Psalm 119

Falling in Love

with the

Word of God

A systematic approach to the doctrines and spiritual disciplines contained in Psalm 119

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STUDY OF PSALM 119: DOCTINES AND DISCIPLINES FOR LIFE

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PSALM 119

HOW TO FALL IN LOVE WITH THE *WORD OF GOD*

AND FALL IN LOVE WITH THE *GOD OF THE WORD*

This course will cover psalm 119 and as we walk through it verse by verse we will build an understanding in several areas.

The following components will be addressed and compiled:

A basic systematic theology

A review of spiritual disciplines

Optional Character studies that relate to Psalm 119

While these lessons will not be exhaustive, there will be enough exposure to these disciplines to provide a strong foundation upon which to build and develop an even greater understanding as we each follow our Lord as His disciples.

Theology may sound boring or difficult, but broken down to its basic level, it means simply "a study of the ways of God".

There is no subject more exciting to ponder and devote one's time to than the study of God Himself.

"The purpose of Bible study is not to get to know the Bible but to get to know God." James Montgomery Boice

Discovering the profound truths of Who our God is and how He relates to His people is before you. Enjoy the journey!

INTRODUCTION

You are in a Bible study. Praise God!

Why you are here, why you are doing this particular study of God's word is known only to the Father. Even you do not realize all of the ramifications of what you are going to be doing. But He does and He will guide you into all truth. John 16:13

"What you think about God is the most important thing about you." A.W. Tozer

God has communicated to us in many ways: His Son, the prophets, His creation, His word.

This psalm is my favorite because I love the Lord and I love His word. This psalm is *all* about His word.

We may be tempted to neglect certain portions of God's word because it is difficult to understand, too long, too many lists, and many other reasons we erroneously come up with.

But do not neglect this psalm which has been referred to as **a small Bible in itself.**

In this psalm we learn many things, but two focus points will be our main theme:

- **A basic study in systematic theology**
- **A training in Christian disciplines**

We will observe Psalm 119. From our observations, we will see a theology concerning our God unfold. An understanding of theology is lacking within the church body today. So we will tackle this fearlessly, knowing that our God wants us to know Him. But theology without application can lead to empty worship. So in addition to the profound and prolific depths of theology, we find in Psalm 119, we also find great examples of Christian practice or discipline (training).

Being armed with an understanding of God and His word and also the implications to our daily lives of that understanding is the purpose of this study.

So if you are not interested in knowing God or His call on your life, you are free to go. If, on the other hand, you are desperate to know Him – to hear His voice – then remember the commitment you make today and do not let anything less than eternal decrees come between you and the study of His word.

<u>May you be eternally blessed by what Psalm 119 has to say to you.</u>

In case you feel this psalm is too long to study, read the following quotes.

"William Wilberforce, the British statesman who was largely responsible for the abolition of the slave trade throughout the empire, wrote in his diary in the year 1819, 'Walked today from Hyde Park Corner, repeating the 119th Psalm in great comfort."

Does it seem strange that busy Wilberforce should know this psalm by heart?

Henry Martyn, pioneer missionary to India, memorized Psalm 119 as an adult in 1812. He had an extremely arduous life, but he confessed that it was the Bible alone that gave him strength to keep going. He died of exhaustion in 1812.

David Livingstone, pioneer missionary to Africa, won a Bible from his Sunday school teacher by repeating Psalm 119 by heart- when he was only nine years old."

From James M. Boice commentary on the Psalms, volume three

"The emphasis in this, the longest psalm, is on the vital ministry of the Word of God in the inner spiritual life of God's children... The way we treat the Word of God is the way we treat the God of the Word."

W. Wiersbe commentary on the Psalms

HOW TO DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Format:

Week one will be an overview.

Then there will be 12 following lessons, each covering two stanzas (with the exception of lesson two). There are twenty-two stanzas in the psalm.

Each week you will read the first stanza (8 verses), then we will go verse by verse. We will be digging out all the riches we can discover from each verse. After you have studied the two stanzas for the week, we will review the stanzas to find our theological truths. We will also look for the spiritual disciplines, such as meditation or prayer, that we can learn from and build an understanding from the application of these practices. Then, to see the practical way in which these powerful truths are lived out, we will do a character study of a Bible person who exemplifies our lesson. These character studies are optional and may be used as class discussions to be delved into during your weekly meeting or used as a separate study.

The breakdown each week will be:

day one overview, in depth verse by verse of stanza one, first four verses

day two in depth verse by verse of verses five through eight

day three in depth verse by verse of stanza two, verses one through four

day four in depth verse by verse of verses five through eight

day five treasure hunt for doctrines/spiritual disciplines/optional character study (This day is also reserved for any missed work that you were unable to do throughout the week.)

(Throughout the week, you will find * in certain places. These asterisks are there to alert you to possible spiritual disciplines. Doctrines will be marked by< >. Watch for these.)

We will thereby complete two stanzas a week (only one stanza the second lesson). Our agenda is to learn from the doctrines which help us see God at work. We do not want to miss anything about the Lover of our souls which a casual look at scripture only ill affords. The spiritual disciplines will be the proper response to the revelation of Who our God really is.

Additional reading:

You will be instructed to read additional selections which will help explain the **doctrines** in the appendix.

There are also informative essays on the spiritual disciplines.

Cross References:

Cross references help the Bible student gain the full counsel of God's word by reading from many portions of scripture, allowing scripture to be the commentary on scripture. This will allow the student to be less dependent on man's counsel regarding God's Word.

There are many cross references in this study. Some will be marked as optional. If you wish to look at them all, they are included here for you. If it is too difficult or laborious for you at this time to read all of the cross references, then take advantage of the optional choice.

The cross references are intended to further your understanding of the topic under review; they are not included to burden or overwhelm you. Keep in mind the focus of this study: an exposure to the doctrines and disciplines contained within God's Word and especially here in this particular psalm.

You will need:

A Bible

A three-ringed binder

(Optional) 5 dividers:

1-the current lesson 2- spiritual disciplines 3 - doctrines 4 - Character studies 5 – appendix

I encourage you to keep a section in your notebook in the appendix which will contain your observations on Jesus throughout the course.

Colored pens or pencils

Any resources that provide Old Testament word studies

At times, some words will be included with a # number. These are words that you may find in the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, the Complete Word Study Series by S. Zodhiates and also the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament by Harris, Archer and Waltke.

HEBREW POETRY

John Milton, the great British poet who wrote Paradise Lost, said that the deepest impulse for poetry is … praise. Milton regards the psalms as humanity's highest achievement in poetry.

Psalm 119 is a poem. Our western understanding of poetry is very different from the middle eastern idea of poetry. Hebrew is not based on rhyme – but on repetition of thought. Parallelism is crucial.

Also the structure of this poem provides another aspect of Hebrew poetry. The structure of Psalm 119 is in groups of eight verses. Each group or stanza is a unit. Each stanza and each line of that stanza begin with the same Hebrew letter. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet and there are 22 stanzas. This structure was useful for memory purposes. The long psalm was made easier to remember because of the use of this device. Psalm 119 is not alone in this structure. These are called *acrostic* poems.

We find from the Oxford Bible Dictionary: "another purpose of the acrostic psalm besides an aid to memorization is its intention to convey the idea that the entire range of sentiment is being expressed, from A to Z."

Poetry is very dependent on order. By observing the order of this poem, which is completely absorbed with God's word, we will learn much about the God of order.

Three Major Features of Old Testament Poetry

1. Synonymous parallelism-the second or subsequent line repeats or reinforces the sense of the first line.

2. Antithetical parallelism-the second or subsequent one contrast the thought of the first.

3. Synthetic parallelism-the second or subsequent line adds to the first line in any manner which provides further information.

Poetry is filled with figurative language and there are guidelines for interpreting this type of language. Hebrew poetry is different from our poetry. We are accustomed to rhyme schemes. But the distinguishing characteristic of Hebrew poetry is a correspondence in thought (parallelism) between one line and the following line, or between one section and the following section. For us, redundancy is to be avoided, but to the Hebrew writer, redundancy was a literary form to be cultivated with diligence. For them, this redundancy was a measure of certainty and predictability. Because most of the New Testament was written by people greatly influenced by Hebrew ways of thinking, in particular the Old Testament, understanding the Hebrew poetic mind will aid in understanding the New Testament as well.

Briefly, the three basic kinds of parallelism can be remembered as: similar thoughts, additional thoughts, or contrasting thoughts arranged side by side in a single passage. It is greatly beneficial to the student of the Bible to become sensitive to the Hebrew idea of poetry: correspondence in thought. For those fluent in Hebrew, they will inform us less fortunate that almost half of the Old Testament is written in poetic language which is lost in translation. But we can be more discerning and regain a portion of what is lost by being aware of the concept of parallel thought.

To value the eternal benefit of this poem, even today one of the uses of this poem is prayer. We find from the Hebrew **Tehillim**(the Hebrew title for the book of Psalms, which means "praises"), prayers for a sick person are recited from this poem. It is customary to recite those verses which correspond to the letter of his/her name.

Why don't you begin your study each day by praying for someone with the first letter of the psalm you are studying – praying that your loved one will be *blameless, blessed, will observe God's testimonies, seek Him with all their heart,* etc.(for one whose name begins with "A").

This prayer will bless the one who is prayed for, will honor the Lord and will cause you to remember the words in this psalm in a deeper, more practical way.

OVERVIEW

LESSON ONE "Beginning to Understand the Sanctification Psalm"

Doctrine: Introduction to Doctrine, Sanctification/Discipline: Meditation

Psalm 119 is long and without proper appreciation can seem monotonous and trying. So we will not ask you to read its entirety, yet, but if you desire to read it all, go ahead.

Your appreciation for this psalm, this poem, this masterpiece will grow as you walk around it, ponder it, learn background information about it and see it from different perspectives.

Be patient and you will see a glorious testimony to God's communication to man – His word. Then you will see how He is speaking His word to you today.

Be certain that you have already read all the information in the pages prior to lesson one.

Day One

1. Today you are to **read** *the first stanza*, *the first line* of each stanza and then *the last stanza*.

Write what it says to you. Note particularly the emotions and thoughts of the psalmist.

(Note: a stanza here is comprised of eight verses. It may also be referred to as a *strophe*.)

Note that he moves from generic "how blessed are *those* …. " (verse 1) to "Let *my* cry come

before You." (verse 169)

2. What is the overarching theme throughout the psalm in your opinion at this point? You will be amazed at how this deepens over the next few weeks.

3. **Read** the same portion of the psalm, this time you will answer the following questions:

a. What does the psalmist most discuss?

b. Are there any other characters?

c. When does the psalmist write? When he is happy, sad, afraid?

d. Where does he go for answers? Where do you go for answers?

4. In your opinion at this point, why does he write this psalm?

5. How can this one psalm glorify God?

You may not realize it, but you just answered the six basic question words: ***who, what, where, when, why and how*** *concerning* ***Psalm 119****. This is a great method of observing a text. As children we learn this method in school and then discard it as we come to the Bible. That is a mistake. Be very energetic and inquisitive. With childlike wonder, talk to and question your heavenly Father about His word to you.*

6. Now you will make some lists on what you have been learning. This will consolidate what you have seen. Use extra paper if you need more room.

List what you learn about the man who follows God.
List what you learn about those who do not follow God.
List what you learn about God.
List what you learn about God's word, law, statutes, testimonies, etc.

The man who follows God	the man who does not follow God	God	God's word/ statutes/law
is blessed			
his way is blameless			
he observes God's testimonies			
he seeks God with all of his heart			

Day Two

1. Go through your list on the man of God.

Ask yourself if that description is a portrait of you. Is it who you want to be?
How can that become true of you?

2. **Read and record** how these verses will instruct and aid you in your goal of being a man/woman of God.

a. Romans 6:12-19

b. Rom. 12:1, 2

In order to be blameless, you must be a slave to righteousness and a living sacrifice.

c. 1 Cor. 6:20

d. 1 Pet. 1:13-15

e. Matt. 13:22, 23

f. Gal. 1:4

g. 1Jn 2:15-17

h. **Col. 1:9-12, 22** note words similar to **Ps. 119,** like *walk, understanding, giving thanks, strength, blameless*

(This portion of Colossians is a prayer. Is someone praying this for you? Are you praying this for someone?)

The guarantee of the end result of your transformation is in God's words of promise.

i. **Phil. 1:6; 2:12, 13**

j. **Tit. 3:5-7**

3. As you finish these verses, realize the blessed truth for believers in Jesus Christ. Because of His tremendous work on our behalf, we have the Spirit of God "tabernacling", dwelling within us! **Jn. 1:14; 14: 16-17; 16:7; Rom. 8:9-11; Col. 2:6-10 (Optional reading)**

Day Three

Now in the appendix,we will begin working on <doctrines>. Go over the verses directed on day one. (First and last stanzas and each first line of the other stanzas.)
Do you see any doctrines? Below you will find a definition of what a doctrine is.

Basically, a doctrine is a teaching about God's truth. The church has been built into the body of Christ by the miraculous work of God. (**Eph. 2:19-22**) As His church, we must know what God teaches us about truth. The most important truth is about God Himself, so always include in your list of doctrinal truth what you learn about God.

For instance, in the **Yodh** stanza, **verse 73,** you learn something about God. What is it?

God is Creator. Put that on your list. As you are making your list, always include the verse number next to your comment.

- In the appendix, **read the selection on Doctrine**.

Begin using your text of Psalm 119. It is highly advantageous to mark this text and note any findings you may discover.

You will also learn things about **God's word**. Make a separate list about this. This is optional, but highly valuable.

Other doctrines are things like, sin, salvation, human responsibility, etc. Anything that you would call a Biblical truth will help you compile a list on doctrine. There is included in the appendix a compilation of doctrines you may find helpful.

- Psalm 119 is primarily a journey with a man committed to his God. He is determined to follow God in His blameless way. The way he has chosen is the way of sanctification. This has been called the "Sanctification Psalm." To better

understand what this means for this psalmist and more importantly for you as a follower of Jesus Christ, **read the selection in the appendix titled "Sanctification."** This is located in the section under doctrines. This doctrine is crucial to your walk with the Lord

Day Four

Also in the appendix, you will find some selections which will inform you regarding *__spiritual discipline__s*. As we read this psalm you will discover these disciplines. The spiritual disciplines you might search for are listed in the appendix. Just as with spiritual gifts, there is no single place in Scripture which records for us the spiritual disciplines. But a simple way of thinking of them is to recall any practice that Jesus did in His earthly life. Our Lord said to follow Him, so I believe following His example in these practices is of deep spiritual benefit.

- **Read the selection on Spiritual Disciplines and also the Discipline of *Meditation*.**

Ask yourself how you can learn to practice these disciplines in your life.

Make any notes on a separate sheet of paper as to your personal insights.

(**Optional**) Today in the appendix, record on a separate sheet of paper any *spiritual discipline* you find in the first stanza, the last stanza and the first line of each of the other stanzas. If you prefer, you may simply record your discoveries in the text of Psalm 119.

Day Five

This day is reserved typically for doctrines, spiritual disciplines and any catch-up that you may wish to do.

But also as an optional exercise or for class discussion, you may elect to do a character study each week. This is optional the following weeks. But this week it is NOT optional. The focus today on the life of Christ is critical to the remainder of the study, so be diligent with this study of Jesus.

We will each week look at a **character study** of a Biblical person who will help us understand God's mind on this psalm. This psalm has every verse of the 176 but one, discussing some form of God's word. Today we will look at God's Holy Word … His Son.

1. Read **John 1** and record insights from this chapter which enlightens your understanding of **Psalm 119.**

2. Read **1 John 1** and do the same.

3. Finally for this week, you will examine a part of the life of Jesus in which He prays His High Priestly prayer.

Your final assignment is to read **John 17** and write down everything you learn about how Jesus felt about God's word. Also do you see any comparisons with anything you have looked at all week in **Psalm 119** with **John 17**?

"He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God."

Rev. 19:13

LESSON TWO "Do You Long To Be Blessed?"

Doctrine: Sovereignty/Discipline: Thanksgiving

Psalm 119:1-8 The Aleph Stanza א

Day One

PSALM 119:1 אַשְׁרֵ asher – "blessed"

How blessed are those whose way is blameless,

who walk in the law of the LORD.

Do you realize these words "how blessed" are the words which open the entire book of the Psalms? They are also the words of our Lord's first recorded sermon.

These indeed are precious words!

*Now, in order to dig a little deeper, let's look at each lin*e. Please make sure you have read the introductory notes on Hebrew poetry.

Line 1

1. What does the first half of the line say to you?

2. How does the second half- line relate to the first?

Throughout the psalm, the first half and the second half of each line will relate to each other.

Watch for what the writer is trying to convey – saying something twice means it is important.

Remember, *in Hebrew poetry the author utilizes repetition; it is his artistic form*.

3. How can you be "blameless"?

4. How can you "walk in the law of the Lord"?

5. How do you learn the law of God?

- *Since I want to be happy and blessed, I need to find this blameless way*.

In further looking at this **way**, we find that it is referred to as "*whose way"*. Whose is a pronoun which shows ownership.

This is your way. “Way” means journey, manner of living, path. As in, “Which path do I take?”

6. Do you claim and acknowledge that you have a way?

We are not just ambling through life – every day you are establishing ***a way that is yours***.

7. Are you at peace with *your way*?
   Is God pleased with *your way*?

8. How can *your way* become more **in tune** with *His way*?

Read Prov. 14:8; 16:17

9. What do you learn about a person’s way here?

Now for the word “blessed”.

Asher is the Hebrew for “blessed” or “happy”. (It is the “**Aleph**” word for the line.)
The use of this term indicates a **covenantal** life and the joy of living in the presence of God.

+This Hebrew word is always used to refer to people and never used of God.
-almost exclusively poetic
- mostly this term is connected with wisdom
- this term is also used to describe a person or nation who enjoys a relationship with God

The opening word of the psalm “blessed” is repeated in verse 2 but found nowhere else in this psalm.
The vital role of this word in opening the psalm and then never being used again is a striking way of drawing attention to the dramatic importance of what follows. If the reader desires to be blessed, he must realize the cost of losing this treasured “blessedness”.

For a further understanding of the word “*asher*”, we will contrast it with another word used for “blessed” – “*barak*”. +This Hebrew word means to bless as well. But the difference is that this word is used when man blesses the Lord. The verb form means “ to kneel.”

Read Psalm 103

In this psalm, man is blessing God by praising Him.

10. Is there a connection between God being blessed and man being blessed? We are to kneel before God in worship (barak) *then* we will be blessed (asher). It is in kneeling, acknowledging God's right of authority over us, that we are willing to submit to His laws, testimonies, statutes, commandments – His words become life and we delight in His words.

Read Psalm 1

11. Who do you see contrasted in these six verses?

12. How is the blessed man described? the wicked?

Verse six has two types contrasted in the last verse.

13. What two types are they?

We will return to Psalm 1 throughout the study as these two psalms are related in content and thought.

Day Two

Write 119:2 here.

1. Who is blessed here?

2. What does it mean to observe His testimonies?

Observe can also be translated "to keep". You can only *keep* what you first *possess*. Do you have the Lord's testimonies, witness, words?

3. What are testimonies?

Hebrew for testimony is *edah*, a noun meaning witness. It is derived from a word that denotes permanence and refers to the act of testifying to a fact or an event. A heap of stones became a witness to the boundary agreement reached between Jacob and Laban

(Gen. 31:52). **Record** this information in the appendix under "God's Word and Its Synonyms", *edah* is #7.

4. What is the relationship between observing His testimonies and seeking God with all your heart?

Recently I served on a jury. The case we heard involved conflicting testimony. We had to determine whose testimony was to be believed.

Every day you live as though you believe God's testimony or you do not believe Him.

5. To learn a little more about testimony**, read John 5:30-40**

Are you willing to believe the *entire testimony* of Who Jesus is and the *entire claim* that He places on your life?

6. **Verse two** contains the first time we encounter the word "heart". You will see heart throughout this psalm frequently.

We have seen *way, walk, observe* and *seek* ... now *heart*.

How does heart relate to all of these words?

There is a wealth of information on the heart in the book of Proverbs. We will look at some-do as many as you can-but if you bog down, just move on. This is to be a blessing to your *heart*.

If you elect to write more on these verses, add more paper for your notes.

a. Prov. 2:2,10

b. 3:1,3,5,6

c. 4:20,21,23

d. 5:12

e. 6:20,21

f. **15:28**

g. **16:1,21,23**

h. **17:3**

i. **19:3**

j. **20:9**

k. **21:2**

l. **22:11**

m. **24:17**

The Hebrew idea of heart expressed the essence of who the person truly was, his identity. At times the heart can refer to the will, mind or emotions. But the bottom line is that to be truly blessed, your "heart" must have all three collaborating: will, mind and emotions.

7. Do not flippantly answer this next question. **Reflect**.

Do you seek God with all of your heart?

"To obey the Lord and walk uprightly will require all our heart and soul and mind."
Charles Haddon Spurgeon

8. Two times the psalmist refers to this man as blessed. Let's dig a little more and learn what it is to be blessed.

God's idea of blessedness must become our own to fully know Him.

There are many places in Scripture which describe blessedness. Probably the first that comes to mind for you is **Matthew 5**... the Beatitudes.

There follows a list of the "blesseds." If you wish to keep a running list of all the comparisons you see to the "blesseds" in Psalm 119, you may record it here. This again is optional.

Read Matthew 5:1-12

Here you see that the one who is <u>blessed</u> is:

Poor in spirit
Yet his is the kingdom of heaven

Mourns
Yet he is comforted

Meek or gentle (Greek word means that he does not contend or struggle with God, but is entirely submitted/yielded to His will)
Yet he inherits the land

Hungers and thirsts for righteousness
And he is satisfied

Merciful
And is shown mercy

Pure in heart
And sees God

Peacemaker
Is called a son of God

Persecuted
Possesses the kingdom of God

9. For now, do you see any relationship between verses 1 and 2, of Ps. 119 and the Beatitudes?

10. What do you see in the beatitudes that corresponds to any of the words we have cross referenced or defined?

11. What does it mean to "see" God? **Matt. 5:8**

In Hebrew poetry parallel lines have a corollary relationship of either synonymous or antithetical use – opposites or the same.

So here, "blessed are those who observe His testimonies and seek Him with all their heart."

What is the correlation of *observing* His testimonies/*seeking* Him with all the heart/*seeing* God?

12. Do you realize that as you obey and observe God's testimonies (His word) that you will see Him more clearly and can more appropriately worship Him?

He reveals Himself to those who seek Him with a pure heart.

Ultimately one day you will see Him as He is!

When we started Psalm 119, it was expressed that you will find how to fall in love with the Word of God and fall in love with the God of the Word. Seeing Him is loving Him. He is irresistibly lovely.

13. To close verse two, read **1 John 3:1-3** and mark the words "see" and "pure" or "purifies".

Take some time to gaze into the eyes of your Beloved.

Day Three This is our righteous walk day!

Write 119:3 here.

1. Verse 3 further describes the blessed one. What do you learn?

2. Is it possible to "do no unrighteousness"?

Read 1 John 3:9; 5:18 Read these verses and answer from the text. We will explore this idea more**.**

3. We have seen "walk" before - how is this walk similar?

Christians use this term quite often, but what does "walk" mean?
Read the following and record what you learn about "walk".

a. Gal. 5:16,25

b. Rom. 8:3,4

4. Also note what you learn about "those who do no unrighteousness".

Read

a. 1 Pet. 3:12 (Ps. 34:15,16)

b. Rom. 3:10; 5:19

c. Look at a frequently overlooked righteous pair – **Luke 1:6**
Did they exemplify **Ps. 119:1-3?**

d. 2 Pet. 2:5

e. 1 John 2:1, 29; 3:7,12

Look for a minute as what true Righteousness looks like.

f. 1 Pet. 2:23

g. Matt. 3:15 (optional)

h. Rev. 16:5,7;19:2

Now to combine this *righteousness* and *walking* that we first looked at in this verse (**Ps. 119:3**) –
Read 1 John 1:6-10 and see what you learn about these two important aspects of our faith.

5. How can you walk in the light today?
6. What can you deny in your life in order to turn from walking in darkness?

For the Christian, to walk in God's ways is already provided for him through Christ. We simply follow our Shepherd – He leads, we follow. Through His life on earth, Christ fulfilled the law. By His obedience to the law at every point, He has provided us atonement. We have kept the law through Him. By His death, He provided for the penalty of sin which is required under law for the sinner. Now, we have forgiveness of our sins. Through Christ the law is fulfilled and the penalty for sin is appeased.

This concept can be referred to in doctrinal terms as *active* (the law observed in His earthly life) and *passive* (the penalty for sin paid for through His death) *atonement*.

This psalmist has described our Lord – blameless, no unrighteousness, walks in the way of the Lord, walks in the testimonies of the Lord, seeks God with all His heart, observes His testimonies, etc.

This is a portrait of Christ and because of His life and death, it is now a portrait of His follower.

7. What do you know of righteousness and the righteous way?

Read Prov. 2:9

"*Then* you will understand (discern) righteousness." When?

8. To find that answer, you must read **Prov. 2:1-9**.

9. What are some of the things you gain by righteousness?
   a. Prov. 10:2,7,11,16

   b. Prov. 11:19

10. What else do you learn about righteousness? **Use a separate piece of paper**. Do as many verses as time allows. But see what you can learn about righteousness.
    a. Rom. 1:17; 3:21-23, 25-26; 4:3-6, 9 13; 5:17-21; 6:13,20; 8:10
    b. Titus 3:5
    c. Heb. 11:7
11. How was Noah declared righteous?

Acts 17:31

12. How will God judge the world?

2 Tim. 4:8

13. What is your relationship to the Righteous Judge?

Write 119:4 here.

Verse four is unique in that it declares clearly for the first time what God has done.

God has ordained or commanded His precepts.

"Ordain" is the Hebrew word *tsavah* – appoint, charge, send a messenger, put in order

1. What does that mean God did?

2. Look in the appendix for the word "precept" in Hebrew. What is it?
3. His precepts relate to us. How so?

4. How are we to keep His precepts?

Your study of God's word and the application of His wisdom must be deliberate, it cannot be casual or accidental.

2 Tim. 2:15

5. Write this verse here and explain how it relates to **Ps. 119:4b**. (*Whenever you see a verse followed by the letter" b", it means the second half of the verse and not the entire verse*.)

Read **2 Tim. 2:16**

6. In order to be diligent in your walk, what are you to avoid?

In Bible study, the importance of context is key. So always try to take the time to look at the surrounding verses of the designated quote.

7. Now look at **2 Tim. 2:14** and describe what Paul thinks is important and unimportant.

So being diligent with God's word does not include wrangling or disputing about words. So what does it mean?

8. Look at **Col. 3:16** and see how it relates to *diligence* in keeping God's precepts.

Remember God had a reason for giving us each psalm.

"teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

Finally, **read Deut. 4:1-20, 24**

9. What do you learn about the statutes and judgments of God?

10. In **verse 4,** who is alive?

11. In **verses 6-8,** who is watching?

"*God has not commanded us to be diligent in **making** precepts, but in **keeping** them*."
C.H. Spurgeon

Do not make yokes for yourself.

119:4 explains to us that God ordains; God is Sovereign and we are not.

- **Read the selection in the appendix on the *Doctrine of God's Sovereignty*.**

Day Four

Write 119:5 here.

When do you say, "Oh!"?

Usually I say this as an exclamation of great surprise, joy, fear, sadness, etc. This word exclaims something. It is a passionate word. It shows emotion and desire. I believe it is the heartfelt prayer of the psalmist.

1. So what is his desire?

2. What does it mean to establish something?

"Establish"- to make strong, put down roots, become unshakeable, undeterred, immovable, resolved

This is in regard to keeping God's statutes.

3. How can you be unshaken?

a. Heb. 12:28

b. Dan. 11:32

c. Zech. 10:12

d. Ps. 125:1

e. Ps. 40:2; 46:5

4. Who establishes you?

5. What is David's response to being firmly established?

Ps. 40:3

6. Your responsibility is to respond to His establishing His word in you.

Read 1 Kings 2:12, 24; 1 Chron. 28:7; 29:25

7. What does David's son Solomon say?

Prov. 4:26

8. Many recite and know **2 Chron. 7:14,** but what do verses **17** and **18** say?

9. Look ahead, it's not cheating, but will confirm the perfect balance and precision of His word.

Ps 119:38

What is being established and by whom?

For what purpose?

This is the Christian life in a nutshell- He works His word in us, His power (more on that later), His purpose and the outpouring of His glory. Honor and praises to Him forever and ever!

Bless His Holy Name!

Rest in Him as He establishes you in His word.

Write 119:6 here.

Then is a "when" word. What is happening and why now?

1. When we looked at **119:4,** we read **2 Tim 2:15**. Look again (at 2 Tim) and see why you do not need to be ashamed.

There is only one thing we are all ashamed of and that is sin. Sin causes shame. Without even using the word *sin*, the psalmist clearly shows what sin is – anything that is counter to God's command.

"Sin brings shame and when sin is gone, the reason for being ashamed is banished."

C.H. Spurgeon

What a joy! Can you exclaim "OH!" to that!

Shame is such a burden, some people prefer death to shame. But thanks be to God – He can banish our shame!

Spurgeon also tells us to "be assured that the Holy Spirit can renew in you the image of God."

This is what Adam lost – the *imago dei* - but Christ has recaptured it for us.

2. What are you ashamed of?

Be honest – not what you wish you were ashamed of, but what are you truly ashamed of?

3. What releases you from shame according to **Ps. 119:6**?

4. How is it possible that looking upon all God's commandments could release you from shame?

5. Where are you to look?

At someone who is a worse sinner than you so you don't feel so bad?

At a saint and you feel guilty?

At your past so you can focus on good or bad depending on your temperament?

No, clearly here it says to **look** upon all Your commandments.

To prepare your heart read Prov. 6:16-23

7. Look at Ex. 20:1-17

Your assignment is to list these ten commandments here.

Go before the Lord and ask Him, "How have I stolen from You? How have I violated Your Holy Name? Ask Him if you have violated any of His commandments.

As the word dwells richly in us (**Col. 3:16**), as we diligently present ourselves to God, accurately handling truth – we are not earning our salvation but what is happening?

Read and see what you learn about God's commandments and His will.

a. Phil. 2:13

b. John 14:15,21,23; 15:10

c. Ezek. 36:25-27

8. Read

Matt. 19:16-26

What do you learn about commandments?

Does keeping the commandments give eternal life?

9. Read

a. Matt. 5:17 – 20

List what you learn about commandments here.

How is Jesus referred to in:

b. Acts 3:14

c. Acts 7:52

d. Acts 22:14

e. 1 John 2:1

f. According to **Rom. 3:21-26,** how does the righteousness of Christ pass to us? Must we keep all the commandments?

10. Read Rom. 10:9,10

What is the result (**v. 10)** of your belief in Jesus Christ as Lord?

This takes us back to **Ps. 119:2**. Seeking Him with a whole heart and keeping His word results in blessing.

Day Five

Write 119:7 here.

1. **When does the** psalmist give thanks or praise?

Remember **Col 3:16** from Day three? "teaching… with psalms and hymns … singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

119:5 was basically a prayer for holiness. It follows that the one who prays for holiness will one day praise God for his joy. No longer shamed – no longer burdened, the believer can rejoice and praise the Lord Who makes the heart upright.

2. **Read aloud. No notes, just praise Him.**

Ps. 100

Ps. 105:1

Eph. 5:20

"Worship and obedience require knowledge of the Scripture."

Notes from the Reformation Study Bible, Ps. 119:7

So if you want to worship God in spirit and in truth, you must know truth.

"When I learn" in the original Hebrew means "in my learning" or "as I learn". It is a continual process. There is so much homework this week, but at some point in your journey with the Lord, do a study on the *thank offering*.

For the time being, ask the Lord how you can offer Him a thank offering that will please Him.

3. How grateful is your heart?

How upright is your heart?

The test: an upright heart is sure to praise the Lord because gratitude is a significant component to uprightness.

Write 119:8

1. Will God ever forsake you?

Heb. 13:5: Deut. 31:6, 8

2. So what does the psalmist mean here?

In the previous verses the psalmist has developed a theme of the immense importance of the Lord and His ways in the life of the blessed man. This man is so desperate for the Lord that he cries out, "O Lord, do not forsake me utterly!" He would be completely lost and forlorn without the fellowship of His God.

"*There is rather a descent from the mount of benediction with which the first verse begins to the almost wail of this eighth verse; yet this is spiritually a growth, for from admiration of goodness we have come to a burning longing after God and communion with Him, and an intense horror lest it should not be enjoyed.*" C.H. Spurgeon

SUMMARY of first stanza:

Remember this is the "Sanctification Psalm." In what ways this week have you seen the psalmist focusing on this topic?

1. After studying the first eight verses, now read **Psalm 1** and describe how it relates to these eight verses.

2. Now why would the writer of **Ps. 119** elaborate to such a great length upon basically the same input as **Ps. 1?**

These first eight verses are not treated as a lesson in righteousness but rather a contemplation of the blessedness in keeping God's law – it is devout rather than scholarly, informative or instructive.

To approach **Psalm 119** as an informative criterion for obtaining God's approval is to miss the heart of this communication of God's heart concerning His word.

3. Record any <doctrines> of truth that you have seen this week in the appendix under the heading of **Doctrines.** Remember one you should include is the doctrine of sin. Also any truths you learned about God would go under the heading of **Doctrines of God**.

Be diligent with these lists; you will be amazed in a few weeks with what you have seen.

4. Now record in the text of the psalm any *spiritual disciplines* you find in these eight verses. I use a different color to note the disciplines.

One you will notice is *giving thanks*.

As you close today, this week, give thanks to Him Who will never forsake you, Who clothes you in royal garments of righteousness, Who calls you to His word to make you complete and whole in Him.

He is worthy of your thanks!

- **Read the selection under Spiritual Disciplines on *Thanksgiving*.**

*The below character study is optional for homework or may be the topic of class discussion.

5. Your character study is on David. On a separate page, record what you learn about David that relates to the first stanza of Psalm 119 and anything else you have seen this week.

   Read Acts 13:22, 23
   Read 1 Sam. 16-18

   You should find things like:
   He seeks him with all of his heart
   His ways are established
   He is not ashamed
   He looks diligently at the law of God
   He is not forsaken by God, but the Lord is with him (1 Sam. 18:14)
   He give thanks, shows a grateful heart to the Lord.

   Read 1 Sam. Chapters 24, 26
   How do these chapters relate to **119:1-8?**

   2Sam. 1
   Regard the response of David to the news of the death of his greatest enemy.

   How do you respond when hardship or destruction comes upon your enemy?

   Is your way blameless?

   Read 2 Sam. 5
   2 Sam 7
   1 Kings 2:1-4 (These four verses teach us much about this man.)

   Psalms 15, 16, 17, 19 (These are not long psalms.)

   This is a lot of reading so if you need to split it into two days, it is worth doing an extra day this week to richly dwell in the life of a man who found favor with his God.

LESSON THREE "Is Your Heart God's Home?"

Doctrine: Sin/Discipline: Memorization

PSALM 119:9-16 the Beth Stanza and 119:17-24 the Gimel Stanza

As you work this week, remember to continue to look for clues to living the life of sanctification. This is the "Sanctification Psalm."

Day One

Read the Beth stanza. בֵּ

1. What is the overall feel of this stanza?

2. List below what you learn about God in one column, the one who would follow God in another column and the word of God in the third.

This is the Beth stanza. It is interesting that "beth" is a letter and also a word meaning *house*.

In this stanza there is a theme for making the heart a home for the word of God.

בַּמֶּה – "wherewithal""

Write 119:9 here.

Here we have the first question posed.

1. The psalmist is now a teacher in typical wisdom literature form. Similar to Ps**. 34:11**, the writer uses this new development in writing as a teaching device. So what does he want to teach?

2. According to the psalmist, when is the best time to establish and maintain a pure life? Why?

3. Repetition is key. What two verbs does he use in verse 9?
4. How is the young man to keep his way?

5. Can you give an example of keeping your way pure?

6. We are told to keep the way pure according to God's word. This phrase "according to Your word" is used many times throughout the psalm. What do you learn here about this phrase?

God does not hide from us what pleases Him. He states it clearly in His word.

So to guard your way and keep it pure, you must know what pleases God and do it.

In verses 9-11, the writer equates the pursuit of God's word to the pursuit of God Himself.

Reread the first stanza and verse 9 of the second stanza.

7. What does it seem is the key to blessedness?

We must guard our way, keep it blameless, undefiled and pure.

8. How?

(This may seem repetitious, but it holds the answer to all of our ventures into the land of sin.)

9. See what you learn about purity from these verses. (This is optional, but very helpful.)

a. John 15:3; 17: 17

b. Eph. 5:26, 27

c. 1 Thes. 5:23

d. 1 Pet. 1:22

Write 119:10 here.

1. Does this seem familiar? Where have you seen "all my heart" and "seeking"?

2. What is different here?

Have sought, this is past tense. So we see a pattern or habit for the follower of God.
So to be clear. We have: a habitual life of seeking God
seeking Him with all the heart

3. Does that allow other things to distract?

Read Col. 3:1

But look at the next half line: "*do not let me wander from Your commandments."*
Even if you are habitually seeking God with all of your heart, you can never let down your spiritual guard. You must keep vigilant guard over your heart at all times.

4. Now when you wander - and we all do – do you think of it as wandering from His commandments?

Read John 14:15, 21

5. Is wandering different from outright rebellion?

6. When does wandering usually occur? Why does it occur?

7. How can God "not let you wander"?
What can He do to prevent your wandering?

Wander: *shagah*, which root word means- to stray, to reel from intoxication, to be enraptured, to go astray, deceive, err, sin through ignorance (how, by the way, can you avoid sinning through ignorance?)

Read John 10:1-18, 26-30

Ps 23

8. What do you learn about wandering/following? (Do not neglect this part of today's lesson. It is crucial.)

9. When was the last time you sinned (that you are aware of)?

10. Were you seeking God?
With your whole heart? What part of you was in rebellion to God's way?

Write 119:11 here.

1. Let's do the *5Ws* and an *H* to this verse.

Who is doing the action?
What is the subject?
What have you done?
Where do you hide God's word?
Why do you do it?
When (implied) do you treasure His word?
How do you keep from sinning?
When you sin, who is it against?

Now some specifics to you.

2. How do you know for certain that you treasure God's word?

3. What is the last sin you committed? (You knew this question was coming again.)

4. Would treasuring God's word enable you not to sin or resist sin?

Herber Lockyer, in his commentary on the Psalms, has this outline of this verse.

The Best Possession – "Thy Word"
The Best Plan – "have I hid"
The Best Place – "in my heart"
The Best Purpose – "that I might not sin against Thee"

So, for a little word study, let's look at *treasure*.

5. Look up *treasure* and see what you find.

If you have no tools for this, a short definition has been provided here.
Tsaphan # 6845 – to hide, to hoard, protect, esteem, lay up, keep secret.

Read Prov. 7:1, 2 (optional)

6. Also, have you seen any doctrines in these verses (9-11)?
7. How about any disciplines?

Record these in the text of Psalm 119.

- **In the appendix read the *Doctrine on Sin* and note what you learn about this doctrine as we progress throughout this psalm.**
- **Also read the Spiritual Discipline on *Memorization* in the appendix.**

Write 119:12 here.

1. How does v. 12 relate to v. 11?
2. From where does this adoration and blessing of God arise?

In v. 11, the writer declares that he has hidden or treasured God's word in his heart – now he asks the Lord to teach him. We may know, memorize, study, discuss – but the Lord, the Master Teacher, is the One Who brings His word to life as He teaches us.

If you are brave, you may join in this prayer; teach me Your statutes. But do not be naïve; when the Lord teaches us, it means He will go after the areas in our lives that need to be dealt with. It may disturb your status quo for Him to truly teach you. But your alternative is not to be taught of the Lord and that leads to sin and death.

Read the following.

a. **John 14:26**

b. **Acts 4:18; 5:28**
   Have we filled our land with His teaching?

c. **Acts 5:42**

d. **1 Cor. 2:12,13**

e. **Col. 3:16**

"Blessed are You, O LORD" – **Yahweh**

Barak – this is the word that is used of our blessing, praising, worshiping God.

This word comes from the root word which means "to kneel".

I encourage you to stop right now and get on your face before God – not figuratively, but literally get on the floor – kneel, bow down, fall on your face before your holy God. You will never be taught, until you dispense with reserve, laziness, embarrassment, whatever hinders you from *barak: blessing kneeling* in worship before your God.

Day Two

Write 119:13 here.

1. In verse 12, the psalmist was a student. Now he is a teacher, telling others of his blessed God. How does this occur?
2. What kind of a communicator are you?

3. Are you a good listener?

4. Do others understand, trust and seek your counsel?

5. A good communicator has something worth communicating. Do you have something worthy of telling others?
6. In this verse, what does the writer do? (I'm looking for the verb in the verse.)

   What does he tell?

7. How does he know what to tell?

From the mouth of God to the lips of this man, he tells God's truth.

From the mouth of God to your lips, you tell God's truth.

In linguistics, the act of speaking requires breath. The Greek word for breath, *pneuma*, also means spirit.

As you prepare your heart … and then lips to speak His truth, I pray it is His *pneuma*- His Spirit- which breathes through you to give air to your lips to speak His word of truth.

Meditate on what has been ordained through God's mouth:

Creation- He spoke

Prophets-"Thus saith the Lord" and it was fulfilled

Look at:

a. Heb. 1:1-3

b. **John 1:1,14,18**

What was explained here.

c. Lk. 24:32

Let your heart burn as He speaks to you.

d. Jer. 20:9

A lawyer is also called counsel – his expertise is in the law. You are to be an expert in God's law and thereby be a ready counsel for those in need.

Write 119:14 here.

1. This is the first time the writer rejoices. Why does he rejoice?

2. What are God's testimonies?

   When someone gives testimony, they are giving an account of something to which they have been a witness. God is giving account through His revealed word to His perspective on truth, on reality. We can rejoice in God's view of reality. Our eyes do not "see" what is real – only God "sees" reality and then He unveils that truth to us in His word, His communication to us.

So as we go through our day, we must rejoice in the way of His testimonies, asking Him to enable us to **see** our encounters, our struggles, our good fortune through His perspective so that we can echo what was said by Rudyard Kipling … "*victory, defeat, treat both those impostors the same"*.

This perspective is greater than all riches. By the way, what is the difference between a one dollar bill and a thousand dollar bill? They are the same size, weight, color. Does the $1,000 bill smell better than the $1 bill? NO. Their difference lies in what they represent. The same is true of our perspective of reality. In our lives, God declares one event to be a $1 bill and another to be a $1,000 bill.

Rejoice in the truth of God's reality – it is our only constant. Trusting in anything but Him will rob you of any joy.

Write 119:15 here.

1. What is meditation?

2. Why do it?

3. How do you do it?

Webster's dictionary defines *meditate* as: to reflect upon; study; ponder; to think deeply and continuously; muse

We meditate all the time.

We mull over a conversation. We contemplate a recent news report.

We think about how to decorate in a different way for Christmas: for instance a more reflective celebration of this holy birth.

For me, I cogitate over my tennis matches, especially the ones I lost. I think about how I could have done better. We replay events in our heads – almost like rewinding a tape player. It can show us errors in our words, actions, gestures, body language that led to miscommunication. Slowing down is good. We move too fast, so fast that we make mistakes. This is where meditation comes in. Our society is so different from that of our

Lord. In His time, people walked everywhere. On these trips, they could talk to the Lord and hear from Him.

Next time you're out, look at the people walking; they are either on ipods or talking with a walking partner or on their cell phones.

Where is our time to listen to God's voice, to talk to Him alone and meditate? Where our mind drifts when we actually do have alone time divulges our true heart. But if we occasionally drift toward the Lord and His word, that is not enough. We **must train** ourselves to meditate on Him. How? Consistently and not accidentally – you don't accidently breath or eat. Your meditation on God and His word is a vital connection to your relationship with Him. And nothing is more important than your relationship to Him or if there is something more important, it is an idol.

Do you know how important these *Christian disciplines* are? (in this case *meditation*)

Read and meditate on these verses. No writing unless you cannot stop yourself.

Ps.1:2; 19:14; 49:3; 63:6; 77:12

Josh1:8

1 Tim 4:15

Write 119:16 here.

Notice that the delight of this verse follows the meditation of the previous verse.

1. What is your delight?

As a child what caused you to be wonderstruck? A ferris wheel? Or 4th of July fireworks?

These things were out of the norm - they were spectacular. You were amazed and delighted in their magnificence.

Has God's word become commonplace to you?

Do you look with wonder to realize what this word truly is? Why or why not?

This book – really library – of authors covering approximately 1600 years, telling one unifying story over the ages is unparalleled. There is a plot: the story of redemption of mankind; there is a setting: heaven, earth and hell; the time covers eternity, creation of the universe and back to eternity and the consummation of the ages. But above all, and here is the true magnificence, to return you to that awestruck wonder as a child- there is a Hero. Jesus Christ is the Hero of all Time. At the appearance of this great Hero we should be filled with awe and worship.

Read

Ps 1:2

Ps. 94:19 this verse has the word *sha' a* - please, amuse self, delight, *play* (remember the ferris wheel?)

Notice here that *anxious thoughts multiply*, not add – these anxious things multiply rapidly.)

Rom. 7:22

2. If Jesus is such a delight, how can you forget Him?

3. Do you really want the answer?

   You forget Him because <u>He</u> <u>is</u> <u>not</u> <u>your</u> <u>delight</u>.

He is not remembered as your Hero.

His magnificence has been clouded to you.

Regain that 20/20 spiritual sight of His magnificence.

Once again, go to your knees, your face – if you will, and cry out to Him that you want Him to be your one and only delight. Restore to your heart His Majesty- our King Jesus.

*You have treasured His word (11)

meditated upon it (15)

spoken it often (13)

delighted in it (16)

You are not likely to forget it.

By the way, get used to going to your knees; it is a great place to find what (Who) you are looking for.

Day Three גִּמֹּל – deal bountifully

The Gimel Stanza 119:17-24

Read this stanza. גִּ

1. What is the overall feel of this stanza?

On a separate sheet of paper, list what you see about God, His word, and two types of people: those who seek Him and those who do not. So you will have four lists.

Here in the Gimel and also the Daleth stanzas (next one), we begin to see references to the trials the writer is going through. These trials appear to be related to the fact that the psalmist has determined to follow God's word.

Look at Matt. 5:10.

Do you see any connection?

Write 119:17 here.

1. How does the writer refer to himself?
2. When you think of yourself, how do you describe yourself? A banker, a teacher, a mother, a nurse, Christian?

3. Verse 17 is the first time the psalmist refers to himself as God's servant. What does this show?

4. Are you God's servant?
5. Does the psalmist serve as a Sunday School teacher, child care coordinator, deacon, make meals? Not as far as we know- he declares himself a servant because he ……..

You fill in what you have seen so far in this psalm.

You are God's servant if you seek Him with all of your heart, follow Him, keep your way pure, treasure His words. Do not fall into the trap of "doing good" according to man's way – even Christian man's way.

If you are God's servant, you must diligently look and listen to your Master's instructions. His voice is heard in many ways-but always His voice is in harmony, agreement with His word. **For you to know His voice, you must know His word.**

Harmony-another musical term.

Remember, you are God's masterpiece (Eph. 2:10, "workmanship" in Greek is *poiema* from which we get our word "poem"). You are God's artwork, His symphony.

Listen to Him as He gives you instruction and direction for the work He wants you to do.

Soon (lesson seven) we will look at the spiritual discipline of *guidance*.

Deal bountifully

Look at Ps. 13:6

That I may live

This is the first time we have seen live.

6. Do you live?
7. Do you seek God's bountiful dealing in your life?

Or are you content to be a slave?

Read

a. **Rom. 6:16, 20-23; 8:2,6,10,13**

(b-g are very helpful, but are optional.)

b. **2 Cor. 3:6**

c. **Gal. 6:8**

d. Eph.2:5

e. Col. 2:11-13; 3:3,4

f. 1 Tim. 6:19

g. 2 Pet. 1:3

8. Of the above scriptures, what gives life?

9. What causes death?
a. Rom. 5:12

b. James 1:14,15

Here's more about true *life*. Just read.

John 1:4; 5:26; 12:24, 25; 11:25; 14:6

In order to serve God, you must be infused with His *life*. First, the psalmist asks the Lord to deal bountifully – then he can serve. By God dealing bountifully (by giving divine *life*) the service produces eternal fruit.

You can make all the casseroles you like, but if the Lord has not dealt bountifully with you for that service, you might as well eat it yourself, there is no eternal benefit.

Write 119:18 here.

1. Who is the One opening the eyes?
2. Why does the psalmist want his eyes opened?

The prayer to open my eyes shows my awareness of my blindness to God's truth apart from Him. It also reveals that I understand there are vast treasures in God's word which I have not yet seen in their fullness.

Let this prayer be your prayer daily throughout this study.

There are many reasons to have our eyes opened.

Jesus saw every need. He saw people's true condition. He saw as God sees.

Read

a. 2 Cor. 5:16

b. Eph. 1:17,18

c. **Lk. 24:30-32** (What do you learn about opened eyes here?)

Write 119:19 here.

1. Read and note what you learn about being a stranger on earth**.**

a. Gen. 23:4 (optional)

b. Lev. 25:23 (optional)

c. Heb. 11:8, 9, 13-16

d. Phil. 3:20

e. 1 Pet. 1:1, 17; 2:11

2. Where is your home?

Saint Augustine said, "Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee."

As a stranger or a sojourner, nothing belongs to him. Since nothing around him is his own, he is desperate not to lose the one thing he possesses (**119:11, 56**) God's word.

3. Do you treasure God's word like this?

   Are you so desperate to know it and keep it?

   If not, why?

If you do not desperately treasure God's word, it is probably because **you have become a resident here on earth and no longer a stranger**. Beware of being attached to this world.

4. What is the connection between the first half of this verse and the second?

God's commandments-His words- remind an exile of home, of God's kingdom.

The "blesseds" in **Matt. 5** remind the disciple of Christ with what type of people the kingdom of God is populated. These are the ones who love God and God's truths. God's words, commandments, statutes, precepts are our solace while we are strangers, exiles on this earth.

5. Does God's word comfort you?

++ Read Matt 5:3-12 and note the comparisons you see between **Ps. 119:1-19.**

Hint: look for similar words, like *righteousness*, *heart, see* or *seek*

More on the connection between being a stranger and God's commandments.

6. What do you learn about this connection in the following verses?

a. John 1:9-11; 3:31; 8:23

b. John 15:18-21

c. John 17:14-19

d. John 18:33-37

e. 1John 2:15-17; 4:5

Write 119:20 here.

1. What is the relationship with the first four verses in this stanza? (v.17-20)

Read Ps. 40:1, 2

"*Desires which can be put off and on like our garments are at best but mere wishes*."
C.H. Spurgeon

Day Four

Write 119:21 here.

1. Who is described here?

Read

a. Ps. 10:2-12

b. Prov. 21:24

c. **Mal. 3:15; 4:1**

"*Only humble hearts are obedient, for they alone will yield to rule and government*."
"*Pride lies at the root of all sin*."
C.H. Spurgeon

2. Is your heart humble or proud?

Settle this issue with God before you do another thing.

There is a doctrine here about God and His ways with the arrogant. Do you see it?

Write 119:22 here.

1. We will always live with the potential of reproach and contempt from those around us. From those hostile to us, we turn to our Advocate. But first we must appeal to our Advocate. How is He our Advocate?

Read

a. 1 John 2:1,2

b. 1 Tim. 2:5

c. Heb. 7:25; 9:24

d. Rom 8:24

He is our Advocate, our Intercessor, our Mediator, our Hope.

To call Jesus your Advocate, He must first be your Lord.

a. Rom. 5:6-12

b. Rom. 10:9,10

c. Rom. 8:9-11

Then as our Lord, it is His responsibility to protect, provide, direct and command you.

2. How is Jesus referred to in **Rom. 7:25**?

The very next verse, **Rom. 8:1** then, says what about you?

"You are not _____."

Rom. 8:33-39

3. Who faces your accusers?

Rev. 12:10

4. Who ultimately accuses you?

5. Do you dare to defend yourself before the Satan (the accuser)?

Jude 1

6. How is the accuser dealt with here?

7. How did Jesus deal with Satan in **Matt. 4?**

First and foremost, our response is to Jesus to settle once and for all our position before God. The security of this position is predicated on our relationship to Christ as Lord. As our Lord, He is like the vassal lord of the Middle Ages who would provide for our protection and needs.

This verse relates to **119:6** – *not ashamed*.

The key to dealing with reproach, contempt, shame from others is **2 Tim 1:12**.

8. Do you know, really know Who you have believed? That's what this Psalm is all about.

Write 119:23 here.

Read **Ps. 1:1, 2**

1. Do you see any similarities with this verse?

2. Do princes sit and talk against you and me? No. So what does this tell you about our psalmist?

3. In **119:23**, what is the psalmist doing?

He sits in quiet meditation on God's word, examining the beauty, absorbed in the majesty and higher thought God's word prompts in his thinking.

4. *Contrast* this with what the princes are doing.

They are busybodies.

Eleanor Roosevelt says, “Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.”

Allow God to vindicate you when you are accused.

a. **Ps. 26:1**

b. **Ps. 43:1**

c. **Ps. 7:8** (Who is your Righteousness?)

“Instead of listening to the enemy’s slander, he meditated on God’s truth.” W. Wiersbe

“*When we think about our accusers, we are robbing God of thoughts that should be devoted to Him. Give no more thought to your accusers; they are God’s affair. Entrust your soul to your Master*.” C.H. Spurgeon

Read and see what you learn about accusers from our Lord.

a. 1 Pet. 2:18-25

b. He. 12:1-3

c. Is. 53:7

We know this passage in Isaiah so well – it fits with our Lord so clearly.

But what if He had not chosen to do as His Father instructed Him, *would we recognize our Lord?*

If He had argued and complained we would not know Him from the prophetic account.

Likewise, **you and I are unrecognizeable as His followers when we complain and rail against our accusers.**

Write 119:24 here.

Stanza three ends with delight.

1. What did stanza two end with?

What is the connection?

Have you ever thought about the fact that Jesus read the Old Testament scriptures that you read?

Do you think He derived joy, encouragement, and comfort from the lives of the faithful?

Men like Joseph, Daniel, Jeremiah, David – would have caused Jesus to know that as alone and misunderstood as He was, these men shared something in common with Him.

You may begin today or wait until tomorrow, but do a short character study on Daniel. See if you find any comparison with the Beth and Gimel stanzas. Again, this character study is optional.

Read Daniel 1-2

Day Five

Stanza One – the writer acknowledges the blessedness of a man whose walk is blameless.

Stanza Two – the writer prays as a youth in need of the Lord's direction.

Stanza Three- the writer pleads as a servant and stranger who finds himself in the enemy's country. His prayer is a *direct and personal* appeal. Here again, we can see a **doctrine** about God. Our relationship with God is personal. You may want to record that in the text.

Look at the two stanzas for this week and see if you find any **doctrines**.

