

# Introduction to Prayer & Fasting

## **WHAT** is fasting?

Fasting is deliberately abstaining from the normal routines of life. Its purpose is to spend focused time in prayer and the study of God's Word, seeking to align our lives with God's will.

Ultimately, fasting is more about replacing than abstaining. It is filling our lives with God's Word instead of with food, social media, or entertainment. It is finding satisfaction and enjoyment in God and God alone. Fasting helps us humble ourselves before the Lord and positions us to experience spiritual breakthroughs in our lives.

## **WHY** prayer and fasting?

God's people all over the world have been seeking spiritual breakthroughs through prayer and fasting since the birth of the church. When was the last time you entered an extended time of prayer and fasting for spiritual, relational, or missional breakthrough? Throughout the history of God's people, great leaders reached out to God for a fresh encounter or divine intervention:

**MOSES** spent 40 days alone with God without eating or drinking until he received the Ten Commandments; **DAVID** sought a personal breakthrough as he fasted to keep himself humble; **DANIEL** fasted and prayed as he sought revival among God's people who were living in rebellion; **PAUL** fasted after his encounter with the risen Lord Jesus and what it meant for his life; **JESUS**, setting the supreme example, entered 40 days of prayer and fasting before launching his public ministry.

# HOW do I get started?

## 1 Pick your fast

**Full Fast:** Drink liquids only. Please consult your doctor first.

**Daniel Fast:** Eat only vegetables, fruit, water, and juice (minimal carbohydrates).

**Partial Fast:** Not eating one or two meals on a specific day or abstaining from certain kinds of food.

**All-day Food Fast:** Abstaining from food one day or multiple days per week.

**Activity/Media Fast:** Forgoing a time-consuming activity such as entertainment, hobbies, social media, tv, internet, sports, etc.

## 2 Set goals and write them down

Begin with clear, personal goals as well as breakthrough goals for your church. Be specific. Why are you fasting? Do you need direction, healing, restoration for your marriage or resolution of family issues? Are you facing difficulties?

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Write these requests in a journal or a digital notebook. Keeping a journal throughout your fast is a great way to track and remember all that God does during your fast.

### **3 Feast on the Word of God**

Fasting is ultimately an expression of humility and dependence on God. It is about replacing daily intake of food, entertainment, and human contact with focused times of prayer, and spending large amounts of time feeding on the Word of God and spiritual listening. You can use the recommended readings in this guide or continue your normal Bible reading program. The YouVersion Bible App and bible.com have a variety of 21-day Bible reading programs.

### **4 Open your life before God**

One of the great benefits of spiritual fasting is a heightened awareness of God's presence and power in our lives. It is not that God has moved but that we have. Fasting has a great way of moving us towards a deeper spiritual dependency and away from willful self-dependency.

The greatest breakthrough will take place when you make time to examine your life and discover what areas most need breakthrough. We ask that you fast for spiritual breakthroughs for your church family and its mission endeavors as well as for yourself.

### **5 Expect God to move**

Enter your fast by faith. The Word of God says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, for anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Spiritual fasting is a supernatural endeavor that has shaped and transformed God's people for centuries. If you have doubt, ask God to meet you in your doubts and lead you in overcoming them, just as the apostles prayed, "increase our faith!" (Luke 17:5).

# OUR PRAYER FOR YOU

Our prayer for you during these 21 days of prayer and fasting is that you will experience a deeper craving for the beauty of the Lord, the wonder of his leading in your life, the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and the favor of God as you have never known before.

Our prayer is that you will realize you are not alone on this journey. You are joining with your immediate and extended church family in seeking the Lord for significant spiritual breakthroughs. Our desire is that these breakthroughs will ripple out and turn into a tidal wave of revival and spiritual awakening all across our community, country, and even the world.

Our prayer is that you will acquire your own prayer and fasting testimony, and that God will overwhelm you with his goodness as you seek his power, presence, and provision in every step of your journey.

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*"Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors.*

*<sup>2</sup> Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. <sup>3</sup> He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD." - Deuteronomy 8:1-3*





# Cherish

A 21-DAY JOURNEY TOWARDS FALLING  
IN LOVE WITH GOD'S WORD



BY GARY ROHRMAYER

## **Cherish: A 21 Day Journey toward Falling in Love with God's Word**

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# Introduction

“I delight in your commands because I love them. I reach out for your commands, which I love, that I may meditate on your decrees.” (Psalm 119:47-48)

When I asked my father-in-law’s permission to marry my wife, Mary, he gave me some very simple yet profound words of advice. He said, “Remember to always cherish each other.” Those words have never left my mind in over 39 years and have served as a guiding principle for our marriage.

To cherish someone means to treat them with great affection, to lovingly protect and care for someone or devote yourself to them with a great level of respect.

When the psalmist says, “Oh, how I love your law!” (Psalm 119:97), he is declaring his deep affection for God’s Word. In essence, he is saying, “I cherish everything about God’s Word.”

Eleven times in Psalm 119 the psalmist declares his love for God’s Word. Let’s take a quick survey of these simple yet profound declarations.

*“I delight in your commands because I love them. I reach out for your commands, which I love, that I may meditate on your decrees” (Psalm 119:47-48).* The psalmist demonstrates his love for God’s Word with feelings of delight, treating it with respect, and thinking about it seriously. He finds joy in God’s Word. He gives honor to God’s Word, and he takes God’s Word into his mind and heart.

*“Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long” (Psalm 119:97).* Again, we see the psalmist backing up his confession of love with a specific action of love: meditating on God’s Word all day long. Meditation is the silent and secret musing of one who is in love.

*“I hate double-minded people, but I love your law” (Psalm 119:113).* The psalmist amplifies his love for God’s Word in comparing it to something he detests: a person with no convictions or character of belief. A person filled with skepticism and wavering thoughts, who has no foundation for their life. In stark contrast, the psalmist resolves, “I will not cling to the vain thoughts of men but I will cling to the pure thoughts of God. It is settled for me; I love God’s Word.”

*“All the wicked of the earth you discard like dross; therefore, I love your statutes” (Psalm 119:119).* Again, we see the psalmist magnifying his love of God’s Word against a backdrop of the fate of those who reject God’s Word. He says his mind is firmly fixed on God’s Word just as God’s judgments are fixed on the wicked.

## FAQs about Psalm 119

### What are the unique features of Psalm 119?

At 176 verses, it's the longest chapter in the Bible. The psalm is an acrostic poem divided into 22 stanzas that are based on the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The eight lines of each stanza all begin with the corresponding Hebrew letter. This was a mnemonic device so the psalm could be memorized more easily. The psalmist writes, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11).

### Who is the author?

The author is unknown. Some say it was King David; others suggest it was Ezra or Daniel. Whoever it was, the author wants nothing to distract us from the theme, which is the supremacy of God's Word.

### What is the theme?

The theme is simple: God's Word is supreme, and it is to be supremely valued by everyone.

*"Because I love your commands more than gold, more than pure gold" (Psalm 119:127).* The psalmist declares his intense affections toward the Word of God by assigning it supreme value. He says, "I esteem God's Word over the best and purest gold this world has to offer."

*"Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them" (Psalm 119:140).* Because the psalmist has experienced the purity of God's Word and is convinced of its holy perfection, he asserts his love and devotion toward it. He understands that if these words are from an undefiled God, they must be holy just as our God is holy.

*"See how I love your precepts; preserve my life, LORD, in accordance with your love" (Psalm 119:159).* We see the psalmist is seeking personal revival and renewal from God's life-giving power. He makes this request in light of two great factors: God's great love for him and his own great love for God's Word.

*"I hate and detest falsehood but I love your law" (Psalm 119:163).* It has been said that you can see a person's heart by what they hate and what they love. The psalmist again uses a negative to amplify his great devotion to the Word of God. He says, "Lies and falsehood turn my stomach, but that which is true stirs within me great passion for God's truth."

*"Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble" (Psalm 119:165).* The psalmist describes two great blessings for those who cherish God's Word. First, serenity, a divine calmness that floods the mind with a great peace. Second, stability, an inner strength that helps us stand firm when the trials of this life come against us and the temptations from our enemy assault us.

*"I obey your statutes, for I love them greatly" (Psalm 119:167).* Obedience is one of the best measurements of one's stated devotion. The psalmist submits his life under the divine control of God's Word, which creates a greater level of love for God's Word. Charles Spurgeon wrote, "When we love the law it becomes a law of love, and we cling to it with our whole heart."<sup>1</sup>

When you cherish someone or something, you treat them differently:

- You give them your utmost respect.
- You seek to honor them before others.
- You devote special time to them.
- You give them your undivided attention.
- You hang on every word they speak.
- You trust them with your life.
- You depend on them completely.
- You do everything to align your life with their desires.
- You sing their praises to everyone who will listen.

Our hope for this 21-day journey is that you will fall in love with the Word of God and the God of the Word. That you will see it as a sacred text worthy of your honor. That you will devote time to reading, studying, and meditating on God's Word. That you will entrust your life to its truth and promises. That you will bring your life in compliance to its standards and values. That the Holy Spirit will quicken your heart and mind and reveal to you the wonders of God's Word. That your heart will be filled with worship and praises to its Author. In essence, our hope is that you will never forget to cherish God's Word in your heart.

"If we do not love the Bible, we certainly do not love the God who gave it to us; but if we do love God, then no other book in the entire world will be comparable in our minds. When God speaks, it is the delight of our ears to hear what he says."  
—Charles Spurgeon

### **How is the Word of God described?**

1. "Law" is used 25 times. It refers to revealed direction in a single command or to the entire law of God.
2. "Word" is used 24 times. It refers to God's spoken word, promise, or command.
3. "Saying" is used 19 times. It refers to anything that God has spoken.
4. "Commandment" is used 22 times. It refers to God's authority to give orders.
5. "Statutes" is used 21 times. It refers to God's written authority to engrave or inscribe his laws.
6. "Judgment(s)" is used 23 times. It refers to the power of God's Word to determine right and wrong.
7. "Precepts" is used 21 times. It refers to the detailed instructions of God's Word.
8. "Testimony" (or "testimonies") is used 23 times. It refers to witnessing God's covenant relationship with us.

### **Psalm 119 is an intimate prayer...**

It is a prayer of praise and a declaration of commitment to the power and wonder of God's Word.

It is a series of memorable meditations that are independent of one another, like a string of pearls that each stands alone in its glory.



# The Big Five Prayer Journal

In early 1535, the Protestant Reformer Martin Luther was getting his hair cut at the local barbershop. His barber, Peter Beskendorf, asked Luther this famous question: "Dr. Luther, do you think you could help me learn to pray better?"

Luther went back to his office and responded with a 40-page letter titled "How One Should Pray, for Master Peter the Barber." His letter was eventually published as the booklet *A Simple Way to Pray*. This timeless booklet has shaped the prayers of God's people for more than 500 years.

