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***“A study on some selected verses from Psalm 119”***

# Psalm 119



**Pretoria North Baptist Church**

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# “From Dusty Depression to Delightful Determination!”

*Directing your ways according to God’s way*

## Psalm 119:25-32

### Introduction:

- One of the great themes of **Ps 119** is: **DEPENDENCE** on the Word of God – **TRUSTING** in and **RELYING** on the Word of God.
- In **ALL** seasons and situations of life the Psalmist **DIRECTS** himself to the Word of God.
- **Ps 119** was written most probably not in one session, but rather as a **NUMBER OF RESPONSES** or thoughts as life occurred and later put together into this *Acrostic Psalm* of **22 parts**, each part consisting of **8 verses** and each sentence in each section starting with a specific letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
- This is then a **COLLECTION OF THOUGHTS** in all seasons and situations of life about the Word of God, amongst other thoughts, that we can **DEPEND** on and **DIRECT** our lives according to it.
- In this section, **Ps 119:25-32**, we find that in the midst of **DEPRESSION** the Psalmist **DEPENDS** on the Word of God. He makes the Word of God the focus of his **DEVOTION** and he resolves with great **DETERMINATION** to then live according to the way of God.
- Our **THEME** for this study is then:

### **From Dusty Depression to Delightful Determination!**

*Directing your ways according to God’s way*

- Please read **Ps 119:25-32**...
- There is a *key word* in this section that appears **FIVE** times namely: **WAY** or **WAYS**...
- We find it in **verse 26-27; 29-30; 32**
- **TWO** of them refers to the **WAY** or **WAYS** of the Psalmist and **THREE** of them to the **WAY** of **GOD!**
- We need to note the **RESULT** of each:
  - The ways of the Psalmist, our ways, is connected to his **DEPRESSION** and **SORROW**... his **HOPELESSNESS**.
  - The way of God that is according to His Word, is connected to **LIFE, STRENGTH** and **VITALITY**.
- One Old Testament scholar explains that in **Ps 119** (cf. **verse 3**), God’s “*way*” or “*ways*” involve **WHO GOD IS** with regard to His character. God therefore desires His people to **REFLECT** His character in **HOW THEY LIVE** and that is why His way leads to life, strength, and vitality...!
- Because walking in God’s ways is about reflecting His character, we can understand that His ways or way is **NOT DIVERSE** but quite **SINGULAR**, meaning there is only **ONE STANDARD** for walking in His way – His **WORD**, in contrast to our ways that is very much diverse and according to our emotions and feelings or longings most of the time.
- The **WAY** then from **DUSTY DEPRESSION** to **DELIGHTFUL DETERMINATION** is by **DIRECTING** your **WAYS** according to God’s **WAY!**

## Study Points:

- We will divide this section into **TWO MAIN PARTS** namely: The Psalmist's **CRY** and his **COMMITMENT**.
- Let us **HEAR** and **JOIN** the **CRY** of the Psalmist and let us **SEE** and **FOLLOW** the **COMMITMENT** of the Psalmist.

## **1. The Psalmist's CRY! (v25-29)**

### **1.1 For REVIVAL...**

- **Verse 25a** describes the **DEPRESSION** the Psalmist is in.
- His soul clings to the dust of **DEATH**, of **MOURNING**, of **HUMILITY**...
- This is not just a passing emotion, but a deep state of his soul – **CLING**...
- It is in this state that he cries for **REVIVAL**...!
- In **Ps 119** this is one of the common cries that the Psalmist brings before God – cf. **Verse 37, 40, 88, 93, 107**...
- *“This shows us that revival comes from a sense of spiritual need and lowliness. True revival – in the Biblical and historical sense – is marked by a shamed awareness of sin and an urgency to confess and make things right...”*

### **1.2 For INSTRUCTION...**

- Telling of his ways refers to his **CONFESSION** of his corruptions and sins before God – he **DISCLOSED EVERYTHING** and kept nothing in hiding. He spoke openly of his afflictions to God in all honesty – he talked about his **FEARS**, his **CARES**, his **TROUBLES**, his **CONCERNS**...
- Confession is important, not because we bring God up to date with our sins – He knows **EVERYTHING** (cf. **Heb 4:13**), but we face up to our sins in confession...
- **Prov 28:13** = NB!!
- God answered him – forgave him; extended mercy... **Isa 1:18; 1 Joh 1:9**...
- Therefore, in place of his corrupted ways, his grateful cry now is to **KNOW** the statutes of God so as to walk in them.
- You can almost see his **DEPRESSION** leading him to **CONFESSION** that leads him to **DEVOTION**.

### **1.3 For UNDERSTANDING...**

- The Psalmist knows that for him to accurately walk in the way of God, he needs not just **KNOWLEDGE**, but also **UNDERSTANDING** of God's precepts – His prescribed will...
- *“He is concerned with a deep understanding, one that goes beyond a mere understanding of the words to a profound understanding of what they REVEAL about the nature of God, the gospel, and Gods ways.”*

- This is what he will then **MEDITATE** upon, talk to himself about, **MUSE** upon...
- Note the link between a deep understanding of the way of God and **MEDITATING** on it...!
- **Jos 1:8**
- We don't like to **MUSE** so much... we like to be **AMUSED** rather...

#### 1.4 For **STRENGTH**...

- Although he is now **DEVOTING** himself to the way of God, yet these **THOUGHTS** of his **PROBLEMS** and **CARES** and **CONCERNS** and even his **SINS** are weighing heavy on him and he finds that they still produces **SORROW** in him – so much so that it feels as if he is **MELTING AWAY** – he has no strength or resistance against these things...!
- Therefore he cries out for **STRENGTH** according to God's Word!
- *"This melting heaviness has not wrought its work, until it has bowed us before the throne of grace with the pleading cry of faith – Strengthen thou me!"*

#### 1.5 For **GRACE**...!

- Finally, it leads him to a place of **REPENTANCE** where his **LONGING** is that not only would he be removed from all lying and false ways, but that they would be **REMOVED** from him and have no more grip on his life, deceiving him by thinking that his sins is not the reason for his depression and sorrows.
- He wants it to be put **FAR** from him – a very good philosophy about sin namely: *Don't look how **CLOSE** you can live to it, but rather how **FAR** you can keep it away from you...!*
- He understands that for this he needs God's **GRACE**!!
- Graciously teach me your law - *"The full thought is, If we are to be kept from sin, it must be by the grace of God exercised through the teaching of his Word."*
- **Jam 4:5-6**

## 2. The Psalmist's **COMMITMENT!** (**v30-32**)

- We need to understand that we do not just simply **DROP** unto the right way per **CHANCE**: *we must **CHOOSE** it and **CONTINUE** to choose it, or we will **WANDER** from it...!*
- To walk in the way of God needs to be our **DAILY** and **CONSTANT CHOICE** that we **CLING** to and **CONTINUE** to walk in!

### 2.1 **CHOOSING** God's way...

- There comes a time in your life that you have to **START DECIDING** what way you are going to follow.

- It is because of so much **INDECISION** that we **WANDER** and **DRIFT** from the **TRUTH**.
- The Psalmist makes a very clear and conscious decision – he is choosing the **WAY** of **FAITHFULNESS**, or **TRUTH** and **TRUTHFULNESS**... **GOD's** way!
- Living a life that is **FAITHFUL** according to the truth – **NOT COMPROMISING** or giving in to the **FEAR** of man or just our own **COMFORT**...
- Choosing the way of faithfulness is to set **GOD's** rules before you and not your own...
- It is to conform in everything to **HIS** design, to His will.
- It is to **STOP** justifying my own convictions solely because it fits with my life or lifestyle or my theology and getting to the place where there is but **ONE** set of rules that matters – **GOD'S!**
- It is to come to the place where **ALL** of my convictions is based on the **WORD OF GOD!**
- This choosing is also founded on the belief and trust that God does not only know better, He knows **BEST!**

## 2.2 CLINGING to God's way...

- To **CLING** to God's testimonies is where you become inseparable from it, where in **ALL** circumstances and **ALL** situations, no matter what the opposition, you **STICK** to the testimonies of God and place your trust in **HIS** faithfulness!
- **Ps 19:7b**
- **STANDING** upon His Word and what He has testified about Himself and His ways with the prayer of your heart then focused on God, who is not a man that He should lie but that He will then vindicate Himself and His testimonies whenever other may try to put you to shame.
- This **CLINGING** is very closely connected with the **CHOOSING**, because if you never chose the way of faithfulness, what will you cling to...?
- Note the **PROGRESSION** that has taken place where once his soul **CLUNG** to the **DUST**, now he **CLINGS** to the **TESTIMONIES OF GOD** – like a sailor who when he is shipwrecked cling to a piece of plank for his life, so the Psalmist has come to hold on to the testimonies of God, staking his life on them!

## 2.3 CONTINUING in God's way...

- This reminds us of what we read in **Heb 12:1-2** and carries the idea of **ENERGETIC, ZEALOUS, ENDURANCE**.
- The commitment to **KEEP ON KEEPING ON**.
- This is ultimately the true test for whether someone has **REALLY** chosen God's way and is really clinging to His way – they will **ENDURE!**
- But note that the Psalmist is **NOT** trusting in **HIMSELF** for this endurance...

- He realizes that this will come as **GOD** enlarges his **HEART** – as God answers his **CRY** he trust and knows that this will bring a **GREATER UNDERSTANDING** of His **WAYS** and His **LOVE** that will **ENABLE** him to continue in His ways.

- We can **MEDITATE** upon God’s Word but ultimately it is **HE** who **CHANGES** and **ENLARGES** our heart, and this He does by using His **WORD**...!

- *“He must change the heart, unite the heart, encourage the heart, strengthen the heart, and enlarge the heart...”*

- *“He must have his heart enlarged; that is, made bigger and stronger and better and more steadfast. His*

*confidence is that God will do this through His word.”*

- The **REALITY** of our revival and the **SINCERITY** of our sorrow is shown by being **ZEALOUS** and **RUNNING** in the commandments of God...!

