

# Moments *for* You

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Theme: Blessed



Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (*Psalms 1:1-3*)

## THE TRUE MEANING OF BLESSED

Some believers don't feel blessed because they are looking for a thorn-free rose garden blooming with all the stuff that will make their lives comfortable, prosperous, and pain-free. God never promised us a rose garden. At least, not in this life. He did give us a perfect garden once, and we—that is, our distant grandparents Adam and Eve—messed it up. Now we must live with that mess. But even as we walk through the greatest hardships of life, we have the assurance that God will eventually lead us to that new and perfect garden we long for after we finish our term here. Jesus Himself made the promise: “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2,3).

This promise of perfection in the future does not mean God has no blessings for us here and now. Not by a long shot! In fact, God promises that if we uphold His truth and walk in His ways, He will give us real joy in this life now (John 10:10). What we need to learn, however, is that joy is not dependent on getting every desire met—that is, not those desires that infect us from the virus of today's “me” culture. Real joy comes when we get the *right* desire met—the desire for God Himself, for a life led by the Spirit, fulfilling not our material desires but our deepest need, which is to be in a close relationship with our Creator. That is the source of true blessing. The only source.

—From *A Simple Blessing* by Michael W. Smith. Published by Zondervan.

## HAPPILY EVER AFTER

We're a nation founded upon the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Ask almost any person what they want out of life, and they will reply, “I want to be happy.” And yet for a people bent on pursuing happiness, we're not doing so well. Many try to find happiness in love and marriage, but the divorce rate shows that we're not finding happiness there. Couples hope that having a family will bring them happiness, but often their children cause them more pain than pleasure. Others try to find happiness in a career or in recreational activities. Many try to deaden their pain with alcohol or drugs, but few would admit that they've found lasting happiness.

Psalm 1 shows us that to live happily ever after, we must build our lives on God and His Word. The first verse begins with “blessed,” which in Hebrew is a plural of intensity and stems from a verb meaning to go on or advance. If you want to advance to the fullest measure of happiness, the psalmist is going to tell you how.

### WHAT NOT TO DO (VERSE 1)

It's significant that he begins by telling us some things that the happy person does *not* do. True happiness is not found in a life that leaves God out and rejects His ways as revealed in His Word.

**Walk in the counsel of the ungodly.** This refers to a person who lives his life based upon the world's wisdom. The word “ungodly” comes

from a Hebrew word meaning loose or out of joint. It refers to a person who doesn't take God seriously and thus disregards God's Word.

**Stand in the path of sinners.** The path of sinners refers to their way of life or behavior. To stand in the path of sinners means involvement with sinners in their sinful behavior. The word "sinners" comes from a Hebrew word meaning to miss the mark. It refers to deviating from the standard of God as revealed in His Word.

**Sit in the seat of scoffers.** Scoffers have rejected God and His Word. They now seek to justify themselves by openly deriding that which they've rejected. Invariably, scoffers have cast off the Bible because they don't want God interfering in their sinful lifestyles.

Note the downward progression in the life of sin. There are degrees of departure from God. First, you walk—you're still moving, but now in the wrong direction. Then, you stand—you're lingering in sin. Finally, you sit—you're at ease in the company of scoffers.

#### **WHAT TO DO (VERSE 2)**

True happiness is found in a life built on God and His Word. Perhaps many of us do not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. But how many can say that we delight in the Word of God and meditate on it continually?

What does it mean to delight in God's Word? The word is used in the Old Testament (Genesis 34:19; Esther 2:14) of a man delighting in a woman. The Bible is God's love letter to you. You're reading the counsel of a loving, all-wise Heavenly Father as to how you should live. His commandments are for your blessing and good. It should be no more of a duty to spend time in God's Word than it is for a young man to spend time conversing with an attractive woman.

We are responsible not only to delight in God's Word, but also to meditate on it continually. To meditate means to think about what the Word says and how it applies to all of life. Meditation is to reading what digestion is to eating: chewing on it, letting it become part of you. The only way for a person to reject the counsel of the ungodly which bombards him from every side is to be continually meditating on, thinking about, chewing on in his mind, the Word of God and how it applies to life.

