



## Daily Devotions in the Psalms

Psalm 119:1-80

# Monday 14th September - Psalm 119:1-16

Aleph

Blessed are those whose way is blameless,  
who walk in the law of the Lord!

2 Blessed are those who keep his testimonies,  
who seek him with their whole heart,

3 who also do no wrong,  
but walk in his ways!

4 You have commanded your precepts  
to be kept diligently.

5 Oh that my ways may be steadfast  
in keeping your statutes!

6 Then I shall not be put to shame,  
having my eyes fixed on all your  
commandments.

7 I will praise you with an upright heart,  
when I learn your righteous rules.

8 I will keep your statutes;  
do not utterly forsake me!

Beth

9 How can a young man keep his way pure?

By guarding it according to your word.

10 With my whole heart I seek you;  
let me not wander from your commandments!

11 I have stored up your word in my heart,  
that I might not sin against you.

12 Blessed are you, O Lord;  
teach me your statutes!

13 With my lips I declare  
all the rules of your mouth.

14 In the way of your testimonies I delight  
as much as in all riches.

15 I will meditate on your precepts  
and fix my eyes on your ways.

16 I will delight in your statutes;  
I will not forget your word.

Psalm 119 is the longest Psalm in the book and the longest chapter in the Bible. It is an acrostic poem, where each stanza begins with the next letter in the Hebrew alphabet (or alephbet as it is known). The Psalm has a particular focus on the word of God being central in the life of God's people.

The first two letters of the Psalm set the tone for the rest by demonstrating the connection between the word of God and the hearts of His people. God doesn't simply want His people to obey Him, he wants their obedience to come from the heart. We have a tendency sometimes to look at the laws of God and think that they are bad. But we need to remember that the laws of God reveal the holiness of God. They can't save us, but they do have a glory.

Notice what we are to do with God's word/law. We are to walk in it (v. 1), keep it (v. 2, 4), fix our eyes on it (v. 6), learn it (v. 8), store it in our hearts (v. 11), speak it (v. 13), delight in it (v. 14), meditate on it (v.15-16) and remember it (v. 16). God's word is meant to be a guard for our lives (v. 9). And seeking God with our whole hearts also means not wandering from His commandments (v. 10).

It's worth pondering if we can sing this Psalm and mean it. Do we desire God like this? Do we long for His word like this and desire to be taught God's word? Are we filling our minds and hearts with his word in order that we might delight in Him and obey Him from the heart?

If I'm honest, it's easy to treat reading God's word like a chore. It's easy to go through the motions or ignore it altogether. If that's you, let this Psalm cause you to repent and ask God to change your heart and desire His word. And then follow the example of the Psalmist. Keep, learn, store, delight, meditate and remember God's word. For many of us, the more we persevere in God's word, the more it becomes a joy.

*Father, help me to love and delight in your word. Forgive my ambivalence to you. Change my heart and help me to walk in your ways. Thank you that my failings are fully covered by Jesus, the perfect Word of God.*

James

## Tuesday 15th September - Psalm 119:17-32

Gimel

17 Deal bountifully with your servant,  
that I may live and keep your word.  
18 Open my eyes, that I may behold  
wondrous things out of your law.  
19 I am a sojourner on the earth;  
hide not your commandments from me!  
20 My soul is consumed with longing  
for your rules at all times.  
21 You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones,  
who wander from your commandments.  
22 Take away from me scorn and contempt,  
for I have kept your testimonies.  
23 Even though princes sit plotting against me,  
your servant will meditate on your statutes.  
24 Your testimonies are my delight;  
they are my counselors.

Daleth

25 My soul clings to the dust;  
give me life according to your word!  
26 When I told of my ways, you answered me;  
teach me your statutes!  
27 Make me understand the way of your precepts,  
and I will meditate on your wondrous works.  
28 My soul melts away for sorrow;  
strengthen me according to your word!  
29 Put false ways far from me  
and graciously teach me your law!  
30 I have chosen the way of faithfulness;  
I set your rules before me.  
31 I cling to your testimonies, O Lord;  
let me not be put to shame!  
32 I will run in the way of your commandments  
when you enlarge my heart!

