


## Naaman: A Case Study on Faith

### Part 3 How to Walk with God

# TALKING POINTS WALKING POINTS

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A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- 1 Psalm 1 discusses different sorts of advice which can shape our lives.  
What's some of the best—or worst—advice you've ever received? Tell us about it.
- 2 Read Psalm 1:1-2. What words describe the **source** of the advice the blessed person **avoids**?  
What **source** of advice does the blessed person **seek**?
- 3 Psalm 1 suggests that ultimately there are only two alternatives regarding the source of advice.  
What are some other biblical "binaries"—ie, no "middle ground" exists—that come to mind?
- 4 Proverbs 9 also talks about two sources of advice that vie for our attention (v. 1-6 and v. 13-18).  
List all of the similarities and differences between "Lady Wisdom" and "the woman of folly".
- 5 Describe the profile of the person who would prefer wisdom to folly.  
Describe the type of the person who would prefer folly over wisdom.
- 6 According to Proverbs 7:6-23, **when** does the destination of one's path become evident?
  - Psalm 1:3 seems to suggest that choosing biblical wisdom results in stability, vitality, fruitfulness, durability and profitability **now**, in **this** life, but the wicked only find out about their doom on judgment day, when it's too late (v. 5). Psalm 73, on the other hand, says that the **wicked** often have prosperous, easy, pain-free, trouble-free lives **now** (v. 3-5, 12) but the **godly** suffer **now** (v. 13-14). How should we untangle this confusing situation?
- 8 Psalm 73 shows how envy and bitterness can grow in the heart of a suffering saint (v. 2-3 & 12).  
When he considered the rigors of righteousness, the psalmist grew pathetically self-centered—*"What did I get out of it?!"* (see v. 12-14). How can we avoid the pit-falls of envy and selfishness?

## Application-Challenge

- 9 What solution did the psalmist find (v. 16-28)?

Experience God's blessing by rejecting man's wisdom and embracing God's wisdom.

**1** Have fun with this soft-ball opening question. Folks may share some epic fails! Be ready for the possibility of a sad or serious answer, and respond appropriately. The goal of this question is to just get folks thinking and talking about the role of advice in our lives.

- 2**
- Avoid: “wicked”, “sinners”, “scoffers”
  - Seek: “God’s law” (= all of Scripture)

- 3** Biblical binaries:
- Creator / creation
  - humans (made in God’s image) / animals (reproduce “after their kind”)
  - male / female
  - Cain (ungodly) / Abel (righteous) see 1 John 3:11–12

- 4** **Similarities:**
- Both are personified
  - Both have a house
  - Both call from the high places of the city—ie, both broadcast their messages
  - At first glance, both messages appear to be the same (v. 4 & 16)

**Differences:**

- Wisdom quietly worked to build a house, to prepare a meal, to set a table; Folly just sits in her doorway (not working hard) and calls to people
- Wisdom has maid-servants; Folly doesn’t (this is a sign of stability and status; see Proverbs 12:9).
- The substance of their messages go in opposite directions (v. 5-6a cf. v. 17)
- Wisdom’s message leads to life and understanding—and she tells her guests that info (v. 6) Folly’s message leads to death/Sheol—but she hides this fact from her guests (v. 18)

- 5** The person who would prefer wisdom to folly: knows and admits that they’ve been involved in folly, is willing to forsake it and to go a different way (v. 6). He demands to know the ultimate destination of his path before he commits to it.

The person who would prefer folly over wisdom: is led by feelings rather than principle, preferring a “sweet/pleasant” feeling even though it requires being an accomplice to thievery and subterfuge (v. 17). He’s willing to commit to a path without knowing where it leads.

- 6** **Not until it’s too late**, when “the ox is in the slaughterhouse”, “the arrow’s in your liver” (v. 22-23).

- 7** As Pastor Doug said in his sermon: “The godly person has troubles, trials, and setbacks (see Psalms 3 and 73). The point of Psalm 1:3 is not that the obedient person’s life is free from trouble, but rather that a life of fruitfulness and stability are reliable byproducts of a godly life. What you sow, you reap.”

