

Psalm 119

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." Ps 119:105

For Your Information: Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the bible at 176 verses.

"The Psalm is arranged in an acrostic pattern. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and this Psalm contains 22 units of 8 verses each. Each of the 22 sections is given to a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and each line in that section begins with that letter. . . The sections and verses are not like a chain, where one link is connected to the other, but like a string of pearls where each pearl has equal, but independent value." - David Guzik

Day 1

Read Psalm 119

Names for Scripture

- I. Below are eight Hebrew words and what they are translated as in English most frequently. These words refer to scripture or God's written word. Read through the following to become familiar with the eight words. You might like to mark these words in your Bible.
- **Law** OT:8451 *towrah to-law'* or *torah* {to-law'}; a precept or statute, especially the Decalogue or Pentateuch: - Strong's Concordance
 - "Its parent verb means 'teach' or 'direct'; therefore coming from God it means both 'law' and 'revelation.' It can be used of a single command or of a whole body of law." (Kidner)
 - The Hebrew word *torah* (law) lays more stress on its moral authority, as teaching the truth and guiding in the right way; - Smith's Bible Dictionary (<http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/>)
 - **Testimonies** OT:5713 *`edah ay-daw'*; testimony, witness.
 - This word is related to the word for witness. To obey His testimonies "signifies loyalty to the terms of the covenant made between the Lord and Israel." (VanGemeren)
 - The idea of testimony is intrinsic to the idea of biblical revelation. The content of biblical revelation, whether general or special, stands as testimony to its Giver. - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology
 - **Precepts** OT:6490 *piquwd pik-kood'* or *piqud* {pik-kood'}; properly, appointed, i.e. a mandate (of God; plural only, collectively, for the Law):--commandment, precept, statute. - Strong's Concordance
 - "This is a word drawn from the sphere of an officer or overseer, and man who is responsible to look closely into a situation and take action. . . . So the word points to the particular instructions of the Lord, as of one who cares about detail." (Kidner)
 - Positive Laws are precepts founded only on the will of God. They are right because God commands them. - Easton's Bible Dictionary

- **Statutes** OT:2706 *choq khoke*; an enactment; hence, an appointment (of time, space, quantity, labor or usage): . - Strong's Concordance
 - The noun is derived from the root verb "engrave" or "inscribe"; the idea is of the written word of God and the authority of His written word. "Declaring his authority and power of giving us laws." (Poole)
 - **Commandments** OT:4687 *mitsvah mits-vaw'*; a command, whether human or divine (collectively, the Law) - Strong's Concordance
 - "This word emphasizes the straight authority of what is said ... the right to give orders." (Kidner)
 - **Judgments/Ordinances** OT:4941 *mishpat mish-pawt'*; properly, a verdict (favorable or unfavorable) pronounced judicially, especially a sentence or formal decree ... including the act, the place, the suit, the crime, and the penalty; abstractly, justice, including a participant's right or privilege - Strong's Concordance
 - "From shaphat, to judge, determine, regulate, order, and discern, because they judge concerning our words and works; show the rules by which they should be regulated; and cause us to discern what is right and wrong, and decide accordingly." (Clarke)
 - **Word** OT:1697 *dabar*; a word; by implication, a matter (as spoken of) or thing; adverbially, a cause. - Strong's Concordance
 - The idea is of the spoken word, God's revealed word to man. "Proceeding from his mouth and revealed by him to us." (Poole)
 - **Word** OT:565 'imrah im-raw' or memrah {em-raw'}; commandment, speech, word.
 - Similar in meaning to *dabar*, yet a different term. "The 'word' may denote anything God has spoken, commanded, or promised." (VanGemenen)
2. When you look through Psalm 119, about how many verses contain one of these eight words?
3. From Psalm 119:1-16, how important would you say scripture is to the psalmist?
4. What do 119:4-8, say about how important scripture is to God? (See also Deuteronomy 11:18-21; Matthew 5:18)

