

Blessed = “Happy,” but why? They are in an advantageous situation. They are **PLANTED/PRIMED** to receive a blessing. (Matthew 5)

Don't **STROLL** = follow their advice (1 John 1:6-7)

Don't **STAND** = be considered one of them - a member in “good standing”

Don't **SIT** = fellowship with them (Job 2:13; Judges 3:6-7 example of progression)

It is essential to stop the progression at the beginning. Sin is **ENTICING** and **DECEITFUL**. (James 1:14-15)

Bad counsel/advice is everywhere (1 John 2:16 New Living Translation)

Wicked = godless, do not **CONSIDER** God's opinion

Sinners = **PRACTICE** wrong behavior

Scoffers = **MOCK** God followers. Call “good” bad and “bad” good.

Why it does NOT work:

It is foolishness. (Proverbs 1:7, 9:10)

It is a direct violation of God's commandment. (Exodus 20:7)

*The person who does not seek the advice of unbelievers, and is not identified with those who do things that God does not like, and does not fellowship with those who make fun of good people, is in a place where he can look forward to God's blessing.*

#### **BUT:**

His delight = finds **PLEASURE**

The Law of the LORD = God's **OPINION** of right and wrong

Meditates = **CONSIDERS** what it says and how to put it into **PRACTICE** Meditation **AND** application **NOT JUST** memorization. (Matthew 7:24)

*The person who enjoys discovering what the LORD wants him to do, and does it, is in a place where he can look forward to God's blessing.*

A PLANTED tree = cultivated, purposefully positioned in an ideal location

STREAMS of water = irrigation canals

In its season = at the appropriate time (1 Peter 5:6-7)

Why it works:

Our goals will be God's goals. (Matthew 6:21, 33)

God can entrust us with His resources. (Matthew 25:21)

God will distinguish between the wicked and the **RIGHTEOUS**.

Distinguish who can't and who can **STAND**.

Psalm 19:7-8 this is the prosperity I want for 2021

Restored **SOUL** = reviving a zest for life

Wise **CHOICES** = skillfully manage resources

Glad **HEART** = genuinely enjoy living

Bright **EYES** = positive outlook (John 10:10)

**1 John 1:6-7** “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

#### **DISCOVER**

1. Does being “blessed” mean more than “being in God's favor”? Where do you see God's favor in Matthew 5:3-11?

2. Re-read 1 John 1:6-7. What does “fellowship” with Jesus mean? How can we stay in fellowship with Him and with one another?

3. Read Judges 3:1-8. God was testing the Israelites. Where do you see them descending into darker and darker life choices?

#### **EXPLORE**

1. What does it mean to walk in darkness? We are all sinners so do we all walk in darkness? What clues can we get from the phrase “practice the truth”?

2. In the Judges 3 passage above, what do you think were the initial choices that drove the Israelites into headlong sin? Where and when would've been the best time/place to “short circuit” their descent into sin? If you were an appointed judge then, what might you have done?

#### **EXPERIENCE**

1. Share with your group the feeling or results you get from reading/memorizing God's word? Do you truly delight in them or are you just “going through the motions”? What does “delighting” in God's word mean?

2. Read Exodus 20:7. Taking the Lord's Name in vain is blasphemy. What does that mean? Why is only God's Name used as a curse word?

3. Read Matthew 5:14-30. Has God entrusted you in any way? How so? How are you doing at it? What will be different in you during the coming year as God's steward?

#### **PRAY**

Praise God that He makes all things new; that despite an “unprecedented” year, He has been faithful and good even during our difficulties (which reminds us of how much we need Him). Ask God to renew your heart for His word in 2021; that the Scriptures would come alive in a fresh way and direct our decisions and our paths. Ask God to give you opportunities to deploy the gifts He has given you and that you would be bold yet sensitive in sharing the gospel message.