**Conclusion:**

*Here are then **FOUR POINTS of APPLICATION:***

***1) REPENT** of your ways...*

***2) RESOLVE** to follow God’s way in everything...*

***3) READ** the Bible...*

***4) RESPOND** to the Bible...*

# “Loving God’s Word!”

## Psalm 119:41-48

- In this study, we will look at the **SIXTH** section of **Ps 119**, to the sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet named **WAW!** (**VAU**)
- Please read **Ps 119:41-48**...
- One of the distinguishing marks of the first Baptists which they became known for in history is that Baptists were people of the **BOOK**... they were people who were known for **READING** and **KNOWING** and **LIVING** according to the **BIBLE**.
- Now this is not a distinguishing mark of Baptists only, but of any **TRUE CHRISTIAN**...! (CF. **1 Pet 2:1-2**)
- One of the first fruits of salvation is exactly this – a **LONGING**, a **DESIRE**, a **HUNGER** after the Word of God.
- I can only speak out of my own experience when God saved me how there came upon me this **ENJOYMENT** and **LONGING** with just **READING** the Bible and especially the Gospels.
- I did not even have a good translation of the Bible then and yet, those first few months of reading what I had to my disposal, God used tremendously to form a foundation for knowing Him.
- Oh, how **SWEET** and **PRECIOUS** were those times of fellowship with Him through His Word!!
- I believe that a distinguishing mark of a true Christian is a **LOVE** for God’s Word!
- The prophet Jeremiah – **Jer 15:16**
- The apostle Paul – **2 Tim 4:13**
- Our theme for studying this section will be: **LOVING God’s Word!**
- This is a theme that occurs frequently in this **Psalm** namely **verse 97; 113; 119; 127; 132; 159; 163; 165; 167**

### Teaching Points:

- We will answer **TWO QUESTIONS** from this section concerning **LOVING God’s Word** namely:

1) **WHY** should you love God’s Word? and

2) **HOW** do you know if you love God’s Word?

### 1. **WHY** should you love God’s Word? (**v41-46**)

#### 1.1 **SALVATION: It contains the PROMISES of God concerning His MERCY for you...**

- **2 Tim 3:14-15; 1 Pet 1:23; Jam 1:18**
- **MERCY** and **SALVATION** come from God to man **THROUGH** the Word of God.
- The Word of God doesn’t **MERELY POINT** us towards mercy and salvation as if it were a self-help book. It actually **BRINGS** mercy and salvation to us!
- **WHY?** Because it is the **WORDS** of God, the **WORDS** of Jesus...!
- **Joh 6:66-69**



- If you desire the mercy of God to come to you, then read His word, read **Rom 1-11** and receive His mercy and understand why Paul says in **Rom 12:1** that he beseech us by the **MERCIES OF GOD** to present ourselves as a living sacrifice before Him...!
- Note the **PERSONAL PETITION** that the Psalmist is making – that it must “*come to me*”.
- The KJV leaves us with the thought that he is meaning to me **ALSO** and not pass me by...
- ***You need to realize that if God’s mercies don’t come to, you will never come to it.***
- God’s mercies comes to us, according to His promises, according to His **NATURE** and Him **ACTING IN LINE WITH HIS NATURE** – He is **GRACIOUS** and **MERCIFUL** and deals with us **NOT** according to what we deserve, but according to His **FAITHFULNESS** and **STEADFAST LOVE**.
- How we **NEED** His **MERCIES** every single day! How we **NEED** to **LOVE** His Word through which His mercy comes to us!

## **1.2 ASSURANCE: *It ENABLES you to give a DEFENSE of the hope that is in you...***

- And this all in connection with **SALVATION** that comes by the **MERCIES OF GOD** and **ACCORDING** to His **PROMISES**.
- There are many areas from where **REPROACH** may come concerning your salvation, concerning the **SOURCE** and **FOUNDATION** and **REALITY** of your salvation which may lead to **DOUBT** and **UNCERTAINTY...**
- It is as God’s mercy **COME TO YOU** through and according to His Word that you are enabled to give bold answers concerning your salvation.
- The Psalmist is seeking the **ASSURANCE** of his salvation in the **MERCIES OF GOD** that comes on Him because of **GOD’S PROMISES**.
- Your **ASSURANCE** of salvation needs to come from God and He gives it to His children through His **WORD!**
- ***Doubts of your salvation may comes from YOURSELF...*** you look at your heart and your failures, how unworthy you are, your inconsistencies, how prone to wander you are – when God’s mercies has come to you, you don’t listen to what you have to say about yourself, you listen to what **GOD** says about you – you **TRUST IN HIS WORD!**
- ***Accusations about your salvation may come from the DEVIL...*** the accuser who would love to remind you of your guilt and unworthiness, your helplessness and difficulties and throw them in your face and then inject hard thoughts about God into your mind – that He is merciless and unreasonable... It is then that the we need to put on the **HELMET OF SALVATION** and remember that our salvation is a **GIFT** from God and not because we are worthy or deserving of it.
- ***“Free grace has saved me; an unspotted righteousness covers me; an Almighty arm sustains me; eternal glory awaits me!”***
- ***Also when there is onslaughts from others on my salvation...*** holding on to the promises of God concerning His mercies and trusting in His word will then enable you to give a defense of he hope within you.
- **1 Pet 3:14-16**

- The **ASSURANCE** of your **SALVATION** comes through **TRUSTING** in His Word: *His promises concerning His salvation that comes to you through His mercies...!*

### 1.3 HOPE: *It keeps your hope ALIVE!*

- As long as one of the promises of God remains in your thoughts and in your mouth, there is **HOPE!**
- If the Word of God were utterly removed, completely removed from you, there would be **NO HOPE!**
- Listen to the hope the prophet Jeremiah had in the midst of Israel not repenting and heading into exile. How the word of truth were not **UTTERLY** removed from him - **Lam 3:21-27**
- We need to stop **LISTENING** to ourselves and start **TALKING** to ourselves...!
- Also there is the sense in this verse of **NOT WITHHOLDING** from speaking out in the moments where we need to break the silence – that the word of truth would not utterly be removed from our mouth where we **DON'T** speak up for Christ and for the truth of the Gospel, but remain quiet about the hope within us.
- If we cannot say all we want of or for our Saviour, **LET US SAY WHAT WE CAN!** A **STAMMERING PROFESSION** is better than silence! A word spoken in **WEAKNESS** may be a word that God uses and **EMPOWERS** by His Almighty power to bring about His salvation according to His mercies that He promised.
- **Prov 15:23; 25:11**

### 1.4 FREEDOM: *It brings about true LIBERTY if you SEEK and OBEY His Word...*

- This is then the **EVIDENCE** of the mercy God: **SEEKING** and **OBEYING** the law and precepts of God.
- Walking in a “**wide place**” is referring to being **TRULY FREE!**
- Many people – even some Christians – have the perspective that the precepts and law of God will **HINDER** our **FREEDOM** and **JOY**, that it will **RESTRICT** us from enjoying the good things in this life...
- **Illustration:** When I first received my spectacles (glasses)... At first it is very irritating and it takes time and even effort to get used to it. I am also, as I understand, bound to these things for the rest of my life... **BUT** it brings the freedom to **SEE** clearly and accurately, to **ENJOY** a good vision!
- Christian, you need to understand and believe that the law of God and His precepts is **GOOD**, it is **PERFECT** and in it alone is **TRUE FREEDOM!**
- **Rom 12:2**
- **John 8:31-32, 36**
- As we sing: *“For it’s only in Your will that I am free...!”*
- It is only as you seek and obey the Word of God that you would experience God’s **PERFECT DESIGN** and **WILL** for life...! *His commandments are for our good...!*

## 1.5 BOLDNESS: *It ENABLES you to SPEAK before Kings about His sure testimonies...*

- **Ps 19:7b; Ps 119:98-99**

- **KNOWING** the testimonies of God and **HOLDING FAST** to it produces the **BOLDNESS** in us to speak in front of even the most influential people in this world, **NOT FEARING** that we would be put to shame because His testimonies are sure!

- The apostle Paul stands as such a great example of this – how he was completely bold to speak in front of Felix, then Festus, then Agrippa and Bernice. (cf. **Acts 24-26**)

- **1 Pet 1:24-25; Acts 4:29**

- Trust in the word of God will free you from the fear of man...!

## 2. HOW do you KNOW if you love God's Word? (**v46-48**)

### 2.1 You SPEAK about it!

- The mouth simply speaks out of the overflow of the heart (cf. **Luk 6:45**) – if there is truly a **LOVE** for God's Word in your heart, you will **SPEAK** in front of you family, friends, co-workers, boss...

- It is a very **SIMPLE** and **COMMON EXCERSICE** to see what is truly in charge of your heart – *just think about what you talk about the most...*

### 2.2 You DELIGHT in it!

- The **HEARING** of God's Word; the **READING** of it; **HOW** you speak about it – with **ENTHUSIASM** and **JOY** and **EAGERNESS**...

- There needs to be a measure of **EXITEMENT** and **ANTICIPATION** as you deal with the Word of God.

- In **DELIGHTING** in the Word of God there is also implied an **UNDERSTANDING** that that which you delight in takes **PRIORITY** over other things in your life...!

- You cannot **DELIGHT** in the Word of God and say you **LOVE** it and **NOT SPEND** a great amount of **TIME** in handling it, even choosing other things freely over it.

### 2.3 You DESIRE more of it!

- Lifting up your hands so as to get hold of it, asking for it and longing to have more of it!

- Just as you **PLAN** to **REACH NEW HEIGHTS** in your career or hobby, in the same way and even of greater importance is **REACHING** for greater knowledge and understanding of the Word of God by **PLANNING** for it...!

- Why do so many people have a **INSUFFICIENT** and **PARTIAL KNOWLEDGE** and **UNDERSTANDING** of the Bible? Because they **DIDN'T PLAN** how they will lift up their hands to His commandments; they didn't plan **NOT** to have a partial and insufficient knowledge and understanding of His Word...

- **Ps 19:10-11**

## 2.4 You MEDITATE on it!

- You **THINK** about that which you love...!