Martin Luther taught his barber how to pray through Scripture, using the example of the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. He instructed Peter to read or recite Scripture word by word while prayerfully reflecting and asking four questions. These questions were designed to allow God's Word to shape his prayers and take hold of his heart so that he could hear God's voice and submit to his will.

Over 30 years ago, I read Luther's letter to Peter the barber. This is one of the most influential teachings ever to shape my prayer life. Building off the foundation of Luther's wisdom, I have developed what I call "The Big Five Prayer Journal," based on the following questions:

- What am I learning?
- What am I thankful for?
- What do I regret?
- Who do I need to pray for today?
- What do I need to do today?

So how does it work? After reading a Scripture text word for word (one to three times), I prayerfully ask myself the following questions:

## What am I learning?

What is God teaching me? After prayerfully reading the text, I write out some immediate thoughts or lessons that I am learning about God, about myself, and about my relationship with God's mission. If I have time, I will do more prayerful study on the text through cross-referencing and word searches around some of the ideas that I sense God is bringing to my attention. As we enter this study on the Holy Spirit, I would encourage you to look up the Bible references cited to verify the teaching in each devotional. Paul described the believers in the city of Berea as being "of more noble character" because "they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17:11). So as you enter this study, be noble like the Bereans.

## What am I thankful for?

This is a time when I glean from the text the various things I learned about God's character and the spiritual blessings he pours out on us. As I write them down, I consciously bring them to God in an act of adoration and worship. I offer them as sacrifices of praise in Jesus's name. William Law wrote, "Prayer is the nearest approach to God and the highest enjoyment of Him that we are capable of in this life."<sup>3</sup>

Worship begins in our prayer closet and breaks forth in corporate worship with other believers. Too often our corporate worship is dry and lifeless because our daily devotion is dull and unmoving.

## What do I regret?

I then reflect on any sins that are pointed out in the text or during my quietness before the Lord. I confess them by holding them out before God and agreeing that they are wrong, they violate God's holiness, they bring pain to the Holy Spirit, and they hinder the work of God in me and through me. F. B. Meyer wrote, "There are no sacrifices so dear to God as broken hearts; no offerings so precious as contrite spirits."<sup>4</sup>

## Who do I need to pray for today?

This is my intercession prayer list. I write out prayer requests for my family, friends, ministry needs, and goals. Oswald Chambers writes, "True intercession involves bringing the person, or the circumstance that seems to be crashing in on you, before God, until you are changed by His attitude toward that person or circumstance." He also writes, "Intercession is putting yourself in God's place; it is having His mind and His perspective."<sup>5</sup>

## What do I need to do today?

This is where I write down my to-do list for the day, including projects I'm working on, meetings I will have, phone calls I need to make, and any ministry deadlines and personal goals I need to address. I have learned to pray about everything I do by bringing God into my work. Our work matters to him, so we need to pray about what we do. As Oswald Chambers wrote, "Prayer does not equip us for greater works—prayer is the greater work."<sup>6</sup>



## Interpretation—What does it mean?

Observation leads to the second step: interpretation. This is where you turn your observations into questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? In the process of finding answers to those questions, you will discover and determine the context of a passage. No verse is an island. It is always set within the context of a chapter, book, or larger section of Scripture. Remember, Scripture interprets Scripture.

To find the answers to your questions, you might want to use some helpful study tools that are available (see sidebar “Bible Study Tools”).

## Application—What does it mean to me?

Application is the fruit of your personal study. Remember, the Bible equips us practically to live out the mission of God. “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Bible teaches what God’s desires are for my life. It tells (rebukes) me when I am not living in line with God’s desires. It shows (corrects) me how to get back in line with God’s desires. It trains me to stay in line with God’s desires so that I can serve God’s purposes in this world.

Here are some good application questions:

- Is there a sin to avoid?
- Is there a warning to consider?
- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there an example to follow?
- Is there a condition to meet?
- Is there a prayer to repeat?
- Is there a challenge to face?

Remember that we study the Bible to hear what God has to say to us in our life situations so that we may live God-centered lives and become the type of people God wants us to be.

# How to Use This Discipleship Guide

## First, find a place to study and pray.

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Matthew 6:6).

We see Jesus often demonstrate this by withdrawing to a place of solitude to seek the Father’s heart. “But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed” (Luke 5:16).

The movie *War Room* depicts the mentoring relationship between an older Christian woman, Miss Clara, and a younger Christian woman, Elizabeth, who is struggling with a marriage that is faltering. Miss Clara teaches Elizabeth that she needs to have a secret place to pray, where she battles for her family through the spirit of prayer. She calls that place her “war room.”

Where is your war room? Do you have a place where you can pray and not be interrupted?

## Second, make this the first thing you do in your day, if possible.

King David wrote, “In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly” (Psalm 5:3). Another psalmist continues this theme: “I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning” (Psalm 130:6).

Andrew Murray wrote, “The student who has made personal devotion to Christ his watchword, will find in the morning hour the place where day by day the insight into his holy calling is renewed; where his will is braced up to walk worthy of it; and his faith rewarded by the presence of Christ waiting to meet him, and take charge of him for the day. . . . A living Christ waits to meet us!”<sup>2</sup>

Let us learn to start our days with Jesus. He is waiting!

## Third, do it with a spouse or close Christian friend. Don’t do it alone.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24). There is no such thing as being a solo Christian; Christianity is a team sport. We need others to cheer us on, as we in turn encourage others in their walk of faith. Finding a fellow believer to join you on this 21-day

journey might be just the thing you need to take your prayer life to a new level, and it might be just the thing your friend needs too.

We are called to walk through this life together, not alone. Find a friend or a loved one and text each other words of encouragement and prayers of love and concern. Share what you are learning and what you are struggling with during this journey.

#### **Fourth, write down your thoughts and prayers.**

Over 30 years ago I was introduced to the concept of writing out my prayers and journaling my thoughts to God. It has brought such focus and clarity to my prayers that I try never to miss a day. Something amazing happens when you start writing things down. It unclutters your mind. It helps you sort out your emotions. It increases gratefulness. It crystallizes your goals. It records God's mercies. It tells a story of God at work in your life. The psalmist wrote, "I gave an account of my ways and you answered me" (Psalm 119:26).

If you are not familiar with The Big Five Prayer Journal, you can learn more about this spiritual journaling process on page 65. This is an excellent way to start writing out your prayers and journaling your thoughts.

#### **Fifth, share what you are learning with those around you.**

King David wrote, "I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly; I do not seal my lips, LORD, as you know. I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help. I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness from the great assembly" (Psalm 40:9–10).

Sharing what you are learning has a way of solidifying it in your heart and in turn can be a blessing to others. Your God story could unlock the God story in others. Your understanding could provide just the right insight that people are looking for in their lives. Your testimony could be used to fill their weary hearts with winds of encouragement to carry them through whatever they are facing. So, let us heed David's words, "I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help" (Psalm 40:10).





Day 1

## Blessedness

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:1-8

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

ℵ Aleph

<sup>1</sup>Blessed are those whose ways are blameless,  
who walk according to the law of the LORD.

<sup>2</sup>Blessed are those who keep his statutes  
and seek him with all their heart—

<sup>3</sup>they do no wrong  
but follow his ways.

<sup>4</sup>You have laid down precepts  
that are to be fully obeyed.

<sup>5</sup>Oh, that my ways were steadfast  
in obeying your decrees!

<sup>6</sup>Then I would not be put to shame  
when I consider all your commands.

<sup>7</sup>I will praise you with an upright heart  
as I learn your righteous laws.

<sup>8</sup>I will obey your decrees;  
do not utterly forsake me.

“Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD.” (Psalm 119:1)

There is one common thread through all of humanity: we are all seeking happiness. The problem is, God doesn’t promise happiness; he promises blessedness.

Happiness is a pleasant or even euphoric emotion based on our external circumstances. Blessedness, however, is deeper; it is a state of being that lifts us beyond the circumstances of life. It does not ignore the harsh realities of the world with a naive cheerfulness but instead embraces the sadness of this world with supernatural confidence.

Where does this confidence come from? It comes from cherishing God’s Word and aligning our hearts with God’s ways. The psalmist illustrates this by using the word “blameless.” This does not mean perfection but refers to a holy desire to please God. The next three action words are “walk,” “keep,” and “follow.” These are words that show alignment and obedience.

What drove the psalmist to live an obedient lifestyle? His wholehearted desire to intimately commune with God. He declares that the blessed ones seek God “with all their heart” (v. 2). There is nothing halfhearted about it. He wants more and more of God—not just God’s blessing but God himself.

The psalmist also recognizes that obedience is not an option. “You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed” (v. 4). God’s Word is to be obeyed completely. The main reason we miss God’s blessings is that we live in opposition to his Word. This leads the psalmist to a humble confession: “Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees!” (v. 5). He confesses his shortcomings, and his confession gives us hope, knowing we can walk in blessedness without being perfect.

Finally, the psalmist ends this stanza by embracing the rewards of obedience: freedom from shame (v. 6), pure, unhindered worship (v. 7), and confidence in God’s unending presence (v. 8).

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The main reason we miss God’s blessings is that we live in opposition to his Word.

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Jesus sums it up this way: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Matthew 5:6).

*Father in heaven, I want the blessed life, not the perfect life—a life filled with your Word, your ideas, and your desires. Teach me how to hunger for, thirst for, and seek you with all my heart. Show me how to walk in, keep, and follow your commands, that I may experience the rich rewards of a blessed life. In Jesus’s name. Amen.*

# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*

Day 2

# Purity

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:9-16

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

⌋ Beth

<sup>9</sup>How can a young person stay on the path of purity?

By living according to your word.

<sup>10</sup>I seek you with all my heart;  
do not let me stray from your commands.

<sup>11</sup>I have hidden your word in my heart  
that I might not sin against you.

<sup>12</sup>Praise be to you, LORD;  
teach me your decrees.

<sup>13</sup>With my lips I recount  
all the laws that come from your mouth.

<sup>14</sup>I rejoice in following your statutes  
as one rejoices in great riches.

<sup>15</sup>I meditate on your precepts  
and consider your ways.

<sup>16</sup>I delight in your decrees;  
I will not neglect your word.





## “How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word.” (Psalm 119:9)

Just asking this question reveals a lot! In my experience, the only time people seek to stay out of trouble is when they either know enough or hurt enough. The psalmist must have experienced the path of impurity both by watching its devastating effects on those close to him and by facing it in his own soul.

This question is powerful no matter what age we are. But how important it is for those just starting out in life, who are filled with youthful enthusiasm, willful ways, and impulsive actions.

What would happen if we started out our days with this question in mind? What mistakes, hurts, and sorrows could this simple question save us from?

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The only time people seek to stay out of trouble is when they either know enough or hurt enough.

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How does the psalmist answer his question? “By living according to your word” (v. 9). It means allowing the Word of God to rule our thoughts and actions by letting its precepts, examples, warnings, and promises guide our lives.