Psalm 119 encourages us to develop a deep love for the Word of God.

“Be good to your servant while I live, that I may obey your word. Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.” (vv. 17–18).

The psalmist asks for God to be good to him that he may “obey” the words of the Lord. It’s important to note the writer is not seeking primarily to enjoy blessing for his own sake. He wants to be sustained that he might walk in the ways of God, so he asks the Lord to open his eyes to show him “wondrous things” in it (v. 18). Unless our Creator does this, the bible will remain a dead letter, a message that we cannot receive into our hearts. Psalm 119 wouldn’t make any sense if the Spirit of God hadn’t in some shadowy way written the law of God on the heart of this believer.

If when the bible is mentioned, we only think of rules - the bible will never be our delight and we would only read it out of duty or peer pressure. But the word of God is a mark of his grace and he longs to write it on our hearts. Whenever we look into the bible prayerfully and humbly, we might be challenged or comforted, but we can see the grace of the Lord Jesus.

*God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we want to echo the Psalmist’s longing for your word. We ask that you would enable us to obey you, out of gratitude for your undeserved goodness to us. We pray that as the word of your grace weaves its way into our heart we would be changed because we long to walk with you, the source of all grace and joy. Amen.*

Martin

# Wednesday 16th September - Psalm 119:33-48

He

33 Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes;  
and I will keep it to the end.  
34 Give me understanding, that I may keep your  
law  
and observe it with my whole heart.  
35 Lead me in the path of your commandments,  
for I delight in it.  
36 Incline my heart to your testimonies,  
and not to selfish gain!  
37 Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things;  
and give me life in your ways.  
38 Confirm to your servant your promise,  
that you may be feared.  
39 Turn away the reproach that I dread,  
for your rules are good.  
40 Behold, I long for your precepts;  
in your righteousness give me life!

Waw

41 Let your steadfast love come to me, O Lord,  
your salvation according to your promise;  
42 then shall I have an answer for him who taunts  
me,  
for I trust in your word.  
43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my  
mouth,  
for my hope is in your rules.  
44 I will keep your law continually,  
forever and ever,  
45 and I shall walk in a wide place,  
for I have sought your precepts.  
46 I will also speak of your testimonies before  
kings  
and shall not be put to shame,  
47 for I find my delight in your commandments,  
which I love.  
48 I will lift up my hands toward your  
commandments, which I love,  
and I will meditate on your statutes.

On most summer Saturday afternoons our family would be loaded up in the Hillman and we would take the long hot drive to my mum's parents' place. A day at the beach, sunburnt with the sting of hot vinyl on the back of the legs with the smell of sunscreen in the car and the noise of complaining in the back seat. These were the signs of summer.

In Psalm 119 we have the signs of what it means to wrestle with following God.

Can you see the struggle in these verses as well as the delights?

My Grandmother loved this psalm because of the delights. Where do these delights come from?

Thinking how Jesus would have repeated these words and committed them to memory; how might He have fulfilled these delights fully?

Phil

# Thursday 17th September - Psalm 119:49-64

Zayin

49 Remember your word to your servant,  
in which you have made me hope.  
50 This is my comfort in my affliction,  
that your promise gives me life.  
51 The insolent utterly deride me,  
but I do not turn away from your law.  
52 When I think of your rules from of old,  
I take comfort, O Lord.  
53 Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked,  
who forsake your law.  
54 Your statutes have been my songs  
in the house of my sojourning.  
55 I remember your name in the night, O Lord,  
and keep your law.  
56 This blessing has fallen to me,  
that I have kept your precepts.