- **Ps 1:2**

- One commentator: *“Why then is the Bible read only – not meditated on? Because it is not loved...!”*

### Conclusion:

- To **LOVE** God’s Word isn’t primarily concerned with having a **WARM FEELING** about the Bible in your heart.
- It is about making a **CALCULATED DECISION** to **SET** or **PREPARE** your heart to love God’s Word!
- It is about **LEADING** and **INCLINING** your heart to God’s Word as you are petitioning Him to **INCLINE** your heart to His testimonies (cf. **Ps 119:36**)
- **Ezra 7:10**

# “COMFORT that comes IN and THROUGH FAITHFULNESS...!”

Psalm 119:49-56

## Introduction:

- In this study we come to the **SEVENTH** section of **P<sub>s</sub> 119**, to the seventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet named **Zayin!**
- Please read **P<sub>s</sub> 119:49-56**...

*Q: Where do you go to in times of **TROUBLE** or **PRESSURE** or **AFFLICTION** for **COMFORT**? In what do you **SEEK** your **COMFORT**?*

- Some seek it in **RELATIONSHIPS** – other **PEOPLE**; some seek it in being **COMFORTABLE** – **REST** and **RELAXATION**; others seek it in **THINGS** – buying new things; other may seek it in **FOOD** – comfort eating; some in **EXERCISE** – running or going to the gym; others in **HOBBIES** or **NEW CHALLENGES**...
- All these things may have their place, but these are not the primary things the Psalmist turns to for **COMFORT** in his time of **AFFLICTION** and **DISTRESS**, when he is **SCOFFED** at and **TROUBLED**...

*Q: What do we mean with the word **COMFORT**?*

- Other words that come to mind are words like **ENCOURAGEMENT** or **REFRESHMENT** or **SUPPORT** or **HELP**.
- In the New Testament the Holy Spirit is described as our **COMFORTER** and in that word, *parakaleō*, the meaning is “to call to one’s side” or “to come alongside...”
- We find this word twice in this section in the form of two statements: **Verse 50a** and **52b**.
- We find that the Psalmist finds **COMFORT** in the **WORD**...
- More specifically he finds comfort in the **KEEPING** of the **WORD**, namely:
  - **GOD** keeping His Word and then also,
  - Comfort that comes through the **PSALMIST** keeping God’s Word.
- I believe that this section teaches us that **COMFORT comes IN and THROUGH FAITHFULNESS...!**

## Study Points:

- We will then explore this **DOUBLE-LAYERED FAITHFULNESS**:

*1) We find comfort in the faithfulness of God;*

*2) We find comfort through our faithfulness to God.*

### **1. We find comfort in the FAITHFULNESS OF GOD. (v49-50)**

- **God cannot forget!** When the Psalmist calls upon God to remember it is not because he fears that God will forget, but rather he is asking God to remember in the sense of being faithful.

***We find COMFORT in the faithfulness of God as we CALL upon and PETITION God to be FAITHFUL to:***

## 1.1 His WORD.

- He is not asking for a new promise, but rather to have the old word that **GOD** has given fulfilled.
- He is reminding God of His own hand writing – that which He has revealed and said.
- This is based on the Psalmist believe that God cannot lie and that His Word is completely true – that is why he has the boldness to remind God of His Word...
- **Num 23:19; Tit 1:2**

## 1.2 His SERVANTS.

- The Psalmist hereby also states his position before God namely as His servant that He has begotten for Himself. The master is the one who buys the servants he wants and in this case the Psalmist is merely submitting himself unto his Master and pleading thta he will do as he has said unto His servant...
- Again the question is, is God able to **FORGET** One of His servants...?
- **Isa 40:27-31; 49:13-16a**
- Spurgeon said about this verse: *“If God’s word to us as His servants is so precious, what shall we say of His Word to us as SONS...!”*
- This is the reality – we have been bought with a price by which we now belong to God, but not only as servants but as sons and daughters...!
- **1 Cor 6:19-20; Joh 10:11; 1 Joh 3:1-2**

## 1.3 His SALVATION.

- The Pslamist is stating very clearly that God is the **SOURCE** of His hope – His Word to him is what brought about hope.
- This is the reality of our existence outside of Christ – we were not seeking for Him and we had no hope...
- We read this command in **Eph 2:11-12** – the **ONLY** command in the first three chapters...!
- God is the **SOURCE** of our salvation – our **HOPE** – which comes as a **RESULT** of His Word to us.
- **Col 1:3-6a**
- The Pslamist is pleading to God to be faithful to this **HOPE** that has been created in him through His Word to him – faithful to His salvation – and God **IS** faithful to the salvation He has brought...!
- **Phil 1:6; 1 Pet 1:13; 1 Cor 1:3-9; 1 Thess 5:23-24**

## 1.4 His PROMISES.

- If the Psalmist was David, he may have been referring to God's promise of his dynasty – that one of his descendants will always be on the throne – this gave him comfort, gave him the means to go on with his life.
- In our afflictions, times of great difficulty in our lives, it is the promises of God that brings us **COMFORT** and the reality that God will fulfil all His promises to us in Christ – **2 Cor 1:20**.
- Here are **TWO GREAT PROMISES** that comfort us in our afflictions: **1 Cor 10:13; Rom 8:28-29** (cf. **Eccle 3:11**)
- The promise of God to everyone of His children, to everyone whom He has called to Him is that He is busy working in them to make them more like Jesus – this promise is true **IN ALL OF YOUR AFFLICTIONS...!**
- None of your afflictions are meaningless...!

## 2. We find comfort through our FAITHFULNESS TO GOD. (v51-56)

*We find COMFORT through our faithfulness to God as we KEEP ON:*

### 2.1 OBEYING His Word.

- No matter what the circumstances, our responsibility is first and foremost to obey God's Word. It is in obeying His Word and trusting that His will is **GOOD** and **PERFECT** that we find **COMFORT...!**
- **1 Pet 2:21-23; 4:19**

### 2.2 REFLECTING on God's consistency.

- God doesn't change His rules and neither is He inconsistent in His judgements, in His dealings with people – they are consistent with His character and His Word that will never change.
- **Rom 2:6-11; 12:19**
- When we **FEEL** that God is not **FAIR**, we only need to reflect on His rules and judgement from of old, how he dealt with people in the past, and we we find comfort in in that He is **CONSISTENT...!**
- At times it may seem that people are getting away with their wicked behaviour, but then you only have to think upon the stories of the Old Testament, of those who entrusted themselves to God and how God intervened and dealt with the wicked. (i.e. **David and Saul; Haman and Mordegai; Elijah and the Baal prophets...**)

### 2.3 HATING all sinful practices.

- **Ps 15:4a; 16:4b**
- The temptation in times of affliction is to fall for temptation and be lured away into worthless sinning – to give in and to conform for the sake of just getting other people of your back...

- There is no **COMFORT** in **SIN**...!
- Remember what the Psalmist prayed earlier in **verse 36-37**

## 2.4 PRAISING God in our daily walk.

• This testifies of finding our **JOY** in God in the midst of all circumstances and being comforted along our pilgrimage through this world by the Word of God.

• **Ps 40:1-4; Eph 5:18-21**

• How true is it that **GREAT** comfort comes when we are simply faithful in lifting our hearts to God in songs of praise and worship while we are sojourning, living in this world...

• How great a comfort is it to sing about things that we **KNOW** are to be true and not only things that we feel are true – what great reviving it brings to our souls, even in the midst of great afflictions...!

## 2.5 DWELLING on WHO GOD IS!

• Remembering the Name of God is to remember who God is.

• Remembering this in the **NIGHT** testifies of someone whose mind is constantly focused on God and thinking about Him, thinking about the One whom we love...

• **Ps 9:10; Prov 18:10; Ps 16:8**

• Spurgeon: *“If we do not keep the name of God in our memory we shall not keep the law of God in our conduct... if we do not think of Him secretly, we will not obey Him openly...”*

• Your midnight thoughts will set the tone for your noontime actions.

• Ultimately our comfort comes because of **WHO GOD IS** – the more we understand and know Him, the greater our comfort will be in all areas of our lives.

• What we **SING** and what we **THINK** about, reveal what or whom we love...!

• It is important to note that this blessing of **COMFORT** came from the Psalmist being faithful as he trusted and relied on the faithfulness of God. (cf **verse 56**)

• **COMFORT** comes as we react faithfully on the faithfulness of God...!

• **Joh 13:17; Jam 4:17**

### Conclusion:

• Here is our ultimate and great comfort, that even when we fail in being faithful to God, He can never be unfaithful...!

• **2 Tim 2:11-13**



# “The GOODNESS of God is revealed in our AFFLICTIONS...!”

## Psalm 119:65-72

### Introduction:

- In this study, we come to the **NINTH** section of **Ps 119**, to the ninth letter of the Hebrew alphabet named **Teth!**
- Please read **Ps 119:65-72...**
- Jesus made some interesting statements while He was on earth.
- One of these statements that can actually be seen as a promise is in **Joh 16:33...**
- Jesus says and even promises that in this world we will have **TRIBULATION... TROUBLE, DISTRESS, AFFLICTION...**
- You don't have to spend a lot of time on this earth to know that this is absolutely true!
- The question is not **IF** you would experience afflictions and trouble, but rather **WHEN** will you experience it...
- In **Ps 119:67** and **71**, the Psalmist uses the verb “*afflicted*”.
- This word refers to any **DIFFICULT** or **PAINFUL CIRCUMSTANCE**.
- Afflictions come in all **SHAPES** and **SIZES**.
- Affliction can be as small as a cold or losing R10 or hitting your thumb with a hammer ... or as large as a major illness, the loss of a job, public persecution, rumors spread by your enemies, death of a family member, being a victim of crime, a worldwide pandemic... the list of all the afflictions that we have experienced, are experiencing and may even experience is almost endless...
- I wonder what kind of afflictions you have been experiencing this past season or even week...
- In the midst of these afflictions it may happen that, willingly or even unwillingly, certain thoughts would pop up in our minds, certain thoughts about God would start to come to the front namely: ***If God is GOOD, why is this happening...?*** Or even: ***IS God really GOOD...?***
- David, whom we believe may have written this Psalm, wasn't unknown with affliction...
- As a young boy he was looked upon as unimportant by his family; then there was this guy called Goliath who caused some trouble for David; Saul became jealous of David and he was out to kill David with all of his might; later David sinned with Bathsheba and the Lord afflicted him with the consequence of his sin and then his one son Absalom was great cause of affliction in his father's life – this just to name a few...
- David knew about affliction and in this section of **Ps 119**, he makes a very startling connection for us concerning our afflictions and God namely: ***The GOODNESS of God is revealed in our AFFLICTIONS...!***
- David is instructing us that ***“it's not what happens to us that matters, but rather it is how we respond that makes the difference.”***

### Study Points:

- I would like to present **THREE TRUTHS** to you in this study concerning ***The GOODNESS of God in our ALLICTIONS:***
  - 1) God is good in everything He does;**
  - 2) God, in His goodness, uses afflictions to discipline and instruct us;**
  - 3) It is as we respond Biblically to our afflictions that it turns out for our good and His glory.**

## 1. God is good in everything He does. (v68)

- **Ps 106:1; 107:1; Exo 33:18-19; Luk 18:19**

- We should meditate and remember this all the time. If you have ill thoughts about the goodness of God it will cast you into a dark and hopeless pit.