Let’s look at how the psalmist does this practically.

*Seeking God with an unrelenting passion (v. 10).* The fact is, God can be found, God’s wisdom can be uncovered, and God’s direction can be revealed to keep us from wandering from his path.

*Hiding God’s Word in our hearts (v. 11).* This is committing God’s Word to memory. Just as we memorize the alphabet or multiplication tables, we need to memorize God’s Word. Jesus quoted Scripture from memory to defeat his enemy (Matthew 4:1-11) and to keep himself focused as he died on the cross (Matthew 27:48).

*Praising and rejoicing (vv. 12, 14).* Worship reminds us that God is supreme and that his words are absolute. There is nothing more valuable in this world than the Word of God.

*Recounting, meditating, considering, delighting (vv. 13, 15, 16).* If we are to stay pure, we must learn to rehearse the Word of God as an actor rehearses their script. We need to think seriously, ponder greatly, and delight ourselves in the Word of God.

Align your life according to God’s Word through this simple prayer today:

*Father in heaven, I want to live a life filled with moral, ethical, and spiritual integrity. Save me from my willful nature and my wandering heart. Help me hide your Word in my heart. Teach me how to think seriously about the implications of your Word so that I will not sin against you. In Jesus’s name. Amen.*



# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*



Day 3

## Perspective

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:17-24

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

λ Gimel

<sup>17</sup> Be good to your servant while I live,  
that I may obey your word.

<sup>18</sup> Open my eyes that I may see  
wonderful things in your law.

<sup>19</sup> I am a stranger on earth;  
do not hide your commands from me.

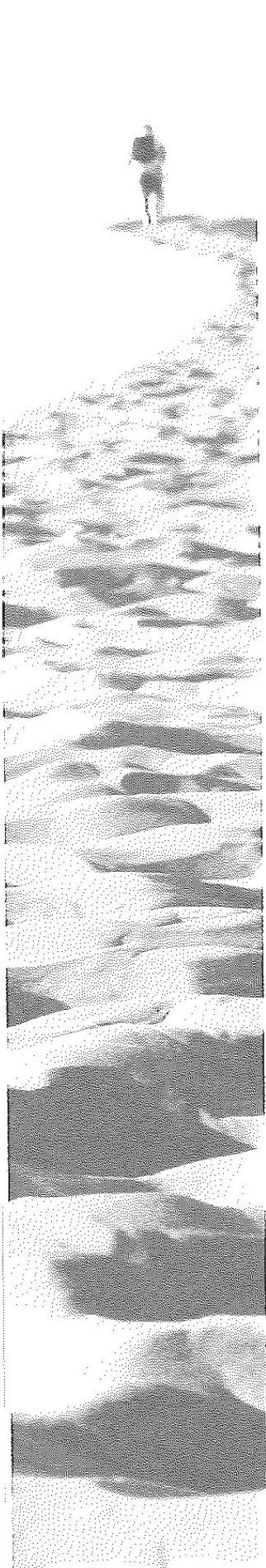
<sup>20</sup> My soul is consumed with longing  
for your laws at all times.

<sup>21</sup> You rebuke the arrogant, who are accursed,  
those who stray from your commands.

<sup>22</sup> Remove from me their scorn and contempt,  
for I keep your statutes.

<sup>23</sup> Though rulers sit together and slander me,  
your servant will meditate on your decrees.

<sup>24</sup> Your statutes are my delight;  
they are my counselors.



Day 4

## Resolve

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:25-32

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

T Daleth

<sup>25</sup>I am laid low in the dust;

preserve my life according to your word.

<sup>26</sup>I gave an account of my ways and you answered me;

teach me your decrees.

<sup>27</sup>Cause me to understand the way of your precepts,

that I may meditate on your wonderful deeds.

<sup>28</sup>My soul is weary with sorrow;

strengthen me according to your word.

<sup>29</sup>Keep me from deceitful ways;

be gracious to me and teach me your law.

<sup>30</sup>I have chosen the way of faithfulness;

I have set my heart on your laws.

<sup>31</sup>I hold fast to your statutes, LORD;

do not let me be put to shame.

<sup>32</sup>I run in the path of your commands,

for you have broadened my understanding.

## “I am laid low in the dust; preserve my life according to your word.” (Psalm 119:32)

All of us have uttered prayers like this during times of grief in our lives, whether from our own sinful actions or from the harmful behaviors of others.

When the psalmist says, “My soul clings to the dust” (v. 25), he is giving us an image of one who has suffered a great loss. Grief is a crippling pain that has a numbing effect on one’s heart. In desperation, he begs God to remove this deadness in his soul and to make his spirit alive again. He prays, “Preserve my life according to your word.” The word “preserve” can also be translated as “quicken,” “revive,” or “make alive again.” God’s Word has life-giving power! God spoke and the world came into being (Genesis 1:3). Jesus spoke and the dead came back to life (John 11:43).

How can we experience the life-giving power of God’s Word?

The psalmist says, “I gave an account of my ways” (v. 26). This is the act of confession. Confession is agreeing with God that our sins (attitudes and actions) violate God’s holiness and his holy desires for us. It is coming clean! It is giving an account to God for our daily thoughts and behaviors.

The psalmist then moves from confession to repentance. Repentance is changing one’s mind or course of direction. Out of a broken spirit, he asks God to change him by giving him a deeper understanding (v. 27), a special strength to obey (v. 28), and by keeping him from sins of deception so that he may find God’s grace (v. 29).

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Confession is agreeing with God that our sins (attitudes and actions) violate God’s holiness and his holy desires for us.

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He finishes with four resolutions: He resolves...

- to live by truth and not deception (v. 30).
- to make God’s Word the central focus of his life and decisions (v. 30).
- to cling to God’s Word instead of clinging to the dust of discouragement (v. 31).
- to move quickly, confidently, and freely in God’s ways (v. 32).

These resolutions will save you from the path of shame (v. 31) and will give you a bigger heart filled with the higher purposes of God (v. 32).

In the end, your resolutions reveal what you really cherish.

*Father in heaven, lift me out of the despairs of life and awaken my soul through the power of your Word. Teach me how to confess my sins daily, to reorient my life to your ways, and to make resolutions that will give me a bigger heart for you and your purposes. Amen.*

# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*





Day 5

## Distractions

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:33-40

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

▮ He

<sup>33</sup> Teach me, LORD, the way of your decrees,  
that I may follow it to the end.

<sup>34</sup> Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law  
and obey it with all my heart.

<sup>35</sup> Direct me in the path of your commands,  
for there I find delight.

<sup>36</sup> Turn my heart toward your statutes  
and not toward selfish gain.

<sup>37</sup> Turn my eyes away from worthless things;  
preserve my life according to your word.

<sup>38</sup> Fulfill your promise to your servant,  
so that you may be feared.

<sup>39</sup> Take away the disgrace I dread,  
for your laws are good.

<sup>40</sup> How I long for your precepts!  
In your righteousness preserve my life.

“Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.” (Psalm 119:37)

Do you ever feel like you are being distracted by your distractions?

I am amazed how distracted I can get when I am trying to spend time in God’s Word and in prayer. But I should not be surprised by this; Christians have been battling distraction for centuries.

A. W. Tozer describes it like this: “Among the enemies to devotion none is so harmful as distractions.” He continues, “Whatever excites the curiosity, scatters the thoughts, disquiets the heart, absorbs the interests or shifts our life focus from the kingdom of God within us to the world around us — that is a distraction; and the world is full of them. Our science-based civilization has given us many benefits but it has multiplied our distractions and so taken away far more than it has given.”<sup>7</sup> It’s interesting that he wrote this in the 1960s.

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“Among the enemies to devotion none is so harmful as distractions.”  
—A. W. Tozer

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Everything is fighting for our attention. We are being bombarded by the media outlets on every level of life.

The psalmist identifies his distractions as “selfish gain” and “worthless things.” Selfish gain is better translated as covetousness. It is a deep wanting that leads to taking or withholding things unjustly with no regard for how it impacts others. Worthless things are those mindless activities that add no value to life or to the service of God.

How does he overcome these distractions? By admitting he is powerless to do so and clinging to the life-giving power in God’s Word (v. 37). He prays that his heart would be dead to meaningless things of life but made alive through the omnipotence of God’s Word.

The psalmist reveals his teachable heart when he prays “teach me” (v. 33), “give me understanding” (v. 34), and “direct me according to your word” (v. 35).

Finally, he sets himself free from distractions by focusing on God’s promises (v. 38), possessing a healthy fear of failure (v. 39), and longing deeply for God’s Word and His life-giving righteousness (v. 40).

How will you be set free from your distractions?

*Father in heaven, I am tired of being distracted. Through the power of your holy Word, set my heart free from those unhealthy cravings that grieve you and that hurt myself and others. Turn my eyes to the things that last, like your promises and your righteousness, which bring life to my soul. Amen.*

# Journal

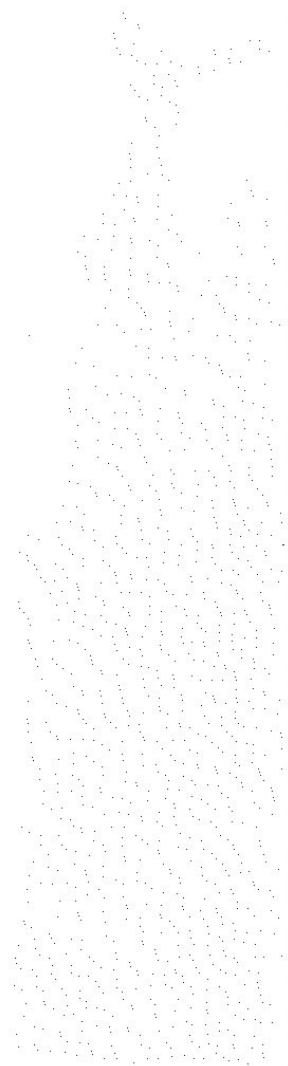
*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*







Day 6

## Overcoming

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:41-48

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

1 Waw

<sup>41</sup> May your unfailing love come to me, LORD,  
your salvation, according to your promise;

<sup>42</sup> then I can answer anyone who taunts me,  
for I trust in your word.

<sup>43</sup> Never take your word of truth from my mouth,  
for I have put my hope in your laws.

<sup>44</sup> I will always obey your law,  
for ever and ever.

<sup>45</sup> I will walk about in freedom,  
for I have sought out your precepts.

<sup>46</sup> I will speak of your statutes before kings  
and will not be put to shame,

<sup>47</sup> for I delight in your commands  
because I love them.

<sup>48</sup> I reach out for your commands, which I love,  
that I may meditate on your decrees.

“I delight in your commands because I love them. I reach out for your commands, which I love, that I may meditate on your decrees.” (Psalm 119:47-48)

We cannot control the way people treat us, but we can control how we respond to them. In this stanza, the psalmist responds to taunts from those in power who oppose his faith (vv. 42, 46). This taunting is not light disapproval but a harsh verbal assault that is threatening in nature.

