6. In Psalm 1:5b, “congregation” means “gathering.” God is reminding us that we should gather with His people, not with those who are not His people.

CONCLUSION: Here it is--a guaranteed recipe to prosperity, a way that every Christian can prosper and succeed. You will notice there is nothing here about talent, ability, size, personality, dynamics, etc. There are just five simple points. The little, the unlearned, the weak, the strong, the rich, the poor, the high, the low, the great, and the simple may all be successful if these five points are observed.