

OPENING UP: Psalm 1 compares life to a tree—rooted and flourishing with God, or withering without Him. When life feels chaotic, where do people often turn to feel grounded or refreshed? What kinds of things do people usually turn to when they want to feel steady or refreshed in life?

- 1 **In the opening illustration for this week's sermon, Josh mentioned Thomas Henry Huxley's story of driving very fast, but in the wrong direction.** Think about times in your life where you experienced energy and passion, but without God's direction?

⚙️ *What are can happen in our hearts and lives when we live this way? What does that kind of pursuit result in?*

📖 *Read Proverbs 14:12, Proverbs 19:2, and 1 John 1:8. What are the dangers of walking through life according to our own perception?*

- 2 **Read Psalm 1:1.** What progression (or even escalation) do you notice towards the way of wickedness?

📖 *If someone was in that progression, how would they know and what should they do to get out of it? See Hebrews 3:12–13, Proverbs 27:5–6; Galatians 6:1–2; Jude 1:21–23, James 5:19–20?*

♥️ *In your life, what has kept you from slipping into this downward pattern?*

3 **Sometimes we can struggle with passages like Psalm 1 because of our own history with and view of the Bible.** Read the following examples and discuss how have you experienced any of these, or seen them show up in your own life...

🗨️ **Obligation/Guilt** - *Feeling like you have to read it so God will like you or so you can be a 'good Christian' or feeling weighed down because you haven't read the Bible as much as you think you should.*

Fear - *Worrying that if you don't read it, life will fall apart—as if the act of reading automatically keeps you safe.*

Distrust - *Finding it hard to trust how the Bible came together or even the claims God makes in it.*

Difficulty & Pain - *When the Bible has been misused by others to control, manipulate, or hurt you.*

Disappointment – *Expecting immediate answers or emotional highs from reading, and being discouraged when it doesn't happen.*

Distraction – *Finding it hard to focus because of busyness, screens, or competing priorities.*

🗨️ Discuss how the Psalm 1:3 image of a tree can help reorient your view of the Word?

4 **Psalm 1 pictures a tree planted by streams of water—strong, rooted, and flourishing—which sets the tone for how the Bible describes the blessed life.** In the ancient world, trees were often symbols of strength, stability, and prosperity. For example, a Mesopotamian king from the 2000s BC was described as *'a palm tree near the canal... a cedar rooted near gushing waters, who gives pleasant shade... whose fruit is sweet and pleasant.'* In that culture, to be pictured as a tree meant you had everything you needed. In the same way, when our lives are rooted in God's Word, we have everything we need for stability and fruitfulness.

📖 Discuss Jeremiah 17:7–8, Romans 15:4, Psalm 19:7-11, Matthew 4:4, and 2 Timothy 3:16-17 with those images of sufficiency and stability in mind. What do these passages show us about the value of God's Word?