Applying the Word: *How important is scripture to you and how do you show it?*

Day 2

Attributes of Scripture

5. Underline where the psalmist says scripture comes from in the following verses.
- v. 1 How blessed are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the **law** of the LORD. NASB
 - v. 13 With my lips I have told of All the **ordinances** of Your mouth. NASB
 - v. 72 The **law** of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of gold and silver pieces. NASB
 - v. 88 Revive me according to Your loving kindness, So that I may keep the **testimony** of Your mouth. NASB
 - v. 115 Depart from me, evildoers, That I may observe the **commandments** of my God.
6. Where did Paul and Peter say scripture comes from? 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21
7. Underline how the psalmist *feels* about scripture in the following verses.
- v. 24 Your **testimonies** also are my delight; They are my counselors. NASB
 - v. 35 Make me walk in the path of Your **commandments**, For I delight in it. NASB
 - v. 47 for I delight in your **commands** because I love them. NIV
 - v. 72 The **law** of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of gold and silver pieces. NASB
 - v. 103 How sweet are Your **words** to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth! NASB
 - v. 111 "I have inherited Your **testimonies** forever, For they are the joy of my heart. NASB
 - v. 128 ...Your **statutes** are wonderful; therefore I obey them. NIV
 - v. 162 I rejoice at Your **word** As one who finds great treasure. NKJV
 - v. 167 My soul keeps Your **testimonies**, And I love them exceedingly. NASB
 - v. 174 I long for Your salvation, O LORD, And Your **law** is my delight. NASB
8. How do you think the psalmist delights in scripture even in times of trouble (Ps. 119:43,44)?

9. Underline how the psalmist describes scripture.

- v. 86 All Your **commandments** are faithful... NASB
- v. 138 The **statutes** you have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy. NIV.
- v. 140 Your **word** is very pure, Therefore Your servant loves it. NASB
- v. 142 Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your **law** is truth. NASB
- v. 151 Yet you are near, O LORD, and all your **commands** are true. NIV
- v. 160 The sum of Your **word** is truth, And every one of Your righteous **ordinances** is everlasting. NASB

Optional Digging Deeper:

How did the following people testify to the truthfulness of God's word?

Joshua 23:14-15

1 Kings 8:54-56

Luke 24:44-48; John 13:19

How did Jesus say we can know the truthfulness of His word? John 8:31-32

For Your Information: "You can trust God's Word. All of it is faithful, righteous, and true. ...The answers to all the problems we face today are in the Bible, because it speaks God's truth to our human condition, which has not changed over the centuries. Satan is always trying to undermine the credibility of God's Word. If he can't do it by attacking the inerrancy of Scripture, he does it by subtly eroding belief in the sufficiency of Scripture... We need to come back to what the psalmist here repeatedly affirms, that Scripture is reliable because it comes to us from God who understands our needs and who graciously has revealed how we should live. The Bible is God's authoritative and reliable Word. We must trust it! "

– Steven J. Cole

10. Underline when and how much scripture can be relied on in the following verses.

- v. 52 I have remembered Your **ordinances** from of old, O LORD, And comfort myself. NASB
- v. 89 Forever, O LORD, Your **word** is settled in heaven. B
- v. 96 To all perfection I see a limit; but your **commands** are boundless. NIV
- v. 111 I have inherited Your testimonies forever, For they are the joy of my heart. NASB
- v. 144 Your **testimonies** are righteous forever; Give me understanding that I may live. NASB
- v. 152 Of old I have known from Your **testimonies** That You have founded them forever. NASB
- v. 160 The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous **ordinances** is everlasting. NASB

Digging Deeper:

What else endures forever?