Hint: what does God do in verse 21? He rebukes, judges, corrects. Anything you learn about God is a **Doctrine of God**. Mark this on your text.

Also, in verse 24, you find a D**octrine on the Word of God**.

What do you learn about the word of God? What does it do?

Mark this in your text. Simply write "Word of God" out beside the verse.

Look at the list of ***Disciplines*** in the appendix. Review the two stanzas from this week and see if you find any disciplines from which you can learn.

- **Make sure you read the selections on the *Doctrine of Sin* and the *Discipline of Memorization* located in the appendix.**

Just for a re-cap.

You have learned much about the heart this week.

If your heart is God's home,

your heart will be ... a pure heart
a well-guided heart
a heart that hears His voice
a lively heart, full of abundant life
a treasured heart
a telling heart
a teachable heart
a burning heart
a rejoicing heart
a studious heart
a delightful heart
a dependent heart

LESSON FOUR "Revive me, O LORD!"

Doctrine: Majesty and Wonder of God/Disciplines: Prayer, Simplicity

PSALM 119:25-32 the Daleth Stanza and 119:33-40 the He Stanza

Day One

Read the Daleth stanza. דָּ

1. What is the overall state of the psalmist?

2. In what ways do you relate to him?

3. Do you respond to trial as he does?

4. Is there anything in the Gimel stanza that is similar to this one?

5. In the last verse of Gimel, he is delighting in God's testimonies. What has happened that the very next verse he is down in the dust?

We are constantly in need of His "life-breathing" (pneuma) in us.

6. How does this stanza exhibit this need?

Write 119:25 here.

1. What is the request of the psalmist?

2. What was his request in v.17? What did he want from God?

He describes here his sorrow. Mourners in the east cast dust on their heads and sat in ashes – this was a woe the writer was familiar with.

3. For you to ponder: was he weary of life? Did he cling to the earth to his regret instead of heaven? Did he sense constant, imminent danger? Could he not shake his sorrow, depression? Was he glued to it?

4. "Revive me": see what you learn elsewhere concerning "give me life".

119:37, 40, 50, 88, 93, 107, 149, 154, 156, 159

דָּבְקָה ""cleaves to""dabaq

Ps. 71:20

5. Who has shown the writer many troubles?

Ps. 143:11 (Optional)

6. If the One in charge of your troubles is also in charge of the result, the purpose, the culmination, the end of your troubles, Who, then should you only turn to when in distress?

7. What do you learn from **Rom. 12:1, 2** about renewing and giving life?

"Many are of the earth … only the heaven-born and heaven-soaring spirit pines at the thought of being fastened to this world." Spurgeon

Word study

"Cleaves" – *dabaq*: to cling, adhere, abide fast, be joined together, stick

Write 119:26 here.

1. What has the psalmist done?

2. What has God done?

3. What does he further ask of God?

This cry for teaching is common in the psalm. In verse 12, it followed a sight of God, and here it follows from a sight of self.

Read (choose one)

a. Ps. 34:4

b. Ps. 86:11,12

When does God answer you?

4. **Read 119:26** again. What can man tell of his condition?

5. Is there anything worthy or good or praiseworthy about you?

a. 1 Cor. 4:7

b. Gen. 18:27 (optional)

6. So what ways has he told to God?
   In the previous verse, his state was one of sorrow – mourning. Like **Matt.5:4**, those who *mourn* will be comforted. In **Matt 5:5**, the next "blessed" is the *meek* – those who do not struggle or contend with God; they are like a powerful horse under the rider's control. Then the next "blessed" is the one who *hungers and thirsts for righteousness* for he will be satisfied.

Just as this psalmist has mourned, told of his ways, now he is comforted as he yields to the Lord, desiring only God to give him His righteousness.

It is amazing how similar both this psalmist and our Lord think regarding being blessed.

Write 119:27 here.

Word study: "way*" derek*: a course of life or mode of action, conversation, custom, manner, pathway, highway

Now each word of scripture is divine – so here we have <u>not</u> "understand His precept" alone but "understand the <u>way</u> of His precepts".

The next time you are driving on a highway, headed somewhere, with your destination in mind, think of this word – d*erek*. Just as you are intentionally going to a destination, you must seek God's understanding on the highway of God's precepts.

His precepts are not learned in a safe, sterile classroom but on the highway on which He places you, with the environment, road signs, delays, green lights, red lights and amber lights which you experience – all to give you an understanding of the way of His precepts.

1. Can you make yourself understand?

So we must always appeal to God for a true understanding of the way of His precepts.

Read

1 Cor. 2:14

2. How does this relate to **119:27**?

"The psalmist is not anxious to understand the prophecies, but the precepts, and he is not concerned about the subtleties of the law, but the commonplaces and everyday rules of it."

Spurgeon

3. How does the above relate to "So I will meditate on Your wonders?"

"Meditate" here is *siyach*: to ponder, to converse with oneself and hence aloud, commune, utter, complain, declare, muse, pray, speak, talk with

Read and see what you gain concerning *meditate* and *way*.

a. **119:15**

b. **Ps. 145:5**

4. What is it to meditate on God's wonders?

Literally, this is "wondrous works".
"Wondrous"- *pala*: to be or make great, difficult, wonderful, accomplish, arise, hidden, things too high, marvelous, miracles, perform, make singular

"Works" - *ma'aseh*: an action, activity, a product (spec. a poem), act, art, business, deed, labor, thing made, occupation, operation, possession, work, workmanship

5. Does all of this sound familiar?

Look at Eph. 2:10.

Workmanship here is *poiema*: Greek for work, art, etc.
You are one of God's poems, one of His masterpieces, one of His wondrous works.

Meditate on all that God has worked in your life; meditate on His way in your life.

Record here – this is not optional! - how He has wrought wonders on your behalf. It is obvious that He works many things in our lives that are unseen and we are unaware of His hand. But we wax too mystical at times and willingly ignore the true marvelous ways in which He is working. We can and should acknowledge Him and give Him praise as the psalmists do all throughout the psalms!

- **Read the Doctrine on the *Majesty and Wonder of God* located in the appendix.**

Write 119:28 here.

1. Why does he grieve? (Look at v**. 29** for a possible reason.)

2. How deep is his grief? Where does he say he is grieved?

3. What part of you weeps? Have you ever grieved over your sin so deeply that your soul wept?

Compare this with **Matt. 5:4.**

4. **In 119:25**, he says to revive him according to God's word. What does he say here?

5. What is the difference?

Revive is the first step – live again.

6. Strengthen is the next step – for what purpose?

Sometimes when I am physically weak, I grab a peanut butter sandwich for protein.

7. What is your spiritual protein?
8. How do you know if it works?

9. Does weeping make you weak? Rung out?
10. What part does weeping have to do with the ultimate request to be revived?

Day Two

Write 119:29 here.

You must be weak before God can truly remove the false way from you. Some have called it being "at the end of yourself". You are no longer trying to "be a good person". You realize you cannot.

- Notice in **verse 29**, that the psalmist does not ask God to remove his enemies or his trials, instead he asks for strength to endure victoriously and to remove any false way from himself. He leaves those oppressing him to the Lord.

Next time you are pressured by your enemy, resist the inclination to pray that God change them. Instead, join the psalmist and ask God to change you and enable you to overcome.

11. How does **v.29** relate to the entire stanza to this point, verses **25-29**?

Write 119:30 here.

1. Do you see a difference here?

2. What has changed?

3. Go back to **119:1-30**. List everything you learn about "way".

v.1

v.5

v.9

v.14

and so forth

4. Now go back and next to the particular way record what else you learn about that way – for instance the result, why they are that way, etc.

Not all will have a second point.

No longer is it *my* way – but it is according to His word. In order for my way to be according to His word, I must know His word and yield to it as I am on the highway of His precepts.

No one ever just stumbles onto the right path.

5. Do you want your life to be one in which you hope to stumble onto the right path?

How can you avoid this?

The second part of the verse has the answer.

"I have placed Your ordinances before me."

6. How does this decision relate to **vs. 25** and **28**?

7. Which way have you chosen? The faithful way?

8. What does this verse have to do with being revived?

Write 119:31 here.

At the beginning of this Daleth stanza, his soul was cleaving to the dust. Now he clings to _____. By the way, the same Hebrew word is used for "cling" and "cleave": *dabaq*.

1. What has happened?

2. When desperately clinging to one thing, what must you do to in order to grab hold of the second thing?

In **v. 20** his soul is _____ ____ _____.

In **v. 25** his soul cleaves __ ____ _____.

In **v. 28** his soul weeps because of _____.

In **v.31** he clings to _____ _____.

3. Then in **v.32** what does the psalmist do?

4. How can he do this? What has God done?

Cleave/cling How appropriate that it is the same word here:*dabaq* . The psalmist chooses this word to describe both his soul cleaving to the dust and now he cleaves, clings to God's testimonies – God's witness, His account of Who He is.

Read Jer. 13:1-11, 25

5. How does this help you understand the psalmist better?
6. One more question to consider: is clinging good?

Think of all the people, things, ways in which you cling. There is only One worthy of your clinging and where He directs your clinging. All other clinging will cause you pain and shame (119:31).

Write 119:32 here.

List the verbs of this stanza in two columns, what man does and what God does.

Man	God
Cleaves (25)	revives (25)
Told (26)	answered (26)

In the first stanza, the psalmist mentions walk twice. Now he will run.

1. Why, after four stanzas, is he running? Is he literally running?

Then what does he mean?

2. How is he able to do this?

3. Where have you seen heart mentioned in this psalm?

List each verse and what you learn about heart.

Read the following and see what you learn about running that would relate to **119:32**.

a. **1 Cor. 9:24-27**
b. **2 Tim. 4:7-8**
c. **Heb. 12:1, 2**

Spurgeon says, "*Our running is the spontaneous leaping forward of a mind which has been set free by the hand of God, and delights to show its freedom by its bounding speed*."

Day Three

The He Stanza 119:33-40 ה

Read this stanza.

1. What is the tone of this stanza?

List what God does in one column and what the psalmist does.

Write 119:33 here.

הוֹרֵנִי Teach me

In scripture the factor of time is important. It can tell us about God, man, trials, victory. Psalm 119 has mentioned time already.

V. 6 refers to **when** you give thanks.

V. 9 refers to the youth – **a time** in life where crossroads are made.

V. 19 acknowledges the **time** on earth of the psalmist as a stranger.

1. Do you see any other time phrases?

But here for the first time *the psalmist has the end in sight*. He is committed to God's way, not until he achieves financial independence or raises a family. No, his commitment is to the end.

2. How long are you willing to observe and follow God's way?

Make that written commitment here below today. Writing things out is a deliberate act which the Lord uses.

On the psalmist's mind is not just starting well or living well but ending well.

Make a short list of any biblical people you can recall who did not end well.

3. What is crucial to a life well lived?

Read

Prov. 4:11-19 and Deut. 5:29

See how they relate to **119:33.**

"Keeping the law was not a matter of external conformity in the OT but required a "heart" of absolute devotion to God." Expositor's Commentary

Write 119:34 here.

1. In **v. 27**, why does the psalmist ask the Lord to make him understand?

V.34, he now asks for understanding in order to _____ and _____.

2. Twice now he has mentioned understanding and observing. Why are these two disciplines so important?

Looking at the law is really looking and observing the majesty of the Lawgiver as the whole of nature bows before His absolute will.

Look at 119:2, 10, 34 and **58** and see what you learn about a whole heart.

We learn much from other writers of scripture. To help us here, we turn to Paul. Just as this psalmist seeks understanding, Paul gave eleven chapters of doctrine (teaching) before he wrote chapters twelve through sixteen, the more practical chapters of the book of Romans. Also, as Paul opens the practical section of his teaching, he appeals to his readers to renew their minds by dying – by becoming a living sacrifice.

Read Rom. 2:12-29; 8:1-17 for doctrine and

Rom. 12:1-2 for instruction in living for Him.

In order to do as Paul instructs here, to become a living sacrifice, you must love God with a whole heart. Understanding and a whole heart are inseparable partners in the walk of faith.

Only a worshiping heart can do this.

Write 119:35 below.

v. 1 God's walk brings <u>blessing</u>

v. 3 God's walk brings right_____

v. 35 God's walk brings _____

1. Would you really, truly rather walk in the highway of your own commandments – your own rules, standards?

Be honest. Because you cannot really love God's word and thereby love Him until you love to walk His way.

If you have discovered (after observing your heart) that you do not delight to walk in God's way, ask why?

We can complicate things or **simplify** them. If you do not delight in God and His way, you have made yourself or something else god in your life. You are an idolater. I have had to confess this sin before.

- **Read the selection in the appendix on *Simplicity (*located in the spiritual disciplines*)*.**

2. *Confess* before God what your soul delights in. He already knows.

Ask Him with the psalmist, to make you walk in the highway of His commandments because your heart now delights in His path, because your heart delights in Him.

3. Do a short word study on *delight*.

To truly worship God we must **bend** to His way.

4. Do you worship God?
5. Do you bow in submission to your King?

We cannot enter into true worship until we **bend**.

"*Thou hast made me to know; now make me to go.*" Spurgeon

Note that here the psalmist does not say, "I delight in them (the commandments)," but "I delight in it (meaning the path)." The root word in Hebrew for *path* is "to tread" and therefore path here means "the trodden path", not a new direction. So we see that it is a path on which others have gone before us.

Many have gone before us on this path of obedience.

Think of the saints who have gone before you.

6. **List the ones** God has used in your life (preferably people that you know). Now, by each name, record what it was about them that inspired, admonished, directed, comforted, enlightened you to walk in the path which they also walked in: to follow the Lord. Before you start, **read Jer. 6:16; Matt. 7:13, 14** to realize how important this is.

Write 119:36 below.

Do a word study on *incline*.

"Natah" # 5186 is translated *pitch* in **Gen. 12:8; 26:25; 2 Sam. 6:17; 1 Chron. 15:1; 16:1; 2 Chron. 1:4 (Choose two of these to read, unless you wish to read all of them.)**

Just as Abraham pitched his tent and David pitched a tent for the ark of the Lord, we are to pitch our tent (our heart, our lives) for the Lord, for His testimonies. Remember, God's *testimonies* are the accounts of Who He is – the true essence of Who He is – the revelation of Who He is.

36b "and not to dishonest gain." This is the natural **inclination** – "what can I get out of life for me?" This attitude dethrones God. It causes death to all around it: greed, lust, pride, self.

Remember **Matt. 22:15-22**? "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."

The imprint of the visage of Caesar was on the coin and therefore Caesar had claim on it. The image of God – *imago dei* – is on you, therefore, God has a claim on you.

What do the last two days of homework have to do with being revived?

Day Four

Write 119:37 below.

At the beginning of this stanza, the psalmist committed to observe God's way (33); he asked for understanding to be able to observe God's law. He delighted in walking in God's commandments (35). He acknowledged his heart needed to be inclined to God's nature.

As the man of God *looks* into God's truth and finds God there, then the man goes about his daily activities. His prayer is that God would continue to protect his *sight* and that he would *see* each encounter from God's perspective.

In error, we *see* eternal things as vain, and we *see* vain things as all important. To gain a holy and true perspective on what our eyes *see*, we must turn to the Lord and ask Him to make us and our *eyes* alive.

1. **v. 17** Where is life from?
2. **v. 25** When you despair, how are you revived (made alive)?
3. **v. 37** When you need to turn from vanity, how are you made alive?
4. What vanity do you spend time "looking at"?
5. What vanity has your heart and therefore your *life's energy*?
6. Vanity drains of *life* – that is why the poet asks to be *revived* in God's ways.

This verse is used in John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress as the pilgrim faces vanity and cries out for help.

Look at Heb. 12:2

Word study on "fix" or "look" depending on your version.

Aphorao #872 (Greek*)* – turn from one thing so as to see another thing clearly

Read Ps. 101:2-6

Num. 15:37-41

2 Cor. 5:16

Matt. 5:8

The fact that the psalmist asks the Lord to turn his eyes, shows his utter dependence and reliance upon the Lord.

The more full I am of God's *life*, the less power the vanity of this passing world will have over me.

Write 119:38 below.

Now we are getting to the heart of the matter.

1. Again, he refers to himself as the Lord's servant. Look at v. 17 and 23. What does the poet acknowledge is from God?

No matter the life around me, I am Your servant. My one purpose is to worship You – to show reverence for You.

2. How does the psalmist appropriately show reverence, proper worship?

Notice, this does not say, "establish Your power or strength or love or grace" – but he asks the Lord to establish him in His word.

3. And what does the word do?

4. How does it produce this?

Write 119:39

It is a spiritually and morally healthy attitude to dread reproach. If we were indifferent to reproach, we would not value a good name. And the name is very important to God.

Here, the psalmist fears and dreads just reproach because he does not want to cause dishonor to God by a bad report of his own behavior. The potential bad behavior would give admission to the enemy to speak of God's way as less than good. You may speak ill of me, but do not speak ill of my God Whose ordinances are good.

Read

1 Pet. 2:18-25; 3:16

Ps. 119:31

1. What is the psalmist concerned with?

Two ways of looking at this reproach.

The reproach or disgrace from not following God's ways

Or

Disgrace from those surrounding you precisely because you do follow His ways.

Read Matt. 10:22

Whatever the case, the temptation (due to this disgrace) is to be a drop-out. Not a high school drop-out, but **a holiness drop-out**.

Whatever disgrace you face, do not give in, but stay in God's school of holiness.

Write 119:40 below.

1. How does the writer begin this stanza?

2. How does he end it?

3. How does he arrive at longing for God's precepts?

4. How is he brought to *life* (revived)?

5. How does God's righteousness revive him?

6. What constitutes life?

v. 17 "deal bountifully with Your servant that I may *live* and keep Your word."

Could it be that all of life, except the keeping of His word is but shadow?

To really live is to worship God as He truly is, as revealed in His word.

"The precepts are grievous to the ungodly, and therefore when we are so changed as to long for them we have clear evidence of conversion." Spurgeon

7. What do you long for?

No notes, just read: **Rom. 8:18-23; Gal. 5:5; Matt.5:6** (righteousness, here and **119:40**)

Day Five

This "*He"* stanza is a school of higher learning. Nine times he prays - asks the Lord to enable him to understand, see, learn and live. The truth of God – which is the only reality – opens the mind to the wonders of **God's** world: knowledge, nature, history, the marvels of God's creation.

The psalmist has enrolled himself in a school.

1. What specifically does the psalmist want to learn?

"He" is the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. "*He*" is also used before verbs to make them causative – meaning when used it changes a verb to say "cause me to learn", "cause me to walk", etc.

So each request is **a prayer** asking the Lord to give the poet all he needs to follow God.

A tone of humility and dependence is obvious to the Hebrew ear when they hear the Hiphil imperative. (The use of the "*He*" prefix to the verb is termed Hiphil imperative.)

- **Read the Discipline of *Prayer* in the appendix.**

119:33 Consider "unto the end" in the first line of this stanza.

We are so programmed with school, jobs, projects, pregnancies for an end date. This is why I believe some marriages do not survive. The idea of no ending point is foreign to us.

List the things you are committed to until the end (which really means without time limit).

In order to truly do anything without time limit - which means eternal - we must be indwelled by the Eternal One – El Olam.

Read John 14: 19-23; 15:4

1 John 2:23-25

Who is the only One Who has control over "the end"?

To wrap up the week, what have you seen about being **revived** that you can use in your spiritual walk with the Lord?

*Do you see any doctrines in the two stanzas (*Daleth* and *He)* for this week?

Remember anything you see about God is included in the Doctrine of God.

For instance, v. 27 points out the wonders of God. So here, you would note the wonder and majesty of God as part of the doctrine of Who He is.

Also, you should have some listings for the Doctrine of the word. For instance, in v. 28 and 38 you find some things about the word. Mark anything you see on your text of Psalm 119.

*Christian disciplines: do you see any in these two stanzas?

> Meditation is all throughout this psalm, but look for other disciplines as well.
> Do you see simplicity, solitude, worship, prayer, guidance, service, etc.?
> As you (1) find each one, (2) note the verse and (3) what you learn that will help you practice these disciplines along with the psalmist. Keep all of this in the appendix. (Again recording these as a separate listing in your appendix is optional, but do record them in your text.)

It will be quite a treasure at the end of the study.

Optional

To further understand this psalmist's heart, a character study on Moses would give you deeper insight.

Read Ex. 2:11-3:22; 4:1-20

You can read this in less than 10 minutes, so take the time to see this great man of God and where he began.

"*It was said of Moses that he spent forty years in the wilderness learning to be nothing so that he might spend the next forty years proving God to be everything*."

James Montgomery Boice

LESSON FIVE "What Does It Mean To Be In Covenant?"
Doctrine: Covenant/ Discipline: Waiting

PSALM 119:41-48 The Vav Stanza and 119:49-56 the Zayin Stanza
Days One and Two

Read the Vav stanza. ו
List here what:

You do:	**God does:**
I have an answer for reproach (42)	Your lovingkindness and Your salvation come to me (41)

What is repeated twice in v. 47 and 48?

This day's homework is very long. You may need to break it up into two days.
But do not miss the blessing of understanding your covenant relationship with your God.

Write 119:41 here.

1. Do a word study on *salvation*.

#8668 *teshuw'ah* – deliverance, help, safety, salvation, victory
from Verb: to rescue
related to #3467- *yasha*: to free (savior comes from this word)

2. Now do a word study on *lovingkindness*.

#2617 *chesed* – favor, good deed, kindness, mercy
This is the term God uses concerning His covenant with His people.
Read Deut.

7:7-12

Ps.26:3 (Optional)

Ps. 36:5, 7, 10

Ps. 40:10, 11

Ps. 48:9; 51:1; 63:3; 69:16; 103:4; 107:43; 138:2; 143:8 (Choose three.)

Is. 55:3

Jer. 31:3

This is a lot, but if you desire to go further, then look at the following verses which clarify the relationship between cutting (#1285; *beriyt*) covenant and lovingkindness.

"The covenants made between God and humans defined the basis of God's character in the Old Testament." The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament

Gen. 15

1 Kings 8:23

Neh. 9:32

Dan. 9:4

Ps. 89:28, 33, 34

Ps. 103:17, 18

Ps. 106:45

3. **Read Ps. 136.**

This is called by the rabbis, "The Great Hallel". (Hallel means "praise".) It is an antiphonal psalm, recited by the priest and the congregation in order to recount the greatness of God through His dealings with His people throughout history. This psalm was associated with the feasts and especially the Passover.

Without doubt, our Lord recited this great poem on the occasions of the feasts.

These are precious words.

Recite them aloud. As you recite, realize that Jesus said these words. Realize that the covenant God Who you worship loves to hear these words spoken by you.

"For His lovingkindness is everlasting", if you will recite this aloud in this psalm as it is written, I truly believe it will be hard for you to forget the next time you do not *feel* the lovingkindness of the Lord! His lovingkindness is, without fail, everlasting!

Relationship of Old Covenant and New Covenant (Testament)

4. Note what you learn about salvation, covenant and mercy ("chesed")
   a. **Lk. 1:67-80**

   b. **Acts 3:25**

   c. **Rom. 11:27**

   d. **Gal. 3:15-17**

   e. **Heb. 8:6-13; 10:16; 13:20, 21; 12:22-24**

I have marked covenant and lovingkindness ("chesed") throughout my Bible and especially in the psalms.

This has been an unimaginable journey in seeing Who our covenant-keeping God is. How amazing are His ways in showing His love toward those in a covenant relationship with Him!

5. To whom does God show His "chesed"?

6. What do you have to do to receive His "chesed"?

7. How do you lose it?

8. What does "chesed" do for you?

To receive God's "chesed", you must be in covenant with Him.

Matt. 26:26-29

1Cor. 11:23-26

John 5:41-63

9. What prompts God to be in covenant with you?

Jn. 1:14, 16, 17

Acts 4:33; 15:11; 18:27 (Whose grace?); **20:24, 32**

In **Ps. 119**, we read so very much of God's word and all it accomplishes. The word of grace accomplishes your salvation. Later, we will spend more time on the teaching of salvation. (v. 94, 146, 166)

You may be familiar with **Rom. 3:23**, but look at **Rom. 3:24**.

Rom. 4:16; 5:15; 6:14

If you feel that *grace* is not an Old Testament concept, look at **Ps. 84:11** and **Gen. 6:8** ("favor" can be translate "grace" here.)

Not only is it the grace of God which provides for your access to a covenant relationship with Him, but it is God's grace which continues you in that relationship. He lavishes on you all you need to live your covenant life with Him. (Read at least three of the following.)

Rom. 5:2, 17; 12:6

2 Cor. 8:9; 9:8; 12:9

Gal. 5:4

Did you ever wonder why so many of the epistles of Paul, Peter, John and the writer of Hebrews, begin or end or both with grace?

Our covenant relationship with God depends utterly and completely on His grace.

Spend the day as you go, thanking Him for His lovingkindness (*chesed*), His grace (*charis*-Greek for favor, gift, pleasure, benefit).

If you are interested, you could continue looking up the remainder of New Testament verses on **grace.**

It is overwhelming to see so much grace!

Note:

Our New Covenant is a covenant of grace.

It differs from the Mosaic covenant or law.

(You have looked at some scriptures regarding this fact. Here are a few more, if you wish to dig further. **Gal. 3:19, 24; Heb. 8:8, 13; 9:15; 12:24**)

But the New Covenant is the anticipated covenant originating with Abraham.

Gal. 3:6-18, 29; Heb.2:16; 6:13-20; Rom. 4:1-25; 2 Cor. **3:6**

At the end of the week, do not forget to record what you have found today about doctrine.

It could fill a volume!

Write 119:42 here.

The love in **v.41**, prompts speaking of the God of love.

The covenant relationship provides a reason, an answer for our way of life when reproached. The ability to answer our detractors and accusers stems from the One we trust. We do not answer out of a wealth of knowledge, because that is relative. One person may have more knowledge of something and we would be defeated. No, our answer is not based on knowing a subject but knowing a Person. It is not in "what" I trust, but in "Whom" I trust. To trust in God's word is to trust in God.

We, as Christians, say we have a *personal relationship* with Jesus Christ: that means that Jesus is a *Person* to us. Is Jesus the Person you know better than anyone else?

1. Who do you know better than Jesus?

Examine that relationship and ask yourself, "How did I get to know that person so well?" Then begin to do the same things with Jesus.

Most persons we know well, we talk to, cry with, complain with, go places with, shop with, go to movies with.

You can go to a movie with Jesus, shop with Jesus, etc.

If you did, you would get in far less trouble emotionally and financially.

Always live as though the Person of Jesus is right there with you. Because He is.

Do you notice all the prepositions – walk *with*, shop *with*, talk *to*? Prepositions denote relationship in space and time. We are human and are limited in space and time. Jesus is not limited in this way. The only time you are free of this dimension is in your relationship to your Savior and Friend Jesus. Be free in Him. He has sacrificed much for this relationship. Don't miss it.

119:41 – We hear God speaking His "chesed" to us according to His word.

119:42 – We hear our enemies speaking.

2. Whose voice do you choose to hear and focus on?

This writer was oppressed by those who reproached him, slandered his name, threatened his life.

3. Our greatest weapon against these attacks is _____.

Read Eph. 6:17

4. Do you realize the power of this mighty weapon? To give life/take it?

Write 119:43 here.

1. What does it say to you?

You can read and read and talk and talk about God's word. But He alone is the One Who puts it in your heart and mind with any effect and growth. Before you speak even think, wait on the Lord, listen to Him. Practice the Christian discipline of waiting on Him – which is the same as waiting on His ordinances. We must understand as we progress through these verses, God's word, law, commandments, statutes, way, precept, testimonies – all of these are God. This is Who He is. Wait on Him.

Read Rom. 14:23 (context is 14:13-23)

I have a test for myself. If I, in faith, cannot do something, if I doubt – then I must wait on the Lord until He gives me peace, freedom, direction, faith to do it.

"Whatever is not from faith is sin."

Anything can be taken out of context, so this can be abused also. But in most cases, impatience and frustration in waiting lead to complications and sin.

2. What are you waiting on from God right now?

- **Read the appendix selection on W*aiting*, located in the section on *Spiritual Disciplines*.**

Write 119:44 here.

1. What do you notice in this short verse?

2. Of the ten words, three of them are _____ words.

30% of this verse concerns time: continually, forever and ever.

All relationships in life are temporary.

Only one is forever.

3. Where should you be spending your time?

(If you did not complete the work on covenant, grace and lovingkindness – then take the time to go and do it now.)

"continually" #8548 *tamiyd* – constant

from root – to stretch, extend

It also refers to the regular daily sacrifice and the special bread (Ex. 25:30) that was to be set on the table continually every Sabbath. (Lev. 24:8)

4. So as you keep His law continually, what are you doing?

Day Two

Write 119:45 here.

Remember in **v. 42**, the concept of prepositions?

Well, the epistles are filled with "in Christ" and what that means.

1. **Read** these scriptures and note what you learn about "in Christ". Then we will relate them to this verse.

Eph. 1:4 _____ in Christ

1:6

1:7

1:11

1:12

1:13

2:6

2:10

Summarize what you have seen about being "in Christ" from these verses.

2. Because of all that you are "in Christ" you can walk at liberty!

Gal. 5:1

2 Cor. 3:17 (optional)

3. More on your walk:

Is. 2:5 (What are they to walk in? _____ According to **Jn. 8:12**, Who is Jesus?

Gal. 5:16, 25 (Choose either theses Gal. or the following Eph. verses.)

Eph. 5:2, 8, 15

1 Jn. 1: 6, 7

Col. 1:10; 2:6 (optional)

Walk *in Christ* and you walk in freedom, *at liberty*, because as you walk you are seeking His precepts.

Everyone is on the road somewhere, looking for something.

So this man has made it his occupation to be on the road, walking in order to seek God's precepts. Usually people see obeying, walking in God's commandments as a burden or legalistic.

4. How can you walk at liberty as you seek God's precepts?

Keeping in **v. 44** and *seeking* in **v. 45** are connected.

5. How do the two contribute to walking at liberty?

6. When you are speeding in your car and you see a police officer, are you at ease?

When you are not speeding, how do you feel about the police?

When we are speeding through life, in our car or just in our attitude, we are conscious of our regard for time more than our regard for the Lord's purposes. Jesus was never in a hurry. Why are we? Are our lives more important, more pressing?

True *liberty* is living at His pace and not our own. So stop speeding! Maybe then you will have more time for His word.

"Liberty": *rachab* # 7342 - roomy in any and every direction, broad, large, wide

James 1:25

(optional) James 2:12

Jn. 8:32

Write 119:46 here.

Because of his covenant relationship,

because of who he is in Christ,

because no matter if he is in chains he is free,

because he has an answer (v. 42),

because God's word is in his mouth,

this servant of the Lord will speak of God, **not of himself**, but he will speak of God's testimonies before kings and not be ashamed.

1. Do you relate to this man?

2. Are you all of the above things?

3. Then can you speak of God before kings and anyone else and not be ashamed?

4. Do you do it? Why or why not?

Read and then note what you see that relates to v. 46.
Rom. 1:16
Phil. 1:20
2 Tim. 1:12; 2:15
1 Pet. 4:16
Acts 4:20!!!

Write 119:47 here.

Remember, "chesed" is what started this strophe: God's lovingkindness.

The psalmist can delight in God's commandments because he can trust God's "chesed". The writer is in a covenant relationship with God Himself, knowing the Lord personally more and more each day, trusting Him more and more as He knows Him.

He can delight and love God's commandments because that is loving God Himself.

Write 119:48 here.

1. When you worship, do you lift your hands?

Some are comfortable with this and some are not.

2. When a worshipper lifts his/her hands, to what or to whom are the hands lifted?

Yet, here the psalmist says, "To Your *commandments* I lift my hands."

3. What does this tell you?

In the privacy of your own home – lift your hands in *worship* to the Lord – the Commander of all.

As you lift your hands, meditate on all He is – all He has done – He is the great covenant-keeping God Who extends His lovingkindness to you continually.

This stanza begins and ends with love: God's love for us expressed in His covenant relationship/ our love for God which is expressed in obedience. Our love of God's commandments results in our telling others about our loving God and His way of truth.

4. Do you tell others about our God and His word and His ways?

Our willingness to speak concerning Him is a direct measure of our love for Him.

Day Three

The Zayin Stanza 119:49-56. זַ

Read this stanza and **record** what impresses you most about God and the psalmist.

1. Who else is a focus in these verses?

Write 119:49 here.

1. What is his prayer?
2. "Remember" – # 2142 *zakar*: to mark, to remember, to mention so as to be recognized, to burn incense, be mindful, recount, record

Remember = zakar זָכַר

Look at:
Gen 8:1; 19:29; 30:22

1 Sam. 1:19

The verbs: *remember and made* are performed by whom?

Who performs the verb *to hope*?

3. Up to this point in the psalm how has the psalmist given evidence of his hope in the Lord?

In his actions

In his thoughts

In his words

4. What is primary – the thoughts or the actions – in regard to hope?
5. Keep in mind, who is in charge of the hope?
6. So what does this tell us about hope and how we may obtain it when we are running low on it?

The psalmist does not say, "Remember my service to You." But he says, "remember Your word to Your servant". "Remember" is a request for God to regard His promises. This is similar to the plea of the thief on the cross who asks Jesus to remember him when He comes into His kingdom.

Lk 23: 39-43

Reflect on what gave our Lord Jesus strength and hope.

Matt. 4

Matt.26:36-46. 53-56

7. What gives Jesus the resolve to face the horror of becoming sin (**2 Cor. 5:21)?**

He knew prophecy; He clung to the truth of God's word.

8. When you face your Gethsemane, what will you cling to, what will you hope in?

Write 119:50 here.

1. **Circle** the "me" in this verse.

My _____

My _____

Revive ____

This is all very personal- *my* denotes possession, ownership. This is not someone else's affliction, comfort, revival.

2. When he is afflicted, he is also _____. He is also re_____. How?

3. How does the word comfort and revive in affliction?

4. Is it personal? Is God's word personal to you? How?

5. Has anything in **119:1-49**, been a personal comfort to you?

Has any verse revived you?

6. What is the relationship of hope in v. 49 and comfort in v. 50?

7. With whom does hope originate?

8. When you think of a great chapter on the comforter which one comes to mind?

Read John 14 and 16 and list on a separate sheet of paper how God comforts. Don't try to be exhaustive here; just get the big picture.

Also **read 2 Cor. 1:3-7; 7:6, 7, 13** to see the importance of comfort to God.

Ps. 119:49 mentions *hope*. We serve a God of comfort. How do these two verses (**119:49, 50**) and **Rom. 15:4-6** relate to this them of *hope*?

Write 119:51 here.

1. What do you see in **v. 49, 50** that give insight into **v. 51**?

2. Do you see a relationship between the *affliction* in **v. 50** and the *arrogant* in **v. 51**?

3. Here the psalmist does not mention the cruel or violent but the arrogant. Why are the arrogant a particular affliction to him?

Zed "arrogant", proud, presumptuous

Prov. 21:24

4. When you are derided, mocked, ridiculed, does it cause you to turn aside from God's law?

   Why/Why not?

5. Now you probably don't literally, physically turn your head and body away from the Bible. So what does "turn aside from Your law" mean to you?

Read

Ps. 44:18 and Job 23:11

Write 119:52 here.

"comfort" # 5162 *naham*: to sigh, be sorry, pity, console, ease, comfort

1. This word is the where the prophet Nahum's name comes from. Do you remember why Nahum is the prophet of comfort? He comforted his people by God's message of doom to the Assyrians. They were the tormentors of God's people at the time of Nahum. Why would this prophetic message be a comfort to God's people? How does that relate to the message of **119:50**?

2. Why would the fact that God's ordinances are "from old" be a comfort?

3. How did this man know the ordinances of old?

4. How were the laws passed down generation to generation?

Read Deut. 4:1-14 and record what you find.

Read Deut. 31:24-29 and do the same.

5. Can you relate to the frustrations of the psalmist?

Perhaps his generation has no regard for the laws and commandments of God.
Look at 2 Tim. 2:2 and 3:1-17.

6. What are our times like in comparison with the times of the psalmist?

7. What can comfort us as we see the pride of the arrogant scoffer?

Day Four

Write 119:53 here.

1. How does this relate to previous verse?

The emotions the psalmist records for us in this stanza are: hope (49), stedfastness/ resolve (51), comfort (50, 52), and here, indignation (53)

2. Why is the poet burning?

3. What do you feel is the most wicked thing in your community? Does it make you burn?

4. How does the poet respond to those who violate/forsake God's law?

5. Where are the poet's thoughts, attention, energy focused?

"*The psalmist was indignant at what the worldly people ("the arrogant") were doing as they abandoned Israel's spiritual heritage*." W. Wiersbe

Write 119:54 here.

"Songs": #2158 *zamiyr*- psalm, song, singing

1. What was the concern in v. **53?**

2. How is he now singing?

Read and see what insights you gain.

Eph. 5:19

Col. 3:16

Job 35:10

Acts 16:22-34

"*The singing of Christians does not make the causes of their sorrows go away – though the Lord sometimes does that Himself – but it does lift their spirits and testifies to the goodness of God, Who provides comfort even in bad times*." J. M. Boice

How do these verses relate to 119:54?

Phil. 3:20

Ps. 119:19

Gen. 47:9

2 Cor. 5:1, 2 ("in the house of my pilgrimage")

3. Did you ever wonder why God gave us music?

4. Do you realize that all the psalms are basically songs?

Write 119:55 here.

1. How does **v. 54** relate to **v. 55**?

2. How would God's statutes being your songs contribute to remembering His name in the night?

Read and see the connection to **119:55**.

Ps. 42:8

Ps. 92:2 (0ptional)

Ps. 119:62

Is. 26:9

Lk. 6:12

3. What other things do you remember in the night that crowd out your remembering His name, His character, His majesty?

I firmly believe that what you think about as you temporarily are leaving this world each night – and what you first think of each morning declare who you are. In other words, your last thoughts each night and your first thoughts each morning tell who you really are – your heart.

In the morning, before your guard is up and all your shields are in place to protect your identity, even from yourself, your true thoughts betray who you are. Semi-conscious, no coffee, no "make-up" to hide behind, just you and your thoughts – that's the real you.

Give this a try. Begin keeping a pad by your bed and record first and last thoughts.

Write 119:56 here.

1. **List** below the things that cannot be taken from you.

Pretty short list, right?

Your wealth, your home, your clothes, your family, your job, your trophies, and on and on … your prized possessions can be wiped out in an instant.

2. So what can truly be designated as "This is mine"?

Only what is eternal and cannot be taken from you is truly yours.

The fact that you belong to the Lord, He is Your God and He has placed you "in Christ", opens to you the possessions you have only in Him.

Go back to verse 45. Look at who you are "in Christ". When you look at who you are in Christ, you are observing God's precepts – His ways. As you grow "in Christ" you will desire to observe God's precepts because God Himself lives within you and He seeks to do as His nature directs.

This is your own – this has become yours!

This is your legacy.

Day Five

1. The **Vav** and **Zayin** stanzas: what is the message of the poet?

2. What doctrines do you find?

Much was discussed on covenant. Make sure you have recorded what you learned about the doctrine of covenant. Also read the selection on Covenant in the appendix.

There is much from this week on who we are "in Christ" – that concerns the doctrine of Christ.

Remember, anything you find on God, would go under your collection on the Doctrine of God, such as His great concern with comforting His people – He is a God of comfort. You may record this in the appendix in your own section on the Doctrine of God.

What do you learn about God's nature from **v. 52**? Concerning His age?

Christian disciplines

You should have some information on the discipline of *waiting* from **v. 43** and other references.

Dig deep and ponder these verses to see what the Lord would reveal to you in order to train you in righteousness.

The *Vav* stanza begins and ends with love.

The *Zayin* stanza begins with affliction, derision and ends with songs and night meditations which arise from keeping God's law.

There are several key words in these two stanzas. Two prominent ones are: *comfort* and *remember*.

As we wait on our Covenant-keeping God, He remembers us and comforts us with His everlasting love. This is the joy of being in a covenant relationship with Almighty God!

Rejoice in this privilege.

Optional

For your character study this week, read **Nehemiah 13** and note what you see about "remembering" and anything else you see from **Ps. 119:41-56**.

LESSON SIX "Do You Truly Know Who Your God Is?"
Doctrines: Inheritance and Adoption, Goodness of God/ Discipline: Grieving

PSALM 119: 57-64 The Heth Stanza and 119:65-72 The Teth Stanza
Day One

Read the Heth stanza. ח

1. What is the overall feel of this stanza?

Make three lists: (1) psalmist, (2) God), and (3) others.

Psalmist	God	others
promised to keep God's words(57)	is my portion (57)	wicked have encircled him with cords(61)

Pray to the Father - asking Him to give you the psalmist's heart as you look at each item on the list that pertains to the psalmist.

Write 119:57 here.

1. What is your most treasured earthly possession? Why?

2. What is your most treasured earthly relationship? Why?

3. What do you value most about being a Christian? Why?

4. Do you know that the Lord is your portion – inheritance?

You are an heir.

Read the following verses and note what you learn about your relationship to God.
Ps. 16:5, 6; 73:25-26; 142:5

Lam. 3:24 (21-25, for context)

5. What do you learn about the heir of all things?
Heb. 1:1, 2

6. How does that relate to you?
Read Heb. 1:14; 6:17-20; 11:7, 9

7. What are you an heir of?
1 Pet. 3:7

8. Why?
1 Pet. 2:9

9. As His heir, what are you rich in?
Jam. 2:5

10. How did we become heirs?
Tit. 3:7

11. As an heir, what does your heart cry out?
Gal. 4:1-7

12. What do you see in **Rom. 4:13, 14; 8:16, 17** about being an heir?

13. How does all of this relate to **119:57?**

Gal. 3:29

You are Abraham's _____.

Heirs according to _____ .

14. According to **Ps. 119:57**. What is our promise?

His promise to you – you are His heir.

Our promise to Him – to keep His word.

15. Are you beginning to see how very important God's word is to Him?

To contrast with what you have seen in all of these verses –

Read Matt. 24:45 – 51 ("assign him a *place* is really *portion*")

16. The master will cut the evil slave in pieces and assign him a place (appoint his portion) with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. What is the inheritance here?

Have you ever watched helplessly as a loved one endured a lingering death?

Sometimes I wonder if one thing we can learn as we suffer through this death process is to get a glimpse - a short glimpse – of what eternal death is like. This should prompt us to see the grave implications of our lost friends and family and thereby act with mercy and mission.

17. Look again at **v. 56** – what has become yours?

Now in **v. 57**, what has become yours?

- **Read now or on Day Five the Doctrine on *Inheritance/Adoption***.

Write 119:58 here.

Go back to v. **2, 7, 10, 11, 32, 36** and list what you learn, along with this new verse about the heart. You may want to have a list in the appendix on the heart from **Ps. 119.**

If God were to be gracious to you – what do you think it would be?

more $, more time, more recognition??

God's idea of grace is so much more.

Think about **v. 57** – His grace has made you an heir to all the spiritual riches that you could ever need.

Read 2 Pet.1:2, 3 and see what God has provided for you.

Write 119: 59, 60 here.

"*The surest way to abstain from evil is to be fully occupied in doing good*." C. H. Spurgeon

There is a fine balance between introspection and paralysis, between being properly occupied and empty busyness. We must consider, think, examine our way but not to the point of *inaction*.

After the psalmist considered his ways, he turned his feet to God's testimonies.

1. What does that mean?

Blaise Pascal, the French philosopher, loved this psalm and memorized it. He said that **v. 59** was "*the turning point of man's character and destiny*."

2. How long did the psalmist take to become obedient to God's instruction?

119:5 – "keep Your statutes".

Here we saw that it was *not by accident* that my ways are Yours – they are **established**.

119:60 – now I must "keep Your commandments" in a timely way.

Now, for some self-examination – are you more of a thinker or a doer? Circle one.

Today, look at yourself as objectively as you can – ask a friend or a mate - someone you know has your best interest at heart- to answer the following questions.

1. Ask yourself and then ask them, if you are a passionate follower of God.
2. Do you obviously love Him and obey Him?
3. Do you speak of Him often?
4. Do you long to be with His people?
5. Do you serve Him by helping those He desires to help?
6. Do you deny yourself ungodly conversations or activities?
7. Do you attend to your interests before His (on the "hasten" – time issue)?
8. Do your feet turn to actions that will make "God stories" (testimonies that give Him all the glory) or do your feet turn to self-testimonials?
9. Are you more interested in self-promotion or making His name promoted?

This act of self-reflection is necessary in our walk with Christ. But as you examine yourself, do it under the supervision of the Lord. Ask Him to examine you and reveal His findings to you. To do this you must be **quiet and still** before Him.

Ps. 139:23, 24

Meditate on these two verses and then ask the above questions, first to yourself – write down as many answers as He directs you to write. Then ask someone you trust to honestly answer the questions about you. To close, **read the entire Ps. 139**.

Remember, the more we know our God, the more clearly we will see ourselves for who we truly are.

Day Two

Write 119:61 here.

Read and **find parallels** to this verse.

Ps. 140:5

Ps. 141:8, 9 (optional)

Ps. 26:1-12

Ps 35 entire psalm *aloud* (esp. **v.6**) David wrote this psalm.

Isaiah 40:10-31 We all memorize **Is. 40:30, 31**, but it is the passage that precedes these two verses that lets you know *Who* it is that gives you strength and endurance.

Read Ps. 97 and Ps. 99 These are the Psalms that declare *our God is King*.

1. Do you even need to consider those who try to harm you?
   Who is your Vindicator?

Know Him!

If you are neglecting to read these passages, you are missing out on the opportunity to see Him as King.

I know it is a lot of reading, but immerse yourself in Who He is and it will be well worth the time to read.

Many times in the psalms the relationship with God grows stronger when the psalmist is faced with foes. In his desperation, he clings to God. He cries out to Him, pours out his heart, relies on Him who sees all things clearly and then the psalmist sees more clearly. "I would rather be crying out to my God because someone is maliciously harming me than be the bully attacking me who will face my Champion."

Write 119:62 here.

1. **119:55**, what was going on at night?

2. In **v. 62,** why is the writer rising at midnight?

Matt. 5:6, write that here.

3. Does God's righteousness keep you awake at night because you are so in awe of Him?

Stop now and weep if your answer is "No".

Also look at **Matt. 5:4**, and note what you must do in order to be comforted.

Christian discipline

The Christian disciplines are to promote a healthy, devoted walk with the Lord and with His people. Personally, I believe the act of mourning over sin – anything that falls short of God's standard of holiness – has been greatly neglected by believer and church.

Mourn – follow the example of Daniel, Josiah, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah and many others.

Mourn – cry out to God how far from the image of Christ you have wandered.

Read the following and mourn with them; it will do your soul good.

2 Kings 22:11, 17-20

2 Chron. 34:19-33

Neh. 1:1-11; 13:30, 31

Is. 6:1-8

Jer. 9:1

The entire book of Lamentations (you may want to read a few verses from this book just to give you the heart of Jeremiah) is concerned with godly mourning. God has included that book in His word, so how important do you think mourning is to God?

Lev. 16:30, 31 – While we are surely not under law (praises to our Savior!) we are nevertheless still inhabiting bodies of flesh that require taming by God's spirit of sanctification. Take time to grieve over sin and its influence on our world.

While the psalmist in this verse (**119:62**) is rising to give thanks to God at midnight, I believe that he has already come to grips with his great need to mourn in order to fully appreciate and thank His God.

- **Read the selection in the appendix on the Discipline of *Grieving*.**

Write 119:63 here.

Make a list of your companions.

No particular order, just jot them down as they come to mind.

Write next to each name, how you will commit to exhibit the character of one who:

1 – fears God

2 – keeps God's precepts

One companion may tempt you to gossip, next to their name, write: "I will only edify and build up with my words."

One companion may frustrate you with their unavailability. Write: "I will wait patiently on the Lord's timing."

One may drain you –

One may fill your tank –

Be aware of your companions and their effect on you.

Determine to fear the Lord and keep His precepts among them all.

Write 119:64 here.

Look back at your *lesson five, day one* notes. Refresh yourself on "lovingkindness" and "covenant".

This Heth stanza began with inheritance (portion) and ends with lovingkindness.

1. What is the connection?

Read Josh. 13:1-2, 7, 8, 15, 24, 29, 32, 33

2. Why did the tribe of Levi have no territory to call their inheritance?

"*The psalmist is saying that, like the Levites, he wants his portion of divine blessing to be God Himself since nothing is better and nothing will ever fully satisfy his or anyone else's heart but God Himself. To possess God is truly to have everything. It takes effort to acquire this treasure, however, because God is discovered in His word – this is the most important teaching of this psalm."* J.M. Boice

Day Three

Read the Teth stanza. ט

1. What is the overall feel of this stanza?

Make a list of three things you learn: psalmist, God and others.

Write 119:65 here.

1. How does God deal with you?

2. Is God ever capricious or moody like the Greek and Roman gods?

3. So should you be caught off guard with His dealings with you?

The better you know His word, the better you know Him, the better you will see His hand in your life and therefore not resist and strain but rest in Him.

4. Examine your life right now. Is there an area where you are resisting how He is dealing with you? Can you say with the psalmist – "You have dealt well with Your servant"?

5. **Reflect** on the word *servant*. Do you see yourself as God's servant?
   Or do you want Him to be your servant?

6. What do you learn from servant earlier?
   v. 17, 23, 49

7. How does God deal with His servants?

8. Does that give you comfort or worry?

Your answer will show you your concept of God and His word.

Write 119: 66 here.

1. Where do you gain discernment and knowledge?

Using Webster's dictionary, **define**: discernment and knowledge.

2. Truthfully, where do you go when you want to <u>know</u> something?

To the expert, right?
True and eternal knowledge is only found in God.

We have all said, "I believe in You, Lord."

3. But what is the relation to believing in His commandments and believing in Him?

4. How does our relationship to God Himself affect our relationship to God's commandments?

5. How does believing in His commandments affect our discernment and knowledge?

Write 119:67 here.

1. How does this verse relate to **v. 65?**

2. What is the contrast in **v. 67?**

3. How does the psalmist respond to affliction?

4. How do you respond to affliction?

There is more on affliction later in the psalm.

Write 119:68 here.

What God is and does are synonymous.

"Good" Tob #2895

I. **טוֹב** to be good, be pleasing, be joyful, be beneficial, be pleasant, be favourable, be happy, be right

1. (Qal)

A. to be pleasant, be delightful
B. to be glad, be joyful
C. to be better
D. to be well with, be good for
E. to be pleasing

2. (Hiphil) to do well, do good, act right, act rightly

1. Why is it so important to make this point (that God is good and does good) at this particular juncture in the psalm?

2. Since God is good and does good, you want Him to teach you His statutes. Can you imagine learning the laws of a god that was not good and did not do good?

Write a comment (even a psalm, if you like) to God of how blessed you are that He is good.

Day Four

Write 119:69 here.

Define: *arrogant*

Define: *forged*

1. What is the psalmist's response to those who oppose him?

2. He still keeps his heart and eyes on God's precepts. Why?
3. Why not stand against the forger of lies?

Look back at the last time he said he would observe God's precepts.

V. 56 "This has become mine – that I observe Your precepts."

When others lie and try to steal your reputation from you – there is one thing no one can take from you – that you will not be derailed from the way of the Lord.

The stanza that contained **v. 56**, also had an encounter with the arrogant and affliction.

4. What was it and how does it shed light on the *Teth* stanza?

Write 119:70 here.

1. Who is the psalmist referring to here?

2. What is their condition, what is the condition of their heart?

Read the following and see if it sheds any light on this verse.

Phil. 3:18, 19

Rom. 16:18

Hab. 2:5

3. What does our Lord say we should hunger and thirst for? **Matt 5:6**

4. How does this verse relate to **Ps. 1:1-3?**

"grease" #2459 *heleb*: fat, the best or fatty portions of an offering; fat was God's portion of the offering (**1 Sam.2:15, 16**); it was not to be eaten by the people (**Lev. 3:17; 7:23-25**)

Ps. 17:10 ("unfeeling" heart really translates to fat heart, fat from "eating" what was forbidden)

A fatty heart indicated an insensitive heart to the things of God.

Just to show a glimpse of how powerful God's exact wording is, in **v. 66**, the psalmist asks the Lord to teach him "good discernment". The actual word for discernment is # 2940 *ta'am* and it means *taste, judgment, discretion*. It describes the experience of **taste**, specifically the taste of manna. In **v. 66**, the psalmist desired the Lord to direct his "appetite" for good things and not things forbidden. So here we can see the contrast between **v. 66** and **v. 70**: the man of God and the man who is his own god. The man who has trained his appetite for things of God has a healthy heart.

Read Jn. 6:31-35, 49-51, 58 and see how that relates.

Write 119:71 here.

1. According to **v. 67** and this verse, why do you think the writer felt it was good that he was afflicted?

2. Is affliction ever advantageous? How?

3. Can you say, "it is good for me that I was or I am now afflicted"? How can you say this?

4. How does our culture view affliction?

So God's view is contrary to the world's. Surprise!

If we have God's view, we automatically stand counter to our culture. This is an amazing opportunity to shine as lights in a dark world.

Spurgeon said that the promises of God shine the brightest in the furnace of affliction.

Write 119:72 here.

1. Have you ever seemed to hear so clearly from the Lord that it was almost as though you heard from His own "mouth"?

2. When does that occur here in this psalm?

The law of God's mouth is better than any earthly, material thing.

3. What is the key repeated word of this stanza?

4. What does this tell you about God?

It may seem simple, but it is the most profound doctrine you can learn.

God is good.

- **Read the selection *Goodness of God* in the appendix under Doctrines.**

After reading this doctrine on the Goodness of God, see if you can find any relationship between this doctrine and the discipline you read this week on grieving.

How does God's Goodness relate to my grieving?

Day Five

Review the Heth and Teth stanzas. See what you learned about doctrine and record it in the text.

1. What did you learn about God, His word, covenant, sin, man, who is in control (this would be a sovereignty issue)? You may choose to keep a more detailed list in the appendix.

2. **What Christian disciplines did you observe?**

Remember some are marked in the lesson with an** to help you find them. This is not a scavenger hunt, but it is good for you to train yourself to find things in scripture so that you are not dependent on others.

3. **The optional character study for this week is a look at affliction.** As you study Paul's affliction, also note what you learn about companions because this was also a topic in the stanzas this week.

Read Acts 16:19-40

1. What do you learn about companions?

2. What happened to those associated with Paul in **v. 23?**

3. What response do Paul and Silas give to this? **V. 25**

(Notice when the psalmist sings in **119:62**.)

4. What happens to those near Paul? **V. 25-26**

5. Paul and his companions fear God, who does the jailer fear? **V. 27**
6. Because Paul fears God, what influence did he have on the jailer? **V. 28-30**

7. What else can you glean from **Acts 16:19-40** about choosing to be with companions that fear God?

A few more verses on affliction, but first to inspire you to stay strong: a quote from James Boice.

"Cosmic suffering demonstrates before Satan and the angels that a person can love and trust God for Who He is in Himself and not merely for what he gets out of Him."

Read

Acts 14: 19-23; 21: 7-14; 23:11-15

2 Cor. 11:23-33; 12:9-10

Phil. 3:8-11 Why do this?