- 8** First, see what your group can come up with. Possible answers include:
- making sure you “go into the Sanctuary” **often** (v. 17)—read your Bible daily (Romans 12:1-2)
  - seeking godly counsel (Proverbs 11:14)
  - taking your concerns and confusion to God in prayer (James 1:5)

- 9**
- frequent exposure to God’s perspective (v. 17)
  - receiving God’s perspective in a believing heart (v. 18-20)
  - living in a grace-dependent relationship with God (v. 21-24)
  - valuing God and God’s approval over earthly ease (v. 25-26, 28)
  - believing that justice truly will come to the wicked (v. 27 cf. v. 3-12)

## Sermon Summary (Key Text: Psalm 1)

Naaman's life is a case study in how someone whom the world deems successful transitions from having no faith in the One True God, to having a vibrant, life transforming faith. So, once a person like Naaman comes to faith in God, how do they grow in that relationship? How do they discover and stay on the right spiritual path? Every person follows one of two paths; one path leads to blessing, the other to judgment (Matthew 7:13–14).

**I. True happiness comes to those who reject worldly wisdom and embrace the wisdom of God's Word** (Psalm 1:1-2). You only find happiness by pursuing God himself, because he is the source of true fulfillment. Hanging out with the wrong people is at the top of the list of things to avoid. Proverbs 13:20 says that “The companion of fools suffers harm.” Don't take advice from the ungodly. Don't adopt their values or hold them up as role models. Don't let their religious and moral skepticism shape your thinking. When we see the word “wicked” (v. 1), we tend to think about terrorists, serial murderers or child molesters, but the Hebrew word translated as “wicked” broadly describes anyone whose spiritual orientation leaves the God of the Bible out. You know, the practical atheist—the person who decides for himself what is right and what is wrong, what is wise and what is foolish. We are told not to walk in their counsel, so we must ask ourselves, “Will this course of action please God (1 John 2:15–17)?” If you walk with the wrong counsel, you'll soon find yourself standing with the wrong companions and finally sitting with the wrong crowd. That is how it works; that is the progression.

**II. Those who follow God's wisdom will prosper** (v. 2-3). The righteous person delights in God's instruction (v. 2). His pleasure is demonstrated not simply by the positive feelings, but also by his preoccupation with it: he meditates on God's Word day and night. As a result, his life is stable, vital, fruitful, durable, and profitable (v. 3).

**III. Those who reject God's wisdom will experience his judgment** (v. 4-6). They are like worthless chaff; blown away by the wind. A life of rootlessness and ruin. While we still have opportunity to change, we need to ask ourselves: “Am I living my life in a way that pleases God and advances His Kingdom, or am I simply living to advance my own selfish goals?” How we live has real and far-reaching consequences: “the wicked will perish” (v. 6). Jesus' teaching on this topic is vivid and clear and terrifying. Hell is a real place and according to the Scriptures, most will spend eternity there. Psalm 1 tells us that all of us will travel down one of two paths, and those paths will lead to one of two destinies. The first word is “blessed” and the final word is “perish”. Those are the options before us.

### Talking To God About This Week's Message

*“Heavenly Father, today I want to be a ‘doer’ of the Word, and not just a ‘hearer’. Amen.”*

### Talking To Others About This Week's Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asks you, “*What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?*”, how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

***This week we will be mining insights from Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17:5-10...***

**Monday**—Read Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17:5-10, and then...

- Make a list of all the things that the godly man does, and does not, **do**.
- Make a list of all the things that the ungodly man (the “wicked”, “sinners”, “scoffers”) does, and does not, **do**.

**Tuesday**—Read Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17:5-10, and then...

- Make a list of all of the ways that the godly man is described, of things he is compared to.
- Make a list of all of the ways that the ungodly man is described, of things he is compared to.

**Wednesday**—Read Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17:5-10, and then...

- Make a list of the contrasting “blessings” and “curses” in these passages. (Make sure you include ideas even when the specific word “blessed” or “cursed” does **not** appear, such as in Psalm 1:6, “God ‘knows’ the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish”.)
- Which of these blessings have you personally experienced? Which of the curses?

**Thursday**—Read Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17:5-10, and then...

- Write several “one word summaries” to show the contrast between the godly and the ungodly (for example, “fruitful” vs. “withered”).
- The word “heart” occurs three times in Jeremiah’s passage. Write down everything you can learn about the “heart”.

