

Psalm 119 • The Bible on the Bible

Introduction

This Psalm is obviously special. It's longer than many books of the Bible. Although we don't know who actually wrote this Psalm, it's important to note that he refers to himself many times, revealing His own suffering for his love of God's Word; and yet he was determined to obey it regardless of the cost. All but 5 of the 176 verses in this Psalm mention God's Word in one way or another. The exceptions (v.84, 90, 121, 122, and 132) all refer to God. Since the number "8" is present throughout – each section is 8 verses long and starts with a different, successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, there are 8 special references to God's Word ("word", "law", "ordinances", etc.), and so on – herein is presented 3 groups of 8 points when it comes to the Bible. The Hebrew word for "eight" literally means "abundance, more than enough" and is the the number representing new beginnings". It's as though the Psalmist is saying, "God's Word is enough; it's the ultimate new beginning." Hopefully this will encourage more careful study of this wonderful provision in God's Word. On the surface it may appear to have the same things repeated over and over again, but in reality they are not. It's a subtle yet thorough documentation of the whole working of God's Word.

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

What IS the Bible? [Read v.9]

God's Word is water for cleansing.

The Old Testament use of the word "pure" is always in the context of being free of the pollutive effects of sin. The ritual uses of water were symbolic of being made pure from sin, and here is revealed this very characteristic of God's Word: "keeping it" has the effect of keeping our life pure and free from sin.

*"You are **already clean because of the word** which I have spoken to you.*

John 15:3

*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having **cleansed her by the washing of water with the word**, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having **no spot or wrinkle** or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.*

Ephesians 5:25-27

How well do you recognize that daily immersion in God's Word is the very thing that washes us clean in a world of sin, that it keeps driving us back to the cross?

[Read v.14, 72, 127 & 162]

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

God's Word is our true wealth and treasure.

⁷²The law of Your mouth is better to me
Than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

We have to come to an understanding of the difference between what something costs versus how valuable it actually is. Compared to all other earthly possessions, the price of a Bible is but a few dollars and therefore economically insignificant; but in reality it has far more value than the combined prices of everything else.

¹²⁷Therefore I love Your commandments
Above gold, yes, above fine gold.

¹⁶²I rejoice at Your word,
As one who finds great spoil.

What affect would you experience if you lost and could not replace God's Word?

²⁴Your testimonies also are my delight;
They are my counselors.

[Read v.24]

God's Word is our counselor.

The Psalmist was a stranger...

*I am a stranger in the earth;
Do not hide Your commandments from me.
Psalm 119:19*

...rejected by the proud...

*You rebuke the arrogant, the cursed,
Who wander from Your commandments.
Psalm 119:21*

...and rejected by princes...

*Even though princes sit and talk against me,
Your servant meditates on Your statutes.
Psalm 119:23*

...but always could rely on God's Word to be his counselor.

*My son, observe the commandment of your father
And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;
Bind them continually on your heart;
Tie them around your neck.
When you walk about, they will guide you;
When you sleep, they will watch over you;
And when you awake, they will talk to you.
Proverbs 6:20-22*

To whom or what do you regularly turn to for guidance? Do you only turn to God's Word at "special" times?

⁵⁴Your statutes are my songs
In the house of my pilgrimage.

[Read v.54]

God's Word is the song of our spiritual journey.

From the heavenly perspective, life on earth is but a pilgrimage because we are not permanent residents but "tourists", so to speak. The songs of the world are supposed to mean nothing to us, replaced by God's Word as the song of our heart.

Have you considered the connection that music and certain songs makes with our emotions and even behavior? How might a preference for secular thoughts expressed in music be telling us something about our spiritual condition?

¹⁰³How sweet are Your words to my taste!
Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

[Read v.103]

God's Word is the greater food that satisfies.

A life that is ever-increasingly conformed to God's Word is sweeter than all the substitutes life has to offer.

*O taste and see that the LORD is good;
How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!*

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Psalm 34:8

*"I have not departed from the command of His lips;
I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my
necessary food.
Job 23:12*

How sad is it when Christians desire the "honey" of this world as opposed to God's Word to be satisfied?

[Read v.105 & 130]

¹⁰⁵Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.

¹³⁰The unfolding of Your words gives
light;
It gives understanding to the simple.

God's Word is our illumination.

The imagery here is of one walking along a dark path holding a lamp. It only actually illuminates the immediate vicinity. In other words, God's Word leads us a step at a time as we walk in obedience.

