

X'ENT NEWS

PROVIDING EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP
THROUGH QUALITY CHRISTIAN TRAINING

Volume 10 Issue 3

July 2002

2 Timothy 2:2
And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

The Blessed Delight

Christians are followers of One God who is revealed in One Book, the Bible. The Bible contains all of the absolute truth that God desired to reveal to mankind. Without this written record it would be impossible to know the truth about God, how to relate to Him, how to grow in maturity or how to see others saved from eternal death. Despite the vital importance of God's Word, most people reject its teaching to follow their own philosophies and religious systems. Unbelievers, in their foolishness, attempt to live life without ever consulting the instructions of their Almighty Creator. Much to their shame, however, many professing believers also live in a manner which completely ignores the Word of God. They come to Christ based on the preaching of the Word, but then spend little or no time learning and living the essential principles the Bible contains. In every case, this brings disaster. Slowly but surely they begin to mix the truth of God with the lies of worldly teaching and their lives grow in sinfulness and ungodliness. They are unable to discern between truth and error and are led astray into confusion. When this happens the church of God becomes weak and unable to accomplish God's Work in the world. This month's article contains a survey of Psalm 1:1-3, which provides instruction concerning the man who delights in God's Word and



the blessedness he receives as a result. This blessedness enables the man of God to live a life of enduring faithfulness and effective ministry.

"How blessed is the man." In the Old Testament, a blessed man was one whose life was pleasing to God and thus he received God's favor. Psalm One reveals that the man who would be blessed lives according to the principles of the Word and thus is able to receive the full benefit of God's mercy and grace. This blessed man is very careful to avoid being ensnared by the foolish thinking and actions of ungodly men. To this end, he does not **"walk in the counsel of the wicked."**

The wicked are not those who are more evil than others, but those who live their lives with no love of God or submission to His Word. They live functionally (if not verbally) as if there is no God. The "counsel of the wicked" refers to the very best of man's plans and wisdom which he exercises apart from God.

To walk in the counsel of the wicked is to establish a pattern of listening to, and putting into practice, counsel which is not motivated by a love of God or informed by the Word of God. Once a man begins to walk according to wicked counsel he soon begins to **"stand in the path of sinners."** Sinners are those who have missed the mark, and their path always leads away from the true God into error and destruction. The one who walks this path will eventually begin to **"sit in the seat of scoffers,"** or actively ridicule the perfection and sufficiency of God's Word, God's character and God's work.

The blessed man avoids this destructive progression by **"delighting in the law of the Lord."** This law is in direct contrast to the "counsel of the wicked" and diametrically opposed to it. The Law of the Lord in Psalm One refers to every available word of God, with

The wicked are not those who are more evil than others, but those who live their lives with no love of God or submission to His Word.

special attention given to the Law of Moses. These commandments are an embodiment of God's character. The Law of God does not reveal everything about Him, but everything it does reveal is absolute truth and is to be revered and honored. Thus, the blessed man has a fear of God and a love of His commandments. He values God and His Word above earthly pleasures and counsel. His greatest passion is to delight in God by understanding His Word and obeying His precepts. This delight goes far beyond the satisfying of

Continued on page 2

This Issue...

The Blessed Delight
Book Nook – The Legacy of Sovereign Joy
News From the World of XL

Continued from page 1

some physical, emotional or intellectual desire. It comes from intimacy with a God who is highly esteemed and greatly loved.

The blessed man's delight is more than an emotional reaction. It is expressed in the fact that ***“in His law he meditates day and night.”***

Meditation goes far deeper than simply reading the Word from time to time, or even hearing it preached once or twice a week. It involves immersion in the Word through reading, study, memorization, teaching, application and evaluation. An essential quality of meditation involves actively putting the Word into practice in daily living. Every situation of life becomes an opportunity to recall, think through and implement biblical principles.

The result of avoiding ungodly counsel and delighting in God's Word through continual meditation is clearly described in verse three.

The blessed man will be ***“firmly planted.”*** He will be steadfast and immovable, able to stand firm during the attacks of Satan and the trials of life. Ultimately he will stand in the day of judgment and enter eternally into the presence of God.

The man who delights in the Word will live a life which ***“bears its fruit in its season.”*** This refers to acts of obedience and worship which flow continually from his life. The blessed man will be characterized by right thoughts, right motivations, right attitudes and right actions which have become ingrained in his character through delight and meditation. The fruitfulness of the blessed man will not be temporary

for his ***“leaf does not wither.”*** He will live in a state of ongoing spiritual health because he is continually being nourished by the life-giving streams of the Word of God. Finally, the result of delighting in the Word of God will be that ***“in whatever he does he prospers.”*** To prosper is literally to accomplish satisfactorily what is intended. For something to prosper, it must come to its God-appointed and -directed conclusion. This may mean great earthly benefit or great earthly loss,

To prosper is literally to accomplish satisfactorily what is intended. For something to prosper, it must come to its God-appointed and -directed conclusion.

but always great spiritual profit. The man who meditates on God's Word day and night prospers in everything, because all that he does is according to the law of God. Real prosperity results from the work of God in the life of one who seeks God with all his heart.