I Chronicles 16:34

Psalm 117:2

Daniel 6:26

John 3:16

2 Corinthians 4:18

Hebrews 13:8

11. How did the Psalmist describe scripture in the following verses.

- 119:54

- 119:105

***Applying the Word:** How would you explain the importance of knowing Scripture and the effect it has on your life? What of the attributes of Scripture mentioned in this psalm would you like to experience more?*

Day 3

Benefits of following Scripture

12. List the words or phrases in 119:1-8 that point to our behaviors/activities/attitudes.

- 119:1 **walk** according to the law
- 119:2 **keep** His statutes (NIV) / **observe** his testimonies (NASB)
Seek Him with all their heart

FYI: Note on 119:8b "Immediately after making the sweeping boast 'I will keep thy statutes!' he seems to have suddenly been overwhelmed with the utter impossibility of such a claim and closes the stanza by throwing himself completely on God's mercy. 'O forsake me not utterly.'" - Henry Morris (115)

13. Why does the study of Scripture need to be more than just reading and learning?

- Luke 6:47-49

- James 1:22-25

14. In response to the question in Psalm 119:9a ("How can a young man keep his way pure?"), what answers does he give in vv. 9b-16?

15. From Psalms 119: 97-100, list the phrases that describe the benefits that scripture gives.

- 119:98
- 119:99
- 119:100
- 119:104 (Note what God's testimonies/statutes are called in 119:24)

16. From 119:97-102, list the phrases that describe the kind of involvement with the Word it took for him to gain this understanding.

- What conclusion did the psalmist come to about departing from God's word? 119:104b

Food for Thought: "If Psalm 119 says anything, it says we must be willing to consume a steady diet of truth from His Book and digest the principles it contains. Pore over it. Pray over it. Read it. Study it. Memorize sections of it. Meditate upon it. Let it saturate your thinking. Use it when problems arise. Filter your decisions through it. Don't let a day pass without spending time alone with God, listening to the silent voice of His eloquent Word. All other attempts to gain spiritual growth lead to frustration. I know; I've tried many of them. With each one my enthusiasm waned; with God's Word my enthusiasm grows."
- Charles Swindoll (217,218)

17. Underline additional benefits the psalmist received or sought from God's Word.

- v 32 I shall run the way of Your **commandments**, For You will enlarge my heart. NASB ("have set my heart free" NIV)
- v. 45 I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your **precepts**. NIV
- vv. 49-50 Remember the **word** to Your servant, In which You have made me hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, That Your **word** has revived me. NASB
- v. 130 The unfolding of Your **words** gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.
- v. 165 Those who love Your **law** have great peace, And nothing causes them to stumble. NASB

IT'S HEBREW TO ME: "**sustain/help**" (119:175) OT:5826 `azar; to surround, i.e. protect or aid - Strong's Concordance

18. Underline what we should **not do** with scripture.

- v.10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your **commands**. NIV
- v. 16 I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your **word**. NIV
- v. 51 The arrogant utterly deride me, Yet I do not turn aside from Your **law**. NASB
- v. 60 I will hasten and not delay to obey your **commands**. NIV
- v. 61 Though the wicked bind me with ropes, I will not forget your **law**. NIV
- v. 87 They almost destroyed me on earth, But as for me, I did not forsake Your **precepts**.
- v. 102 I have not departed from your **laws**, for you yourself have taught me. NIV
- v. 157 Many are my persecutors and mine adversaries; (yet) have I not swerved from thy **testimonies**. ASV

19. Who does the psalmist name in the following and how do they regard the law?

- v. 85
- v. 136
- v. 155 (See also Job 21:14-15)
- v. 158

20. Underline what following the law reveals or yields.

- Deuteronomy 4:6 Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these **decrees** and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." NIV
- Deuteronomy 12:28 Be careful to obey all these **regulations** I am giving you, so that it may always go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the LORD your God. NIV
- Nehemiah 9:13 "You came down on Mount Sinai; you spoke to them from heaven. You gave them **regulations** and **laws** that are just and right, and **decrees** and **commands** that are good. NIV

21. Underline the purposes for the law that the New Testament reveals.

- Romans 3:19-20 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.
- Galatians 3:24-25 So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. 25 Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. NIV