2 Tim. 4:6-8, 9-12

Paul's affliction was not only physical, but he was deserted by co-laborers – a real affliction for him. He gained much strength from the companions, but when they were not there, he always had His great Companion.

LESSON SEVEN "The Darkest Point in the Psalm"
Doctrines: Creation, the Doctrine of Man/Disciplines: Submission, Guidance

PSALM 119: 73-80 The Yodh Stanza and 119:81-88 The Kaph Stanza

Day One

Read the Yodh stanza. י

1. What is your impression?

2. What does the psalmist focus on?

List what you learn about:
Psalmist God others

Write 119:73 here.

1. According to this verse, Who is God?

Read Ps. 139:1-6, 13-16 Who is God?

Job 38:1-41

2. Now, after seeing Who God is, what is our response?

Read:
Acts 17:22-31

Eph. 2:10

Phil. 2:12, 13

Matt. 5:48 Be ....., because your heavenly Father is ....._. This word in Greek is "teleios" and means – perfect, complete, *made for a specific purpose and design*.

3. Why do you think Genesis 1, the creation event, is recorded first in the Bible? Is it solely because of chronology?

Yes, the creation account is given because it occurs first in our time/space dimension, but it is also placed first in our Bibles for authoritative reasons. God designed us for His purposes. He has a distinct claim on us as His creation and His children.

4. Now why does the psalmist ask for understanding?

5. What does learning the commandments mean? If it is just memorizing or gaining information, would you really need understanding?

I believe this understanding is built upon the previous stanzas on affliction. Now, the psalmist is ready to gain true understanding.

Spurgeon, "*God's commands are best read by eyes wet with tears*."

6. Do you see the wisdom in that statement?

I. "hands" yad יָד hand

1. hand (of man)
2. strength, power (fig.)
3. side (of land), part, portion (metaph.) (fig.)
4. (various special, technical senses)

A. sign, monument
B. part, fractional part, share
C. time, repetition
D. axle-trees, axle
E. stays, support (for laver)
F. tenons (in tabernacle)
G. a phallus, a hand (meaning unsure)
H. wrists

Write 119:74 here.

1. What does it mean to *wait for Your word*? How do you *wait for His word*?

2. Because I wait for Your word, what happens?

Whenever you see words like "because" find out the "why" that accompanies it. *Because* is a very important word.

"Those who fear You see me …"

3. What is your impact on those near you?

4. Related to **v. 73**, God's hands made you and fashioned you to be an impact on others – but how do you know what kind of impact?

The only guarantee that you will offer any lasting benefit from your time investment in people is if you "wait on God's word". Dispense this word as the only place with answers for all those near you.

Jn. 17:17

Write 119:75 here.

1. What do you see about God in this one verse? There are several things. Add them to your **doctrines** in the appendix as well as list them here.

At times, the Judge judges that affliction is the best tool to achieve His desired outcome.

"In faithfulness" You have afflicted me – not in mercy, hope, truth – <u>but in faithfulness.</u> He is faithful to His original intent: to achieve Christlikeness in you.

2. **Read Heb. 12:10** What do you learn about how God works with His children?

3. **1 Cor. 10:13** Does this verse have anything to do with **119:75**?

4. **Deut. 7:9**

1Thes. 3:3

The book of Isaiah presents the message of a God Who uses affliction to turn His people back to Him.

If you read **Isaiah ch. 1**, you will see the whole theme of the book which declares a faithful God calling to a rebellious and sinful nation.

Read Job 1 and note what you see about affliction.

Make sure you note Job's response to his affliction.

Do you realize that when something happens in your life, God has judged it – weighed it – and pronounced it of ultimate benefit to your soul. Perhaps it doesn't seem a good judgment to you at the time, but He is Judge, He is faithful, merciful, righteous, all-knowing, all-powerful and without fault. You can trust Him. These are not just words – they are a tower you can run to for refuge.

Prov. 18:10

Write down the things you have left in His hands to judge.

Write down the things you do not trust with Him as loving, holy, righteous Judge yet.
Be honest, this could change your life.

Write 119:76 here.

If you are keeping a list on lovingkindness, you may add what you find here about it. If you are not keeping a master list, then record it here.

1. Why does God comfort in this verse?

2. In **v. 75**, the writer speaks of affliction and in v**. 76** of God's comfort. How do the two relate?

At the beginning of this stanza, you saw that God is the Creator.

- **Read the selection under Doctrines: *Creation*.**

According to v. 73, God has created us.
V. 74 tells us that God created us to be involved with others.
V. 75 tells us that our afflictions are part of His plan as our Creator.
V.76 tells us that as our Covenant God, He comforts us.

Day Two

Write 119:77 here.

1. What is the connection of Creator in **v. 73**, Judge in **v. 75** and Compassionate Giver of life?

2. According to **v. 75**, God's judgments are _____
and that in _____ You have afflicted me.
v. 77 May Your _____ come to me.

From these verses, list what you see about God on your comprehensive list of God in the appendix.

Write 119:78 here.

1. When you think of the most traitorous, deceptive person in the Bible (or anywhere really), who do you think of?

Read Matt. 26:20-25; 27:1-5

2. What is the end of his deception?

Read John 8:39-47 (esp. v. 44)

3. What was the beginning?

4. Where do lies begin?

Read Matt. 12:34-37

5. Who were those Jesus accused of lying in these verses?

6. How can we know if we are truthful followers of Christ or liars? **1John 2:3-6**

The answer to living in truth versus living in a lie is "but I shall meditate on Your precepts". Meditating is more than just thinking about something. It is straining to dig within yourself, examine yourself and see if (**Ps.139:24**) there is any harmful way in you.

Look at James 1:22-25

7. According to James **1:25** and basically all of **Ps 119**, what type of person is blessed?

One who looks _____

AND abides in it.

How? By being a effectual _____ of the law of liberty.

Write 119:79 here.

What three verbs are in this verse. Underline them. Verbs show action or state of being.

1. The psalmist is afflicted by those who do not fear God. But he does not retreat into monasticism and withdraw totally from mankind. Here, what is his concern?

2. What was his concern in **v. 74?**

3. Even in our affliction, what should be our response to God and to others?

יָרֵא yare fear #3373 fearing, reverent, afraid

Is this reverence and fear to be exhibited to others or to God?

If you exhibit fear in the right place, your response will always be proper.

Our attitude toward others tells us much about our heart toward God. We have the opportunity to bless or curse by our blameless heart or bring down with our self- absorbed heart.

4. Are people happier to see you walk up to greet them or when you leave?

Write 119:80 here.

1. What causes the writer shame?

2. What causes you shame?
   a personal blunder? your looks? your clothes? your children? your financial circle?

3. Where does the blameless attitude reside?

4. What do you find from **Matt. 6:33, 34** that relates to this verse?

There is a strong sense of submission to the Lord in this stanza. The psalmist is submitted to the will of his Creator.

Essentially saying, "Because You are my Creator (v. 73), I wholeheartedly submit to Your statutes (v. 80)."

- **Read the Discipline on *Submission* in the appendix.**

Day Three

Read the Kaph stanza. כ

1. What are your impressions?
2. List what you see about (1) the psalmist, (2) God, and (3) others.

3. This stanza is a prescription for despair. Does the writer disavow or minimize his despair?

What does he do?

4. What two things does he ask for in **vs. 86** and **88**?

Read Matt. 3:1-10

5. What was John's attitude in these verses?

Matt. 3:11-12

6. How does John see the One Who is to come - as Shepherd or as Judge?

Matt. 3:13-17; Jn. 1:29, 34

7. Who did John know Jesus was?

Matt. 11:1-6

8. Why does John ask the question in **v. 3**?

9. What kind of savior did John expect?

Look at 119:84

10. Who had imprisoned John?

    Yet, Herod was not in prison, John was!

11. Do you see John's dilemma?

12. Each line of this stanza could have been written by John while he was in prison. Can you relate in any way?

Write 119:81 here.

In an English dictionary, look up languish and revive (**v. 88**).

Languish:

Revive:

These two days we will be looking at how one goes from soul-languish to being revived.

Now, you are armed with your definitions.

1. What does his soul languish for?

2. If the writer has salvation, why does his soul languish for it? (Granted the Old Testament concept of salvation builds to form into the New Testament concept, yet we are talking about the same Architect of salvation in both testaments.)

3. What relationship is there between his soul languish and God's word?

Spurgeon, "He wished for no deliverance but that which came from God" … he waited and hoped in God and so "he felt that salvation would come, **for God cannot break his promise**."

כָּלָה kala #3615 – faint, languish

I. to accomplish, cease, consume, determine, end, fail, finish, be complete, be accomplished, be ended, be at an end, be finished, be spent

(Qal)

A. to be complete, be at an end
B. to be completed, be finished
C. to be accomplished, be fulfilled
D. to be determined, be plotted (bad sense)
E. to be spent, be used up
F. to waste away, be exhausted, fail
G. to come to an end, vanish, perish, be destroyed

2. (Piel)

A. to complete, bring to an end, finish
B. to complete (a period of time)
C. to finish (doing a thing)
D. to make an end, end
E. to accomplish, fulfil, bring to pass
F. to accomplish, determine (in thought)
G. to put an end to, cause to cease
H. to cause to fail, exhaust, use up, spend
I. to destroy, exterminate

3. (Pual) to be finished, be ended, be completed

Write 119:82 here.

Remember we are trying to learn how you get from languish to revive. Don't become apathetic.

1. What do his eyes have to do with longing for God's word?

Read Lam. 2:11 and see how it relates.

2. What does his question have to do with his comment about failing eyes?

3. How does this relate to you? What are you looking for, longing for, languishing for, in desperate need of comfort for?

4. Are all problems resolved in this verse and then the next verse is carefree joy?

Write 119:83 here.

1. What happens to things around smoke?

2. What is his response even though he feels dry, wrung-out and useless – good for nothing – might as well throw in?

3. Just ten verses ago, **73,** we learned that God made us and He has a purpose in mind for His creation. Yet, now, in this present verse, the psalmist is so weary that he has begun to despair of his "purpose". Does he *see* his God-designed purpose?

Spurgeon again says, "*He was half afraid he would become useless and incapable through so much mental suffering, and that people would look on him as an old worn-out skin bottle, which could hold nothing and answer no purpose*."

Write 119:84 here.

Read Ps. 39:4 (then take the time to read all of **Ps. 39**)

1. Who wrote **Ps. 39?**
2. Did he understand languishing?
3. How is David referred to in **1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22?**

4. Did David understand persecution?
5. How did he respond to these things?

You can answer this from your knowledge of David or you can read:

1 Sam. 18 and 19, 24, 2 Sam. 1

At this point in the psalm, v. 81-84, is God still the psalmist's Creator and Judge?

Is God still sovereign?

Day Four

Write 119:85 here.

1. If the persecutors are digging a pit they are fairly certain of obtaining their prey. But the psalmist mentions only two things about these pit diggers. What are they?

2. Why does he mention these two things about his tormentors?

Write 119:86 here.

1. Why, at this point in the writer's languishing does he refer to God's commandments as faithful?

2. Is it arbitrary?

Look at Lesson Six, Day two, v. 61. Read the notes after the reading selections.

Because of God's word, the psalmist knows Who his Champion is.

The psalmist has been seeking the Lord's **guidance** throughout this psalm. He is in a desperate situation and following the course set by the Lord is his only constant.

- **Read the Discipline on *Guidance* in the appendix.**

Write 119:87 here.

The first line of this verse shows that the psalmist perceives the limit of the enemies' power. They *almost* destroyed him. Spurgeon comments, "The lions are chained: they can rage no further than our God permits."

1. "But" indicates a contrast. What's the contrast?

When you are almost destroyed, you go into survival mode, like throwing everything off a sinking ship to desperately keep it afloat. You abandon everything, keeping only the essentials.

2. What would you retain with a vengeance?

3. So how life sustaining are these precepts?

Write 119:88 here.

Go back and look at the other uses of *lovingkindness*.

v**. 41, 64, 76**

1. What do you see that pertains to **v. 88?**

Now go back and see what you learn about: *revive me*.

v. 25, 37, 40, 88

3. Why does God revive?

4. How does God revive?

5. Who does God revive?

6. What happens to those revived/ not revived?

7. Where are you in your spiritual journey when God revives you?

You have just looked at this verse using the 5WH. Always remember what a valuable tool this learning skill is.

- Not only is this the mid-point of the psalm, it is also the "lowest point in the psalm". This stanza is *the midnight of the psalm*, very dark … however even in that darkness … stars shone out and the last verse gives promise of the dawn." Spurgeon

Some ancients have said that there is significance to the shape of Hebrew letters. The *Kaph* letter gives evidence of this concept. *Kaph* is a curved letter, much like a half circle, and it was often thought of as a hand held out to receive a gift of blessing. In this verse, the psalmist is in need, and he knows that the only One Who can answer his need is God. Therefore, he holds out his hands in supplication.

Look back at the first line of this stanza: v. 81 His soul languishes but he waits.

I would love to give you something more glamourous than waiting but that is the recipe for reviving: we wait. We wait upon the Lord. That is all the difference – on what, on Whom do you wait?

יָחַל yachal to wait. #3176 hope, expect

1. **(Niphal) to wait**
2. **(Piel)**

A. to wait, await, tarry

B. to wait for, hope for

3. **(Hiphil) to wait, tarry, wait for, hope for**

Day Five

Doctrines: you should see quite a few this week.

1. Who is God in **v. 73? In v. 75?**
2. How is he described in **v. 75? V. 77?**

3. Do you learn anything about God's timing?

We have seen the profound teaching of the fact that God is our Creator. But this should point to the question of "Who, then are we?" This would direct us to ponder and search the doctrine of Man.

- **Read the selection on the Doctrine of Man in the appendix.**

__Christian disciplines__: what do you find in **v. 78? V. 81**?

Even if you elect not to do the character study, please read all the info in the next page. Optional Character study: on day two, you read **Job 1**. Now read **ch. 2 and 3**.

Describe Job.

1. Is he truly afflicted?

To get a fuller picture **read 6:1, 2; 7:11; 10:1; 13:3; 19:1-6, 13-22.**

2. What, at this point, is Job's comfort? **Read 19:23-29**.

3. **Read 29:1-25,** describe Job's influence and why he had this influence.

4. **Look at 32:1** and see what you find.

5. Compare Job's friend's "comfort" to God's comfort in **119:76, 77**.

6. **Look at Ps. 119:74**, were Job's friends glad to see him?
   What's the difference?

Notice in **119:80**, the psalmist desires to be blameless – the very description of Job in **ch. 1.**

7. When God begins His correction of Job, how does God declare Himself?

Job 38:1-7 (read more if you like)

8. How does **119:73** begin? God _____.

Read **Job 40:1-9**

God now describes Himself as _____ (**v.8**). How is God described in **Ps. 119:75**?

9. **Read Job 42:1-6**. What was the point of Job's affliction?

Can you say with Job, "I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear. But now my eye sees You"?

Do you **see** Who God really is? This is the real reason for studying **Psalm 119**: to see Who our God is and fall so deeply in love with Him and His word that you will worship Him as He deserves to be worshiped.

As an application question, after studying these two stanzas, all the cross references, doctrines and disciplines, how would you tell someone to move from soul languish to revival?

Use all of your work from this week to help you answer.

LESSON EIGHT "Who or what do you worship? Is He or it real to you?"
Doctrines: Faithfulness of God, Word of God / Disciplines: Worship, Fasting, Study

PSALM 119:89-96 the Lamedh Stanza and 119:97-104 the Mem Stanza

Day One

Read the Lamedh stanza. ל

1. What is the overall theme of this stanza?

Make three lists, what you learn about (1) the psalmist, (2) God, and (3) others.

2. Are there time indicator words? What are they? How do they relate to the theme of this stanza?

Write 119:89 here.

1. How does this verse relate to the psalmist's affliction? What does the nature of God's word being eternally settled in heaven have to do with the psalmist?

"*There is constancy and order in all of creation, reflecting the faithfulness of the Lord. The order in creation reveals the love, care, and fidelity of the Lord*." Willem A. VanGemeren

Compare 119:89 to Matt. 6:9, 10.

1 Pet. 1:25

Is. 40:8

Read Heb. 12:25-29.

2. How would this be a comfort and a warning to the psalmist?

   A later judgment would not be necessary if God's will was being done now in all spheres (in a way that we can perceive). God will bring about all things under His dominion – but that will ultimately require a coming judgment.
3. **Look at 119:84** and see if you can find a connection with that verse and the one we are looking at today?

4. Now, after studying more than half of this psalm, does the writer focus on any one thing in particular?

5. What does that say for your life's focus?

"*How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord,*
Is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!
What more can he say than to you he has said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?"

What occurs in heaven is reality. On earth, we see only shadows and types.

Read Heb. 8:1-6 (Ex. 25:40)

Heb. 9:11-14, 23-28

Heb.10:1-3

It is amazing to me that Plato, a non-Jew, non-Christian, had an understanding of the truth of the concept of reality. I believe he had this understanding because he was seeking truth.

Plato taught that there is an "ideal" or true essence that we cannot see with human eyes. There is a "form" of love, goodness, truth, liberty, honor, etc., that is perfect. Everything we see is a shadow of that true essence. The following is a great simplification but hopefully will give a basic understanding of Plato's view. For example, if you are sitting in a chair right now, that chair is an imitation patterned off of an idea of the "true" chair; it is an attempt to recreate the perfection of the "true" or "ideal" chair. Your chair possesses "chairness" but is not the ultimate chair. (I am sorry if that offends you and your special chair.)

So from a spiritual point of view, our love is only as true as it is originated in God's love. I believe there is great biblical support for this view. Plato was onto something that has great spiritual benefit to us.

6. When we come to God's word, His word is eternal and it is settled in heaven where reality dwells. So where does that put you?

Read Eph. 2:6, and see what reality has for you. Not just a nice thought, but what is real, whether you can see it, feel it, touch it, what you read here is truth.

Write 119:90 here.

1. What does this verse tell you about God? You may wish to record this if you are keeping a list of <doctrines> concerning God in the appendix.

Note how the following relate to this verse.

Read Ps. 148:1-6

Read Ps. 89:1-11

"*There is an analogy between the Word of God and the works of God, and specially in this, that they are both of them constant, fixed and unchangeable*." Spurgeon

- **Read the selection on the *Faithfulness of God* in the appendix under Doctrines**.

Write 119:91 here.

1. What does this tell you about God?

2. How do all things stand?

Ps. 74:16, 17

Ps. 19:1-6

104:5-9

Never forget: Ps. 115:3!!

"*God's Word which established the world is the same as that which He has embodied in the Scriptures; when we see the world keeping its place and all its laws abiding the same, we have herein assurance that the Lord will be faithful to His covenant… Created by His Word the universe obeys His Word and thus answers the purpose of its existence.*" Spurgeon

Write 119:92 here.

1. Is this the key to handling affliction?

2. The “L” word (Lamedh) here is “unless, if” *lule*. It means “unless, if not”, and is used to introduce a conditional clause. So here *unless* God’s law had been the psalmist’s delight, what would have been his ultimate end?
3. The word “delight” is *sha’ ashuiym.* **Look at Prov. 8:26-31**, to see what God’s delight is.

4. Sometimes are you so weary from affliction, that to perish from it would be a relief?

The word perish is *abad* and means “to perish, to be lost, to wander, to destroy, to reduce to some degree of disorder”.

Read Lam. 3:18

5. What perishes here?
6. So how do you make sure your hope and strength do not perish?

Day Two

Write 119:93 here.

1. How does this verse relate to the last one?

2. There is a *time word* in this verse, what is it?

“To forget something, in the psalms, implies disobedience.” The Reformed Study Bible

3. What have been the other *time words* in this stanza?

4. The word used for “revived” does not mean just barely hanging on, but *flourishing* and *safe*. Are you flourishing? Are you safe?

Revival and renewal are a recurring theme in this psalm. The psalmist has asked the Lord to revive him in several verses (**v. 25, 37, 40, 88**). But here he is not asking for revival, he is declaring that God *has* revived him.

5. How did this happen?

The renewal has taken place as the psalmist has remembered God’s word. This is something that God does by His Holy Spirit. But we must not forget the link between the Holy Spirit and God’s word. The Spirit and the word always go together.

6. How did Jesus revive the near dead and raise the dead?

John 11:43

Mark 5:41

Luke 7:1-10

By His word, life is given. The writer does not say that the precepts quickened him, but that the Lord revived him (gave him life) by means of the precepts.

If you desire life, let the Lord speak to you through His word of life. This is the message of this psalm.

Write 119:94 here.

1. "*For I am Yours, save me*;" Did you notice that each word is only one syllable? This is so simply phrased. The simplicity of this is profound. A four year old child could say this, yet this is precisely the heart that Jesus tells us we must have to enter His kingdom.
   Matt. 18:3

Take a moment to **think** about how *simple* this phrase is and how it relates to the need for *simplicity* in your relationship to your Lord. **Enter any notes** in the appendix under *spiritual disciplines* if you are keeping this list.

Look again at the **Vav stanza** (**41-48**).

2. What is the relationship between God and the psalmist?

3. How does that affect the request now in **v.94?**

The *life* in the previous verse and the *seeking* ("for I have sought Your precepts") are related.

Read Amos 5:4

Deut. 4:29

The prayer of the psalmist is for God to **save him.**

4. What is *salvation*? This is a <**doctrine>** which many believers have not taken the time to study for themselves and know the truth of this great teaching only in bits and pieces.

So we will look at it today.

5. What really happens in salvation?

~Read Matt. 5:3

6. What **realization** must take place?

After you have seen the vast separation between who you are and Who God is, you recognize your need for salvation. (Remember the focus of this lesson is: **what is real**.)

7. Where does this recognition come from?

Eph. 2:1-10; 1:18

John 10:27

Have you ever noticed all the scriptures that say "God called you"?

Look at a few:

1 Pet.2:9

2 Thes. 2:14

1 Cor. 1:9

And there are many, many more, but the point is God calls you. Just as our psalmist declares to us in **v.93,** we are made alive by His word. Now here in **v. 94,** it is His word of salvation to which the psalmist refers.

Read Matt. 11:28 and Rev. 3:20.

8. Here Jesus is making an offer, what is it?
9. From where does this desire for salvation come?
10. Your appetite for self has changed. Why does the base appetite change from selfishness and sin to love of God and purity?

Gal. 3:1-3

Rom. 7:18-8:4

~Matt. 5:6 (The Sermon on the Mount describes the kingdom believer. One who has become a citizen of the kingdom of God.)

The above verses show us a *before and after* much like the psalmist who now acknowledges true life and salvation only in God's precepts. As God has declared the true life, so now the writer turns away from his way and makes the turn to God's way. This is done by following God's precepts.

In the second part of this verse, the psalmist says, "I have sought Your precepts." The word "**sought**" means "to consult, to inquire, to beat a path, to read repeatedly." This man has beaten a path through the scriptures; he has read them over and over, studied and pondered them. Although our times may change, the psalmist knows that "Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven." (**119:89)**

Answer from the verses we have looked at or add your own and note the verse.

11. The ability or power to effect all these changes – where does that come from? Possibly Eph. 2:10
12. The ongoing result of salvation – what happens there? Possibly Gal. 3:1-3
13. The purpose of salvation – what is that? Possibly 1 Pet. 2:9

If you are drowning and you say, “Save me” to someone, are you saying, “Let me help you save me” or are you saying, “I am totally dependent on you saving me. If you pass me by, I will perish.”

Because of **salvation:**

You have gone from death to life. **Eph. 2:5**

You have gone from darkness to light. **1 Pet. 2:9**

You are made a new creation. **2 Cor. 5:17**

You have been baptized (identified) with Christ. **Rom. 6:4**

You are seated in heavenly places. **Eph. 2:6**

You are in God’s family, no longer an enemy to God. **Eph. 2:3, 19; Rom. 5:10**

You are hidden in Christ. **Col. 3:3**

Your nature has been changed. **2 Pet. 1:4**

Look at Matt. 19:25, 26 and see what you learn about salvation.

The doctrine of salvation will be covered in lesson twelve.

Write 119:95 here.

This stanza is telling us, from the first line, that God’s word is settled … it is settled in heaven. Although our culture may constantly be in flux: fads, economy, values, fashions, job security, financial security, definitions of family, marriage, love, and on and on, there is one thing we can know is settled. God’s word. If God’s word is settled, then we can be settled, too.

1. Has anyone ever tried to harm you?
2. Do your enemies typically give up after one try?

   Your greatest enemy waits and is patient. If you have resisted the enemy once, then “Bravo for you”, but stay on guard, because your enemy will wait for another opportunity. **Lu. 4:13**

3. But are we to cower in fear as our enemy waits to destroy us?
4. What are we to be doing according to the psalmist as our enemy waits?

5. Why would considering God’s testimonies be an encouragement during this waiting period?

6. How does this relate to the whole motif of the stanza?

Write 119:96 here.

Read Is. 40:6-8; 55:11; 59:21; Matt. 5:18; 24:35
See if you gain any insight in this verse (**119:96**).

Read the **Lamedh** stanza and see how it relates to the whole psalm.
Use specific verses to support your response.

"*The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me. The Bible is not antique or modern. It is eternal*." Martin Luther

Day Three

Read the Mem stanza. **מ**

1. What are your impressions?

2. What is the contrast with which the stanza begins and ends?

List what you see about (1) the psalmist, (2) God, and (3) others. List on another page.

3. How does this stanza compare to **Ps. 1**?

4. How does this stanza compare with the last several stanzas?

5. What makes the difference?

Read Deut. 5:22-29 and see how man responds to God's law at first**.**

Write 119:97 here.

1. Why does the psalmist love God's law? I understand respecting the law, but why does he love it?

We have not defined *law* yet and the answer to this question lies in what exactly the word law means.

Look up *law* in any tools you have.

"Law":#8451 *torah* – instruction, direction, law, Torah, the whole Law. This noun comes from the verb *yarah* which means to teach or instruct. For further notes on this word, **look in the appendix under terms**.

2. From what you found, does "law" mean rules alone?

3. So what is it that the psalmist loves?

"*He meditated on God's word because he loved it, and then loved it the more because he meditated on it*." Spurgeon

Write 119:98 here.

1. What do the commandments of God do for the psalmist?

2. How does he become wise?

Read John 7:17

Deut. 4:6

Job 28:28

Eccl. 12:11-14

Ps. 19:7; 111:10

Prov. 1:7

2 Tim. 3:15

Eph. 1:17

Spurgeon, "*We learn not only from promise and doctrine and sacred history; from the commandments we gather the most practical wisdom and that which enables us best to cope with our adversaries.*"

The next part of the verse, "for they are ever mine", demonstrates the level of commitment of the psalmist. He is like a soldier who realizes that he is in a battle and he must never lay aside his weapons and shield – and so also we must never have the word of God out of our thinking.

Look back at **verse 56** and see the comparison to this verse.

Write 119:99 here.

1. In v. 98, to whom does the psalmist compare himself?
2. To whom does he compare himself in this verse?

3. Do you notice all three verses to this point in this stanza have "my" four times, " mine" one time, and "me" one time? What is the reason for this focus on *me, my and mine*?

The psalmist has teachers. We know this because he compares his insight to that of his teachers.

4. So what can we learn from this regarding teachers, insight, meditation and understanding?

5. To whom do you run when you need understanding?

Write 119:100 here.

1. This stanza begins with what attitude toward God's word?

2. What verbs are used in regard to God's word throughout this stanza?

Love, made wise, _____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____ _____

3. What relationship does the attitude toward God's word have to do with the psalmist's wisdom?

4. **Read Is. 29:14-16** and see if it helps you learn what the psalmist believed about gaining wisdom?

"To keep" is the word # 5341 *nasar:* to keep, guard, preserve, observe, hide. Same word in **v. 2, 22, 33, 34, 56, 69**, look at these verses and see how it reflects here in this verse.

5. **Read Job 32:1-14** what do you learn about wisdom here?

Day Four

Write 119:101 here.

1. What does the psalmist do so that he keeps God's word?

2. Can you keep God's word and be careless about your way (remember "your way" in v. 1)?

3. How do you personally "restrain your feet from evil"?

4. "I have restrained my feet from most evil ways." How have I **changed** the wording here?

Look back at your **v. 94** word study on "sought". The definition for this word carried the idea of trodding a beaten path, in this case someone walking a well-worn path of Bible study.

5. In **v. 101**, the psalmist makes sure that his path is far from the evil path. In what ways have you grown careless about your path and you have wandered down some evil paths and have neglected the "sought after" path of God's ways?

6. You cannot possibly follow two paths at once, so if you are **not** on the road of righteousness, which road are you on?

"Keep" Your word in this verse is # 8104 *shamar*: to watch, keep, preserve, guard, be careful, watch over, watch carefully over, to be on one's guard, to pay close attention to, to maintain or to observe something for a purpose.

"*This book (the Bible) will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book*." anonymous

7. A pure or right way is counter to a sinful way and knowledge of sin requires a knowledge of God's Law. What is sin?

"*Only the Law of God can tell us what offends God*." J. M. Boice

Write 119:102 here.

"turn aside" #5493 *sar:* to turn away, go away, desert, quit, keep far away, stop, take away, remove, make depart

The psalmist has not *deserted* or *kept far* from him the ordinances of God.

1. Why has he not done that?

2. Is God your Teacher?

3. In this verse, there is an emphasis on You. He writes, "You Yourself are my Teacher."

Emphasis is used to insure that we have not missed an important point. Why is this point so important at this particular point in the psalm?

When you study the Bible, what do you see or hear?

Kol Yahweh: the voice of God

We are hearing the "voice" of God Himself. He Himself is our Teacher. This is much like the time in the garden that Adam and Eve experienced with God each day as the Lord would meet with them in the cool of the day. When we study God's word, it is as though we are returning to that special time in the garden before the fall occurred. Even better than Eden, we have a taste of heaven when we open our Bibles and open our ears, hearts, and minds to find that God Himself is speaking to us.

"*The Bible bears on its very surface the stamp of the divine mind and of God speaking*."

J.M Boice

- **Read the selection on the Discipline of *Study* in the appendix**. **Remember this is the "Sanctification Psalm." The process of sanctification involves repeated and constant exposure to concentrated study and application of God's word.**

Write 119:103 here.

Read Prov. 16:24; 24:13, 14; Ps. 19:7-14; Jer. 15:15, 16; Rev. 10 and record the parallels that you see with this verse. Record this on a separate piece of paper.

1. What is your favorite food? Why do you like it so much?

Something about that food is pleasurable to you: the taste, texture, energy it gives you. Something about that food has a positive effect on you (and negative if it is cheesecake or pizza or ....). Did you know that there are only a few basic tastes? Bitter, sweet, salty and sour make up all the foods we eat. But think of all the things you can do with these basic tastes! The word of God has so much more ability to give us a divine taste of heaven. We can begin to develop a taste for God's things and in particular, God's word.

"taste" #2441 *hek:* indicating a palate, a mouth. It refers to the roof or upper palate of one's mouth (**Ps. 137:6)** used extensively to form sounds and words. Its failure to function makes one mute (**Ezek. 3:26**). It also indicates the sensation of the sweet taste of honey. It is used to mean speech, the place where speech is formed. The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament

You can see from this definition of *hek*, much more is indicated than just taste. What you do with your mouth - what goes in and what comes out - will determine how sweet your life is. The same is true of your spiritual taste. What are you feasting on?

While *fasting* is not clearly described in this psalm, the concept of affliction or denying oneself, is observed. The psalmist says that "it is good for me that I was afflicted" (v.71) and he tells God that "the law of Your mouth is better than thousands of gold and silver pieces." (72) The **Teth** stanza makes mention of the fat covered heart which is not pleasing to God. The heart that turns away from following God's standard. (Look at notes on v. 70.) And here in the Mem stanza, the psalmist tells us that God's "words are sweet to my taste, sweeter than honey to his mouth!"

- **Read the selection on *Fasting* as a Spiritual Discipline**.

Write 119:104 here.

This stanza began with, "O how I love Your law!"

1. How does it end?

There are really only two responses to God's truths: love and hate. If you think you are indifferent to God and His revelation, you are deceived. Jesus made it clear, you cannot have two masters; one you will love and the other you will hate. **Matt. 6:24**

God and His word are inseparable.

The **Mem** stanza is very special. **There is not a single petition in it**. The previous stanzas have requests of God's deliverance, help, salvation, etc. but here there is a change. In this stanza, from the first verse, the psalmist declares his love for God's law.

C.S. Lewis wrote a study on the psalms called Reflections on the Psalms. He mentions his surprise at how the psalmist writes of his "love" for God's law, not respect or admiration, but love. This seemed strange to him, similar to loving the instruments of a dentist which are used to inflict pain on the patient. But for Lewis, the reason for the confusion was answered with a better understanding of the word "law".

Law includes the entirety of God's written revelation, promises as well as warnings, blessings as well as judgments. Lewis also found that what the poet loved about God's law was "the engaging moral order of the divine mind." This order is carefully constructed in the psalm we have been studying for weeks now. We consider *love* as emotional but when the psalmist writes of love of God's law, precepts, commandments, it is not particularly emotional in the sentimental sense. This *love* is a reflection of the psalmist's awe and devotion in having been privileged to gain entry through God's word into the perfection and beauty of God's word – God's mind.

This stanza presents five reasons why the psalmist has learned to love God's Law.

1. God's word is the true essence of wisdom.
2. God's word directs and keeps us on the right path and away from the wrong one.
3. God Himself is our Teacher as we study.
4. God's word is sweet to our spiritual mouth.
5. God's word gives understanding and a hatred for the false way.

"*These verses are not saying that the best of many valuable ways to keep one's way pure is by studying God's word; they are saying that this is the only way*." J.M. Boice

Day Five

1. Remember that the *psalm* was an expression of worship. How do these two stanzas worship God?

2. How could you worship the Lord with the inspiration of these two stanzas?

What <doctrines> have you seen this week. Note these within your text of the stanzas.

What *spiritual disciplines* have you seen this week. Note these within your text of the stanzas.

- **Read the selection in the appendix on *Worship*.**
- **Read the selection on the *Word of God*.**

Character study

Look at the life of Joshua and see what you learn that can help you better understand **119:89-104**.

Read these selections and any others about Joshua that will aid in your findings.

Ex. 17:8-16; 24:12-18; 32:15-17; 33:11

Num. 11:28; 13:8, 16-20, 30-33; 14:1, 2, 5-10, 30, 38; 27:18, 22; 32:12

Deut. 1:38; 3:28; 31:3, 7, 14, 23; 32:44; 34:9

Josh. 1:1-9

Read as much of the book of **Joshua** as you care to read.

Judges 2:7-13

By now you should have quite a selection of character studies.

Bless you for pressing on to lay hold of God's truth, God Himself.

LESSON NINE "What sustains, guides and upholds you?"
Doctrines: Justification, God is Judge/ Discipline: Guidance

PSALM 119:105-112 The Nun Stanza and 119:113-120 the Samekh Stanza

You have done well to be stedfast and perseverant through these weeks of homework. Bless you for your faithfulness. Whether you have completed each day of homework or not, you have met with the Lord and heard His voice, I pray.

Day One

Read the Nun stanza. נ

1. What is the overall theme of this stanza?

Make three lists, what you learn about (1) the psalmist, (2) God and (3) others.

Record here the things that you have already seen in **Psalm119**. (Do this **without** looking back at the earlier verses. This does not need to be exhaustive, just major points.)

Write 119:105 here.

1. Up to this point in the psalm, how has God's word been a lamp for the writer?

נִיר Lamp #5216

Read each of the following scriptures and note what you learn about light.

Ps. 19:8

Ps. 27:1

Prov. 6:23

Ex. 13:20-22; Num. 9:15-23

2. How is God a light for His people here?

Ex. 24:15-17; Deut. 4:24; 9:3; Heb 12:29

3. How is God a light in these verses?
   Is. 60:1, 2, 19, 20
4. What is the relationship of God's glory and His light?

Is. 51:4

5. What is the relationship of God's law, light and justice?

Matt. 4:16; Jn. 8:12; 1 Jn. 1:5

6. What is the contrast here?

Eph. 1:18; 2 Cor. 4:6; Acts 26:18; 2Pet.1:19; Luke 24:27, 32

7. What do you learn about God's light here?

Rev. 21:21-24; 22:5

8. How important is light to God?

9. According to Genesis, what was the first thing that God **spoke** into existence?

And God **said**, "Let there be _____." **Gen 1:3**

Remember, **Psalm 119** is all about God's word - His word of life, correction, instruction, creation, His word for ordering His universe. Light is a part of that ordered creation.

Make a list of all you learned about "light". Then **examine** your life and see if it reflects the light of God. Also do not forget to record any <doctrines> you have found.

One of the things you should see about "light" is that it guides us.

- **Read the selection on G*uidance* in the appendix under Disciplines if you did not read it in Lesson Seven.**

Write 119:106 here.

1. What are the verbs used in this verse?

2. What is the relationship between swearing, confirming and keeping?

3. What adjective (describing word) does the writer use to modify God's ordinances?

4. What does this tell you about the psalmist's attitude toward God?
5. How does that help with his resolve to keep God's ordinances?

We serve a righteous, wise, holy, loving, faithful God. Because He is all of these things, we can trust in His judgments. "If the Lawgiver were foolish His law would be the same and obedience to such a law would involve us in a thousand mistakes." Spurgeon

How blessed we are that we can trust His judgments. His word is the revelation He has given about paths of life. He has designated the path which will bless us and He has exposed the many paths that will harm us. He has made that judgment about these paths and we are foolish if we do not heed His word concerning these paths.

6. **(Optional) Read** the following and see what you learn about swearing/vowing. List your findings.

Eccl. 5:1-7

Num 30:2

Ps. 50:14; 66:13, 14; 76:11

7. When you became a Christian, what did you ask the Lord to do?

8. What did you tell Him was your response to His gift of eternal life?

Write 119:107 here.

Although the psalmist has been faithful to his sworn allegiance to the Lord, he suffers affliction. 1. What is his attitude about this affliction?

2. Is he only marginally afflicted?

3. Has he given up?

4. **Look** at the other "revive me" verses and see their connection to this verse.

119:25, 37, 40, 50, 88

5. How is he revived?

Write 119:108 below.

1. How does this verse carry on from the previous two verses?

2. **Read and note** what you learn.

Hos. 14:2

Heb.13:15

If you have access to a Bible dictionary, **look up** freewill offering. If not, then an excerpt from Unger's Bible Dictionary is provided below.

The *peace offering* is "divided into three kinds: the *thank offering*, the *votive offering*, and the *freewill offering*... The *peace offerings* have their root in the state of grace with its fellowship with God...They served to establish the Hebrew more firmly in the fellowship of the divine grace; to be mindful of God ... and when adversity threatened to obscure his feeling and consciousness of God's nearness and mercy, he might be enabled through the *peace offering*, to maintain this feeling and consciousness, and quicken them afresh...

The motive impelling to the *freewill offering* seems to have centered in the desire to thank God for the enjoyment of His bounties and to be assured of their continuance."

3. How does the above information help you understand what the psalmist was saying?

The typology involving Christ in this offering will be discussed in class. We truly have so much for which to be thankful. This is the benefit of going deeper in Bible study ... you see the richness of all that our Lord has done for us. Encourage others to see with their own eyes. "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You." **Job 42:5**

By neglecting to go deeper in His word and refusing to devote sacrificial time to this study, we cannot truly come to realize the depth of what our God has done for us.

119:105-108 details much concerning the theme of the psalm: *words*. But here they are also words which we use. "I have sworn, I will confirm ... accept the freewill offerings of my mouth."

Warren Wiersbe says, "*Perhaps the highest use of speech is in the worship of the Lord ... If worship is the highest use of words, then to be careless in worship is to commit a great sin."*

Day Two

Write 119:109 here.

Depending on your translation, the first line reads, "My life is continually in my hand" or "My life is continually in danger."

1. How bad is the affliction the psalmist faces?

2. Do you see him orchestrating his own protection or manipulating the situation to preserve his life? What is he doing to deal with the threat to his safety?

3. For the psalmist, what is greater, the threat to his physical life or the threat of his forgetting God's law? Which will he consider the greatest threat to his well-being? Which will he preserve at all costs?

4. What about you? Are you most concerned with your remembering God's law or protecting yourself?

5. The psalmist's decision to remember God's law was costly. By his resolve to obey God, his existence was a threat to those who chose differently. Does your obedience cause others to take notice of you? Are you a threat to the enemy?

Read and note.

1 Pet. 5:8-10

1 Sam. 17:37

Acts 5:40-42

6. Are you considered worthy to suffer for His name? What were they doing to incur this suffering?

7. How does that relate to the psalmist?

Read Acts 5:38-39

8. Who are men fighting against when they oppose you as you do God's work?

Write 119:110 here.

Read Ps. 1 and record who the wicked are.

1. What is the only defense against the wicked?

2. How does the psalmist deal with the wicked?

The most wicked one is described as _____ in **Gen. 3:1.**
He is described as the _____ __ _____ in **Jn. 8:44.**
How did Jesus respond to His enemy in **Matt. 4**?

Read Eph. 6:12-17, and **record** how we are to respond to our enemy.

Read 2 Cor. 10:3-5 and do the same.

3. Do you see how vital to your spiritual life it is **never** to wander from God's word?

Write 119:111 here.

Look at **v. 89**.

1. What do you remember about God's word?

Isaiah 40:8 says, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."
Ps. 119:50 says, "This has become mine, that I observe Your precepts."
Ps. 119:57 says, "The Lord is my portion; I have promised to keep Your words."

2. What is the psalmist saying in this verse (**111**)?

3. What or really Who is the joy of the psalmist's heart?

Look at 119:10, 11 and see how it relates to **v. 111**.

God is so intricately associated with His word, His law, His testimonies, His commandments that when you love Him you love His ways. The word of God is perfectly in balance and order, in guidance and direction, in power and effectiveness. As we truly see

His word in action, we worship Him and marvel at the design with which He ordered all things.

To love His law is to acknowledge the great perfection of His design and order. His law is not a burden; it is a reflection of Who He is as the Master of creation, the Maestro of mankind, the Architect of redemption, and the Lover of your soul. How could His law be anything less than perfect?

How does this relate to **Matt. 5:5**? Who inherits? What does he inherit?

How does **119:111** relate to **Matt. 5:8**?

What really happens to your heart as you gaze at the Lord and the ways of the Lord?

As we access our inheritance, our covenant relationship with our God, we see more and more of Him and as we see Him, our heart is purified in His truth. **1 Jn. 3:2, 3** is the culmination of what we can glimpse at each day with the Lord.

Write 119:112 here.

Word study on "inclined" # 5186 *natah:* to stretch out, to extend, to pay attention, to turn, to turn aside

It is used of setting up a tent or tabernacle, stretching it out.

It is used of establishing a people.

It has the sense of turning to something, inclining to it.

See how it is used in the following verses:

Josh. 24:23

Ezra 7:28

How is this verb used in:

1 Kings 11:2, 4

Ps. 125:5

1. Is your heart stretched out like a tent for the Lord?

A tent that is properly set, firmly tied down, can endure strong winds and rain. But a tent haphazardly and quickly erected will not stand. Take care how your heart is inclined.

Review this stanza and ask the Lord if there is any way in you that is not committed forever, even to the end.

Day Three

Read the **Nun stanza** again.

1. Do you see the determination of the psalmist?

He has set his course and no one and nothing will deter him from following the Lord.

2. He has not had an easy time. So *why* has he endured? *How* has he endured?

He has been continually transformed by the renewing of his mind and heart with the living word of God.

1. Now how does he begin the Samekh stanza?

Samekh **O**

List what you see about the psalmist, God and others.

Write 119:113 here.

Look at the following verses and see how they relate to **119:113.**

1 Kgs. 18:21

James 1:8; 4:8

Matt. 26:14-16; 27:3-5

Double-minded #5588 *se'ep:* indicating double-mindedness, vanity of thought. It indicates a person who engages in doublethink, a process of illogical thought, perverse thinking that distorts and reverses the truth. The Complete Word Study of the Old Testament

Since God also is **not** pleased with the double-minded, who **is** pleasing to Him?

1 Chron. 28:9, 10

1 Kgs. 15:14

2 Kgs 23:1-3

Acts 13:22

Instead of consuming his mind and energy with those who fail God, what does the psalmist do?

Write 119:114 here.

#5643 seter – hiding place

I. סֵתֶר - *sēṯer - covering, shelter, hiding place, secrecy*

1. covering, cover

2. hiding place, shelter, secret place

3. secrecy

A. secrecy (of tongue being slanderous)

feminine noun

II. shelter, protection

1. In what ways is God a hiding place?

2. Can thoughts consume you as well as physical torment?

3. How can God's word be a hiding place from all the trials the psalmist has mentioned?

4. The psalmist declares that God is his hiding place and his shield. What else does he do?

The verb "wait" # 3176 *yahal*, means wait or hope or tarry. (Personally, this is one of my favorite verbs.)

Read the following verses and see what you are waiting for. Make any pertinent notes.

Ps. 33:18, 22; 38:15; 42:5, 11

Lam. 3:21, 24

Micah 7:7

"*It is easy to exercise hope where we have experienced help*." Spurgeon

Allow God to build your faith, by inclining your heart fully to Him. Have no double-minded thoughts, yield no ground to your enemy and "watch expectantly for the Lord, wait for the God of your salvation and know that He will hear you".

Write 119:115 here.

How does the verse compare to **Ps. 1:1**?

Here, the psalmist does not mince words. He emphatically commands the evildoers to leave him.

Evildoers can have several negative effects on us. One is that they will cause us to misplace our attention; our eyes will be on them instead of on God. But also, evildoers can be among us and tempt us to forget God's ways.

1. Which of these two influences do you think the psalmist is concerned with? Support your answer.

2. Notice that the writer here says, "my God". Why is that important?

3. What <doctrine> do you see here?

Only here does the name "Elohim" (God) occur in this poem. This is the name of God which regards His fullness of power, His majesty which indicates His kingly rule or an allusion to the Trinity.

Think about the fact that this is "my" God and the meaning of this particular name of God and write your thoughts below.

Write 119:116 here.

1. How does God sustain us?

2. What does that mean? How can He sustain us by His word?

Look at:

Ps. 3:4

Ps. 37:17, 24

Ps. 54:4

Ps. 55:22 (a different word which also means to sustain)

Ps. 145:14

Is.41:10

Col. 1:16, 17

3. What is he potentially ashamed of?

4. Why would he be ashamed of this?

5. What will guard against ever being ashamed of this?

Day Four

Write 119:117 here.

"Uphold" in v. 117 is # 5582 *sa'ad*: to support, to sustain, to refresh. It is used of energizing people, of aiding them, refreshing them with nourishment or with rest and food

"Sustain" in v. 116 is #5564 *samak*: to lay on, to uphold, to sustain. It can mean to lean against a wall with one's hand, it has the sense of supporting or sustaining someone.

1. Both of these words are similar, but are used here for a reason. What do you think that is? You have been studying this psalm now for a few weeks, see if you can reason why the psalmist would write these two verses here and use such similar verbs to repeat the idea twice.

Look at:

Ps. 12:5

Ps. 63:8

Ps. 16:1-2, 7-11

2. What is the only way we will truly be safe?

Read Heb. 1:3 and record how God is currently upholding all things.

3. According to the second half of this verse (**119:117**), what is to be your response?

"*We are saved by past grace, but we are not safe unless we receive present grace*." Spurgeon

Write 119:118 below.

How is this verse similar to **Ps. 1:4-6**?

1. **Look at 119:10, 21, 118**. What do you learn about the connection of these three verses?

"You have rejected", rejected is #5541 *salah*: to tread down, to reject, to treat as worthless. It means to put out, to exclude, to refuse to accept.

"God will set His foot on those who turn their foot from His commands." Spurgeon
According to this verse (**118)**, those who wander from God's statutes are _____.

2. In what way are they deceived/ useless?

3. Do you know people who wander from the Lord and maintain their innocence?

They make excuses to allow for their disobedience and rebellion, not calling it that but explaining their actions as "reasonable" considering their particular circumstances.

4. Despite their pretty excuses, what does God call their wandering?

Write 119:119 here.

1. What is dross?

Reformation Study Bible: *dross is the waste that results when metal is smelted*.

Read the following and note what you learn.
Prov. 25:4

Is. 1:21, 22, 25-31

Jer. 6:28-30

Ezek. 22:17-22

Mal. 3:2, 3

Read Jn. 8:39-47 and see how it relates to this verse.

Even when God is fierce and full of righteous indignation, the psalmist loves the ways of God.

2. When God is exerting His wrath, what divine attribute does that exhibit?

3. Do you love God's holiness, His justice, His purity, His righteousness and His order?

Or do you only know God's mercy, love, and grace?

God reflects all of these attributes. But always remember, His love is a holy love and His grace is a holy grace, His mercy is holy. **Everything about God is holy**. Everything about God is to be praised and revered.

Write 119:120 here.

1. With all that the psalmist has seen of God's ways, what is his response?

Ps. 115:13

Ps. 118:6

Prov. 3:7

Prov. 8:13

Prov. 16:6

"*It is only as we tremble before the exalted and holy God that we will ever see the world and its distorted values to be the empty things they are. If we do not tremble before God, the world's system will seem wonderful to us and consume us*." J.M. Boice

Finish the day by reading **Is. 6:1-8 aloud.**

Day Five

Review the **Nun** and **Samekh** stanzas.

1. What does the psalmist add in these two stanzas that develop an even deeper understanding of God and His word?

2. **Record any <doctrines>** you have seen this week in these two stanzas.

3. **Record any *spiritual disciplines*** you have seen.

We have seen in these two stanzas much of what God does and Who He is. The last verse of the Samekh stanza tells us that the psalmist trembles for fear of God. Our God is good, just, faithful and righteous. Because of all that He is, He must judge sin as a violation of His order.

- At this point **read the selection on *Justification***. This doctrine is key to your understanding of God's character.
- Also **read the selection on *God is Judge***. He is portrayed throughout this psalm as Judge.

Optional character study

This week we will study the lives of Aaron and the tribe of Levi.

4. **Read Ex.32** and record all you learn from this chapter about being double-minded and single-minded. Record anything else you see that relates to **119:105-120**.

LESSON TEN "Are you the servant of the Lord? Is even Satan the servant of the Lord?"
Doctrines: Satan, Propitiation/ Discipline: Service

PSALM 119:121-128 The Ayin Stanza and 119:129-136 The Pe Stanza

Day One

Read the Ayin Stanza. עָיִן

1. What impresses you about this stanza?

Make the three lists: psalmist, God and others.

2. How does the psalmist refer to himself?

Our identity is crucial. The psalmist is God's servant. In the previous two stanzas the psalmist saw God as his light, his hiding place, his shield. But for the Lord to be those things to him, the psalmist had to be in covenant relationship to God. The disciple must not wander from God's law (**119:110, 118**); he must not be double-minded (**119:113**); he must worship the Lord alone (**119:108, 111**).

3. How do the **Nun** and **Samekh** stanzas relate to this one (**v. 121-128**)?

4. Are you beginning to notice the clear contrast between those who follow the commandments of God and those who do not?

Is it really that simple? Are there bad guys and good guys?

Write 119:121 here.

1. Why does the psalmist refer to his deeds of justice and righteousness?

Look at Ps. 33:5; 89:14.

2. What about the oppressors?

Read

Ps. 72:4; 105:14

Prov. 14:31

One of the **ayin** words is: # 6231 '*asaq*: a verb meaning to oppress, **defraud**, especially a servant; **robbing or cheating** someone; the word includes the idea of accusation and slander.

This is the first time the word "oppressors" and "oppress" appear in the psalm.

How is the oppressor defrauding you right now in your life?

Look at the following verses and **record** what the Lord said about oppressors:

Lev. 19:13

1 Sam. 12:3, 4

3. How did the prophets speak about oppressors and defrauders?

Amos 4:1; Mic. 2:2; Zech. 7:10; 9:8; Mal. 3:5

Note what you learn about those that slander and accuse**.**

Rev. 12:10

1 Pet. 5:8 (devil means "accuser")

Zech. 3:1

Luke 22:31

Job 1:11; 2:5

How is the accuser working on you?

How is the oppressor oppressing you?

- **Read the selection in the appendix on *Satan*.**

Write 119:122 here.

1. What is a surety?

Read Gen. 43:1-19; 44:18-34

2. Do you see anything of the New Testament here? What is it?

Read and record what you find:

Job 17:3

Is. 38:14

Heb. 7:22

(In fact, in the next verse **119:123**, the word "salvation" is *yeshuah*.)

Here we have another **ayin** word, "surety" #6148 *arab:* means to exchange, to take as a pledge or a guarantee

- **Read the Doctrine of *Propitiation* located in the appendix.**

By the way, according to the Masoretes, v. 122 is the only verse in this psalm that does not mention the word of God. (Some see that vs. 90, 121, 132, also do not mention the word of God.)

The fact that this is the only verse with no mention of God's word could perhaps point to the depth of despair to which the psalmist succumbed due to the wicked men who had oppressed him. But this anguish does not linger for long; while his eyes temporarily left the Lord, he quickly turned his gaze again to his only hope for salvation.

Write 119:123 here.

Read Is. 38:14 again and see if you see a similarity with this verse as well as the previous one.

1. What is the word for "salvation"?

2. In what way were his eyes straining for God's salvation?

3. What did he long for in addition to the salvation of the Lord?

עַיִן - ayin eyes #5869 eye

1. eye

A. of physical eye

B. as showing mental qualities

C. of mental and spiritual faculties (fig.)

I. spring, fountain

Look again at 119:82.

Write 119:124 here.

1. How does he refer to himself again?

2. He also mentions another bond with the Lord; what is it?

Read 109:26 and see what you learn about God's lovingkindness.

We must remember, as the Lord's servants we are His. This truth has many implications, but one which is pertinent to the condition of the psalmist is this: whenever people attack or harm us, they also attack the Lord, because we belong to Him. **Remember Acts 9:1-5**?

Read 119:12, 26, 64, 108 and see what you learn about being taught by God.
Ask yourself the 5Ws and H about these verses. **Record** here what you find.

Day Two

Write 119: 125 here.

1. For the third time in this stanza, the psalmist refers to himself as a _____.

Read and note what you learn about the Servant.
Is. 42:1-4

Is. 49:3-7

Is. 52:13-15; 53:1-12 (esp. 53:11)

Acts 3:26

2. To whom are the above verses referring?

Now if Jesus is willing to be called a servant and even a bondservant (Phil. 2:7), we do well to follow His example and gladly call ourselves servants of the Lord.

- **Read the selection on the Spiritual Discipline of *Service* in the appendix.**

Read Heb. 1:1-2, and write how Jesus is now referred to.

2 Tim. 2:11-13 tells us how Jesus relates to us.

The psalmist asks for understanding. The first step to understanding is knowing your own identity. Our identity is in Christ.

3. According to **119:125**, why does the psalmist ask for understanding?

"*God's servants do not live by explanations; they live by promises*." W. Wiersbe

Write 119:126 here.

Read Jer. 18:23 and see if it gives you any insight.

