



"REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

"All About Praise"

Series of Six Psalms

LESSON 5

Well, get ready for an amazing week through Psalm 119. Yes, you heard me right. We are going to tackle Psalm 119 in one week, all 176 verses. We could study this one Psalm all year and still not have done it justice. Spurgeon wrote one entire book on it; Thomas Manton, one of the most famous Puritans, wrote a 3-volume set on Psalm 119. It is the longest Psalm and the longest chapter in the Bible, containing 176 verses and 315 lines. One of the most exciting characteristics of it is that almost every verse refers to the Word of God, and God Himself is mentioned in every verse. The obvious theme, then, would be the importance of the Word of God. John Phillips wrote, "The Word of God is the foundation on which this poet builds; he builds on it because he loves it. He is bound to the Word of God, not by the chains of the law but by the magnetic attraction of love."

Our hope and prayer for this week is that this simple overview will whet our appetites to study this Psalm even further, and that the importance, the benefits, the exhortations and the commands in the Word will also revive us, comfort us, delight us, and "enlarge our hearts," as it did the Psalmist.

First Day

Before we begin reading, let's take a short look at the type of Psalm this is. Psalm 119, known as the "Giant among The Psalms," is actually a combination of four literary types. **First**, it is an "Acrostic" Psalm, meaning that it consists of 22 stanzas, each consisting of eight verses, and each emphasizing, in order, a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Each verse in each stanza begins with the letter of the alphabet to which the stanza is related. Hence, this Psalm is sometimes called the "ABCs of the Law." Most scholars believe that it was written this way, not only because it was a popular literary style at the time, but as an aid to memory.

Second, Psalm 119 is a hymn of praise to God and His law. **Thirdly**, it is a wisdom psalm that teaches us concerning the law. **Lastly**, it somewhat resembles a Psalm of lament, because at times he prays for deliverance from his enemies.

The **author** of this Psalm is not mentioned. There are many suggestions and theories, but most scholars, including Spurgeon, believe our beloved David wrote it. He believes it is Davidic in tone, expression, and style. He calls it "David's pocket-book."

The "law" is most likely referring to the Pentateuch, which is the first 5 Books of the Bible, written by Moses. But the "law" refers to much more than laws, rules, and restrictions. It refers to God's whole spoken and written revelation, containing all the various elements that all the other words used for "law" represent. There are eight different synonyms used for the word "law" in this Psalm, but they all have a distinctive different "shade" of meaning. Let's take a look at these before we jump in.

1. Law: instruction
 2. Testimonies: witness to God's will and man's duty
 3. Precepts: a collection of specific injunctions and details
 4. Commandments: that which expresses the will of the personal God
 5. Ordinances: group of divine judgments
 6. Statute: law that is written down and prescribed
 7. Word (promise): communication of God's will to man
 8. Ways: the law is a pattern of behavior in accordance with will the of God
1. Let's begin by reading Psalm 119:1-8. Since the main theme runs through the entire Psalm, we're going to look at it stanza by stanza. **Give this section a title** specific to its main point.
 2. Which of the eight synonyms are used for "law"?
 3. The Psalm opens similar to Psalm 1 in that it opens by pronouncing a blessing. Who is the recipient of this blessing? (Remember that blessed means "O how happy.") What do they receive?

4. What words in these verses emphasize human response and responsibility?

The first stanza reminds us that we are blessed if we conform and live according to God's law. It's important to note that the Psalmist is not glorifying the Word of God for its own sake, but Scripture is "revered for being *His* sayings, and God's servants thereby seek *Him*, not the Book for its own sake." (Derek Kidner) These eight verses remind us that the Bible is a source of blessing, and should become very personal in our lives.

5. Read Psalm 119:9-16. How would you title this stanza?
6. What are some of the benefits of the Word, according to this section?
7. Make another list of words that are active or our "responsibility."
Look over the list. Are there any that you are neglecting?
8. How does God's Word have a "cleansing" effect? How does it keep us clean in a "dirty world"?
9. One of the "great secrets" of a holy life is found in verse 10. What is it?

Of verse 11, G. Campbell Morgan used to say, "It tells us about the best book -- Thy Word -- hidden in the best place -- my heart -- for the best purpose -- that I might not sin against God."

10. Are you hiding His Word in your heart? Have you been consistent and diligent in studying Scripture, memorizing it, and learning how to apply it? Are there any changes you need to make to apply this verse today?