- But God **IS** good – it is **WHO HE IS!** He is a **GOOD** God...

- God is good in **EVERYTHING HE DOES.**

- **Ps 145:7-9; Jam 1:17**

- God cannot do any evil and therefore we need to hold on to the truth that this God who **IS** good, **DO** only good.

- The good He does is certainly not always as the world would define good though namely as to just make life easy and fun and comfortable.

- The good He does is concerned with what is **ULTIMATELY GOOD** for us and what will **BRING HIM GLORY.**

- And in the words of David in **Ps 16:2...**

- God is the **ULTIMATE GOOD** and He does what will bring about our knowing Him better.

## 2. God, in His goodness, uses afflictions to discipline and instruct us. (v67+71)

- “**Astray**” refers to going our own way and neglecting the way of God.

- We are **PRONE TO WANDER** and many times the Lord has to bring us back to the fold.

- We **FORGET OUR DUTY, FALL INTO SIN, DEPART FROM WHAT IS RIGHT, EMBRACE ERRONEOUS VIEWS, LIVE IN NEGLECT OF OUR SOULS, NEGLECT GOD!**

- **PROSPERITY** and **COMFORT** very often have the result that we don’t fulfil our **DUTY** to grow in holiness, we don’t **SEEK** the assurance of our salvation and we stop **TRUSTING** and relying on God.

- Then God sends **AFFLICTION** that is designed to **BRING US BACK TO HIM** – He **DISCIPLINES** us.

- **Prov 3:11-12**

- Afflictions are among the most precious means of grace!

- *They are entirely under the direction of God and God knows every heart and he best way to reach every heart.*

- C.S. Lewis: *“God whispers in our pleasure but He shouts in our pain.”*

- **GOD WILL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO BRING ABOUT THE ULTIMATE GOOD FOR US...!**

- He then also uses affliction to instruct us.

- The most common response we have to affliction is “**WHY?**”

- Our response should rather be: ***“What does God want me to learn from this...?”***
- We will do well to remain **GOD**-centred in our afflictions and not become **ME**-centred...
- Your troubles and afflictions are not primarily about you... Your trouble and afflictions is primarily about **GOD**.
- ***“They are sent to teach you things about God you couldn’t learn any other way!”***
- God in His goodness want us to **KNOW** Him and so He uses affliction as one of His teachers to teach us specific lessons about Him.
- Think of **JOB** for a moment and what he learned from his tremendous afflictions... **Job 42:1-5**
- Affliction helps us to see **GOD** for whom He truly is and help us see ourselves for who we truly are...
- Anything that leads a man to obey God is a blessing and a favour!
- **Jam 1:2-4** is true for **ALL** of our afflictions...
- We need however to understand that afflictions doesn’t **AUTOMATICALLY** bring about good in our lives.
- Sadly there are many who are worse from their afflictions because they **FAIL** to respond to it in a Biblical way, but rather choose to respond in a sinful, ungodly, untrusting, murmuring way.

### **3. It is as we respond Biblically to our afflictions, that it turns out for our good and His glory. (v65-66, 6-70, 72)**

- In this section we also see how the Psalmist responded to his afflictions and why he was able to give the testimony he just gave in **verse 67** and **71**.

#### **3.1 We must keep on Praising and Giving Thanks. (v65)**

- We need to always be thankful for the way that God deals with us, for He always deals with us according to His Word which is good.
- **1 Thess 5:18**
- David Guzik: ***“Think of all the ways God has dealt well with us. He loves us, He chose us, He called us, He drew us to Himself. He rescued us, He declared us righteous, He forgave us, He put His Spirit within us, He adopted us into His family. He makes us kings and priests and co-workers with Him, and He rewards all our work for Him.”***
- Even in our most difficult of afflictions, God is dealing well with His servant, according to His word...!
- ***Right now God is dealing well with you – thank and praise Him for that!***

### 3.2 We must keep on Praying for Wisdom. (v66)

- In the midst of our afflictions, we need to run to God for help in how to deal with our afflictions.
- **Jam 1:5**
- We need to seek out His “**knowledge**” – having an understanding of what is true, what is His will, what is our duty.
- We also need to seek His “**good judgement**” – the ability to discern and distinguish in the light of the knowledge that we have received what is right from wrong; how to properly respond practically in our afflictions.
- *“**Knowledge is the speculative perception of general truth. Judgment is the practical application of it to the heart and conduct.**”*
- Spiritual maturity is exactly this – **Heb 5:14**
- Afflictions, if handled Biblically, brings about **GREATER MATURITY** as God answers our prayer to teach us good judgement and knowledge.

### 3.3 We must keep on Obeying. (v69-70)

- The Psalmist names one specific affliction that he has endured namely that there were those who would put together, literally patch together, lies about him and spread these lies about him – he was slandered.
- **Have forged a lie against me** - Compare **Job 13:4**. The word rendered “**forged**,” means to patch together; and then it is applied to charges or accusations against anyone, perhaps from their being made up (as they often are) of shreds and patches - hints, small matters, things having no necessary connection in themselves, but brought together as if they pertained to the same transaction - words dropped here and there in conversation, which, being artfully woven together, seem to make out a plausible case against a man. Most slanders are formed and sustained in this way, for it is rare that an absolutely forged slander is uttered against a man, or that a charge is brought which cannot be made to have plausibility from such circumstances as those referred to above. Even the purest and circumspect cannot always avoid this, for there is something in every man’s life of which a malignant and cunning enemy may take advantage, and which he may weave into a story which some will believe, and which it may not be easy to confute. A malicious man may thus start a slander which may require years to correct, and which may even operate injuriously against a man all his life.
- **But I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart** - Notwithstanding their accusations, and their attempts to turn me away from thee, or to represent me as false and hypocritical. Whatever they may do; whatever reports they may start to my disadvantage, it is my fixed purpose to obey entirely and always thy law.
- He discerns that their hearts are unfeeling like fat – their **CONSCIENCE** is not pricked by these patched together stories and the lies that go with it... they are pretty much **SATTISFIED** with their conduct in this way...
- But his focus is very simple – **HE KEEPS ON OBEYING!**
- In our afflictions we should keep on doing what we know the revealed will of God to be.

- Our obedience towards God should never depend on what other people are or aren't doing.
- **Jam 4:17**
- This is one of the greatest tests in our affliction – **WILL WE KEEP ON BEING OBEDIENT...?**

### **3.4 We must keep on Treasuring His Word. (v72)**

- It is in affliction that we come to understand and discern the **TRUE VALUE** of the Word of God.
- It is then that we come to understand how **PRECIOUS** it is and how we need it more than anything in this life.
- The Psalmist would literally rather choose the Word of God and knowing it by implication, than being wealthy...
- **Ps 19:10**
- To treasure His word is to **READ** it, **STUDY** it, **LEARN** it, **THINK** about it, **SHARE** it.
- Without treasuring God's word in this way, we will not be able to respond correctly to our afflictions, because we would respond according to our **OWN** wisdom and opinions which will lead to sin and even more pain.

#### **Conclusion:**

- I close with three statements regarding times of afflictions that has been very helpful for me to remember:
  - 1) **God is perfect in His love and wants what is best for us;**
  - 2) **God is unlimited in His wisdom knows what is best for us;**
  - 3) **God is absolute in His sovereignty and is doing what is best for us.**
- May you experience the **GOODNESS** of God in your **AFFLICTIONS...**

# “The BATTLE for the TRUTH in times of AFFLICTION...!”

Psalm 119:73-80

## Introduction:

- In this study we come to the **TENTH** section of **Ps 119**, to the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet named **YODH!**
- This is the smallest Hebrew letter that Jesus referred to in **Matt 5:18**.
- Please read **Ps 119:73-80**...
- **THE** greatest battle that has been going on since the creation of the world is the **BATTLE FOR TRUTH...!**
- This was the **FIRST** battle that was ever to be thought in the garden of Eden – the serpent in tempting Eve put his truth claim against the truth claim of God... (cf. **Gen 2:17; 3:4**)
- Ever since, the devil as the father of all lies and the master deceiver has been going around twisting the truth and confusing people concerning the truth.
- When Jesus came He came in grace and **TRUTH**– **Joh 1:14, 17**
- Jesus came to testify to the **TRUTH** - **Joh 18:37**
- This battle for the truth is still going on **TODAY** and one of the places where it is at its fiercest is in the midst of **AFFLICTIONS...!**
- It is in the midst of **AFFLICTIONS** where you are truly tested on what you actually believe to be the **TRUTH**.
- In **Eph 6** we find the very well know armor of God that we need in this fight that we have against the devil with all his schemes. Look at **Eph 6:10-14**... The very first piece of armor has got to do with the **TRUTH!**
- The battleground where this battle for the truth is being fought is right up here – in your **MIND!**
- Listen to what Peter writes to the persecuted Christians in modern-day Turkey just after he reminds them of the greatness of their salvation – **1 Pet 1:13**
- In **2 Cor 10:5** Paul writes to the Corinthian church concerning **TRUE** spiritual warfare...
- **WHAT** and **HOW** we think then in times of **AFFLICTION** is absolutely crucial.

