



Title: New Season – Word-Driven

Text: Psalm 19:7-14, Psalm 119:1-11

Date: August 28, 2022

Main Idea: God reveals himself to us through his word, and his word is the guiding anchor of our lives and ministry.

Personal Study Guide

READ: PSALM 19:7-14 AND PSALM 119:1-11

Highlight – What stands out?

Note: This series will be slightly different than our Story and Song series because we are looking at different texts each week. For this lesson, each

section will follow the same format, but will be divided based on main headings.

For this lesson, we're looking at the priority: **word-driven**. We will work through this based on asking and answering what, why, and how questions.

What Does It Mean to Be Word-Driven? – Psalm 119:1-11

1. There are seven words used to refer to God's revelation in this text. What are those words?

2. There are multiple blessings that are derived from scripture mentioned in this text. What are those blessings?

3. What are some essential interactions with scripture? What are the action words in this text?

What does it look like to word-driven? Read Psalm 1. What do you notice about being word-driven in Psalm 1?

Explain – What does this mean?

Why are we word-driven?

Note: We are going to break down the following passage to give space to slow down and process the value of being word-driven.

Read Psalm 19:7-14

The table below breaks down verses 7-9. Each sentence includes a phrase that describes the word, a descriptive word about God's word, and the result of God's word in our life. Use the table below to break down each verse.

Phrase	Adjective	Result
"the law of the Lord" (v.7)	"is perfect"	"reviving the soul"

Read verses 10-11. This is an explosion of truth about God's word. How does this explain why we are to be word-driven?

Now let's look at why we're word-driven by tracing the word all throughout the scriptures. Look up the following passage and write down what purpose or truth the passage is saying about the word of God.

Scripture	Truth or Purpose
Deuteronomy 34:45-47	
Psalm 12:6	

Psalm 119:89-90, 160	
Psalm 111:7	
Matthew 5:17:19	
Romans 15:4	
Hebrews 1:1-3	
John 1:1-4,14	
2 Timothy 3:16	

Apply – How does this change me?

How are we to live out being word-driven? Read Psalm 1 again. What does the blessed person do and not do? Does the word take this priority in your life? Or does something else fill its place?

Read Psalm 19:7-14 again. Looking closely at verses 12-14. What effect does being word-driven have on our lives?

Look back at Psalm 119:1-11. The psalmist mentions three things that are blessings derived from being word-driven:

1. I will not be put to shame.
2. I will be kept pure.
3. I will not sin against the Lord.

Of these three blessings, is there one you struggle with most that you've seen the word transform? How does being word-driven lead to these blessings in your life?

Look up each of the adjectives mentioned in Psalm 19:7-9 in the dictionary (you wrote them down on the table above). What does this mean about God's word? Do you view God's word this way in every area of your life? Or in every area of how we do ministry at Immanuel?

Respond – What’s my next step?

1. In Psalm 1 the psalmist is essentially saying “watch your inputs and watch your influences”. We do that by meditating on God’s word day and night. Is there an area of your life that you need to be more word-driven? Is there a decision you need to make that needs to be informed by the word?

2. Think about the ministries you’re involved in at Immanuel. How are they already shaped by being word-driven? How can they be further shaped by being word-driven?

Commentary – Psalm 19 and Psalm 119

Written by Mark Futato’s commentary on Psalms and Proverbs

◆ R. Psalm 19

NOTES

19:1 *The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship.* This verse is a chiasm: (A) The heavens (B) proclaim (C) the glory of God. (C) His marvelous craftsmanship (B) display (A) the skies. The paralleling of the “glory of God” and “his craftsmanship” leads to the conclusion that the “glory of God” refers at least in part to “his craftsmanship,” the heavens and the skies themselves as a manifestation of God’s own intrinsic glory (Futato 1984:96–97). God’s glory here is the visible manifestation in the creation of his otherwise invisible character. Similarly, in Isa 6:3 the glory of God that fills the whole earth is the visible manifestation of his otherwise invisible holiness (Futato 1984:97).

19:2 Day after day. Some understand the Heb. *yom leyom* [3117, 3427] to mean “day to day” in the sense that one day communicates with another (Kraus 1988:267; Mays 1989:97; NRSV). The expression, however, is better understood to mean “day after day,” as in the NLT. The exact expression occurs nowhere else in the MT, but there are other analogous expressions that support the NLT rendering (1 Chr 12:22; 2 Chr 24:11).

continue to speak. The verb *yabbia'* [5042, 5580] is quite colorful and means “bubble” or “gush.” The picture is that of words bubbling up, gushing up from a spring.