2 Pet. 3:1-10

Hab. 2:3

Ezek. 12:25

Ps. 27:14

1. What do you learn about the timing of the Lord?

2. Why does the psalmist believe it is time for God to act? Is it because the psalmist is weary or frustrated with his own situation? What does this show you about the psalmist?

Look at the following verses which use the same Hebrew word #6565 *parar*: "to break, divide, frustrate" and **see** <u>who</u> you think has broken God's law.

Is. 24:5

Is. 33:8

Jer. 11:10; Jer. 31:32

Write 119:127 here.

There are three psalms that are considered as the predominant *Torah psalms*: **1, 19 and 119**. This is easy to remember because of the numbers. We have looked repeatedly at **Psalm 1** throughout our study. Today, look at **Psalm 19** and see the similarities with our psalm. Especially notice the verses in **Psalm 19** that relate to our verse today, **127**.

1. What is the psalmist saying in **Psalm 19**?
2.

List everything from **Psalm 19** that causes the psalmist to love God's word. There is much in this psalm to compare to **Psalm 119**, but limit yourself to only **what causes him to love God's word**.

3. What do you find about gold and silver below?

Prov. 3:14, 15

Prov. 8:10, 19

Prov. 16:16

Write 119:128 here.

1. What prompted this response?

2. What is the contrast here? (Compare v. 126 to these last two verses.)

Go back to Day One homework, question # 3. How do the previous two stanzas relate to this verse?

If the wicked have broken God's law, if the ungodly have deemed God's law unworthy of esteem, if the lawless ones have found fault with God's precepts then the psalmist has all the more reason to cling to and revere the words of God.

"*The censure of the wicked is a certificate of merit; that which they sanction we may justly suspect, but that which they abominate we may ardently admire.*" Spurgeon

The evil the psalmist has seen around him has only driven him to a more committed stance to follow the Lord. It (evil) has actually served a great purpose in his life: to solidify his allegiance.

This hatred of false ways springs from a love of truth.

The **Samekh** stanza began with, "… I love Your law." And this **Ayin** stanza ends with, "I hate every false way."

Our time is described by many as *postmodern*. We live in a world where relativism is heralded as truth (in a relative sense) and absolutes are the mark of ignorance. Are you ignorant? Do you chafe at the insult? Jesus was declared a fool for us, come be a fool for Him. If you are called ignorant, then do what a good ignorant person does, they IGNORE. Follow the guide of the psalmist. Allow the Lord alone to dictate your worldview. "Therefore I esteem right all Your precepts concerning *everything*."

"*We cannot hold to God's standards without separating from the contrary standards of the world. We cannot love the right path without hating the wrong one*." J.M. Boice

Matt. 6:24

Day Three

Read the Pe stanza. פֵּ

1. How does the stanza begin and end?

Write 119:129 here.

One of the **Pe** words in this stanza is #6382 *pele'*: a wonder, a miracle, a marvel; the word is used to represent something unusual or extraordinary; beyond human capabilities

I.**פֶּלֶא –** wonder – pele #6392 wonder, marvel

1. wonder (extraordinary, hard to understand thing)
2. awonder (of God's acts of judgment and redemption)

Look at how this word (or its root) is used in the following:

Job 5:9

Ps. 40:5

Ps. 96:3

Ps.98:1

Ps.136:4

Ps. 145:5

Is. 9:6

Is 25:1

Is. 28:29

Because of our **WONDERFUL GOD and His WONDERFUL WORD,** what should be our response after meditating on it?

Read Ps. 9:1

Remember, testimonies are described in one sense as verbal accounts of actual events.

Declare the accounts of Who God is; declare the wonders of His works. **Recoun**t, give evidence of what He has done through the ages and in your own life. You are the greatest authority (apart from God) on your life. If you are not an expert on anything else, you are an expert on this: your own life and God's role in it.

2. Because of God's wonderful testimonies, what is the response of the psalmist?

3. **Describe** how your soul observes God's testimonies. What does that mean?

"*Those who know them (God's words) best wonder at them most*." Spurgeon

Write 119:130 here.

"unfolding" #6608 *petah*: indicates an entrance, an unfolding, a place of access into something

"simple" #6612 *petiy*: simpleminded, foolish, naïve concerning the challenges and complexities of life, inexperienced, lacking insight but made wise by God's words and laws (**Ps. 19:7)**

The book of Proverbs is written to give understanding, knowledge and discretion to the *simple/naive*. **Prov. 1:4**

Read the following and record what you learn about "entrances".

1 Kgs. 22:10

2 Chron. 12:10

Mic. 5:6

Luke 24:32 ("While He was explaining the scriptures to us," the actual word means "opening the scriptures**")**

Luke 24:31, 45 See what else was opened.

If you were to do a study on the times when these verses were written, you would find how vitally important the access or entrance to the city was. All the business and judicial activity took place at the city gate. The entrance to the city provided access to those welcomed and it prohibited access to those viewed as enemies.

1. How does the above information relate to **v. 130**?

How does it relate to:

Phil. 4:7

2 Cor. 10:3-6

"*It gives understanding to the simple*."

Look at the following and **note** what you learn regarding simple/wise. There is much here!

1 Cor.1:17-2:16

"*The mere hearing of the Word with the external ear is of small value by itself, but when the words of God enter into the chambers of the heart, then light is scattered on all sides. The Word finds no entrance into some minds because they are blocked up with self-conceit or prejudice or indifference; but where due attention is given, divine illumination must surely follow upon a knowledge of the mind of God.*" Spurgeon

Write 119:131 here.

1. How does this verse relate to the previous one?

Read:

Ps. 81:10

Ps 42, the entire psalm!

2. The psalmist is not ashamed to compare himself to an animal desperate for water. The writer has to look to the animal kingdom for an apt comparison to his own desperation. Are you that desperate?

In the previous verse (130) the psalmist recognizes the effect of God's imparted wisdom in comparison to the world's. He casts aside any claims of the world in preference to God's way. In **Ps. 42:1**, he is eager to compare himself to the purity of an animal in pursuit of life in order to convey his devotion to the Lord.

Just to see the contrast, look at another use of "to open the mouth".

Read these and rejoice that you have a Savior.

Is. 5:14

Related to the above verse:

Prov. 27:20; 30:16

Hab. 2:5

Write 119:132 here.

Compare to:

Ps. 25:16

Ps. 69:16

Ps. 86:16

1. Who wrote these three psalms?
2. Can we know if God answered his prayer?

The psalmist does not say, "Be gracious to me as I deserve."

3. What does he say and why?

Day Four

Write 119:133 here.

"Establish" # 3559 *kun*: a verb meaning to set up, to make firm, to establish, to prepare. The primary action of the verb is to cause to stand in an upright position, and thus the word also means fixed or stedfast.

1. What does the psalmist desire to be established in?
2. What does he want to be "fixed" in?
3. **Look at Heb. 12:1, 2** What are you to be fixed on?

   The second part of the verse expresses another desire. What is it?

The word for “iniquity” here is: # 205 *awen* and it means “nothingness, trouble, sorrow, evil, mischief; the primary meaning is that of emptiness and vanity; it can also refer to an idol, strongly conveying the fuitility of worshiping an idol, which is, in fact, nothing”

It seems the psalmist is asking the Lord to establish him in God’s word so that he does not _____.

Read Rom. 6:12-14 and see what you learn about sin having dominion. Recall what you read about Satan in the selection on doctrine.

Write 119:134 here.

There are so many wonderful **Pe** words, but this one cannot be ignored.

“redeem, deliver” # 6299 is *padah*: to ransom, redeem, deliver; the word is used to depict God’s act of redeeming; He redeemed His people with a mighty hand from Pharaoh and slavery; the Lord redeemed His people from bondage in Babylon; He redeemed them from their enemies many times; He longed to redeem them from their idolatry and wantonness; He also redeemed David and other individuals; in another sense this word describes the practice of ransoming the firstborn (Ex. 13:13, 15; Num 18:15); in the future Zion will be redeemed through justice (Is. 1:27); the entire story of Ruth is a picture of the Kinsman Redeemer

1. Now what is all of this a picture of?

“oppression” means extortion or defrauding, robbing, denying justice to the poor, the orphan, the slave, the widow

2. Who is being defrauded in the psalm?
3. Who is defrauding you?
4. When you are denied joy, peace, to walk in liberty, who do you think is defrauding you?
5. Is there anything you can do about it?

See how God feels about oppression/ the oppressed.

Look at:

Lev. 19:13

Ps. 9:9

Ps. 103:6

Ps. 146:7

Jer. 30:20

Ez. 18:10-18

Acts 10:38

Luke 1:67-80

6. How does oppression affect someone keeping God's precepts?

7. To help with thinking this through, what did God do when His people were oppressed in Egypt?

Write 110:135 here.

Read Ps. 4 (esp. v. 6)
Ps. 31:14-16
Ps. 80:3, 7, 19
Num. 6:22-27 (What is associated with the Lord's countenance?)

1. What do you learn from these verses about God's face?

Read John 14:9 and **record** what you learn about "seeing" God.

When the psalmist makes this request of God, how does he refer to himself?

2. As God's _____

3. In the next part of the verse, what does the psalmist ask of God?

4. How does this relate to **119:99, 102, 108, 124**?

Write 119:136 here.

1. What is the condition of the poet here? Why?

The **Pe** word that begins this verse is "streams" # 6388 *peleg*:a stream, a channel; it indicates an abundant flow of oil or water; it is the same word used in Ps. 1:3.

The psalmist is crying in abundance, not a "little cry". When is the last time you were so grief-stricken over the sin of your nation or the sin of your world or your own sin that you were crying "streams of water"?

Read the following and note what you learn about *weeping*.

Jer. 9:1, 18

Jer. 8:18

Jer. 14:17

Jer. 13:17

Lam. 1:16

Luke 19:37-41

Matthew Henry, "The sins of sinners are the sorrows of saints."

Spurgeon, "The experience of this verse indicates a great advance upon anything we have had before: the psalm and the psalmist are both growing."

2. So what is the answer for this weeping?

Read below and answer collectively.

Matt. 5:4

John 16:20

Mark 16:10

John 20:20 (When do the disciples rejoice?)

Acts 5:40-42 (When do the disciples rejoice?)

3. Over what are we to *mourn*?
4. About what are we to *rejoice?*

Day Five

This week we looked at the ***Ayin*** and ***Pe*** stanzas. *Obedience* and *wonder* are predominant themes in these two stanzas. What is the relationship between these two ideas?

1. If you are enraptured with the wonder of God and His ways, how will that affect your obedience?

"*Just as love and hate (v. 127-128) and joy and affliction can exist in the same heart (v. 111,107), so can awe and anguish. In fact, when we begin to see the beauty and wonder of*

the Scriptures, we also begin to understand the ugliness of sin and the cheapness of what the world has to offer. This section describes a "spiritual chain reaction" in the life of the psalmist, one that can occur in our lives if we ponder the wonder of God's Word." W. Wiersbe

2. Why do people obey?

List all the reasons you can think of.

Review both stanzas and record the <doctrines> and *spiritual disciplines* you find.

Our optional character study for this week is Solomon.

Read the selected passages and record in the appendix what you see concerning wonder and obedience. (Anything else you would like to remember about Solomon, feel free to add to your list under a different heading.)

1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12

1 Kings 3

1 Kings 4:25-34

1 Kings 5:1-5, 12

1 Kings 8:1-15, 22-24, 27, 54-55

1 Kings 9:1-9

2 Chron. 7:12-22

2 Chron. 9:22-31 (esp. note v. 25)

Deut. 17:16

1 Kings 11:1-14, 23, 43

Prov. 1:1-2; 10:1; 25:1

Matt. 6:28, 29; Matt. 12:42

LESSON ELEVEN "Do you possess abundant life?"
Doctrines: Righteousness of God, Holy Spirit/Discipline: Solitude

PSALM 119:137-144 the Tsadhe Stanza and 119:145-152 the Qoph Stanza

Day One

Read the Tsadhe stanza. צ

1. What is the key repeated word in this stanza?

Make your three lists about: the psalmist, God and others.

Write 119:137 here.

Look up the following verses and record what you see about the Lord's righteousness. Use extra paper if needed.

Deut. 32:4

Ezra 9:15

Ps. 11:7; 19:8

Ps. 71:19

Ps. 97:2

Ps. 116:5

Ps. 129:4

Ps. 145:17

Is. 5:16; 45:19

Jer. 12:1

Dan. 9:7, 14

"Righteous" # 6662 *tsaddiyq*: just, righteous; someone or something is declared to be righteous because of conformity to a given standard; it can be used of human beings; it is also applied to God Who is the ultimate standard used to define justice and righteousness

I. **צַדִּיק** just, lawful, righteous

1. just, righteous (in government)
2. just, right (in one's cause)

3. just, righteous (in conduct and character)
4. righteous (as justified and vindicated by God)
5. right, correct, lawful

1. Now what do all the above verses and the definition have to do with you and me?

Read Is. 46:12, 13

The doctrine of the Righteousness of God and the imputed righteousness of His people deserves far more attention than the verses we have looked at here. The psalmist has this attribute of God clearly on his mind. Every line begins with the sound of the beginning of this word righteous.

By this point in this study, if you have looked up each verse, you have seen hundreds of verses. What is the theme of all of them? What is the constant message of the Word of God?

2. When the psalmist refers to God's judgments being upright, which judgments does he mean?

3. When he discusses God's testimonies, where are those found?

4. Where does this psalmist develop his great and unshakeable confidence in his God?

"The source of righteousness is the character of God and the Law of God gives expression to that righteousness. The Bible mirrors the character of God." J. M. Boice

Righteousness is defined in Grudem's Systematic Theology as: the doctrine that God always acts in accordance with what is right and that He is Himself the final standard of what is right.

5. Now God truly has a dilemma: how can a righteous God neglect to judge a sinful people and even more impossible how can He be in fellowship with a sinful people?

Look at Matt. 19:25, 26 and see what you can do about this dilemma.

Look at Rom 3:23 and state the problem.

6. **Gal. 2:21**, how does the Law affect your righteousness?

Rom. 3:21-26 (pay special attention to **v. 25, 26**)

7. What do you learn about the role of righteousness in regard to your sin?

8. **Look at 1 Cor. 1:29-31.** What do you see about righteousness?

9. It's clear that God is righteous and Jesus is God and therefore righteous, but how does that remove the sentence of death which hangs over us?

2Cor. 5:16-21 (especially note v. 21)

Rom. 10:6-11

Note what *belief* results in (**Rom 10:10**).

This is a lot to take in, but this is the heart of Christianity: we are justified and righteous before God based on the life of Christ.

- **Read the selection in the appendix on the Doctrine of the *Righteousness of God*.**

Write 119:138 here.

1. **Ps. 19:9** compares to this verse. What do you see?

2. God's righteousness is mentioned several times in this stanza, but in this verse (v. 138) that attribute is joined with another. What is it?

3. How are the two different/ the same?

Really give this some thought. Meditate on God's righteousness and His faithfulness.

Write 119:139 here.

1. **Look at Ps. 69:9.** Does this sound familiar?

Look at John 2:17.

The righteousness of God was the focus in the first two verses. Now the psalmist responds to that righteousness.

Look at Matt 5:3-10 and see if you learn anything about righteousness.

2. Before the "blessed" hungers and thirsts for righteousness, he is poor in spirit (acknowledging his complete dependence on God); he mourns his sin; he yields to God's authority in his life (he is meek), and now he hungers and thirst for righteousness. What follows this hungering and thirsting?
3. What response do others have to his new found righteousness? **Matt 5:10**

You could actually do a thorough study of the comparison of Ps. 119 and the Beatitudes! Oh, for another study!

Write 119:140 here.

Define in your own words what "pure" means to you.

"pure" is # 6884 *sarap*: to refine, to test; this word describes the purifying process of a refiner who heats metal, takes away the dross and is left with a pure substance (**Prov. 25:4**)

God's word has no mixture of error or sin; it is pure in all aspects: its meaning, its language, its spirit, its influence. The fact that the psalmist loved God's word is proof that he himself was pure in heart.

1. Continuing with the parallels in **Matt. 5,** how does this verse connect?

2. "Blessed are the _____ in heart for they shall see God."

Here in **119:140**, God's word is *pure* and the psalmist responds to that by saying he _____ it. From where do we typically think of love as originating?_____

As the psalmist grows in his understanding and appreciation of God's word, he is "seeing" Who his God is. He is growing in love and in understanding and in righteousness as he clings to God's word. He is blessed. God's word is pure; the psalmist's heart is being made pure; and he is "seeing" more and more of God.

End this day by meditating on God's righteousness, His purity and His faithfulness.

You may want to pray using God's Name "Jehovah Tsidkenu" – the Lord our Righteousness.

Day Two

Write 119:141 here.

1. Do you allow the world's view of you to cause you to look at yourself differently than God looks at you?

What is the Psalmist's answer to that problem? How does he regard himself? According to _____

The Tsadhe word here is #6810 *sa'iyr*: young, little, small. It refers to the age of a person; indicates what is little, small, smaller in size or number; it refers to servants, young ones

Read the following and answer the questions below.

Matt. 18:1-6, 14; 19:13-15

1 Tim. 4:12

1 Sam. 16:1-13

2. What do you learn about youth and how they were regarded?

3. How are youth regarded now in our culture?

4. It seems that youth are either ignored, feared, misunderstood or on the other hand they are envied for their youth, idolized and pampered. From what you have seen in **Psalm119**, what is a spiritually sound way of viewing youth?

Determine to regard youth as God sees them: in need of His blessing.

5. As for the fact the psalmist was *despised*, how does the world view Christians right now?

If you say you have not been despised for your faith, I challenge you to let it be known more frequently. Not in an insensitive or confrontational way, but as the occasion arises, voice your love for Jesus. See if you can relate to the psalmist then.

Write 119:142 here.

1. What is the contrast in this verse from the previous one?

2. How would the eternal quality of God's righteousness be a comfort to the psalmist?

Ps. 19:7-9, 14

Write below the verbs from these verses that describe what the words, laws, testimony, commandments, judgments and precepts of God do.

Look at John 14:6; 17:11-17.

John 8:32, 36

1 John 5:6

3. Why is truth so important and so easily missed?

Write 119:143 here.

1. What is contrasted here?

2. How can someone be in anguish and yet delight at the same time?

What we "see" in our lives can discourage us, dragging us down, but what we "see" in the Word of God tells us truth and for that reason, we can delight. The world may tell us we are defeated, but the Word of God tells us that we are more than conquerors. **Rom. 8:24, 25, 37**

3. What are the negative things the psalmist has endured in this stanza? List them here.

Yet he declares his delight in God's commandments.

Read through this stanza and mentally note to yourself the truths of Who God is and the reason for the psalmist's delight.

God, You are righteous.

God, You are upright in Your judgments.

God, what You command is righteous. (I can trust all You command.)

God You are faithful.

…

Write 119:144 here.

1. If you had to describe an abundant, full life, how would you describe it? Spurgeon says, "*To live without understanding is not to live a human life, but to be dead while we live. Only as we know and apprehend the things of God can we be said to enter into life."*

2. When you think of the fullest life ever lived, who comes to mind?

3. How long did He live?
4. So if it is not the number of years or the fame and renown or the travel or the grand resumes or the large family or the large bank account, then what makes for a life well-lived?

The essence of this stanza points to the **righteousness** of God; it also describes the everlasting, eternal nature of God's righteousness. The legacy of God's testimony is unending because of His righteousness. We are studying **Psalm 119** and after we are long gone, others will study this scripture and all other scriptures that point out the righteousness of our God. If we wish to live a full life and leave a legacy of lasting worth, then we must ask our God for understanding and this understanding is based on His righteousness.

Read

John 10:10

John 5:39, 40 (watch for the word testify = to give testimony, as in 119:144)

Note what you find out about life.

5. In **John 11**, Jesus declares Himself to be the resurrection and the life. How did He signify this, how did He give testimony to this truth?

Read John 11:25, 38-44

6. How did Jesus impart life to Lazarus? (**v. 43**)

7. How does Jesus impart life to you?

1 John 1:1; 5:11

Col. 3:4 (3:1-4, 10)

Make a list on what you have seen about life. Use extra paper.

Finish this day by asking the Lord to show you where you are not truly living the abundant life that He intends for you.

Day Three

Read the Qoph stanza. ק

Record here what you find about: the psalmist, God and others.

1. In the Qoph stanza with what action is the psalmist most occupied?

Look at this stanza and **ask** the 5Wand H about the prayers of the psalmist.

v. 145 tells us HOW he prayed – with all his heart

v. 146 tells us WHAT he prayed – "save me"

Spurgeon tells us, "He who has been with God in the closet will find God with him in the furnace."

Write 119:145 here.

Here in v.145 he has cried out with all of his heart. This is the first of many prayers in this stanza.

Record what you learn about prayer**.**

Rev. 5:8; 8:3, 4

Luke 1:10

Ps.141:1, 2
Ps. 142
Ex. 30:8
Eph. 6:18
1 Thes. 5:17

There is so much to learn about prayer. But to be honest, we all probably know what we need to know about prayer, it is now just a matter of the spiritual discipline of praying … living a life of prayer**.**

"In prayer, it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart." John Bunyan

Record what you learn about prayer under your list for the *spiritual discipline* of prayer in the appendix. You have already read this discipline in lesson four, but add anything new you find.

Write 119:146 here.

1. **Look back at 119:94**. What did the psalmist ask here?

2. How did he preface his request?

One of the greatest differences between the Christian faith and all others is the fact that we share a personal relationship with our Father Who is God. When the psalmist cries, he says,"I cried to You." This is personal and he expects his Father to hear him.

When you pray, do you pray as a desperate attempt for someone to hear you, or as a last ditch effort to be heard. Or … do you pray expecting God to act on your behalf, either to grant your request, to deny your request or to tell you to wait on His timing? Do you expect God to move when you pray?

Write 119:147, 148 here.

"Rise" #6923 *qadam*: to come before, to meet, to confront, to prevent; it can mean to proceed, to go before, to think or meditate on something, to anticipate

קָדַם

"Anticipate" #6923 *qadam*: the same word as above is used in **v. 148**

1. Both of these verses are concerned with praying, waiting, watching and meditating. They also share in common a time theme. What is it?

2. Basically when is this man crying out to God?

Before the watchman cried out the hour, the psalmist cried out to God. It mattered not to him what the time was, he knew it was time to call on God.

When the psalmist prayed he watched with anticipation to see what the Lord would do.

3. How do these four verses (145-148) strike you as an inspiration to pray?

4. In all four of these verses, what does the psalmist need?

5. Do you notice how short his request is? He does not make a long list of all his problems. He does not labor over long discourses with God, he simply states his desperate need. He does not multiply his petitions, people seldom do when they are intent upon the one truly necessary thing: save me.

6. In all four verses, after his initial cry for help, what does he commit to do?

7. What is the connection with the cry for help and his dwelling in God's word?

8. Do you run to God's word when you need help?

9. Do you want to pray God's will and know you are heard?

If you do, then you must know the mind of God and that is discovered in His revelation to us through His word. You must know His word and then you will know how to pray. Apart from God's word, we cannot know God's will.

10. How do prayer and God's word relate?

Read:

John 15:7

Acts 6:4

Eph. 6:17, 18

Phil. 4:6-9 (How will you know what is pure, true, honorable, etc. unless you know what God says is pure, true, honorable? You must know the word of God to know the mind of God in order to pray and think properly.)

This psalmist has asked for God's help. Jesus has sent the Helper.

- **Read the selection on the Doctrine of the *Holy Spirit* in the appendix.**
- **Read the selection on Solitude in the appendix.** Both v.147 and 148 show the dedication of the psalmist in the times of solitude, "I rise before dawn ... my eyes anticipate the night watches."

Day Four

Write 119:149 here.

“voice” # 6963 *qol*: voice, sound noise, cry; it can refer to God’s voice, man’s voice, singing, laughter or even animal sounds; sounds of nature, such as thunder

קוֹל

The psalmist has cried out. He has not just prayed silently to himself, mind wandering and distracted**.** He can hear his own voice. This is actually beneficial in prayer. Now he asks the Lord to hear him.

1. How does he ask the Lord to hear him? … according to _____

2. How does he ask the Lord to revive him?

3. What is key about the Lord hearing and answering according to His lovingkindness?

When the Lord hears, He will hear through the “lense” of the covenant relationship.

When the Lord revives, He will revive by His standard which is full life and not the meager life of the world.

“Revive” # 2421 *hayah*: a verb meaning to be alive, to live, to keep alive; it means flourishing or safety; it is used to show the preserving of life

4. According to this verse, what will cause the psalmist to flourish and what will give him true safety?

Write 119:150, 151 here.

1. What do you see contrasted here?

2. What seems to prompt the urgency of the psalmist’s need for the nearness of the Lord?

Read Neh. 4:7-9 and see how you should respond to enemies when they close in on you.

3. In the same vein, what do you learn from **Matt. 26:41; Mark 13:33; Col. 4:2; 1 Pet. 4:7**?

4. When life is rough, what is your tendency? Do you scramble to your God and allow nothing to derail you or do you pull away from God?

Look at the following and note any relevance to 119:150, 151

Ps. 34:18

Ps. 145:18

The psalmist tells us that the commandments of God are truth. In **v. 142**, he told us God's _____is truth. What does that tell you?

Write 119:152 here.

"Bubbles please children, but grown adults prize those things which are solid and substantial, which will bear the test of the ages." Spurgeon

1. Do you prefer "bubbles" or the settled, established, eternal, immovable, unshakeable word of God?

2. The answer seems clear, but what does your actual life declare your answer to be?

3. A major theme of this stanza is prayer. Why would a stanza primarily about prayer end with this verse?

"Old" # 6924 *qedem*: a noun meaning the east, earlier, formerly, long ago; the word is used regularly to mean east or eastern; the famous movement of the whole earth's population to the east to build the Tower of Babel in the plain of Shinar is toward the area of Babylon; the word is also used to refer to former times, times of old; it describes the works of God before the world was created (**Prov. 8:22, 23**); **Micah 5:2**, describes the Lord's coming Ruler from Bethlehem whose origins were from eternity or from ancient days; this word describes the mountains and heavens as old, of long ago

Look at the following verses and see how the above definition helps you understand this word.

Ps. 74:2, 12

Ps. 77:11, 12

Ps. 143:5

To close the day, meditate on the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:9, 10).

Day Five

Read the Tsadhe and Qoph stanzas.

1. What is the connection between these two stanzas?

2. What do God's righteousness and prayer have to do with each other?

The psalmist studied, prayed, meditated and cried day and night. What he learned and saw in the words of God gave him great hope and guidance. He knew that his God was always

near and that his enemies were never closer to him than his God. Nothing could get to him before it got to his God.

"How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He has said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

"Fear not, I am with you, O be not dismayed;
For I am your God, and will still give you aid;
I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

"The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

From: Rippon's Selection of Hymns, 1787

Record the <doctrines> you have seen this week.

Record the *spiritual disciplines* you have seen this week.

Our **optional character** study this week is Noah.

Read the passages and record what you see in the life of Noah that deepens your understanding of these two stanzas in this psalm

Heb. 11:7

2 Pet. 2:5

Gen. 6-9 (It will take about 15 minutes or so to read these 4 chapters.)

.

For instance, (**v. 148**) do you think Noah strained to watch for the return of the dove as they awaited their deliverance? What do you think Noah considered as he waited?

(**v. 139**) What was the condition of Noah's culture before the flood?

Ask yourself questions as you read.

LESSON TWELVE "Does your heart stand in awe of God's words? Why or why not?"
Doctrines: Redemption, Salvation/Discipline: Celebration

PSALM 119:153-160 the Resh Stanza and 119:161-168 the Shin Stanza

Day One

Read the Resh stanza. ר

What is the theme or themes?

What request is repeated three times?

Make your three lists here: one on the psalmist, one on God and one on others.

Write 119:153 here.

Are there times for you when you just want someone to hear you and be aware of your pain?

What is the difference here for the psalmist and for you when you both cry out to God versus telling a friend or a loved one of your pain?

What is the psalmist saying here regarding his suffering and its effect on his attitude toward God's law?

Have you ever suffered to the point that it drove you away from God's word? Be truthful, God knows.

How can we guard against being so discouraged that we abandon God's word?

Our *resh* word for this verse is "look upon" # 7200 *ra'ah* or *ro'eh*: to see, to give attention, to discern, to distinguish, to consider or reflect

Hagar used the term to describe God in **Gen 16**. She called Him the "God Who sees" El Roi.

Read Gen. 16 and **note** how this relates to the psalmist.

Also **look at Gen. 22:8**. Abraham used this term when he was on his way to sacrifice Isaac.

God will provide translates to "God will see to it." Our blessed Father not only "sees" our need, our suffering, our pain, He will also "see to it" and provide His tailor made provision. Not always the provision we were looking for, but He will provide.

God does more than sees; He sees the need and provides!

Read Ps. 34:15. Does God see and hear you?

Write 119:154 here.

Do you notice as the psalm is drawing to a close that the psalmist is becoming more urgent in his request for God's revival?

"Plead my cause" Plead is # 7378 *rub* or *riyb*: to strive, contend, dispute, to conduct a lawsuit; this word means to raise complaints or accusations against another; it means to bring a case against, to oppose

רִיב

Look at the following and notice who is bringing the case against someone:

1 Sam. 2:10

Is. 3:13

Is. 57:16

Micah 7:9

Look back at 119:134

1. What does the psalmist associate with his being redeemed?

2. Here in **v. 154**, he again asks to be redeemed. What also does he ask of God?

Look at 1 Sam. 24:12-15.

3. In **verse 15**, David asks something of God. What is it?

4. Did David have the opportunity to avenge and protect himself?

5. Why didn't he take it? It seemed that God put Saul, David's greatest enemy, right in David's hand to destroy. Wasn't that a sign from God that He was in favor of David removing his greatest obstacle?

6. How did David know what was the right thing to do?

How will you know what is the right thing to do when you are presented with short cuts?

It is always the wise thing to entreat the Lord on your behalf and not seek your own, more immediate and sometimes momentarily satisfying resolutions.

Follow David's example and that of the psalmist.

- **Read the Doctrine on *Redemption*.**

Write 119:155 here.

"Wicked" # 7563 *rasa*: means wicked, guilty, in the wrong, criminal, transgressor. This adjective is used 264 times; this word is the direct antonym of *saddiyq*: righteous; the word indicates people who are enemies of God and His people; those described by this word are evil and do not learn righteousness; the wicked are those who do not serve God

רָשָׁע

1. What do you learn about the wicked from the following verses:

Ps. 1:3-6

Ps. 9:5

Ps. 11:5-7

Ps. 17:13

Ezek. 3:18

Mal. 3:18

"*Every step they have taken in the path of evil has removed them further from the kingdom of grace: they go from one degree of hardness to another till their hearts become as stone.*" Spurgeon

There is so much we could study about "wickedness" but this is enough for our purposes here.

Two stanzas ago (the Tsadhe stanza) we saw a description of righteousness, now we can learn from the wicked.

Make a summary statement about the wicked and wickedness from these verses and what you have seen in **Ps. 119**. You have been making lists each stanza about the psalmist, God and others. You may pull from your list on others to find material about the wicked.

Basically you will see as you study the wicked that they "look like" their father the devil.

Write 119:156 here.

1. The psalmist asks to be revived. In what manner does he request this revival?

2. He does not ask to be revived according to God's pity or kindness. He asks to be revived according to God's _____.

3. How much trust does he have in God's ways to do this?
4. Do you trust all of God's ways to this degree?

Well, praise the Lord you can! Do you know why?

"Mercies" #7356 *raham:* a feminine noun meaning womb, compassion, mercy, affection, maiden; the singular form of this word always signified the physical womb of a woman and was commonly used in this way (**Gen. 49:25**). When the plural is used (here in **119:156**) the author had in mind the idea of compassion, tenderness or mercy. The Old Testament authors thought of the womb or bowels as the seat of warm and tender emotions.

רַחַם

Look at Gen. 43:30

Ps. 25:6

Ps. 103:4

Zech. 7:9

You should have something to write on your <doctrines> about the character of God from this.

To close today, find a place where you can be free of any distraction. Think about all the ways the Lord has shown you mercy. If you neglect to do this periodically, you will not be **revived** in the way He is prepared to **revive** you. Revival, a common theme in this psalm, is not quick and easy, business as usual. It is bringing something back to life.

Heb. 4:16 "Let us **draw near to the throne of Grace**, so that we may receive **mercy** and fine grace to help in time of need."

Day Two

Write 119:157 here.

"persecutors" # 7291 *radap:* a verb meaning to subdue, to chase, to persecute, to chase after, to pursue someone in a hostile manner, as when Pharaoh pursued Israel (**Ex. 14:4, 8, 9, 23**)

Deut. 30:7 is an example

1. When you are hounded by someone or something, what do you want to do?

My first instinct is to run, get out of the conflict. Escape!

2. What does the psalmist say he does when he is pursued by those hostile to him?

"turn aside" *natah*: used of setting up a tent (You can look back at **v. 36** in lesson four for your first look at this word.)

3. Have you set up your tent in God's word?

The psalmist is not going anywhere. He has secured his tent pegs and is unshakeable.

4. Do you long to be unshakeable in the face of conflict?

Then set up your "tent" securely. Do not turn aside from God's testimonies.

5. How can you determine in an active way that you will not turn aside from God's testimonies?

Write 119:158 here.

"Behold" is *ra'ah* the first word we looked at in this lesson on day one. Look back at **v. 153.**

In that verse it was used of God looking, considering; God seeing.

1. Now the psalmist says that he sees or considers. What is it that he considers?

2. Because the psalmist spends so much time "seeing" the testimonies of God, do you suppose he is better equipped to "see" who the transgressors truly are?

3. Have you ever mistaken a friend who ended up being an opponent and you mistook someone for an enemy who really was a friend?

4. Do you believe we can "see" more clearly if we consider all things and all people after sitting at the feet of the only One Who truly sees: *El Roi* – just as Hagar called Him in **Gen. 16.**

Take a minute to look at **v. 53, 113, 118, 126, 136, 139, 150, 155, and 158.**

5. What is the common thread here?

6. Who are the enemies of the psalmist?
   Foreigners? Pagans?

Read Ez. 33:30-32

Is. 29:13

"*Disobedience- profession without practice- has been a problem throughout history. It was true of Israel… Jerusalem was destroyed because the people were wanting only to be entertained by God's words and not obey the instructions*." J. M. Boice

It is true of the Church now.

"*This is a sure test: many there are who have a warm side towards the promises, but as for the precepts, they cannot endure them*." Spurgeon

Write 119:159 here.

"Consider" #7200 *ra'ah* for the third time in this stanza! Verse 153, 158 and 159.

רָאָה

I.to see, look at, inspect, perceive, consider

1. (Qal)

A. to see

B. to see, perceive

C. to see, have vision

D. to look at, see, regard, look after, see after, learn about, observe, watch, look upon, look out, find out

E. to see, observe, consider, look at, give attention to, discern, distinguish

F. to look at, gaze at

2. (Niphal)

A. to appear, present oneself

B. to be seen

C. to be visible

3. (Pual) to be seen

4. (Hiphil)

A. to cause to see, show

B. to cause to look intently at, behold, cause to gaze at

5. (Hophal)

A. to be caused to see, be shown

B. to be exhibited to

6. (Hithpael) to look at each other, face

1. Who is to see or consider here (v. 159)?

See what?

2. Is it obvious, easy to see, that you love the Lord's precepts?
   Do you pass the sure test of Spurgeon above (at the end of **v.158**)?

The psalmist has used the "see, behold, consider" three times.
He has also asked the Lord one request three times. What has he asked for?
Each time he asks, "R_____me according to Your 1._____ (v. 154)
2. _____ (v.156) 3. _____ (v. 159)."

Write 119:160 here.

Now that the psalmist is revived according to God's word (154), according to His ordinances (156) and according to His lovingkindness (159), the psalmist can "see" that the sum of God's word is_____.

1. How long has God's word been truth?
2. How long will it survive as truth?

God's word is not just true. God's word **is** truth. Think of the difference. I can say a true statement, but do I embody or contain truth? I might just as likely say something untrue. But God and His word are truth. There is nothing in Him or His word that can possibly be found untrue. And this is forever.

Look at the ending verse of the last three stanzas: **144, 152, and 160.**

3. What do they all share in common?

4. How sure is God's word?

When something is repeated so many times the writer is making a point.

5. What is his point in these last three stanzas?

Day Three

Read the **Shin** stanza. שׁ

1. What are your impressions?

Make you lists on the psalmist, God and others.

Write 119:161 here.

1. Why are princes persecuting him?

2. Is the psalmist so deeply immersed in God's word that he does not notice that he is persecuted?

3. What does that tell you about your own persecution?

4. But although he was aware of the persecution and he did not like it, what was his response?

"stands in awe": #6342 *pahad:* to dread, to be in awe, to fear, to fear in reverence

Look at Isaiah 60:5 written below**.**

"Then you will **see** (#7200 *ra'ah*: see, consider, behold) and be radiant,

And your **heart** will **thrill** (#6342 *pahad*: reverential awe, dread, fear) and rejoice;

Because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you,

The wealth of the nations will come to you."

This is an end times promise from the Lord in **Isaiah.**

The heart of the psalmist could stand in awe of God and not keep looking at his persecutors because he had determined to "see" only his God.

In Isaiah, likewise, we will see, we will be in awe and we will rejoice because of Who He is and what He does.

Write 119:162 here.

"rejoice" # 7797 *sus*, *siys*: a verb meaning to rejoice, to exalt, to be glad; it is a verb that indicates great rejoicing and jubilant celebration; it refers to the Lord's taking delight in blessing, punishing or disciplining His people if they need it (Deut. 28:63; 30:9; Jer. 32:41); it describes a horse enjoying his strength (Job 39:21); the sun joyfully traveling across the sky (Ps. 19:5); but especially God's people rejoicing over Him (Ps. 35:9; 40:16; 68:3; Is. 61:10).

1. Which of the *spiritual disciplines* does this point to?

2. What part of celebration do you have in your life?

3. How do you celebrate your King?

- **Read the selection in the appendix under Spiritual Disciplines on *Celebration*.** Every time you see the word "delight" in this psalm is another key to this concept of celebration.

"I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great spoil." **Read Is. 9:3** and find what spoil is there.

Read Matt. 13:44

Spoil is usually the booty that is taken after a foe has been vanquished.

4. If one country invaded another, who would benefit the greatest from taking the spoils?

5. What person from the conquering country would benefit the most?

It is not by accident that the psalmist is thinking of treasures and princes in the same verse.

6. While princes would try to take land, possessions, reputation, position from the psalmist, the prince could never touch his greatest treasure. What is that?

Rejoice with the psalmist that no one can take your greatest joy!

Matt. 6:19-24

Look at the similar wording in Matt. compared to the last two stanzas (v. 153-163): *someone is stealing, treasures, heart, seeing, masters, wealth*.

Write 119:163 here.

1. How does the psalmist feel about falsehood?

2. How do you feel about it?

3. How do you feel about your own falsehood? Are you even aware of it?

4. By the way, if you have been missing some "feeling" questions from Bible study .... Voila!

"Hate" # 8130 *sane:* to hate, to be unwilling, to loathe someone or to be hostile to; this word is the opposite of *ahab*, the Hebrew for to love; the verb *sane* means to hate God or persons; God hates as His enemies those who love cruelty and wickedness (Ps. 11:5); God's people were not to become allied to those who hated the Lord (2 Chron 19:2; Ps 139:21). God hates all who do evil (Ps 5:5) and wickedness (Ps. 45:7), thus, to fear God means to hate evil (Prov. 8:13).

"Both love and hate are contagious, and when they are sanctified the wider their influence the better." Spurgeon

5. Do people know you hate falsehood?

6. Do they know you love God's law?

7. What is your sphere of influence?

8. How can you impact the kingdom of God with what you have learned in **Psalm 119**?

Write 119:164 here.

Three times a day, the truly devoted worshiper would praise God (**Ps. 55:17; Dan. 6:10-11**), but this psalmist wanted to offer much more praise than the prescribed praise.

1. Of what significance is the number seven?

2. On what does the psalmist base his praise?

3. What do most people base their praise on?

"Seven" # 7651 *sheba* or *shiba*: means seven, a counting number; this is the word from which Sabbath comes

"Praise" # 1984 *halal*: to praise, to commend, to boast, to shine; the root meaning may be to shine but it could also be to shout; the word most often means praise and is associated with the ministry of the Levites who praised God morning and evening (**1 Chron. 23:30**)

"Hallelujah" is a command to praise (*halal*) *Yah*.

Read

Ps. 148 Who is supposed to praise God?

Ps. 150 How are we to praise Him?

4. What amount of Scripture is devoted to praising God?

5. How important is praising God?

6. How would you define "praise"?

One hundred and sixty-four verses have been written and this is the first one to mention praise.

V.7 uses "give thanks" y*adah*, which is more of the idea of thanksgiving.
V. 164 is the first in the entire psalm to mention "praise". Then in **v. 171**, he says he will praise and that is "tehillim" (a word derived from halal, meaning to sing praises). The psalms are called Tehillim in Hebrew.

In **v. 175**, he uses "*halal*" again.

Keep in mind that he has not used this word until the last twelve verses and then he mentions "praise" three times.

7. Why the sudden burst of "praise"?

8. Have his circumstances changed?

To put this concept in New Testament thinking, **look at Phil. 4:4-13** and **see** how it relates to this verse in **Psalm 119**.
Also look at **Rev. 19:4-7** and see what you learn about praise.

What an incredible God we serve!

Day Four

Write 119:165 here.

Yesterday much time was spent on praise.

1. Now what does the psalmist tell us follows the love of God's law?

2. Have you found that to be true?

3. Do praise and peace have anything in common?

4. When you praise God, where are your thoughts?

Look at Is. 26:3 and write it here:

Look at and summarize what you learn about peace (*shalom*):
Is. 26:12

Is. 54:10

Is. 57:18, 19

Is. 9:6, 7

Prov. 3:1, 2

John 14:27

John 16:33 Note especially why Jesus spoke these words.

Phil. 4:7

Col. 3:15

Eph. 2:13-17

5. If you say you love God and do not obey His law (His standard of holiness) what does Jesus say you are doing?

John 14:15, 21, 23, 24

Do you have peace?

In the "blesseds" is there anything about peace?
Blessed are the _____ for they shall be called the _____.

Not only do those who love God's law have peace, they do not _____.
Read
Prov. 4:12
1 John 2:10

Write 119:166 here.

1. What does this verse teach you about salvation?

2. Is it something the psalmist "works" for?

What verb does he use? "I _____ for You salvation, O Lord."

"Hope" # 7663 *sabar*: verb meaning to scrutinize, to expect with hope and patience, to hope, to tarry, to wait; Nehemiah used this word to express and examination of the broken walls of Jerusalem before the returning exiles began repairing them (**Neh. 2:13-15**)
שִׂבַּר

3. While he is hoping for the Lord's salvation, what is he "doing"?

Look at all the verbs in this stanza which the psalmist does.
161- his heart stands in awe
162- he rejoices

163- he hates falsehood/loves God's law

164- he praises God seven times a day

165- he has great peace and does not stumble

166- he hopes and does right

167- he keeps God's testimonies and loves them

168- he keeps God's precepts and His testimonies

4. If you remember the point of Hebrew poetry is repetition, what has been the constant theme throughout this psalm?

5. As the poet is drawing his poem to a close, what do you see him building as his final crescendo?

(In music, a crescendo is an increase in sound and intensity for the purpose of effect.)

Much like the psalmist, we are waiting for "the salvation of the Lord".

Read the following verses and **note** what you learn about salvation. (By the way, salvation is a crucial <doctrine> which you must have a clear grasp of if you are to impact the world for God's kingdom.)

Rom. 8:18-25; 13:11

2 Tim. 3:15

Tit. 2:11-14; 3:5-8

Heb. 9:28

- **Read the selection on the Doctrine of *Salvation* in the appendix.**

6. What should be our attitude as we hope and wait for our Savior?

Read:

Matt. 24:45-51

2 Tim. 4:6-8

1 John 2:28; 3:2-3

Write 119:167 here.

"Kept" #8104. **שָׁמַר** *shamar:* to watch , to keep, to preserve, to guard, to be careful, to watch over, to watch carefully over, to be on one's guard; Adam and Eve were to watch over and care for the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15); temple holy things were to be guarded,

taken care of by the priests; the Hebrew word means to maintain or to observe something for a purpose

Deut. 4:6, 15; 5:1

1. How would you define “soul”?

2. What does it mean that his soul keeps God’s testimonies?

3. Does keeping them or loving them come first?

4. Do you **love** to keep God’s testimonies?

Every time I see the word “testimonies”, I think of all the stories in the Bible which tell us of our God and His amazing ways. I love the Bible because it tells me more about my Lord. The Bible is like the witness on the stand giving “testimony” about Who our God is.

We are witnesses each and every day as to Who God is and how He works in our lives through the story He is writing. How is your story, your testimony going?

5. When the psalmist says that his soul keeps God’s testimonies, is that the outward life or the inward life keeping them?

6. Does your inner life really matter so long as you keep the outward law?

Prov. 23:7a

From the beginning of this psalm, the heart has been important. What you do originates in your heart. Keeping and loving God’s ways goes together. You cannot say you love God and love His ways unless you keep His truth in your heart and bear witness to it in your life.

Examine your walk with the Lord at this time and **ask yourself** what part of being a follower of Jesus do you “love exceedingly” and what part of being His disciple is less lovely to you.

This will expose your heart.

Write 119:168 here.

Here is the same word “kept” as in the previous verse.

1. What does he keep here?

2. What is the difference?

Look at:
Job 24:23; 31:4
Ps. 38:9
Ps. 44:21
Ps. 94:11
Ps. 139:3
Jer. 12:3

3. How does it make you feel knowing that God sees all your ways?

Heb.4:13, 16

4. How does the end of the **Shin** stanza compare with the beginning?

Day Five

In all that is swirling around you in your life right now, does your heart take the time to stand in awe of God's word?

Consider all that you have seen this week about God, about you, about the wicked.

Does it all not make you bow in reverence to the One … the only One, Who holds time, purpose, life, reality and beauty in His hands?

Review the **Resh** and **Shin** stanzas.

1. In the **Resh** stanza, how many requests does the psalmist make of God?

2. How many requests does he make in the **Shin** stanza?

3. Why do you think there is a difference?

4. Does anything else strike you about these two stanzas?

Record the <doctrines> you have seen this week alongside your text of Psalm 119.

Record the *spiritual disciplines* you have seen this week alongside your text.

Our character study this week is different. We have, for the most part, only looked at godly men.

The Lord has preserved in Scripture many unholy men and women. We can learn much from them as well.

Today you will look at two.

Record what you learn about the wicked men here.

List what happened to them and those in their sphere of influence because they did not love the law of the Lord.

Make any comparisons to your own life that you may see. We must not follow in the footsteps of enemies of the Lord.

Read 2 Chron. 21:1-20 and see what you learn from Jehoram.

Read 2 Kings 21:1-20 and see what the life of Manasseh teaches you about the cost of being unfaithful to the Lord and His ways.

LESSON THIRTEEN "I long for Yeshuah!"

Doctrine: Jesus Christ /Discipline: Confession

PSALM 119:169-176 the Tav Stanza and Summary of the Study

Day One

Read the Tav Stanza. ת

1. What is the overall theme of this stanza?

Make three lists: the psalmist, God and others.

2. What words are repeated?

3. Without using repeated words, how can the author make known his key points?

4. What does the psalmist do in each verse except **174**?

Write 119:169 here.

"This line sums up one of the major themes of the psalm: the desire for insight into God's will so that the writer may act in obedience." The Reformation Study Bible

1. Do you think you are wise?

2. Do you recognize from where true wisdom comes?

Read 1 Cor.1:20-25

In the "blesseds", the poor in spirit sees his utter dependence on God. He is not at all confident in himself; his confidence is in his covenant relationship to God alone.

3. How does that attitude relate to this verse in the Tav stanza?

Write 119:170 here.

Read
Ps. 28:1, 2
Ps. 140:6; 143:1

1. Who wrote each of these psalms?
2. What condition was he facing?

Ps. 31:2
Ps. 59:1-5

3. What is requested here in **v.170** which is similar to the request in the above psalms?

4. Why does the psalmist always ask "according to the word of the Lord"?

5. Do you ask "according to the word of the Lord"?

6. How does one learn to do this?

"supplication" # 8467 *tehinnah*: a noun meaning request for favor; the request was often connected with prayer and **associated with a distinct relationship to God**; this word is used in connection with Solomon's dedication of the temple

תְּחִנָּה

There are several standout things that set apart the Hebrew believer. One was circumcision. The temple was distinctly Hebrew. The law itself was something which set the Jewish people apart from all others. Their history, their practices, their worship, all the characteristics which established their identity as God's chosen people required a relationship with their God. Without that relationship, they were ordinary at best.

Look at the use of this word "tehinnah" in **1 Kings 8:28, 30, 38, 45, 49, 52, 54**.

The repetition of this word at the dedication of the temple, the most visible representation of the people of God, underscores its importance.

When the psalmist asks for anything "according to the word of the Lord", he is asking according to his covenant relationship with his Holy God. **No relationship, no answer to prayer**.

Write 119:171 here.

1. What follows understanding (**v. 169**) and deliverance (**v. 170**)?

He is not telling God he will praise Him, he is asking God to "let my lips utter praise."

2. What does this tell you about genuine praise?

3. What relationship does genuine praise have with knowing God's statutes?

"Praise" # 8416 *tehillah:* praise, a song of praise; this word is derived from the verb *halal* (#1984); it is used especially of the adoration and thanksgiving that humanity renders to God (**Ps. 34:1**); this has also become the Hebrew title for the entire book of Psalms.

If you have never done a study on Praise, then the few verses below are a necessity.
(Even if you have, this will be a good refresher; it's never a bad idea to take another look at praise!)

Record what you learn about praise from the following:

Deut. 10:21

Ps. 22:3

Ps. 34:1-3

Ps.64:10

Ps. 84:4

Ps. 105:3

Ps. 145:1

Ps. 148

Ps. 150:6

Jer. 17:14

Some things you will see are:

God is inseparably joined to praise.
Human existence and praising the true God are closely related.
The fullest richness of human life produces continual praise.
One's only and continual boast (glorying) is to be in God.

Try to find out what the first question (and answer) of the Westminster Confession is.

4. In your own words, how important is praise for the believer?

5. How important is it to you?

Write 119:172 here.

Read Ps. 51:15

1. How do you worship?

John 4:7-26

2. What do you learn about worship from **John 4**?

Look at Lev. 10:1, 2;.Num. 16: 1-7, 23-35 and see what you learn about God's standard for worship. How does God feel about worship?

3. Does it surprise you that God has fixed the ways we are to worship Him?
4. Do all current forms of worship pass His standards revealed in His word?

5. By the way, what is the next thing Jesus taught His disciples after the event with the woman at the well in which He taught about worship?

Look at John 4:32-34

6. Is there a connection between worship and doing God's will and God's work?

   Everything the psalmist has been doing to this point culminates here in these last few verses. He has cried out to the Lord; he has prayed for deliverance; he has established his high regard for God's words, ways, ordinances, precepts, commandments, laws, statutes, testimonies. All of this now comes to the final realization of what true understanding of God and His ways will result in: worship, true and blessed worship.

Spend some time in *celebration* of your God.

Day Two

Write 119:173 here.

Read verses 169-172.

These first four verses of this stanza are different than the previous stanza. In fact, they are different than the majority of the psalm. Look at the **Shin** stanza. What is the state of mind of the psalmist?

1. Is he confident, hopeful, prepared?

2. But in the **Tav** stanza, he is constantly asking help of God. As he closes this psalm, what is he doing?

"*This stanza is all petition, and there is little confidence. Instead there is humble recognition of the writer's lost condition and his constant need of God's grace*." Boice

How do the following verses relate to this verse?

Ps. 37:23, 24

Ps. 73:23

Ps. 95:7

Ps. 115:1-8

Jn. 10:28, 29

Read Josh. 24:14-33

3. What do you find out about choosing the Lord and His ways?
   Who is affected beside yourself?

4. What are the other options to choose beside the Lord?

5. How important is a wise and godly leader?

6. If you do not have a godly leader, does it matter what you choose? Why?

7. How important is timing when choosing to serve God? **Josh. 24:25**

8. Why does Joshua pin the people down about making a decision? Why not just let them come to a decision on their own?

9. What does **Josh. 24:31b** tell us about recounting the works of God (His testimonies, too)?

10. What difference does it matter where they buried Joseph's bones? **Josh. 24:32/ Gen. 50:24, 25**

Once again, you have just answered **5Ws and H**. This is a tremendous learning skill and if you learned nothing else in this course but to ask these questions, then that is great!

Write 119:174 here.

"Salvation" # 3444 *yeshuah*: salvation, deliverance, help, victory, prosperity; to be rescued from distress or danger; help or security offered by fortified walls

Look at: v. 41, 81, 94, 123, 146, 166

1. What do you learn about salvation?
   Is it something the psalmist had?

2. What about us? Do we possess salvation?

Read:
Phil. 2:12, 13

Ps 3:8
Luke 2:30

Acts 4:12
1 Thes. 5:9

2 Tim. 3:15
Heb. 1:14; 9:28
1 Cor. 1:21

3. What is the difference between "being saved" (past tense = has already occurred) and inheriting salvation in the future?

"*There is a salvation yet to come, when we will be delivered from the body of this death, set free from all the turmoil and trouble of this mortal life …. Though we have not yet reached the fullness of our salvation, yet we find in God's Word so much concerning a present salvation that we are even now delighted."* Spurgeon

4. "Your law is my delight." Can you echo that statement with the psalmist?

   You have seen so much of the beauty and majesty of God's law. Much of God's law declares His means of achieving our salvation. How can we do anything except praise and thank Him for His law?

   Do not miss the importance of the word "Yeshuah." The psalmist longs for *salvation*. This is the name of Jesus: Yeshuah.
   Do you long for Yeshuah?

Write 119:175 here.

1. Why are you alive?

2. What do you live for?

3. Are there those who are alive but their "soul" is not alive?

4. Do you know how you can tell the people who are "soul" alive?
   They are doing something … what are they doing?

5. How do God's ordinances help you praise Him better?

Do you remember the many verses in this psalm in which the psalmist asked the Lord to "revive him"? That word "revive" is 2421: *hayah* (notes at **v. 149**, lesson eleven).

Here we have the same word: *hayah*. "Let my soul live (be revived, flourish, be safe)."

6. When is the only time you truly flourish, live, enjoy safety?

7. According to this verse, how can you experience this kind of revival?

Write 119:176 here.

As you write this last verse, you have written the entire psalm! Bravo!

1. After all he has written about loving the law of the Lord and keeping His precepts, how can he now say that he is a lost sheep?

Read

Is. 53:6

1 Pet. 2:25

Matt. 5:3

Rom 3:9, 23, 27, 28

Notice all the "according to the flesh" phrases in this passage. It is a contrast to all the "according to Your word" phrases in **Psalm 119.**

Rom. 8:1-17

We must find out what the psalmist means when he calls himself a lost sheep.

Read John 15:5 and see if being fruitless (apart from Christ) has anything to do with being a lost sheep.

