



THE HAPPIEST PEOPLE ON EARTH

By Rev. Will Nelken

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Psalm 112

¹ Praise the Lord!

*How joyful are those who fear the Lord
and delight to obey his commands.*

*² Their children will be successful everywhere;
an entire generation of godly people will be blessed.*

*³ They themselves will be wealthy,
and their good deeds will last forever.*

*⁴ Light shines in the darkness for the godly.
They are generous, compassionate, and righteous.*

*⁵ Good comes to those who lend money generously
and conduct their business fairly.*

*⁶ Such people will not be overcome by evil.
Those who are righteous will be long remembered.*

*⁷ They do not fear bad news;
they confidently trust the Lord to care for them.*

*⁸ They are confident and fearless
and can face their foes triumphantly.*

*⁹ They share freely and give generously to those in need.
Their good deeds will be remembered forever.*

They will have influence and honor.

¹⁰ The wicked will see this and be infuriated.

*They will grind their teeth in anger;
they will slink away, their hopes thwarted.*

God's people—the followers of Jesus Christ—are the happiest people on earth!

They're not happy-go-lucky (ignorant of real-life problems and issues). They see the inequities of life, and have real problems themselves—but they are happier than other people who are in similar circumstances.

This psalm not only describes that in some detail, but it also explains why it is so.

CHARACTERISTICS

Let's get a closer look at these people. What are they like? How do they behave? The psalmist identified four major characteristics:

1. Full of joy:

Psalm 112:1 Praise the Lord!

How joyful are those who fear the Lord and delight to obey his commands.

Joy abounds in the hearts of those who regard the Lord with reverential awe and seek to please Him in all of their ways.

2. Blessed:

Psalm 112:4 Light shines in the darkness for the godly. They are generous, compassionate, and righteous. ⁵ Good comes to those who lend money generously and conduct their business fairly.

Light shines on them, and *good comes* to them! Surely, goodness and mercy follow them all the days of their lives.

3. Unafraid:

Psalm 112:7 They do not fear bad news;

they confidently trust the Lord to care for them. ⁸ They are confident and fearless and can face their foes triumphantly.

They have trust in the faithful care and protection of their Sovereign God. They believe that He is for them, not against them. It makes them fearless.

4. Generous:

Psalm 112:9 They share freely and give generously to those in need. Their good deeds will be remembered forever.

Christ's followers live with an open hand, ready to help those in need. Their gifts of help are generous.

CHALLENGES

In the spirit of keeping it real, the lives of Christ-followers are not idyllic. Just in this brief psalm are mentioned five common challenges God's people must deal with:

- *Not overcome by evil*
Evil does threaten them and opposes their endeavors, but they are not overcome by it.

They bounce back and continue to do good.

- *Don't fear bad news*

The news is not always good in their world, and things don't always go their way, but they are not shaken by dread. They have hope in God.

- *Trust the Lord to care*

They have needs like others, but they believe in the Sovereign God and trust Him to see and provide what they need.

- *Face their foes*

They have enemies, who may try to undermine or overthrow them, but they don't run or hide; they face their opposition courageously.

- *Give to those in need*

Their world is not perfect, and they recognize all manner of needs around them, yet they do what they can to assist others and undo injustice where they find it.

DIRECT REPERCUSSIONS

There are significant four direct repercussions from the lifestyle of true believers:

1. Their offspring:

Psalm 112:2 *Their children will be successful everywhere; an entire generation of godly people will be blessed.*

Personal faith cannot be inherited, but its influence is certainly passed through family lines, according to God's promise, often for generations. This reminds me of the bridge of "The Blessing":

May His favor be upon you
And a thousand generations
And your family and your children
And their children, and their children

2. Themselves:

Psalm 112:3 *They themselves will be wealthy,
and their good deeds will last forever.*

Biblically, "wealth" refers not just to money, but to all that is at your disposal, all that is available to you to use. "Wealthy" means to have an abundance—more than enough for your

household, so that you also can share with others. God's people are particularly wealthy in good deeds, shining with integrity and justice.