19:3 They speak without a sound or word; their voice is never heard. There are two different interpretations of this line. In one the point is that the speech of the heavens is inaudible (e.g., Craigie 1983:177–178; NLT, NASB). The point of the other is that the speech of the heavens is unlimited: “There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard” (NLT mg, NIV, NKJV). The latter is more likely for two reasons: (1) The next verse unpacks and amplifies this very point, and (2) when *beli* [1097, 1172] (without) is used elsewhere with a passive participle, it subordinates the following material to the previous (see 2 Sam 1:21 and Hos 7:8; see DCH 2.177), so it is best to understand 19:3b as a subordinate rather than coordinate clause.

19:4 their message. For a concise survey of ancient and modern interpretations of *qawwam* [6957/6957A, 7742/7743] (strange speech), see HALOT 3.1081. The frequently proposed emendation to *qolam* [6963, 7754] (their voice), based on LXX *phthongos* [5353, ZG5782] (sound) (so Craigie 1983:178) is not necessary according to Kraus (1988:268), who cites Isa 28:10, 13, where *qaw* probably means “sound” and is onomatopoeic, as are Greek *phthongos* (sound) and Latin *sonus* (sound).

home. This word renders what is expressed metaphorically in Hebrew by the word *'ohel* [168, 185] (tent), which is then played on in the following verse.

19:5 after his wedding. The simile in Hebrew is that the sun is like a radiant bridegroom bursting forth from his bridal chamber (*khuppatho* [2646, 2903]; NIDOTTE 2.229) after the wedding night. Based on this simile, the “tent” of the previous verse is probably not the daytime sky but the resting place of the sun during the night, from which the sun bursts forth in the morning. This interpretation finds support in the next verse, where David refers to the sun rising by using the word *motsa'* [4161, 4604], from the same root (*yatsa'* [3318, 3655]) as the verb “burst forth.”

19:7 perfect. In context the sense is probably “all-encompassing” (McCann 1996:752); see commentary below.

reviving the soul. This may be a metaphor rooted in food restoring vitality to the body (so Clines 1974:8; see Lam 1:11, 19). The picture is that of God's instruction being "true soul-food," "imparting refreshment to the inner man" (Briggs 1906:1.169).

19:9 Reverence for the LORD. If "reverence for [or, "the fear of"] the LORD" is our subjective response to God's revelation (McCann 1996:152), then some think it is not a very good parallel term with the other words for "law" as objective revelation, and thus a variety of emendations have been proposed (e.g., Kraus 1988:268; see Craigie 1983:179 for a summary). But "the fear of the LORD" can refer to God's objective revelation; see Prov 1:29, where "the fear of the LORD" not being chosen is parallel to knowledge being hated, and Prov 2:5, where "the fear of the LORD" is understood and the "knowledge of God" is found. "The fear of the LORD" as objective revelation is a fine parallel with the other terms in the list.

19:12 sins lurking in my heart. The Heb. *shegi'oth* [7691, 8709] is apparently a biform of *shegagah* [7684, 8705] ("inadvertent or unintentional sin"; for the meaning of *shegagah* see NIDOTTE 4.42–44). Perhaps *shegi'oth* (19:12a) refers to actions that are known to the person though the sinfulness is not known, as opposed to the *nistaroth* [5641, 6259] (19:12b) that are completely unknown sins (so Milgrom 1967–1968:118).

19:14 pleasing. Heb. *ratson* [7522, 8356] is used elsewhere as "a technical term for qualified offerings to God at the sanctuary" (Mays 1994:100). Here the "words" in praise of creation and instruction are the acceptable sacrifice (see Heb 13:15).

my redeemer. Heb. *go'ali* [1350B, 1457] "derives from family relationships, where it was the responsibility of family members to buy back, or 'redeem,' relatives who had fallen into slavery (see Lev 25:47–49). Thus redeemer connotes intimacy" (McCann 1996:753).

COMMENTARY

Psalm 19 has often been analyzed as a composite of two separate poems, but whether Psalm 19 is comprised of two originally separate poems or not, we are obligated to read it as a whole (Kraus 1988:269). Of this whole C. S. Lewis (1958:56) once said, "I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world."

I divide the poem in two: celebrating God's revelation in creation (19:1–6) and celebrating the Lord's revelation in Scripture (19:7–14). Each stanza is further divided into two strophes.

Celebrating God's Revelation in Creation (19:1–6). The first strophe (19:1–4a) tells us that the heavens display the radiant splendor of God. Specifically, this

is the radiant splendor of the universal Creator—“his eternal power and divine nature” (Rom 1:20)—not the saving deeds of Yahweh (Mays 1994:98). This glory is made known every day and in every corner of the planet. Whenever and wherever the heavens are seen, God may be known in his glory.

In the second strophe (19:4b–6), the quintessential display of God’s splendor is quite naturally said to be the sun. Like a bridegroom bursting forth from his wedding chamber the morning after and then like an Olympic runner sprinting to the finishing line, the sun rises in radiance, runs its course, and sets in magnificence. Not a nook or cranny in creation escapes the dazzling rays that reveal divine glory.