How does the psalmist respond to these personal attacks?

He first appeals for help based on the promise of God’s mercies (vv. 41-42). The disapproving voices we often hear can be quieted by our abiding trust in God’s endless mercy. This never-ending mercy is revealed to us by God’s Word: “May your unfailing love come to me . . . according to your promise” (v. 41). Our experience of God’s mercies will lead to a deeper love for God and increase our confidence in God’s Word.

This is why the psalmist begs God not to take away his Word, for it is his anchor of hope (v. 43). Life without hope leaves us anchorless. God’s Word is what holds the psalmist together in the storms of these verbal assaults.

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Our experience of God’s mercies will lead to a deeper love for God and increase our confidence in God’s Word.

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He continues by declaring his obedience to God’s Word: “I will always obey your law, for ever and ever” (v. 44). These are strong words of deep and settled conviction. When a soul is touched by the mercy of God, it creates an intense desire to please the Giver of mercy.

This type of genuine obedience leads to a life of blessing.

We see three specific blessings:

- *Freedom* (v. 45). In this context, it is freedom from the fear of men and their aggressive taunting.
- *Courage* (v. 46). A supernatural strength to speak God’s truth to the rulers who are assaulting him.
- *Delight* (v. 47). After speaking courageously to the leaders, “he feels a sweet serenity of heart when musing upon the word.”<sup>8</sup>

Finally, the psalmist overcomes the contempt of others by cherishing God’s Word (v. 47-48).

*Father in heaven, O how I love your Word. I relish every fragment of your counsel. I cherish your commandments! O how they keep me anchored in the storms of life and infuse my life with freedom, boldness, and feelings of deep delight. Amen.*

# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*





Day 7

# Anger

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:49-56

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

† Zayin

<sup>49</sup> Remember your word to your servant,  
for you have given me hope.

<sup>50</sup> My comfort in my suffering is this:  
Your promise preserves my life.

<sup>51</sup> The arrogant mock me unmercifully,  
but I do not turn from your law.

<sup>52</sup> I remember, LORD, your ancient laws,  
and I find comfort in them.

<sup>53</sup> Indignation grips me because of the wicked,  
who have forsaken your law.

<sup>54</sup> Your decrees are the theme of my song  
wherever I lodge.

<sup>55</sup> In the night, LORD, I remember your name,  
that I may keep your law.

<sup>56</sup> This has been my practice:  
I obey your precepts.

“I remember, LORD, your ancient laws, and I find comfort in them.” (Psalm 119:52)

All of us have seen the frightening outcomes of red-hot anger burning inside someone. This fiery rage, if not contained, will engulf one’s soul and will burn out of control, devastating everything in its path. The psalmist writes, “Indignation grips me” (v. 53).

So, how do we deal with the anger boiling up inside us?

In this stanza, we see how the psalmist deals with his inner rage in the midst of these merciless attacks upon his character (v. 51). He throws himself on God’s mercy and is reminded of God’s promises to comfort him in his pain. Three times he uses the word “remember”:

- “Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope” (v. 49).
- “I remember, LORD, your ancient laws, and I find comfort in them” (v. 52).
- “In the night, LORD, I remember your name, that I may keep your law” (v. 55).

How do we pray through the promises of God? Richard Sibbes offers this insight: “When we hear any promise in the word of God, let us turn it into a prayer. God’s promises are his bonds. He loves that we should wrestle with him by his promises.”<sup>9</sup>

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“When we hear any promise in the word of God, let us turn it into a prayer.” —Richard Sibbes

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In the midst of great anguish, it is easy to forget who God is and the promises he makes. The psalmist prays, “Lord, remember your promises,” and then declares, “Lord, I recall your word.” And he appeals to God’s character, “Lord, I will not forget who you are.”

It is only in remembering God’s promises that we can know hope (v. 49), experience life-giving strength (v. 50), discover relentless focus (v. 51), find lasting comfort (v. 52), sing songs of joy (v. 54), experience intimacy with God (v. 55), and learn the habits that please God (v. 56).

We are a forgetful people. When we forget the promises of God, we will turn to other things to comfort us: work, success, money, adventure, friends, family, food, alcohol, drugs, or even our own anger. Yet none of these bring lasting comfort, only temporary relief.

Let us cherish God’s Word by turning his promises into petitions.

*Father in heaven, remember your promises to me—the promises of your presence, your power, your strength, and your comfort. Father, I hang on to these promises for dear life! Your promises hold me up in bad times; they renew my spirit and revive my soul. Amen.*

# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*



# Four Basic Disciplines in Approaching the Word of God

## Reading

The first basic discipline is simply reading the Word of God. The psalmist says, “I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word” (Psalm 119:16). Nine times the psalmist speaks of delighting in God’s Word. Here in this verse he speaks of it in terms of “delighting himself.” He finds the reading of God’s Word joyful, pleasant, and entertaining. Here is where we need to start. We should read the Bible consistently, making time—morning, noon, or evening—to spend with God in his Word. We should read it systematically, one book at a time. Finally, we should read it expectantly, eager to hear God speak to our hearts.

## Memorizing

The discipline of storing up the Bible in your heart and mind. It involves reading, reciting, and rehearsing God’s Word. The psalmist says, “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11). Dallas Willard wrote, “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 mind 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.”<sup>10</sup>

## Studying

The discipline of examining Scripture to understand the writer’s original intent, the historical and cultural nuances of the passage, and how its message fits with the rest of Scripture. In the book of Acts, we discover a great example to inspire us in the discipline of study: “Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true” (Acts 17:11). When the Bereans heard Paul’s message, they did not receive it blindly but were fully engaged and ready to investigate, even scrutinize, Paul’s teaching, comparing it against the rest of Scripture. They did this on a daily basis, not just once a week

on the Sabbath. There is nothing like daily Bible study to fill your soul, nourish your mind, and guard your heart.

## Meditating

The discipline of thinking deeply and prayerfully on God's Word. It's unfortunate that our culture today links meditation more with non-Christian practices than with Christian spiritual disciplines. Eastern religions see meditation as emptying the mind and detaching from the world, but Christian meditation is about filling our mind with God's thoughts, which will lead us to freely and completely attach our lives to God. Meditation is the spiritual fruit of reading, memorizing, and studying Scripture. For in the work of praying through, musing on, and working out a text, we begin to digest, enjoy, and assimilate God's truth deep into the fabric of our soul. The psalmist exclaims, "Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long" (Psalm 119:97) because he knows his soul's needs will only be satisfied by the Word of God. Jesus said it this way: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).





Day 8

## Portion

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:57-64

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

n Heth

<sup>57</sup> You are my portion, LORD;

I have promised to obey your words.

<sup>58</sup> I have sought your face with all my heart;

be gracious to me according to your promise.

<sup>59</sup> I have considered my ways

and have turned my steps to your statutes.

<sup>60</sup> I will hasten and not delay

to obey your commands.

<sup>61</sup> Though the wicked bind me with ropes,

I will not forget your law.

<sup>62</sup> At midnight I rise to give you thanks

for your righteous laws.

<sup>63</sup> I am a friend to all who fear you,

to all who follow your precepts.

<sup>64</sup> The earth is filled with your love, LORD;

teach me your decrees.

## “You are my portion, LORD; I have promised to obey your words.” (Psalm 119:57)

What gets you up in the morning? What compels you to do what you do? For the psalmist, it's simple: the Lord. He exclaims, “You are my portion, Lord!”

The idea of a portion in the Bible is similar to the idea of an inheritance in today's language. It's something we look forward to possessing that provides security. For the psalmist, his security is not in property or riches he would inherit but in the Lord, his mighty portion.

What temptations could we avoid by declaring God as our portion? An unsatisfied heart causes us many heartaches in this world. A wandering heart leads us to stray far from God. A discontented heart drives us to find satisfaction in all the wrong places.

What can we learn from the satisfied heart of the psalmist?

- Because his heart is satisfied, he chooses to live in obedience to God's promises (v. 57).
- By having his life filled up with God, he craves a deeper intimacy with God (v. 58).
- Since he feels safe with the Lord, he opens his life up to God's piercing examination (v. 59).
- Because he is secure, he quickly responds to God's Word (v. 60).
- Being confident in God's provision, he keeps the Word of God always before him and worships the Lord throughout the day (vv. 61-62).
- Having trusted God with his future, he has a deeper relationship with God's people and a profound view of God's mercy (vv. 63-64).

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The more satisfied we are with Jesus, the more we satisfy God and live a satisfying life.

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In the New Testament, we see how through Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection, God has provided for us an inheritance that is described as “imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3-5 ESV). Jesus is our portion! The more satisfied we are with Jesus, the more we satisfy God and live a satisfying life.

The apostle Paul prays that this will be an ever-increasing reality in our lives: “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know . . . the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people” (Ephesians 1:18).

*Father in heaven, give me eyes to see Jesus as my portion! He is the only one who can satisfy the deepest needs of my soul and cause me to cherish every word that comes from your heart. Amen.*

# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*





Day 9

## Affliction

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:65-72

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

∪ Teth

- <sup>65</sup> Do good to your servant  
according to your word, LORD.
- <sup>66</sup> Teach me knowledge and good judgment,  
for I trust your commands.
- <sup>67</sup> Before I was afflicted I went astray,  
but now I obey your word.
- <sup>68</sup> You are good, and what you do is good;  
teach me your decrees.
- <sup>69</sup> Though the arrogant have smeared me with lies,  
I keep your precepts with all my heart.
- <sup>70</sup> Their hearts are callous and unfeeling,  
but I delight in your law.
- <sup>71</sup> It was good for me to be afflicted  
so that I might learn your decrees.
- <sup>72</sup> The law from your mouth is more precious to me  
than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.



## “You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees.” (Psalm 119:68)

As a child, I remember my mother saying that bad things always happen in threes. I saw this happen a few times growing up, but I never asked my mother, who is with the Lord now, why she believed that. Maybe it was what she heard her parents say, maybe it was superstition, or maybe it was just a way of bracing herself for the tragedies of life.

In this stanza of Psalm 119, we discover four life lessons in how the psalmist braces himself for affliction.

*He praises God for His goodness.* As he reflects on his life, the psalmist sees the overwhelming nature of God’s goodness toward him: “You have been good to your servant” (v. 65). Later he writes, “You are good, and what you do is good” (v. 68). Thomas Manton describes the goodness of God this way: “He is originally good. . . . He is essentially good; not only good, but goodness itself. . . . In God [goodness] is His essence. He is infinitely good. . . . He is eternally and immutably good.”<sup>11</sup>

*He possesses a teachable spirit.* Three times the psalmist asks God to teach him (vv. 66, 68, 71). The greatest disciples are always the most teachable disciples. The word “disciple” itself means learner. Disciples are always seeking to learn. Unteachable people are filled with arrogance, which causes their hearts to be hard and unresponsive, like arteries filled with cholesterol (v. 70). But a teachable heart is delightfully responsive to God’s Word.

