

The Amazing Secret to a Blessed Life

On Sunday we continued our sermon series called “Eight EPIC Bible Passages.” Tonight we’ll talk about the second epic passage – Psalm 1.

1. Warm up question: Jeff described his perfect day when he was a kid – basketball with friends during the day, followed by a bonfire, weeny roast, and game of “flashlight” in the evening. What did your perfect day look like when you were a kid?
2. We all want to live “the good life.” To borrow a phrase from Joel Osteen, we all want to “live our best lives now.” Do you feel like you’re living your best life now? If yes, tell us why. If not, tell us what stands in your way.
3. The author of Psalm 1 tells us how he/she believes we can “live our best life now.” Read Psalm 1:1-6.
 - a. Verse 3 invites us to picture ourselves as being like a tree. So let’s go with that image. Using your imagination, tell us: If you were to describe the present state of your life in terms of a tree, where would you be planted, how tall would you be, what condition would you be in, and what would you look like?
 - b. The first Hebrew word that appears in verse 1 is translated into English as “happy” or “blessed.” The Hebrew word is actually in the plural – promising “happinesses” or “blessednesses” to those follow the advice of Psalm 1. Share some “happinesses” or “blessednesses” you’ve experienced in your life recently.
4. Verse 2 of Psalm 1 promises a good life to those who “delight” in the scriptures, and “meditate on them day and night.”
 - a. Tell us about something (other than the Bible) that you “delight” in.
 - b. What word would you use to describe your current relationship with the scriptures? Would you use the word “delight”? If not, what other word would be more accurate for you?
 - c. For those who find great delight in the Bible, share why. For those who struggle to delight in the Bible, share why.
 - d. Do you think our theological orientation – conservative, liberal, or somewhere in between – impacts our ability to “delight” in the Bible?
 - e. If someone asked you what it means to “meditate” on the Bible, what would you say?

5. If we immerse ourselves in reflecting on the scriptures, the concepts we absorb will guide us to the best possible responses to life's circumstances. That seems to be the theory of Psalm 1. Jeff gave several examples of that theory at work. When Gordon MacDonald received a difficult medical diagnosis, he found great strength in a Bible verse he memorized as a teen. When Al Master's was consumed with hate for the teen who killed his son, he found guidance in Jesus' exhortation "to love your enemies" and regained a son in the process.
- Can you think of a time in your life when you have deliberately applied a Bible principle to a situation you were facing? What happened? How did it go?
 - Let's practice together what Psalm 1 is talking about. Move through the following steps together:
 - Ask someone in your group to describe a confusing or difficult situation they're facing right now.
 - Let the group ask follow-up questions to clarify what the person is facing.
 - Then take a moment, as a group, to silently think about whether any Bible verses or Bible stories come to mind that might be relevant.
 - Share those verses or stories with the group. (If no ideas come to mind, do a quick Google search for relevant Bible verses.)
 - Then, as a group, discuss what it might look like to apply the Bible to the situation that was described.
 - Lastly: Ask the person who shared the situation to reflect on whether he/she could imagine applying the principles discussed.
6. Jeff described two large studies that attempted to identify what spiritual practices have the most impact in terms of spiritual growth and mental wellbeing. Both studies reached the same conclusion: personal daily Bible meditation over a sustained period of time is the most impactful spiritual practice. Do you buy it? Why or why not?
7. Jeff suggested several steps that can help us get deeper into the Bible:
- Regular Sunday worship.
 - Oasis Group conversations.
 - Discipleship courses.
 - Writing a key Bible verse on a card and posting it where you'll see it many times during the week.
 - Memorizing key Bible verses.
 - Daily meditation using "Be Still" found at <http://LifeJourney.church> under "spiritual resources" – or other similar devotional resources.
- Have you tried any of the last three points? How do they work for you?
 - Do you feel called deeper into the Bible? If so, what will you do to make that happen?