22. What ultimate purpose did Christ give to the law? Matthew 5:17,18

For Your Information: “The statutes of the Old Testament are designed to heighten our appreciation for the goodness and kindness of God toward us. Psalm 119 was written both to encourage and to capture the pure delight in what God’s law teaches us. Even though the Lord Jesus has fulfilled all the law, we continue to face temptations to sin that threaten to undermine our faith. At times we find ourselves feeling alone, forsaken, despondent and discouraged. But Psalm 119 is a masterpiece of Hebrew poetry that provides us with the hope and joy we often lack.”
– Woodrow Kroll Ministries

“We don’t study the Bible to become Bible scholars. Nor do we study it simply to learn and follow its moral precepts, although we should do that. We study the Bible to seek God Himself (v. 2)” – Steven J. Cole

Digging Deeper

The Law versus grace in Christ

Why don’t we need to keep the law as recorded in the Old Testament?

- John 1:17-18
- Romans 6:14
- Galatians 3:11-14

Why ***can’t*** we keep the law?

- James 2:10 (See also Romans 3:23)
- Galatians 3:10
- Galatians 5:17-18
- Romans 7:18

Applying the Word: How do you delight in the Word of God?

Day 4

What to ask God for

23. What does the Psalmist ask God for in the following verses? Underline the characteristic of God, if given, on which he based his request.:

- v. 12 Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your **statutes**. NASB
- v. 26 I have told of my ways, and You have answered me; Teach me Your **statutes**. NASB
- v. 33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your **statutes**, And I shall observe it to the end. NASB
- v. 64 The earth is full of Your lovingkindness, O LORD; Teach me Your **statutes**. NASB
- v. 66 Teach me good discernment and knowledge, For I believe in Your **commandments**. NASB
- v. 68 You are good and do good; Teach me Your **statutes**. NASB
- v. 108 Accept, O LORD, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me your **laws**. NIV
- v. 124 Deal with Your servant according to Your lovingkindness And teach me Your **statutes**. NASB
- v. 135 Make Your face shine upon Your servant, And teach me Your **statutes**. NASB
- v. 171 Let my lips utter praise, For You teach me Your **statutes**. NASB

24. The psalmist asks God to teach him His word in all of the above verses except 66. What does he ask to be taught in 66? How do you think that compares to the other requests?

- What did Paul ask for believers to have? Colossians 1:9-10.

25. Underline other ways he asks to be taught and why:

- v. 18 Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your **law**. NASB
- v. 27 Make me understand the way of Your **precepts**, So I will meditate on Your wonders. NASB
- v. 34 Give me understanding, that I may observe Your **law** And keep it with all my heart. NASB
- v. 36 Incline my heart to Your **testimonies** And not to dishonest gain. NASB
- v. 38 Establish Your **word** to Your servant, As that which produces reverence for You.
- v. 73 Your hands made me and fashioned me; Give me understanding, that I may learn Your **commandments**. NASB
- v. 125 I am Your servant; give me understanding, That I may know Your **testimonies**. NASB
- v. 144 Your **testimonies** are righteous forever; Give me understanding that I may live. NASB

26. What does Paul say that Scripture teaches us?

- Acts 17:2-3; 18:28
- 2 Timothy 3:15-17

27. How are we empowered to understand scripture today and what are we taught?

- John 14:26; John 16:13
- Ephesians 1:17

28. Underline additional things the psalmist sought from God's Word.

- v. 25 I am laid low in the dust; preserve my life according to your **word**. NIV
- v. 28 My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word. NIV
- v. 76 O may Thy lovingkindness comfort me, According to Thy **word** to Thy servant. NAS.
- v. 94 I am Yours, save me; For I have sought Your **precepts**. NASB
- v. 117 Uphold me that I may be safe, That I may have regard for Your **statutes** continually. NASB
- v. 134 Redeem me from the oppression of man, That I may keep Your **precepts**. NASB
- v. 145 I cried with all my heart; answer me, O LORD! I will observe Your **statutes**. NASB
- v. 170 Let my supplication come before You; Deliver me according to Your **word**. NASB
- v. 175 Let my soul live that it may praise You, And let Your **ordinances** help me. NASB