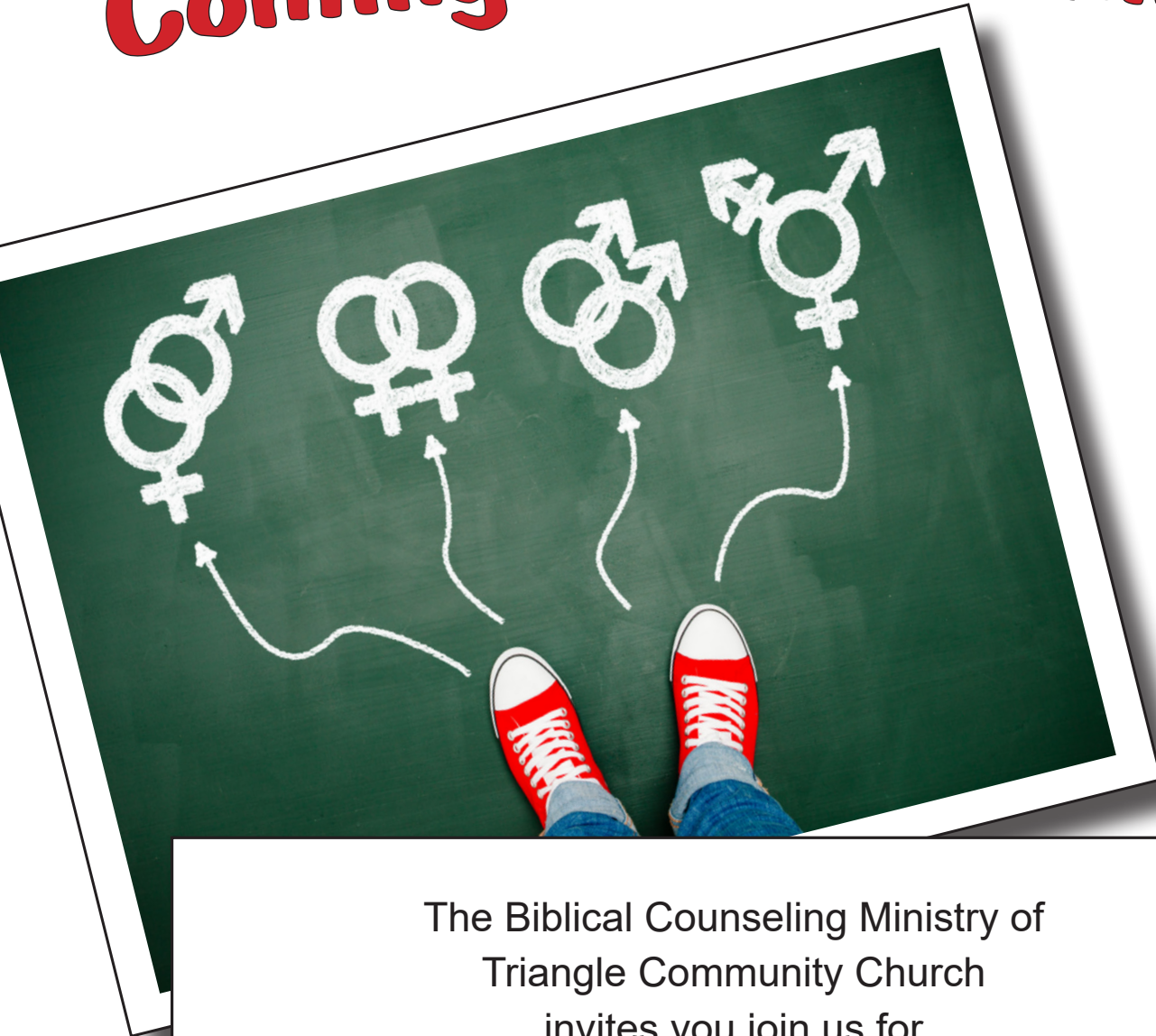
**Friday**—Read Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17:5-10, and then...

- Make a list of all of the things God is said to **do**, how he is said to **react**, for both the godly and the ungodly.
- According to Jeremiah 17:9-10, what do we **need** God to do for us?
- Begin making the words of Psalm 139:23-24 your daily prayer:  
***“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.”***

**Saturday**—Read Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17:5-10, and then...

- List everything that is **not** different about the godly and the ungodly.
- From Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17, what must we **do** in order to be described as “godly”? Are you doing that? Why or why not?

# Coming this November!



The Biblical Counseling Ministry of  
Triangle Community Church  
invites you join us for

## **“Biblical Perspectives on Gender Identity”**

Saturday, November 6, 2021

9am til noon



Our seminar speaker, **Dr. Jim Newheiser**, is the director of the Christian Counseling program at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte and serves as a board member of both the Biblical Counseling Coalition and the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors.

For more info, write to: **BiblicalHopeAndHelp@gmail.com**