Read Ps. 23 and see if you can learn anything about the Shepherd or the sheep.

I believe that after meditating on God's word for all of these stanzas, the psalmist has truly seen how vast is the expanse between himself and a holy God.

Is. 6:1-8

He has become poor in spirit, realizing his utter dependence on God for all things spiritual and temporal. He "sees" himself as he really is: a sinner in need of a Savior. Yet, as he humbles himself before a Mighty God, he is offering the sacrifice of praise**.**

Simul Justus et peccator A phrase which Martin Luther used of believers in Christ. It means "both justified and a sinner." Jesus is not our Shepherd at salvation and then our Priest alone. He is ever our Great Shepherd. We are constantly in need of His care, direction, protection and provision. He is the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls. **1 Pet.2:25**

It is a high form of praise to acknowledge the worth of a holy God when we see the grave contrast of our own state of humanity. The psalmist is so aware of his impotence that he even asks God to seek him, knowing his own ineffectual ability to return properly to his God.

- **Read the selection in the appendix on the Spiritual Discipline of *Confession*.**

Day Three

Record any <doctrines> you see in the Tav stanza alongside the text.

Record any *spiritual disciplines* you see likewise.

Look at the life of Peter. This was a man who understood his own sin, cried out to God and praised Him for His mercy and glory.

Read and record everything you see about Peter that relates to the Tav stanza.

Matt. 14:22-33 (See if you can see how this passage relates to **Ps. 119:173**.)

Matt. 15:15-20

Matt. 16:13-19

Matt. 16:21-23

Matt. 17:1-8

Matt. 17:24-27

Matt. 18:21-22

Matt. 19:27-30

Matt.26:33-35

John 6:64-69

John 13:6-11

John 18: 4-27

John 21:1-22

Acts 3:12-21

Acts 5:29-32, 41

1 Pet. 1:10-12

1 Pet.4:14

2 Pet. 1:13-15, 16-18

2 Pet. 19-21

That's enough for today. Just a little more and you are finished with **Psalm119.**

Day Four

You have spent many weeks learning about these stanzas. You have looked at the Hebrew words to gain a deeper understanding. You have looked at cross references to broaden and expand your insights on each verse.

You have peered in on the heart of the psalmist, putting yourself in his position.

You have made lists to clarify your thinking.

You have asked the 5 Ws and H.

You have spent time becoming familiar with this psalm.

Now you are saying goodbye to this psalm for a while. It is like a friend saying goodbye to another friend who is about to go and minister elsewhere. This is similar to sending someone off on a mission trip. Psalm 119 is off to minister to someone else while you now will move on to another place, perhaps Babylon, to study Daniel or Rome or Corinth or Egypt.

Look one last time at each stanza of Psalm 119.

You know them well – now see each one as yours. You are familiar with each stanza like a family member whose voice you know and recognize so well.

Now **look** at stanza one – **the Aleph** stanza.

Wrap yourself around it as you would wrap yourself in your favorite blanket on a cold, wintry morning. Wrap this word of God tightly around you to protect and guide you as you face the unknown day. Unknown to you, but known to the Author of Life and the Author of this psalm.

In the appendix, **read** the text of stanza one. **Write** in the margin what it says to you now that you know it so much better than you did a few weeks ago. Also **record** along each verse any <doctrines> and *spiritual disciplines* you have seen over the weeks. Your **Psalm 119** text will contain all this vital information in one place.

Very slowly and deliberately read the **first eleven stanzas**. Do not be in a hurry.

Talk with the Author of this Psalm and ask Him what He wants to say to you as you close this study of the psalm that is all about His Word.

Day Five

Today you will finish the psalm.

You have done well. I pray you will return to this psalm from time to time and revisit it like an old friend.

Read the last eleven stanzas very slowly asking yourself what God has to tell you for each and every verse. Again record the same information in the text as yesterday.

After you do this, you will have a collection of doctrines which we will discuss in class and prepare as a systematic theology … your own.

This psalm begins with a longing to know God and His word.

It ends with a deeper understanding of who the psalmist is and his ability to worship God in truth because he knows Him better.

"**Psalm 119** is a *magnum opus*, a mighty hymn of praise for the Word of God… This work is also an artistic masterpiece. Its structure is simple, elegant and precise. This is the consummate alphabet psalm." Don Wyrtzen

The essence of this psalm is a quote from Spurgeon: "*we learn the music of heaven in the school of holy living."*

This psalmist has become our friend in a way. We know him pretty well. We will see him one day.

The psalmist's longing for God's thoughts and ways and word was a precursor to the eventual longing of the believer for the **Word Himself as a Person**.

Your final doctrine to **read is the Doctrine on *Jesus Christ***. We have seen Jesus all throughout this psalm, now read the doctrine, the teaching that sheds more light on our Blessed Savior.

APPENDIX

What are Doctrines?
Doctrines List (followed by twenty individual doctrinal essays)
Spiritual Disciplines Defined
Spiritual Disciplines List (followed by sixteen essays on those disciplines)
Character Studies Explained
God's Word and its Synonyms
Terms
Study Tools
Text of Psalm 119

Your Additions: (optional)
Character Studies
Observations on Jesus

Site for Hebrew alphabet and sounds

https://www.hebrew4christians.com/Grammar/Unit_One/Aleph-Bet/PrinterPage/printerpage.html

DOCTRINE

WHAT ARE DOCTRINES?
DO WE NEED TO KNOW DOCTRINE?

The church is in desperate need at this time to learn, understand and teach concerning the doctrines for which many have died, including our Lord.

Our Lord and Savior taught doctrine constantly. He saw the value in working it into the fiber of His followers, so we must guard this teaching as well.

The Sermon on the Mount is a veritable systematic theology; it teaches us who is part of the kingdom of heaven.

As Jesus walked with His disciples, He taught them how the Pharisees had invalidated the law of God. He challenged their blind reverence to those who would put them in spiritual slavery.

Doctrine was extremely important to the mission of our Lord.

Didache Greek for doctrine simply means "teaching or instruction."

Didaskalia Greek for "that which is taught, doctrine."

Generally, *didache* means the substance of teaching and *didaskalia* the act of teaching.

"We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Acts 5:28

Eph. 4:14 states, "We are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming."

"Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them." Rom. 16:17

"As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines." 1 Tim.1:3

"In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following." 1 Tim. 4:6

"If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing ..." 1 Tim.6:3

"Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict... But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine... not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect." Tit. 1:9; 2:1, 10

- For believers today, the importance of doctrine is just as crucial as it was in the times of the early church. Each generation passes to the next a more corrupt version of truth or a more uncontaminated rendering of the gospel. Without sound doctrine, we are at the mercy of those with a superior rhetoric regardless of their virtue and accuracy.

The great safety in studying doctrine is the surety that truth will always substantiate truth in the scriptures. In other words, one teaching will complement and never contradict another

teaching. If there appears to be contradiction, there must be an inconsistency in the interpretation because scripture will bear out scripture.

Doctrine protects the believer from error, but there is an error even when one knows sound doctrine that must be avoided. Doctrine must always be combined with practice. When one thinks rightly, his belief must be reflected in his behavior.

The study of doctrine is a lifelong pursuit, not of knowledge but of the Teacher Himself.

DOCTRINES LIST

COVENANT
THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD
GOD IS THE CREATOR
GOD IS THE JUDGE
THE GOODNESS OF GOD
THE HOLY SPIRIT
INHERITANCE/ADOPTION
JESUS CHRIST
JUSTIFICATION
THE MAJESTY AND WONDER OF GOD
THE DOCTRINE OF MAN
PROPITIATION
REDEMPTION
THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD
SALVATION
SANCTIFICATION
SATAN
SIN
THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD
THE WORD OF GOD

COVENANT

Berith: cutting (Hebrew)

Diatheke: disposition, covenant, testament or will (Greek)

According to Unger's Bible Dictionary, a covenant is a compact between man and man; either between tribes or nations; or between individuals in which each party bound himself to fulfill certain conditions, and was promised certain advantages; also it refers to a compact between God and man. As man is not in the position of an independent covenanting party, such a covenant is not strictly a mutual compact, but a promise on the part of God to arrange His providences for the welfare of those who should render Him obedience.

There are many covenants mentioned in the Bible: with Noah, with Abraham, with David, with Israel and the new covenant. Covenants were usually sealed with an oath and confirmed by the sacrifice of an animal which depicted the future of either party if they were to break the covenant. At times a covenant meal was involved or the giving of salt.

Signs

Signs are involved with different covenants. With Noah, the rainbow was a sign of God's promise to Noah. Circumcision was the sign God used when institutiing the covenant with Abraham. God designated the Sabbath day as the everlasting sign between Israel and God.

"But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD Who sanctified you.'" Ex. 31:13

Today, among believers and even non-believers, marriage is a covenant agreement in which rings are the token sign of the pledge of faithful commitment and constant love.

In the new covenant, there are two signs of the relationship: baptism and the covenant meal.

These were established by Jesus. "While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.'"

Matt. 26:26-28

"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. God therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'" Matt. 28:18-20

How important are these signs? What is the worth of these signs?

The signs are only as trustworthy as the Person standing behind the value of the sign.

As in the case of wedding rings, the rings themselves do not magically effect the transformation of the two people entering into matrimony.

The signs of God's covenant agreements are only as true as He is Himself. Is God willing to stand behind His covenant promises? A look at the history of Israel and human history in general will give evidence to God's commitment to His promises and covenant agreements: **both the blessings and the curses.**

Grudem: *a covenant is an unchangeable, divinely imposed legal agreement between God and man that stipulates the conditions of their relationship*. Note the term "divinely imposed." This term is crucial because it reveals the fact that man can never negotiate with God or change the terms of the covenant; he can only accept the covenant requirements or reject them. To emphasize this truth, the writers of Scripture use the term *diatheke* in the New Testament and also in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. The common Greek word used when referring to a mutual contract agreement is *syntheke*.

Although the actual word "covenant" is not seen in the Genesis account with Adam, The essential parts of the covenant are all there – a clear definition of who is involved, binding provisions that delineate the conditions of the relationship between the two parties, the blessings in the event of obedience. Hos. 6:7, indicates an understanding by the prophet of a covenant agreement between Adam and God.

We experience death because the covenant between God and man was violated.

The crucial covenant with God seen in the Old Testament is between God and Abram.

In Gen. 12:2, 3, God says to Abram, "I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Gen. 15:18 (read entire chapter for context) tells us that, "On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.'"

This is the covenant upon which the entire covenant system is founded.

Hesed

Throughout Scripture there is a covenant term which reveals the heart of God toward those with whom He is in covenant relationship. That term is "hesed."

"Hesed" is the consistent, ever-faithful, relentless, lavish, ever pursuing, one-way love of God for His own people.

Michael Card states,

"*Hesed*" is a Hebrew word that describes the indescribable, that defines the un-definable. Put simply, *hesed* is the defining characteristic of God in the Old Testament.

The classic text for clearly stating the importance of this term is Psalm 136. Here the psalmist uses this word twenty-six times to proclaim God's eternal kindness, love and goodness to His people. In this psalm, God's faithful actions toward His people to protect, perfect, provide, deliver and redeem them is the focus of the rehearsal of all His miraculous works. All that God has done to act on behalf of His people is founded upon His great covenant love, His "hesed."

"*The entire span of creation to God's redemption, preservation, and permanent establishment is touched upon in this psalm. It all happened, is happening, and will continue to happen because of the Lord's covenant faithfulness and kindness*."

The Complete Word Study Dictionary Old Testament

"*God's "hesed" was not basically mercy, but loyalty to His covenant obligations, a loyalty which the Israelites should also show*." Nelson Glueck

"*Hesed" denotes free acts of rescue or deliverance which in prophetic usage includes faithfulness*. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

Some scholars have viewed God's "hesed" in the Old Testament as the preview to the announcement in the New Testament that "God is love."

"Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, Who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments... Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers." Deut. 7:9, 12

"He said, 'O LORD, the God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart.'" 1 Kgs. 8:23

"I said, 'I beseech You, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, Who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments."

Neh. 1:5 (Daniel says almost the same thing in Dan. 9:4)

"Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, Who keeps covenant and lovingkindness. Do not let all the hardship seem insignificant before You, which has come upon us, our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers and on all Your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria to this day. However, You are just in all that has come upon us; for You have dealt faithfully, but we have acted wickedly." Neh. 9:32, 33

"All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies... The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant." Ps. 25:10, 14

"Gather My godly ones to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice...But to the wicked God says, 'What right have you to tell of My statutes and to take My covenant in your mouth?'" Ps. 50:5, 16

- Just a quick look at Psalm 136 reveals that God's "hesed" is everlasting.

"My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever, and My covenant shall be confirmed to him." Ps. 89:28

"He has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac. Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant." Ps. 105:8-10

Some covenants were to be everlasting and some were to serve a purpose for a time.

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

"Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; so I spread My skirt over your and covered your nakedness. I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine," declares the LORD GOD..."Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. Thus I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the LORD."

Ez. 16:8, 60, 62

"I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. My swelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. And the nations will know that I am the LORD Who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever." Ez. 37:26-28

"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, Whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in Whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. Mal. 3:1

"And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people…to show mercy toward our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to Abraham our father." **Lk. 1:67-73**

The new covenant was inaugurated by Christ. He was the mediator of this new covenant and it was better than the prior covenant which was referred to as the covenant of the law.

"It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'" **Acts 3:25**

"And so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.'" **Rom. 11:26, 27**

"But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. When He said, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear." Heb. 8:6, 13

What if you are not in covenant with God?

"Because you have said, 'We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we have made a pact. The overwhelming scourge will not reach us when it passes by, for we have made falsehood our refuge and we have concealed ourselves with deception." Is. 28:15

"Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?" Heb. 10:28, 29

The central element of all of God's covenants with His people has been, "I will be their God, and they will be My people." (Jer. 31:33; 2 Cor. 6:16)

"*Do you want something to keep you close to God? Something that will give you confidence that you are never without Him? Then you're searching for God's covenant, His undying promise… God's covenants provide the foundation and structure for life."*

Covenants O. Palmer Robertson

If you are in covenant relationship with Almighty God, there will be evidence of this truth. You will resemble your Father. The family likeness will be evident in your life. Your identity is wrapped up in Who He is and how you can express your great love for Him. It is interesting that the terms describing covenant have to do with cutting (Hebrew) and wills (Greek). There must be a "cutting away" of the dead flesh that cries out to be pampered, indulged and spoiled. For the follower of Christ, the marriage begins with a funeral. There must be a death to self-will and a birth to living for the will of God. **This is the covenant life**.

Let this be our prayer:

"Now the God of peace, Who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to Whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen." **Heb. 13:20**

GOD IS THE CREATOR

Why is the doctrine that God is Creator so important?

First of all, the teaching that God is our Creator is repeatedly expressed in Scripture, so this must be an important message of our Lord to His children.

As our Creator, God has authority over His creations. By acknowledging this truth, we also are acknowledging His particular design and therefore His direct purpose for our existence.

"*The teaching of Scripture about the relationship between God and creation is unique among the religions of the world. The Bible teaches that God is distinct from His creation. He is not part of it, for He has made it and rules over it*." Grudem's Systematic Theology

The term which means God is greater than His creation is **transcendent**.

God is also involved in His creation and that term is **immanent.**

"The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life." Job 33:4

"Nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things... For in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'" Acts 17:25, 28

"One God and Father of us all, Who is above all and through all and in all." Eph. 4:6

With this doctrine of creation the objection to the possibility of miracles vanishes. Therefore the other miracles pronounced in Scripture carry more weight and cannot be easily denied or selected piece-meal.

Who is involved in creation?

Elohim is the name God uses in Genesis 1 to describe Himself. This is a plural form for El (God) and indicates the plurality of powers represented in the Trinity. This term is used about 2,500 times in the Old Testament and testifies to the might and power of our God. **El Olam**, "The everlasting God", also in Genesis, describes the eternal nature of our Creator. Before anything was, He had existed.

"From everlasting to everlasting, You are God." Ps. 90:2

"God's eternity means that He has a different kind of existence, an existence without the passage of time, a kind of existence that is difficult for us even to imagine." Grudem

Job 36:26, "Behold, God is exalted, and we do not know Him; the number of His years is unsearchable."

Ps. 102:24, "O God, do not take me away in the midst of my days, Your years are throughout all generations."

*God the Father was active in creation, but He did not work alone.

John 1:1-3, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."

1 Cor. 8:6, "Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from Whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we exist through Him."

Col. 1:16, “For by Him (Jesus) all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him.”

Heb. 1:2, “In these last days God has spoken to us in His Son, Whom He appointed heir of all things, through Whom also He made the world.”

Just as God the Father is eternal, so is His Son Jesus.

John 8:58, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”

*We must not forget the role of the Spirit in the act of creation.

Gen. 1:2 says, “The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.”

Job 26:13, “By His breath (*ruach*, same word as Spirit), the heavens are cleared.”

Ps. 104:30, “You send forth you Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the ground.”

“*The Nicene Creed speaks of the Spirit as ‘The Lord, the Life-Giver,’ and a combination of further passages describing Him as the direct Agent in the creation of man, just as He is responsible for his re-creation*.” Herbert Lockyer

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1

With these words we have the beginning of everything, right? No!

Before Jesus died, He prayed a very special prayer. “Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” John 17:24

1 Peter 1:20 echoes this idea. “For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.”

Not only does our Lord point to a time prior to the creation of the world, but our lives testify to this truth as well. Eph. 1:4, 5 “Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love, He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself…”

2 Tim. 1:9, “Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.”

Francis Schaeffer tells us, “*The mentality of the whole Scripture is that creation is as historically real as the history of the Jews and our own present moment of time*.”

The fact of creation is a real time event. But any discussion of the origins of the universe must include the origin of time itself. God is timeless and the Creator, not only of the world, planets, solar systems and all we can see, but He created **time**. When we debate about how old the earth is, we have no real concept of what we are talking about. We cannot comprehend the absence of time; it is integral to our existence. God is distinct and very different from those He has created.

Yes, He created us in His image, but even that truth is shrouded in mystery because God is spirit and we are made “from the dust of the ground.” Gen. 2:7

Why did God create?

Is. 43:7, “Everyone who is called by My name and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed, even whom I have made.”

Ps. 19:1, 2, “The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.”

Rev. 4:1, “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

How did God create?

Jer. 10:12, “It is He Who made the earth by His power, Who established the world by His wisdom; and by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens.”

1 Tim. 4:4, “For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude.”

Gen 1:31, “…it was very good.”

Unger’s Dictionary defines *creation* as: “the work of God in bringing into existence the universe, including both the material and the spiritual worlds; in a more restricted sense, the bringing into existence and into its present condition the earth and the system to which it belongs.”

We are also taught that God created *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, by the power of the almighty will.

Ps. 33:6, 9, “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host… For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”

John 1:3, “All things came into being through Him, and **apart from Him nothing** came into being that has come into being.”

Acts 17:24, “The God Who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.”

Rom. 4:17, “’A father of many nations have I made you, in the presence of Him Whom he believed, even God, Who gives life to the dead and calls into being **that which does not exist**.”

The first sentence of the Apostle’s Creed is, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.”

What was lost between Creator and creature at the fall?

When man fell due to sin, there was a sharp alteration to the Creator-creature relationship. Man’s attitude toward his Creator was changed. Man lost his way in discovering true happiness. In a very basic form, salvation is the restoration of a right relationship between man and his Creator.

We are servants. At the fall we became servants of sin and no longer servants of the Lord Who made us.

“*Made as we were in the image of God, we scarcely find it strange to take again our God as our All. God was our original habitat and our hearts cannot but feel at home when they enter again that ancient and beautiful abode*.” Tozer

Chip Ingram has written a book entitled, God as He Longs for You to See Him. This book explores the character of God. It also reveals the lost ability to see God as He truly is. We tend to create God in our image instead of the other way around. Throughout Scripture, the godly men and women were the ones who knew their God and knew Him well.

“*Until you know God as He is, you will never become all that He has created you to be*.” Ingram

Ps. 119:73, “Your hands made me and fashioned me; give me understanding that I may learn Your commandments.”

“*Some of the most rapturous moments we know will be those we spend in reverent admiration of the Godhead. In those holy moments the very thought of change in Him will be too painful to endure.*” A.W. Tozer

What is the final act of creation?

Is. 65:17, “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing and her people for gladness.”

By the way, when we read of the new heavens and new earth written by the apostle John, how was he enabled to write these passages? Rev. 1:10, “I was in the **Spirit** on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet.”

With the doctrine of creation, we are reminded that God is sovereign over the universe He created. He made it all and it is His. He is Lord of all of it. We owe our allegiance, praise and reverence to Him. At His appointed time, He will realize His final plans in plain view for all the world to see. We can have absolute confidence that He will ultimately defeat His enemies and be revealed as the Majesty on High. He will be worshiped forever.

“For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens (He is the God Who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited), ‘I am the LORD, and there is none else.’” Is. 45:18

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

Why is the faithfulness of God so important to our faith?

Gods throughout history have not always been faithful; some have indeed been very fickle and immature, provoking and behaving in petulant manners. The Greek and Roman gods are rife with such activity. But the God of the Judeo-Christian faith is a God of truth and integrity.

What does Scripture have to say about the faithfulness of God? Perhaps in observing these Scriptures we can answer the introductory question.

Deut. 7:9, “Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, Who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments.”

Deut. 32:4, “The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He.”

Ps. 89:1, “I will sing of the lovingkindness of the LORD forever; to all generations I will make known Your faithfulness with my mouth. For I have said, ‘Lovingkindness will be built up forever; in the heavens You will establish Your faithfulness.’ ”

89:8, 24, “O LORD God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You…My faithfulness and My lovingkindness will be with him, and in My name his horn will be exalted.”

Ps. 36:5, “Your lovingkindness, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness reaches to the skies.”

Ps. 91:4, “He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.”

Do you notice that God’s faithfulness is mentioned many times in conjunction with His covenant (*lovingkindness* is a term associated with God’s covenant relationship)? Why do you think there is a connection between these two great doctrines of God’s ways?

- From these few verses, we see that faithfulness is not a necessity to God in the sense that air is a necessity to a human being, but His faithfulness is simply part of Who our God is. It is unimaginable to understand God without recognizing His character of faithfulness.

Ps. 100:5, “For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations.”

Lam. 3:22, 23, “The LORD’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.”

Ps. 119:86, 138, “All You commandments are faithful; they have persecuted me with a lie; help me!... You have commanded Your testimonies in righteousness and exceeding faithfulness.”

Ps. 119:90, “Your faithfulness continues throughout all generations; You established the earth, and it stands.”

What does the New Testament have to tell us about our faithful God?

1 Cor.1:9, “God is faithful, through Whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

1 Thes.5:24, “Faithful is He Who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.”

1 Thes. 3:3,“But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.”

1 Pet.4:19, “Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.”

1 Jn. 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Rev. 19:11, “And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He Who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.”

- These verses in the New Testament show a connection from God’s faithfulness to His people. It is clear that God’s faithfulness has a distinct bond with the relationship He shares with His people.

Like begets like. A child is like his father in some ways.

Our Father is the standard of faithfulness. As His children, we are to hold to that same standard and be a people of faithfulness.

God’s faithfulness should result in our own built-up faith. As we encounter His faithful ways in Scripture, in history and in our daily lives, we should give testimony to His everlasting faithfulness and thereby exhibit our faith.

God is not pleased when we neglect to “share in the family resemblance” in regard to faithfulness.

Matt. 23:23, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.”

- God’s faithfulness is inextricably connected with His other attributes: His majesty, for instance. In His majesty, we see that He is exalted in His judgment on sin. (Is. 5:16; Rev. 19:1-2)

His faithfulness is involved in His coming judgment as well. “Before the LORD, for He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness.” Ps. 96:13

When we think of God's faithfulness, we like to focus on all His promises of safety, love, provision, protection and prosperity. Blessings, in other words. But God has also promised curses to those who reject His ways of truth. These curses are warnings because as our Creator, He knows what we were created for: to glorify Him. When we fail to glorify God, we are acting counter to our intended purpose and therefore can have no peace. God, in His faithfulness, has promised life to the obedient and death to the disobedient. He has not complicated things … we have.

- Unlike man, when God makes a promise, He is able to bring it to pass. God keeps all His promises without fail. When we read a promise in Scripture, we can be assured that it will happen as God has said. This is the great faith builder in reading Scripture, because we see time and again how God has been proven faithful to His word. If He has been faithful for all time, then we can trust Him for our lives and our future.

"And being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform." Rom. 4:21

"God is not a man, that He should lie, not a son of man, that He should repent; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" Num. 23:19

"*Faithfulness is that in God which guarantees that He will never be or act inconsistent with Himself…Everything God says or does must be in accord with His faithfulness*." A.W. Tozer, The Attributes of God

When we are under pressure, we desire a God, a Champion Whom we can trust. In the heat of battle against our enemy, we need to know our Commander. Studying the attributes of our God will only serve to strengthen and empower us in the days of battle. When the heat is turned up is not the time to call out to a "Santa Claus" version of Almighty God. We must know Him as He truly is: holy, faithful, just, loving, merciful, righteous, all-powerful, compassionate, awe-inspiring, wise, eternal …

Our culture has invented a god that is comfortable and easy. This is not the true God of Scripture.

We had better know Who God is. If we do not, our enemy will use this misinformation to undo us.

When we evaluate the complete message of Scripture, from Genesis One to Revelation Twenty-two, we see a common communication: God is faithful. Look at all the narratives of the Old Testament; look at the pronouncements of the prophets; look at the life of our Lord. All of the Bible tells us one thing: God can be trusted with our eternal souls.

Do not keep this truth to yourself. Tell the world how faithful our God is and what He has done in your life.

GOD IS JUDGE

"*For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us.*" Is. 33:22

"*And the heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is judge*." Ps. 50:6

"*But God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another*." Ps. 75:7

"*Righteous are you, O LORD, and upright are Your judgments*." Ps. 119:137

There is much in Scripture which informs us concerning this aspect of our God as Judge.

In fact, an entire Old Testament book is entitled "Judges." This particular book explores the early days in the history of Israel, before the kings, when God used His representatives, the judges.

These men and woman were called upon to serve the nation of Israel in leadership. They were also used of God as deliverers from the oppression of surrounding nations. The accounts of the judges reveal to us God's commitment to His people to protect, guide, discipline and mold them into His own particular people. The ultimate judge is God Himself.

"When the **LORD raised up judges** for them, **the LORD was with the judge** and **delivered** them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed and afflicted them." Judg. 2:18

"I therefore have not sinned against you, but you are doing me wrong by making war against me; may the LORD, the Judge, judge today between the sons of Israel and the sons of Ammon."

Judg. 11:27 (Concerning the situation during the time of Jephthah)

This entire book of "Judges" points to our need for a Judge.

- The first time the word "judge" is used in Scripture is Gen. 15:14.

"But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions." Clearly God is in control here of who is judged, when he is judged and how it will turn out when the judgment is completed.

Sarai, the wife of Abram, called upon God as Judge. "May the wrong done me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms, but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May the LORD judge between you and me." Gen. 16:5

Concerning the destruction of Sodom, "Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" Gen. 18:25

- In Exodus, we see that God has called Moses to act as His judge for the benefit of the people.

"It came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening." When he was questioned regarding his long hours of service Moses answered, 'Because the people come to me to inquire of God." Ex. 18:13, 15

The following verses are the advice of the father-in-law of Moses.

"Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people's representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do. Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands ... Let them judge the people at all times." Ex. 18:19-22a

- Leviticus and Deuteronomy give instruction regarding judging the people.

"You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor not defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly." Lev. 19:15

"You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, **for the judgment is God's**. The case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it." Deut. 1:17

"You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they will judge the people with righteous judgment. You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue." Deut. 16:18-20a

"The man who acts presumptuously by not listening to the priest who stands there to serve the LORD your God, nor to the judge, that man shall die; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel." Deut. 17:12

- Hannah knew the importance of God as her Judge.

"Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered; against them He will thunder in the heavens, the LORD will judge the ends of the earth; and He will give strength to His king, and will exalt the horn of His anointed." 1 Sam. 2:10

Later in the book of 1 Samuel we see the people demanding a king to judge them because the nations surrounding them do this. 1 Sam. 8:5, "And they said to him, 'Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations."

- As David was pursued by a crazed king Saul, he cried out, "The LORD therefore be judge and decide between you and me; and may He see and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand." 24:15

Do you begin to see the great need of man for justice and a righteous Judge?

The Lord knows we need this system of balance and righteousness in our community. There is no justice apart from God. He is the standard by which we know what is indeed right.

- When Solomon asked God for wisdom in order to judge God's people God was pleased to give Solomon great gifts.

"So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" 1 Kings 3:9

- As a good king Jehoshaphat appointed judges in the land. "He said to the judges, 'Consider what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for **the LORD Who is with you when you render judgment.' " 2 Chron. 19:6**

When threatened by invading armies, Jehoshaphat cried out to God, not as Father, but as Judge.

"O our God, will You not judge them? For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You." 2 Chron. 20:12

- All creation longs for the standard of perfection which resides within Almighty God. The only possible hope for all life is the corrective work of our Lord. When He comes to judge, He truly comes to set all things right and sound.

"Then the trees of the forest will sing for joy before the LORD; for He is coming to judge the earth." 1 Chron. 16:33

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him Who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” Rom. 8:20, 21

“And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.” Isaiah 2:4

Concerning the Coming One …

“And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear; but with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; and He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist.” Is. 11:3-5

“And men will say, ‘Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely there is a God Who judges on earth!’ ” Ps. 58:11

“Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for You will judge the peoples with uprightness.” Ps. 67:4

“A father for the fatherless and a judge for the widows, is God in His holy habitation.” Ps. 68:5

“Arise, O God, judge the earth! For it is You Who possesses all the nations.” Ps. 82:8

“Rise up, O Judge of the earth, render recompense to the proud.” Ps. 94:2

“How many are the days of Your servant? When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?” Ps. 119:84

- The Lord is the only Judge to Whom we can appeal; with great confidence, we can know that He will judge with perfect justice AND compassion.

“For the LORD will judge His people and will have compassion on His servants.” Ps. 135:14

“Judge me, O LORD my God, according to Your righteousness, and do not let them rejoice over me.” Ps. 35:24

“And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity.” Ps 9:8

“The LORD judges the peoples; vindicate me, O LORD, according to my righteousness and my integrity that is in me… God is a righteous judge, and a God Who has indignation every day.” Ps. 7:8, 11

“O LORD, You have seen my oppression; judge my case.” Lam. 3:59

“You say, ‘What does God know? Can He judge through the thick darkness?’ ” Job 22:13

“I said to myself, ‘God will judge both the righteous man and the wicked man,’ for a time for every matter and for every deed is there.’ “ Eccl. 3:17

“Then hear from heaven and act and judge Your servants punishing the wicked by bringing his way on his own head and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness.” 2 Chron. 6:23

- Yes, our Lord is compassionate in His judging, but make no mistake, it will come!

"Now the end is upon you, and I will send My anger against you; I will judge you according to your ways and bring all your abominations upon you… Now I will shortly pour out My wrath on you and spend My anger against you; judge you according to your ways and bring on you all your abominations." Ez. 7:3, 8

"Say among the nations, 'The LORD reigns; indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity… Before the LORD, for He is coming, for He is coming to judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness." Ps. 96:10, 13

"The LORD arises to contend, and stands to judge the people." Is 3:13

Why does God judge?

"You will fall by the sword. I will judge you to the border of Israel; **so you shall know that I am the LORD."** Ez. 11:10

"The LORD has made Himself known; He has executed judgment." Ps. 9:16

"Thus says the LORD, 'By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in my hand, and it will be turned to blood.'"

Ex. 7:17 (God's judgment on Egypt was a way of revealing Himself as Lord of all.)

"Therefore, I will deliver My flock, and they will no longer be a prey; and I will judge between one sheep and another." Ez. 34:22 (He judges to deliver.)

"Let the nations be aroused and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Joel 3:12 (He judges to bring all things to completion.)

What does the New Testament have to tell us about our Judge?

"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will , but the will of Him Who sent Me." John 5:30

"He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; and the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." John 12:48

"Because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man Whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Acts 17:31

"And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One Who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead." Acts 10:42

"And I heard the altar saying, 'Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.' " Rev. 16:7

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He Who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war." Rev. 19:11

"And they cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?' " Rev. 6:10

"To the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect." Heb. 12:23

"Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door." James 5:9

"But they will give account to Him Who is ready to judge the living and the dead." 1 Pet. 4:5

“And while being reviled, He did not revile in return, while suffering, He uttered not threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him Who judges righteously.” 1 Pet. 2:23

“If you address as Father the One Who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth.” 1 Pet. 1:17

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom… In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.” 2 Tim. 4:1, 8

“On the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.” Rom. 2:16

“

What is to be our role in judging?

“I shall give thanks to You with uprightness of heart, when **I learn** your righteous judgments.” Ps. 119:7

“**I know**, O LORD, that Your judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.” Ps. 119:75

“**My flesh trembles for fear of You**, and **I am afraid of Your judgments**.” Ps. 119:120

“Therefore **do not go on passing judgment** before the time, but **wait** until the Lord comes Who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.” 1 Cor. 4:5

“Or do you not know that the **saints will judge the world**? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?” 1 Cor. 6:2

“But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For **we will all stand before the judgment seat of God**.” Rom. 14:10

God’s role as Judge in history should bring us to our knees in worship to our mighty God. He alone is righteous to judge; He alone is powerful enough to bring judgment to pass; He alone is perfect in His decisions; He alone is compassionate in His just decrees; He alone can judge with perfect impartiality. We can rest in the veracity of His judgments. The more we learn of Him, the more we can trust His ways in all things, and that includes His judgment.

Sin requires judgment. A holy God cannot condone, overlook or ignore any violation of His standard. The fine must be paid. “The wages of sin is death.” Jesus experienced God as Shaphat, as Judge. He faced and accepted the judgment that should have fallen on me; I praise my Lord and Redeemer that He has provided an eternal life for me, a life free of condemnation. Yet, I will stand before the Lord and give account of how I have used this life He has given me. I will not be condemned, but I will answer for my words and deeds before a Holy God.

Jehovah Shaphat

God is Judge.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD

"You are good and do good." Ps. 119:68a

The perfections of Yahweh are those qualities which are revealed to His people through His revelation to them in His word. The basis for hope lies in the perfections of Yahweh. God's "goodness" is connected to His covenant fidelity. All of His promises are integrated into His promise of "goodness."

"*God's goodness is that perfection which prompts Him to deal kindly and bountifully with all His creatures*." Herbert Lockyer

"For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations." Ps. 100:5

"For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You." Ps. 86:5

"I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living." Ps. 27:13

"How great is Your goodness, which You have stored up for those who fear you, which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You, before the sons of men!" Ps. 31:19

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

Ps. 34:8

"Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, His lovingkindness is everlasting." Ps. 136:1

"I will give You thanks forever, because You have done it, and I will wait on Your name, for it is good, in the presence of Your godly ones." Ps. 52:9

"The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble. And He knows those who take refuge in Him." Nahum 1:7

The goodness of God means that God's standard of good is the authoritative norm and all that He is and does constitutes what is good.

Jesus Himself said that God alone is good. Lu. 18:19; Mark 10:18

"Good" is the old English word for "God."

Hebrew verb: "to do good" and adj. "to be good"

Tob: to do good, to be happy, to please, to be loved, to be favored, to endure, to be valuable, to do well, to do right, to be glad

Tobah: and adj. which means good, well-pleasing, fruitful, morally correct, proper, convenient, appealing and pleasant, useful and profitable, good as opposed to evil

God is originally good, in His essence He is good. Not only is He good, He is goodness itself. He is eternally and immutably good; He cannot be less than good. Any goodness in a creature is there because of the goodness God has imparted to that creature.

All that comes from God – his laws, decrees, ordinances, creation – can only be good.

"God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good." Gen. 1:31a

"And He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." Acts 14:17

"*God's mercy is His goodness toward those in distress, his grace is His goodness toward those who deserve only punishment, and His patience is His goodness toward those who continue to sin over a period of time*." Grudem's Systematic Theology

One of the first verses we learn as young Christians is Rom. 8:28, "For we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." How could we be confident in this if God were not able (omnipotent) to bring this "good" to pass and the source of goodness itself? James 1:17 tells us, "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow."

As we evaluate things as God has designed us to see them, we are in agreement with His approval or disapproval of things. We therefore will delight in the things in which He delights and disapprove of the things which meet with His disapproval.

"*When we realize that God is the definition and source of all good, we will realize that God Himself is the ultimate good that we seek*." Grudem's Systematic Theology

"When I say that God is good, that God has a kind heart, I mean that God has a heart infinitely kind and that there is no boundary to it... It is impossible for God to be anything and not be completely, infinitely what He is. It is possible for the sun to be bright, but not infinitely bright because it doesn't have all the light there is." A.W. Tozer

But for God He is infinitely good and perfectly good. There is no partially good or somewhat good. He is completely and wholly good. Whatever God is, He is perfectly.

The goodness of God excludes any tolerance for sin. His goodness cannot exist in company with sin.

Rom. 11:22, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shall be cut off."

"*History shows that no tribe or nation has ever risen morally above its religion*." Tozer

If the religion of the people was impure, corrupt, and debauched, then the people would follow its lead.

"*Christianity at any given time is strong or weak depending on her concept of God*." Tozer

This is why seeing the goodness of God is critical to our faith. As Christians we must accept nothing less than God's version of what is good. When we settle for mediocre morality, we walk the way of the world and dishonor our good and holy God.

Eph. 5:9, "For the fruit of the Light consists in all **goodness** and righteousness and truth."

"goodness" is Greek *agathosune*: it is energized character, expressing itself in benevolence and active good.

In Greek philosophy, good had several meanings. Some saw it as what is pleasant (Sophists); Plato saw goodness as the central idea; Aristotle viewed it as the necessary. For the Greeks, people became good through instruction in the good.

Old Testament Judaism saw goodness differently. "Jer. 32:39, 42, "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own **good** and for the good of their children after them...For thus says the LORD, 'Just as I brought all this great disaster on this people, so I am going to bring on them all the **good** that I am promising them.'"

New Testament believers have the distinct privilege of living in the light of this goodness every day. "For I am confident of this very thing, that He Who began a **good** work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." Phil. 1:6

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, **goodness**, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." Gal. 5:22, 23

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is a critical teaching of both the Old and New Testaments.

With a doctrine as important, vital and misunderstood, it is imperative that the focus be on Scripture and not on any particular manmade ideologies.

Hebrew for spirit is *ruah #7307*. This is a noun which means spirit, wind, breath.

The Holy Spirit was involved in creation.

We are introduced to the Spirit of God in Genesis 1:2, "The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters."

The truth of this fact is reiterated in the psalms.

Ps 33:6 says, "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host."

Ps. 104:30, "You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the ground."

Ps. 147:15, 18, "He sends forth His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly…He sends forth His word and melts them; He causes His wind (#7307) to blow and the waters to flow."

"*The revelation of the Spirit is a progressive doctrine*… As the flower or fruit form the last revealed part of the tree, so the Spirit is "third", seeing He is the last revealed personality of the Trinity." Herbert Lockyer

The Spirit gave abilities to perform certain tasks in the Old Testament.

Ex.31:2-6, "See… I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of draftsmanship, to make artistic designs for work …." This was done to enable the tabernacle to be built according to God's specifications.

Judg. 15:14, "When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him. And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily so that the ropes that were on his arms were as flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds dropped from his hands."

The Spirit inspired prophets to utter their prophecies and elders to judge.

Num. 11:17, 25, "Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit Who is upon you, and will put Him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you will not bear it all alone… Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do it again."

2 Sam. 23:2, "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue."

The Spirit was given to man at the discretion of God.

Ps. 51:10-12, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a stedfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit."

Ez. 36:27, "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." This was spoken to Old Testament people with a

view to the future promise of the indwelling Spirit which they had only partially experienced.

The people rebelled against the Spirit.

Ps. 106:33, "Because they were rebellious against His Spirit, he (Moses) spoke rashly with his lips."

The people grieved the Holy Spirit.

Is. 63:10, 11a, "But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; therefore He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them. Then His people remembered …."

The Spirit was present among the returned exiles.

Hag. 2:5, "As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!"

Neh. 9:20, "You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, Your manna You did not withhold from their mouth, and You gave them water for their thirst."

The Spirit gave rest.

Is. 63:14, "As the cattle which go down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest. So You led You people, to make for Yourself a glorious name."

The Spirit brought the dead to life.

Ez. 37:5, 6, "Thus says the Lord God to these bones, 'Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life. I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin and put breath in you that you may come alive; and you will know that I am the LORD.'"

The full and complete revelation of the Spirit would not become manifest until Pentecost.

Is not the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church today less distinct than in the early church? Why?

Our enemy would deny believers the truth of the blessed Holy Spirit. His tactic is to hide from us Who the Holy Spirit is and if he is not successful in that strategy, his method is that of patronage and falsification.

Paul warns us of the trinity of perversion in 2 Cor. 11:4, "For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully."

The Holy Spirit was involved in the birth of Christ.

Matt. 1:20, "But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child Who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."

Lk. 1:35, "The angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.'"

John the Baptist foretold that Jesus would baptize in the Spirit. (Mark 1:8; Jn.1:33)

This was the fulfillment of the prophecy uttered in the Old Testament. (Jer. 31:31-34; Joel 2:28-32

The following descriptions highlight the fact that the Holy Spirit acts as a Person; these are personal acts.

The Holy Spirit speaks.

Acts 1:16, "Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus."

Acts 8:29, "Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and join this chariot.'"

Acts 10:19, "While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, 'Behold, three men are looking for you.'"

Acts 13:2, "While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'"

The Spirit teaches, guides, and counsels.

Jn.14:26, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

Rom. 8:14, "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

Gal. 5:18, "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law."

The Spirit testifies (witnesses).

Jn. 15:26, "When the Helper comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth Who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me."

Rom. 8:16, "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God."

The Spirit searches and reveals.

1 Cor. 2:10-16, "For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God... Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit Who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words, taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised... But we have the mind of Christ."

The Spirit wills.

1 Cor. 12:11, "But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills."

The Spirit intercedes.

Rom. 8:26, 27, "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groaning too deep for words; and He Who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

The Holy Spirit clearly is divine.

The Spirit gives life.

Jn. 3:5-8, "Jesus said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit…The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.'"

Jn. 6:63, "It is the Spirit Who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

Gal. 4:6, "Because you are sons, 'God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'"

While the Spirit gives life, He also takes life.

Acts 5:1-9, "… But Peter said to Ananias, 'Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? … You have not lied to men but to God.' …Then Peter said to her, 'Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well.'"

The Spirit is opposed to the flesh.

Gal. 5:16, 17, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."

The Holy Spirit convicts of sin.

Jn. 16:8, "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment."

The Holy Spirit helps.

Jn. 14:16, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, Whom the world cannot receive, because He abides with you and will be in you."

The Spirit sanctifies.

Gal. 5:22, 23"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

The Spirit transforms.

2 Cor. 3:17, 18, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."

The Spirit renews and regenerates.

Tit. 3:5, “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.”

“*Regeneration does not make a sinner a better man, but brings in a new man. The old nature is not improved*.” Lockyer

The Spirit empowers.

Acts 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

The Spirit unifies.

Phil. 2:1,2, “Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.”

The Spirit gives evidence of God’s presence.

1 Jn. 4:2, “By this you will know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.”

Jn. 15:26, “When the Helper comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth Who proceeds from the father, He will testify about Me.”

The Holy Spirit will not unveil His magnificence and power unless we maintain a heart of devotion and humility.

“*The work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church*.” Wayne Grudem

The Spirit dwells within the believer in Jesus Christ.

Rom. 8:6, 9, “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace… However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”

Acts 2:38, Peter said to them, ‘Repent and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

Eph. 2:21, 22, “In Whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in Whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”

Comforter: *parakletos #3875* refers to aid of any kind; used of a legal advisor, pleader, proxy, or advocate, one who comes forward in behalf of and as the representative of another; it comes from the verb *parakaleo* which means to call to the side, to aid, help, comfort, encourage, exhort

Spirit: *pneuma #4151* means breath; the vital spirit of life; the rational spirit, mind, element of life; “*the spirit is man’s immaterial nature which enables him to communicate with God, Who is also spirit*.” Zodhiates

“*The true abode of the Spirit was and ever must be, the God-Man, crucified, risen, ascended, and coming again*.” Herbert Lockyer

Is. 11:2, “The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.”

INHERITANCE and ADOPTION

"The LORD is my portion; I have promised to keep Your words." Ps. 119:57

"I have inherited Your testimonies forever." 119:111

The Westminster Catechism tells us that adoption is "*an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God*."

- Romans has much to say about adoption and inheritance.

8:15 says, "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of **adoption** as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

8:17: "And if children, **heirs** also, **heirs** of God and **fellow heirs** with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him."

8:23, "And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our **adoption** as sons, the redemption of our body."

- Likewise the book of Galatians has an entire chapter describing the inheritance of God's children.

Beginning with Gal. 3:16 through chapter four, we see much regarding the sonship of the heirs of the promise. 3:29 says, "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, **heirs** according to promise."

4:3-7: "So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the **adoption** as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an **heir** through God."

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are **of God's household**." Eph.2:19

3:6 says, "To be specific, that the Gentiles are **fellow heirs** and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

- One of the effects of our adoption and familial relationship with the Father is that the world will not know us. We are strange and puzzling to the world.

"See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called **children of God**; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him." 1 John 3:1

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become **children of God**, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." Jn. 1:12, 13

God "*only adopts into His family those who have been born anew…As used in Scripture, adoption implies a change of nature and a change of relationship*." Herbert Lockyer

Regeneration has to do with son-making; adoption has in view son-positioning.

In Roman law, a son exchanged his garment referred to as the *pretexta* for the *toga veritas* (garment of manhood). There would be a ceremony commemorating this coming of age for the young man. A sacrifice would be made and with this tradition entrance into public life would be accomplished. The Greek word for "adoption" is *luiothesia: son + a placing*

So here we have, "the placing or positioning of a son." The adopting parent gained the *potestas* (legal power) over the adopted child exactly as though this child was the issue of his own body.

Titus 3:7: “So that being justified by His grace we would be made **heirs** according to the hope of eternal life.”

1 Pet. 1:4, “to obtain an **inheritance** which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”

Col. 3:24, “Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the **inheritance.** It is the Lord Christ Whom you serve.”

- Not only do we obtain many advantages and privileges as heirs to the King, but we face the discipline of a heavenly Father when we disobey.

Heb. 12:6-11, “For those whom the LORD loves He disciplines, and He scourges every **son** whom He receives. It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with **sons**; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ..He disciplines for our good, so that we may share His holiness.”

- Even the Old Testament has much to teach regarding this topic of inheritance and adoption.

Moses was adopted by the daughter of Pharaoh and he enjoyed all the privileges of royalty although he was by blood a “lowly Hebrew.”

Jacob adopted the two sons of Joseph. (Gen. 48:4-22)

Esther was adopted by Mordecai and he raised her as his own daughter. Esther 2:7

And as for inheritance, the greatest Old Testament example of this concept is found in the dividing of the land. Joshua 13 relates the apportioning of the land to Israel. All the tribes received specific lands. But the Levites received no territory of their own. Why?

Josh. 13:32, 33, “These are the territories which Moses apportioned for an inheritance in the plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan at Jericho to the east. But to the tribe of Levi, Moses did not give an **inheritance**; **the LORD, the God of Israel, is their inheritance, as He had promised to them.”** Read also Deut. 18:1-8

Like the Levites, believers in Jesus Christ are a royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9). This verse tells us why we have been chosen as God’s priests. “So that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him Who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

“And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the **inheritance** among all those who are sanctified.” Acts 20:32

From the very words of our Lord while He was on earth,

“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matt. 25:34

From Revelation 21:6, 7,

“Then He said to me, ‘It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes **will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son**.”

JESUS CHRIST

Jesus is a subject about which "even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written." This is indeed the loftiest study to which one can engage his mind. While art, poetry, literature, and music have made efforts at honoring this Man, it is Scripture alone which can truly enlighten us as to the full revelation of His life and purpose.

Without a proper understanding of Who Jesus is, we miss the import of the entire teaching of Scripture.

The doctrine of Jesus Christ introduces the student to the greatest life ever lived. We first make the acquaintance of Jesus Christ in Genesis chapter one. The first verse of the Bible makes it clear that Elohim, the plural form of the word "El" created the heavens and the earth. Each day of creation is begun with, "then God said," this points to the creative force of the voice of God, even the Word of God. Colossians makes this evident, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." Col. 1:1-17

Also John 1:3, 10 "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being…He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him." We run the risk of not knowing Him as He truly is, unless we endeavor to search the Scriptures to discern His true identity.

The Scriptures are full of Jesus Christ. From the opening verse to the closing verse, Jesus is at the heart of the redemption story. The imprint of Jesus is seen in the accounts of the creation of our world, the fall of man, the need for a Savior and the solution to our inevitable righteous judgment. Genesis opens with the creative force of Elohim, the Godhead (we also see the work of the Holy Spirit in creation in Gen. 1:2). The last book of the Bible is referred to as "the Revelation of Jesus Christ …"

But what is astounding is that this Jesus Whom we worship and adore is One Who existed before the creation of the world. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." John 1:1-2

- Jesus is co-eternal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit.
  Christ declares His pre-existence. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad…Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.'" Jn. 8:56, 58

  "Now Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." Jn. 17:5
  When Jesus entered into the world as a human baby He was declared prophetically to be "the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom … the zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. "
  "Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever. Amen." 1 Tim. 1:17
  He is "the Lamb Who has been slain before the foundation of the world." Rev. 13:8

- There are pre-incarnate theophanies in the Old Testament to prepare the world for the ultimate arrival of God Himself in the flesh. Many of these refer to the angel of the Lord.

"Now the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day…I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son." Only God has the power to give life at His own discretion. Gen. 18:1, 10

As Abraham was about to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice “the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!,’ And he said. ‘Here I am.’ He said, ‘Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’ Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son.” Gen. 18:11-13

In the account in Gen 32 of Jacob’s struggling with the Lord, this is seen as an appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ.

Jacob refers to God as his “Shepherd all his life, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil.” Gen. 48:15, 16

Josh. 5:13-15 records Joshua encounter with the Captain of the host of the Lord Who instructed him to remove his sandals because he was on holy ground. Joshua fell on his face to the earth and bowed down. There is not remonstrance to this obvious worship.

Manoah, the future father of Samson, upon hearing of the coming birth of his son from the angel of the Lord asks the name of the angel. “But the angel of the LORD said to him, ‘Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?’” Judg. 13:18

“These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him.” Jn. 12:41. This refers to Is. 6 where Isaiah says that he “saw the LORD sitting on a throne, high and lifted up and the train of his robe filled the temple… calling out to one another, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.’”

Zechariah records an encounter with God also. “For behold, I will wave My hand over them so that they will be plunder for their slaves. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me. Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst … then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.” declares the LORD. Zech. 2:9-11

Christ’s pre-incarnate appearance is hinted at in Dan.3:25. “Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without ham, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!”

- The Old Testament contains many prophetic pronouncements of the coming Servant of the Lord, His Anointed One. For hundreds of years, the prophets had told of One coming to do the work of the Lord. He would come from the tribe of David and He would rule His people and all nations.

Even in Gen. 3:15 we have the announcement that God would put “Enmity between the serpent and the seed of the woman.” In ancient writings, very little is mentioned of the woman’s seed; it is inconsequential as to the woman’s seed. The man’s seed is the important issue. The mention of the woman’s seed points to a unique concept and foreshadows the virgin birth.

Gen. 12:1-13 records the great blessing in promise form of God’s dealing with the man Abraham and his effect on all the world. Gal. 3:16 clarifies this promise. “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ.” One of the key theses of the book of Matthew is to reveal Christ as the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, and so Matthew begins his account with the genealogy, commencing with Abraham.

1. The Christ is to come from the tribe of David. 2 Sam. 7:12-14
2. He is to be born of a virgin. Is. 7:14; 9:7; Matt. 1:22, 23 It is clear and should be pointed out that Scripture makes it key that Jesus was born of Mary and the Holy Spirit. “Jacob begat Joseph” follows a long list of ‘begats’ to be ended with “Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus.” The word ‘begat’ is not included in Mary’s geneaology. Jesus was not ‘begotten’ of natural generation, but was brought forth by the Holy Spirit.
3. He is to be born in Bethlehem. Mic. 5:2
4. He will be worshiped by Gentiles. Is. 60:6; Matt. 2:11
5. He will have a forerunner. Is. 40:3; Matt. 3:1-3

A study of the incarnation or the birth of Christ is a complete and separate doctrine worthy of deep and serious attention. But the above information suffices for the purpose of a cursory view of the doctrine of Christ.

A summary statement of the doctrine of Jesus Christ would include the fact that Jesus was fully God and fully man in one person.

- The human nature of our Lord is clearly presented in scripture.

1 Cor. 15:21 tells us, "For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead."

Jesus as a man, possessed a soul. "Then He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.'" Matt. 26:38

"See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." Lu. 24:39

"Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil." Heb. 2:14

Jesus experienced the same circumstances as ordinary men. He hungered, wept, felt weary, loved, was angered and felt a full gamut of emotions, but always within the bounds of lawful behavior.

Jesus is referred to both as the Son of God and the Son of Man. Because of His work on our behalf, the Son of God became the Son of Man so that He might effect our transformation, making the sons of men become the sons of God. 1 John 3:1-3

A mere man could not accomplish this work. Only the Son of God could redeem man from his fallen state.

- Scripture leaves no opportunity for argument as to the divine nature of our Lord.

Both Old and New Testaments remark as to the deity of our Savior. (Is. 9:6; Jer. 23:6; Matt. 11:27; Jn. 1:1; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 19:16)

He is self-existent, immutable, omnipresent (Matt.28:20), omniscient (Col.2:3), omnipotent

(1 Pet.3:21, 22).

He is the Lord of the Sabbath, the Forgiver of sin (Lk. 5:20-24), the Commander of death and Hades (Matt. 9:24; Jn. 11:43, 44; Rev. 1:18), the Savior (Acts 4:12; 5:31; Lu. 2:11), the Creator and Preserver of all things, the Judge of all men (Matt. 13:39-43; 16:27; Jn. 5:22, 23; 2 Cor. 5:10).

When reading scripture, the alert student will see that in most cases where the human nature of our Lord is mentioned, the divine nature will not be far from this truth as well. The reverse is true also. When we see the divine nature mentioned, the human nature is not far away. We are profoundly grateful for a King and Lord Who would express His love for us in such as way that we can never fully comprehend, yet we can reap the benefits for all eternity.

-Our Lord was baptized to show His identity with His beloved children. (Matt. 3)

-Our Lord was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. (Matt.4; Heb. 4:15)

When we yield our lives to Christ, we surrender to the One Who mastered our great enemy in the wilderness and at Calvary. The life of the only One ever to resist and overcome Satan abides within the believer in Jesus Christ.

-Our Lord was sinless. (Jn. 8:29, 46; 1 Jn. 3:5; Heb. 4:15; 7:26)

-Our Lord was faithful to fulfill all prophetic proclamations concerning Him.

