



## YEAR 3—The God Who Pursues Relationship: A Story of God's People

### *Module 4: God Leads His People*

#### *Lesson 4: God's Desired Way for Israel—Psalm 1-2*

### BIBLICAL REFLECTION

*(A theological and biblical reflection on today's Scripture passage.)*

### GOD'S STORY

The Bible contains the core pieces of God's Story and shares them in different genres of literature. The book of Psalms falls into the category of poetic inspiration in that it offers an outlet of prayer and an inlet for finding wholeness out of brokenness. Each psalm is an expression of someone's heart toward God in life's ebbs and flows in the attempt to better know His heart and the relationship He offers. People like David were inspired to pen these works which in many ways became a type of hymnal for the Israelites.

Every psalm stands apart from the others, yet the first two seem to complement one another in revealing God's desired relationship with Israel. Psalm 1 is appropriately placed as the first of 150 such expressions, beginning with the word "blessed." In the Hebrew language this word "esher" indicates joy and contentment from the hand of God as we live a straight or right life. In short, when we are grounded in a relationship with the Lord we soar to new heights in ways we otherwise couldn't.

The second psalm explores this in its own manner, showing how when we run away from God we end up running into destruction. While Psalm 1 focuses more on the blessings to the individual, Psalm 2 offers a sobering realization of what happens when nations and groups of people ruin themselves by constructing rebellious or self-centered plans against the Lord. There is also a clear nod to the Messiah who would one day correct all injustices and let His kingdom in heaven cover the whole earth. It is quoted in Acts 4:24-30 by the early church as a prayer against the persecution they faced. The final statement in Psalm 2 also begins with the word "blessed," as if to say it is still possible to climb out of the hole we often dig for ourselves (or face at the hands of others) if only we'd stop digging and turn to the Lord.

### OUR STORY

God proposes blessing us and leading us into restoration; however, He doesn't do this by overlooking our betrayal or carnal spirit. Both psalms reference the things that tear us away from life and make us vulnerable to tragedy. The destruction we can take part in can not only destroy our lives but ravage the entire world.

We were made for more than this. There is wisdom in realizing our potential to be foolish, but even greater insight comes when we serve the Lord with awe and humility. Just as it's not enough to just read about our capacity to sin, we can not trivialize what God says we're capable of if we let Him shape our thoughts and lives.

Your life matters to God. He put potential in you that is unique, for while you can do things that other people have done, no one will ever do things exactly the way you will. Certainly this merits you doing more than being casually religious. The verses in the Bible are there for you to memorize and become intimately familiar with and to offer you new ways of thinking, behaving and belonging. As you are transformed by the

renewing of your mind, you will walk with godly wisdom, show others the real pathway to the Lord and sit down to rest in His truth versus your own opinions.

### *OTHERS' STORY*

The people in your life who seem to fit into one of the categories mentioned in these psalms may not realize their fallen condition. There are three categories mentioned in Psalm 1: the “wicked” are cited as those who freely give counsel that doesn’t come from God; “sinners” are those who have carved out a devious path they regularly travel; and “mockers” are described as having a seat through which they criticize others. It’s possible for others to live in these ungodly ways yet do enough good deeds that they think their relationship with God is fine.

It’s important to note this can happen even in churches. When a congregation becomes critical of people inside or outside its circle, we can forget to care for them. Consequently, that church ends up off mission and into itself more than into the Lord.

When even one person speaks up for God and His values, though, others are affected by an influence that shapes and molds them further into the image of Christ. In heaven there will only be one Church—a congregation filled with those who have given their lives over to Jesus. It’s difficult to gauge our walk with God now, and so the promise of what’s to come and the freedom in that realm to enjoy the Lord without guilt is striking.

In the meantime, we have to better discern if others are influencing us or if we’re influencing them. It’s easy to listen to the counsel of an unsaved friend or family member and not consciously recognize we are listening to ungodly advice. There may be nuggets of truth within what they share, but without first acknowledging this we may be letting our relationship with them trump our relationship with God. His Word and Holy Spirit always offer the best counsel, and if we listen we then have something to share to others so they might know the path of life.

### *THE WORLD'S STORY*

The world offers a mentality that the greatest value we could aspire to is the pursuit of happiness. The irony is that when we pursue our own happiness we end up created a self-centered society. Even if what makes the world happy is enjoying our family, that “good” value can distract you from God’s values. It still falls short, for the goal is to delight in the law of the Lord.

Practically speaking, this is your wake-up call as to why your relationship with God matters and is meant to be shared world-wide. We bear the burden of this world’s brokenness as God’s people. Every time we think, “It’s no big deal if I don’t stand up for Christ there,” we let the world remain broken and we create destructive headlines through our apathy. We must stop asking God or even the world, “WHY?” if we won’t first look at our own laziness as Christians and ask “WHY?”

We can theorize how not allowing prayer in public schools is to blame, yet it may have more to do with what we are allowed to do as Christians relationally and often shrink back from. The world seems to demand we have an open mind about everything, but it almost feels like it’s more about emptying our minds, such as is the practice with Eastern meditation. God has invited us to know His Word, delight in it and share it locally and globally.

One day, as Psalm 2 points out, the “kings” of the earth will have to answer for their defiance of God. We can save many in the world a tragic ending if we show them the benefits of serving God with fear and rejoicing with trembling. “Blessed” are all those who put their trust in Him and show others how to do the same.