

2024 BIBLE STUDY SERIES
THEME: “GET YOUR HOPES UP!”

September 25, 2024

AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN LIVING
“An Effective Devotional Life”
Psalms 119:11

Topics

- Reflection Questions
- Important Emphasis
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- Background And Context
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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

A. What does it mean to be devoted to someone or something?

B. What does it mean to treasure something?

C. What can hinder you from spending regular quiet time with God?

IMPORTANT EMPHASIS

How important is a devotional life for you? Is this useful or filled with futility? Does meditating on God's word have relevance today? The Bigger question is how do we do it? (Psalm 1:2 and Joshua 1:8)

There is a difference between reading God's word and studying (meditating) God's word. We need to read four chapters a day to just become familiar with the terrain of his towering word. Let's get God's word in our spiritual system. Then meditate on a specific verse(s) being very attentive to its flow, its framework, and the fundamental principles that are present.

"The book of Psalms has always had an important place in the spiritual life of both Jews and Christians". Athanasius suggests while most of scripture speaks to us, the Psalms speak for us! Leslie Allen aptly calls Psalm 119 it is a literary monument raised in honor of Yahweh's revelation... to Israel. Dahood says "There is a freshness of expression throughout the psalm."

Here in Psalms 119 it teaches us wonderful lessons. Each section has eight verses! One of the main lessons about a devotional life is the placement of your heart in the practice. The word heart is used 12 times within Psalms 119 vs 2, 7, 10, 32, 34, 36, 58, 69, 70, 111, 112, and 145

There are two words that I desire for us to pay specific attention to and that is seek and the word all. Why are these words important to our discussion because it sets the tone of the expression of what comes from the heart. 3 times the word seek is used vs. 2, vs. 10, vs. 58. This suggests that we must have diligence to seek after divine things with our hearts.

The second term we need to give attention to is the word all. This has an undergirding sense of wholeness, effort, or strength being given to the actions vs. 2, vs. 10, vs. 34, vs. 69 vs. 145 Almost half of the times that the word heart is used the word all is associated with it.

These words are used to articulate the disposition of the Psalmist when it comes to Torah along with walk and the term way. "The psalmist is thoroughly devoted to God's word and is intent upon faithfulness to God that includes obedience. First, the Psalmist speaks of his ways then he turns to speak of the ways of God.

This psalm is the most comprehensive of all the psalms, it is particularly artificial product of religious poetry. It is known for its alphabetic acrostic nature which is also in Psalms 9, 10, and 111. "In short, torah – God's

revelation instruction is pervasive and all-encompassing. It applies to everything from A to Z or in Hebrew from Aleph to Taw.” The Psalm is overwhelming and that is what was intended.

“The Psalmist views the word of God and the law for God as the decisive factor in every sphere of life. There is hardly a verse which does not contain a reference to God’s Word.”

Words that are used to describe his word are ordinances, testimonies, precepts, and statutes they are meant to express the same thing.

Let’s be mindful that the personal religious life of the poet is on display here.

In Psalm 119 the Outlining of His Word is Strongly Emphasized:

**Promise(s) of the Word
Precious is the Word
Passion for the Word**

KEY TERMS

Blessed
Commandments
Delight
Devotion/Devotional
Forget
Heart
Keep
Meditate
Mind
Ordinances
Precepts

Prepare
Pure
Rejoiced
Sin
Statutes
Teach
Testimonies
Wander
Way
Word

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE (*Beth*)

⁹ How can a young man keep his way pure?

By keeping *it* according to Your word.

¹⁰ With all my heart I have sought You;

Do not let me wander from Your commandments.

¹¹ I have treasured Your word in my heart,

So that I may not sin against You.

¹² Blessed are You, Lord;

Teach me Your statutes.

¹³ With my lips I have told of

All the ordinances of Your mouth.

¹⁴ I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies,

As much as in all riches.

¹⁵ I will meditate on Your precepts

And regard Your ways.

¹⁶ I shall delight in Your statutes;

I will not forget Your word.