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Unteachable people are filled with arrogance, which causes their hearts to be hard and unresponsive.

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*He accepts God’s discipline as good.* The psalmist realizes that some of the affliction he is facing is because of his own actions (v. 67). This could have been the result of willfulness, ignorance, inexperience, or outright disobedience, yet, because God loved him, God would not let him get away with it (v. 71).

*He treasures God’s Word above everything.* He ends this stanza with a powerful declaration. What carries him through the school of affliction is the strength, encouragement, and comfort he finds in the priceless Word of God (v. 72).

Let us cherish God’s goodness and the goodness of his Word.

*Father in heaven, you are great and you are good! Your goodness has overwhelmed my life. You have been merciful to me in my disobedience and compassionate in my sufferings. You seek the best for me according to your good promise. Keep my heart soft and pliable, for I cherish and treasure your Word. Amen.*

# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*



Day 10

## Loving Discipline

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:73-80

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

Yodh

<sup>73</sup> Your hands made me and formed me;  
give me understanding to learn your commands.

<sup>74</sup> May those who fear you rejoice when they see me,  
for I have put my hope in your word.

<sup>75</sup> I know, LORD, that your laws are righteous,  
and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.

<sup>76</sup> May your unfailing love be my comfort,  
according to your promise to your servant.

<sup>77</sup> Let your compassion come to me that I may live,  
for your law is my delight.

<sup>78</sup> May the arrogant be put to shame for wronging  
me without cause;  
but I will meditate on your precepts.

<sup>79</sup> May those who fear you turn to me,  
those who understand your statutes.

<sup>80</sup> May I wholeheartedly follow your decrees,  
that I may not be put to shame.



“I know, LORD, that your laws are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.” (Psalm 119:75)

The hardest suffering to deal with comes from wounds that are self-inflicted.

As a pastor, I had the opportunity to minister to people in times of great need. On one occasion, a church member had his business raided by the FBI for some illegal practices, which led his family through a difficult season of court battles and a prison sentence. When I met with this man after his arrest, he asked the normal questions: *Why did this happen to me? Where is God in this?* I explained that God only promises to protect us when we are living within the boundaries of his Word, and that when we venture outside that safe area, it’s as if God says, “Swim at your own risk.” It took time for him to come to grips with the situation, but once he did, he started to see how God was redeeming his mistakes and turning him into a usable instrument for reaching other inmates. I can imagine him praying these words to the Lord: “I know, LORD, . . . that in faithfulness you have afflicted me” (v. 75).

What can we learn here about God’s loving discipline in our lives?

*God loves us more than we realize.* The one who made us knows everything about us—our strengths and frailties, our victories and defeats—and still loves us. The psalmist appeals to the mercy of God for comfort (vv. 76-77). In begging for God’s mercy, he is asking God to withhold what he really deserves.

*God disciplines those he loves.* The Bible teaches us to recognize the Lord’s discipline in our lives so that we will not lose heart as we learn to endure the consequences of our own bad choices. “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves” (Hebrews 12:5-6).

*Our testimony matters* (vv. 74, 77). We may not love the circumstances we find ourselves in, but God never wastes a hurt. He uses our trials to make us better messengers of his great mercy and love (Hebrews 12:11).

Oswald Chambers wrote, “There is never any mistaking the pain of the Lord’s Word by His children, but the moment that pain is felt is the very moment at which God reveals His truth to us.”<sup>12</sup>

In cherishing God’s Word, we can discern the loving discipline of the Lord.

*Father in heaven, help me discern the difference between your loving discipline and the painful trials of this life. May I find comfort in the promise of your mercy and respond in ways that honor you and that cause others to follow you. In Jesus’s name. Amen.*



# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*



Day 11

## Depression

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:81-88

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

כ Kaph

<sup>81</sup> My soul faints with longing for your salvation,  
but I have put my hope in your word.

<sup>82</sup> My eyes fail, looking for your promise;  
I say, "When will you comfort me?"

<sup>83</sup> Though I am like a wineskin in the smoke,  
I do not forget your decrees.

<sup>84</sup> How long must your servant wait?  
When will you punish my persecutors?

<sup>85</sup> The arrogant dig pits to trap me,  
contrary to your law.

<sup>86</sup> All your commands are trustworthy;  
help me, for I am being persecuted without cause.

<sup>87</sup> They almost wiped me from the earth,  
but I have not forsaken your precepts.

<sup>88</sup> In your unfailing love preserve my life,  
that I may obey the statutes of your mouth.

“My soul faints with longing for your salvation, but I have put my hope in your word.” (Psalm 119:81)

What has been the lowest point in your life? When have you been so filled with anguish that your soul was ready to faint and your eyes were giving out, and unbearable sorrow dried up your spirit like a useless wineskin? For the writer of Psalm 119, this is the lowest point in the chapter, and yet he found a way to crawl out of it.

How does one crawl out of the pit of depression?

Pray. Bring your questions before God through prayer. I used to think it was wrong to bring our questions to God. Yet that is not what Scripture teaches. The psalmist questions God three times: “When will you comfort me? How long must your servant wait? When will you punish my persecutors?” (vv. 82, 84). In his darkest moment, Jesus questioned his Father (Matthew 27:46). Questions reflect intimacy because it is a sign that we are running toward God and not away from God. Remember, God is big enough to handle all our questions.

Seek. Read, study, and meditate on God’s Word. “My eyes fail, looking for your promise” (Psalm 119:82). When was the last time you sought God until your eyes hurt? You cannot put your hope in God’s Word unless you know God’s Word. You will not experience God’s comfort unless you ponder and meditate on God’s precepts.

Wait. No one likes waiting! It’s painful to wait through things we can see, like flight delays, traffic jams, or a reply to a text message, but it is excruciating to wait for God to move in our lives. Yet it is in the waiting that our souls are transformed (Romans 5:3-5).

Rest. Rest on the promises in God’s life-giving Word and rely on his unfailing love (v. 97). Warren Wiersbe wrote, “When the Father allows His children to go into the furnace of affliction, He keeps His eye on the clock and His hand on the thermostat. He knows how long and how much.”<sup>13</sup> God is with us through the trials (Deuteronomy 31:8) and always provides a way out from the trials and temptations we face (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Crawling out from life’s pits is not easy, but it is possible.

*Father in heaven, you know every weakness, pain, and agony of my soul. You and you alone are the one who brings light into my darkness. Renew my strength, refresh my soul, and revive my faith according to your promises. Amen.*

# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*







Day 12

# Eternal

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:89-96

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

5 Lamedh

<sup>89</sup> Your word, LORD, is eternal;  
it stands firm in the heavens.

<sup>90</sup> Your faithfulness continues through all generations;  
you established the earth, and it endures.

<sup>91</sup> Your laws endure to this day,  
for all things serve you.

<sup>92</sup> If your law had not been my delight,  
I would have perished in my affliction.

<sup>93</sup> I will never forget your precepts,  
for by them you have preserved my life.

<sup>94</sup> Save me, for I am yours;  
I have sought out your precepts.

<sup>95</sup> The wicked are waiting to destroy me,  
but I will ponder your statutes.

<sup>96</sup> To all perfection I see a limit,  
but your commands are boundless.

“Your word, LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.”  
(Psalm 119:89)

When life gets shaky, where do you go to find stability?

In this stanza, we see the strength, the power, and the immovable nature of God’s Word because it is eternal and boundless. Isaiah said, “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever” (Isaiah 40:8).

No other piece of literature in the history of humankind has been attacked, mistreated, and abused more than the Word of God. It has outlasted Roman emperors who tried to extinguish it. It has survived mistreatment by false teachers and cult leaders through the centuries. It will outlive prosperity preachers who manipulate it for their own personal gain and racists who pervert it to harm others. Peter tells us our faith rests solidly on the unchangeable nature of God’s Word: “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Peter 1:23).

How did the eternal nature of God’s Word impact the psalmist’s attitude?

- He submitted himself to God’s enduring Word (v. 91). God’s interests are the ones to be served, not our own.
- He delighted in God’s Word (v. 92). This simply means he enjoyed God’s Word, and that enjoyment carried him through the seasons of suffering.
- He remembered God’s Word (v. 93). He carried the eternal Word of God with him, relying on its life-giving power to revive him.
- He sought out God’s Word (v. 94). This is not just a casual reading, but involves digging in and dragging out eternal truths through serious study.
- He pondered God’s Word (v. 95). Even in the midst of painful attacks, he thoughtfully mused upon the Word of God.
- He was humbled by the limitlessness of God’s Word (v. 96). As he viewed the perfection of creation, he experienced the transcendent nature of God’s Word.

God’s Word never gets old, and it is always speaking to us. If we cherish it passionately, it will revive our spirits, renew our minds, and refresh our faith.

*Father in heaven, thank you for your eternal Word on which the foundation of the world is built. Thank you for your enduring Word that sustains our world. Thank you for your reviving Word that makes dead souls alive. May I treat your Word with care and humility. Amen.*

# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*



Day 13

## Wisdom

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:97-104

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

Mem

<sup>97</sup> Oh, how I love your law!

I meditate on it all day long.

<sup>98</sup> Your commands are always with me  
and make me wiser than my enemies.

<sup>99</sup> I have more insight than all my teachers,  
for I meditate on your statutes.

<sup>100</sup> I have more understanding than the elders,  
for I obey your precepts.

<sup>101</sup> I have kept my feet from every evil path  
so that I might obey your word.

<sup>102</sup> I have not departed from your laws,  
for you yourself have taught me.

<sup>103</sup> How sweet are your words to my taste,  
sweeter than honey to my mouth!

<sup>104</sup> I gain understanding from your precepts;  
therefore I hate every wrong path.



“Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.”  
(Psalm 119:97)

There is a difference between knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge knows everything there is to know about a subject, but wisdom finds a way to apply that knowledge in practical ways. You can have knowledge without wisdom, but you cannot have wisdom without knowledge. Knowledge is the foundation of wisdom. So, what is wisdom?

Wisdom is the skill of applying God’s Word in our everyday situations in order to achieve God’s purposes. The psalmist declares that God’s Word makes him “wiser than his enemies” (v. 98). It gives him “more insight than all my teachers” (v. 99) and “more understanding than the elders” (v. 100).

How did the psalmist acquire wisdom?