#### **THE RESULT: A BLESSED LIFE (VERSE 3)**

The psalmist describes the person who delights in God's Word as a tree planted by streams of water. This is a tree that has been deliberately cultivated, surrounded by canals so that its roots have a continual supply of water. It is solid and able to withstand drought or storms. It is fruitful and has continual evidence of life and vitality. There's a truly happy person: the person God blesses with His prosperity, no matter what circumstances of life he finds himself in. God is not promising financial prosperity here, but rather soul prosperity. God's servants may be poor in this world's goods and afflicted by many trials, but they are rich toward God (Luke 12:21), which is true prosperity.

#### **A BLESSED ETERNITY (VERSES 4-6)**

Perhaps, if you were honest, you'd admit that you question the truthfulness of Psalm 1. You may know people—glamorous, powerful, exciting people—who leave God out of their lives and who seem to be genuinely happy and prosperous. What about that? The psalmist goes on to show that true happiness is only found in a life that takes eternity into account.

God says, "Those who leave Me out of their lives are like chaff." They have no substance. They may be

great before men, but before God they will be blown away like chaff in the final judgment. Their case won't hold up in God's court. They won't be in heaven, where those who have been made righteous through faith in Christ will be assembled. Even though it may not look like it at times, "the Lord knows [is intimately acquainted with] the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish." The wicked will be condemned to eternal punishment in the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8).

The Word of God declares that you are not an accident. You are here as the creation of God, made in His image, designed to find true happiness in Him and in His Word. But, due to your rebellion, as seen in your running your own life rather than in submitting to Christ as Lord, you are alienated from God. He could rightfully judge you, but because of His love and mercy, He sent Jesus Christ to die in your place on the cross. You must turn from your rebellion, trust in Him and accept the pardon He offers. If you will do that and then build your life on God and His Word, you will live happily ever after, both now and throughout eternity! —Steven J. Cole

*In Biblical terms, to be blessed means to be rightly related to God so that your life is fulfilled and you experience deep, personal satisfaction. It's important to know that this sort of happiness is not related to our circumstances. And it doesn't come simply by seeking for it. You find happiness not by seeking it, but by doing certain things (and not doing other things). The blessing comes as a side benefit of the choices we make. —Ray Pritchard*

## COME CLEAN!

*"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity" (Psalm 32:1,2).*

It is unfortunate that the mention of David reminds us too often of his sins and not his victories. Most people think "David and Bathsheba" rather than "David and Goliath." Perhaps this says more about us than it does about David! The tragic background of both Psalm 32 and 51 is David's sin with Bathsheba, his unsuccessful attempts to hide it, and then his confession and God's forgiveness of the king (2 Samuel 11,12). This one event was an ugly blemish on an otherwise faithful life (1 Kings 15:5).

Psalm 32 records the experiences that David went through as he faced his sins, confessed them, and received God's free forgiveness. How is a righteous God able to forgive guilty sinners? Paul explains this miracle of grace in Romans 4, and he quotes Psalm 32:1,2 as part of his argument. Three words are important: "forgiven," "covered," and "imputed."

The word *forgive* means "to lift and carry away." It reminds us of the annual Day of Atonement in the Hebrew calendar (Leviticus 16), when the high priest "laid the sins" of the nation on the head of the scapegoat, and the goat was taken away into the wilderness to be seen no more. This pointed figuratively to Jesus, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

The word *covered* simply means "concealed, out of sight." David tried to cover his own sin with deceit, and yet he was found out. When God covers our sins, *they are gone forever*. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions

from us” (Psalm 103:12). The blood of Jesus Christ does not simply cover sin; it cleanses sin (1 John 1:7-9).

The word *impute* is a financial term; it means “to put to one’s account.” After all, what good is it if, after God wipes the record clean, we sin again and He starts a new record? David rejoiced because God would never again keep a record of his sins. Paul made it clear in Romans 4 that the person who trusts Jesus Christ is fully and finally forgiven, the record is made clean, and no record will ever be kept of his sins.

How is this possible? Through the wonderful and perfect transaction on Calvary. On the cross, all of our sins were put to Christ’s account. He was made sin for us (1 Peter 2:24). And, when we trusted Jesus Christ, His righteousness was put on our account! “He [the Father] hath made Him [the Son] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). This dual transaction makes our forgiveness and salvation possible.