3. Their legacy:

Psalm 112:6 Such people will not be overcome by evil. Those who are righteous will be long remembered.

Righteous living builds a legacy. Such people will never be shaken. And that will leave a lasting imprint on those who follow. Notice how the psalmist reworded verse 3b ("*their good deeds will last forever*").

4. Others in need:

Psalm 112:9 They share freely and give generously to those in need. Their good deeds will be remembered forever. They will have influence and honor.

Their wealth is shared, freely and generously. Here, he repeats the words of verse 3b. They create positive influence and gain honor in doing so.

INDIRECT IMPACT

The indirect impact of their lifestyle on the unrighteous (wicked) is not to be ignored, and could not be stronger.

Psalm 112:10 The wicked will see this and be infuriated. They will grind their teeth in anger; they will slink away, their hopes thwarted.

The unrighteous are often offended and angered by the righteous deeds of God's children. Convicted, perhaps; embarrassed, maybe.

This reminds me of the accusers of the adulteress in John 8...

⁷ So when they continued asking Him, [Jesus] raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." ⁹ Then those who heard it, **being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last.** And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

They slunk away into the shadows, finding no answer to such truth and mercy. The psalmist said they will fade away, like water into thirsty soil (Psalm 58:7).

COMPOSITE PICTURE

If we pull together all of these descriptions of the character of God's people, here's what we'll see:

- Joyful
- Good (toward others)
- Hopeful
- Good comes to them (called “lucky”)
- Unshaken by difficulty
- Unafraid of bad news
- Confident
- Brave
- Generous
- Honorable

LIFESTYLE

If we add up the habitual behaviors that define their lifestyles, this is the composite picture we’ll find:

- Fear the Lord
- Delight in obeying His commands
- Generous
- Compassionate
- Righteous
- Lend money generously
- Conduct business fairly
- Confidently trust the Lord’s care
- Fearlessly face their foes
- Share freely
- Give generously

This is the aggregate image of the people of God, the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. I notice that “generosity” is mentioned three times. So typical of true believers.

LOOK IN THE MIRROR

In conclusion, considering the two lists just presented, I ask you to take a look at yourself in the mirror of God’s Word.

Is this the way others see you?

Are these behaviors characteristic of you?

If not, why not?

If not, then we fail to represent the Lord well; our lives won't reflect His great goodness.

And if that's the case, no amount of "testimony" or Scripture quotation will offset the bad taste we leave in people's mouths (the bad impression we make).

And for all that Christ has done for us—forgiving our debt of sin, removing our shame and reproach, adopting us into the family of God, giving us the Holy Spirit, granting us eternal life with Him—for all this (and so much more) all He expects of us is to represent Him clearly, to give others a glimpse of His goodness by the way we treat them.

Let me leave you with several specific, revealing questions that explore the concepts of this psalm:

- Are you *actually* indifferent to God in your daily life (minimal interaction with His Word, brief and sporadic times of prayer, limited witness to others)?
- Do you prefer your own ways to His (fail to ask Him what He wants you to do)?
- Is your heart insensitive toward other's needs (brusque attitude, looking down on others)?
- Do you shave corners in your business affairs, when you should be willing to keep your word, even if it hurts?
- Do you doubt that God "has your back" (get anxious, self-protective)?
- Are you afraid of opposition or "bad luck" (have a generally negative outlook)?
- Are you stingy (clutching what you have for yourself)?

Let the Holy Spirit shine His cleansing light in your heart today.

Don't stand ashamed of how far short you have fallen; instead, draw nearer in repentance.

Return your confidence to the Savior; ask Him to reshape you for His honor.

Make up your mind right now to do the first thing He tells you—ignoring any perceived personal cost. Then, ask God for wisdom in how to proceed with fulfilling your vow. Do it, but do it *His way*.

Are you ready to repent and return to following Christ closely?

Are you prepared to express your vow to God?

Will you do so right now?