*Wisdom comes to us when we love God’s Word (v. 97).* The psalmist proclaims his devotion to the Word of God. His deep affection for the beauty of God’s Word is crystal clear. Charles Spurgeon wrote, “I beseech you to let your Bibles be everything to you. Carry this matchless treasure with you continually, and read it, and read it, and read it again and again! Turn to its pages by day and by night. Let its narratives mingle with your dreams! Let its precepts color your lives! Let its promises cheer your darkness, let its Divine illumination make glad your life! As you love God, love this Book.”<sup>14</sup>

*Wisdom comes when we meditate on God’s Word (vv. 97, 99).* To find God’s wisdom, we must carry God’s Word with us day and night (v. 98). Meditation is a “holy exercise of pondering over the Word, chewing it as an animal chews its cud to get its sweetness and nutritive virtue into the heart and life.”<sup>15</sup>

*Wisdom is imparted through our obedience (vv. 100-101).* Putting God’s Word into practice does more than anything else to make a person truly wise. Obedience keeps us on the right path (v. 101) and teaches us to hate the wrong paths of deception (v. 104). Submission to God’s Word puts a sweet taste in our mouth, causing us to crave more and more (v. 103).

It is in cherishing God’s Word that the wisdom of God comes alive in our lives.

*Father in heaven, wisdom comes from fearing you and cherishing your Word. Oh, how I seek to know your thoughts and to work them out in my daily life. Fill my mind, my heart, and my life with your wisdom as I seek your goodness and your glory. Amen.*

# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*

Day 14

## Guidance

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:105-112

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

1 Nun

<sup>105</sup> Your word is a lamp for my feet,  
a light on my path.

<sup>106</sup> I have taken an oath and confirmed it,  
that I will follow your righteous laws.

<sup>107</sup> I have suffered much;  
preserve my life, LORD, according to your word.

<sup>108</sup> Accept, LORD, the willing praise of my mouth,  
and teach me your laws.

<sup>109</sup> Though I constantly take my life in my hands,  
I will not forget your law.

<sup>110</sup> The wicked have set a snare for me,  
but I have not strayed from your precepts.

<sup>111</sup> Your statutes are my heritage forever;  
they are the joy of my heart.

<sup>112</sup> My heart is set on keeping your decrees  
to the very end.



“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. . . .  
My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.”  
(Psalm 119:105, 112)

Oswald Chambers wrote, “We should get in the habit of continually seeking [God’s] counsel on everything, instead of making our own commonsense decisions and then asking Him to bless them.”<sup>16</sup> We have all done this way too often and have suffered the consequences for it.

In this stanza, the psalmist not only declares that God’s Word is what guides him in his daily decisions (vv. 105-106), but he proclaims that God’s Word is what sets the direction for his whole life (v. 112).

What happens when we let the Word of God guide our lives?

We find God’s life-giving power in the midst of heartache (v. 107). Pain and suffering invade our lives more than we like, but when we seek God’s counsel, we mysteriously find relief, comfort, and hope from the persevering power of God’s Word.

We find our heart filled with praise (v. 108). The psalmist’s act of worship is in response to discovering God’s will and leads to a more teachable attitude.

We will not be overwhelmed by danger (v. 109). The psalmist finds a supernatural peace from God’s Word. Later in the psalm he writes, “Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble” (v. 165). The apostle Paul also describes “the peace of God, which transcends all understanding” (Philippians 4:7).

We see the traps set out for us (v. 110). Temptations come in all shapes and sizes, but living daily in the light of God’s Word exposes them and secures our steps. Our Savior used the Word of God to fight temptation (Matthew 4:1-11).

We experience joy deep in our hearts (v. 111). We make the Word of God our portion, our inheritance, our hope. It produces satisfaction that cannot be explained. We move from head knowledge to a real heart knowledge.

When we cherish the Word of God and let it guide our lives, the outcomes are miraculous.

*Father in heaven, I set my heart upon your Word, all my affections, dreams, and desires. I set your Word as a lamp that guides me step by step and decision by decision each day of my life. Father, your Word gives me hope in heartache; it fills me with worship instead of worry, peace instead of fear, freedom instead of bondage, and joy instead of sorrow. Amen.*



# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*

# Four Benefits of Daily Bible Study

Earlier we learned about the Bereans, who were people of great character because they “examined the Scriptures every day” (Acts 17:11). Daily Bible study has rich rewards. Here are just a few of the blessings we experience from daily digging into God’s Word.

## God’s Word ignites our faith.

“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ” (Romans 10:17). God’s Word is what ignites faith. God’s message about Jesus is what awakens our mind and soul to the wonders of God’s grace. How does this happen? Through the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul explains, “What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:12-14). As we daily engage the Word, God does something supernatural in our hearts. He stirs our affections with the truth of the gospel, thus taking souls that were once dead in sin and making us alive in Christ (see Ephesians 2:1-5).

## God’s Word is food for our soul.

“Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). In the midst of a great spiritual battle, Jesus quoted this verse from Deuteronomy 8:3 to gain victory over the devil, who was tempting him. In God’s Word is the nourishment that strengthens our soul for the daily battles we face. Many times in Scripture we see the Bible referred to as milk, honey, meat, or solid food. Just as daily intake of good food strengthens us physically and emotionally, so daily feeding on God’s Word fortifies us spiritually and emotionally. Without proper nutrition we can get grumpy and irritable. There is even a special word for this: *hangry*. It blends “hungry” and “angry,” and is defined as “bad-tempered or irritable as a result of hunger.” Too many followers of Jesus walk around spiritually hangry because they are not getting proper spiritual food for their soul. In the midst of great grief, pain, and anger, the prophet Jeremiah found relief from God’s Word: “When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, LORD God Almighty” (Jeremiah 15:16). God’s words filled this hangry prophet’s soul with joy and delight and reminded him that he was God’s spokesman during those difficult days. It’s the same for us. We need to feed daily on God’s Word to give us a healthy perspective and the power to live out God’s calling in our lives.

## God's Word provides victory over sin.

Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17). The word "sanctify" means to be set apart or made holy for God's unique purposes. This sanctification was provided through Jesus's own sanctification that led to him to fulfill the Father's will through his death on the cross: "For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified" (John 17:19).

Sanctification in our lives is both positional and progressive. We "have been made holy" (Hebrews 10:10) through our faith in Christ's death on the cross, and we "are being made holy" (Hebrews 10:14), meaning we are growing in our ability to be set apart by God for his special service. This happens through the sanctifying power of God's Word: "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). When we live in obedience to God's Word, we experience victory and freedom. James says it this way: "But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do" (James 1:25). As we read, study, and apply God's Word to our lives on a daily basis, God sanctifies our heart and sets us free from sin. The psalmist declares, "I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts" (Psalm 119:45).

## God's Word produces hope in the midst of the battle.

The apostle Paul wrote, "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope" (Romans 15:4). We cannot explain how it happens but can only testify to the fact that, in some miraculous way, God's Word generates hope deep in our soul. This hope is an expectant confidence that God is for us in the midst of life's battles. This is why we need to daily study the scriptures, because through the perseverance of people like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Esther, David, Daniel, Isaiah, and Job, we find the encouragement that puts everything into perspective.

In seeking to unify the church in Rome, Paul wrote to mature Christians who needed to bear with the weaknesses of others and not seek to please themselves (Romans 15:1-2). He used a prophetic statement about Jesus from the Old Testament to show that Jesus did not seek to please himself but willingly bore the insults of others (15:3). So we, being filled with hope through the Scriptures, are empowered to see through the insults or weaknesses of others for the sake of unifying the church of God (15:5). This why the psalmist wrote, "I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your word" (Psalm 119:147).

D. L. Moody explains the importance of daily study this way: "A man can no more take in a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough for the next six months, or take sufficient air into his lungs at one time to sustain life for a week. We must draw upon God's boundless store of grace from day to day as we need it." <sup>17</sup>

Day 15

## Double-Minded

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:113-120

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

▷ Samekh

<sup>113</sup> I hate double-minded people,  
but I love your law.

<sup>114</sup> You are my refuge and my shield;  
I have put my hope in your word.

<sup>115</sup> Away from me, you evildoers,  
that I may keep the commands of my God!

<sup>116</sup> Sustain me, my God, according to your promise,  
and I will live;  
do not let my hopes be dashed.

<sup>117</sup> Uphold me, and I will be delivered;  
I will always have regard for your decrees.

<sup>118</sup> You reject all who stray from your decrees,  
for their delusions come to nothing.

<sup>119</sup> All the wicked of the earth you discard like dross;  
therefore I love your statutes.

<sup>120</sup> My flesh trembles in fear of you;  
I stand in awe of your laws.



**“I hate double-minded people, but I love your law.”  
(Psalm 119:113)**

Fickle people are fatal people.

Fickle people are always changing loyalties; they are unstable and continually give in to the opinions of others. They lack consistency in their affections and solidarity in their commitments. James describes a double-minded person as a two-souled person, completely unreliable, unprincipled, always wavering, and having a split personality that cannot be trusted (James 1:8). The psalmist describes them as evildoers (v. 115), people who stray from God’s Word, and delusional (v. 118). Their fate is that they will be discarded like dross, the useless scum from purified metals (v. 119).

How does the psalmist protect himself from fickle people, and how does he keep his own heart from becoming fickle in nature? Use the principles from God’s Word and the following questions to search your own heart in this matter:

- He declares his devotion to the Word of God (vv. 113, 119). When was the last time you declared your love for God’s Word?
- He looks to God as his only source of protection (v. 114). Where do you go when you are feeling defenseless or vulnerable?
- He separates himself from the fickle (v. 115). What voices are you listening to? Who are you allowing to influence your life and calling?
- He depends on God’s sustaining power (vv. 116-117). How is God sustaining you in the midst of disappointments? How have God’s promises lifted you up at the right time to keep you from falling?
- He possesses a deep reverence for God and awe for God’s Word (v. 120). What do you really fear in life? What holds you in awe?

If fickleness has crept into your heart, then let the Word of God speak to you and set you free.

“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up” (James 4:7-10).

May God replace our fickleness with a faithful devotion through the power of God’s Word.

*Father in heaven, save me from the fickleness in my own heart. Sustain and uphold me according to the power of your life-giving Word. Protect me from fickle and faithless people who produce nothing that will last. Father, I love you and I love your Word. May I be found faithful today. Amen.*

# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*



Day 16

## Confidence

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:121-128

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

Y Ayin

<sup>121</sup> I have done what is righteous and just;  
do not leave me to my oppressors.

<sup>122</sup> Ensure your servant's well-being;  
do not let the arrogant oppress me.

<sup>123</sup> My eyes fail, looking for your salvation,  
looking for your righteous promise.

<sup>124</sup> Deal with your servant according to your love  
and teach me your decrees.

<sup>125</sup> I am your servant; give me discernment  
that I may understand your statutes.

<sup>126</sup> It is time for you to act, LORD;  
your law is being broken.

<sup>127</sup> Because I love your commands  
more than gold, more than pure gold,

<sup>128</sup> and because I consider all your precepts right,  
I hate every wrong path.



“I am your servant; give me discernment that I may understand your statutes.” (Psalm 119:125)

What do rejection, worry, distress, and angst have in common? They are all feelings that can rob us of our confidence when we approach God in prayer.

