



Songs in the Night Psalm 1

Are You Interested in Happiness?

Perhaps you remember bits and pieces of your dream last night. Maybe it was comforting and reassuring, or it could have been chaotic, stressful, or even frightening. Dreams tell us a lot about what is going on inside us, the emotional and psychological climate of our soul. There may be disagreement on what we should make of our dreams, yet I think you would agree that much takes place within us when we sleep. Perhaps our dreams play a part in what is happening, or they may be more like a mirror, reflecting back to us what is taking place as we sleep. It is pretty clear that within our time asleep, something important happens. It could be regenerative where healing takes place, the damage caused by sin, both those we have committed as well as the sins committed against us, is soothed and comforted. It may just be a time of coping when we somehow find the emotional and psychological strength to get by. Or our time asleep may be degenerative, adding to the damage to our soul, making it worse in some ways. Whatever you may see in your experience, you can be certain that the time you sleep, both leading up to it and as it continues, is probably important to you. Let's consider one way that we can make the most of that precious time we have been given.

As you probably know, the Psalms of the Bible were originally songs, verses put to music. As such, they were intended to inspire and empower Godly living and spiritual health. The very first Psalm in the book of Psalms is a beautiful example of how that was done. Let's read together the first three verses of Psalm 1. **Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.** (Psalm 1:1-3 NIV) Of course we know that this Psalm is not just directed toward men. It is for both men and women, girls and boys. It points out that certain people are blessed, or perhaps a better way to translate the Hebrew word is "happy". The way this term "asher" is applied in the first verse is to indicate something that becomes who you are, a primary character trait. Happy is made a part of the spiritual and psychological DNA of the one who takes seriously the opportunity presented in this song.

The song insists that the one who becomes happy as a part of the personality does not "walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. This powerful list of "does nots" is a typical characteristic of Hebrew songs. To make a point more powerfully, often the same thought is repeated in different ways. In this case, the idea is that those who become happy at deeper levels than just some response to a great event is that they stop letting influence them those who are not walking with God, those who are opposed to the Christian lifestyle and who make fun of Christian values. This is not easy given how immersed we are in non-Christian thinking. Never in the history of the human race have people been so surrounded by such a great crowd of voices all within earshot. Whether it is YouTube, TikTok, or countless other forms of social media, we are inundated by strangers and friends who have something to say to us. This is not some shocking revelation. We know it is so. With a click you can be taught by atheists, agnostics or cultists and influenced greatly by their ideas. Recently someone who is an atheist somehow stumbled across a devotional I posted on a group Facebook page that is available only to those I've invited to join and confronted my faith in God. It is not someone I know or have ever heard of before and that quickly my beliefs

were being questioned and debated. The point is that access to us comes from all over the world with all sorts of messages and ideas.

You are being confronted by strong beliefs that go against the Bible. Creative and thoughtful people are influencing you and encouraging your turn away from God. You are being given advice by people who have no love for Jesus but are quite persuasive. The turn away from God is a growing movement in the United States and in Russia and many parts of the world. It would be great if these counselors and advisors and influencers looked like paintings of how Satan has been imagined over the centuries, but they don't. They are cool YouTubers, cheery Instagram posters and happy go lucky friends on Facebook. There is a local basketball player who has chosen not to be vaccinated for what he says are religious reasons. He is being bombarded by opinions, and advice, statistics and pressure from people he does not know. You live in a hurricane of swirling thoughts and viewpoints that are maybe not opposed to the Bible and God but certainly do not encourage faith or a deep and loving relationship with Him. If you want to have supernatural happiness, the sort that rises above circumstances and problems, our song provides the answers you need.

God given and sustained happiness is enhanced and developed by making two lifestyle changes. The first is to begin to turn down the volume of the voices pushing for you to become disinterested in God and lose your faith in Him. When non-Christian and anti-Christian influencers are receiving your most attention, then they are going to impact how you view God and the sorts of decisions you make. This cannot be avoided. The more you immerse yourself in the propaganda of the non-Christian mind-set, the greater impact it will have on you. Our song from the Bible insists that you will be happier and more content if you listen less to non-Christian voices and make an effort to reduce the amount of time you give to them. **Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.** (Psalm 1: 1 NIV) You may consider it difficult to make this change to your life, but you will find it an important decision to make for your own happiness and those close to you.

Our song tells you the second step to increase your happiness and become strong spiritually and psychologically. Start meditating on the Bible. That is what the song calls the Law. **But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.** (Psalm 1: 2-3 NIV) Delight means to take pleasure in it, to look forward to that time, to gain joy in it. Not everyone finds the Bible to be a great source of delight. Plenty feel like reading the Bible is a chore. Sometimes I admit that reading the Bible is a bit like doing sit-ups and yet as with weightlifting, I am always glad for having made it a priority.

Something mysterious and supernatural takes place when you meditate on the Bible. As you let the words sink into you and give some time to think about it, God joins the process. You may not feel Him, you might not sense His presence, but something unique takes place that cannot be explained by natural conclusions. God works in you during these times meditating on the Bible and changes your inner world. I am convinced that during that special time when so much goes on within you as you sleep, much of the emotional and psychological damage you have suffered during the day is addressed. God's power could be brought to bear on your heart if one of the last parts of your day is the regular practice of letting the Bible sink into you. It takes very little effort to read a few verses when you go to bed, but God tells us that meditating on the Bible at night will increase our happiness. Give it a shot! See what miracles can take place in you as you put some effort into chewing on the Scripture just before you go to sleep!