


Psalms

Knowing the God of Praise



Lesson 4 Songs of Instruction

Level 1- Read through the Bible passage prayerfully. As God speaks to you through his word, respond back to him in prayer. What can you praise him and thank him for? What sin do these scriptures prompt you to confess? What do you need to ask God for? How do you need to yield to what God is saying in his word?

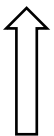
Level 2- Read and pray as in level one and do the numbered questions (that follow along with the Bible passage) in the study. Do the heart questions.

Level 3- Read and pray as in level one. Do the numbered questions and the heart questions as in level 2, as well as the Discussion questions and the Digging Deeper for more in depth study.

Day 1

Songs of instruction, also known as didactic psalms, are psalms that teach about “wisdom, Torah (the Old Testament), or other key topics.”¹ We will be looking at Psalm 119 this week, the longest psalm in the book. It is an acrostic poem where each Hebrew letter introduces prayers and reflections on the word of God.

Charles Surgeon says, “This great Psalm is a book in itself: instead of being one among many psalms, it is worthy to be set forth by itself as a poem of surpassing excellence...To the thoughtful student it is like the great deep, full, so as never to be measured; and varied, so as never to weary the eye. Its depth is as great as its length; it is mystery, not set forth as mystery, but concealed beneath the simplest statements...”²



Father, open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. Help me to seek you with my whole heart and to delight in your word. (Ps.119:18, 10,14)

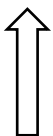
Read Psalm 119:1-32

1. What in this section of the prayer shows us that we don't seek or revere the Bible for its own sake?
2. How are seeking God with your whole heart and God's word related according to verse 2?
3. How can the Bible help us in our struggle against sin? (vs. 6,9,11)



Blessed are those whose way is blameless (v1)...who...walk in his ways (v.3), Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes (v.5). The word *ways* indicates direction or manner. God's ways are the expression of his character and nature—they are good and beautiful like he is. Sometimes they are mysterious and unfathomable like he is. Always God's ways are to be delighted in (vs.14, 16,24) because they reflect who he is.

- ◆ In what aspects do you follow your own ways?
- ◆ How can you delight in God's ways that you find hard to understand or accept?
- ◆ What do you take delight in and why? How can you foster a delight for God's word?



Father, oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your commands.
Help me to delight in your word as much as in all riches!

Picture and Ponder

"As his laws, decrees, and commands [God's} Word is absolutely authoritative and must be obeyed. As his statutes it is permanently relevant for every time and place and must be trusted.

As his precepts it is consummate wisdom such that what he requires perfectly fits our needs and nature.”³

Day 2- Psalm 119:33-64

1. In verse 33-38, what words does the Psalmist use to show how God directs and works in us regarding his word?

- How do we respond, participate and take action?



How teachable is your heart? Do you joyfully and willingly submit to God’s word?

2. One commentator translates, *I shall walk in a wide place*, (v. 45), as, *you open up my life*⁴. Verses 32 and 96 also talk about the spaciousness of God’s law. How does seeking God’s ways open your life?

3. What benefits does following God’s word bring in verses 49-56?



Using some of the words and phrases in this prayer, join the Psalmist in asking God to help you relate rightly to his word and thank him for the life-giving truth found in it.

Day 3- Psalm 119:65-96

1. Look at verses 67 and 68, 71 and 72, 75 and 76, 92 and 93. What does the Psalmist say about affliction and God and his word?

Picture and Ponder

“Suffering is a school where students learn things about themselves, about God, and about life that they would never have learned without it.”⁵

2. How is the writer of the psalm feeling in verses 81-88?

- a. How does God’s word provide him comfort?



How has God’s word ever been a comfort and help to you in suffering?



How can the truths expressed in verses 89-91 comfort and ground you in affliction? Respond in prayer.

*Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.
Your faithfulness endures to all generations;
you have established the earth, and it stands fast.
By your appointment they stand this day, for all things are your servants.*

Day 4- Psalm 119:97-136

1. In verses 97-104, what fruits come from meditating on God's word?

Picture and Ponder

"Meditation pauses, not to discover the meaning, but to steep our souls in the significance, and try to feel a greater sense of it in our hearts. Meditation funnels our Bible intake to the heart. It takes the mental work of reading (and study) and presses it down into our emotions to better feel the weight of the meaning."⁶



Christian meditation is the opposite of other kinds of meditation that are practiced, where the aim is to empty your mind. The Bible speaks of meditation as filling your mind with the words of God and then pondering them. God's word becomes sweet as we savor a morsel of it, letting our hearts marinate on its truth.

- ◆ Do you ever have times of silence throughout your day where you can meditate on what you have been reading in God's word? Consider limiting the constant intake of information (even good information) that we can sometimes

become addicted to, in order to make some space for silent meditation on God's word.

- ◆ Choose a verse or phrase from today's reading to reflect on.

2. Verse 105 tells us that God's word is a light to our path. What kinds of things does God's word show us that we might not like?

- a. In verse 106 the writer tells of the commitment he made to keep God's word. Why is this kind of commitment important?

3. How does God's word shape the Psalmist's affections in verses 97-136?



Pray that as you read and meditate on God’s word your affections will be shaped to reflect God’s heart—that you will love his commands and find joy in keeping them, that you will long for the things of God and hate sin.

Day 5- Psalm 119:137-176

1. Look at verses 137, 138, 142, 144 and 160. How is the truth expressed in these verses relevant today in your life and our culture?

Picture and Ponder

“Certainly the Word is more than simply a book of true statements. It is the way to know God and his strengthening love. But this encounter is based on these doctrinal commitments to the full inspiration and authority of the Bible. If we can’t trust what it says of God, we can’t know the God it shows us.”⁷

For Discussion

Why should God’s word be the ultimate authority in your life?

2. In verses 145-152 how does the writer handle his trials, sorrows, and sleepless nights?

a. Sometimes in the middle of sorrow and distress God can feel so far away. How is the sweet comfort of verse 151 connected to the way the Psalmist deals with trouble?

3. From verses 161-168 describe the Psalmist's outlook even though he is in the midst of injustice and trials.



God's word is a treasure of inestimable worth. It reflects who he is, shows us his ways, and keeps us on the path of life if we submit to it. May we never take it for granted, neglect it, or see it as irrelevant. Write a prayer in response to the truths in Psalm 119.

¹ Russel, Walt. *Playing With Fire*, p. 142. NavPres 2000

² Spurgeon, Charles H.. *The Treasury of David: Charles Spurgeon Commentary on Psalms (with Active Table of Contents) [Illustrated]* . Niche Edition. Kindle Edition.

³ Keller, Tim. *Songs of Jesus* p.304 Viking 2015

⁴ Moffat quoted by Kidner P. 456 Kidner *Classic Commentaries* p. 452. Intervarsity Press, 1975

⁵ Keller, Tim. *Songs of Jesus* p.312 Viking 2015

⁶ Mathis, Dave

⁷ Keller, Tim. *Songs of Jesus* p.323 Viking 2015