29. Underline how the psalmist asked God to revive/preserve him:

- v. 37 Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your **word**. NIV
- v. 40 Behold, I long for Your **precepts**; Revive me through Your righteousness. NASB
- v. 107 I am exceedingly afflicted; Revive me, O LORD, according to Your **word**. NASB
- v. 156 Your compassion is great, O LORD; preserve my life according to your **laws**. NIV

IT'S HEBREW TO ME: **Revive/preserve/quicken** OT:2421 *chayah*; to live, whether literally or figuratively; causatively, to revive: Also translated KJV - keep alive, give (promise) life, nourish up, preserve (alive), quicken, recover, repair, restore (to life), revive, save, be whole. - Strong's Concordance

"The intensive form of *chayah* means 'to preserve alive'...Gen 6:19. This word may also mean "to bring to life" or "to cause to live"...To live" is more than physical existence. According to Deut 8:3, "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." Moses said to Israel: "...love the Lord thy God... that thou mayest live and multiply" Deut 30:16." - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

30. What kind of preservation of his life do you think was the Psalmist asking for?

- What kind of life does Jesus offer?
- John 10:10

- John 3:36; 10:27,28

31. What mistake were the religious leaders making with the law? John 5:38

- How would you explain the similarities or difference between the request for the law to “revive me”/“preserve my life” (NIV) versus the life that Jesus offers?

32. Underline what the psalmist prays about his walk with the Lord.

- v. 5 Oh that my ways may be established To keep Your **statutes!**
- v. 10 With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your **commandments**. NASB
- v. 19 I am a stranger in the earth; Do not hide Your **commandments** from me. NASB
- v. 29 Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me through your **law**. NIV
- v. 31 I cling to Your **testimonies**; O LORD, do not put me to shame! NASB
- v. 35 Make me walk in the path of Your **commandments**, For I delight in it.
- v. 37 Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, And revive me in Your **ways**.
- v. 43 And do not take the **word** of truth utterly out of my mouth, For I wait for Your **ordinances**. NASB
- v. 133 Establish my footsteps in Your **word**, And do not let any iniquity have dominion over me. NASB

33. How would you state his main concern?

- Compare Jesus’ teaching: John 15:4-5

- Compare Paul’s prayers: Ephesians 3:16-19; Colossians 2:5,7

34. Read through Psalm 119 and list some of the attributes of God that are given.

35. Underline how the psalmist wanted the Lord to deal with him.

- v. 17 Deal bountifully with Your servant, That I may live and keep Your **word**. NASB
- v. 58 I sought Your favor with all my heart; Be gracious to me according to Your **word**. NASB
- v. 76 O may Your lovingkindness comfort me, According to Your **word** to Your servant. NASB
- v. 77 May Your compassion come to me that I may live, For Your **law** is my delight. NASB
- v. 124 Deal with your servant according to your love and teach me your **decrees**. NIV
- v. 132 Turn to me and have mercy on me, as you always do to those who love your name. NIV
- What do you think these requests show about the Psalmist's relationship with God? (Compare Psalm 17:7)

36. What kind of witness did the psalmist want his life to have.

- vv. 74 May those who fear you rejoice when they see me, for I have put my hope in your **word**. NIV
- v. 78 May the arrogant be ashamed, for they subvert me with a lie; But I shall meditate on Your **precepts**. NASB
- v. 80 May my heart be blameless toward your decrees, that I may not be put to shame. NIV

37. In vv. 169-175, what final requests does the psalmist make? After all the words of devotion to God's law, what did the psalmist admit at the end? Psalm 119:176

FYI: (119:176) "Resolutions to keep God's commandments are all well and good, but 'by the law is the knowledge of sin' (Rom. 3:10). The better one knows the holiness of God's statutes, the more he realized he is unable to measure up to God's standard ...(Gal 3:10)"
- Henry Morris (115)

Applying the Word: What treasure will you take away from studying this Psalm?