How does a person overcome this loss of confidence in prayer?

John Piper writes, “The main way that God deepens, strengthens and awakens confidence in prayer is not through answered prayer. It’s by the word of the living God!”<sup>18</sup>

In this stanza, the psalmist finds confidence from God’s Word to approach God boldly even in the midst of feeling abandoned (v. 121), discouraged (v. 122), anxious (v. 123), and frustrated (v. 126).

First, his confidence is rebuilt through his consistent pursuit of God through the Word (v. 121). He relentlessly searches for God’s promises (v. 123). He greatly esteems and completely trusts in God’s Word. His walk is not one of perfection but of tenacious consistency. He cherishes God’s Word above everything else, daily seeking God’s counsel in choosing the right path to walk (vv. 127-128).

Second, his confidence is strengthened by his promised position with God. Three times he calls himself God’s servant, which is better translated as “slave,” a person with no rights and who is completely owned by his master. He appeals to God’s ownership of him (v. 122). In essence he says, “I’m yours, Lord. My interests are your interests, my desires are your desires, so answer my prayers.” He begs God to deal with him as an object of love (v. 124), then he boldly claims his position with God: “I am your servant; give me discernment” (v. 125).

Jesus said it this way: “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you . . . so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you” (John 15:15-16).

Our confidence in prayer comes out of our promised position in Christ, which is discovered through God’s Word. The more we cherish God’s Word the deeper our assurance grows.

*Father in heaven, I am yours! I belong to you! I come before you with confidence because I have been purchased through the sacrificial death of Jesus, my Advocate and my great High Priest who intercedes for me. It’s in his name that I pray. Amen.*



# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*



Day 17

## Wonderful

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:129-136

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

☞ Pe

<sup>129</sup> Your statutes are wonderful;  
therefore I obey them.

<sup>130</sup> The unfolding of your words gives light;  
it gives understanding to the simple.

<sup>131</sup> I open my mouth and pant,  
longing for your commands.

<sup>132</sup> Turn to me and have mercy on me,  
as you always do to those who love your name.

<sup>133</sup> Direct my footsteps according to your word;  
let no sin rule over me.

<sup>134</sup> Redeem me from human oppression,  
that I may obey your precepts.

<sup>135</sup> Make your face shine on your servant  
and teach me your decrees.

<sup>136</sup> Streams of tears flow from my eyes,  
for your law is not obeyed.

“Your statutes are wonderful; therefore I obey them.”

(Psalm 119:129)

In the Hebrew language, the word translated as “wonderful” has a deeper meaning than just a warm sentiment. Its actual meaning is “miraculous.” When the psalmist declares that God’s Word is wondrously miraculous, he is speaking of the supernatural aspects of God’s Word.

In this stanza, the psalmist points us to some of the supernatural effects that come from cherishing God’s Word.

- God’s Word miraculously speaks to me. It continuously brings light into my darkness and helps me to understand my world from God’s perspective (v. 130).
- God’s Word wondrously creates an all-consuming passion in me for more of it (v. 131). It never gets old. Its freshness and satisfying nature cause a supernatural thirst in me like that of a wild animal seeking a cool drink.
- God’s Word marvelously produces a desire in me to be known by God and to experience his loving mercy (v. 132). It causes me to say with the psalmist, “Look at me, God. Be merciful to me because I love you.” Only God can put this in the human heart.
- God’s Word supernaturally generates a desire in me to be ruled by God and not sin (v. 133). This is the sanctifying work of God’s Spirit through God’s Word. It shows me my sin and sets my heart free of sin’s rule.
- God’s Word incredibly strengthens me to face my oppressors (v. 134). God’s Word grants me the fortitude to stand up to those who live in bondage to their own sin.
- God’s Word amazingly reveals the radiant light of God’s love deep within my soul (v. 135), creating the same intimacy with God that Moses experienced (Exodus 33:11).
- God’s Word miraculously breaks my heart with the knowledge that God’s words are not being obeyed (v. 136). I experience grief and brokenness that were not there before I fell in love with God and his Word.

Close to forty years ago, something supernatural took place in my life under the preaching of God’s Word. My mind, heart, and soul were opened to God’s great love to me through Jesus Christ. When I responded in faith, a whole new world opened up to me. God put in my heart a love for Jesus, a strong affection for God’s people, and an unquenchable thirst for God’s Word. God’s Word is wondrously miraculous! Let us learn to cherish it every day.

*Father in heaven, your Word is miraculous! Your infinite Word continuously reveals your will, wisdom, and ways. It is alive and life-giving. It quenches my spiritual thirst. It sanctifies my heart and renews my mind. It leads me and guides my every step. Amen.*

# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*





Day 18

## Righteous

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:137-144

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

⚡ Tsadhe

<sup>137</sup> You are righteous, LORD,  
and your laws are right.

<sup>138</sup> The statutes you have laid down are righteous;  
they are fully trustworthy.

<sup>139</sup> My zeal wears me out,  
for my enemies ignore your words.

<sup>140</sup> Your promises have been thoroughly tested,  
and your servant loves them.

<sup>141</sup> Though I am lowly and despised,  
I do not forget your precepts.

<sup>142</sup> Your righteousness is everlasting  
and your law is true.

<sup>143</sup> Trouble and distress have come upon me,  
but your commands give me delight.

<sup>144</sup> Your statutes are always righteous;  
give me understanding that I may live.

## “You are righteous, LORD, and your laws are right.” (Psalm 119:137)

Feelings shift like the sand, but God’s righteousness is unmovable.

The psalmist declares that God is righteous. The word “righteous” means just, fair, true, pure, correct, and lawful. God’s righteous character does not allow him to act in an unrighteous manner. His holiness, justice, love, and mercy demand that he be fair and equitable in all his dealings.

In this stanza, the psalmist experiences strong emotional forces from internal stress (v. 141—“I am lowly and despised”) as well as from external suffering (v. 143—“Trouble and distress have come upon me”). His emotions are raw and real, but his faith does not waver. Why? Because his identity is not in what others think about him but in God’s righteous Word (v. 141). He refuses to be defined by his circumstances, as painful as they are, because he delights in God’s promises (v. 143).

When the psalmist speaks about God being righteous (v. 137), he means that God in his righteousness never withholds a promise given or a judgment pronounced. God is completely upright, fair, and pure in his dealings with humankind, therefore God can be trusted.

When the psalmist declares God’s Word to be righteous (v. 137), he means that the Bible always reflects and flows out of God’s righteous character. God’s Word is righteous because God is righteous. This is why the psalmist pronounces God’s Word as “fully trustworthy” (v. 138), “thoroughly tested” (v. 140), and “true” (v. 142).

Yet, the psalmist does not stop there; he declares that God and his Word are eternally righteous (vv. 142, 144). This means that God and his Word will never change. They are timeless and eternally fixed, therefore God and his Word can be trusted for eternity.

We live in an age of feelings, meaning we allow our lives to be driven by how we feel about a situation. Yet, when faced with feelings of insecurity and discouragement, the psalmist zealously runs to the righteous Word of God for perspective and to experience the life-giving power of God’s Word (v. 144).

Our feelings can often fail us, but God’s Word never fails, so let us delight and cherish it forever.

*Father in heaven, you are eternal. You are righteous. Your Word is eternally righteous. It is trustworthy, tested, and true. Fill my life with the understanding of your truth and the power to live it out. Amen.*

# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*



Day 19

## Awakening

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:145-152

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

פ Qoph

<sup>145</sup> I call with all my heart; answer me, LORD,  
and I will obey your decrees.

<sup>146</sup> I call out to you; save me  
and I will keep your statutes.

<sup>147</sup> I rise before dawn and cry for help;  
I have put my hope in your word.

<sup>148</sup> My eyes stay open through the watches of the night,  
that I may meditate on your promises.

<sup>149</sup> Hear my voice in accordance with your love;  
preserve my life, LORD, according to your laws.

<sup>150</sup> Those who devise wicked schemes are near,  
but they are far from your law.

<sup>151</sup> Yet you are near, LORD,  
and all your commands are true.

<sup>152</sup> Long ago I learned from your statutes  
that you established them to last forever.



“Hear my voice in accordance with your love; preserve my life, LORD, according to your laws.” (Psalm 119:149)

How's your soul? Soul care is of the utmost importance for everyone. Good soul care starts with a consistent devotional life. A strong devotional life is the oxygen we need for a vibrant life, a fruitful ministry, and a healthy soul.

There are two basic ingredients in any relationship: talking and listening. Hearing and being heard are critical to developing intimate relationships. The more time I spend talking with and listening to someone, the stronger our bond. When we apply this principle to our relationship with God, we recognize that talking is prayer and listening is hearing God's voice through reading, studying, and meditating on God's Word.

In this stanza, we see the psalmist seeking to be heard: “I call out with all my heart; answer me” (v. 145). “I call out to you; save me” (v. 146). “I rise before dawn and cry for help” (v. 147). “Hear my voice in accordance with your love” (v. 149). Just like the psalmist, we all want to be heard and understood.

Yet the psalmist not only wants God to hear his prayers, but he also wants to hear God's voice and live according to it. After each intense cry, he declares his commitment to God's Word: “I will obey your decrees” (v. 145). “I will keep your statutes” (v. 146). “I have put my hope in your word” (v. 147). “I meditate on your promises” (v. 148). “Preserve my life, LORD, according to your laws” (v. 149).

In the midst of this intense conversation, God shows up. The psalmist not only experiences the reality of God's presence—“Yet you are near, LORD” (v. 151)—but also the awakening power of God's eternal truth (v. 152).

Andrew Murray wrote, “Little of the Word with little prayer is death to the spiritual life. Much of the Word with little prayer gives a sickly life. Much prayer with little of the Word gives more life, but without steadfastness. A full measure of the Word and prayer each day gives a healthy and powerful life.”<sup>19</sup>

May God help us pray and study with equal passion.

*Father in heaven, you are near. You hear the cries of my heart, the pain in my soul, and the frustrations in my spirit. Father, your Word is true, infinite, and everlasting. It speaks to my heart, encourages my spirit, and guides me on the path of righteousness. Father, revive me according to your rich mercy and the power of your everlasting Word. Amen.*

# Journal


*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*



Day 20

## Preservation

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:153-160

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

¶ Resh

<sup>153</sup> Look on my suffering and deliver me,  
for I have not forgotten your law.

<sup>154</sup> Defend my cause and redeem me;  
preserve my life according to your promise.

<sup>155</sup> Salvation is far from the wicked,  
for they do not seek out your decrees.

<sup>156</sup> Your compassion, LORD, is great;  
preserve my life according to your laws.

<sup>157</sup> Many are the foes who persecute me,  
but I have not turned from your statutes.

<sup>158</sup> I look on the faithless with loathing,  
for they do not obey your word.

<sup>159</sup> See how I love your precepts;  
preserve my life, LORD, in accordance with your love.