Heth

57 The Lord is my portion;  
I promise to keep your words.  
58 I entreat your favour with all my heart;  
be gracious to me according to your promise.  
59 When I think on my ways,  
I turn my feet to your testimonies;  
60 I hasten and do not delay  
to keep your commandments.  
61 Though the cords of the wicked ensnare me,  
I do not forget your law.  
62 At midnight I rise to praise you,  
because of your righteous rules.  
63 I am a companion of all who fear you,  
of those who keep your precepts.  
64 The earth, O Lord, is full of your steadfast love;  
teach me your statutes!

Have you noticed the number of words in this section that are used to describe God's written revelation?

- Law, v.51, 52, 53, 55, 62
- Word, v.49, 57
- Decrees, v.54, 64
- Commandments v.60
- Statutes v.59
- Precepts v.56, 63,

The psalmist delights in the positive benefits of meditating on God's word. He talks about a time when he made a clear decision to follow the Lord:

"I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes" v.59

The consequences of following God do not result in an easy life, but in many respects make things more difficult and challenging for him.

In verses 50, 51, 61 he talks about being persecuted, and in v.53 he shares feelings of righteous anger towards those who callously refuse to obey God.

Although these things stretch him, they do not overwhelm him because he continues to gain new strength from God's word. God's word leads to enjoyment of God himself, and produces a life of obedience and prayer.

You are my portion, Lord;  
I have promised to obey your words.  
I have sought your face with all my heart;  
be gracious to me according to your promise v.57-58.

*Father God, thank you for the light of our word. We forever walk in darkness until you clearly show us where we can confidently place our feet. So move our heart that we may hear and respond to what you are saying to us, and love you with all our heart and soul, mind and strength. Amen.*

John

# Friday 18th September - Psalm 119:65-80

Teth

65 You have dealt well with your servant,  
    O Lord, according to your word.  
66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge,  
    for I believe in your commandments.  
67 Before I was afflicted I went astray,  
    but now I keep your word.  
68 You are good and do good;  
    teach me your statutes.  
69 The insolent smear me with lies,  
    but with my whole heart I keep your precepts;  
70 their heart is unfeeling like fat,  
    but I delight in your law.  
71 It is good for me that I was afflicted,  
    that I might learn your statutes.  
72 The law of your mouth is better to me  
    than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

Yodh

73 Your hands have made and fashioned me;  
    give me understanding that I may learn your  
    commandments.  
74 Those who fear you shall see me and rejoice,  
    because I have hoped in your word.  
75 I know, O Lord, that your rules are righteous,  
    and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.  
76 Let your steadfast love comfort me  
    according to your promise to your servant.  
77 Let your mercy come to me, that I may live;  
    for your law is my delight.  
78 Let the insolent be put to shame,  
    because they have wronged me with falsehood;  
    as for me, I will meditate on your precepts.  
79 Let those who fear you turn to me,  
    that they may know your testimonies.  
80 May my heart be blameless in your statutes,  
    that I may not be put to shame!

I still remember sitting in church, looking over at my father and noticing that our posture was identical. It must have looked pretty funny so I quickly changed the way I was sitting. I wonder if anyone noticed?

In many ways, I resemble my earthly father, but do I resemble my heavenly Father? Am I willing to be taught by the One who created me, or do I find worldly wisdom more appealing?

The Psalmist prays over and over that he would be made more and more like his creator, recognising that His ways are best. The fact that he prays this shows that to be obedient to God is not our natural inclination, we need Gods help. He also recognises that correction can be painful. Do we see God shaping us in our trials?

Let's not lose sight of the big picture here. It is only through trusting in Jesus who obeyed God's Law perfectly on our behalf that we can be reconciled to our Father. However, to pray as the Psalmist does is indeed a right response for someone who has entered this relationship.

What God says and does reveals who He is. What we say and do reveals who we are. Do our thoughts and actions show that we are Gods children? Is the family resemblance obvious to those around us? Let's be encouraged to pray as the Psalmist does, that we might learn His ways, that we would become more and more a people who represent our Father in a way that brings Him glory.

Danny