God bless you, ladies, as you take this challenge to wade through Psalm 119. May you be in awe of the power, wisdom, and blessings found in God's Word. Matthew Henry said, "He that reads Psalm 119 considerately, it will either warm him or shame him." I believe this to be true!

Memory Verse of the Week: *Please choose any verse from Psalm 119 and make it your memory verse. Be prepared to share it with your group, along with an explanation of why you chose it.*

Second Day

Work on your memory verse.

1. Today let's read Psalm 119:17-24. Title this stanza.
2. One writer titled this chapter "Solace in loneliness." What do you think he meant? Another titled it "Handling Critics". How is that similar?
3. Read Psalm 119:25-32. Notice the word "chosen" in verse 30. Why is that word so important? (Do we ever simply "stumble" onto the right path?)

The word "cling" in verse 31 means to "stick" or "attach" or "to adhere."

4. What does it mean to "attach" ourselves to His testimonies?
(Have you done that?)
5. Read Psalm 119:33-40. Are there any repeated words in this stanza?

6. If our hearts are inclined to His Word, what will it protect us from, according to verse 36? Can you explain why?

7. Do you ever struggle with covetousness? In what areas? What can you practically do to guard your heart and mind?

8. Why is praying for "understanding" of His Word so important? (vs 34)

9. Read Psalm 119:41-48. How does "true freedom" come through submission and surrender? (vs 45) How does this compare to the world's view of freedom, which means "doing your own thing"?

10. Which verse or verses in 17-48 specifically challenge you today?

We'll end here for today. I'm so sorry we are only scratching the surface. But I hope the Holy Spirit is quickening certain verses to your heart!

Third Day

Review your memory verse!

1. Read Psalm 119:49-56. What blessings of studying God's Word are listed in this section?

2. Do you need hope right now for a particular situation in your life? How can you find that hope? Have you been looking in other places or things to bring you the hope you may desperately need?

3. How does washing your mind in His Word and singing praises before you sleep help you when you are struggling? Why?

4. Who else sang praises in the night and was comforted and delivered? Read Acts 16:25. How does that story minister to you?

Read verses 57-64. Of this stanza, Spurgeon wrote, "In this section the Psalmist seems to take firm hold upon God Himself: appropriating Him (vs 57), crying out for Him (vs 58), returning to Him (vs 59), solacing himself in Him (vs 61-62), associating with His people (vs 63), and sighing for personal experience of His goodness (vs 64)."

The word "**portion**" means "inheritance" or "lot." James Montgomery Boice wrote, "The psalmist is saying that he wants his portion of divine blessing to be God Himself since nothing is better and nothing will ever satisfy his or anyone else's heart but God Himself. To possess God is truly to have everything."

5. Can you say, along with the Psalmist, that the Lord is your portion? Is He your everything? Define what it means to be "satisfied" in Him. Are you satisfied in Him, or are you looking for satisfaction in other places? Allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart.

6. Read Psalm 119:65-72. What three contrasts do you find?

7. Why does the Psalmist see affliction as good? What good did it bring about?

8. Can you think of a time in your life that you can now say, "It is good that I was afflicted?" When and why?

9. According to verses 73-80, did affliction, or being treated unfairly, cause the Psalmist to distrust the Word? How does that challenge or encourage YOU?

10. What prayer requests do you find in verses 73-80?

What are your prayer requests today? Can you, like the Psalmist, spend time praising the Lord by reading His Word, trusting that God will hear your prayers? Write out the prayer requests that are most pressing on your heart. Offer them up to Him, surrendering any desire you have to control the situations. Give them to Jesus.

Fourth Day

Work on your verse. Will you be ready to share it with the group tomorrow?

1. Let's jump right in by reading Psalm 119:81-88. How would you describe the mood or tone of the Psalmist in this stanza? What seems to be going on?

2. What comfort does the Word bring in his situation?

3. How does this section speak to you specifically?

4. Read the next stanza from verses 89-96. What are some of the "great certainties" of life?

5. Have you ever been completely certain of someone or something, and it was pulled right out from under you? How can this section encourage and challenge you?

6. According to verses 97-104, what are some of the blessings of the Word?

7. Why are wisdom and understanding so important for you and I in today's world? (Also, read James 1:5) How is God's wisdom so different from the world's?

Verse 103 is one of my favorites. The Word of God is so sweet! (Although I prefer chocolate over honey!) I like what Warren Wiersbe wrote: "When people are sick, their appetites change. In fact, they often lose their appetites completely. Likewise, sin in our life robs our spiritual appetite, and we lose our desire for the Word. May we always have an appetite for the sweetness of the Word of God, even when we have to read things that convict us. That first bite of Scripture may taste sour sometimes, but it will turn sweet!"