## Study Points:

- The previous section in **Ps 119** dealt with the truth that the **GOODNESS of God is revealed in our AFFLICTIONS**.
- **Ps 119:68 = NB!**
- In the next section the theme is still one of **AFFLICTION** and in this study, we will draw, from this section, **TEN FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS TO MEDITATE ON IN TIMES OF AFFLICTION:**

### **1. God MADE you. (v73a)**

- Your existence is not a mere accident or just by chance. God **DECIDED** to make you.
- He is the One who created you according to His very specific design – He fashioned you, **CRAFTED** you like a sculptor would design the very detail of a sculpture. (cf. **Ps 139:13-14**)

- From this reality flow certain further truths that we need to meditate on:
  1. We are **OBLIGATED** to God as our Maker for the very life that we have – we **OWE** Him our lives.
  2. We are to **RESPECT** Him as the One who is greater and smarter than we are.
  3. He is our **DESIGNER** and He knows what is **BEST** for us.
- As His creation we then have this **HOPE** that He would not abandon those that He has fashioned with such great detail.
- For those in Christ there is then this further truth to meditate on that not just are they part of God’s physical creation, but also are they part of His **NEW** creation! (cf. **Eph 2:10**)
- It is His **HANDS** that made and fashioned us.
- Someone once prayed: *“Oh look upon the wounds of thine hands and forget not the work of thine hands.”*
- God made you and saved you!

## 2. God has a **PLAN** and **PURPOSE** in everything He does. (v73b)

- You being made and fashioned and saved is according to the plan and purpose of God.
- In times of affliction this is to be our **PRAYER** – “give me understanding in your plan and purposes – in Your **WILL!**”
- In all of our circumstances this is what needs to be our concern: *To have a greater understanding of who **GOD** is and what His **PLAN** and **PURPOSE** is.* (cf. **Eph 1:11**)
- *“Our chief concern. Even in our afflictions, ought to be to understand more perfectly His divine will.”* (cf. **Col 1:9-10**)
- We need to meditate on the truth that He has a **PLAN** and **PURPOSE** and so **SEEK** to understand better what it is that He wills us to do, what He commands of us.

## 3. God wants to **ENCOURAGE** His people through your afflictions. (v74)

- In affliction you need to remember that your affliction is not just about **YOU**... (cf. **2 Cor 1:3-7**)
- How you **RESPOND** to your affliction will be an **EXAMPLE** to other believers.
- It is as you go through affliction and instead of reacting with disbelief or doubt or being bitter or angry and becoming **HOPELESS**, you react by hoping in God’s word, that this verse becomes a reality – those who fear God look at you and **REJOICE** over your faithful example of keeping your Hope in God and His Word!
- In affliction there needs to be the understanding of this truth and commitment that you want to be one of those faithful believers who will hang unto God and His Word for dear life and so being an **ENCOURAGEMENT** to other believers.
- When you are going through an affliction, yes it is meant to **GROW YOU**, but it is also meant to **GROW US!**

- How **YOU** respond to your afflictions matters for the kingdom of God! (cf. **Phil 1:12-14**)

#### 4. God is **RIGHT** in everything He does. (**v75a**)

- God is **RIGHTEOUS** – totally **PURE**; free from any and all imperfections. He **CANNOT** do wrong and He **CANNOT** make a mistake of any kind.
- **MEDITATE** on this truth that your afflictions are **NOT** a mistake but God is busy acting in righteousness towards you – He is doing what is **RIGHT**!
- God is not acting with a lack of **CARE** or lack of **LOVE** or lack of **CONCERN** or lack of **COMPASSION** or lack of **GOODNESS** or lack of **JUSTICE** towards you.
- He is righteous and right in **EVERYTHING** He does!
- The Psalmist is justifying God here in saying that although it may **SEEM** at the time that God is doing something wrong, **HE IS NOT**!
- Listen to this old hymn called: *“Whatever my God ordains is Right...”*

*“Whatever my God ordains is right: His holy will abides.  
I will be still whatever He does; and follow where He guides.  
He is my God: though dark my road. He holds me so that I shall not fall,  
wherefore to Him I leave it all.*

*Whatever my God ordains is right: He never will deceive me.  
He leads me by the proper path; I know He will not leave me.  
I take, content, what He hath sent. His hand can turn my griefs away,  
and so patiently I wait His day.*

*Whatever my God ordains is right, though now this cup, in drinking,  
may bitter seem to my faint heart, I take it all, unshrinking.  
My God is true; each morn anew. Sweet comfort yet shall fill my heart,  
and pain and sorrow shall depart.*

*Whatever my God ordains is right. Here shall my stand be taken.  
Though sorrow, need, or death be mine, yet am I not forsaken.  
My Father's care is round me there — sorrow, need, death;  
my Father's care is round me there!  
He holds me that I shall not fall, and so to Him I leave it all.”*

#### 5. God is **FAITHFUL** – always! (**v75b**)

- In the worst of my afflictions, I need to remember that God is not doing this out of **MALICE**, but because He is being **FAITHFUL** to me to bring about what is **ULTIMATELY GOOD** – **KNOWING HIM!**
- Remember **Ps 119:67 & 71...**
- This needs to be a **TRUTH** on which we need to stand and stake our lives on – God is **FAITHFUL** – **ALWAYS!** (cf. **2 Tim 2:11-13; 1 Cor 10:13**)
- Meditate on this that God in His **FAITHFULNESS** brings about affliction in your life – out of His **LOVE** for your soul and because He is seeking the **WELFARE** of your **SOUL...**!



- God is faithful in affliction and He is also faithful to **YOU** in **YOUR** affliction – He truly will **NEVER** leave you nor **FORSAKE** you.
- As a matter of fact – part of His **FAITHFULNESS** in afflictions is to **DRAW** you **CLOSER** to Him and make you so much more **DEPENDENT** upon Him...!

## 6. God is **STEADFAST** in His **LOVE** – that is His promise. (v76)

- **NEVER** doubt God's love for you! Not even the **WORST** of afflictions!
- Remember **Rom 5:6-8**
- Hold on to **Rom 8:37-39**
- Meditate on **Lam 3:21-23**
- Let this be your **COMFORT**, what encourage you, what carries you...
- There are two verses in Paul's letters to the Thessalonians that always leave me utterly breathless and speechless – **1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13**

## 7. God is **MERCIFUL** in giving you life and His Word. (v77)

- Meditate upon this truth that even your worst of afflictions is **WAY LESS THAN WHAT YOU DESERVE...!**
- Even in your **WORST AFFLICTION**, God is **BEING MERCIFUL** to you!
- There mere fact that you are still **ALIVE** today testifies of the mercy of God towards you.
- That is why in afflictions you need to plead for God's mercy that He will **NOT** bring the affliction to the level of what you deserve for then you will surely **DIE!**
- It is because of Him being **RICH IN MERCY** that you are able to know Him, that you have His Word and can delight in it. (cf. **Eph 2:4**)
- The Psalmist is putting forth the idea of pleading for further mercy from God only because of His mercy he can be a friend of God who delights in His Word.
- He knows that if God were His enemy, He would be **DEAD!**
- Remember what God said to Moses in **Exo 33:19**...

## 8. God **HUMBLES** the proud – don't dwell on them, dwell on God. (v78)

- **1 Pet 5:6** and **Jam 4:6**
- God is the One who will deal with those who are proud and go about with falsehood against other people – He will put them to **SHAME...!**
- **WHY?**
- Because these are two things that are a **ABOMINATION** to Him - **Prov 6:16-19**

- CH Spurgeon: *“Shame is for the proud, for it is a shameful thing to be proud. Shame is not for the holy, for there is nothing in holiness to be ashamed of.”*
- It is so easy to be consumed by proud people and falsehoods they may spread about you – **DO NOT DWELL ON THEM!**
- Listen to what the Psalmist says... *“as for me, I will meditate on your precepts...”*
- **DWELL ON GOD and HIS WORD!!**
- CH Spurgeon: *“He would study the law of God and not the law of retaliation. The proud are not worth a thought. The worst injury they can do us is to take us away from our devotions; let us baffle them by keeping all the closer to our God when they are most malicious in their onslaughts.”*

## 9. True COMPANIONS are those who fear God and loves His Word. (v79)

- In affliction, do not dwell on the proud, dwell on God and seek out those who **FEAR GOD** and have a love for His Word.
- True friendship and true, deep fellowship is founded upon these principles: ***a common love for God, love for His law, and love for His service.***
- This is also a prayer that we should pray namely that God will direct us towards friendships to those who **FEAR** Him and **LOVE** His Word – that He would provide these kind of friendships in our lives.
- These are the kind of companions that we need in afflictions – those who fear Him and can learn more of Him with us in our afflictions. (cf. **2 Tim 2:22; Prov 13:20**)

## 10. God desires you to have a HEART that is wholly devoted to Him. (v80)

- **1 Sam 16:7; 2 Cron 16:9; Prov 4:23; Jer 29:13**
- Pray that God will keep your heart blameless before Him and that you will not be deceived by your own heart in times of affliction.
- There is sometimes such a great desire to be **RIGHT** in our afflictions that we can so easily deceive ourselves and this should be our prayer to God – that **HE** would **KEEP OUR HEARTS BLAMELESS!**
- Pray what David prayed in **Ps 139:23-24** on a regular basis with all sincerity and honesty before God...!
- Echo the words of **Ps 19:12-14** regularly lest your heart is **NOT** blameless and you fall into shame...!

### Conclusion:

- May God help us to **MEDITATE** on these **FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS** in all of our afflictions...!