Celebrating the Lord’s Revelation in Scripture (19:7–14). Pondering the sun produces connections between the two stanzas. “Just as the sun dominates the daytime sky, so too does Torah dominate human life” (Craigie 1983:183). “While the sun, perfect in shape, revives the earth, Yahweh’s instructions, perfect in their intent, reanimate humans in the depth of their being” (Terrien 1993:61).

The focus of the first strophe (19:7–11 [8–12]) is on the nature of revelation in Scripture. The revelation in Scripture is special. There is obvious movement between the first and second half of the poem, signaled by the shift from “God” (*’el* [410A, 446]) in the first stanza to *yhwh* [3068, 3378] (“the LORD”) in the second. This movement parallels that in Genesis 1–2 and is a move from God’s general revelation in creation to his special revelation in the Scriptures (Craigie 1983:182). The move is from the transcendent and cosmic God to the immanent and merciful Lord (Fishbane 1979:87). This movement shows that general revelation is not unimportant, since special revelation “works toward the fulfillment of God’s creational purposes” (McCann 1996:754).

The revelation in Scripture is essential. “Though the vast firmament so high above us declares God’s praise, it is the Torah of God that reveals to mankind that he has a place in the universal scheme of things” (Craigie 1983:183).

The revelation in Scripture is authoritative. “The creator of the universe is the LORD who gives Torah; the creator’s authority is behind the law” (Mays 1994:98). This instruction is not only authoritative, but it is also all-encompassing, like the sun and the wide variety of terms used in reference to it; in short, the instruction of the Lord is presented as cosmic in scope (McCann 1996:752).

The second strophe (19:12–14) shifts to our response to this revelation in Scripture. While nothing can be *hidden* (*sathar* [5641, 6259]) from the heat of the sun (19:6 [7]), sins are often *hidden* (*sathar*) even from those who commit them (19:12 [13]). Our inability to be aware of all of our violations of Scripture leads to the conclusion that we cannot possibly be righteous through the law (Mays 1994:99). We are kept from life-dominating, willful rebellion by the Lord’s grace and not through our own strength. “Only by God’s forgiveness can [we] be blameless ... and innocent of much transgression” (Mays 1994:99–

100). Grace is our only hope of being “free of guilt” (*tamim* [8552, 9462]; 19:13 [14]) when the standard is a “perfect” (*tamim*; 19:7 [8]) law.

Grace produces gratitude. The sacrifice of praise from the heart is the fitting crescendo in this celebration of praise to the cosmic Creator who has drawn close to us as our kinsman-redeemer. The transcendent God and the immanent Lord meet in the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we see the glory of God (John 1:14; Heb 1:3). He has revealed the Father (John 1:18). He has kept the law perfectly for us that we might be forgiven and receive the grace needed to escape the dominion of sin. “Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name” (Heb 13:15).¹

M. Psalm 119

COMMENTARY

“Oh, how I love your instructions! I think about them all day long” (119:97). Perhaps this verse captures better than any other the heart of the longest psalm in the Psalter. Psalm 119 is a masterful celebration of the *torah* [8451, 9368] of the Lord (119:1). This poem is composed of 22 strophes, one for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Each strophe is made up of eight lines, and each line of a given strophe starts with the same letter of the alphabet; so, for example, the first eight lines all start with the letter Aleph. This alphabetic acrostic form serves to underscore the completeness of the celebration of the Lord’s *torah*, the perfection of that *torah* (see 119:96), and its comprehensive wisdom that is applicable to all of life (see 119:98–100).

While *torah* has customarily been translated “law,” it is preferable to translate it as “instruction” or “teaching” in this context, as in 1:1 (see note on 1:1 and Mays 1994:382), 78:1, and Proverbs 1:8. The related verb (the Hiphil of *yarah* [3384E, 3723]), which means “teach,” is used in 119:33 and 119:102. Seven other synonyms are used, yielding a total of eight words used for the Lord’s instruction; this eight matches the eight lines per strophe (Allen 1983:139) and further underscores the message of the poem. The eight words in order of frequency are *torah* [8451, 9368] (“instruction”; 25 times), *dabar* [1697, 1821] (“word”; 24 times), *mishpatim* [4941, 5477] (“laws”; 23 times), *’eduth* [5715, 6343] (“statute”; 23 times), *mitswah* [4687, 5184] (“commandment”; 22 times), *khoq* [2706, 2976] (“prescription, rule”; 21 times), *piqqudim* [6490, 7218] (“instructions, procedures”; 21 times), and *’imrah* [565, 614] (“promise”; 19 times).

¹ Mark D. Futato, [“The Book of Psalms.”](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 7: The Book of Psalms, The Book of Proverbs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2009), 88–92.