*So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.
2 Peter 1:19-21*

John reveals that there is a simultaneous occurrence between walking in God's light and obedience to His Word. To be in His Word means to be putting it into practice so that our behavior is visibly changed.

*This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.
1 John 1:5-10*

Have you considered that God's Word just doesn't shine the light to show us the way, but shines a light that exposes the quality of our spiritual walk?

[Read v.162]

¹⁶²I rejoice at Your word,
As one who finds great spoil.

God's Word is our great spoil.

Consider how this would be interpreted by people in the ancient world. Poor soldiers became rich by obtaining the spoil left by a defeated enemy. The riches of God's Word don't come easy, often after a spiritual battle with Satan and the flesh; but it is well worth it.

*Have you noticed in your spiritual victories how they act to confirm God's Word so that you have even **more** faith in it?*

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¹¹¹I have inherited Your testimonies
forever,
For they are the joy of my heart.

[Read v.111]

God's Word is our heritage.

At the core of the process of discipleship is our obtaining the confirmation of God's Word from previous generations as we pass it to the next. It not only becomes a kind of earthly heritage passed between generations, but the basis of our inheritance in the next life to come.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:19-21

People make all sorts of preparations to either inherit or pass along as an inheritance the physical legacies of material things. How well do you engage that process when it comes to God' Word?

What Does the Bible DO?

[Read v.1-2]

¹How blessed are those whose way is
blameless,
Who walk in the law of the LORD.
²How blessed are those who observe His
testimonies,
Who seek Him with all their heart.

God's Word blesses.

We are blessed in the course of reading the Word, understanding the Word, and obeying the Word. We are also blessed in the course of sharing His Word with others.

*How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the
wicked,*

Nor stand in the path of sinners,

Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

But his delight is in the law of the LORD,

And in His law he meditates day and night.

He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water,

Which yields its fruit in its season

And its leaf does not wither;

And in whatever he does, he prospers.

Psalm 1:1-3

What might be betrayed about one's spiritual condition when they seek God's blessing through means other than His Word? Or when they don't even obey His Word to begin with?

[Read v.25, 37, 40, 50, 88 & 93]

²⁵My soul cleaves to the dust;
Revive me according to Your word.

God's Word gives life.

³⁷Turn away my eyes from looking at
vanity,
And revive me in Your ways.

God's Word provides eternal life when we believe.

⁴⁰Behold, I long for Your precepts;
Revive me through Your righteousness.

*for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but
imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of
God.*

1 Peter 1:23

⁵⁰This is my comfort in my affliction,
That Your word has revived me.

By definition God's Word is living.

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⁸⁸Revive me according to Your
lovingkindness,
So that I may keep the testimony of Your
mouth.

⁹³I will never forget Your precepts,
For by them You have revived me.

²⁸My soul weeps because of grief;
Strengthen me according to Your word.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

If like many you desire to see spiritual revival, how well do you recognize that it only comes through those wholly yielded to His Word? How should this affect our prayer and even approach for revival?

[Read v.28]

God's Word gives strength.

Actually, it's **THE** source of our strength, empowering us when our faith is followed up with obedience to His Word. It's the actual source of our sustenance for both this life and the one to come.

"He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 8:3

To where do you most often go to be fed? Is it God's Word or a worldly substitute? Is your desire for His Word at least as strong as the daily yearning to eat and maintain the basics of life?

[Read v.45]

⁴⁵And I will walk at liberty,
For I seek Your precepts.

God's Word gives liberty.

Sin desires to have dominion over us...

*Establish my footsteps in Your word,
And do not let any iniquity have dominion over me.*
Psalms 119:133

...but the Word of God sets us free.

and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."
John 8:32

True liberty is realized by obedience to God's will, and according to James it is the "perfect law of liberty".

But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.
James 1:25

What might be revealed by those who feel that God's Word is restrictive or a burden? How does its freeing effects from sin grant the kind of liberty that genuinely exhilarates?

⁶⁶Teach me good discernment and knowledge,
For I believe in Your commandments.

⁹⁷O how I love Your law!
It is my meditation all the day.

⁹⁸Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies,
For they are ever mine.

⁹⁹I have more insight than all my teachers,
For Your testimonies are my meditation.

¹⁰⁰I understand more than the aged,
Because I have observed Your precepts.

¹⁰¹I have restrained my feet from every evil way,

That I may keep Your word.

