

Blessed

In Irving Berlin's *White Christmas*, Bing Crosby comes across a worried Rosemary Clooney visiting the kitchen late at night. The movie is a musical, so of course Bing sings Rosemary's cares away:

*When I'm worried and I can't sleep
I count my blessings instead of sheep
And I fall asleep counting my blessings*

Irving Berlin, *Count Your Blessings* (1954)

The Bible tells us that true blessings are from the Lord, and this week we will study one of those blessings God gives us – the ability to study the very word of God, the Bible. We will see that God's great blessing to us in turn brings glory and honor to God himself. What a blessing indeed!

Monday – A Study in Contrasts

Contrast – a striking exhibition of unlikeness (from the Latin for “stand against”). dictionary.com

1. Please read Psalm 1:1-6. What differences do you see in the people described here?
2. According to 2 Corinthians 6:14-15, what is the spiritual significance of the differences noted in Psalm 1?

Text Insight: Belial is a demonic name used here as a synonym for Satan, the prince of darkness.

3. Now read John 3:19-21. Why would people love the darkness that comes with doing evil? How does God's light, the righteousness of Christ, expose deeds as good or evil?

Making it Personal: Are you glad your deeds are done in God's sight? As you consider your own life, when is this most likely to be true? When are you most likely not to be glad about God seeing your deeds? Why?

Tuesday – Mockers

“[Satan] laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray.” Samuel Chadwick, 19th-20th c. English theologian

1. Please read Psalm 1:1. What is the significance of the progression from walk to stand to sit?
2. How does mocking God occur in the context of Galatians 6:1-10?
3. In 2 Chronicles 36:15-19, how did people mock God? What did God do? Why was this just?

Making it Personal: Do you ever find yourself doing things that constitute mockery of God? He is ready to forgive and hold you close. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in honoring God in all you do.

Wednesday – Delight in God's Word

“The Bible is either absolute, or it's obsolete.” Leonard Ravenhill, 20th c. English evangelist

1. Please read Psalm 1:1-2. What does the blessed person do? Why is this a blessing?
2. Now look at Joshua 1:7-9. What type of strength and courage comes from studying God's word?
3. In Psalm 119:97-104, what had the Psalmist learned about focusing on the word of God?

Making it Personal: Do you look to God to strengthen you through his word? When have you seen this happen? Are there specific verses that God had used to strengthen you in your faith?

Thursday – Always Prospering

“The branch of the vine does not worry, and toil, and rush here to seek for sunshine, and there to find rain. No; it rests in union and communion with the vine; and at the right time, and in the right way, is the right fruit found on it. Let us so abide in the Lord Jesus.” Hudson Taylor, 19th-20th c. English missionary

1. Please read Psalm 1:3. What does the phrase “in season” mean?
2. We don't always get to choose when we bear spiritual fruit. God brings it in his timing. What do you think of relying on God's timing and not your own?
3. What insights can you find in John 15:1-8 about being fruitful in Jesus?
4. According to Colossians 1:9-14, what does spiritual prosperity look like?

Making it Personal: What fruit is God producing in your life during this present season?

Friday – Blowing Away the Wicked

“Eternity to the godly is a day that has no sunset; eternity to the wicked is a night that has no sunrise.” Thomas Watson, 17th c. English pastor

1. Please read Psalm 1:4-5. Why do you think wickedness is described as so insubstantial?
2. In Jude 17-23, how are we told to relate to those who struggle in their faith? To those who oppose God?

Making it Personal: What is your attitude toward people who disagree with your faith? Ask God to guide you in discerning how you should interact with those around you. Pray for the grace to love them without becoming entangled in their ways.

For the Weekend: Read Psalm 1:6. What is the relationship between the Lord and those who belong to him? Now read Psalm 121:1-2, Romans 3:22 and Philippians 3:7-9 & 18-21. Where do these verses say about righteousness and how we grow in it?