The word *torah* is the lead term, as indicated by its use in 119:1 and the fact that it is the most frequent term (Allen 1983:139), and it highlights God's instruction as the theme of the song. Rather than examine the psalm strophe by strophe, we will ponder five things that Psalm 119 teaches us about the Lord's instruction.

Our Attitude toward the Lord's Instruction. Love is the first word. We love the Lord's instruction very much (119:167). In fact, we love it more than "the finest gold" (119:127). Our love means we honor that instruction (119:48). We not only love to study it (119:97), we also love to put it into practice (119:127–129). Coupled with our love for the Lord's instruction is our delight in it: "How I delight in your commands! How I love them!" (119:47). We delight in the Lord's instruction as we would delight in finding a great treasure (119:111). This delight is joined with our longing to experience more of God's salvation (119:174) and thus serves as a basis for our appealing to the Lord for his mercy in our lives. Our love and delight in the Lord's instruction shows that our relation to this instruction is not just a matter of external conformity to principles but a desire that comes from deep within our hearts. We search for God with all our hearts (119:2), hide his instruction within our hearts (119:11), and desire to put his instructions into practice with our hearts (119:34). "Of 'legalistic piety' there is not a trace" in this psalm (Kraus 1989:420). Rather, in Psalm 119 we read of a relationship wherein we desire from our hearts to live in keeping with the instructions of our God.

Our Desire for the Lord's Instruction. Repeatedly the psalmist uses an imperative verb form to ask God for instruction. We desire that the Lord teach us both so we can better understand his instruction (119:26–27) and so we can better put those instructions into practice (119:33). Good judgment for living well in God's world is one key thing we want to learn from the Lord (119:66). We want to learn from the Lord, because of his character: He is good (119:68), and he is love (119:64, 124, 135), so we can be confident that all he teaches us will be for our good and that we might love even as he loves. Our desire to be taught by the Lord is one way we show him that we are grateful for his goodness and love (119:108).

Our Resolve to Live in Keeping with the Lord's Instruction. Committing ourselves to live in keeping with the Lord's instruction is our choice. It is a choice that the psalmist made (119:113, 173). That this choice is coupled with a firm resolve is seen in 119:30: "I have chosen to be faithful; I have determined to live by your regulations." The psalmist wholeheartedly searches for and devotes himself to God's word (119:2, 10, 45, 94). The psalmist also frequently uses the cohortative to express this resolve, as in the expressions, "I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways" (119:15), "I will meditate on your wonderful deeds" (119:27), "I will obey your decrees" (119:145). This resolve is no fair-weather commitment but is strong even in the face of hardship and

opposition. Throughout the psalm we read words like: “Even princes sit and speak against me, but I will meditate on your decrees” (119:23); “The proud hold me in utter contempt, but I do not turn away from your instructions” (119:51); “Evil people try to drag me into sin, but I am firmly anchored to your instructions” (119:61); “Though the wicked hide along the way to kill me, I will quietly keep my mind on your laws” (119:95); “Many persecute and trouble me, yet I have not swerved from your laws” (119:157). This resolve results in great benefits.

Our Benefits from the Lord’s Instruction. Following the Lord’s instructions results in great benefits to us. One benefit is peace: “Those who love your instructions have great peace and do not stumble” (119:165). Another is comfort: “Your promise revives me; it comforts me in all my troubles” (119:50; see also 119:52, 76). Another is freedom: “I will walk in freedom, for I have devoted myself to your commandments” (119:45). Along with the mention of these benefits are the frequent references to the tremendous, life-renewing power of God’s word, e.g., “I lie in the dust; revive me by your word” (119:25) and “I have suffered much, O LORD; restore my life again as you promised” (119:107). And then there is the hope that fills our hearts through the medium of God’s instruction: “Do not snatch your word of truth from me, for your regulations are my only hope” (119:43) and “I rise early, before the sun is up; I cry out for help and put my hope in your words” (119:147). The psalmist says, “Your instructions are more valuable to me than millions in gold and silver” (119:72). One of the reasons this is so is because of all the benefits God’s instruction brings into our lives. Another is because our Lord’s instruction reveals his heart.

Our Lord’s Heart in His Instruction. When we look into the heart of God, we see his unfailing love. All of his instruction to us is a revelation of his love for us. Because the earth is full of his unfailing love, we want him to teach us his principles for living well on this earth (119:64). We want the Lord to deal with us according to his unfailing love, including teaching us his principles (119:124). We anticipate experiencing his salvation based on the unfailing love he has for us (119:41, 149, 159), and we resolve to respond to his love by living in keeping with the principles he has taught us (119:88). Ultimately, it is because of our Lord’s heart revealed in his instructions that we say, “Oh, how I love your instructions! I think about them all day long” (119:97).²

² Mark D. Futato, [“The Book of Psalms.”](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 7: The Book of Psalms, The Book of Proverbs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2009), 367–374.