# “Being in LOVE with the WORD of God and the GOD of the Word...!”

## Psalm 119:97-104

### Introduction: (v97)

- In this study we come to the **THIRTEENTH** section of **Ps 119**, to the thirteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet named **MEM!**
- Please read **Ps 119:97-104**...
- David starts this next section with a great **DECLARATION** followed immediately with an **AUTHENTICATION** of what he just declared.
- **His declaration:** “*Oh, how I love Your law!*” (v97)
- **Please note the following observations:**
  - 1) He is declaring what is true of **HIM** – not what should be true of others. He is speaking for himself.
  - 2) He is declaring what is true of him **RIGHT NOW** – not what is **WAS** or **SHOULD BE**, but what it **IS!**
  - 3) He is declaring his **LOVE** – not an **EMOTIONAL, SENTIMENTAL ATTRACTION** but rather a **LASTING COMMITMENT** that he has made – To make the Word of God the foundation of his life.
  - 4) He is declaring his love for the Word of **GOD** and not just for the Word itself. His love for the Word is because he knows that it is ultimately the words of his **BELOVED**, of His **GOD** and **THAT** is the reason why he loves the Word, because of **WHOSE** Word it is...!
  - 5) He is declaring his love for the Word of God meaning that he has **COMMITTED** himself to make the Word of God the **FOUNDATION** of his life.
- He then immediately follows up this **DECLARATION** with an **AUTHENTICATION**.
- **Q:** *How does he KNOW this to be TRUE OF HIM? What is the PROOF that he does actually love the Word of God?*
- **The Authentication:** “*It is my meditation all the day.*”
- He **THINKS** about the Word all the day. He thinks about it **DEEPLY** and find himself **INFATUATED** with it; almost even **OBSESSED** with it.
- Charles Spurgeon: “*He meditated in God’s word because he loved it, and then loved it the more because he meditated in it.*”
- He maybe even found himself daydreaming about it and distracted from other things because he is so **LOVING** just being pre-occupied with it...
- Now, we have **ALL** loved something or someone in this manner somewhere or at some time in our lives.
- The **QUESTION** is if that is how you are **AT THIS PRESENT STAGE** loving the **WORD** of God and the **GOD** of the Word...?
- Before you get depressed and demotivated or feel condemned, please understand that David didn’t just wake up one day and found he loved the Word of God in this manner.
- One preacher said: “*This sort of love cannot happen by accident. It is a combination of DESIRE plus DILIGENCE. You don’t wake up one day loving the Bible. That is a CULTIVATED HABIT that is developed over time.*”

- You can't **MAKE** yourself love someone or something, but you **CAN CULTIVATE** your love towards someone or something.
- David can help us with that in this study by simply looking at the **REASONS** he gives of **WHY** he loves the **WORD** of God and the **GOD** of the Word so intensely; what he has **FOUND** the Word to be.

**Study Points:**

- We find **THREE REASONS** why he is so in **LOVE** with the **WORD** of **GOD**:

**1. He has found that it gives him SUPERIOR WISDOM. (v98-100)**

- The Word has made him **WISER**, gave him **MORE UNDERSTANDING** and enabled him to **UNDERSTAND MORE...**
- He specifically mentions **THREE GROUPS OF PEOPLE** over which God through His Word has given him **SUPERIOR WISDOM**:
  - a) His ENEMIES** – he found that he didn't have to be **INTIMIDATED** by his enemies and their clever talk, crafty schemes, and evil threats but that through the Word he has been made **WISER** than them. He had a better ability to apply the word of God because God made him wiser than those who were trying to make him look stupid; maybe even twisting his words and manipulating the facts to make him look bad.
  - b) His TEACHERS** – he found that he wasn't **SLAVISHLY DEPENDENT** upon his teachers to gain understanding in the Word of God, but that he was able to grow in his understanding even to the point where he was able to say that he know has **MORE** understanding than his teachers. This **DEFINITELY** doesn't mean that he is **DEVALUEING** the teachers in his life. What he is rather doing is **UPLIFTING** the Word of God as his **TRUE SOURCE** of growing in his understanding and expressing the almost staggering thought that his spiritual growth was not to be slavishly dependent on his teachers, but rather on **GOD** and **HIS WORD**!
  - c) His ELDERS** – the aged people; those who are more mature than him because of their **EXPERIENCE** that comes through **AGE**. He found that he was not to sit about **PASSIVELY WAITING** for them to help him understand more, but that he actually come to a place where he understand more than they even though they had more **EXPERIENCE** of this life than himself. Not only then is it **POSSIBLE**, but he actually came to that point that he had more understanding than them.

***Q: HOW did all this come about? Just out of itself...?***

- He **CULTIVATED** this wisdom and understanding by feeding his **DESIRE** for the Word of God and God Himself with **DILLIGENCE** in the following **THREE AREAS**:
  - a) The Word was “ever with me” (v98)**– it was always with him in the sense that he referenced God's Word in everything and he literally **WENT** to God's Word – he **READ** it! We will do **VERY** well do have God's word **WITH US** so that we can **TURN TO IT** throughout our day, wherever we are...! He may definitely also be referring to **MEMORIZING** the Word so that it is ever with him...
  - b) The Word was his “meditation” (v99)** – he **STUDIED** the word of God and that enabled him to have more understanding than even his teachers. This understanding didn't come **EASILY** but required **GREAT WORK** and **DISCIPLNE** for **MEDITATING** on the Word of God is **WORK**!

c) **He KEPT the Word of God (v100)** – he **OBEYED** what he came to understand and so he had more understanding about life than even those of greater age that experienced more than him.

- Many people are **NOT** growing spiritually as they should and then they tend to blame it on their **ENEMIES**, their **TEACHERS** or the **AGED** because they are **INTIMIDATED** by their enemies, **SLAVISHLY DEPENDENT** on their teachers and **PASSIVELY WAITING** for the aged...
- Dear friend know and understand that none of these groups should be able to **HINDER** or be **RESPONSIBLE** for your spiritual growth... **YOU ARE TO PRIMARILY TRUST GOD TO WORK THROUGH HIS WORD FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH!**
- It is **POSSIBLE** for you to come to **SUPERIOR WISDOM** through **READING, STUDYING** and **OBEYING** the Word of God!
- **THAT** is why David **LOVED** the Word of God so intensely...! This is what he **FOUND** to be **TRUE**, to be the **REALITY** in his life!

## **2. He has found that it brings about his SANCTIFICATION. (v101-102)**

- The Psalmist found that it is the **BIBLE** that keeps him of the wrong road and keeps him on the right road.
- Every day we are faced with numerable decisions to **OBEY** God **OR** to **DISOBEY** Him; to follow the path of joy, peace, fulfilment, and deeper knowledge of God **OR** to follow the path of yielding to temptation, compromise, bitterness, anger, hate, violence, lust, pride, greed, gluttony, sloth, etc.
- The Psalmist says “**he holds back his feet**” – he **RESTRAINS** himself; he goes against what his natural inclination would be **BECAUSE** he is directed **NOT** by his natural inclinations, but by the **WORD** of God.
- He makes a **CHOICE** not to go the evil way not just for the sake of **NOT** doing sin, but because he wants to do what is **RIGHT** – He restrains himself from sin so that he can **OBEY!!**
- **THIS** is the real understanding of **SANCTIFICATION** – it is not just to **STOP** sinning, but also to **START** doing what God requires.
- **Eph 4:22-24** talks about **PUTTING OFF** the old man and then **PUTTING ON** the new man.
- The Psalmist has found that it is the Bible that is pulling him in the direction of obedience – the Bible working in him and making sensitive his conscience to what is **PLEASING** to God and stirring up in him the **DESIRE** to obey and bringing about the **RESOLVE** to choose against sin and choose for obedience.
- If you are truly busy to **OBEY** what God is saying and doing the **GOOD WORKS** that He has called you to do, you won't have **TIME** to sin...!
- He further then reveals his personal submission to the Word of God and his **DELIBERATE CHOICE** not to turn of the path which he know to be right, not falling into the trap of taking the **EASIER ROAD**, but sticking to what he **KNOWS** to be right and what His Lord requires of him.
- You need to watch for those **FIRST SIGNS** of **TURNING ASIDE** – not keeping your quiet time; falling into an old sinful habit or mindset; falling into the habit of missing the gatherings of the saints;

relaxing in your training for godliness; having no desire for God's Word and holiness; being tempted to lose your anger, be impatient, repay evil with evil...

- It is at those moments when you need to make a **DELIBERATE CHOICE NOT** to turn aside!
- But listen to his **MOTIVATION** – “for **YOU** have taught me...”
- He has found that **GOD** is the One who **THROUGH HIS WORD** is His teacher – the One teaching him.
- That is why it brought about superior wisdom and sanctification in his life because the **ALL-WISE GOD** who Himself is **HOLY** is His teacher!
- God can teach the believer through His Word in a **DIRECT SENSE!** He is the **ULTIMATE TEACHER** from whom every one of us needs to desire to learn.
- The **WAY** we seek our instruction sometimes and from **WHERE** we seek our instruction sometimes bring the question to mind: **DO PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT GOD CAN ACTUALLY TEACH THEM FROM HIS WORD...?** Or have they just become **LAZY** and are they maybe misplacing their **TRUST** for their instructing and corresponding **SANCTIFICATION...?**
- This **DOES NOT MEAN** that everything one comes to through self-study is correct or from God, and it does not **ELIMINATE** the need for Bible teachers.
- Yet, we do need to remember passages like **Isa 30:20-21**
- It also does fulfil what Jesus later said in **John 16:13** and what John wrote in **1 John 1:20-21, 27**
- This is why the Psalmist **LOVE** the Word of God for he has found that **GOD HIMSELF** is teaching him through His Word and leading Him on the path that is according to His Word.