Forgiveness, then, is not cheap, even though it is free. David knew that no amount of expensive sacrifices could take away his sins (Psalm 51:16,17). Our own good works, or even our good intentions, can never solve the sin question. Jesus Christ, the perfect sacrifice, had to die for the sins of the world. It is on the basis of that one perfect sacrifice that God can meet the sinner and forgive his sins.

—From *Meet Yourself in the Psalms* by Warren W. Wiersbe.

**Cover up your sins, and God will uncover them in judgment. Uncover your sins, and God will cover them in grace.** —A.J.P.

## BLESSED ARE THE ...

In the part of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) we call the Beatitudes, our Lord described the characteristics of a righteous man and laid the foundation of a happy life.

### SPIRITUAL PAUPERS

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* The word “poor” indicates one who is destitute, poverty-stricken, without any resources. The poor in spirit is the one from whom the ground of self-sufficiency has been taken. The poor in spirit is the heart on its knees. A man’s only way of access to God is to confess his own unrighteousness, his own inability to meet the standards and requirements of God, and by faith proclaim the blood of Christ, which covers his sin. His life as a child of God will also be marked by that same complete dependence upon God, moment by moment.

### BROKEN-HEARTED

There is much in the experience of the child of God day after day to bring tears to the eyes. Yet our Lord has promised, *“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”* The Biblical concept of mourning is recognizing a need, and then presenting that need to the God of all comfort. When believers—in desperation, oppression, loneliness, bereavement, discouragement, anxiety, earnestness, desire, or devotion—present their burdens to God, they can count on God to not only hear their pleas, but also to provide His comfort.

### YIELDED SERVANTS

*“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”* The world does not see as God sees, nor does it think as God thinks. When we think of Moses, we associate him with a fearless boldness. He was not only unafraid

to be in the presence of Pharaoh, but he also gave orders to one who ruled the nation (Exodus 5). The world would never have called Moses a meek man, but God called him the meekest man on the face of the earth (Numbers 12:3).

Exodus 3 reveals what characterized Moses as a meek man: he had no confidence in himself, no confidence in the flesh. Paul also said of himself that he had “no confidence in the flesh” even though he could “do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 3:3; 4:13). The sign of a meek man is that he recognizes and submits himself to divinely constituted authority.

#### **SPIRITUALLY HUNGRY**

Why is it that some Christians continue as spiritual babies, and others go on to spiritual maturity? We sometimes think it may be the difference in the individual personality, or in one’s experience with Jesus Christ in salvation. But when we turn to the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:6 we find the secret of spiritual gianthood. Our Lord said, *“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”* He stated that the secret of spiritual growth is a spiritual appetite. Those with a voracious appetite for the things of God, and who satisfy that appetite by feeding on the Word and by communing with the Lord, will grow to spiritual maturity.

#### **CHANNELS OF MERCY**

The merciful person is the one who is full of the fountain of mercy—who is full of God. When our Lord said, *“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy,”* He was saying that a man who has turned in faith to Jesus Christ and has received of His loving grace, will be conformed to the mercy of Jesus Christ so that God’s mercy can continually flow through his daily

life. The merciful man is the man who is full of love, and who loves with the love of God. To show mercy because we have received mercy permits God to open up the windows of heaven and pour out blessing upon us.

#### **WASHED AND CLEAN**

*“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”* This beatitude has two important things to say. The first is that man, measured in the light of the holiness of God, is unholy. Jesus came and offered Himself on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins. By His death He paid the price for the sins of the world, and God offers forgiveness for sins to anyone who will accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior. When God looks at the one who trusts Christ for salvation, God sees that one in the same light as He sees His own beloved Son.

But there is a second truth: holiness is a prerequisite for fellowship. “If I regard iniquity in my heart,” Psalm 66:18 says, “the Lord will not hear me.” I cannot enjoy the light of His countenance and the joy of His companionship apart from clean hands and a pure heart. In 1 John 1:9 we are assured, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

#### **SIGNPOSTS TO PEACE**

*“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”* Not one word in Scripture ever gives us hope that man will bring peace to this earth. Swords will not be turned into plowshares until the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ, returns to earth. He has not transferred to us the responsibility to make peace among nations, but He has given us the duty of telling men that they can come to peace with God through the blood of the cross; and He has given

us the sobering responsibility to maintain the Spirit's unity of believers in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).