¹⁰²I have not turned aside from Your ordinances,

For You Yourself have taught me.

¹⁰³How sweet are Your words to my taste!
Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

¹⁰⁴From Your precepts I get understanding;

Therefore I hate every false way.

⁶³I am a companion of all those who fear You,
And of those who keep Your precepts.

[Read v.66 & 97-104]

God's Word imparts wisdom.

Look at all the results noted here:

- "discernment and knowledge" (v.66)
- "wiser" (v.98)
- "more insight than all my teachers" (v.99)
- "understand more than the aged" (v.100)
- "I get understanding" (v.104)

Knowledge and facts may be found in other books, but only true spiritual wisdom is found in the Bible. The Psalmist notes here that some of the ways to discover truth is from "my enemies" (v.98), "my teachers" (v.99), and "the aged" (v.100), but above them all is God's Word. Teachers may derive knowledge from books and elders from experience (both deserving respect, of course), but without the Bible these alone are insufficient.

Why is it a mistake to assume that wisdom is something only supernaturally imparted as a gift from God? Do you believe that wisdom can be acquired by dedication to God's Word?

[Read v.63]

God's Word provides true friends.

Obedience to the Bible will bring into your life the best and finest friends, relationships tightly knit together because of God's Word. False friends will attempt to dazzle you with worldly wisdom and wealth which will ultimately lead you astray. Stick with those who "stick" with the Bible.

*I cling to Your testimonies;
O LORD, do not put me to shame!
Psalm 119:31*

*Do you think that those with whom you associate the most might be a reflection of your spiritual walk? How might **THEIR** commitment to God's Word be a reflection – or even a hindrance – of yours?*

[Read v.50, 76, 82 & 92]

God's Word gives comfort.

More than sixty verses in this Psalm specifically mentions trial and persecution. (v.20, 50-53, 95, 98, and so on) Believers will experience trials in this world even as they're obedient to God's Word, but His Word is a source of comfort through those trials. One of the primary descriptions of the Holy Spirit is "Comforter", describing how He takes the Word of God and applies it to the comfort of our heart.

In times of trial and duress, to whom or what do you turn? How might first running to God's Word point out a more mature Believer than normal?

⁵⁰This is my comfort in my affliction,
That Your word has revived me.

⁷⁶O may Your lovingkindness comfort me,
According to Your word to Your servant.

⁸²My eyes fail with longing for Your word,
While I say, "When will You comfort me?"

⁹²If Your law had not been my delight,
Then I would have perished in my affliction.

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¹³³Establish my footsteps in Your word,
And do not let any iniquity have
dominion over me.

[Read v.133]

God's Word gives direction.

God's Word directs our daily steps both for walking and running.

*I shall run the way of Your commandments,
For You will enlarge my heart.
Psalm 119:32*

*Make me walk in the path of Your commandments,
For I delight in it.
Psalm 119:35*

How well do you consider or reject other sources of input?

What Are WE Supposed to Do with the Bible?

[Read v.97 & 159]

⁹⁷O how I love Your law!
It is my meditation all the day.

We are supposed to love God's Word.

¹⁵⁹Consider how I love Your precepts;
Revive me, O LORD, according to Your
lovingkindness.

To love Him is to love His Word.

*"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.
John 14:15*

*Confirm or refute the following statement: The way you treat your Bible is the way
you treat Christ.*

[Read v.72 & 128]

⁷²The law of Your mouth is better to me
Than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

We are supposed to treasure God's Word.

¹²⁸Therefore I esteem right all Your
precepts concerning everything,
I hate every false way.

We are supposed to recognize its worth over every other personal possession
possible, which is one of the chief characteristics of a true saint.

How do you treat God's Word as compared to other possessions?

[Read v.7, 12, 18 & 26-27]

⁷I shall give thanks to You with
uprightness of heart,
When I learn Your righteous judgments.

We are supposed to study God's Word.

¹²Blessed are You, O LORD;
Teach me Your statutes.

At least twelve times in this psalm the writer prays, "Teach me." The consistent
inference is that it is **DAILY** immersion in His Word that is required. Bible study is
not an easy endeavor, but at least five times the psalmist states that it takes the
"whole heart". (v.2, 10, 34, 69 & 145)

¹⁸Open my eyes, that I may behold
Wonderful things from Your law.

²⁶I have told of my ways, and You have
answered me;
Teach me Your statutes.

*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman
who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word
of truth.*

2 Timothy 2:15

²⁷Make me understand the way of Your
precepts,
So I will meditate on Your wonders.