### **3. He has found that in it lies ultimate SATISFACTION. (v103)**

- The **ONLY** way that you can find out for yourselves how good something is, is to experience it for yourself.
- The Psalmist is speaking here of what he has “**tasted**”.
- He has tasted the Word of God and it left him in uttermost astonishment of how **GOOD** it tasted...!
- He compares it to what he knows to be the sweetest thing and then go on to say that the Word is even sweeter **BEYOND** this...!
- **Jer 15:16; Ps 34:8**
- The Psalmist has found that to him “*The study and obedience of thy words yields him more satisfaction and delight than any worldly men find in their sensual pleasures.*”
- Notice the use of the plural “**words**” – it leaves us with the understanding that he here means all the words that makes up the Word of God – he has been tasting **EVERYONE** and eating of all the **VARIETY** and savouring **EVERY PART** of it.
- “*While God's truth is food for our souls, it is not a "buffet" from which we select only the things we like.*”

- Oh how we know and remember all the good restaurants and all the places that fed us with good steaks, but how we struggle to remember what was the last **SWEET WORD** of our God to us... Can it be that we are **NOT** feasting on His Word and therefore maybe have no idea what the Psalmist is talking about...?
- How **SWEET** is His **PROMISES** in times of **AFFLICTION** and **TRAGEDY**...
- How **SWEET** is His **CORRECTIONS** that brings us **BACK** to Him...
- How **SWEET** is the **PSALMS** in times of our **EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY**...
- How **SWEET** is His **WISDOM** writings in times of **DECISION MAKING**...
- **HOW SWEET IS HIS WORD IN ALL SEASONS OF OUR LIVES...!**

**Conclusion:**

- David then concludes this section with a final **REALITY CHECK**. (**v104**)
- He again states the reality he found in God's Word – it gives him understanding – seeing the world as he should...
- And then he closes with this last sentence – **“therefore I hate every false way.”**
- Taking the opening sentence of this section and the last sentence together, leaves us with the final **REALITY CHECK**: *If you truly **LOVE** His Word, you will **HATE** every false way...!*
- You cannot claim to **LOVE GOD** and His **WORD** and yet **LOVE** false ways...!
- May it be that we would be able to say with the Psalmist: **“Oh how I love your law!”**

***“In order to enjoy the Word, we ought to continue to read it,  
and the way to obtain a spirit of prayer, is to continue in praying;  
for the less we read the Word of God, the less we desire to read it,  
and the less we pray, the less we desire to pray.”***

**George Mueller**

# “LIVING in the CLEAR DIRECTION God provides through His WORD...!”

## Psalm 119:105-112

### Introduction:

- In this study we come to the **FOURTEENTH** section of **Ps 119**, to the fourteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet named **NUN!**
- Please read **Ps 119:105-112...**
- The previous section started with the great declaration: *“Oh, how I love your law!”* followed up with a quick authentication namely: *“It is my meditation all the day.”*
- We saw three reasons why we should love the Word of God and actually the God of the Word:
  - 1) He gives us *Superior Wisdom* through the reading, studying, and obeying of His Word;
  - 2) He brings about our *Sanctification* through His Word;
  - 3) He brings about our complete *Satisfaction* through His Word.
- In this study I want to start with a few **QUESTIONS** aimed at identifying certain people in our congregation – just a **SIMPLE** and **FUN** exercise but with a **VERY** specific application...
- Who in our congregation **LOVES**:
  - 1) Mountain Biking?
  - 2) Running, Gyming, Exercising, doing Warrior Races?
  - 3) Doing IT programming?
  - 4) Going to the Bushveld?
  - 5) Making amazing food for other people?
  - 6) Watching Cricket or basically any kind of sport?
  - 7) Hot & spicy food?
- How do you **KNOW** these people love these things...?
- Simple principle: ***IF YOU LOVE IT, YOU’LL LIVE IT...!***
- That brings us to a much more serious question: ***Whom amongst us LOVE the BIBLE...?***
- Would you be one of the people that would come to my mind and would I be one of the people that would come to your mind if we ask this question...?
- After the section of declaring his love for God’s Word, we find a section that is devoted to the following theme which to a great extent proves his declaration in **verse 97** namely: ***LIVING in the CLEAR DIRECTION that God gives us through His Word.***
- **Verse 105** is probably one of the most well-known verses of **Ps 119...**
- It is a verse talking about the **CLARITY** of Scripture. An attribute of the Bible alongside other attributes like the **INERRANCY** of Scripture; the **SUFFICIENCY** of Scripture, the **NECESSITY** of Scripture and the **AUTHORITY** of Scripture which is of **GREAT** importance to us.
- The pictures of a **LAMP** and a **LIGHT** in **Ps 119:105** show us that the Word of God is light and brings light. It doesn’t make things darker or harder to understand. It is a light book and not a dark book...!
- It brings **CLARITY** about what is the will of God; what does God require of us; what is the purpose of life; how are we saved; what does it mean to be a Christian; how are we to grow in holiness.



- The Bible is **CLEAR** enough to teach the simplest of men what the **REVEALED WILL** of God is.
- Wayne Grudem defines the clarity of Scripture in the following way: *“The clarity of Scripture means that the Bible is written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by all who will read it seeking God’s help and being willing to follow it.”*
- This section of **Ps 119** is concerned at looking at *“how the Word of God gives **DIRECTION** in every **AREA**, in every **ASPECT**, in every **CIRCUMSTANCE**, in every **CONDITION** of life.”*

### Teaching Points:

- There are **FOUR CHARACTERISTICS** necessary for us to **EMBRACE**, to **ENHANCE**, to **EXEMPLIFY** in order for us to be *LIVING in the **CLEAR DIRECTION** that God gives us through His Word:*

#### **1. We need moment-by-moment DEPENDENCE on the Word of God. (v105; 107)**

- The word being a **LAMP** to our feet carries the idea of the Bible being able to instruct us in the **NEXT STEP** we should take.
- Whether it is to know how to be **OBEDIENT** in a certain situation or trusting God for His wisdom in a **DECISION** or relying on the God for **DELIVERANCE** from a **PRESENT TEMPTATION**...
- The **REALITY** is that if we would but **DEPEND** on God and His Word, we would have enough **LIGHT** to know where to safely place our next step... how to get through each day.
- And that is all we need to know, is it not? (cf. **Matt 6:33-34**)
- The Word being a **LIGHT** for our path speaks about the **DIRECTION** of our lives. The Bible is able to keep on pointing us in the right direction – what that **PATH** is that we should follow; the overall direction of our lives.
- *“Christianity, following Jesus, is not about living a life of perfection but rather of walking in the right direction.”*
- There are other verses in **Proverbs** that comes to mind: **Prov 3:5-7**
- Not only do we need to be dependent on God and His Word for our next step in the right direction, but we are also to be dependent upon God to **SUSTAIN** our lives and even **REVIVE** us according to His Word.
- In many an affliction it feels like driving in dense **FOG**... you just don’t know when you will get out of it **OR** how the road ahead looks like and you can easily become **DEPRESSED, DESPONDENT, HOPELESS**...
- In our **WORST AFFLICTIONS**, we need to be dependent on **GOD** to *Revive us, Renew us, Restore us* according to and **THROUGH** His Word...!
- Remember **Ps 119:25**...
- What contributes to bringing about our **Revival** and **Renewal** through the Word is to remember what the Bible teaches us about **HOW** God **USES** affliction in our lives...

- One preacher: *“The faithful servants of God may be ‘afflicted’; they may be ‘very much’ and grievously afflicted: but let them consider, that, by afflictions, their corruptions are purged away, their faith is tried, their patience is perfected, their brethren are edified, and their Master is glorified.”*

## 2. We need complete DETERMINATION to obey His Word. (v106; 109-110)

- Knowing that the Word of God will direct Him moment-by-moment, the Psalmist makes it his **DELIBERATE PURPOSE** to conform his life to the Word of God, to His revealed will, to take the next step in obedience as he keeps on walking in the right direction.
- The Psalmist’s obedience to the Word of God is not by **ACCIDENT** and neither should ours be...!
- Some of us might cringe at what the Psalmist is saying here (cf. **v106**) – shouldn’t our ‘Yes’ be Yes and our ‘No’ be No...? (cf. **Matt 5:33-37**)
- It should be, yes, but that doesn’t mean that there is now place for **VOWS** and **OATHS** when it comes to our Christianity... think for example of **WEDDING VOWS**...
- It would be wrong to vow something that is **UNBIBLICAL** and **CLEARLY** against the Word of God and it would be wrong to vow something which we knew we would **NEVER** be able to do...
- We also shouldn’t take **OATHS** or **VOWS** because people are not trusting our **CREDIBILITY**... not trusting our word and we want to add more weight to our word...
- But the Psalmist teach us here something about being completely **DETERMINED** to obey the Word of God.
- In this context, the Psalmist is simply *“announcing a special RESOLVE to God to keep His Word.”*
- He is making a clear-cut and public **COMMITMENT** to, as the grace of God enables him, to **KEEP** God’s **RIGHTEOUS RULES**...!
- We live in a culture that is **DEAD SCARED** of making **RESOLUTIONS**... **COMMITMENTS**... **VOWS**..., because we are not **DETERMINED** to do what we have **RESOLVED**...!
- **Verse 109** – even in the face of **DANGER**, where our lives, or our comfort or our job or even our relationships are at stake – holding your life in your hand speaks of your life hanging in the balance – the Psalmist is saying that he is **DETERMINED** not to **FORGET** God’s law, fail in keeping it, even if it means he should **SUFFER** for it...!
- **Verse 110** – even if he **KNOWS** his enemies has set a trap for him and if he knows **DOES** what the word of God requires of him, he would be ensnared by them – he doesn’t **STRAY**, go aside, try and go around what he knows God requires of him – he still **OBEYS**...!
- Know and understand this – **DETERMINING** to obey God’s Word, no matter what, **WILL COST YOU**...!
- If you have not **RESOLVED** to obey God no matter what, guess what – you will **COMPROMISE** when it gets to obeying Him in difficult situations... you will easily opt for the **EASY WAY OUT**!

### 3. We need a great DELIGHT in the Word of God. (v108; 111)

- That in which you have great delight is no burden to do... in fact, it is your JOY to do it!
- It is easy to tell everyone how AMAZING and GREAT the things are in which you find your DELIGHT!
- That is exactly what the Psalmist is saying in **verse 108**...!
- The word “free-will” here means: *“It conveys the idea that there is no constraint or compulsion; that the offering is a prompting of the heart.”*
- Free-will offerings in the Old Testament was exactly that – it was an offering brought to God not because the law required it, but because the one offering it wanted to express his PRAISE and THANKFULNESS and JOY towards God...!
- The Psalmist here does it most probably in the form of PRAISE from his LIPS – cf. **Heb 13:15**
- He brings this PRAISE as a FREE-WILL offering, but there is something he is bargaining for... there is actually something that he wants God to give him...
- He wants God to FURTHER TEACH HIM HIS RULES...!
- His DELIGHT is in the WORD of God so as to KNOW GOD more...!
- He was TRUSTING GOD HIMSELF to teach him...!
- His WORD is CLEAR ENOUGH that by reading it and trusting GOD to bring understanding THROUGH HIS SPIRIT, you can come to understand the truth...!

