

## Starting a New Year- Psalm 1- Sermon from 5 Jan 2020 – Small Group Notes

Habits are powerful... in many ways we are the culmination of our habits...  
As is said, "Anything worth having doesn't come easy".

- What will you become this year?
- What sort of habits could you put into your life?
- What have you learned from experience about trying to add habits to your life?

### Read Psalm 1:1-6

Give people in the group time to read it over again on their own and find words or phrases that stand out to them.

- What stood out to you?

The Psalmist contrasts two very different people.

- What ways, in the Psalm, can you see this contrast described?
- Does anything stand out to you from the main metaphor of a tree compared to chaff?

The image of a river, or 'living' water is used many times in the bible.

- Can you think of any other times?
- How do these other bible passages add to what we read here?

**Quote-** Alexander Maclaren- regarding people that are religious but are really just going through the motions instead of being fed by God's word and his Spirit said, "Religion lacks depth and volume because it is not fed by hidden springs."

After the service a person mentioned a well know saying to me, "if you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there".

- Why is it common for people to go through life without a sense of where they are going, or how they will get there?
- Why do we drift into this, and what can we do about it?

The Psalm gives us some helpful points to be the tree planted by streams of living water.

## How do you get there? – The Influence of Others

### Read Psalm 1:1

• What do you see here in the verbs and the types of people described?  
By nature, we are very influenced by the people we know and the society we live in. Some have called this a ‘herd mentality’ among humans.

- How have you seen this?

Psalm 1 talks about the influence of others in negative terms, but it can also be a force for good. Remember the series we did on Spiritual Friendship? The premise, at the beginning, was that if you want to do anything significant it is much easier with others. We then applied that idea to spiritual growth.

- How can we use our relationships with others as an aid to becoming the people that we want to be?
- How can we help others to be ‘like a tree planted by streams of living water’?

### Read Psalm 1:2

The key difference here between being like a tree or like chaff is in how we engage with the Bible. Your roots need to be in the river.

- How can we delight in the law of the Lord?
- How might this be an acquired taste, and if so, how do we get to loving it?
- What draws us away from loving God’s word?

Sometimes we need to direct our hearts, instead of letting our hearts direct us.

- How do we go about doing this?
- Can you think of times that have done this and benefitted from it?

- What does it mean to meditate on God’s word?
- How might one do this?

Often, we engage with information in a way that means it doesn’t touch us and affect us.

- How can we read the Bible carefully so that our roots are truly in the river?

This year... what do you want to be? A tree planted by streams of living water, or chaff that the wind blows away? How will you get there?

The influence of others matters... how can you use that to help you?