OUTLINE

- I. Purify Your Way (Psalm 119:9-10)
 - A. Seek the Pure Way with God's Word
 - B. Seek the Pure Way with All Your Heart
 - C. Seek the Pure Way by Going Straight
- II. Protect Your Heart (Psalm 119:11-13)
 - A. Store God's Word in Your Heart
 - B. Store God's Statutes and Ordinances on Your Lips
- III. Prepare Your Mind (Psalm 119:14-16)
 - A. Rejoice in the Way of God's Testimonies
 - B. Rejoice and Meditate on God's Precepts
 - C. Rejoice and Delight in God's Statutes
 - D. Rejoice in Remembering God's Word

INTRODUCTION

The first lecture in the Authentic Christian Living Series was on the topic of "What it Means to be a Genuine Christian." The topic for this second lecture is "An Effective Devotional Life." Devotion is a powerful theme woven throughout Scripture, emphasizing our commitment, love, and reverence for God. The Bible teaches that true devotion to God requires our whole heart, soul, and mind (**Matthew 22:36-37; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:27**). Devotion shapes our relationship with God and draws us closer to His will. True devotion is about giving God everything – our thoughts, actions, and intentions. When we commit ourselves fully, we honor God and reflect our love for Him.

A devotional period is a time set aside to spend with God through prayer, Bible reading, studying, meditating, and worship. The goal of this time is to strengthen and deepen a person's relationship with God.

Personal devotion is important for many reasons:

1. To help you grow spiritually by providing inspiration, encouraging prayer, and helping you reflect on the Word of God. (**Proverbs 27:19**)
2. To develop a deeper relationship with God by allowing you to learn to listen to God and align yourself with His plans. (**Proverbs 16:3; Jeremiah 29:11**)
3. To help you receive direction from God for your daily life by providing wisdom to help you make the right choices. (**Proverbs 3:5-6**)
4. To help you build your faith by helping you hear God's Word. (**Romans 10:17**)
5. To help you cultivate delight in God by training your faith eyes to see his glory in the word and your emotions to respond to what you see. (**Psalm 1:2; Psalm 119:18; Psalm 119:36**)

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Psalms are a collection of prayers that convey various human emotions, facilitating a connection with God through expressions of thanksgiving, praise, despair, and repentance. They portray Jesus as the ultimate embodiment of these emotions, offering reasons for appreciation, comfort in distress, and redemption for our transgressions.¹

Psalms 119 is most notable for its length, leading to its nickname ‘the giant psalm’, and for the fact that it is an _____.

Acrostics. An acrostic poem is one where each poetic unit begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Psalm 119 is a famous example with each of its twenty-two stanzas starting with a Hebrew letter. This literary device brings organization and a sense of completion to the poem. Other acrostics can be found in Psalms 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145.

Psalms 119, a wisdom song, is most like Psalms 1 and 19 which also extol [praise, exalt, commend, admire, worship] the law of God and encourage its study.

The primary subject of Psalm 119 is God’s law. The Psalmist refers to God’s law with eight different Hebrew words throughout the psalm: (*tôrâ* [law], *‘ēdā* [statute], *piqqûd* [precept], *hōq* [decree], *mišwâ* [command], *mišpāṭ* [judgment], *dābār* [word], and *’imrâ* [word/promise]).

EXPLORING THE TEXT

I. Purify Your Way (Psalm 119:9-10)

A. Seek the Pure Way with God’s Word

**⁹ How can a young man keep his way pure?
By keeping *it* according to Your word.**

It should be noted that this guidance for a devoted relationship with God through His Word is relevant for all, not just young men.

¹ Ortlund, Dane. 2021. *In the Lord I Take Refuge: 150 Daily Devotions through the Psalms*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

(*Beth*) The second 8-verse stanza, Psalm 119:9-16, is the only one to open with a question (**Psalm 119:9**). The psalmist asks how a young person might stay on the path of purity. A young man cleanses his way—*orah*, which is translated as “way” here, signifies a track, a rut, such as one made by the wheel of a cart or chariot. A young sinner has no broad beaten path; he has his private ways of offense, his secret pollutions: and how shall he be cleansed from these? How can he be saved from what will destroy mind, body, and soul? Let him hear what follows; the description is from God.

He is to consider that his way is impure; and how abominable this must make him appear in the sight of God.

He must examine his way according to God's word, and carefully hear what God has said concerning him and it.

He must take heed to it, to keep guard, and preserve his way—his general course of life, from all defilement.