-Our Lord "was going throughout all Galilee, **teaching** … **proclaiming the gospel** of the kingdom and **healing** every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people."

-Our Lord performed many signs which were recorded is scripture "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."

Jn, 20:30, 31

-Our Lord died for His people in a vicarious manner. (Matt. 26:28; Mk. 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal.2:20) As an inspired writer of scripture, the apostle Paul devotes much of his teaching to the cross of Christ. This is a crucial teaching which must be transmitted to a fallen world. Christ without the cross is heresy.

"*A mere belief in the historical Christ will not save. Our hope is built on His blood and righteousness, without which we are lost*." H. Lockyer

The death of our Lord is not our hope. Our hope lies in His resurrection. "That is you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that **God raised Him from the dead**, you will be saved." Rom. 10:9

The doctrine of the Resurrection is a teaching in itself which scholars have devoted their entire lives to pursuing.

The first sermons in Acts focus clearly on the Resurrection. Act 2:24-32; 3:15

Although the preaching of the Resurrection resulted in great persecution for the early church, the apostles would not yield in their proclamation of this doctrine.

The Resurrection is an accomplished fact with resounding scriptural support. "But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God." Heb. 10:12

More than five hundred people saw the resurrected Christ. This is documented in the scriptural accounts. It may be argued that the Bible cannot support the Bible, but before the compilation into the scriptures we possess today as the canon, these were individual writings of witnesses to these truths. These are not the accounts of one or two people. Also these letters and gospel teachings were contemporary with those acquainted with their veracity or the lack thereof. The claims made by the followers of Christ could have been easily rebutted and dismissed by disclaimers had they not been true. Because of the availability of eye witnesses currently living, the scriptures had to be beyond reproach in their accurate reporting of events.

Our Lord is also referred to as **Prophet, Priest and King**. In former times, a prophet spoke to man about God and a priest spoke to God about man.

1. The people acknowledged Him as a prophet. Lu. 7:16; 24:19; Matt. 21:11, 46

   He today continues to reveal God's will to His people. Jn. 16:12-14; Lu. 24:27, 44, 45

2. Jesus represented His people as Priest and as sacrifice and today continues to represent them before the Father as their Intercessor. (Is. 53:12; Lu.23:34; Jn. 1:29; Heb. 2:17; 3:1;4:15; 9:11-15, 24-28; 10:19-22)
3. Jesus is to be worshiped as King.
   When our Lord first appeared, He took the form of a servant, yet some saw Him as He truly is: Sovereign King. When He returns there will be no doubt: He will come as reigning King. Ps. 2:6; Matt. 2:2; 28:18; Acts 17:7; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:15-19; Rev. 11:15; 19:16

   Have we crowned Him Lord of all? This is the only question we need answer.

- The Return of Christ
  There is much teaching on the second coming of our Lord. This area of the work of Christ is referred to as the study of end times or eschatology. The Greek word *eschatos* means "last."
  The coming of our Lord is described in scripture as triumphant and glorious. He will return with great power. He Who was judged at the end of His stay on earth will judge all the nations. Matt. 24:30; 25:31-46

It is the responsibility of all believers to eagerly await His Personal, visible, bodily return. 1 Jn. 3:2, 3; 1 Cor. 1:7; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 9:28

"*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*" 1Thes. 4:16

"He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming quickly.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

Rev. 22:20

JUSTIFICATION

The doctrine of justification is one of the most important biblical teachings. This was the primary issue of the Protestant Reformation. The vital point of this doctrine is that God does the work of justifying and not man. Man cannot justify himself.

Rom. 3:27, 28 clearly proclaims the truth of this tenet of our faith.

"Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law."

Verse 26 of the same chapter says, "For the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

While Romans is the book declaring God as the Justifier of a believing man, the Old Testament gives us some insight into this truth as well.

Paul proclaims that man is justified by faith. The opposite of a faith-produced justification would be a works-produced justification, a law-centered justification. Yet, nowhere does the psalmist in the psalm most associated with God's law (Ps. 119), announce that he is justified by the law. In fact, he repeatedly prays to the Lord to "save" him, to deliver him, to redeem him. He asks the Lord to *cause* him incline his heart to God's testimonies (36), to *cause* him to keep God's law (34), to *cause* him to walk in the path of God's commandments (35). He acknowledges that his blameless state is totally dependent on God. Nowhere does the psalmist comment on his goodness or his own abiding by the law as his guarantee for salvation. He does not expect God's help based on his own merit but "according to God's word." Because God is in a covenant relationship with the psalmist, God will perform all His promises regarding the salvation of His heir.

Ps. 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west, so far **has He removed** our transgressions from us."

Habakkuk tells us that "the righteous will live by his faith." Hab. 2:4b

Hebrew for "justify" is #6663 *tsadak* (or *sadaq*): a verb meaning to be right, to be righteous, to be just, to be innocent, to be put right, to justify, to declare right

"As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities." Is. 53:11

Not only does God do the justifying, He has made it a legal certainty. Theologians refer to this truth of justification as *forensic* because it has "to do with legal proceedings."

Grudem's Systematic Theology: "***justification*** *is an instantaneous legal act of God in which He (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ's righteousness as belonging to us, and (2) declares us to be righteous in his sight.*"

This act of justification involves the act of more than just declaring us innocent. That would be a merely neutral standing before God. We would be just as Adam (and we all know how that turned out). No, we are forgiven of our sins AND we are imputed the righteousness of Christ.

"I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, my soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, **He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness**, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." Is. 61:10

Impute: *to think of as belonging to someone, and therefore to cause it to belong to that person. God "thinks of" Adam's sin as belonging to us, and it therefore belongs to us, and in justification he thinks of Christ's righteousness as belonging to us and so relates to us on this basis*. Grudem

Rom. 4:6, “Just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God **credits** righteousness apart from works.”

Imputation is encountered three times in this doctrine of justification.

First, Adam’s sin was imputed to his descendants. Rom. 5:12

Second, our sin was imputed to Christ. 2 Cor. 5:21

Third, Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us. Now God sees Christ in us when we identify in covenant relationship with our Lord. Rom. 5:18

“For in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by faith.’” Rom. 1:17

This was the watchword of the Reformation. This verse helped to lead Martin Luther into the truth of justification by faith.

“*This text was to me the true gate of Paradise*.”

Now let us break down this verse phrase by phrase.

The righteous

Christ is our righteousness.

The believer has ceased trying to please God and has turned to Jesus instead for the righteousness that God gives freely.

1 Cor. 6:11, “Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

The focus is on the *past* work of Christ. He has done it all!

Shall live

In Galatians chapter 3, it is pointed out to the Galatians that they had started by receiving the Spirit by faith, but now they are trying to move toward perfection by the works of the flesh.

They had ceased to live by faith.

The focus on the *present* life of faith versus a life of works.

By his faith.

As the book of Hebrews tells us, especially in chapter 11, believing God means acting on that belief. With each entry in chapter 11, the writer tells us that each believer lived *by faith. “By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice … by faith Noah prepared an ark … by faith Abraham obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out not knowing where he was going.”*

The focus is on the *future* promises which give the believer the proper perspective for the life of faith. *“By faith Abraham lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”* Heb. 11:9, 10

The Law cannot save us.

Gal.2:16, “Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be

justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified."

Gal. 3:11, "Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, 'The righteous man shall live by faith.'"

Acts 13:39, "And through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses."

So what does the Law do for us?

Rom. 3:20, "Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin."

Gal. 3:24, "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith."

Now that we see the Law cannot save us, what can we do?

Rom. 4:5, "But to the one who does not work, but **believes in Him** who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness." Notice who God justifies … the ungodly.

W**hat is our future**?

Titus 3:7, "So that being justified by His grace, we would be made **heirs according to the hope of eternal life."**

Rom. 4:13, "For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be **heir of the world** was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith."

Rom. 5:1, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, **we have peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ … Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be **saved from the wrath of God** through Him."

John Murray says, "Justification is still the article of the standing or falling of the Church."

<u>Redemption Accomplished and Applied</u>

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this is His name by which He will be called, '**the LORD our righteousness**.'" Jer. 23:5, 6

We are justified because He is our righteousness.

He is our Jehovah-tsidkenu.

THE MAJESTY AND WONDER OF GOD

If I have one passion in life, it is to communicate the majesty and wonder of Who God is.

How can you or I do this?

We cannot.

It remains for the Word of God to accomplish this supernatural undertaking.

Within the deepest part of my soul, where no man can see and even I do not comprehend, I believe this is the greatest error within the Church today.

Please forgive the personal nature of this writing, but to me, this truth of God's majesty, missing from the lives of the body of Christ today is very personal and close to my heart.

If my heart could give voice to its longing, my heart would cry out to all who would listen: "Do not be robbed of the greatest joy of this earthly life." Beholding the majesty, the splendor, the wonder of our God is worth whatever it takes to be acquainted with, to live in, to come to know His magnificence.

"The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; the LORD has clothed and girded Himself with strength; indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting." Ps. 93:1, 2

"Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty, covering Yourself with light as with a cloak, stretching out heaven like a tent curtain. He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariots; He walks upon the wings of the wind; He makes the winds His messengers, flaming fire His ministers." Ps. 104:1-4

- **How can this psalmist write of something so divine as God's majesty?**

He is under the divine guidance of God Himself to "see" what man cannot see. The writer then communicates in language we use in order to give a rough translation of an appreciation we can only glimpse here.

"Listen to this, O Job, stand and consider the wonders of God…Now men do not see the light which is bright in the skies; but the wind has passed and cleared them. Out of the north comes golden splendor; around God is awesome majesty. The Almighty – we cannot find Him; He is exalted in power and He will not do violence to justice and abundant righteousness. Therefore men fear Him; He does not regard any who are wise of heart." Job 37: 14, 21-24

"And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When he had made purification of sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb. 1:3

The writer of Hebrews does not experience this glory firsthand, but he is a faithful scribe to the truths which the Holy Spirit of God has revealed to him.

"*Because God is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, it is appropriate that our theology be constructed with His greatness and goodness as the primary reference point*."

Christian Theology, Millard J. Erickson, p. 82

We see glimpses of God's glory and majesty here on earth. There are many ways of seeing His splendor. But the method of greatest transparency of this magnificence is in His word.

Some may say that they see His hand in the works of nature or the miracle of birth, but Scripture reveals Who God truly is. Any human being can see how special a birth is or a beautiful sunset, but only the redeemed child of God, in covenant relationship with Him, can truly "see" His majesty. When the word of God transforms the mind of a disciple of Christ, he is then equipped to witness the reality of God's glory.

The poet in Psalm 119:18, asks God to "open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law."

He further says, "Make me understand the way of Your precepts, so I will meditate on Your wonders." 119:27

- **What is involved in manifesting God's glory?**

Even judgment is a revelation of Who God is. This, to the untaught mind, seems harsh and cruel. But to the mind molded by God's word, to an understanding deepened by divine disclosure, the believing heart acknowledges the perfectly just act of God in His righteous judgment.

"But the LORD of hosts will be exalted in judgment, and the holy God will show Himself holy in righteousness." Isaiah 5:16

Speaking of His coming judgment, "The pride of man will be humbled and the loftiness of men will be abased; and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day." Is. 2:17

"Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; *because* His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bondservants on her." Rev. 19:1b-2

Note here *when* and *why* the shouts of "Hallelujah" come.

Even the judgment that awaits many rebellious people will cause God to be regarded as majestic and glorious. This seems unnatural to us because *it is* unnatural; it is supernatural and only a heart and mind that yields itself to the truths of Scripture will accept it as good and true.

- **What is the glory of God?**

The word "glory" is *doxa* in Greek. It comes from the verb *dokeo* which means "to seem." The word primarily means opinion, reputation or value. It indicates the worth one sees in another, and estimate and the honor resulting from a good opinion.

In biblical terms, the word *doxa* takes on special meaning as it relates to Christ. There is a clear message in the writers of the New testament choosing the same word- doxa- in referring to God's glory and to the glory of Christ.(1 Tim.3:16; Rom. 6:4; Lk. 2:14; Acts 7:55; Heb. 13:21; 1 Cor. 2:8; Jms. 2:1)

In another sense, God's "glory" means the bright light that surrounds God's presence. Since God is spirit, and not energy or matter, this visible light is not part of God's being but is something that was created. We may define it as follows: God's glory is the created brightness that surrounds God's revelation of himself." W. Grudem, Systematic Theology

- **Our response**

"Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; speak of all His wonders. Glory in His holy name; let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad…Remember His wonders which He has done, His marvel and the judgments uttered by His mouth." Ps. 105:2, 3, 5

"On the glorious splendor of Your majesty and on Your wonderful works, I will meditate."

Ps. 145:5

"Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul observes them." 119:129

Here it is not just a mere admission that God is right. The psalmist does not just acquiesce with mental assent; his very *soul* keeps and obeys God's truths.

We are His! "Everyone who is called by My name, and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed, even whom I have made." Is. 43:7

We learn Rom 3:23 as young Christians: "For all have sinned and fall short of the GLORY of God." God made us for His glory. We were to be glorious representatives of His on earth. But we have failed in this. Praise be to our Priest, Prophet and King Who did not fail in representing God's glory to the world.

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14

"I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." Jn. 17:4, 5

Humility

The only way to truly "see" God in His glory and majesty is to come in humility and submission, saying, "Lord, only You can reveal truth."

As the Church, we are far from the capability of seeing our God.

Even Isaiah was unable to see Him at first. In Is. 6, the prophet tells us that he was driven to cry out, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." As Isaiah saw the glory of God, he realized his own unworthy nature before a holy God. His response was not one of awe and wonder, but fear and recognition of his sin.

Apart from this humble response, we will not see God's glory. Jesus tells us that the poor in spirit are blessed to be a part of the kingdom of heaven. Not the intelligent, proud or talented, but the poor in spirit, those who acknowledge their deep dependence on a King's benevolent love will enter His kingdom.

In order to see the contrasting natural response to Who our Lord is, note the way Jesus was viewed by man. "For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from who men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him." Is. 53:2, 3

But God did not leave Him in obscurity and neglect. Phil. 2: 9-11 tells us, "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Rev. 5:13 echoes this, "And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, 'To Him Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."

Because David had a heart for God, he could write, "Who is the King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates, and lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory." Ps. 24:8-10

One of the saddest things in Scripture to me is the progression of the word *glory* in the book of Ezekiel. We see the glory of the Lord in Ez.3:23. Read Ez. 10:1-5; 15, 18, 19; 11:22, 23. As you read these verses, you will see the glory of God reluctantly leaving His temple. "Then the cherubim lifted up their wings with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them. The glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood over the mountain which is east of the city."

But never fear, God will prevail. In the end of the book, Ezekiel gives us a glimpse of the future.

Read Ez. 43 and note the return of the glory of God to His temple.

“And the city has no need of the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.” Rev. 21:23

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

"God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female, He created them." Gen. 1:28

"Adam" perhaps means red earth and is the initial Hebrew name for man in the Old Testament.

"Man came into existence by a distinct act of creation. He bore originally, and in an important sense still bears, the image and likeness of God." Unger's Bible Dictionary

The story of man is aptly summed up by the terms of G. Campbell Morgan: generation, degeneration and regeneration.

Why was man created by God?

Man was not created by God because of any lack or need of God's. God created man because it pleased Him to do so. Is. 43:7 "Everyone who is called by My name, and **whom I have created for My glory,** whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

The first question in the Westminster larger Catechism is "What is the chief and highest end of man?" The proper response is, "Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy Him forever."

How was man created?

Man was created by a divine, direct and definite act of God. He was created in the image of God.

"Then God said, 'Let Us make man on Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." Gen. 1:26

"*Man's body was formed from the lower elements-the divine Spirit was inbreathed-a living soul resulted from the union of the first two*." Herbert Lockyer, All the Doctrines of the Bible

Through this **body** man has a *world consciousness*. The five senses are the connecting agent to the world. The non-believer senses the world through the same senses as the believer. But the believer in Yahweh has the distinct advantage of seeing, hearing, touching, etc., the world with the divine insight which God alone offers him. Gen. 2:7b, "The Lord breathed … the breath of life and man became a living soul."

Man was not created as an infant, he was fully and perfectly functioning in intellectual ability.

Gen. 2:20

While the **body** represents *world consciousness*, the **soul** is the source of *self-consciousness*.

1 Cor. 2:11

There are many emotions within the soul of man.

"I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, my **soul** will exult in my God." Is. 61:10a

"Truly we are guilty concerning our brother, because we saw the distress of his **soul** when he pleaded with us, yet we would not listen; therefore the distress has come upon us." Gen. 42:21

Animals do not enjoy this faculty: "Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding." Ps. 32:9a

Within the **spirit** of man lies the *God-consciousness* divinely sparked by the very life of God.

"We had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of **spirits** and live?" Heb. 12:9

“But it is a **spirit** in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.” Job 32:8

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Th. 5:23

You may also think of these likenesses to God in this sense: **spirituality**, God is Spirit and we are like Him in spirit; **personality**, God is Person and we also have personality; **holiness**, God is holy and has called His children to bear the family resemblance of holiness; **love**, God is love and has endowed us with great propensity to love and be loved to reflect this aspect of His being; **dominion**, God is sovereign and He created man to rule, but first man must rule himself through the power of God’s Spirit.

“*God meant the body to be the servant of the soul, and the soul, the servant of the spirit: and spirit, soul and body all servants of His and avenues along which He can journey to a lost world.”* Herbert Lockyer

Unlike certain postmodern philosophical perspectives, man is not just a thinking animal. The distinction between man and animal is considerable. What animal can properly use tools to the degree that a four year-old child does? More outstanding, what animal can create a tool for complex use? This act of creating things is a direct reflection of our being made in the image of our Creator. A bird continues to build the nest the same way he did thousands of generations ago; look at the complexity of architecture in the buildings man erects.

What animal has the gift of expressing articulate thought? Certain animals can mimic speech, but none can express complicated thought or converse on basic topics. Animals can learn to repeat particular acts because of rewards or punishments. But man acts based on far more sophisticated reasoning. Sometimes his reasons are not moral, but his actions are not motivated purely by instincts. If man is only an animal, then why not transfuse an animal’s blood into a human when we run low on blood donors?

One of the most flawed ways of regarding man it that of *materialism*. This view holds that man is only material and that indeed all life is no more than the material from which it derives its life. In contrast, the man God created has a soul in addition to his body; he has a spirit which can commune with Almighty God.

Man is not just an animal. Man is not just material. Man is the pinnacle of God’s creative activity because he is made in the image of God.

Why did man fall?

Eccl.7:29 “Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices.” God declared His work at creation to be very good in Gen. 1:31.

The fall of man was due to his unbelief in what God said. “The serpent said to the woman, ‘You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.” Gen. 3:4-6

Man alone is represented in scripture as sinful. A future judgment and an immortal destiny lie before man.

What did man lose at the fall?

“Just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.” Rom. 5:12

“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually appraised.” 1 Cor. 2:14

“For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.” Rom. 8:6, 7

According to Eph. 4:19, man’s understanding has been darkened.

He is spiritually dead. Eph. 2:1

He is under wrath and judgment. John 5:28, 29

“But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.” Is. 59:2

“Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man.” Gen. 9:6

“With it (the tongue) we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God.” James 3:9

Man continues to be regarded as made in the image of God, although that image is now distorted. Even though men are sinful, there remains enough likeness to the Creator that to murder another person is to violate the part of creation that most resembles God.

What is the only hope of man?

“So also it is written, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living soul.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit…The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven…Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will bear the image of the heavenly.” 1Cor. 15:45, 47, 49

“For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.” Rom. 5:17

“Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Cor. 5:21

“If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He Who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit Who dwells in you.” Ro. 8:10, 11

“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’” Matt. 19:28

What is the blessed privilege of man?

It should give us a profound sense of dignity and significance as we reflect on the realization that God created man when He desired to create something in His own image and likeness. He created wonders of our universe … remarkable and majestic worlds, yet we are more like our Creator than any of His other works. Because of this great truth, every human being, no matter how marred by sin, how small, how old, how weak, how different than the elite, each human being is made in the image of God. The grave implications for our own conduct demand that we regard every human with dignity and significance. Human life, made in His image, is the great privilege and honor we possess; we must never devalue this life.

“You have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One Who created him.” Col. 3:10

“Put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” Eph. 4:24

"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; what is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You have crowned him with glory and majesty!" Ps. 8:3-5

The ultimate image of God is seen in our Lord Himself.

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." Col. 1:15

"He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb. 1:3

PROPITIATION

“”Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make **propitiation** for the sins of the people.” Heb. 2:17

“And He Himself is the **propitiation** for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” 1 Jn. 2:2

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins.” 1 Jn. 4:10

Christ Jesus was “displayed publicly as a **propitiation** in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” Rom. 3:25, 26

- Propitiation: *hilasmos* means “a sacrifice that bears God’s wrath to the end and in so doing changes God’s wrath toward us into favor.” Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology

Hilasterion is the Greek word for mercy-seat. This was the lid or cover of the ark of the covenant. Once a year expiation or atonement was made on this mercy-seat on the Day of Atonement.

David tells us in Ps. 32:1, “How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”

Many of the doctrines are woven together. The doctrines of sin, atonement, covenant, God’s holiness, justice, righteousness and wrath are some of the related teachings associated with propitiation.

The holiness of God demands His attention to the sin which is resident in man. The justice of God requires Him to punish the sinner for his offence. God’s righteousness has been violated by the sin. His wrath will without doubt fall upon the sinner. Yet the atonement is His answer to the dilemma of His justice **and** His lovingkindness toward His covenant children.

- To remove us from the wrath of God that we deserved because of sin, Christ died as a propitiation for our sins.

The propitiation of Calvary thereby clearly demonstrated that God is perfectly righteous: “it was to prove at the present time that He Himself is righteous and that He justifies him who has faith in Jesus ” (Rom.3:26).

- This concept of substitution was clearly indicated in the Old Testament.

Is. 53:6, “All of us like sheep have gone astray, each one of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.”

“Surely our griefs He Himself bore and our sorrows He carried.” Is. 53:4a

The entire system of Old Testament sacrifices pointed to the substitutionary nature of the offering.

> “He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf.” Lev. 1:4

For a poignant type of Christ’s substitutionary work, we may look at Gen. 22.

Here Abraham is instructed to sacrifice his son. Isaac was the promised son, the son born after Abraham was as good as dead. The patriarch was obedient though and proceeded to trust that God could raise Isaac from the dead if need be.

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, ‘In Isaac you descendants shall be called.’ He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.” Heb. 11:17-19

God did not require the life of Isaac, but instead God Himself provided a ram for the offering. Gen. 22:14 records the name we have come to rely upon: **Jehovah-jireh, the LORD will provide**.

Christ is seen in the ram offered up as Isaac’s substitute. Christ was offered in our place as well.

Is. 53:10, “But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a **guilt offering**, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.”

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us – for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.’” Gal. 3:13

- The idea of the substitution is seen in the Passover. Christ is our Passover Lamb.

“The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.”

Ex. 12:13

“Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.” 1 Cor. 5:7b

“The next day he (John the Baptist) saw Jesus coming to him and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world!’” Jn. 1:29

“And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” 1 Pet. 2:24

“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.” Acts 13:38, 39

The psalmist in Psalm 119:122, asks God to be his **surety** … his **guarantee** for good. God has answered this prayer through the life and work of Jesus Christ.

Have you truly beheld the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world?

He is your Propitiation.

REDEMPTION

Some doctrines are inter-related with other key teachings. The doctrine of redemption falls into this category. The need for redemption was required because of sin. The willing response of Almighty God to achieve this redemption was due to His unfailing covenant love: His *hesed*. The actual reality of redeeming was put into effect by the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. By His work we are redeemed, justified and regenerated. So the doctrine of redemption touches on the doctrines of man, sin, covenant, propitiation, justification, regeneration and the work of the Trinity in attaining the purchase of man's immortal soul.

"Knowing that you were not **redeemed** with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with the precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." 1 Pet.1:18, 19

"For you have been **bought with a price**: therefore glorify God in your body." 1 Cor.6:20

"And they will call them, 'The holy people, the **redeemed** of the LORD;' and you will be called, 'Sought out, a city not forsaken.'" Is. 62:12

"In Him we have **redemption** through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace… The Holy Spirit is given as a pledge of out inheritance, with a view to the **redemption** of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory." Eph. 1:7, 14

"And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and **purchased** for God with You blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.' " Rev. 5:9

"But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, Who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and **redemption**." 1 Cor. 1:30

Words used regarding redemption

**Lutroo (Greek)*: to loose by a price, the price paid for freeing a captive, release from bondage or captivity

"Jesus gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time." 1 Tim. 2:6

"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Matt. 20:28

**Exagorazo (Greek):* to purchase out, to buy up out of the possession of any one, this is a legal term, paying a ransom demanded by the law; the "agora" was the forum or marketplace from which slaves were purchased; *ex*: means "out;" so this means "out of the marketplace"

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us – for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.'" Gal. 3:13

**Padah (Hebrew)*: to set free, to let go

"*When God liberated His oppressed people in Old Testament days, He set them free by the substitution of a spotless lamb to bear the merited stroke of death in their place and stead*."

H. Lockyer

" 'Forgive Your people Israel whom You have redeemed, O LORD, and do not place the guilt of innocent blood in the midst of You people Israel.' And the bloodguiltiness shall be forgiven them." Deut. 21:8

"The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned." Ps. 34:22

"So I will deliver you from the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem you from the grasp of the violent." Jer. 15:21

**P'dooth* (Hebrew): division; this is the bloodword redemption; the "division" is made by the sprinkled blood of the spotless lamb

"He has sent redemption to His people; He has ordained His covenant forever; holy and awesome is His name." Ps 111:9

"O Israel, hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is lovingkindness, and with Him is abundant redemption." Ps. 130:7

Our redemption by the precious blood of Jesus Christ should result in a **division** between the believer's lifestyle and that of the world.

**Panrak* (Hebrew): to break off, to wear away, rescue, deliver, there is understood a certain element of violence in the breaking off due to the Deliverer's power

"He has rescued us from our adversaries, for His lovingkindness is everlasting." Ps. 136:24

**Ga'al* (Hebrew): to redeem, ransom, recover, avenge; this word points to the office of the one who was kinsman, deliverer, redeemer, husband and avenger

"Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.' " Ex. 6:6

"As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth." Job 19:25

"Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion." Ps. 103:4

"A Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," declares the Lord. Is. 59:20

Redemption here has more in mind than the act of buying back. The aspect of avenging wrongs done to the injured party is expressed in this term. For the Christian, this will occur when Christ judges the nations at His coming.

The Old Testament gives us many pictures of the concept of buying someone out of slavery.

God purchased His own people out of bondage to Egypt.

The sacrificial lamb offered as atonement was in effect buying the offender out of the debt to death.

The practice of redeeming is seen in the occurrence of Jubilee.

"If there are still many years, he shall refund part of his purchase price in proportion to them for his own **redemption;** and if few years remain until the year of jubilee, he shall so calculate with him. In proportion to his years he is to refund the amount for his **redemption**." Lev. 25:51, 52

- **How does God redeem?**

"They are Your servants and Your people whom You redeemed by Your great power and by Your strong hand." Neh. 1:10

"For thus says the LORD, 'You were sold for nothing and you will be redeemed without money.'" Is. 52:3

“And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” Heb. 9:12

- **Why does God redeem?**

“But because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.” Deut. 7:8

“In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, and He lifted them and carried them all the days of old.”

Is. 63:9

“Jesus gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” Tit. 2:14

- **Can a man redeem himself**?

“No man can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him – for the redemption of his soul is costly, and he should cease trying forever.” Ps. 49:7, 8

“Then he shall have redemption right after he has been sold. One of his brothers may redeem him.” Lev. 25:48

“Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.” Rom. 7:24, 25

The redemption of souls is not in question here. This is referring to actual legal redemption from bondage. But in reading Heb. 2:14-18, we find that our elder Brother, the Lord Jesus, has indeed redeemed His brethren! He has become our *Goel*, our Kinsman-Redeemer. The *Goel* in Old Testament times would not only purchase his brother out of bondage, he would avenge his affliction or death. Christ, by His own death, destroyed man’s murderer: Satan himself.

John 8:44

“*Jehovah is the redemptive and covenant-keeping name of God*.” H. Lockyer

There remains but one more question for the believer: do you value your redemption?

Do you constantly walk in grateful surrender to the One Who purchased you from bondage to sin and death?

Do you constantly talk of your Redeemer and His tremendous work on your behalf?

Do you long to honor His redeeming love by serving Him with a pure heart?

Redemption is the main story of the Bible from beginning to the end. The Redemption song (Rev. 5:9) of God is the music on every page of scripture. Your life, from beginning to end, is another movement in this symphonic masterpiece composed by God Himself.

“But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob, and He Who formed you, O Israel. ‘Do not fear for I have redeemed (ga’al) you; I have called you by name; **you are Mine**!’”

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, Whom you have from God, and that **you are not your own**? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” 1 Cor.6:19, 20

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

The teaching or doctrine on the Righteousness of God is critical for the believer to understand. This attribute of God is the pivot on which His ways operate. If our God were not righteous, we would have no need for a savior. If our God were not righteous, we could never depend on His faithful carrying out of His promises. If our God were not righteous, His communicated word to us would be untrustworthy.

Sir Walter Scott says, "*Righteousness is the necessary basis of God's dealing with saint and sinner; the ground too, on which grace gloriously sways its scepter (Rom. 5:21), and the super-structure on which all Christian life, progress and service repose. It underlies every position and relation of the arch of divine revelation*."

"God always acts rightly, in perfect harmony with His nature in all His actions." Herbert Lockyer

We greatly need to see His righteousness before we can acknowledge that we are devoid of it.

A proper vision of God in His righteous state will forever abolish the idea of my own merit before Him.

"For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God." Rom. 10:3

Deut. 32:4, "The Rock! His work is perfect. All His ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is He."

Ps. 96:13, "Before the LORD, for He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness."

Ps. 97:2, "Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne."

Ps. 97:6, "The heavens declare His Righteousness and all the peoples have seen His glory."

Ps. 98:2, "The LORD has made known His salvation; He has revealed His Righteousness in the sight of the nations."

Ps. 111:3, "Splendid and majestic is His work, and His Righteousness endures forever."

God is the absolute and final standard of righteousness, therefore no standard outside of God exists by which we measure righteousness or justice.

Grudem's Systematic Theology tells us that "*God's righteousness means that God always acts in accordance with what is right and is Himself the final standard of what is right*."

"For the sake of My name I delay My wrath, and for My praise I restrain it for you, in order not to cut you off." Is. 48:9

"For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like a filthy garment." Is. 64:6a

"Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Is. 6:5

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:23

"But the LORD of hosts will be exalted in judgment and the holy God will show Himself holy in righteousness." Is. 5:16

"A destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness." Is. 10:22b

It is established; we need a Savior.

“Declare and set forth your case; indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none except Me.” Is. 45:21

“For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh.”

Rom. 8:3

To be a Righteous Judge, our God must deal with sin. With the atoning work of Jesus Christ, God has dealt with sin. The debt is paid. But there remains the problem of our righteousness.

Jesus Himself tells us in the Sermon on the Mount, “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.” Matt.5:20

“But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, Who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.” 1 Cor. 1:30

(Jesus Christ) “Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” Rom. 3:25-26

“He made Him Who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Cor. 5:21

Now what?

“And do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin, as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” Rom 6:13

“Present your members as slaves to righteousness resulting in sanctification.” Rom. 6:19b

“For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.” Gal. 5:5

“If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.” Rom 8:10

Westminster Confession: “*Faith, receiving and resting on Christ and His Righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification, yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces*.”

“As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many.” Is. 53:11

“For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness.” Is. 61:10

Our Righteousness is not Something but Someone.

Jer. 23:6b, “And this is the name by which He will be called, ‘The LORD our righteousness.’”

Jehovah-tsidkenu

SALVATION

"May Your lovingkindnesses also come to me, O LORD, Your salvation according to Your word. Ps. 119:41

What is salvation?

Webster's tells us that salvation is 1) a saving or being saved from danger, evil, difficulty, destruction, etc. 2) a person or thing that is a means, cause, or source of preservation or rescue

3) a spiritual rescue from the consequences of sin; redemption

As always, biblical terms require an understanding of the original language in which they were first used. A familiarity with the word in Hebrew or Greek will better enable the reader to grasp the meaning with confidence and cause less confusion when discussing the text in question.

The above reference is in the Old Testament which is primarily written in Hebrew. So we will look for the meaning of salvation in this context.

Here in Psalm 119:41, salvation is *teshuw'ah*, which means deliverance, help, safety, victory. It comes from the verb which means to rescue; it is related to *yasha*, a verb which means to free. This is the word from which we get our word for "savior".

Much is written in the New Testament regarding salvation, so finding the Greek word for salvation will aid us in further study of the word.

Ephesians 1:13, 14 tells us, "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your **salvation** – having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's won possession, to the praise of His glory."

The Greek here is *soteria*. This word means deliverance from danger or destruction; deliverance from sin and its spiritual consequences. Jesus uses this word only twice (Luke 19:9 and John 4:22). For Jesus, to have salvation was to have the kingdom of God within oneself. This indicates salvation to be a present experience.

Jesus taught that when one possesses salvation (also termed by Jesus as eternal life), death would cause no interruption in the communication of the person with God. This is why God can be referred to as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is the God of the living and not of the dead. They are all currently in the presence of God Himself and enjoying a resurrection life with their God. (Luke 16:22; 20:37, 38; 23:43)

Now that we have the original languages definitions and the English definition of this term, we can begin to examine scripture references to salvation with more clarity.

Why do we need a savior?

In brief, because God is holy and we have fallen short of His holiness.

God is our Creator and has authority to designate what sin is and He has the authority to demand our obedience to His standard.

Rom. 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

When was salvation, in essence, created?

There is another amazing element to the beauty of salvation: God planned it long ago.

"What a marvelous origin the salvation of your souls has! It antedates creation, being conceived in the mind of God in the dateless past. It came to us according to the eternal purpose of God." Herbert Lockyer

"This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord." Eph 3:11

"Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity." 2 Tim. 1:9

"In the hope of eternal life, which God, Who cannot lie, promised long ages ago." Tit. 1:2

What a tremendous calm it gives the soul to know that our all-knowing, all-powerful, all-gracious God, not only has provided our salvation but He has provided it for all time and since before time began! If He can create a universe like ours how can we doubt that He can save our eternal souls?

Why would Jesus, Who was one with the Father, resplendent in glory, lay aside His garments of majesty and come to our aid as a mere man, clothed in humanity?

1Tim. 1:15, "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost."

"For the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost." Luke 19:10

By the way, the previous verse, Luke 19:9, is one of the two occasions where Jesus uses the term *soteria*. "And Jesus said to him, 'Today **salvation** has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.'"

Read Philippians 2:5-13 This passage explains the attitude of our Lord in coming to save His sheep.

He did not leave His glory above to become a model for obedience or a teacher of truth. He came to save the lost from their future and current destruction.

Even His name designates His purpose in coming to us: "You shall call His name Jesus; for He will save His people from their sins." Matt. 1:21

God has chosen His Son to be the provider of salvation.

How do we obtain salvation?

"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be **saved.**" Acts 4:12

Believing in the "name" of Jesus means believing in the Person of Jesus. One must know Who He is in order to believe in His name. A basic understanding of Who Jesus is plays a role in salvation. For genuine salvation to exist, God alone knows to what degree this understanding of Who Jesus is must take place. But the evidence of the truth of salvation is in the new believer's resurrection life.

"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be **saved**; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in **salvation**." Rom. 10:9, 10

"Of Him the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins." Acts 10:43

"Jesus answered him, 'Truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God... The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.'" John 3:3, 8

"And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life." 1 John 5:11-13

Who is able to receive salvation?

"*It is freely offered to all men, but is conditioned upon repentance and faith in Christ*."

Unger's Bible Dictionary

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit Whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:5-7

God our Savior "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth." 1 Tim. 2:4

Unger's Bible Dictionary: "*Salvation proceeds from the love of God, is based upon the atonement wrought by Christ, is realized in forgiveness, regeneration, sanctification, and culminates in the resurrection and glorification of all true believers."*

How are we to regard salvation?

We are to regard salvation as eternal and unshakeable.

"Lift up your eyes to the sky, then look to the earth beneath; for the sky will vanish like smoke, and the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants will die in like manner; but My **salvation** will be forever, and My righteousness will not wane." Is. 51:6

"Israel has been saved by the LORD with an **everlasting salvation**; you will not be put to shame or humiliated to all eternity." Is. 45:17

We are to regard salvation with gravity and gratitude.

"How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will." Heb. 2:3, 4

We are to see our **salvation** as **Someone** not something.

"Behold, God is my **salvation**, I will trust and not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and song and **He has become my salvation**." Is. 12:2

Elohim Yeshuah

"The LORD is my light and my **salvation**; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread?"Ps. 27:1

“He only is my rock and my **salvation**, my stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.” Ps 62:2

“*God is able to keep what He has committed unto us, seeing that what He committed was Himself*.” Herbert Lockyer

SANCTIFICATION

When looking at doctrinal points, it is preferential to search for certain background information.

1. In the case of this word – "sanctification" – find the word in the original language.

Sanctification - Greek *hagiasmos:* from *hagiazo*, to sanctify

It can be translated as holiness, separation unto God.

This word points to the activity of the Holy Spirit in setting man apart to salvation, redeeming him, and also refers to the work of the Holy Spirit enabling him to be holy even as God is holy.

2. Now that you are armed with the definition of the word in its original intent, the next step is to compare its use in many cross references in Scripture. This will show you how each author, as inspired by God, intends for the word to be used.

Check a concordance which indicates the verses which use the word "sanctification" or "sanctify."

Sanctify, sanctifies: Jn. 17:17, 19; Eph. 5:26; 1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 2:11; 9:13; 13:12; 1 Pet. 3:15

Sanctified: Jn. 10:36; Acts 20:32; 26:18; Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11;7:141 Tim. 4:5; 2 Tim. 2:21; Heb. 10:10, 14

Sanctification: 1 Cor. 1:30; 1 Thes. 4:3, 4; 2 Thes. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2

After reading and noting each use of the word "sanctification", you will have a better understanding of its meaning in regard to the doctrine.

This may seem laborious, but it is a safeguard against false teaching based on misuse of a term that is not clearly understood.

3. Then it is helpful to discover any information you may glean from Bible dictionaries or commentaries. A good Bible dictionary is inexpensive and a great resource. Online sites offer help as well.

Unger's Bible Dictionary is a standard tool used for many decades.

This source provides helpful information regarding **sanctification.**

The following information comes from Unger's.

This word (and its counterpart in Hebrew: *qadash*) indicates a separation from the secular and sinful, and the setting apart for a sacred purpose.

The New Testament presents the doctrine of sanctification in three aspects: positional, experiential and ultimate.

Positional is the possession of everyone "in Christ." Positional sanctification is just as complete for the weakest and youngest believer as it is for the strongest and oldest. All believers are "saints" and are "sanctified." Acts 20:32; Rom. 12:1; Eph. 4:1; Col. 3:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; 5:1, 2; 6:1-8, 11; Jude 1:1

Experiential is the phase of sanctification effected by faith. (This is the growth and process part of sanctification.) Rom. 6:1-11

Ultimate sanctification is the glorification or complete conformity to Christ at His coming.

1 John3:1-3; Rom. 8:29, 30; Jude 1:24, 25

4. Now research any theology sources you may have available.
   Sanctification is defined in Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology as: *a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and more like Christ in our actual lives*.

From this definition, we see that God and man work together for the purpose of the sanctified nature of the believer. When there are two forces at work, in this case God and man, we say that the work of sanctification is *synergistic* (combined efforts for the end goal). Not covered here but mentioned as a contrast is justification. This particular doctrine is *monergistic*. In the act of justification, the traditional view is that God alone works on man's behalf. God working alone is *monergistic*. These two theological terms may appear in certain works which you consider.

Because you have invested much time and energy into your research concerning the **doctrine of sanctification**, you are better equipped to agree or disagree with the things which man may say regarding this doctrine. You do not need to rely on other's opinions. You have done your own investigation and you can draw your own conclusions based on the truth which God Himself has shown you.

*A word of advice is appropriate here, though.

If you come up with a theory which has escaped the notice of centuries of Christians and you alone are now privy to this jewel of theological mystery, you may have wandered down a road less traveled and stumbled on an unturned rock. Some rocks are unturned for good reason.

The danger of the novice theologian is that we do not always see the extrapolated ramifications of our "discoveries." That is why a good, sound systematic theology is a tried and true treasure.

Find a source you feel is trustworthy and check out your views with those of the trusted source.

You may differ on some points and not others, but you are armed with the tools to **think** through most all of your own questions now.

You may never be a theologian in the classical sense, but you will be a **thinking** Christian dependent on no one but the Spirit of God. Christians have for too long abdicated the intellectual role in society, even in Christian society. It is time we take back the influence in our churches, homes, schools and communities.

Think, Christian!

SATAN

The doctrine of Satan is a difficult study to undertake on many levels. It can be ignored, which is a mistake, or it can become a priority, which also is in error. To properly attempt a biblical view of the enemy of our souls, we must approach this study as any other. The scriptures must lead the way.

"*God, Christ, prophets, apostles and Satan-bound souls had no doubts as to the reality of this enemy of man*." Lockyer

While we encounter Satan early in the book of Genesis, there are actually passages which infer some information about his existence prior to the Garden of Eden.

Is. 14:12-24, "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, 'I will ascent to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, they will ponder over you, saying, 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a wilderness and overthrew its cities, who did not allow his prisoners to go home?' All the kings of the nations lie in glory, each in his own tomb. But you have been cast out of your tomb like a rejected branch, clothed with the slain who are pierced with a sword, who go down to the stones of the pit like a trampled corpse… just as I have planned so it will stand."

Ez. 28:11-19, "… you had the seal of perfection … you were in Eden, the garden of God … you were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God… you were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you."

The Prince of Tyre foreshadows the Beast. (Dan. 7:8; Rev. 19:20)

"*As the anointed cherub, he covered God's throne; he guarded it. But instead of covering it, he coveted it and so fell.*" Lockyer

And He (Jesus) said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning." Lk. 10:18

The name, "Satan", means *adversary* in the Hebrew.

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them." Job 1:6 Satan goes on to accuse Job of not being a blameless man and requests of God permission to torment him.

"Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel." 1 Chron. 21:1

"Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.' Zech. 3:1

Satan bound people with infirmities. "And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?" Lk. 13:16

He is also referred to as the devil or *diabolos* in the New Testament. This word means accuser.

He is the accuser of God's people.

Rev. 12:9, 10

He is also referred to as Apollyon which means "destroyer" in Rev. 9:11.

He is the tempter in Matt.4:3; 1 Thes. 3:5.

He is the "wicked one" in 1 John 5:18, 19.

He is the "ruler of this world" in John 12:31, 14:30; 16:11.

He is "god of this world" in 2 Cor. 4:4.

He is seen as presiding over mankind's anti-God lifestyles in Eph. 2:2; 1 John 5:19; Rev. 12:9.

He is the father of lies in Jn.8:44.

He is the serpent who fooled Eve in Rev. 12:9; 20:2.

He disguises himself as an angel of light in 2 Cor. 11:14.

He is described as a roaring lion in 1 Pet. 5:8.

He is a dragon in Rev. 12:9.

He is the enemy of Christ in Matt. 4:1-11; 16:23; Luke 4:13; 22:3.

He is now the enemy of the followers of Christ. Luke 22:32; 2 Cor. 2:11; 11:3-15; Eph. 6:16

He is defeated by Christ. Matt. 12:29

He is resisted by the followers of Christ. Eph. 6:10-18; James 4:7; 1 Pet.5:9, 10; 1 John 4:4

He is destined for the lake of fire. Rev. 20:10

Since Satan is a "liar and the father of lies", distortion or denial of the truth is always present in false religions, especially those with a strong demonic influence. Grudem

"But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?'" Acts 5:3

"During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray him." Jn. 13:2

"I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." 1 Cor. 5:5

"Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme." 1 Tim 1:20

"And they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will." 2 Tim. 2:26

Demons

While there is one devil, there is more than one *daimon,* Greek for demon. It can refer to evil spirits. According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, this word denotes the spiritual agents acting in all idolatry. The idol itself is nothing, but every idol has a demon associated with it who induces idolatry with its worship and sacrifices. 1 Cor. 10:20, 21; Rev. 9:20; Deut. 32:17; Is 13:21; 34:14; 65:3, 11

"*Demons are evil angels who sinned against God and who now continually work evil in the world."* Grudem

"*We are to consider Satan and the demons as one doctrine because they were one in their rejection of God's claim, and have remained one since their deposition from heaven in their*

diabolical purpose to thwart God's benign purposes on man's behalf. Had Lucifer not become Satan, there would have been no demons." Lockyer

Demons try to seduce believers.

"But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons." 1 Tim. 4:1

"Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God." Lev.19:31 (See Lev.20:6, 27)

"Or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead." Deut. 18:11

"When they say to you, 'Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,' should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn." Is. 8:19, 20

Demons act under the supervision of Satan.

"And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty."

Rev. 16:13, 14

Demons tremble before God.

"You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder." James. 2:19

Demons recognize Christ as Lord and coming Judge.

"And they cried out, saying, 'What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?'" Matt.8:29

"Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, 'You are the Son of God!' But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ.'" Lk. 4:41

"And the evil spirit answered and said to them, 'I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?'" Acts 19:15

Jesus rebuked demons.

"And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once."

Matt. 17:18

"When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: 'He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases.'"

Matt. 8:16, 17

There are varying degrees of wickedness with demons.

“Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation.” Matt. 12:45

Future for Satan and the demons

“Who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God… The one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders.” 2 Thes. 2:4, 9

“I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.” Rev. 2:9

“And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a place of every unclean bird.” Rev. 18:2

“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’” Matt. 25:41

“And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.” Jude 6

“For God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.” 2 Pet. 2:4

How does all of this effect us?

“In which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.” Eph. 2:2

“To open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.” Acts 26:18

“You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.” Acts 10:38

“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death, He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Heb. 2:14

“I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.” 1 Jn. 2:13

What is our response to the power of Satan?

“So that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.”

2 Cor. 2:11

“These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them.” Mk. 4:15

“But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.” 2 Cor. 11:3

“The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for the purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John 3:8

“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” James 4:7, 8

“And do not give the devil an opportunity.” Eph. 4:27

“Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” John 12:31

“And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged… These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world. ” John 16:11, 33

God is at work through His people building His kingdom. As we labor in this great work, God’s enemy and ours will also be at work to thwart the plans of our Sovereign. We need not tremble or fear this accuser; his fate is already assured. We need not ignore his existence; he is committed to dishonoring our Lord. He is committed to his agenda of destruction and we need to be more committed in following our mandate to win the world for the kingdom of our Heavenly King.

SIN

There are several words for “sin” in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, “iniquity” is # 5771 *awon*: guilt, evil, iniquity, punishment; it refers to the idea of deliberate twisting or perverting; it conveys the idea of conscious sin

This word is used in Gen. 4:13; Ex. 20:5; 34:7; Is. 53:11; Jer. 11:10; 13:22

Also an Old Testament word, “transgression” is # 6588 *pesha*: transgression, rebellion; this word primarily displays a rebellion against God and His laws (Is. 58:1; 59:12; Amos 5:12)

“Trespass” is # 817 *asham*: this word refers to the idea of guilt or offense due to wrongdoing; this term may also refer to the offering associated with a sin and the ensuing guilt (Lev. 5:6)

“Sin” is # 2403 *hatta’t*: sin, transgression, sin offering, punishment; this word can refer to sins committed against God or man

Mirrored in the New Testament, there are four primary words for sin as well.

They are:

#93 *adikia*: injustice, what is not conformable with justice, that which is wrong

1 John 5:17 says, “All unrighteousness (*adikia*) is sin (*hamartia*# 266). Whatever does not meet God’s justice is missing God’s goal for us.

266 *hamartia*: sin, missing the mark, missing the true goal of our lives, which is God; aberration from the truth, error, it stands in opposition to the truth (John 8:46), used in Rom. 3:9; 5:12, 20, 21; Gal. 3:22; Heb. 3:13 *Hamartia* is missing the mark ordained by God and not by us.

#458 *anomia*: lawlessness, not merely the absence of the law but the violation of the law

In 1 John 3:4, “Whosoever commits{on a continual basis} the sin (*hamartia*) also commits {continuously} lawlessness (*anomia*) and the sin (*hamartia)* is the lawlessness (*anomia*)”.

So here, it is evident that lawlessness is missing the mark set by God. He has a standard for His people.

#4189 *poneria*: evil, malice, wickedness (Matt. 22:18; Luke11:39; Rom. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:8; Eph. 6:12)

In addition to the above words used in the New Testament for sin, there are two more that are of interest.

3847 *parabasis*: from the verb *parabaino*, *para* implies nearness or proximity, beyond or contrary to; *baino*: to go, walk, step; *parabasis* is going beyond, false-stepping, transgressing, violating God’s standard Rom. 2:23; 4:15; 5:14; Gal. 3:19; 1 Tim. 2:14

2549 *kakia*: bad, wickedness as an evil habit of the mind, inherently evil

See Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8; Tit. 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:1

That is a lot on the words meaning sin, but it is imperative to be very clear when discussing this word. Our culture admits no existence of sin, so we must be very definite when using this supposedly archaic word.

Now that we have seen what God's word means by sin, we can observe the dictionary definition of sin.

Webster defines sin as: "the breaking of religious law or a moral principle ... to break a religious law or moral principle ... to commit an offense or fault or any kind; do wrong"

Unger's Bible dictionary tells us that "the underlying idea of sin is that of law and of a lawgiver. The lawgiver is God. Hence sin is everything in the disposition and purpose and conduct of God's moral creatures that is contrary to the expressed will of God."

What is sin?

Rom 3:20 "By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin."

Rom 7:7 "What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, 'You shall not covet.'"

James 4:17 "Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin."

Sin is against God.

Gen. 39:9b "How then could I do this great evil (commit adultery) and sin against God?"

Ps. 51:4 "Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge."

Self is put in the place of God.

2 Tim. 3:1, 2 "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy."

Gen. 3:5 "For God knows that in the day **you** eat from it **your** eyes will be opened, and **you** will **be like God**, knowing good and evil."

All have sinned.

Rom. 5:12, 13 "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned – for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law."

Rom. 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

1 Kings 8:46 "When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near ..."

Sin brings death.

Rom. 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

James 1:14, 15 "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."

Our lives are affected by sin. We are children of wrath.

Eph. 2:1-3 “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”

Col. 1:21, 22 “And though you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.”

What can be done about our sin?

Matt. 7:11 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father Who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”

Matt. 19:25b, 26 “Then who can be saved? And looking at them Jesus said to them, ‘With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

James 4:12 “There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One Who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?”

Rom. 5:6, 8 “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly…But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Rom. 5:19 “For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.”

As our representative head (or federal head) Adam’s sin was imputed to us. Imputation basically means “put that on my account.” We face the penalty of sin’s wages, which is death. Christ, acting as our representative, has paid that debt. We now have His righteousness imputed to us. (Rom 5:12, 17-21; 2 Cor. 5:21)

More on this when we discuss *justification*.

Grudem’s Systematic Theology offers this: *sin is failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature. Sin is here defined in relation to God and His moral law*.

“We should note that all sin is ultimately irrational. Though people sometimes persuade themselves that they have good reason for sinning, when examined in the cold light of truth on the last day, it will be seen in every case that sin ultimately just does not make sense.”

The doctrine of sin is crucial to the Christian faith. What we do with the subject of sin will determine whether we see the need for a Righteous, Loving, Merciful Savior and Lord.

It is to be remembered that we not only need God’s mercy prior to the point of salvation, but now moment by moment we are completely dependent on His loving compassion. “The Lord’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.” Lam. 3:22, 23

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matt 5:3

“Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.” Matt. 5:4

Recognize your condition before a holy and just God and recognize your only hope of life in the sacrificial offering of His only Son. Sin serves a purpose: it drives us to our knees before the Sovereign Judge and Lord. Once on our knees, He draws us to Himself as our Father and Champion of our souls. Praise be to the One and only One Who can remove our sin once and for all!

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Oh! precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my pardon, this I see,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
For my cleansing this my plea,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Nothing can for sin atone,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
Naught of good that I have done,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

This is all my hope and peace,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
This is all my righteousness,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Now by this I'll overcome—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus,
Now by this I'll reach my home—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Glory! Glory! This I sing—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus,

All my praise for this I bring—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

SOVEREIGNTY

"I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted." Job 42:2

"The Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes." Dan. 4:25b

"But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases." Ps. 115:3

The doctrine of the sovereignty of God should be a comfort to His people. But this truth only comforts those who know and trust Him.

- How do we come to trust our God as Sovereign?
- How do we see Him clearly enough to realize He truly knows what He is doing?

As with anything else in life, we observe closely the object of our interest.

There are many ways to observe, study, contemplate this attribute of God.

The first way to observe is to "see" Him in Scripture where He has ordained His own revelation to us.

"There is only one Lawgiver, the One Who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor? Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.'

But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin." James 4:12-17

Our God is omnipotent (all-powerful). Within this attribute of the Lord's omnipotence is the idea of His sovereignty. Latin *omni* = "all" , *potens* = "powerful.

"*God's omnipotence means that God is able to do all His holy will.*"

Grudem's Systematic Theology

The Lord's power is frequently mentioned in Scripture.

"Who is the King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle."

Ps. 24:8

"Ah Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstreteched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You." Jer. 32:17

"For nothing will be impossible with God." Luke 1:37

"And looking at them Jesus said to them, 'With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'" Matt. 19:26

It was well known among the Lord's servants that He is omnipotent.

"And do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham." Matt. 3:9

"And we know that God causes all things to work out together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren." Rom. 8:28, 29

Many times in both Old and New Testaments, the Lord is referred to as "Almighty."

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty." Greek = *pantokrator*

It is important in mentioning God's omnipotence that, as the above definition states, God can do "all His holy will." This clarifies the terms of His exertion of power. He cannot lie, sin, deny Himself, be tempted with evil, cease to exist or act in a manner contrary to His attributes. His will is holy and is always consistent with His character.

God also exercises power over His creation.

"Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My purpose from the east, the man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.'" Is. 46:9-11

"Daniel said, 'Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. It is He Who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. It is He Who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him. To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for You have given me wisdom and power; even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, for You have made known to us the king's matter.'" Dan. 2:20-23

"See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me; it is I Who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I Who heal, and there is no one who can deliver from My hand."

Deut. 32:39

"The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with nobles, and inherit a seat of honor; for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and He set the world on them." 1 Sam. 2:6-8

God's power is not always exerted to bless and comfort, but at times to discipline.

"Let me sing now for my well-beloved a song of my beloved concerning His vineyard on a fertile hill. He dug it all around, removed its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it; then He expected it to produce good grapes, but it produced only worthless ones.

'And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between Me and My vineyard. What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it?

Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones? So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground. I will lay waste; it will not be pruned or hoed. But briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah His delightful plant. Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.'" Is. 5:1-7

God's sovereign will does not always make sense to us.