### SUFFERERS FOR CHRIST

*"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake."* As a brilliant light is painful to the eyes, so the light of God's holiness is painful to a sinner and he seeks to hide from it. The believer, placed in the world as a light, brings pain to the world. There can be no other response to him than that of rejection, persecution, bitterness, and hatred. So our Lord said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you" (John 15:18).

God calls believers to separation to Himself; but in separating them to Himself, He separates them from the world, and they must expect the world's hatred. Doubly blessed are those who show this fruit of righteousness.

—From *Design for Living* by J. Dwight Pentecost. Published by Kregel.

## BLESSED THROUGH TRIALS

*"Sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away" (John 16:6,7).*

The greatest trial, disappointment, and sorrow to the disciples was the Lord's departure from them. And yet it would result in their fullest and deepest blessing. Without going away, He could not have accomplished the redemptive work of the cross, nor could the gift of the Holy Spirit have been given.

How often have we proven the same to be true? Our trials provide unparalleled opportunities for our faith to be strengthened by loosening our grip on "the things which are seen" and tightening our grasp of "the things which are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18). —H.M.H, adapted

## ALREADY BLESSED

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).*

The first word translated "blessed" means to *celebrate with praises*. Paul, who wrote this wonderful verse, magnifies the grace of God so that we, too, might be filled to overflowing with praise. God is said to bless us when He bestows upon us every provision for our spiritual peace and prosperity. We are said to bless God when we offer praise and thanksgiving for His provision.

More than twenty-five years had passed since Paul met the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet he was still counting his blessings and praising God for them. Note that Paul is not praising God because God *desires* to bless him, nor because God has *determined* to bless him at some future time, but because God "*hath*" blessed him. Yes, and "us," too! God is the Blesser, and the blessed are those, and those only, who have received His Son as "our Lord Jesus Christ."

The nature of these blessings is said to be "*spiritual*." Too many of us place the emphasis upon those things that are temporal and transient while we neglect the values that are spiritual and eternal. The Father designed every spiritual blessing for us. They are ours "*in Christ*," and are delivered to us by the Holy Spirit. Here are a few:

- Salvation (*Ephesians 2:8*)
- Justification (*Romans 3:24*)
- Victory over sin (*Romans 5:20*)
- Power to testify (*Colossians 4:6*)
- Strength for service (*Heb. 12:28*)
- A spirit of generosity (*2 Cor. 8:7*)
- Ability to stand (*1 Peter 5:12*)
- Strength in suffering (*2 Cor. 12:9*)

—Adapted from *Ephesians* by Lehman Strauss.

## PORTRAIT OF THE BLESSED

Just like a skilled painter creating a perfect likeness through masterful brushstrokes, the following Scriptures paint a clear portrait of the one whom the Lord calls “blessed,” or truly and deeply happy. Is it a portrait of you?

- Happy is the man whom God correcteth. *Job 5:17*
- Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. *Psalms 33:12*
- Blessed is he that considereth the poor. *Psalms 41:1*
- Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord. *Psalms 94:12*
- Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in His commandments. *Psalms 112:1*
- Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart. *Psalms 119:2*
- Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord. *Psalms 144:15*
- Happy is he ... whose hope is in the Lord his God. *Psalms 146:5*
- Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. *Proverbs 3:13*
- He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he. *Proverbs 14:21*
- Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he. *Proverbs 16:20*
- The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him. *Proverbs 20:7*
- Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters. *Isaiah 32:20*
- Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
- Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven. *Matthew 5:3-12*
- Blessed is she that believed. *Luke 1:45*
- Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me. *Luke 7:23*
- Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it. *Luke 11:28*
- Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. *Luke 12:37*
- Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. *John 20:29*
- It is more blessed to give than to receive. *Acts 20:35*
- Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. *Romans 4:7,8*
- Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. *Romans 14:22*
- Blessed is the man that endureth temptation. *James 1:12*
- If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye. *1 Peter 4:14*
- Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.