B. Seek the Pure Way with All Your Heart

¹⁰ With all my heart I have sought You;

He must seek God, make earnest prayer and supplication to him for Divine light, for a tender conscience, and for _____ to walk uprightly. His whole heart; all his affections must be engaged here, or he cannot succeed. If he keeps any affection for the idol or abomination; if his heart does not give it before the Lord, he may make many prayers, but God will answer none of them.

C. Seek the Pure Way by Going Straight

Do not let me wander from Your commandments.

He must take care to keep in the path of duty, of abstinence and self-denial; not permitting either his eye, his hand, or his heart to wander from the commandments of his Maker. (**Matthew 7:13-14**)

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. What is the purpose of having a regular devotional period with God? (Intro)

2. What is the primary subject of the Book of Psalms? (Intro)

3. How can a person make their way pure? (119:9)

4. How did the young man in Psalm 119:10a seek God?

5. What did the young man implore God to keep him from doing? (119:10b)

EXPLORING THE TEXT

II. Protect Your Heart (Psalm 119:11-13)

A. Store God's Word in Your Heart

¹¹ I have treasured Your word in my heart, So that I may not sin against You.

He must **treasure** [hide, lay-up, or store] up those portions of God's word in his mind and heart that speak against uncleanness of every kind; and that recommend purity, chastity, and holiness. The word of Christ should dwell richly in him (**Colossians 3:16**). If God's word is only in his Bible, and not also in his heart, he may soon and easily be surprised into his _____ sin. He must acknowledge the mercy of God, in so far preserving him from all the _____ of his sin.

The Hebrew word often translated as “heart” also means “mind.” The psalm recommends pondering, memorizing, recalling, and in other ways thinking about God’s Word. These are activities related to the mind. Ancient Israel did not make a distinction between “head knowledge” and “heart knowledge.” Rather, it distinguished between those who truly obeyed God and those who honored God with their lips but whose minds/hearts were far from him. Choosing to have God’s Word “on your mind” is an essential part of taking it into your “heart.”

¹² Blessed are You, Lord; Teach me Your statutes.

He should beg of him (God) to become his teacher so that his heart and conscience might be instructed in the spirituality of God’s statutes.

B. Store God’s Statutes and Ordinances on Your Lips

¹³ With my lips I have told of all the ordinances of Your mouth.

He should declare to his own heart, and all his companions in iniquity, God’s judgments against himself and them; that if his longsuffering merely has not made a proper impression on their hearts, they may tremble at his approaching judgments.

III. Prepare Your Mind (Psalm 119:14-16)

A. Rejoice in the Way of God’s Testimonies

¹⁴ I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches.

He must exult (rejoice) in God’s word as his treasure, live in the spirit of obedience as his work, and ever glory in God, who has called him to such a state of salvation.

B. Rejoice and Meditate on God’s Precepts

¹⁵ I will meditate on Your precepts and regard Your ways.

He should encourage self-examination and reflection; and meditate frequently on God's words, works, and ways—and especially on his gracious dealings towards him.

He should keep his eye upon God's steps; setting the example of his Savior before his eyes, going where he would go, and nowhere else; doing what he would do, and nothing else; keeping the company that he would keep, and none else.

C. Rejoice and Delight in God's Statutes

He must consider it his chief happiness to be found in the path of obedience, giving his whole heart and strength to God; and when enabled to do it, he should rejoice more in it than if he had gained thousands of gold and silver. Oh, how great is the treasure of a tender and approving conscience!

D. Rejoice in Remembering God's Word

**¹⁶ I shall delight in Your statutes;
I will not forget Your word.**

He must never forget what God has done for him, done in him, and promised further to do; and he must not forget the promises he had made, and the vows of the Lord that are upon him. Any young man who attends to these points will get his impure way cleansed; victory over his sin; and, if he abides faithful to the Lord that bought him, an eternal heaven at last among them that are sanctified

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

6. For what reason did the young man store up or hide God's Word in his heart? (119:11)

7. What did the young man ask the Lord to do after he declared Him to be blessed? (119:12)

8. What did the young man broadcast from his lips for his benefit and the benefit of others? (119:13)

9. How did the young man rejoice in God's testimonies? (119:14)

10. What did the young man do to remember God's precepts and ways? (119:15)

Life Application

- How could you improve the quality or quantity of the time you spend reading and thinking about God and His Word this week?
- What benefits can you expect from disciplined meditation on God's Word?