"When David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out from there a man of the family of the house of Saul whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came out cursing continually as he came. He threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David; and all the people and all the mighty men were at his right hand and his left. Thus Shimei said when he cursed, 'Get out, get out, you man of bloodshed, and worthless fellow.' ...Then David said to Abishai and to all his servants, 'Behold, my son who came out from me seeks

my life; how much more now this Benjamite? Let him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him.'" 2 Sam. 16: 5-11

"I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God... that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD Who does all these."

Is. 45:5-7

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has asked permission to sift you like wheat."

Lk. 22:31

"So Pilate said to Him, 'You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?' Jesus answered, 'You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.'" John 19:10, 11

"Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!" Matt. 18:7

Job 1 reveals to us that Satan is not free to torment us. He must ask permission to inflict us with any of his schemes.

"Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life... God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance, now therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt." Gen. 45:5-8

"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive." Gen. 50:20

We can trust God's covenant, sovereign will.

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it." 1 Cor. 10:13

"In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thes. 5:18

"In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?" Ps. 56:11

"Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us."

Ps. 62:8

"Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it." Ps. 37:5

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

Prov. 3:5, 6

"Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you." 1 Pet. 5:7

Another way to develop your trust of your Sovereign God is to "see" His work in the lives of others.

We can remain more objective when looking at the life story of someone else. Also that life has the advantage of looking back with gained insight and perspective. We are in the midst of our own lives. The Lord knows this to be true of us; I believe this is why there are so many narratives in the Scriptures about people like Joseph, Daniel, Job, Abraham and above all

the life of our Lord. These lives give us direction, hope and understanding in the ways of God. Also reading biographies of those who trusted their Sovereign God is a great inspiration. The lives of people like Corrie ten Boom, Hudson Tayor, William Carey, Jim Elliot and many others, can help you "see" how a Sovereign God can be trusted with your own life.

We also can gain understanding of God's sovereignty by looking with the help of the Holy Spirit at our own lives.

"But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him Who lives forever; for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?'" Dan. 4: 34, 35

"The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, 'Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand ... For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched out hand, who can turn it back?'" Is. 14:24, 27

Basically God's sovereignty means that He reigns over all.

There is nothing at all that can happen in God's universe without His permission. To see this truth in its proper balance, we must ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten us. Otherwise, with an improper view of God's reign, we might develop an unhealthy resentment and lack of trust in our Sovereign God. When we are tempted to doubt God's covenant love in the light of His sovereignty, we must ask ourselves if we value our own wills and desires more than His sovereign will. His will must win out at all times because He knows the end from the beginning. He tells us, "I am the Alpha and the Omega Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty." Rev. 1:8

"Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and that it might be paid back to him again?

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." Rom. 11:33-36

He is our "El Shaddai," our all-sufficient God .

He is Adonai, Lord.

He is Elohim, the Creator.

He is El Roi, the God Who sees.

He is El Elyon, the Most High God.

THE WORD OF GOD

There are many terms which writers of Scripture use for "word." One of the most powerful words in the Old Testament for God's word is "law" or *torah*.

"Law (*torah)* in the broad sense refers to any "instruction" flowing from the revelation of God as the basis for life and action…The goal of revelation is the *internalization* of God's word in the heart of man so as to transform his way of life: 'The law (torah) of his God is in his heart; his feet do not slip.'" (Ps. 37:31; 40:8; Jer.31:33) Expositor's Bible Commentary

The expression of internalization is delight in God's revelation.

God's word is faithful (Ps. 119:43), righteous (119:160), a lamp to my feet (119:105), a light to my path (119:105). His word sustains me during adverse times (119:114).

The godly acknowledge that God's laws give order within the community. Ps.18:22

"*As he has felt the sun, perhaps in the desert, searching him out in every nook of shade where he attempted to hide from it, so he feels the Law searching out all the hiding-places of his soul*." C.S. Lewis

The most common term for "word" in the New Testament is *logos*.

According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, *logos* is the expression of thought – not the mere name of an object as embodying a conception or idea. It is also the word which designates Jesus as the Personal Word, a title of the Son of God.

Logos in the original language means "to explain" or "to reckon." Even Plato and Socrates used this term to mean "a harmony between the *logos* of reason and the *logos* of reality."

Rhema denotes that which is spoken, what is uttered in speech or writing. In Eph. 6:17, when the believer is enjoined to take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word (rhema) of God, the meaning is that he is to take up and use an individual scripture which the Spirit brings to the regenerate, sanctified mind.

According to Vine's, *logos* is reasoned speech and *rhema* is an utterance, the articulated expression of a thought.

Revelation

"The New is in the Old conceled;

The Old is in the New revealed."

Herbert Lockyer, referring to revelation in the Old and New Testaments

What do we mean by *revelation*?

The word actually means "flinging or drawing back the veil" so as to remove any hindrance to complete vision.

Human search can never discover God.

"*The Bible is not primarily a record of man's thoughts of God, but a record of what God has done and revealed of Himself to man*." Herbert Lockyer

Each book of the Bible proceeded from the same divine mind, so the instruction of the Bible's sixty-six books is complementary and consistent. Scripture never contradicts Scripture instead, one passage explains another.

"**By the word** of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of His mouth." Ps. 33:6

Heb. 1:3 tells us that Christ is continually "upholding the universe **by His word of power**."

God's words of *personal address* are His communications with people on earth. An example of this would be His encounter with Adam and the instructions which God gave to Adam.

God's words spoken through human lips were considered to be just as authoritative and just as true as God's words of personal address.

Also, God has provided His *written word*. The first example of this is in Exodus with the narrative concerning the giving of the Ten Commandments. Ex. 31:18; Deut. 31:24-26; Josh. 24:26; Is. 30:8; Jer. 30:2

Since the Bible is a progressive revelation, it is wise to read it as a whole, comparing one part with another. This will result in a true perspective. Partial examination will result in partial understanding; only careful and complete comparison of Scripture will show the complete mind of God.

Inspiration

"I thought age should speak, and increased years should teach wisdom. But it is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding." Job 32:7, 8

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." 2 Tim. 3:16

The word "Scripture" here is *graphe* and refers to the Old Testament written Scripture because each use of *graphe* in the New Testament refers to the Old Testament Scriptures in every other occurrence in the New Testament. Also look at the previous verse (15) and see how Paul refers the "sacred writings".

The term which theologians have used many years is *plenary inspiration*. This means that the words of Scripture are God's very words. (Plenary means "full.")

Jesus refers to the words of God in Matt. 4:4 when He says to the devil, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*."

Illumination

This is the work of the Holy Spirit as He gives understanding to the follower of Christ.

"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth; fir He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come."

Jn. 16:12, 13

"Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law." Ps. 119:18

"Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us? ...Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." Luke 24:32, 45

"Sanctify them in truth (aletheia); Your word is truth." Jn. 17:17

Jesus here does not say that God's word is true (alethes or alethinos), but He says that God's word is truth itself. The Bible is not simply true, but we must think of the Bible as being itself the final standard of truth.

"The sum of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting." Ps. 119:160

"*Thus we are to think of the Bible as the ultimate standard of truth, the reference point by which every other claim to truthfulness is to be measured.*" Grudem's Systematic Theology

Because of the sin of man, his thinking has been distorted. Sin is ultimately irrational and sin makes us think incorrectly about God and about creation. If our world were free from sin, we would be equipped to think properly about the world and about the Bible, but because of our handicap we do not recognize the truths of the Bible as God's word apart from God's Spirit.

"But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For 'who has know the mind of the LORD, that he will instruct Him?' But we have the Mind of Christ." 1 Cor. 2:14-16

When studying Scripture, you may run across the following terms concerning interpretation. Interpretation involves the meaning of the passage in question.

Hermeneutics: the study of correct methods of interpretation (study of interpretation itself)

Exegesis: the process of interpreting a text of Scripture (application of interpretation; actually explaining a particular text)

The major teachings of the Scriptures which concern the content itself can be classified into four characteristics.

1 **– the authority of Scripture**

"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 Pet. 2:20, 21

2 – **the clarity of Scripture**

"The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple." Ps. 19:7

"The unfolding of Your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple." Ps. 119:130

3 **– the necessity of Scripture**

"For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. For 'all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower fall off, but the word of the LORD endures forever.' And this is the word which was preached to you." 1 Pet. 1:23-25

"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, 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." Heb. 4:12

4 - **the sufficiency of Scripture**

Grudem says, "*The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained all the words of God He intended His people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting Him perfectly, and for obeying Him perfectly.*"

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deut. 29:29

"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 Tim. 2:15

“So that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” 2 Tim 3:17

In Scripture, when “thus says the Lord” is used, it is reflective of a formula used by royalty. This phrase was used when an edict was made. This edict was final, authoritative and could not be challenged or questioned. The only response was to obey it. When the prophets say, “Thus says the Lord”, they are claiming to be messengers of the King of heaven.

“*The Scriptures were given, not to tell us how the heavens go, but to teach us how to go to heaven.”* Herbert Lockyer

What is to be our response to God’s Word?

“Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.” Ps. 119:89

“Thus says the LORD, ‘Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? For My hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being,’ declares the LORD. ‘But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit and who trembles at My word.’” Is. 66:1, 2

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES LIST
Celebration
Confession
Grieving
Guidance

Fasting
Meditation
Memorization
Prayer

Service
Simplicity
Solitude
Study

Submission
Thanksgiving
Waiting
Worship

Oswald Chambers views them as:

Discipline of divine guidance
Discipline of peril
Discipline of prayer
Discipline of loneliness
Discipline of patience

Any spiritual practices which you have observed in the life of Christ are worthy to be modeled and followed in your own life.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES DEFINED

Spiritual disciplines may be defined as activities which promote and nurture the believer's growth and development to the end that Christ is glorified.

When I speak of spiritual disciplines or practices, I am not referring to anything mystical. Disciplines are practices or acts that are prompted and strengthened by God's Spirit within the believer.

In the book of Acts, these practices could be traced as the followers of Christ *gave*, *prayed*, *served,* etc.

Our Lord practiced *solitude* when He withdrew to a solitary place.

In Matthew 6, He said, "When you *pray* … when you *fast* … when you *give*," **not if**.

The Lord is concerned first with our being and then our doing. But our doing will flow out of our being.

These practices are not laws in the sense of legalistic rituals.

But, as the psalmist says, "Open my eyes … I will meditate." Ps. 119:15, 18

"Revive me in Your ways." 119:37

The practices our Lord engaged in and the psalmist promotes are a vehicle for reviving each believer in His ways.

When he writes, "I delight in Your commandments which I love … I delight in Your law" (119:47, 70), he has moved beyond mere reading into a practice which we would do well to learn.

God's law is perfect because He is perfect. We are not here talking about the Ten Commandments alone – but God's holy standard – being identified with Him.

Matt. 5:48 "Therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

When we practice the same disciplines as our Lord we are identifying with Him and training ourselves to live the life of our Lord, following in His steps.

Within each of the stanzas of Psalm 119, there is at least one discipline for the Christian to develop in his life that will strengthen his walk with the Lord.

As you read the psalm, try to discover these spiritual disciplines. Learn how to adapt – no, more than adapt- revolutionize your life by daily walking in these disciplines. The word discipline means "to train" – you are a soldier, Ranger, Marine, Navy Seal in the Lord's army. Without training, these soldiers are in great peril. But with proper training, each soldier is confident and equipped to face the battle that he will face that day.

Are you equipped to face your daily battle?

Arm yourself by engaging in the spiritual disciplines.

Celebration

While worship and celebration have much in common, there is a difference. When we worship, we are declaring the worth of our majestic Sovereign; when we celebrate, we are breathing in the life of Christ and breathing out the joy which He brings to our life. When you celebrate an occasion like a birthday, you are rejoicing in the person behind the event. It is not the birthday which brings you joy, but the life of the one honored.

For the Old Testament believer, the year of Jubilee was a great celebration. At this time, all debts were canceled, slaves were released, land was returned to its original owner, no planting was done because even the earth was celebrating its rest. All of this celebration took place because the Lord required it and because He would be recognized as Jehovah-jireh … the Lord provides. Because of Who He is, the people would celebrate. But this celebration required trust that He was Who He said He was.

Today the same is true. To celebrate our Jehovah-jireh, we must actively celebrate even when we do not "see" the "crops" that we are longing for. It is by the act of faith and by the act of the will that we celebrate.

Celebrate: #7673 *shabat*-to repose, to rest, to rid of, to still

"It is to be a Sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep (**celebrate**) your Sabbath."

Lev. 23:32

"Then the land will enjoy its Sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its Sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your Sabbaths, while you were living on it."

Lev. 26:34, 35

Celebrate: #2287 *hagag*-to hold a feast, to celebrate a holy day

"You shall thus **celebrate** it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall **celebrate** it in the seventh month."

Lev. 23:41

"These things I remember and I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go along with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God, with the voice of joy and thanksgiving, a multitude keeping **festival** (2287)." Ps. 42:4

"Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace! **Celebrate** your feasts, O Judah; pay your vows. For never again will the wicked one pass through you; he is cut off completely."

Nahum 1:15

Joy # 2304: *hedwah*-joy, gladness

"The joy of the Lord is our strength." Neh. 8:10

"Splendor and majesty are before Him, strength and **joy** are in His place."

"And the sons of Israel, the priests, the Levites and the rest of the exiles, **celebrated** the dedication of this temple of God with **joy** (2305)." Ezra 6:16

Great mirth #8057: *shimhah*-joy, rejoicing, gladness, pleasure

“Also in the day of your **gladness** and in your appointed feasts, and on the first days of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be as a reminder of you before your God. I am the LORD your God.” Num. 10:10

To blow these trumpets required a full breath of air. No half-hearted trumpeters! The sound is only produced by a hearty effort. To celebrate with trumpet really meant business when it came to celebrating! A weak marginally committed effort would get no sound. The same is true of our weak, marginally committed celebration.

We can learn much from the early followers of Yahweh. Our Sovereign Lord instructed His people to gather three times a year to **celebrate** their identity as the people of Jehovah-jireh. By having these annual festivals, Israel developed a national cohesion which gave them strength and unity.

Our rejoicing before the Lord in celebration each day is to be like a wedding feast.

“Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and gaze on King Solomon with the crown with which his mother has crowned him on the day of his wedding, and on the day of his **gladness of heart**.”

Eccl. 3:11

Read Luke 4:18, 19.

“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD.”

Here Jesus begins His public ministry by announcing **the year of Jubilee**.

As we practice these spiritual disciplines, we must be infused with the **Lord’s joy**. **Joy** makes us strong. If we do not have a **joyful spirit of celebration** we will become Pharisees as we heap law upon law.

“Because you did not serve the LORD your God with **joy** and a **glad heart**, for the abundance of all things (curses will come upon you.)”

Deut. 28:47 Read v. 45-48 to gain a better understanding.

Remember that true joy, true celebration originates with the Lord. We cannot generate it with our own effort. Just as the Lord gives joy; He can take it away from those who refuse to walk in covenant relationship with Him. He does not revoke the covenant, but the blessings of the covenant experience are removed.

“Gladness and joy are taken away from the fruitful field; in the vineyards also there will be no cries of joy or jubilant shouting, no treader treads out wine in the presses, for I have made the shouting to cease.” Is. 16:10

We are desperate to know how to celebrate the Lord and maintain a heart of celebration.

The psalmist in Psalm 119 tells us that the blessed man is the one whose way is blameless.

Psalm 1 tells us that the blessed man delights in the law of the Lord.

Psalm 119:111, “I have inherited Your testimonies forever, for they are the joy of my heart.”

The psalmist understood that joy lies in obedience.

What does the wisest Man ever to live say about joy and blessing?

“While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.’

But He said, ‘On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.’”

Luke 11:27, 28

As we practice these spiritual disciplines, the only true and lasting joy which we will find is the joy of obedience. To celebrate means to follow Him wholeheartedly.

God is not interested in removing our trials. God is not our Sovereign King so He can make our lives easier. God is greatly interested in transforming us. He is transforming us by the renewing of our minds into the mind of Christ “Who for the **joy** set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

“You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of **joy**; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever.” Ps. 16:11

We as God’s people are lacking the joyous occupation of life as a festival of praise.

Celebration is not found in a worship service where the songs and music you prefer is performed.

Celebration is not being pumped up.

Celebration is not getting a spiritual pep talk or momentary high from a thrilling message.

Many believers try to come into joy far too soon.

Celebration is obedience.

How is celebration a discipline?

It is a discipline because it is an act of the will to rejoice in the Lord at all times.

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Phil. 4:4-7

“Though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.” 1 Pet.1:8, 9

Rejoicing is not a byproduct of circumstances; it is an act of the will. Our Lord commanded it in the Old Testament believer and He commands it for today’s believer. Celebration is an antidote to taking ourselves too seriously. Christians can become too heavy-hearted and burdened. Our Lord told us that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Matt. 11:30 In fact, the Greek for “easy” is *chrestos* and it means profitable, fit, good for any use, well-fitting. The Lord has just the yoke that is tailor-made for each one of us. He has not only taken great care and time to create us in His image but has provided the yoke that will transform us into Christlikeness. He also has gone before us to prepare a place for us in His Father’s house. Jn. 14:2

With this realization, celebration becomes the heart’s response.

Our Lord also told us that we must become like little children to enter His kingdom. What do children do when they celebrate?

They make a lot of noise!

We have become so mechanical in our worship and celebration.

Follow the lead of the psalmist (Psalm 150) who says,

“Praise the LORD!

Praise Him in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty expanse.

Praise him for His mighty deeds; praise Him according to his excellent greatness.
Praise Him with trumpet sound; praise Him with harp and lyre.
Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe.
Praise Him with loud cymbals. Praise Him with resounding cymbals.
Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!"

Begin to celebrate your own festivals of joy!

Confession

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 Jn. 1:9

Much of the Bible is concerned with God's righteousness and our reconciliation to Him by declaring us righteous as well. Confession is a large part of that process.

"*The confession of evil works is the first beginning of good works*." St. Augustine

**"Confess": Greek *homologeo* # 3670 means literally to say the same thing as, to assent, to consent, admit, to agree with, to concede, to acknowledge openly, to confess

The opposite means to deny, to refuse, to avoid, to reject, to disapprove, to despise.

"Alas, sinful nation, people weighed down with iniquity, offspring of evildoers ... they have **abandoned** the Lord, they **have despised** the Holy One of Israel, they **have turned from** Him."

Is. 1:4

The above is the opposite of a people who routinely confess their sins.

When we confess our sins, our falling short of God's glory, God's design for us, we are agreeing or saying the same thing that God says about our sin. We do not *explain* it, *excuse* it, *rationalize* it, we confess it and then we are restored to righteousness. In error, we try to be righteous in our own efforts to cover up or explain away our sin. Or worse, we compare ourselves to those "more sinful" and perform the job of self-absolution.

"Mourning" is necessary to confession. Our Lord told us that the mourners are blessed because they will be comforted. (Matt. 5:4) Confession begins with mourning and ends with joy. There is a tendency to remain in the self-indulgence of reprimanding ourselves. There must be an end to mourning and an embrace of the forgiveness. Confession serves the purpose of restoration. It would be a mutant of another kind to remain in confession. It is self-serving to continue self-condemnation.

"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Rom. 8:1

"For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death." 2 Cor. 7:10

The following verses depict a coming to terms with confession.

The act of confession is a realization of what is true about oneself and one's relationship with God.

"He saved others; he cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him... The robbers who had been crucified with Him were also insulting Him with the same words." Matt. 27:42-44

"One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, 'Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!' But the other answered, and rebuking him said, 'Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.' And he was saying, 'Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!' And He said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.'" Lk. 23:39-43

The criminal on the cross at first did not "see" Jesus as He truly is. At some point, he recognized Jesus as innocent and true and therefore the criminal saw himself more clearly.

The cure for our own sin is to spend whatever amount of time we need to develop eyes which "see" God.

When we truly see Him with spiritual eyes, we become aware of our own condition and immediately cry out to God to, "Save us from ourselves!"

The criminal on the cross "saw" Jesus and immediately confessed.

This is the heart of confession.

"Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when you judge…Make me to hear joy and gladness, let the bones which You have broken rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins and blot our all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a stedfast spirit within me… Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit…then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness… a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." Ps.51:2-17

Not only do we confess our sins to our Heavenly Father, we are instructed to confess them to one another.

"Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." Jms. 5:16

"And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins." Mk. 1:5

- What is the purpose of confessing to one another?

Humility and prayer. When we appropriately confess to others, we are humbling ourselves. God gives grace to the humble yet God resists the proud. (Jms. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5) When we confess to those we offended, they can be restored to us and they can pray for us. We can always benefit from godly prayer.

Always remember, the heart is deceitful and wicked (Jer. 17:9, 10). We are in desperate need of God's Spirit to guide and direct us in the area of confession.

"Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not rule over me; then I will be blameless, and I shall be acquitted of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer." Ps. 19:12-14

"For evils beyond number have surrounded me; my iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able **to see**; they are more numerous than the hairs of my head, and my heart has failed me." Ps. 40:12

But praise God …

"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for those of the whole world."

1 John 2:1, 2

It would be wonderful to end on a high note with no worries, but look at the end of the letter John wrote.

“And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him Who is true; and we are in Him Who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Little children, guard yourselves from idols.” 1 John 5:20, 21

And so ends the epistle.

Ever be on guard against the enemy of your souls. Ever be ready to confess to your Father any separations from Him.

Some questions for you.

Do you readily ask others for forgiveness?

Do you accept forgiveness or beat yourself up about your shortcomings?

Do you have a teachable spirit or do you resist being corrected?

Do you view every criticism as an opportunity to take it to the Lord and ask Him to examine your heart and see if there is any harmful way in you?

Do you agree with God about your sin?

Do you more readily see others’ sins and not your own?

Do you regularly “make an appointment” with God to examine your heart?

Do you make excuses when confronted with other’s disappointment in you?

Do you consider God’s righteousness unattainable and therefore not worth the effort to seek forgiveness?

Will God forgive you if you do not forgive others?

What do you think would happen to the kingdom of God on earth if we practiced confession as He desires us to practice it?

What do you think would happen to the lost world if they saw Christians living in a perpetual state of confession and restoration, unfettered by unconfessed sin?

Do you practice the discipline of confessing your sins to one another?

Does the idea of confessing your sins to God and /or to others make you cringe?

Hopefully the answers you provide for these questions will give you some insight into your attitude regarding confession.

Confession is an absolute necessity as a discipline for the follower of Christ.

To shame our sins He blushed in blood;

He closed His eyes to show us God;

Let all the world fall down and know

That none but God such love can show.

Bernard of Clairvaux **Confession**

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"Mourning" is necessary to confession. Our Lord told us that the mourners are blessed because they will be comforted. (Matt. 5:4) Confession begins with mourning and ends with joy. There is a tendency to remain in the self-indulgence of reprimanding ourselves. There must be an end to mourning and an embrace of the forgiveness. Confession serves the purpose of restoration. It would be a mutant of another kind to remain in confession. It is self-serving to continue self-condemnation.

"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Rom. 8:1

"For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death." 2 Cor. 7:10

The following verses depict a coming to terms with confession.

The act of confession is a realization of what is true about oneself and one's relationship with God.

"He saved others; he cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him... The robbers who had been crucified with Him were also insulting Him with the same words." Matt. 27:42-44

"One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, 'Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!' But the other answered, and rebuking him said, 'Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.' And he was saying, 'Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!' And He said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.'" Lk. 23:39-43

The criminal on the cross at first did not "see" Jesus as He truly is. At some point, he recognized Jesus as innocent and true and therefore the criminal saw himself more clearly.

The cure for our own sin is to spend whatever amount of time we need to develop eyes which "see" God.

When we truly see Him with spiritual eyes, we become aware of our own condition and immediately cry out to God to, "Save us from ourselves!"

The criminal on the cross "saw" Jesus and immediately confessed.

This is the heart of confession.

"Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when you judge…Make me to hear joy and gladness, let the bones which You have broken rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins and blot our all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a stedfast spirit within me… Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit…then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness… a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." Ps.51:2-17

Not only do we confess our sins to our Heavenly Father, we are instructed to confess them to one another.

"Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." Jms. 5:16

"And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins." Mk. 1:5

- What is the purpose of confessing to one another?

Humility and prayer. When we appropriately confess to others, we are humbling ourselves. God gives grace to the humble yet God resists the proud. (Jms. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5) When we confess to those we offended, they can be restored to us and they can pray for us. We can always benefit from godly prayer.

Always remember, the heart is deceitful and wicked (Jer. 17:9, 10). We are in desperate need of God's Spirit to guide and direct us in the area of confession.

"Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not rule over me; then I will be blameless, and I shall be acquitted of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer." Ps. 19:12-14

"For evils beyond number have surrounded me; my iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able **to see**; they are more numerous than the hairs of my head, and my heart has failed me." Ps. 40:12

But praise God …

"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for those of the whole world."

1 John 2:1, 2

It would be wonderful to end on a high note with no worries, but look at the end of the letter John wrote.

"And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him Who is true; and we are in Him Who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Little children, guard yourselves from idols." 1 John 5:20, 21

And so ends the epistle.

Ever be on guard against the enemy of your souls. Ever be ready to confess to your Father any separations from Him.

Some questions for you.

Do you readily ask others for forgiveness?

Do you accept forgiveness or beat yourself up about your shortcomings?

Do you have a teachable spirit or do you resist being corrected?

Do you view every criticism as an opportunity to take it to the Lord and ask Him to examine your heart and see if there is any harmful way in you?

Do you agree with God about your sin?

Do you more readily see others' sins and not your own?

Do you regularly "make an appointment" with God to examine your heart?

Do you make excuses when confronted with other's disappointment in you?

Do you consider God's righteousness unattainable and therefore not worth the effort to seek forgiveness?

Will God forgive you if you do not forgive others?

What do you think would happen to the kingdom of God on earth if we practiced confession as He desires us to practice it?

What do you think would happen to the lost world if they saw Christians living in a perpetual state of confession and restoration, unfettered by unconfessed sin?

Do you practice the discipline of confessing your sins to one another?

Does the idea of confessing your sins to God and /or to others make you cringe?

Hopefully the answers you provide for these questions will give you some insight into your attitude regarding confession.

Confession is an absolute necessity as a discipline for the follower of Christ.

To shame our sins He blushed in blood;

He closed His eyes to show us God;

Let all the world fall down and know

That none but God such love can show.

- Bernard of Clairvaux

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Fasting

"Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father Who is in secret; and your Father Who sees what is done in secret will reward you." Matt 6:16-18

Notice here that Jesus does not say, "If you fast", but He says "When you fast."

Some people who considered fasting important are: Moses, David, Nehemiah, Esther, Elijah, Anna the prophetess, Paul, and even Jesus Christ Who is the Lord of lords. Also many of the great leaders and teachers fasted regularly. Martin Luther, John Knox of Scotland, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney, David Brainerd, C.H. Spurgeon followed the example of our Lord in fasting.

Even those who were not followers of Jehovah fasted: Plato, Aristotle, Socrates are a few.

In our society even when fasting is practiced, it is usually for vain purposes and not for spiritual ones. The Biblical purpose of fasting is to draw closer to the Lord in obedience.

- Some Biblical background on fasting

Originally, God's people were instructed to fast only one day a year, the Day of Atonement.

"On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to the LORD. You shall not do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the LORD your God." Lev. 23:27, 28 (also Lev. 16:29-30; Num 29:7) It was understood that to humble themselves and do no work included fasting for this event.

The Day of Atonement was to be a time of sorrow, affliction and reflection of their sin and separation from God.

Over time, fasts were added by the leaders at the direction of God and also for their own legalistic appeasement so that now there are over twenty fasts!

"Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish." Esther 4:16

"Blow a trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly, gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room and the bride out of her bridal chamber. Let the priests, the LORD's ministers weep …" Joel 2:15-17

When threatened by foreign invasion, "Jehoshaphat was afraid and turned his attention to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to seek help from the LORD; they even came from all the cities of Judah to seek the LORD."

2 Chron. 20:3, 4

Moses "went up to the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, and the tablets of the covenant which the LORD had made with you, then I remained on the mountain forty days and nights; I neither ate bread not drank water." Deut. 9:9

Speaking of Elijah, the prophet, we read that he "arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God." 1 Kings 19:8

"I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed." Dan. 10:3

Even Darius fasted when he had to follow his own decree and put Daniel in the lions' den.

"Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him. Then the king arose at dawn … and went in haste to the lions' den… The king said to Daniel, 'Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, Whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?'" Dan. 6:18-20

When Jonah preached to the people of Nineveh, a key city of the fierce Assyrians, the people "believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them… the king of Nineveh issued a proclamation and it said, 'In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles. Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. But man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands."

Jonah 3:5-8 Note that here even the animals were required to fast!

When Ezra embarked on his journey back to Jerusalem, he "proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from Him a safe journey for us, our little ones, and all our possessions. For I was ashamed to request from the king troops and horsemen to protect us from the enemy on the way, because we had said to the king, 'The hand of our God is favorably disposed to all those who seek Him, but His power and His anger are against all those who forsake Him.' So we fasted and sought our God concerning this matter; and He listened to our entreaty." Ezra 8:21-23

By the time of Zechariah, there were four fasts which were observed. "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth months will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah; so love truth and peace.'" Zech. 8:19

By the time of Christ, the Pharisees fasted twice a week: Mondays and Thursdays. These were also market days which would provide the Pharisees more opportunity to be seen for their "piety."

We see the early church involved in fasting. "While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart from Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Acts 13: 2, 3 At Paul's conversion, before being selected for the above work, "And he (Paul) was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank." Acts 9:9

The *Didache* (an early Christian treatise for believers) instructed followers to fast twice a week: Wednesday and Friday. At the Second Council of Orleans in the sixth century specific fasting was made obligatory.

- **Is fasting too demanding? Is it old-fashioned and unnecessary?**

Then why does the church of today resist this discipline and call it fanatical or optional?

"*Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross*."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer The Cost of Discipleship

Once it has been established that fasting is a positive activity for the believer to observe, the questions become *how* and *why*.

Why Do We Fast

First the motive of fasting must be addressed. As with all the disciplines, this cannot become a legalistic practice. It will not honor or please the Lord if it is done in the flesh.

"Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years, was it actually for Me that you fasted? When you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and do you not drink for yourselves? Are not these the words which the LORD proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous along with its cities around it…'" Zech. 7:5, 6

" 'Even now', declares the LORD, 'return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting and weeping and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments.' " Joel 2:12, 13a

"When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed." Acts 14:23

Each discipline must center on God. God must call you, equip you and sustain you through your offering of faith. Fasting is an offering to the Lord.

He has called us through His word to observe fasting.

He has equipped us through His word to deny self, deny the flesh in order to hear Him more clearly.

He has sustained us with His word by abiding with us. He has sustained us with His very **Presence** as we obediently yield to His word. Do you know that the daily bread which was placed by the priest on the table of showbread was referred to as **the Presence**? "You shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before Me at all times." Ex. 25:30

Anna is our example here. She "never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." Lk. 2:37, 38

Anna saw and recognized the Messiah because she was so very in tune with God that she did not miss His appearing as so many others did. She was willing to pay the cost and she was rewarded for her faithfulness.

Fasting is so closely associated with prayer that the two become a form of communication with the Giver of life. **We must ever be on guard that we are not more interested in the blessing than in the Blesser.**

In times of fasting, we are really feasting and not fasting. We are feasting on the Bread of Life Himself. We are more intimately abiding in Him because we are denying the flesh for a period of time. Once we deny the flesh in this way, the power of the flesh is not as strong. The real strength in our lives is the resurrected life of Christ. "Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him Who sent Me and to accomplish His work.'" Jn. 4:34

At times we fast because we are desperate. When Nehemiah heard the news of the devastated condition of Jerusalem, he "sat down and wept and mourned for days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven." Neh. 1:4

How Do We Fast

With this discipline in particular, you must begin in stages. To attempt a 40 day fast might be "biting" off too much.

Begin with a short, partial fast. Here you may fast from certain foods for a time. As you fast, let your hunger pains or your denial of desires be a reminder of Who you serve.

As you progress, you may fast from any food for one meal or even two meals.

Next you may want to fast a specific amount of time, for instance 24 hours, from all food.

It is important to stay hydrated, so drink plenty of water.

You may fast for a longer period of time. Some experience fasting for three days or more.

A forty day fast has been successfully attempted by many including Bill Bright.

Check out Your Personal Guide to Fasting and Prayer which you will find by simply searching under this title online.

John Wesley was so adamant about fasting that he refused to ordain anyone to the Methodist ministry who did not fast two days a week.

Many times when prayer does not satisfy the inner longings, fasting will close the gap of that sense of separation. I have prayed for things that I did not gain a peace about. I continued praying, but sensed no response. This is the time when I might ask the Lord if He would direct me to fast. So many times a fast is what will break through within my spirit and allow me to hear the Lord's answer to my prayer.

In Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology, he points out several benefits from fasting.

1. Fasting increases our sense of humility and dependence on the Lord
2. Fasting allows us to give more attention to prayer
3. Fasting reminds us that we are to sacrifice ourselves entirely to our God
4. Fasting is a good exercise in disciplining the body to refrain from food and strengthens our ability to refrain also from sin as we gain more and more control over our desires
5. Fasting heightens our spiritual alertness and offers a sense of God's presence as we focus less on the material things of this world
6. Fasting expresses earnestness and urgency in our prayers

Remember also that we can fast from other things besides food. Fasting from food is the prescribed, biblical form of fasting, but you may also fast from television, radio, activities, habits that have begun to master you too much. As your Father, Lord and Designer, He knows what you need to put aside for a time. This laying aside of our desires is a sure way of disciplining our bodies and our wills.

"Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." 1 Cor. 7:5

These instructions were to married people regarding abstaining from sexual involvement for the right purposes. The main objective in the denying of the flesh here was to devote oneself to prayer.

"David answered the priest and said to him, "Surely women have been kept from us as previously when I set out and the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was an ordinary journey; how much more then today will their vessels be holy?" 1 Sam. 21:5

Check out this reference and you will be amazed to see that it has to do with .... bread!

At the giving of the Law, God instructed Moses to tell the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman." Ex. 19:15

There are many ways we can humble ourselves and acknowledge the Lord as our Master and King. Listen to His voice and He will direct in this matter. But you and I must be willing to obey as He leads.

"Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst... I am the bread of life...This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever, and the bread also which I will give, for the life of the world is My flesh." Jn. 6:35, 48, 50, 51

Grieving

When was the last time you went to the Christian bookstore and saw a book on "How to Be Blessed through Grieving?" You probably will not. People are not interested in grieving. People want to talk about, read about, think about joy and happiness. Where is the place for grieving?

Since our Lord told us, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Matt. 5:4), I believe we need to learn His perspective concerning grieving and mourning.

Mourning takes up a large amount of Scripture. An entire book is called "Lamentations!"

Psalms of Lament are a large section of the book of Psalms.

So why is mourning/grieving so crucial to a proper understanding of God and His ways?

"He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Is. 53:3b

If our Lord was called a "man of sorrows", then we would do well to understand what this means.

Grief #2483 *holiy* indicates disease, sickness; suffering brought on by loss; sickness due to idolatry

Sorrow #4341 *mak'ob* refers to pain, suffering, sorrow; it is used to refer to our Lord; also refers to the Hebrews under the bondage of the Egyptians

* How did the writers of Scripture feel about grief?
  Did they like it?
  Where did it come from?

Jer. 45:3, "Ah, woe is me! For the Lord has added sorrow to my pain; I am weary with my groaning and have found no rest." Words of Jeremiah to Baruch

But what does Lam. 3:32 tell us? "For if He causes grief, then He will have compassion according to His abundant lovingkindness." By the way, Jeremiah wrote both the book named for him and this book of Lamentations. He understood grieving.

Even the rebellious prophet Jonah was delivered from his grief by the Lord. "And the Lord prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd." Jonah 4:6

But then read what happens because of his relief . Jonah 4:7-11

Relief is not always what we need. The Lord knows this. Jonah was grieved again because his first relief only hardened his heart more.

Jer. 6:7 refers to Jerusalem. "As a well keeps its waters fresh, so she keeps fresh her wickedness. Violence and destruction are heard in her; sickness (grief:*holiy*) and wounds are ever before Me." Here, Jerusalem is sick with wickedness. But never fear, God has the remedy. Exile to Babylon. Because she will not grieve over her evil, she will be brought to her knees in grief in exile.

This is what Solomon said about wisdom: "Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain." Eccl. 1:18 Solomon grieved his soul because he endeavored to find the answers to life's questions with the human intellect. He found no satisfaction there. In the end of this book, he discovers the true path of wisdom. You will have to open your Bible and go to Eccl. 12 to find that answer.

Who is the man you think of as well acquainted with grief? Look at Job.

Job 2:13, "Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him, for they saw his pain (grief #3511 *ke'eb)* was very great. '' Job 6:2 "Oh that my grief were actually weighed and laid in the balances together with my calamity!"

Job 16:6, "If I speak, my pain is not lessened, and if I hold back, what is left me?"

We always disparage Job's friends, but at least they stay with him for seven days in silence. Sometimes we do not need a lot of words. In Job 6, it is as though Job desires to know that God indeed sees and measures his sorrow.

What about David? What was his response to grief?

"My eye has wasted away with grief; it has become old because of all my adversaries." Ps. 6:7

"Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted away from grief, my soul and my body also. For my life is spent with sorrow and my years with sighing; my strength has failed because of my iniquity, and my body has wasted away." Ps. 31:9, 10

What do you learn about grieving here?

David understood that his relief would come only from God. He also recognized the role his own sin had played in his grief. There is also an awareness of the effects of distress on the body. Opposition from adversaries can cause the very life to be sapped away. So what is to be done?

David does it. He cries out to his God, knowing that He will answer.

Another psalmist, Asaph, can enlighten us regarding grief also.

Ps. 73:21-28, "When my heart was embittered (grieved) and I was pierced within, then I was senseless and ignorant, I was like a beast before You ... Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but my God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever ... I have made the Lord my refuge."

Psalm 95:10 tells us that God grieves (#6962 *qut)* in the sense that He abhors, feels disgust at the sin of His people. "For forty years I loathed (grieved) that generation, and said they are a people who err in their heart and they do not know My ways."

There is something key here about grief. Not knowing God's ways causes Him grief and causes us to err in our hearts.

In Psalm 119:158, the same word used of God's grief (*qut)* is here used of the psalmist's grief when he sees those who do not regard God's ways and keep God's word.

"I behold the treacherous and loathe (#6962) them, because they do not keep Your word."

*This brings us to the point of recognizing that we should be mourners over our own sin and the sin of our world.

Ps. 78:40 "How often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness and grieved Him in the desert!"

Amos 6:6, "Who drink wine from sacrificial bowls while they anoint themselves with the finest of oils, yet they have not grieved over the ruin of Joseph." God desires us to grieve over the sin and misfortune of others, especially those united with us in covenant with our Lord.

Jer. 5:3, "O LORD, do not Your eyes look for truth? You have smitten them, but they did not weaken (are not grieved); You have consumed they, but they refused to take correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to repent." Does this not break your heart to read?

We must mourn over the unrepentant around us. Ask God to break our hearts for what breaks His heart. Then we will be a people who truly worship, adore and identify with our Lord.

Dan. 7:15, “As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me.”

Have you ever been grieved to this degree? Most of us are so foreign to the depths of grief that we have no awareness of this distress of Daniel’s.

Paul felt grief. 2 Cor. 2:4, “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.”

Peter tells us, “For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.”1 Pet. 2:19

Mark 3:5, “After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.”

What grieved Jesus? Hardness of heart. Do you see any of that around you? Are you grieved over it?

Mark also tells us what grieved a potential follower of Christ. “But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.” 10:22

What you grieve over tells you where your heart truly is. For this rich young man, his heart was wrapped up in his possessions. **What causes you to grieve? There is your god!**

*Now that I am grieving, what do I do with the grief?

Habakkuk (1:3) says, “Why do you make me see iniquity and cause me to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me; strife exists and contention arises.”

Yet, as he ends his powerful little book, he says, “Yet I will exult (have tremendous joy) in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.” 3:18

Peter learned something about grief. Jn. 21:17, “Jesus said to him for the third time, ‘Simon, son of John (Note the name which Jesus used here. He used the former name of Peter. Will you choose to be Simon or Peter?), do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Tend My sheep.’”

Never fear, beloved of the Lord, He always desires to restore you. After Peter grieved over his denial of his Lord, he was restored. But for Peter to do the work the Lord had for him, he must be refined as through a furnace. Peter came through the flames because Jesus was always with him, He never denied him and He strengthened him to be a vessel fitted for glory.

A final word about grief/sorrow.

2 Cor. 7:9, 10, “I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance, for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.”

Grief is only holy grief if it achieves God’s purposes. Beware of self-motivated grief. Do not conjure up grief. Ask God to open your eyes to the grief He sees. There is plenty of that. You do not need to look for it. He will show you what grieves His heart about you and about your world.

Grief in the New Testament is observed in at least nine words. In Matt. 5:4 (below), the word is *pentheo,* the most severe word for grief. It is devastating grief.

I believe our Lord is telling us that the road to happiness is by the path of grief, the way to rejoicing is mourning. Sin, anyone's sin, is a cause for grief. See and define sin as God does (1 Jn. 1:9). This awareness leads to grief, but "a shout of joy comes in the morning." Ps. 30:5b

"Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted."

Meditation

What is meditation?

It is not mystical. Sometimes it helps to know what something is NOT. Eastern meditation is the practice of emptying the mind (Luke 11:24-26). Christian meditation is **not** emptying the mind, but **filling** the mind with God's thoughts and words. There is hard work that goes into meditation.

When I meditate on God and His word, it is like a running conversation with verses coming to my mind. In order to do this, the verse must be there. That is where the work comes in. The more familiar you are with God's word, the more ready will be the "conversation" with God. This is not unlike prayer, but it is a conversation in which we are unaccustomed to engaging because it is not immediately responsive in the sense with which we are familiar. Do not let familiarity or the lack of it rob you of the great joy of meditating on our great God.

How to meditate:

Take a verse which tells you something of the nature of the Lord. For instance, you wish to worship the Lord by meditating on **Is. 6:3** or **Rev. 4:8.**

One way you can begin this is to take each word of the verse and think about each word, talking to the Lord about what it means.

"*Holy*" – the first thing that popped into my mind here was the worship song which says, "Holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, holy, holy." I sing that before the Lord. Singing is a form of meditating because it slows you down and causes you to ponder the words concerning God and His kingdom slowly enough to pass from mere decoding that we must do in reading to the "decoding" that your spirit must do to meditate.

The next word "*is*" now becomes your focus. God "*is*" holy. His state of being is holy. When God told Moses Who He was and how He was to be referred to, He said His identity was to be thought of as "I Am". God's *self-existent* nature is one of the most important things about Him. He needs no other to exist. Unlike us, He is truly **the Existent One**. In **Acts 17:28,** Paul tells us that "we live and move and have our existence in Him". Apart from Him, there is no "is" for us. **Col. 1:17b** says, "in Christ all things hold together". We would not remain alive for a second if it were not for Him.

"*The"* is the next word. Our God is not "*a*" lord, He is "THE" LORD! There is no one like our God. He stands alone and separate (by the way, that is one translation of "holy" – separate and distinct, consecrated, set apart). He alone is worthy of our worship. Meditate on that.

"*Lord*" is the next word. Really think of how He is Lord of all. He is Lord of your life. He is Lord of your family. He is Lord of your job and all the lives you encounter every day. He holds their very breath of life in His hands. He is Lord of your state, country, world. And if you care to take a look at space and realize how vast it is, how many systems there are so many light years away that we are even unaware of them, so many stars, galaxies, things that defy our concept of time and space. We begin to realize our Lord is so other than us that we could meditate thousands of years and still have so far to go to even scratch the surface of Who this Great God is.

"*Almighty*". Think about that word. Who else is almighty? **Gen. 17:1; Ps. 91:1; Ex. 6:3,** these all refer to *God as Almighty* or *El Shaddai*. No one has anything near the might of our God. Much of scripture declares the might of our God. His name **Jehovah Sabaoth** is His Warrior name. This is the name He uses as He goes to battle for His people. **Jehovah Sabaoth** has never and will never be defeated because He is all-powerful, almighty, all-consuming. Nothing can prevail against Him. So if you are trying to do anything your way and against His way, remember you are dealing with the all-powerful Lord. If anyone is trying to harm you, remember that foolish one is not fighting against you but your Shield and Defender: the Almighty God.

Do you get the idea? Meditation is slowing down so you can hear the voice and thoughts of God, learning His ways and closing out the thoughts and ways of this world that shout so much louder to you unless you take the time to meditate on His word.

Take a minute to look at **1 Sam. 3**. Here is a lesson on hearing the voice of God, which is what meditation really is. Samuel needed help and direction from Eli to learn to hear the Lord correctly. So there is a school, so to speak, of meditating. Read scripture and observe how the Lord's servants heard from Him.

Also important and probably the most important lesson in meditating is that once you have heard from the Lord, you MUST OBEY His voice. If you fail to respond to His voice, guess what? You will probably not hear from Him again for some time. Our Lord does not waste His words – they will not return void to Him. He takes His word very seriously, we had better do the same.

A word of warning: we Christians have replaced meditation with devotional or Christian reading. By abdicating our individual role in meditation, we allow others' words and ideas to supplant the communion that our Lord would have with us – One to one.

Memorization

"*Your word I have treasured (hidden) in my heart, that I may not sin against You*." Ps. 119:11

Throughout Scripture, we are urged to hide God's word in our hearts.

Why is this discipline so important for the believer?

What happens if we choose not to follow the wisdom of memorizing Scripture?

Chuck Swindoll writes, "*I know of no other single practice in the Christian life more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing Scripture … No other single exercise pays greater spiritual dividends! Your prayer life will be strengthened. Your witnessing will be sharper and much more effective. Your attitudes and outlook will begin to change. Your mind will become alert and observant. Your confidence and assurance will be enhanced. Your faith will be solidified"* (Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994], p. 61).

Ps. 119:9 says, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word." Then the psalmist tells us (v. 11) that he has treasured God's word in his heart in order not to sin against God. Both of the Hebrew words in these verses shed insight into the value of keeping and treasuring God's word.

- v.9 "keep"is *samar:* to watch, to keep, to preserve, to guard, to be careful, to watch over, to watch carefully over

Adam and Eve were to care for and watch over the Garden of Eden. This was to be their occupation. This activity, had it been done to God's specifications, would have prevented them from the idle thoughts and deeds which cost man so dearly. If we were to take this activity seriously of guarding God's word carefully in our hearts, what dark deeds would we be protected from committing? What do we fall into when we fail to commit God's word to our hearts?

This verb is true of God as well. God watches over us as His children.

"The LORD will protect you from all evil; He will *keep* your soul." Ps. 121:7

"If I sin, then You would *take note* of me, and would not acquit me of my guilt." Job 10:14

Peter understood this connection between God guarding us and our guarding our way from sin.

"And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For *you were continually straying* like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and **Guardian** of your souls." 1 Pet.2:24, 25

- The verb in v. 11 is "to hide" which in Hebrew is *sapan*: to hide, to keep secret, to conceal, often something of great value.

Rahab concealed the Israelite spies (Josh. 2:4).

"They make shrewd plans against Your people, and conspire together against Your treasured ones." Ps. 83:3 Here God's people are referred to as His treasure.

Even the Temple is referred to as God's hidden, secret treasure (Ezek.7:22).

God has gone to great lengths to preserve and protect His treasured ones. He has given us the example of viewing appropriately what needs to be treasured in this life and in the next. Jesus likewise has told us that "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matt. 6:21

We are encouraged to regard God's word as a treasure worth obtaining and guarding.

Also, we are to guard this treasure in our hearts, not in our mind alone. This truth of God's word is to penetrate beyond our thinking into our very soul and remain there to produce eternal fruit.

So how do we go about training ourselves to treasure God's word?

As with all the disciplines, this must not become a legalistic endeavor but an exertion, a working out of what God is working into our lives through His word.

Martin Luther loved God's word. He had committed much of it to memory. Johann Staupitz, Luther's senior during his days in the Augustinian monastery, had encouraged him to devote himself to the Scriptures. As Luther was pondering Rom. 1:17, his eyes were opened and he "ran through the Scriptures from memory" as he came to understand from the Lord the meaning of justification by faith. If Luther had followed the pattern of his day, he would not even have owned a Bible most likely. People were earning doctorates in theology without even reading the Bible at this time. So we must not regard what others deem worthy of our time as the rule. Luther was not swayed by his peers; he heard from God because he knew God's voice through His word. He was able to think about it at all times because he was not limited to reading it alone. He had hidden it in his heart.

1. Commit God's word to memory. Make the decision to do this and it really does not matter the method you employ; just be faithful to your commitment.
2. Memorize small sections, such as one or two verses.
3. Memorize larger passages, such as chapters or parts of a chapter.
4. Review the verses you have memorized even as you are adding more new verses.

There are many ways you may choose to memorize.

Breaking it down into smaller phrases can make it more manageable.

Saying the verse stressing different words each time will help you focus on the individual words.

Saying it in a whisper and then loudly will be a technic that aids your memory.

Repeating the verse frequently throughout the day is helpful.

Writing it down repeatedly can cause you to remember it.

Saying it aloud, writing it and using it as you talk with others will cause it to become yours.

Reciting the verse or verses to the mirror and then to a real person will help.

Singing the verse is a great way which the psalmists used to speak God's word.

Recording yourself and playing it back will help.

This list could continue, but the key is for you to get started memorizing God's word and not stop!

Why do this?

Well, if the above reasons are not enough. Here is what Dallas Willard (professor of Philosophy at the University of Southern California) says about memorization. "Bible memorization is absolutely fundamental to spiritual formation. If I had to choose between all the disciplines of the spiritual life, I would choose Bible memorization, because it is a fundamental way of filling our minds with what it needs. This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth. That's where you need it! How does it get in your Mouth? Memorization" (Spiritual Formation in Christ for the Whole Life and Whole Person" in Vocatio, Vol. 12, no. 2, Spring, 2001, p.7).

The psalmist in 119, tells us that God's word will aid the young man in keeping his way pure.

Memorizing Scripture will strengthen us in our fight with the enemy of our souls. Memorizing is not a magic potion, it is the voice of God in our heads telling us the way of life versus the way of death. Rom 8:13 "… if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live." This occurs because you have become "transformed by the renewing of you mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Rom. 12:2 We must take up the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Eph. 6:17

A soldier who took up a weapon with which he was unfamiliar, would soon be victim to a more powerful enemy. But a soldier well-trained with his weapon of choice was a mighty warrior!

In Matt. 4, our Lord Himself used the word of God to combat the devil. Can we do better?

As we train our minds and hearts in God's word, we will become more and more like the Author Himself because we will see Him in His word. "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." 2 Cor. 3:18

"And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, because the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh **by the word of the LORD**." 1 Sam. 3:21

If you are longing for God to reveal Himself to you, follow the example of the great men and women of the Bible of and of history. They valued the Lord's word and treasured it in their hearts.

One of the great advantages of memorizing Scripture is that you will have it available to share with others even when you do not have a Bible handy. Also a word fitly spoken from the heart is "like apples of gold" Prov. 25:11

Paul told Timothy to preach the word; be ready in season and out of season …" 2 Tim. 4:2

It is wise to have a few verses on critical points from memory. There are topics in Scripture which the believer must have a firm grasp upon in order to be effective in the body of Christ and in the world. Remember the times you have wished you knew a verse and stumbled for a way to say what God had already said in His word. Memorize that verse!

Have in your memory verses on God's glory, love, holiness, justice, righteousness, comfort, etc.

You will want to learn about man's condition: sin, lostness, need for a savior, redemption, etc.

The work of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit and the finality of rejecting God's gift of eternal life are all areas that we need to be prepared to talk about with others. Learning verses to speak about God's encouragement to those in need of hope and assurance will be time well-spent.

Memorizing Scripture ministers to your soul and to the soul of those the Lord leads you to bless.

Who is the Lord?

By memorizing Scripture, you can ponder that great truth all the days of your life.

What better employment of your time could you undertake?

"Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, bless His name; proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day. Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.

For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before Him, strength and beauty are in His sanctuary."

Ps. 96:1-6

Prayer

"Help me."

"Save me."

"Teach me."

"Revive me."

"Incline my heart to Your testimonies."

"Give me understanding that I may observe Your law."

So much has been written on the discipline of prayer. We can all learn more about prayer, but the real education for this discipline is accomplished in "the school of prayer."

This is one of the most talked about and read about practices, yet one of the least exercised.

When asked to teach His disciples regarding prayer, our Lord offered a simple yet profound example. He did not tell them "about" prayer, He prayed.

"Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Each point in this prayer can be a stopping point to dwell and talk with the Lord. This is called an *index prayer*, meaning each point is one which can be elaborated upon.

For instance, "Our Father." Stop here and thank the Father that He has called you His own. Thank Him that He will provide, protect, love and guide you as a father does his beloved child.

"Who is in heaven" reminds us that our Father is the Sovereign God of all the universe.

Pause to praise and adore Him.

"Hallowed be Your name." God is holy. He is altogether other than we are. We must approach a holy God with the reverence and awe He deserves. The only reason we can boldly enter the holy place is because of "the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh." Heb. 10:19, 20

"Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. 4:16

As you progress through each point of the prayer Jesus gave as an example, allow the Spirit Who lives in you to speak. "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He Who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." Rom. 8:26, 27

By the way, the disciples had probably prayed all their lives. So why did they ask Jesus how to pray? Because they heard **Him** pray and it was not like anything they had ever heard! Do not be satisfied with vain, empty Santa Claus prayers. Do not bring God your grocery lists.

To deepen your prayer life, go throughout the Scriptures and learn from the pray**ers** – the people who prayed. Start with Cain in Genesis 4:13-15. If God can hear the prayer of Cain, that should give you confidence that He will certainly hear you. Look at Gen. 5:24. "Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." Is walking with God similar to prayer?

What do you learn about prayer?

Read the Bible in this manner, searching and asking God to teach you everything He wants to reveal to you about talking with Him. Literally talk out loud to God as you read the Scriptures.

Many books have been written *about* prayer; put them aside … and pray!

Service

While there is no particular discipline for companionship or fellowship, our Lord definitely taught us about investing our lives in others. When we examine the life of Christ, we see that He poured out His life for others in service and availability. Yes, He healed, taught, performed miracles, but His disciples also saw the heart of a servant when they looked at their Teacher.

This heart of service had been foretold by the prophets as part of the messianic fulfillment.

"And now says the LORD, Who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him (for I am honored in the sight of the LORD and My God is My strength), He says, 'Is it too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.'" Is. 49: 5-6

(Also look at Is. 50: 4-9)

"Behold My Servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted. Just as many were astonished at you, so His appearance was marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of men. Thus He will sprinkle many nations, kings will shut their mouths on account of Him ... As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many as He will bear their iniquities." Is. 52:13, 14; 53: 11

And in the New Testament we see the fulfillment of these prophecies.