*How is the task to "study" different than merely "reading"? How might it be more
related to the repeated encouragement to "meditate" on God's Word?*

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

[Read v.11]

We are supposed to memorize God's Word.

This is not just for kids. Joshua was **NOT** a youth when God commanded him to memorize the Law.

"This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Joshua 1:8

Jesus personally provided this example in His rebuttals not just to religious authorities trying to twist God's Word, but in His response to Satan himself.

What have you done to "treasure" God's Word in your heart? What "life" verses have you committed to memory?

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

[Read v.15, 23, 48, 78 & 99]

We are supposed to meditate on God's Word.

²³Even though princes sit and talk against
me,
Your servant meditates on Your statutes.

⁴⁸And I shall lift up my hands to Your
commandments,
Which I love;
And I will meditate on Your statutes.

⁷⁸May the arrogant be ashamed, for they
subvert me with a lie;
But I shall meditate on Your precepts.

⁹⁹I have more insight than all my
teachers,
For Your testimonies are my meditation.

It has been said that, "Meditation is to the soul what digestion is to the body." The term "to meditate" literally means "to turn over" God's Word in the mind and heart, examine it, compare Scripture with Scripture, to feed on it.

One of the basic tenants of Walk with the Word is that the Bible can be read for information, instruction, and even inspiration, but that these endeavors most often fall short of accomplishing the purpose of God's Word to change us. Meditation upon God's Word is one of the primary tools for achieving the goal of incarnational reading – that is, hearing God speaking personally to us through His Word – because we're not passing over it for the limited purposes of information, instruction, or inspiration, but to know how He would have us apply it to our very behavior.

Concerning your own Bible reading habits, what do you need to change so as to incorporate meditation upon His Word into your daily routine?

⁴²So I will have an answer for him who
reproaches me,
For I trust in Your word.

[Read v.42]

We are supposed to trust God's Word.

We trust the Bible because it is, indeed, right about **everything**. There are no gaps that can be filled by alternate resources, only an exercise of faith and trust that it can provide what we need to know and respond.

Ever notice how the Spirit will bring to mind a Scripture to rebut what at first seems like a good argument? How does immersion in God's Word serve as our best preparation for evangelism?

¹How blessed are those whose way is blameless,
Who walk in the law of the LORD.
²How blessed are those who observe His testimonies,
Who seek Him with all their heart.
³They also do no unrighteousness;
They walk in His ways.
⁴You have ordained Your precepts,
That we should keep them diligently.
⁵Oh that my ways may be established
To keep Your statutes!
⁶Then I shall not be ashamed
When I look upon all Your commandments.
⁷I shall give thanks to You with uprightness of heart,
When I learn Your righteous judgments.
⁸I shall keep Your statutes;
Do not forsake me utterly!

[Read v.1-8]

We are supposed to obey God's Word.

What is the only difference between Satan and a Bible-believing Christian? They both **KNOW** God's Word, but only one is **OBEDIENT** to God's Word. Note all the instances here of behavior which displays obedience to God's Word:

- "walk in the law" (v.1)
- "observe" (v.2)
- "seek Him" (v.2)
- "walk in His ways" (v.3)
- "keep them" (v.4)

Now make note of the specific changes in behavior that are supposed to evident as a result of these actions:

- "way is blameless" (v.1)
- "do no unrighteousness" (v.3)
- "keep them diligently" (v.4)
- "I shall not be ashamed" (v.5)
- "I shall give thanks" (v.7)

How well do you suppose others can prove your obedience to God's Word by their observation of these behaviors in your own life?

[Read v.13 & 26]

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

²⁶I have told of my ways, and You have answered me;
Teach me Your statutes.

We are supposed to declare God's Word.

The "witness" of our life to others is not limited to presenting a spoken testimony documenting why one should accept Christ as their personal Savior, but includes the degree to which our daily walk conforms to God's Word. According to this standard, we are witnesses of Him every hour of every day.

How could a plea to receive the Gospel be undone by its speaker's lack of personal obedience to God's Word?

Overall Application

It has often been found to be the case that when one delves deeply into God's Word that one finds themselves confronted by their sins and shortcomings when it comes to not having been fully obedient to the Word. With all the discussion and personal assessment of obedience to God's Word to this point, it is suggested that the group leader facilitate group prayer with an emphasis on confession of sin and a sincere desire to live according to God's Word more closer than ever.