In considering the life of the blessed man, the challenge for the believer is clear. Every area of life must be evaluated in order to determine the areas that are being impacted by worldly counsel. The Christian must cease walking according to this counsel and design his life around delight and meditation upon the Word of God. In doing so, the believer will be continually directed to the person and work of Jesus Christ. As he fixes his eyes upon Jesus he will be steadfast, fruitful, and spiritually prosperous. Do not be deceived. No one can toy with worldly principles and still accomplish the work of God in the world. As believers change to reflect the principles of this Psalm, the church will be empowered and the witness of the body of Christ will be effective.

✍Chris Riser



1. When the Words of God mean more to us than the counsel of princes (or our best friend, or the television).
2. When the commandments of God are more precious to us than a thousand pieces of silver (or our monthly paycheck, or a million dollars, or a new Lexus).
3. When the law of God means so much to us that although we are beset by persecutions from the very gates of hell we cannot be distracted from study and meditation of it.
4. When our daily schedule is arranged around the anticipation of time spent studying the precepts of God.
5. When our affliction and distress drives us to the testimonies of God, rather than away from them.
6. When we cry and agonize over the fact that others have forsaken the perfect way of God.
7. When we are willing to put every goal and plan aside and wait for the direction of God's commandments.
8. When an overwhelming passion and pursuit of holiness sweeps over our soul as a result of meditation on the Word of God.
9. When the first place we look for comfort, counsel and security are in the judgments of God rather than in our relationships, hobbies, toys or entertainment.
10. When we tremble in awe at the beauty, power and perfection of a God who could render such perfect and righteous statutes.



Book Nook

The *Legacy of Sovereign Joy*
By John Piper

“The sum of all our goods, and our perfect good, is God. We must not fall short of this, nor seek anything beyond it; the first is dangerous, the other impossible.” This is a quotation by Augustine from the book, *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy*, by John Piper. The book, like the quote, directs the believer to look heavenward, beyond ourselves to the One who deserves all glory and in whom and only in whom can we find Sovereign Joy. That is the Joy that comes from a proper understanding of who God is. *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy* is the first book in a series by John Piper

entitled *The Swans Are Not Silent*. Each book reveals to us the lives of some of the most influential men and women of the faith through the centuries. This first book discusses the lives of St. Augustine, Martin Luther and John Calvin. Each section begins by telling the history and background of the individual, and the story of how God drew each man to Himself. I appreciate Piper's willingness to tell us of the good and the bad in each person. He does a great job at personalizing each one.

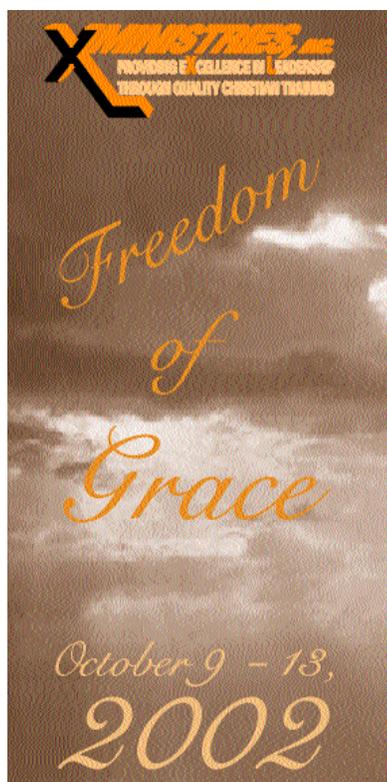
The heart of the book revolves around the spiritual life of each man. This is both the most interesting and most challenging, and demands of us that we look afresh at our view of

the Scriptures, of ministry, and of God Himself. I have read lots of books in the last several months and can honestly say that this one impressed upon me the most the need to study more, pray more, love more, and above all, know God more. For those of us in ministry, looking at the lives of these flawed saints, and seeing what God has done through them, ought to be a giant encouragement for us all. Let me leave you with one last quote, this one from John Calvin. I have this one hanging on my wall right now and it is a daily challenge for me. I pray that it will be for you as well.

✍️ Brian Murphy

“Let the pastors boldly dare all things by the word of God. . .
Let them constrain all the power, glory, and excellence of the world
To give place to and to obey the divine majesty of this word.
Let them enjoin everyone by it, from the highest to the lowest.
Let them edify the body of Christ. Let them devastate Satan's reign.
Let them pasture the sheep, kill the wolves, instruct and exhort the rebellious.
Let them bind and loose thunder and lightning, if necessary,
But let them do all according to the word of God.”

✍️ John Calvin



XL Ministries, Inc. Conference 2002

Freedom of Grace

Reminder: the conference is a little earlier this year: Wednesday, October 9 — Sunday, October 13. Please send your registration and payment by September 1, 2002. There is a \$15 per person late fee after September 13.

The location is new this year: Horn Creek Conference Grounds in Westcliffe, CO. This beautiful area of Colorado is about a 1 hour drive west of Pueblo, or 1 ½ hours southwest of Colorado Springs. You can see maps to the location, recreation information about the camp facilities, etc., at their web site: www.horncreek.org.

For further details about the conference, please see the Conference page on our web site: www.xlministries.org

You can also contact us by email, mail, or phone: conference@xlministries.org
XL Ministries, Inc.
PO Box 821831
N Richland Hills, TX 76182
(817) 656-7920

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and in His law he meditates day and night.

And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither;
and in whatever he does, he prospers.

The wicked are not so,
but they are like chaff which the wind drives away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 1 (NAS)