"Jesus got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded... So when He had washed their feet and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.'" Jn. 13:4, 5, 12-17

Service is very ordinary from the world's point of view, but in John 13, Jesus completely changes that concept. With His life, Jesus had been showing His disciples what service was – the many little deaths to our own agenda. Here, hours before His death on the cross, He teaches His followers what true love and service are: ministering, bending low, to wash another's dirty feet with no regard for status or fairness. He even washed the feet of Judas who had already betrayed Him. The same feet Jesus was washing, were the feet Judas had walked on to the temple just hours before to be bribed with thirty pieces of silver for the life of His Teacher. (Matt. 26:14-16)

Judas did not understand service and it cost him his life and his soul.

Jesus also tells us in Jn. 12:26, "If anyone **serves** Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My **servant** will be also; if anyone **serves** Me, the Father will honor Him." (Read also Matt. 20:26-28)

If our Lord, Who left His seat in glory to become a servant, embraces the role of servant, can we do less?

Paul tells us, "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love **serve** one another." Gal. 5:13

Paul, speaking of the gifts within the church says, they are “for the equipping of the saints for the work of **service**, to the building up of the body of Christ.” Eph. 4:12

Paul also tells Timothy in the first epistle to his son in the faith, “In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good **servant** of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. 4:6

Here the blending of service and doctrine equips the man of God.

The writer to the Hebrews further explains true service. “Since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable **service** with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire. Let love of the brethren continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.” Heb. 12:28- 13:3

All of this service is very purposeful.

Heb. 9:14, “How much more will the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to **serve** the living God?”

Col. 3:24b, “It is the Lord Christ Whom you **serve**.”

What service teaches us is “hiddenness”. We are content to serve the Lord, dying to self and the need for approval, because we are serving Him and blessing others. What matters if it is anonymous?

“Servant”, Greek *doulos*: a slave who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, his will being altogether consumed in the will of the other

Many times when writing the epistles, the authors would refer to themselves as *douloi* because of their devotion to the Lord. In the Old Testament, the prophets were the servants of the Lord. Moses is referred to as the servant of the Lord. When Joshua took the mantle of leadership from Moses, he became the “servant of the Lord.” This is a title of great purpose and honor. But the cost is great as well. The servant of the Lord has now been consumed by the will of the Lord.

When we truly serve, we do not concern ourselves with the results; those are in God’s hands. He calls us to invest in a life and we do not need to calculate the outcome.

Be assured, this type of service, genuine service, is a lifestyle, not a whimsical, guilt-driven activity.

There are so many opportunities for service in the body of Christ. Listening, truly listening, is rare. Faithful rebuking, when you have earned the trust through deep levels of investment, strengthens the body. Seeing needs in areas that are unfamiliar to your own world must be accomplished by a true servant. Aware of the loneliness of a nursing home resident, time spent reading from the Bible or a book is a great service. Smiling at a child who has had a hard day at school ministers Christ’s love. Singing to those in your own family serves by example to infuse your home with joy. Sacrifices of large amounts of time, energy and expense may be required of the servant of our God. Stopping whatever you are doing to be the eyes, ears, arms, lips of Jesus is a service He has called us to perform.

All of this requires humility. The flesh cries out for notice, for its own way, for fairness, for equality. Humility recognizes the truth that large tasks require great sacrifice only temporarily, whereas small tasks go unnoticed and require constant sacrifice and death to self.

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, Who although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied

Himself, taking on the form of a **bond-servant**, and being made in the likeness of men, being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2:5-11

Simplicity

"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Matt. 6:33

As with all the disciplines, a look at the life of Christ is the inspiration and standard which gives us direction.

Jesus led a life unencumbered by possessions and burdens. He did have deadlines and projects to complete. But these all were focused on one thing, one simple, single thing, to do the will of His Heavenly Father. He was the most focused, single-minded Person to ever live.

How can we follow His example in the pursuit of simplicity?

"Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation." 1 Pet. 2:2

"To know wisdom and instruction, to discern the sayings of understanding, to receive instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice and equity; to give prudence to the naïve, to the youth knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel." Prov. 1:2-5

"Surely I have composed and quieted my soul; like a weaned child rests against his mother, my soul is like a weaned child within me." Ps. 131:2

"The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple." Ps. 119:130

"The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. Return to your rest, O my soul, for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you." Ps. 116:6, 7

"The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple." Ps. 19:7

"The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." Matt. 6:22-24

"But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will he not much more clothe you? You of little faith. Do not worry then, saying 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' ... For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." Matt. 6:30-32

The Lord is opposed to the double-minded, because it is contrary to His clear instruction to be single-minded.

"For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." Js. 1:7, 8

"But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ." 2 Cor. 11:3

Do not be deceived by the world's culture regarding wisdom.

"Let no man deceive himself, if any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, 'He is the one Who catches the wise in their craftiness'; and again, 'The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless.'" 1 Cor. 3:18-20

"At that time Jesus said, 'I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants.'"

Matt. 11:25“Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.” 1 Cor. 14:20

“And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, ‘Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.’” Matt. 18:2-4

The power of the gospel is in its purity and simplicity.

“For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, not with a pretext for greed – God is witness – not did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.” 1 Thes. 2:5-7

“For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world and especially toward you.” 2 Cor. 1:12

The power of the church is in her unity and simplicity.

“Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all Who is over all and through all and in all.” Eph. 4:3-6

“Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart.” Acts 2:46

“And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all.” Acts 4:32, 33

Simplicity wars with legalism.

In the entire twenty-third chapter of Matthew, our Lord is making a strong pronouncement against the complicated and burdensome laws that the Pharisees have heaped on man. God has always desired whole-hearted commitment to Himself and not to a legal code. Jesus, by His life and teaching, proclaimed a life of purity and devotion. This is the simplicity of purpose and life which the Pharisees and indeed, the church today, have lost. We must “throw off everything that hinders and the sin which so easily entangles, and run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.” Heb. 12:1,2

The word “fix” means to turn from one thing so as to properly see another. Our lives are so complicated and our eyes are running in so many directions that we must commit to look only at Jesus. This means we must turn from whatever we are currently fascinated with in order to truly “see” Him. Then we will be living the life of simplicity: a life devoted to our Sovereign.

When we truly see Him in His majesty and holiness, all else will fall away and be seen for what is really is, a decoy to get us off track. As the song says, “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.” This is simplicity.

Busyness wars with simplicity.

There is so much busyness in our lives that drain us and rob us of the vitality that the Lord would give to us. We must be vigilant to be aware of these insidious thieves and mockers of the true value in this life which our Father has loaned to us. We are stewards of our lives, our time, our loved ones and definitely of our possessions. As the psalmist says, “This has become mine, that I observe Your precepts.” Ps. 119:56 The one true possession we have

is our relationship with our Lord. In singleness of mind and heart, be devoted to that one treasure.

“Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

Jesus spoke these words in response to Martha’s busyness. Lk. 10:41, 42

Some things we can actively do to simplify our lives:

Examine your physical belongings and eliminate the things that you realize are unnecessary.

De-clutter. (Boy, is this hard for me!)

Examine your schedule and eliminate the things that you realize the Lord does not wish to be a part of your life.

Make purchases for their usefulness and not for the status which the world tells you they provide.

Routinely give things away.

Refuse to be a part of anything that breeds oppression. God does not like oppressors, as we clearly see in the Psalms.

Appreciate things without owning them. Life is not about control and possession; it is about the people that the Lord brings into your sphere of influence. Not stuff!

Do not become addicted to anything; that complicates your life.

Let your speech reflect your life of simplicity. Let your words be honest and clear. Let your ‘yes’ be ‘yes’ and your ‘no’ be ‘no.’

We are moving toward one thing, one single thing.

“At the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.” Phil. 2:10, 11

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! … For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.” Rom. 11:33, 36

Solitude

"*Let him who cannot be alone beware of community … Let him who is not in community beware of being alone … Each by itself has profound pitfalls and perils. One who wants fellowship without solitude plunges into the void of words and feelings, and one who seeks solitude without fellowship perishes in the abyss of vanity, self-infatuation, and despair.*" Dietrich Bonhoeffer

- As with all the disciplines, Jesus is our example. He spent much time in solitude. Why?

His public ministry began after His forty days spent alone in the wilderness. Matt. 4:1-11

After healing many all day, Jesus retired to a solitary place, alone. Mark 1:35

Prior to selecting the twelve disciples, Jesus "went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles." Luke 6:12, 13

In Mark 6:31, Jesus instructs His disciples to "come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while."

Upon hearing the news of John the Baptist's beheading, Jesus withdrew to a secluded place by Himself. Matt. 14:13

After feeding the five thousand, Jesus "went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone." Matt. 14:23

The Transfiguration took place up on a high mountain with only three of His disciples. Matt. 17

As Jesus face His greatest task, He prepared Himself by seeking the solitude of the Garden of Gethsemane. Matt 26:35-46

"Down to Gehenna, and up to the throne,

He travels the fastest who travels alone."

Matthew Arnold

"*Loneliness is inner emptiness. Solitude is inner fulfillment*." Foster

- We desperately need silence in our lives. Without silence as a routine part of our lives, we will not hear what is truly important and vital to our spirit. With no silence there will be no solitude.

"A time to tear apart and a time to sew together; a time to be silent and a time to speak." Eccl. 3:7

"Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few." Eccl. 5:2

"…Draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools." Eccl. 5:1

Prov. 25:11, "Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances."

As we develop this discipline, we learn when to speak and when to be silent. This is wisdom.

We need to hear the divine Whisper better.

Our Lord understood solitude. There are others in Scripture as well who were masters of this discipline. Joseph was alone in Egypt as a slave and then as a prisoner. He was a solitary Hebrew among godless men and women. He probably did not even speak his own language to anyone for many years. Yet, he was unshakeable when faced with temptation. He had spent time alone with his God. It did not matter where, with whom, how long, or even why he suffered. He was always in the presence of his King and Lord. Even in his solitude.

- When we have come to the point of submitting to the path our Lord chose in solitude, we embark on what has been called the "dark night of the soul." This is a stripping away of all our dependences on our verbal and emotional crutches. We yield to the Lord alone.

Our culture would tell us to avoid this at all costs. But this dark night is one of the ways in which the Lord brings us into a stillness of the soul so that He transforms us to the image of His Son.
Living in peace, joy, celebration and comfort will not always provide us with the "spiritual soil and climate" which is necessary to grow in His grace and knowledge.

"In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation." Heb. 5:7-9

- So where do we begin?

Recognize the culprit.

The tongue is like a thermometer. It reveals our spiritual temperature.

The book of James has much to say about the tongue. The same instrument which praises God is at times used to curse our brother. This is an abuse of the tongue we have been given.

I have never met a Christian who believes they have tamed the tongue. One sure way is to silence it and control it by fasting from its use for a time. This will regain some of the control that has been lost.

Begin with small steps.

Do not speak in the car when alone. No phone calls.

At home, screen phone calls. Set aside an hour when you will not speak.

Next take bigger chunks of time.

Like exercise, discipline the tongue not to speak for a full morning.

Eventually, you may be led to not speak for a full day or even a weekend.

At these times the Lord can speak and you can listen better than you have ever done before. This can happen because you are not distracted with superfluous chatter and empty words. Only the Word Himself can be heard.

- Solitude is not merely neglecting to speak.

  Our Lord used His solitude to pray and cry out to God. He removed Himself from distractions so He could think clearly and communicate deeply with His Father.

  Does our Father not deserve this commitment from us?

Ps. 46:10, “Be still (cease striving) and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”
Here the psalmist tells us to “Be still” but that is not all. “Know that I am God.” While you are being still, know that He is God. In solitude you will find a new depth to “knowing” that He is God.

- Remember, this is not a law. This is a wise decision to follow the example set by Jesus.
  Do not make this a legalistic endeavor to please God or impress other believers. This must be a discipline the Lord puts on your heart.

“*Solitude with God repairs the damage done by the fret and noise and clamor of the world*.” Oswald Chambers

“*Alone! Relinquish all! You cannot consecrate your children, your wife, your lover, your friend, your father, your mother, or your own life as yours. You must abandon all and fling yourself on God as a mere conscious being, and unperplexed, seeking you’ll find Him… Abandonment of ourselves is the kernel of consecration, not presenting our gifts, but presenting ourselves without reserve.”* Chambers

Solitude is walking alone with God. The disciple who walks alone with Almighty God is not dependent on places and moods, but carries himself with dignity, serenity and an unshakeable devotion to his Sovereign and King.

- Remember also that many will follow one who has just been on the mountaintop. Many will clamor around the one with the spectacular experience with God. But few are the fans of solitude.

Do not let this deter you.

“Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.” And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” Matt. 8:19-20

“*The only road to Jesus is Alone*.” Chambers

Study

What is study?

How would you define "study"?

Bible studies come in many varieties, shapes and sizes. So what is God's viewpoint on a true study?

Think of the places in the Bible that refer to *studying* God's word. Is that specific terminology in the Bible? So what do we mean by *study*?

Webster defines "study" as:

1. "the act or process of applying the mind so as to acquire knowledge or understanding, as by reading, investigating, etc."

2. "careful attention to, and critical examination and investigation of, any subject, event, etc."

For those of us who love Bible study, we do not often contemplate the simple act of study itself.

But as with all the disciplines, the purpose of *study* is the complete transformation of the disciple of Christ.

Read Romans 12:1, 2 and **see** how it relates to study.

"... by the mercies of God, present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

How important is what you think?

Read Phil. 4:6-8.

"Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension (*another thinking word*), will guard your hearts and your **minds** in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, **dwell** on these things."

What if you are lazy or careless about the *study* of God's word?

2 Cor. 10:5

"We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking **every thought** captive to the obedience of Christ.."

If you do not realize it, the battle for your **mind** is raging around you. Whether you take it seriously or not, this battle will continue. Your decision to study to show yourself approved is your only safeguard against false teaching and corruption. Not only does study prepare you for the wolves in sheep's clothing and their false doctrine, but true, transforming study will prepare your heart and mind for the battle.

Why does the passage on spiritual warfare include God's word?

What is the Word of God in spiritual warfare?

Look at Eph. 6:16, 17.

“In addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take up the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

How can you take up a sword with which you are unfamiliar? It becomes a liability to carry around a weapon which is unfamiliar and clumsily used. This is why David chose his sling and stones and not the heavy armor of King Saul. You must be able to wield the sword of God’s word as adeptly as David maneuvered with his tried and true weapons. The result for David was the death of his mortal enemy and the enemy of God.

Much can be done through study.

But unfortunately, many people are in Bible study and are not transformed.

So how do you study so as to be changed into His glorious image?

That is the *discipline of study* in contrast to the activity of study.

The discipline of study is not an activity; study is the heartbeat of what God has to say to you when you open His word. You are observing God’s truth with the intent to carve away “the dead flesh” that slows you down.

Heb. 12:1

“… let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

The discipline of study is more like a strenuous race than a gentle stroll through the park.

The disciplines are for those who have come to realize the deadly battle between the way of our Sovereign and King and the way of His enemy.

Arm yourself with the discipline of study.

Submission

As with all the disciplines, you cannot make the discipline itself the central focus – that can become legalistic. We must guard against making the discipline a law.

The act of submission must come from a willing, loving heart. Then the disciple yields to his Lord, bowing in reverence to a worthy and majestic Sovereign.

Submission is a degrading word to some people. But willing submission is the most regal, honorable thing we can do because it is the example set by our Lord and King Himself. To submit to God and follow His way instead of demanding *my* way, is the mark of wisdom. Submission is just another word for trust.

Do you trust God with the life He has loaned to you?

How can you practice submission as a daily discipline?

Examine your day today. Was there a situation in which you knew you were doing something *your* way because *God's* way seemed unreasonable or too costly?

In contrast to this, the proper spiritually disciplined response would be to guard your heart the next day (really the next moment) so that you yield to God's way revealed through His word.

Practice yielding to Him and it will become a reflection of the yielded life of our Lord – more than a reflection, the very life of Jesus Christ will manifest itself through you.

Follow the example of Christ in submission:

"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me." Jn. 5:30

"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men, being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name." Phil 2:5-9

"For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously." 1 Pet. 2:21-23

Yield your life to God:

"He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it." Matt. 10:39

"And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." Mark 8:34

"But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake.'" Acts 9:16

Submit to God's word:

"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him… Jesus answered and said to him, ' If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.'… If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." Jn. 14:21, 23; 15:10

"You have ordained Your precepts, that we should keep them diligently. Oh that my ways may be established to keep Your statutes!" Ps. 119:4, 5

Submit to Godly authority:

Submission is first of all to the Lord. But as we yield our lives to Him, *our* rights to *our* time is forfeit. The Lord then calls us into service to others. While the spiritual discipline of service will be explored in a later lesson, the practices of submission and service are prompted by the same obedient heart.

"For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more."

1 Cor. 9:19

"For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." Ga. 5:13

"Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." Eph. 5:21

"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right." 1 Pet. 2:13, 14

When submission to man is in conflict to God's word:

"But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.'" Acts 4:19, 20

"But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men.'" Acts 5:29

In true submission, we are finally free to release our lives back to our Creator. Then we work in unison with Him to live the life for which He has perfectly designed us. We no longer struggle to do things our way because we are submitted to His will and His will alone. This is freedom.

Thanksgiving

"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;

For His lovingkindness is everlasting." Psalm 118:1

While thanksgiving is not mentioned in most lists for spiritual disciplines, we see our Lord practicing thanksgiving throughout His life. If our Lord demonstrated His appreciation for the value of this discipline, then we are wise to follow in His footsteps. Matt. 15:36; 26:27; Luke 22:17, 19; John 11:41

Giving thanks is an often repeated topic in the psalms as well. The practice of giving thanks displays a grateful heart, dependent on the Lord and acknowledges the Sovereign King as worthy of thanks.

In contrast, an ungrateful heart betrays a stingy attitude toward God. If the practice of thanksgiving is foreign to you, if you do not have time for it, if it seems child-like, or if it is not spiritually deep enough for you, then why was it a practice of our Lord? Can we ignore something which was a priority to Him?

Thanksgiving is not simply the offering of a prayer at a meal and then you are done. Anyone can do this out of habit or tradition. True thanksgiving is an act born out of a heart which acknowledges that each and every (every single one, without exception) good thing comes from the Father of lights. James 1:17

God specified certain offerings to be a staple activity of His chosen people. He prescribed offerings for His people in several areas: trespass or guilt offerings, sin offerings, peace offerings, meal and drink offerings, burnt offerings, wave and heave offerings and thank offerings.

Each offering had a particular purpose. The sin offering was a general recognition of sin as a separating element between God and man. The trespass or guilt offering was for a specific offense against God, offered to restore fellowship with God. The meal offerings were acknowledgements to God as the Provider for His people, etc.

"When you sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord, you shall sacrifice it so that you may be accepted." Lev. 22:29

Jesus has been that sacrifice because through the offering of His life, we have been found acceptable. (Jesus is pictured in all the sacrifices. Do not miss that blessed truth.)

The thanksgiving offerings came under the peace offerings. The peace offering is divided into three categories: thanksgiving, votive and freewill offerings. The thanksgiving offering was given primarily in times of prosperity and success to demonstrate the gratitude of the offerer.

As Christians we experience spiritual abundance at all times and hence should offer this sacrifice of thanksgiving constantly. John 10:10

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" 2 Cor. 9:15

Read through these verses on giving thanks and see what you learn. Use the *who what when where why and how* questions to aid you in your discovery.

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him." Ps. 28:7

(For instance, here you might note HOW you thank Him.)

“That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving and declare all Your wonders.” Ps. 26:7

“It is good to give thanks to the Lord and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High.” Ps. 92:1

“Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.” Ps. 95:2

“Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise.” Ps. 110:4

“Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praises to our God on the lyre,

Who covers the heavens with clouds, Who provides rain for the earth.” Ps. 147:7, 8

“Then on that day David first assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks to the Lord.

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples.”

1 Chron. 16:7, 8

“But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.” Rom. 6:17

“I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Cor. 1:4

“And there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.” Eph. 5:4

“Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.” Eph. 5:20

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” Phil. 4:6

“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.” Col. 3:17

“Oh give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples. Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; speak of all His wonders. Glory in His holy name; let the heart of those who seek the Lord be glad. Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face continually. Remember His wonders which He has done, His marvels and the judgments uttered by His mouth. O seed of Abraham, His servant, O sons of Jacob, His chosen ones! He is the Lord our God; His judgments are in all the earth.” Ps. 105:1-7

Waiting

"And do not take the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for I wait for Your ordinances."
Ps. 119:42

If Christians do anything, it is wait. We are waiting for complete redemption; we are waiting for our Lord; we are waiting to be freed from the presence of sin; we are waiting for our loved ones to come to Christ; we are waiting to be reunited with other loved ones who have died; we are waiting for the consummation of the ages.

But what is our countenance as we wait? Do we endure waiting or do we thrive as we wait?

The Hebrew word for "wait" in this verse in Psalm 119 is *yahal*: a verb which means to wait, to hope, to tarry

Noah waited in Gen. 8:12.

Jacob waited seven years and a week to receive his beloved bride.

Job waited in Job 6:11

Psalm 33:18 tells us, "Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who *hope* for His lovingkindness."

Ps. 38:15, "For I *hope* in You, O LORD; You will answer, O Lord my God."

These verses stress the aspect of hope involved in waiting. Waiting is not like a diet where the object is to be devoid of something. Waiting is to be filled with something: hope.

Ps. 42:5, "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? *Hope* in God, for I shall again praise Him for the help of His presence."

Lam. 3:21, 24; "This I recall to my mind, therefore I have *hope*... 'The LORD is my portion,' says my soul, Therefore I have *hope* in Him.'"

Micah 7:7. "But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will *wait* for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me."

As students of the Bible, we read many times of saints and sinners alike who wait and wait. Why is waiting such a large part of the life of the creatures which God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit made in their image? Does God wait? Is part of being made in the *imago dei* to wait?

"For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness." Gal. 5:5

We wait through the Spirit. As we wait, we enter into a sweet communion with the Spirit of God. Believing this, we can rejoice as we wait and not just endure waiting.

1 Cor. 1:7, 8 "So that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Our waiting is a valuable element in the process of our being transformed into the likeness of our Lord. 1 John 3:2 tells us that we will see Him at His appearing and we will be made like Him because we will see Him as He is.

Rom. 8:23, 24 "And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope;

for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it."

The Greek word for wait is *apekdechomai*. It means to expect, to look for, to wait for. The opposite word is helpful. It is *exaporeomai*, which means to be without a way of escape, despair, to give up in despair.

Do you see what God has done for us by giving us the opportunity to hope and wait?

The world can see the difference in our lives of hope and the godless life of despair.

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Phil. 3:20

Oswald Chambers tells us, "*Patience is the result of well-centered strength. To 'wait on the Lord', and to 'rest in the Lord,' is an indication of a healthy, holy faith, while impatience is an indication of an unhealthy, unholy unbelief*."

Do you pass this test on waiting? On patience?

An analogy which Chambers uses to explain true patience is the act of scaffolding. "*The scaffolding may be so skillfully erected and admirably proportioned and may be there for so long that we come to consider this the scheme in the mind of the architect. Then one day we see the loosening of ropes and planks and ladders, and the turmoil destroys forever the skill and beautiful proportion of the scaffolding; all that is happening is but to clear the real building that it may stand nobly before all as a thing of beauty."*

Do you want your life to be the scaffolding or the beautiful building, the temple of the Lord that He, as the Master Architect, has designed your life to be? Then patiently wait as He performs His masterpiece: your life.

"Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient, strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near." Jam. 5:7, 8

Do you love Jesus?

Remember in 1 Cor. 13:4, the first thing Paul tells us is that love is patient.

You honor the Lord greatly by your practice of patience … hoping, trusting, eagerly expecting His return.

A note to remember as you wait.

Satan will try to undermine you by removing the "first thing." Just as he tempted Jesus with this "first thing", so he will try with you. What is this? The "first thing" is this, "First, you must do the will of God." Jesus made it clear that He was going to do the will of the Father.

John 6:38, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me."

Heb. 10:7, "Behold, I have come – in the scroll of the book it is written of Me – to do Your will, O God."

Patience is truly a discipline which we are in desperate need of developing. Christians are growing weary; we must grow strong in the practice of waiting.

Worship

According to A.W. Tozer, the reason Christ came, the reason He suffered and died was to "make worshipers out of rebels… We were created to worship, worship is the normal employment of moral beings."

When we read passages about heaven, the consistent activity there is worship.

Look at Ez. 1:1-5 or Isaiah 6:1-6 or Rev. 4 and 5.

Tozer says that "you cannot worship a Being you cannot trust."

The church is not well because we do not see God as He is … in His majesty.

"The God of the modern evangelical rarely astonishes anybody… He is very much one of us."

Are you captivated by God? Are you fascinated by Him? Are you struck with His splendor?

If not, then you have not been dwelling in His presence because that is where His splendor, His majesty, His perfection abides.

Worship is the only time we truly live and experience Reality. When we worship we are responding to the heart of God.

When we look at worship in the Bible, we see a people who expected to hear from God. They were waiting to hear the *Kol Yahweh*, the voice of God.

Acts 2:2, "And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting."

Acts 4:31, "And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness." Read Acts 5:1-11; 9:36-43; 20:7-10 to see more of this God we worship.

God was among them and they were aware of it. The response to His Presence was worship.

Are you aware of His Presence?

Worship is the activity of glorifying God in His presence with our voices and hearts.

Grudem's Systematic Theology

Worship happens when the creature understands that he is not the Creator and bows in adoration and submission before the One Who is the Creator.

Worship is not nor was it ever intended to be a spectator sport.

The Origins of Worship

In early times, our ancestors worshiped in simple ways. We are not told in Scripture the nature of the worship offered by our first parents; but we understand from the early records that their sons were motivated to offer a portion of the product of their labor in sacrifice to God. Worship appears to be an appropriate act toward a divine benefactor.

Later in biblical accounts, a simple form of worship occurs. Wherever Abraham and his progeny would pitch their tents for a protracted amount of time, they would build altars and call upon the name of the Lord. Gen. 12:8, "Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD."

As time went on, the direction for worship became more specific. The Mosaic ritual included a description of the place of worship, a distinct order of sacred functions, religious ceremonies, and observation of particular feasts. Included in worship, the offerings of sacrifices demonstrated the worshiper's symbolic devotion and utter surrender to the Lord. For the most part Mosaic worship was expressed in outward form and ceremonies. As long as worshipers inhabit earthly bodies the expression of religious thought directed to the Creator is accomplished through *corporeal media*.

God had commanded Pharaoh, "Let My people go, so that they may worship Me in the desert." Ex. 7:16b

The place of worship in the Old Testament eventually became the temple. The physical locale of worship for the Hebrew was of great importance because the temple was the place where heaven met earth.

"In unison when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the LORD saying, 'He is indeed good for His lovingkindness is everlasting,' then the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the God." 2 Chron. 5:13, 14

Isaiah's vision of the Holy One occurred in the temple. Is. 6:1-8

"But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood," declares the Lord God. Ez. 44:15 is referring to future temple activity.

Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was performing his priestly tasks when the angel of the Lord appeared to him declaring the birth of his son. Luke 1

While the temple is clearly important in the Old Testament cultus, we learn in Heb. 10:19, 22 that "we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus… Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." When we worship, we enter before His throne. This is genuine worship.

Jesus in John 4, makes clear that worship is no longer a matter of space but of spirit and truth.

Rev. 1:10-13 John's vision occurred as he "was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, saying 'Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches …'"

Do you long to know and worship God?

Then become acquainted with the One Who explains the Father - Jesus Christ.

John 1:18 (Amplified Bible)

18 No man has ever seen God at any time; the only [a]unique Son, or [b]the only begotten God, Who is in the bosom [in the intimate presence] of the Father, He has declared Him [He has revealed Him and brought Him out where He can be seen; He has interpreted Him and He has made Him known].[A]

Knowing God as He is will result in true worship. Going to church will not guarantee that you will truly worship. True worship is found in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Has there ever been someone you longed to know and someone else had access to that person? How wonderful would it be to know your favorite writer or president or favorite actor or for me, Beethoven? I am jealous of whoever was able to spend time with Beethoven and really know him.

What did that person have that I do not have? Access, time and interest of the desired one.

We have all three of those in order to know God. Well, we have access and time. The interest is each individual's choice. What must I do to really see God?

The psalmist says, "With all my heart I have **sought** You." Ps. 119:10a

1. The first step of seeking God is to accept, learn, treasure and store up His Word.
2. Next you must be submissive to that Word; you must have a desire to be taught by His Word.
3. Develop a passionate prayer life. The psalmist also prays. "Blessed are You, O LORD; teach me Your statutes… Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, and I shall observe it to the end. Give me understanding that I may observe Your law and keep it with all my heart." Ps. 119:12, 33, 34
4. To **see** God you must faithfully **follow** Him <u>each day</u> not sporadically. The **seeking** of God needs to occur as your priority in life.

"O LORD, I remember Your name in the night, and keep Your law… At midnight I shall rise to give thanks to You because of Your righteous ordinances." Ps. 119: 55, 62

"This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Ps. 118:24

"O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day." Ps. 119:97

Somehow, the more we see of God the more we become like Him. Grudem

Even the best description of God will never compare to knowing Him yourself. Truly seeing God as He is cannot be experienced as fully by hearing another person talk of Him – it must be experienced by you personally: you and God.

"*The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express the same <u>delight in God</u> which made David dance*." C. S. Lewis

Corporate Worship

Just as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are One, something divine and reflective of majesty occurs as the body of Christ is one. We are most like our Father when we are in unity.

What is involved in worship?

Silence

"But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him." Hab. 2:20

"Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD; for He is aroused from His holy habitation." Zech. 2:13

Remove all busyness from your human activity. Be still before Him. Live in a state of constant listening silence before the King. Now God is the source of our words and actions.

For most human beings, focused attention is slowly attained and easily lost. Grudem

Singing

More than forty psalms command us to sing unto the Lord.

Singing ushers us into the presence of the One to Whom we address these worship songs**.**

"Yet You are holy, O You Who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel." Ps. 22:3

We are told to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Worship involves our whole being. Body, mind, spirit and emotions are present on the altar of worship to our Sovereign King.

Learn to accept distractions in the worship experience. Perhaps God is speaking to you through these distractions. Do not become fixated on the idea that these distractions should not be there and are someone's fault.

What about when you do not feel like worshiping?

Offer a sacrifice of praise. This is the opportunity to yield your body, mind, soul and strength to the LORD. One Hebrew word for bless means "to kneel". We kneel in submission to our King. If we do not bow the knee to Him and we choose to go our own way, then we have not worshiped Him but ourselves.

As we worship we expect God to move. So we begin with pregnant hearts, but if it is true worship the delivery and birth will be the fruit of obedience. If we are not obedient, then we have not worshiped.

To offer praise before the Holy One of Eternity, the Ancient of Days is to experience change. To worship is to be changed to reflect Him.

Service

"Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire." Heb. 12:28, 29 To gain context, read Heb. 12:18-29.

"Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Rom. 12:1, 2

Simply put, worship is doing the will of God.

"*Worship is therefore a direct expression of our ultimate purpose for living, "to glorify God and fully to enjoy Him forever*." Grudem

Service is so very important in the body of Christ. But service must originate in worship to be eternally effectual.
There are many words for worship. The following are in Greek.

Proskuneo means to kiss the hand toward one, in token of reverence, by kneeling or prostration to do homage

Latreuo means to serve, to render religious service or honor

Ethelothreskeia is voluntary worship.

Therapeuo means to do service.

Sebomai means to revere a deity.

When digging deeper these terms almost all originate from a concept of service. Worship and service are inextricably woven together.

In Hebrew, the same is true.

Abad means to work, to serve

Sagad means to fall down, to bow down, to lie down in worship

Shachah means to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to crouch, to fall down, to humbly beseech, to do reverence, to worship In Ps. 66:4, the whole earth is bowing down to worship God

Finally, worship is much like prayer: we must practice it. We learn to pray by praying. We learn to worship by worshiping.

Dwell on this: what does God do when we worship Him?

"The LORD your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy." Zeph. 3:17

"You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. It will no longer be said to you, "Forsaken," nor to your land will it any longer be said, "Desolation"; but you will be called, "My delight is in her," and your land, "Married"; for the LORD delights in you, and to Him your land will be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so your sons will marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you." Is. 62:3-5

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." James 4:8

"*As we love God and praise Him we realize that we are bringing joy and delight to His heart. And the deepest joy of love is the joy of bringing delight to the heart of the one you love*." Grudem

True worship comes from the same source as genuine salvation … the same source as living water. ..Worship is the ultimate aim of salvation.

Worship is the ultimate ethical act on earth, the most important act on earth because it is the ultimate fulfillment of the Shema, the Great Commandment, and indeed the First and Second Commandments.

Ben Witherington in <u>We Have Seen His Glory</u>

Genuine worship is not something we generate ourselves, it is the outpouring of our hearts as an expression of the realization of Who God is.

Worship changes the worshiper into the image of the One worshiped. Jack Hayford

CHARACTER STUDIES EXPLAINED

Psalm 119 is a part of the word of God. Our God has chosen to communicate truth to His people through words. Each writer of the Bible was endeavoring to deliver God's message to His people.

A good writer employs many tools to achieve his desired effect.

He may use **definition** to clearly explain what sin *is*.

He may use an **example** of faith in the life of Abraham.

He may use **compare and contrast**, such as Jacob and Esau, to show something about God's dealings with man.

He most definitely uses **repetition** to drive home his point.

In each lesson, we will develop a character examination to explain by **example** what that particular doctrine is teaching.

Example is a writing device used throughout scripture, so we will follow the lead of the Holy Spirit and learn from these examples.

At the end of each week, a character will be given to you for observation.

Read the selected portions of scripture and **record** what you find.

Keep all of your findings in the appendix. You will have quite a collection at the end of the study.

God has directed the writers of both New and Old Testaments to use the method of telling stories about the lives of people to teach and inspire those who will read the Bible.

What you are doing by delving into these character studies is a divinely approved approach to learning about God and His ways with His people.

Instructions as you do your character studies:

As you are assigned a particular person, read the directed text. Note anything that you find helpful. Also record the things that relate to Psalm 119. Remember that these people have been preserved in Scripture for our eternal benefit and for our Lord's glory. Listen as the Holy Spirit teaches you through their lives.

When you record any facts or insight that you find pertinent, be sure to note the verse from which you gained the deeper understanding.

By the end of the course, you will have an amazing collection of characters!

God's Word and Its Synonyms

Psalm 119 is an acrostic arrangement on the theme of God's word. Each strophe or stanza has eight verses which begin with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The next strophe will begin with the following letter of the Hebrew alphabet. For instance, in English, stanza one would begin and continue each line with "A". Each line of the second stanza would begin with the letter "B". This would continue until the alphabet was finished. In an English poem, because we have 26 letters, there would be 26 stanzas.

Hebrew has 22 letters in the alphabet.

This psalm is a collection of thoughts, meditations and prayers on God's word.

The writer uses ten words to refer to God's word. (# 9 and #10 are not included by some.)

These are listed below.

1. "Law": # 8451 *torah* indicates direction or instruction. Reference to whole bodies of teaching is implied, such as Deuteronomy, even the whole Pentateuch.

   The word "law" has both a specific meaning and a general meaning. In the general sense it refers to any "instruction" coming from the revelation of God as the basis for life and action.

   In the specific sense it refers to the Torah of Moses.

   "Here, as in Ps. 1 and 19, it must be taken in its widest sense, as synonymous with the "word" of Jehovah (Is. 1:10; 2:3), to include all Divine revelation as the guide of life."

   A. F. Kirkpatrick

   C.S. Lewis wrote a study on the psalms called Reflections on the Psalms. He mentions his surprise at how the psalmist writes of his "love" for God's law, not respect or admiration, but love. This seemed strange to him, similar to loving the instruments of a dentist which are used to inflict pain on the patient. But for Lewis, the reason for the confusion was answered with a better understanding of the word "law".

   Law includes the entirety of God's written revelation, promises as well as warnings, blessings as well as judgments. Lewis also found that what the poet loved about God's law was "the engaging moral order of the divine mind." This order is carefully constructed in the psalm we have been studying for weeks now. We consider *love* as emotional but when the psalmist writes of love of God's law, precepts, commandments, it is not particularly emotional in the sentimental sense. This *love* is a reflection of the psalmist's awe and devotion in having been privileged to gain entry through God's word into the perfection and beauty of God's word – God's mind.

2. "Word"*:# 1697 dabar* can mean spoken word or speech, a command or royal decree, a report or tidings, advice, reference to legal affairs, business dealings. But most of all it refers to divine communication. The Ten Commandments are literally called "the ten words of the Lord". This is a term which is used for God's revelation, any word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. This is a general designation for

divine revelation. This can be a "word" referring to the Decalogue, the law of Moses, or the word given by God to the prophets.

3. "Commandment": # 4687 *miswah* indicates a definite command with authority. Many times its use is associated with an order of the covenant God.

4. "Statutes": # 2706 *huqquim* comes from the root word which means "to engrave or inscribe". God is the divine authority and therefore issues the divine decrees to His covenant people. This word reveals His royal sovereignty and establishes His divine will in His creation. It is always in the plural.
   It also refers to that which must be observed by strict ritual.

   "The *huqqim* of the Lord give order to human lives, even as they uphold order in the created world." Expositor's Commentary on the Psalms

5. "Judgment": # 4941*mispot* means a judgment, a legal decision, a legal case, a claim. It denotes a binding law which stems from a judicial decision and corresponding precedence. It refers to cases or legal decisions associated with particular legal issues. The word is clearly associated with the basis of Israel's legal system. God is the supreme Judge and therefore reveals His will through His laws and judgments.
   This word can also refer to God's judgment on the wicked.
   This term also refers to the place of judgment, the place where judgments were rendered; disputes were to be taken here. This word is also used to describe the instructions or plans regarding the building of the Tabernacle and the exact directions for the Temple.

   The mispatim (judgments) of God are righteous and they establish His sovereign order in His creation, giving His people a security which they cannot create.

6. "Precepts": # 6490 *piqqudim* is a poetical word for mandate, found only in the psalms. This word is strongly associated with covenant and with the revelation of God. The root word (*p-q-d*) "visit or appoint" signifies a relationship between the speaker and the object. As the Sovereign, covenant-keeping God has commanded the precepts, it is the job of the psalmist to *guard, long for, keep, love, seek, choose, and meditate* on these precepts.
   The root of this word means to attend, to visit and to search out. The idea of attending to something, especially in the case of God paying attention to His people, is in view here.

The idea that God is paying attention to how He wants things ordered is prominent in this word.

7. "Testimony": # 5715 *edah* declares a solemn declaration to the will of God. It can be referred to as a precept or warning sign. It reveals the standard for God's required conduct. Also referred to as ordinances. This word is derived from "w-d" ("witness or testify"). A covenant relationship is in view as this word is used when referring to "the tablets of the Testimony" and "the ark of the Testimony". God's covenant people were to be loyal to the covenant agreement made between Himself and His people. Observance of God's ordinances was not optional. He is our Witness and our Judge.

8. "Way": # 1870 *derek* describes the mode of life one will follow as directed by God's law.
   From the verb *darak*, meaning to walk or to tread. Usually this word is used metaphorically to refer to the pathways of one's life, indicating the pattern of life. The obedient life, the righteous life, the wicked life are all described using this word. Also pleasant, dark, and wise ways are represented in scripture using this word.

9. "Word" or "saying": # 559 '*imrah* can be translated "promise" and is closely connected to *dabar*. This can refer to anything God has promised, commanded or said.

10 "Path": # 734 *orah* is very similar to "way". It means "pathway, highway or byway. It describes the literal path one walks on (Jud. 5:6); the path or rank one walks in (Joel 2:7); the path of an individual or course of life (Job 6:18); the characteristics of a lifestyle, good or evil (Ps. 16:11); righteousness or judgment (Prov. 2:13). The Complete Word Study of the Old Testament

Throughout this psalm, the message of Deuteronomy is seen in both the language and message. The law as God's standard is not portrayed as burdensome or ritualistic, but a loving response to a gracious LawGiver.

"When the psalmist used the word "law" (torah), or any other words for the Scriptures, he was referring to much more than the Ten Commandments and the ceremonial instructions that have now been fulfilled in Christ. He was referring to the entire revelation of God as found in the Old Testament Scriptures." W. Wiersbe

With the use of several words to clearly explain God's law, the psalmist carefully crafts a masterpiece depicting the eternal benefits and blessings of the Divine gift of His communication to His covenant people. Without covenant, there is no divine blessing and no understanding of His words of life.

TERMS

Cross reference: verses located in other places within scripture which relate and explain the currently observed text

Declarative praise: praise found in psalms that declare the majesty of God; also psalms in which believers are commanded to praise God

Descriptive praise: psalms in which the poet praises God and points out specifics that prompt the worshiper to remember concerning God's actions and attributes, i.e., creation, salvation

Distich: a two-line compound thought; also called a bi-colon

Eisegesis: the process is misinterpreting a text by reading into the text one's preconceived ideas

Exegesis: explanation, critical analysis or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. of the Bible; the process of interpreting a text of scripture

Imprecatory psalms: those which contain the request for God to judge the enemies of the psalmist

Interior lament: psalms in which the poet describes problems which he has gone through or is currently going through from which he has gained insight, shaping his faith and building his trust in God; the focus is not on the trial but on the Lord's faithfulness

Laments of the individual: there are eight parts to this type of psalm: address and cry to God for help, the lament itself, confession of trust, petition, belief in being heard, longing for God's intervention, vow of praise, and rejoicing when the personal cry has been heard.

Maskil: a song for teaching purposes as well as artistic, it's exact meaning is unknown but it is attached to 13 psalms

Parallelism: a literary pattern common to Hebrew poetry in which an idea is stated in one line and then re-enforced in the next either by synonymous terms or antithetical ones

Pericope: in rhetoric, a unit or passage of writing that forms a thought, such as a story

Psalms of lament: psalms characterized by a complaint or distress expressed by the psalmist

Psalms of praise: psalms characterized by praising God and recounting why God is to be praised; there are four predominant themes in these psalms: creation, Yahweh's omnipresence and omnipotence, Israel's history and God's works and deeds

Psalms of thanksgiving: usually involves the psalmist gratitude at deliverance from crisis

Qal vahomer: the basic idea of “how much more”, if God cares for the lilies of the field, then how much more will He care for His children

Sitz im leben: “setting in life” is a scholarly term which refers the reader to the life-setting of the text; emphasis on context

Songs of ascent: psalms 120-134 which were most likely sung by pilgrims on their journey to Jerusalem for the annual feasts; later these psalms were sung by the Levites as they stood on the fifteen steps of the temple

Stich or colon: the line or completed thought segment of poetry

Strophe: a larger thought segment in Hebrew poetry, made up of multiple stichs

Tehillim: the Hebrew word which designates the Book of Psalms; it means “praises”

Torah: the revelation of God’s character and covenant which is recorded in the first five books of the Bible. At its heart is the law, which God gave to Israel on Mt. Sinai; the focus being that God’s will for human life is divinely revealed and historically evidenced in the story of Israel and mankind. The discussion of law or Torah in the Psalms takes on at least three forms: God’s ways, God’s works and God’s words

Torah psalms: three psalms in particular make the Torah the focus: 1, 19, 119. Sixteen others focus on this topic enough to fall in this category as well: 18, 25, 33, 68, 78, 81, 89, 93, 94, 99, 103, 105, 111, 112, 147, 148. It is said these psalms form the structure for the entire Psalter; they give a foundational interpretive framework for the personal, moral and national identity of the psalm as a form

Typology: an interpretive method that notes the historical and textual relationship between two matter of revelation and then more fully understands the separate parts on the basis of the whole.

Unit: the basic words or phrases that make up the larger thought segment of a poetic line or stich

Wisdom motifs: themes concerning the two contrasting ways of life: good and evil; also practical advice on living, including the fear of the Lord

Writings: the third division of the Hebrew canon in which the Book of Psalms is contained. Separate from Torah and Prophets, this division is sometimes referred to by its Greek name, the Hagiographa.

Yahweh is king psalms: “YHWH malak” – The Lord reigns! is declared in these psalms; these psalms proclaim the present reign of Yahweh.

Study Tools

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Psalm 119

New American Standard Bible

Meditations and Prayers Relating to the Law of God.

Aleph.

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!

6 Then I shall not be ashamed

When I look upon all Your commandments.

7 I shall give thanks to You with uprightness of heart,

When I learn Your righteous judgments.

8 I shall keep Your statutes;

Do not forsake me utterly!

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 Your word I have treasured in my heart,

That I may not sin against You.

12 Blessed are You, O 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 shall not forget Your word.

Gimel.

17 Deal bountifully with Your servant,

That I may live and keep Your word.

18 Open my eyes, that I may behold

Wonderful things from Your law.

19 I am a stranger in the earth;

Do not hide Your commandments from me.

20 My soul is crushed with longing

After Your ordinances at all times.

21 You rebuke the arrogant, the cursed,

Who wander from Your commandments.

22 Take away reproach and contempt from me,

For I observe Your testimonies.

23 Even though princes sit *and* talk against me,

Your servant meditates on Your statutes.

24 Your testimonies also are my delight;

They are my counselors.

Daleth.

25 My soul cleaves to the dust;

Revive me according to Your word.

26 I have told of my ways, and You have answered me;

Teach me Your statutes.

27 Make me understand the way of Your precepts,

So I will meditate on Your wonders.

28 My soul weeps because of grief;

Strengthen me according to Your word.

29 Remove the false way from me,

And graciously grant me Your law.

30 I have chosen the faithful way;

I have placed Your ordinances *before me*.

31 I cling to Your testimonies;

O LORD, do not put me to shame!

32 I shall run the way of Your commandments,

For You will enlarge my heart.

He.

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes,

And I shall observe it to the end.

34 Give me understanding, that I may observe Your law

And keep it with all *my* heart.

35 Make me walk in the path of Your commandments,

For I delight in it.

36 Incline my heart to Your testimonies

And not to *dishonest* gain.

37 Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity,

And revive me in Your ways.

38 Establish Your word to Your servant,

As that which produces reverence for You.

39 Turn away my reproach which I dread,

For Your ordinances are good.

40 Behold, I long for Your precepts;

Revive me through Your righteousness.

Vav.

41 May Your lovingkindnesses also come to me, O LORD,

Your salvation according to Your word;

42 So I will have an answer for him who reproaches me,

For I trust in Your word.

43 And do not take the word of truth utterly out of my mouth,

For I wait for Your ordinances.

44 So I will keep Your law continually,

Forever and ever.

45 And I will walk at liberty,

For I seek Your precepts.

46 I will also speak of Your testimonies before kings

And shall not be ashamed.

47 I shall delight in Your commandments,

Which I love.

48 And I shall lift up my hands to Your commandments,

Which I love;

And I will meditate on Your statutes.

***Zayin*.**

49 Remember the word to Your servant,

In which You have made me hope.

50 This is my comfort in my affliction,

That Your word has revived me.

51 The arrogant utterly deride me,

Yet I do not turn aside from Your law.

52 I have remembered Your ordinances from of old, O LORD,

And comfort myself.

53 Burning indignation has seized me because of the wicked,

Who forsake Your law.

54 Your statutes are my songs

In the house of my pilgrimage.

55 O LORD, I remember Your name in the night,

And keep Your law.

56 This has become mine,

That I observe Your precepts.

Heth.

57 The LORD is my portion;

I have promised to keep Your words.

58 I sought Your favor with all *my* heart;

Be gracious to me according to Your word.

59 I considered my ways

And turned my feet to Your testimonies.

60 I hastened and did not delay

To keep Your commandments.

61 The cords of the wicked have encircled me,

But I have not forgotten Your law.

62 At midnight I shall rise to give thanks to You

Because of Your righteous ordinances.

63 I am a companion of all those who fear You,

And of those who keep Your precepts.

64 The earth is full of Your lovingkindness, O LORD;

Teach me Your statutes.

Teth.

65 You have dealt well with Your servant,

O LORD, according to Your word.

66 Teach me good discernment 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 arrogant have forged a lie against me;

With all *my* heart I will observe Your precepts.

70 Their heart is covered with fat,

But I delight in Your law.

71 It is good for me that I was afflicted,

That I may learn Your statutes.

72 The law of Your mouth is better to me

Than thousands of gold and silver *pieces*.

Yodh.

73 Your hands made me and fashioned me;

Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments.

74 May those who fear You see me and be glad,

Because I wait for Your word.

75 I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are righteous,

And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.

76 O may Your lovingkindness comfort me,

According to Your word to Your servant.

77 May Your compassion come to me that I may live,

For Your law is my delight.

78 May the arrogant be ashamed, for they subvert me with a lie;

But I shall meditate on Your precepts.

79 May those who fear You turn to me,

Even those who know Your testimonies.

80 May my heart be blameless in Your statutes,

So that I will not be ashamed.

Kaph.

81My soul languishes for Your salvation;

I wait for Your word.

82My eyes fail *with longing* for Your word,

While I say, “When will You comfort me?”

83Though I have become like a wineskin in the smoke,

I do not forget Your statutes.

84How many are the days of Your servant?

When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?

85The arrogant have dug pits for me,

Men who are not in accord with Your law.

86All Your commandments are faithful;

They have persecuted me with a lie; help me!

87They almost destroyed me on earth,

But as for me, I did not forsake Your precepts.

88Revive me according to Your lovingkindness,

So that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth.

Lamedh.

89 Forever, O LORD,

Your word is settled in heaven.

90 Your faithfulness *continues* throughout all generations;

You established the earth, and it stands.

91 They stand this day according to Your ordinances,

For all things are Your servants.

92 If Your law had not been my delight,

Then I would have perished in my affliction.

93 I will never forget Your precepts,

For by them You have revived me.

94 I am Yours, save me;

For I have sought Your precepts.

95 The wicked wait for me to destroy me;

I shall diligently consider Your testimonies.

96 I have seen a limit to all perfection;

Your commandment is exceedingly broad.

Mem.

97 O how I love Your law!

It is my meditation all the day.

98 Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies,

For they are ever mine.

99 I have more insight than all my teachers,

For Your testimonies are my meditation.

100 I understand more than the aged,

Because I have observed Your precepts.

101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way,

That I may keep Your word.

102 I have not turned aside from Your ordinances,

For You Yourself have taught me.

103 How sweet are Your words to my taste!

Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

104 From Your precepts I get understanding;

Therefore I hate every false way.

Nun.

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet

And a light to my path.

106 I have sworn and I will confirm it,

That I will keep Your righteous ordinances.

107 I am exceedingly afflicted;

Revive me, O LORD, according to Your word.

108 O accept the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD,

And teach me Your ordinances.

109 My life is continually in my hand,

Yet I do not forget Your law.

110 The wicked have laid a snare for me,

Yet I have not gone astray from Your precepts.

111 I have inherited Your testimonies forever,

For they are the joy of my heart.

112 I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes

Forever, *even* to the end.

Samekh.

113 I hate those who are double-minded,

But I love Your law.

114 You are my hiding place and my shield;

I wait for Your word.

115 Depart from me, evildoers,

That I may observe the commandments of my God.

116 Sustain me according to Your word, that I may live;

And do not let me be ashamed of my hope.

117 Uphold me that I may be safe,

That I may have regard for Your statutes continually.

118 You have rejected all those who wander from Your statutes,

For their deceitfulness is useless.

119 You have removed all the wicked of the earth *like* dross;

Therefore I love Your testimonies.

120 My flesh trembles for fear of You,

And I am afraid of Your judgments.

***Ayin*.**

121 I have done justice and righteousness;

Do not leave me to my oppressors.

122 Be surety for Your servant for good;

Do not let the arrogant oppress me.

123 My eyes fail *with longing* for Your salvation

And for Your righteous word.

124 Deal with Your servant according to Your lovingkindness

And teach me Your statutes.

125 I am Your servant; give me understanding,

That I may know Your testimonies.

126 It is time for the LORD to act,

For they have broken Your law.

127 Therefore I love Your commandments

Above gold, yes, above fine gold.

128 Therefore I esteem right all *Your* precepts concerning everything,

I hate every false way.

Pe.

129 Your testimonies are wonderful;

Therefore my soul observes them.

130 The unfolding of Your words gives light;

It gives understanding to the simple.

131 I opened my mouth wide and panted,

For I longed for Your commandments.

132 Turn to me and be gracious to me,

After Your manner with those who love Your name.

133 Establish my footsteps in Your word,

And do not let any iniquity have dominion over me.

134 Redeem me from the oppression of man,

That I may keep Your precepts.

135 Make Your face shine upon Your servant,

And teach me Your statutes.

136 My eyes shed streams of water,

Because they do not keep Your law.

Tsadhe.

137 Righteous are You, O LORD,

And upright are Your judgments.

138 You have commanded Your testimonies in righteousness

And exceeding faithfulness.

139 My zeal has consumed me,

Because my adversaries have forgotten Your words.

140 Your word is very pure,

Therefore Your servant loves it.

141 I am small and despised,

Yet I do not forget Your precepts.

142 Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness,

And Your law is truth.

143 Trouble and anguish have come upon me,

Yet Your commandments are my delight.

144 Your testimonies are righteous forever;

Give me understanding that I may live.

Qoph.

145 I cried with all my heart; answer me, O LORD!

I will observe Your statutes.

146 I cried to You; save me

And I shall keep Your testimonies.

147 I rise before dawn and cry for help;

I wait for Your words.

148 My eyes anticipate the night watches,

That I may meditate on Your word.

149 Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness;

Revive me, O LORD, according to Your ordinances.

150 Those who follow after wickedness draw near;

They are far from Your law.

151 You are near, O LORD,

And all Your commandments are truth.

152 Of old I have known from Your testimonies

That You have founded them forever.

Resh.

153 Look upon my affliction and rescue me,

For I do not forget Your law.

154 Plead my cause and redeem me;

Revive me according to Your word.

155 Salvation is far from the wicked,

For they do not seek Your statutes.

156 Great are Your mercies, O LORD;

Revive me according to Your ordinances.

157 Many are my persecutors and my adversaries,

Yet I do not turn aside from Your testimonies.

158 I behold the treacherous and loathe *them,*

Because they do not keep Your word.

159 Consider how I love Your precepts;

Revive me, O LORD, according to Your lovingkindness.

160 The sum of Your word is truth,

And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.

Shin.

161 Princes persecute me without cause,
But my heart stands in awe of Your words.

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

163 I hate and despise falsehood,
But I love Your law.

164 Seven times a day I praise You,
Because of Your righteous ordinances.

165 Those who love Your law have great peace,
And nothing causes them to stumble.

166 I hope for Your salvation, O LORD,
And do Your commandments.

167 My soul keeps Your testimonies,
And I love them exceedingly.

168 I keep Your precepts and Your testimonies,
For all my ways are before You.

Tav.

169 Let my cry come before You, O LORD;

Give me understanding according to Your word.

170 Let my supplication come before You;

Deliver me according to Your word.

171 Let my lips utter praise,

For You teach me Your statutes.

172 Let my tongue sing of Your word,

For all Your commandments are righteousness.

173 Let Your hand be ready to help me,

For I have chosen Your precepts.

174 I long for Your salvation, O LORD,

And Your law is my delight.

175 Let my soul live that it may praise You,

And let Your ordinances help me.

176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant,

For I do not forget Your commandments.

Additional documents for Psalm 119 study




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