

The Counsel of the Ungodly

By Elder David Pyles

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. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish. – Ps 1:1-6

This is the first of all the Psalms and was written 3000 years ago. Its wisdom has blessed the lives of millions. It first speaks of *walking* in error then *standing* in it and finally *sitting* in it. This degenerative path ends with one being in the “*seat of the scornful*,” meaning that they not only do wrong but sit in contemptuous judgment against what is right. The word “*sitteth*” implies that the error has become entrenched because of an extremely darkened state of the mind. Obviously, this is a woeful state, and no better way to avoid it than by refusing to take the first step in its direction. This first step is to walk in the counsel of the ungodly.

By “*counsel*” is meant advice. There are many troubled people in the world whose problems began by following the wrong examples and listening to the wrong advice. Such bad influences have a corrupting effect that no competent person will deny. Multitudes of people have made many trips to rehabilitation facilities and jails only to relapse right back into error almost as soon as they were released. In most of these cases, the relapse was caused by the fact that they went right back to the same corrupting influences that had been the root of their problem all along. Accordingly, there have been many who have successfully changed for the better, and these will promptly profess that the key to changing their lives was in changing their friends and counselors.

No one is immune to the corrupting influences of bad counsel. Even the pure man Adam succumbed to it in the Garden of Eden. It must also be remembered that much counsel in this world is bad, maybe even most of it. The counsel given by the media is commonly bad. The counsel given by actors, athletes, etc. is oftentimes bad. Educators are capable of giving very bad counsel too. Much of the counsel that comes from our governmental leadership is also bad. In all these cases, the bad counselor presumes that his lofty position in one area gives him competence and authority to speak in another, whereas there may be little actual reason for supposing this to be so. For example, most who attended college will remember a few professors who wasted time by spewing out opinions on subjects that had little to do with the curriculum and even less to do with their credentials. Finally, even the counsel of religious leaders can be bad. The Bible denounces these above all others and gives strong warnings concerning them.

So where does one go for good counsel? The Psalm goes on to describe the man with good counsel saying, "*But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*" That is, he seeks his counsel from the word of God. What better place to get good advice than from our very Maker? What better place to get good advice than from a book that millions of people over thousands of years have happily and heartily praised as being the most blessed influence over their lives?

But many will complain that the Bible is a very big book and is not always easy to understand. Indeed, almost none can satisfactorily learn it without help from others. So how do we know that the help we are getting is itself good counsel? After many years of experience in studying and teaching the Bible, I can confidently say that most bad counselors who pretend to be Bible-based are so inept that almost anyone who has studied the book at all can easily spot them. A little counsel from the Bible will even teach us how to choose our counselors! The very culmination and apex of the Bible is in the teaching of Jesus Christ. This is not too much for anyone to read, and will carry one far on the path to perfection.

The person who averts the bad counsel of the world and seeks the good counsel of the Bible will not only stay out of trouble but will actually be *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.” He not only avoids failure but puts himself on a path to success. “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.”