<sup>160</sup> All your words are true;  
all your righteous laws are eternal.



“Your compassion, LORD, is great; preserve my life according to your laws.” (Psalm 119:156)

Prolonged suffering can have a numbing effect on one’s soul. It can make us feel spiritually dull or lifeless, even though we may be faithfully clinging to God’s Word.

In this stanza, we see the psalmist suffering at the hands of his enemies. We don’t know if these were physical or verbal attacks, but we can hear the emotional pain in his voice: “Look on my suffering and deliver me” (v. 153). “Defend my cause and redeem me” (v. 154). “Many are the foes who persecute me” (v. 157).

We see a man coming to the end of his rope, crying out, “Lord, do something!” What is he asking God to do? Three times he begs God, “Preserve my life” (vv. 154, 156, 159). In this short but powerful prayer, the psalmist is saying, “Breathe your life into my soul; awaken me, quicken me, and revive my soul.” Charles Spurgeon describes it this way: “As the soul is the center of everything, so to be quickened is the central blessing. It means more love, more grace, more faith, more courage, more strength, and if we get these we can hold up our heads before our adversaries. God alone can give this quickening.”<sup>20</sup>

In the midst of his pain, the psalmist lives in the realm of God’s promises (vv. 154, 160). He cries out to experience God’s great love and tender mercies (vv. 156, 159). He refuses to forget God’s Word (vv. 153, 157). Finally, he declares his love for God’s Word (v. 159). Warren Wiersbe describes what it means to love God’s Word: “To love the Word is to obey it, and to obey it is to receive life from it. The Bible is not a magic book that conveys divine life to anyone who picks it up and reads it. God’s living Word communicates His life and power to those who read it, meditate on it, and obey it because they love God and His Word.”<sup>21</sup>

By cherishing God’s Word, we too can find the supernatural strength to overcome the pain that numbs our lives.

*Father in heaven, your Word is alive. Breathe life into my soul through your Word. Revive me through your eternal words of truth and your life-giving promises, for great are your loving-kindness and tender mercies to me. Amen.*



# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*



Day 21

## Tremble

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:161-168

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

ψ Sin and Shin

<sup>161</sup> Rulers persecute me without cause,  
but my heart trembles at your word.

<sup>162</sup> I rejoice in your promise  
like one who finds great spoil.

<sup>163</sup> I hate and detest falsehood  
but I love your law.

<sup>164</sup> Seven times a day I praise you  
for your righteous laws.

<sup>165</sup> Great peace have those who love your law,  
and nothing can make them stumble.

<sup>166</sup> I wait for your salvation, LORD,  
and I follow your commands.

<sup>167</sup> I obey your statutes,  
for I love them greatly.

<sup>168</sup> I obey your precepts and your statutes,  
for all my ways are known to you.

“Rulers persecute me without cause, but my heart trembles at your word.” (Psalm 119:161)

If you have ever gone into a court of law, you have to admit that it creates uneasy feelings of fear, awe, and even dread, because the court’s judgment has the power of a nation behind it. This is the same feeling that the psalmist expresses toward God’s Word.

These uneasy feelings of fear, awe, and dread can be summed up in the word “trembling.” The psalmist trembles before God’s Word, because in the Scriptures the full nature of God is found and revealed.

What is the evidence that the psalmist trembles at God’s Word?

*His heart trembles with confidence in God’s Word.* He rejoices in God’s promises like one who has struck it rich (v. 162). He is preoccupied 24/7 with praising God for his righteous laws (v. 164). He waits expectantly for God’s salvation as he keeps his heart in line with God’s Word (v. 166).

*His heart trembles with love for God’s Word.* Three times he declares his intense affection for God’s Word (vv. 163, 165, 167). Do you remember the first time you fell in love? Were your palms sweating, your heart pounding, and your body trembling? This is the kind of love the psalmist speaks of—a life-altering affection. This type of devotion to God’s Word provides supernatural peace (Philippians 4:7) and a rock-solid foundation for life (Matthew 7:24-29).

*His heart trembles in obedience to God’s Word.* He aligns his life in following God’s desires (v. 166). He commits his inner being, his secret life, the depths of his soul to treasuring God’s Word (v. 167). This is all done consciously, in full view of an all-knowing and all-consuming God (v. 168).

In all this, we see the psalmist fears God’s Word more than he fears attacks from powerful leaders (v. 161). The Lord says, “These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word” (Isaiah 66:2).

What about you? Do you really fear God more than people? Does your love for God’s Word cause your heart to tremble?

*Father in heaven, I praise you for your righteous Word. I rejoice in your promises and wait expectantly for your salvation. Fill my life with deeper reverence, trembling awe, and loving fear for your holy Word. Grant me the peace and stability that only you can provide. Amen.*

# Journal

*What am I learning?*

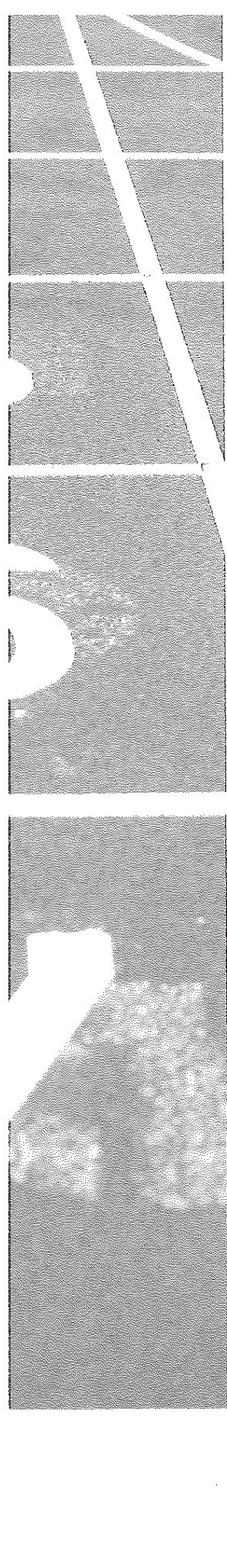
*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*





*Bonus: Day 22*

## Finishing Well

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:169-176

*Practice Your Diagramming Skills*

π Taw

<sup>169</sup> May my cry come before you, LORD;  
give me understanding according to your word.

<sup>170</sup> May my supplication come before you;  
deliver me according to your promise.

<sup>171</sup> May my lips overflow with praise,  
for you teach me your decrees.

<sup>172</sup> May my tongue sing of your word,  
for all your commands are righteous.

<sup>173</sup> May your hand be ready to help me,  
for I have chosen your precepts.

<sup>174</sup> I long for your salvation, LORD,  
and your law gives me delight.

<sup>175</sup> Let me live that I may praise you,  
and may your laws sustain me.

<sup>176</sup> I have strayed like a lost sheep.  
Seek your servant,  
for I have not forgotten your commands.

“I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I have not forgotten your commands.” (Psalm 119:176)

Leadership guru Robin Sharma says, “Starting strong is good. Finishing strong is epic.”<sup>22</sup>

The last verse in this colossal journey through the longest chapter in the Bible is epic. It should cause every follower of Jesus and all serious students of Scripture to pause and reflect.

Psalm 119 begins with a blessing: “Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD” (v. 1) and ends with a warning: “I have strayed like a lost sheep” (v. 176). The man who called out to God to revive his soul, who repeatedly declared his love for God’s Word, who wrote, “I keep, I obey, I delight in, I meditate on, and I long for God’s Word,” now says, “I have strayed.”

Charles Spurgeon explains it this way: “The Psalmist is approaching the end of the Psalm, and his petitions gather force and fervency; he seems to break into the inner circle of divine fellowship.... This nearness creates the most lowly view of himself, and leads him to close the Psalm upon his face in deepest self-humiliation, begging to be sought out like a lost sheep.”<sup>23</sup>

The hymn “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing” captures this thought wonderfully:

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
prone to leave the God I love;  
here’s my heart, O take and seal it;  
seal it for thy courts above.<sup>24</sup>

The closer we get to God, the more we see the weakness in our own soul. This is what God is aiming at, for his people to be completely dependent on him for everything.

This final stanza of Psalm 119 is a humble prayer for spiritual transformation. This is a cry for more understanding (v. 169), for experiencing more of God’s promises (v. 170), for more of God’s help in worship (vv. 171-172), for more of God’s power to live uprightly (vv. 173-175), and for more of the God who seeks us out and carries us back to himself (v. 176).

The more we cherish God’s Word, the more we see our propensity to stray. This is a good thing that keeps us humble, grateful, and craving more of God and his Word.

*Father in heaven, protect my heart from being hardened by pride. Keep me from being puffed up with knowledge, and save me from my wandering nature. Father, transform my life through surrendering it to the supremacy of your Word. Amen.*

# Journal

*What am I learning?*

*What am I thankful for?*

*What do I regret?*

*What do I need to pray for?*

*What do I need to do today?*

## What's Next?

Our hope for this 21-day journey is that you will fall in love with the Word of God and the God of the Word. That you will discover the joy in the discipline of Bible study and that this discipline will turn into a spiritual habit that marks you for the rest of your life.

Haddon Robinson offers us wise words: "The people involved in the public relations department of the church always make Bible study sound as though it is easy. It is not. It takes a great deal of effort to understand this text, and even more to understand how it applies to our lives. We like to think that when we study the Bible, it's like getting a shot of spiritual adrenaline. It gives a spiritual high. Studying the Bible is much more like taking vitamins. You gulp down a couple of vitamins in the morning, but no wave of energy flows through your body. You take the vitamins because they build you up. They protect you against the diseases in the environment. In the long pull, they make you strong."<sup>25</sup>

Let's start taking our daily vitamins of God's Word so that we can stay strong and vibrant in our walk with Jesus and our involvement in his unfolding vision.



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**"If we do not love the Bible, we certainly do not love the God who gave it to us; but if we do love God, then no other book in the entire world will be comparable in our minds."**

**- Charles Spurgeon**

As we take this 21-day journey through the longest chapter in the Bible, our hope is that you will fall in love with the Word of God and the God of the Word. That you will see it as a sacred text worthy of your honor. That you will entrust your life to its truth and promises. That you will bring your life in compliance to its standards and values. That the Holy Spirit will quicken your heart and mind and reveal to you the wonders of God's Word. In essence, our hope is that you will learn to cherish God's Word in your heart.

In *Cherish*, Gary Rohrmayer introduces you to the spiritual discipline of daily reading, memorizing, studying, and meditating on God's Word. Our hope is that this 21-day journey will teach you how to study the Bible for yourself and turn it into a 365-day spiritual habit.

## **WHO IS CONVERGE?**

Converge is a movement over 1,400 churches. We were born out of a mission to reach immigrants in the 1850s. These new believers cherished the Word of God and depended on God through prayer. From these humble beginnings, a multi-generational, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic group of churches was formed. We voluntarily work together in the starting and strengthening of churches together worldwide.

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