

Psalms 128:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.

Analysis

The psalm begins with blessing pronounced on the God-fearing: 'Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.' The word 'blessed' (Hebrew 'ashrei') denotes happiness, contentment, and flourishing - true well-being. The universal 'every one' makes this promise available to all who meet the condition. 'Feareth the LORD' describes reverential awe, not terror - appropriate respect for God's majesty combined with love for His character. This fear is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). The parallel phrase 'walketh in his ways' defines what fear looks like practically - not merely emotional disposition but lifestyle obedience. God's 'ways' are His revealed will, commands, and character. Walking implies sustained direction, not momentary compliance. The verse establishes that blessing flows from right relationship with God expressed through obedient living.

Historical Context

The Songs of Ascents context suggests pilgrims singing this while traveling to Jerusalem for festivals. The blessing pronounced would encourage those making the journey in obedience to God's command. The wisdom tradition (Psalms 1; Proverbs) repeatedly links fear of the LORD with blessing, making this opening familiar and comforting.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does 'fear of the LORD' differ from being afraid of God?
2. What is the relationship between fearing God (internal disposition) and walking in His ways (external behavior)?
3. Why is blessing connected to fear and obedience rather than given unconditionally?
4. How does the 'every one' emphasize the universal availability of blessing?
5. What does 'walking in ways' suggest about the nature of obedience as sustained direction rather than isolated acts?

Interlinear Text

בְּדַרְכָּיו:	הַ הַלֵּל הַ	יְהוָה הַ	יְרֵא	כָּל	אֶשְׁרֵי
in his ways	that walketh	the LORD	is every one that feareth	Blessed	
H1870	H1980	H3068	H3373	H3605	H835

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 119:1 (Blessing): Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.

Psalms 112:1 (Blessing): Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.

Psalms 103:13 (References Lord): Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

Luke 1:50 (Parallel theme): And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

Acts 9:31 (References Lord): Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

Psalms 147:11 (References Lord): The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

Psalms 127:1 (References Lord): Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

Psalms 115:13 (Blessing): He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great.

Psalms 103:17 (References Lord): But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

1 Thessalonians 4:1 (References Lord): Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.