8. Are you feeding your soul a proper diet? Is something lacking?

9. In verses 105-112, do you see any repeated "themes" or repeated thoughts?

10. How is God's Word like a lamp and a light? Are you depending on it to show YOU the way?

11. In verses 113-120, the Psalmist says God is his "Hiding Place and Shield." What does that mean? Are you "hiding" from someone or in something other than God?

12. Let's read one more stanza, verses 121-128. We know His Word is sweeter than honey, and now what does he say it is more valuable than?

13. Do you value God's Word more than anything else you "own"? Is it more valuable to you than any of your possessions; and if you answer "yes," does your life reflect that?

14. Last question. From this section I personally find verse 128 really intriguing. What verse in this section intrigues or "speaks" to you? Why?

See you tomorrow, ladies, as we wrap up this Psalm. I wish we could camp out in every stanza! I feel like we're doing the "hop, skip, and jump" version. Even so, may the reminders about the importance of His Word stick to your heart and make an impact on you for the rest of your life.

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory!

1. Please read Psalm 119:129-136. How would you title this stanza? What is the main point?

The word "entrance" in verse 130 means "the opening up, the expounding, the unfolding of God's Word. As Scripture is explained to us, it illuminates us." If you find yourself in darkness, read His Word, and it will bring you light!

The word "pant" in verse 131 expresses "the eagerness of a hungry or thirsty animal."

2. Are you "panting" for God's Word? Explain what that would practically look like.
3. His Word is able to keep sin from having dominion, or control, over us, according to verse 133. How does that work?
4. Is there a certain sin that is controlling you right now? Have you brought it under the light of God's Word for examination, strength and power?
5. Read Psalm 119:137-144. What word is repeated? What's the main thought?
6. Read verses 145-152. What emotion can you sense as you read this section? What seems to be happening?
7. When you wake up early because you can't sleep, do you take the time to pray and read His Word? What happens when we do that, according to the Psalmist?

8. In verses 153-160, the Psalmist uses the phrase "revive me according to Your Word." He's used this phrase a few times. What do you think it means?

Verse 160 tells us that His Word -- all of it -- is true. It is guaranteed. And because it's true, it can be trusted. It is pure, refined, sure, and trustworthy.

9. Do you trust God's Word? Do you believe it's true in its "entirety"? If so, are you willing to trust God and His promises in whatever situation you face today? (If you are doubting, what is causing that doubt?)

10. Read verses 161-168. A new thought is introduced in verse 165. What else can we have when we trust His Word? Why?

11. How does the Psalmist sum it all up in verses 169-176?

Now we get to wrap up the Psalm in one beautiful bow! Try your best to answer the following questions.

12. List some of the blessings and "benefits" we receive when we study the Word.
13. What are some words that are used in this Psalm to describe God's Word, such as truth, honey, etc.?

14. There are at least 70 prayer requests in this Psalm. Can you list some of them?
15. Do you ever "sleep" through God's blessings in the morning by turning off the alarm clock instead of getting up to spend time in His Word? How can you discipline yourself better to make sure you spend time with Him?

Warren Wiersbe notes a chain reaction in verses 169-176. He calls it a *spiritual chain reaction* that has the power to transform our lives. He writes, "It begins in verse 169; 'Let my cry come before You, O Lord, give me understanding according to Your Word.' *Prayer leads to understanding*. This is the first part of the chain reaction. Next, *understanding leads to freedom*. 'Let my supplication come before You; deliver me according to Your Word (vs 170).' The Psalmist asks for freedom that comes from the truth of God. Jesus said, 'You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free' (John 8:32). The greatest bondage in the world is the bondage to lies. The third stage in this spiritual reaction is found in verse 171, 'My lips shall utter praise, for You teach me Your statutes.' *Freedom leads to praise*. When we understand the statutes of God, we can sing. Knowing His Word makes us want to praise Him. Finally, *praise leads to witnessing*. 'My tongue shall speak of Your Word, for all Your commandments are righteousness.' (vs 172). As a result of our witness, people come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior."

May you read His Word daily, pray for understanding, receive the freedom you have in Christ, give Him the praise due His Name, and be a witness to your world. May this spiritual reaction transform your life and the lives of others. And may you fall more and more in love with His Word. May you study diligently as one who finds great treasure. May His Word become the joy and rejoicing of your heart!