#### Q: DO YOU STILL BELIEVE THAT...?

- Just listen again to these verses from the OLD and NEW Testament: **Jer 31:34; Joh 6:45; 1 Cor 2:10; 1 John 2:27**
- An then we see this in **verse 111**
- Here is the AMAZING HERITAGE, inheritance, that you as a believer in Christ have – God REVEALING Himself TO YOU, PERSONALLY, through HIS WORD...!
- The clarity that the Word has brought to the Psalmist has helped him to see what is of TRUE value, what is the HERITAGE that brings TRUE JOY... NOT the things of this earth in the form of possessions or indulging ourselves in its pleasures or seeking out positions of honour... but of KNOWING GOD!
- **Jer 9:23-24; Phil 3:7-8; Joh 17:3**
- This WORLD WILL FAIL but the WORD OF GOD ENDURES FOREVER...!
- **Ps 16:5-6**
- This is the greatest HERITAGE you can receive and it is also the greatest HERITAGE you can leave for others...!
- *“Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage. To these he was heir; he had inherited them from his fathers, and he was determined to leave them to his family for ever. If a man can leave nothing to his child but a Bible, in that he bequeaths him the greatest treasure in the universe.”*

#### 4. We need an ultimate DESIRE to obey God's Word forever. (v112)

- *"The Psalmist had just been rejoicing in his privileges. He now binds himself to his obligations and that not for a day, but even to the end. Observe where he begins his work - not with the eye, the ear, the tongue, but with the heart, "for out of the heart are the issues of life."*
- *"Incline"* is here again a word of purposeful CHOOSING, of RESOLVING to STRETCH OUT or TO EXTEND his heart, his AFFECTIONS towards obeying God's Word.
- Ultimately we know that we cannot change our affections – GOD does that and earlier in this Psalm it has been prayed – **Ps 119:36**
- This is the ACTIVE RELIGION that we are to PURSUE because God has enabled us through Christ to do so...!
- **Phil 2:12-13; Joh 5:15 & Phil 4:13**
- *"The Psalmist would never forsake God's word; never stop reading, learning, meditating, and especially obeying it."* – NEITHER SHOULD WE...!

#### Conclusion:

- Are THESE characteristics that you have EMBRACED, are ENHANCING and EXEMPLIFYING?
- What will you RESOLVE to do concerning YOUR READING, STUDYING and OBEYING of God's Word so as to LIVE in the CLEAR DIRECTION God provides through His Word?
- Jonathan Edwards in one of his resolutions that he made said: *"28. Resolved, to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same."*
- May it be so with you and me!

# “SEEKING the LORD...!”

## Psalm 119:145-152

### Introduction:

- In this study we come to the **NINETEENTH** section of **Ps 119**, to the nineteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet named **QOPH**, the equivalent of our letter “**k**”
- Please read **Ps 119:145-152...**
- *Q: Have you ever **REALLY** sought something with **GREAT URGENCY**?*
- I like the *Chicken Likin* advertisements – “*When the cravings got you, it got you...*”
- **The principle:** Whenever you are **REALLY** seeking something with **GREAT URGENCY**, you are willing to do whatever is necessary, whatever it takes to get or achieve it. Where there is a will there is a way. You will make a plan. You will put certain things on hold. You will even sacrifice other things...
- To **SEEK THE LORD** is a very common command and theme in the Bible – something that God has called Israel to many times in the Old Testament and something that many of the people in the Bible has resolved to do...
- For example **Ps 27:4, 8**
- We find that whenever God gives a command to seek Him, it is to be **WHOLEHEARTEDLY** - **2 Chron 16:9; Jer 29:13**
- When Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees in **Matt 15:8-9**, He quoted **Isa 29:13** concerning their “*seeking*” of the Lord...
- In the New Testament we are also commanded to seek the Lord – **Matt 6:33; 7:7-8; Heb 11:6...**
- The **QUESTION** that I want to start with in this study is then simply this:  
**Are you TRULY SEEKING the Lord...? Is there an URGENCY in your PURSUIT of God...?**
- In this section of **Ps 119** we find the Psalmist **SEEKING the LORD!**

### Study Points:

- We will look at **THREE ELEMENTS** of the Psalmist’ seeking the Lord in this section:

#### **1. The Occasion for his Seeking. (v150)**

- He is being “**persecuted**” - **sought after, hunted, put to flight, chased** with the intent to bring him harm, to do him evil, to hurt him.
- Someone is **SEEKING HIM**, maybe even his life and they are coming **CLOSER!**
- The **CHARACTER** of those who draw near to him with evil purpose is that of those who have no **THOUGHT** and **INTENTION** of keeping the law of God – it is a **LAWLESS PEOPLE** and that **HEIGHTENS HIS DISTRESS!**
- *What does he do?*
- He **SEEKS THE LORD!!**
- As was his **CUSTOM** and **HABIT...** **Ps 119:2, 10, 58**
- Note these two additional principles:

a) To draw near to sin, to evil, to persecuting others is to draw away from God... *You cannot live close to sin and live close to God...!*

b) God uses what others means for evil and turn it for our good! (cf. **Gen 50:20**)

• **Ps 119:65, 71, 75**

• The **GOOD** that has come from this occasion is that the Psalmist resolved to **WHOLEHEARTEDLY** seek the **LORD** and find his **HOPE** and **CONFIDENCE** in **HIM**, who and what **HE** is...!

## 2. His Wholehearted Seeking. (v145-148)

### 2.1) The INTENSITY of his seeking... (v145a, 146a, 147a)

• It is a wholehearted **CRY**, a **CALL** for salvation, a **CRY** for help – this was much more than just a formal prayer to get it done and over with!

• He was **EARNEST**, **SINCERE** and **FERVENT** in his crying and calling upon God.

• His **WHOLE SOUL** and **BEING** was **ENGAGED** in his seeking God because he realized his complete **DEPENDENCE** on God and that God alone was his hope.

• Being **WHOLEHEARTED** in his seeking of the Lord also speaks of his complete **FOCUS** in his seeking, in his praying – he wasn't **DISTRACTED** but all his faculties were engaged and focused on seeking the Lord.

• Note also that he was **EXPECTING** God to hear his crying and calling upon Him – he was waiting for God to **ANSWER!**

• Some people pray and that is enough... they do not concern themselves with whether their prayers are heard or not... they may even get up and walk away and forget what they were asking of God...

• This was **NOT** so with the Psalmist – he cried to God and longed for His answer!

• He expected God to **ANSWER** him, to **SAVE** and to **HELP** him – this was an **EARNEST** and **FAITH FILLED** seeking of the Lord!

• Charles Spurgeon: *“There may be no beauty of phrasing about such prayers, no length of expression, no depth of doctrine, nor accuracy of wording; but if the whole heart be in them, they will find their way to the heart of God.”*

• Jesus Himself is our example in this kind of intensive prayer – **Heb 5:7**

*Q: Are you seeking the Lord with this kind of INTENSITY, EARNESTNESS, SINCERITY, FERVENCY...?*

### 2.2) The MANNER of his seeking... (v147-148)

• Let us examine and take note of **WHEN** and **HOW** he sought the Lord.

• **WHEN:** He got up **EARLY IN THE MORNING**, before dawn, and before anything else was on his agenda he sought the Lord in crying and calling upon Him! (cf. **Ps 5:3**)

• In **Mark 1:35** we find Jesus rising very early and going out while it was still dark to pray.

- This is not a **LEGALISTIC PRACTISE** that we want to enforce but one we should take note of and the reality is that when you are truly seeking something, and in this case the **LORD**, it will have **PRIORITY** and I think more than anything that is what the Psalmist is stressing – **HIS FIRST PRIORITY EVERYDAY WAS TO CRY AND CALL UPON THE LORD!**

- But we see that even this was not enough for him... he even awoke **THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT** with **EAGER LONGING** to cry out and call upon the Lord! (**v148**)

- This is the thought that is brought forth here by the Psalmist – he is so **LONGING** for the Lord, so **SEEKING** for Him that he even arises **BEFORE** his normal time of devotion to **SEEK THE LORD...!**

- This testifies of **COMPLETE DEPENDENCE** on the Lord and of an **INTENSE** and **DEEP LOVE** for the Lord – that is what is the **DRIVING FORCE** of **ALL** wholehearted seeking of the Lord!

- **Ps 63:1, 5-6**

- **HOW:** He cried for help in accordance with the hope that he finds in the words of God.

- It was the words of God that were on the **FOREFRONT** of his mind as he cried out to God for His help – they gave him **HOPE** and **CONFIDENCE** that God would hear him – **ALONE** with God in the morning he found consolation by **TRUSTING** and **HOPING** in the **WORDS OF GOD...!**

- **Ps 119:48** – he **MEDITATED** on the promises of God and it is that which most definitely gave **BIRTH** to and **INFUSED** his prayers.

- George Mueller said that: *“The missing link between Bible reading and prayer is MEDITATION...”*

- John Gill comments on this verse: *“He rose so early, in order to give himself up to meditation on the word of God... that he might be better furnished for the work of prayer; for the more familiar the word of God is to us, the better able we are to speak to God in his own language.”*

**Q:** Are your intense seeking of the Lord **MANIFESTED** in making it a priority in your **DAILY LIFE**? Are there this great **LONGING** for communion with God and a **TRUE DEPENDENCE** on Him for **HELP** and to **SAVE** you in times of trouble?

### 2.3) The **PURPOSE** of his seeking... (**v145b, 146b**)

- His purpose and desire was to keep the Lord’s statutes – to be **OBEDIENT** to His commands.

- He longed for the salvation of his Lord so that he may observe His testimonies – be **OBEDIENT** to what His Lord is testifying to as being true.

- David Guzik: *“The Psalmist pleaded with God, crying out before Him. In his pleading, he wanted to keep the word of God. This was not merely a cry for help or deliverance or forgiveness; this was a cry for obedience.”*

- The purpose for the Psalmist’ seeking God in this manner was more than just deliverance, but rather there was a **GREATER LONGING** for **TRUE INTIMACY** with God through the appointed **MEANS OF GRACE...**

- His enemies drawing near to him was an **EXCUSE** for him to seek his Lord with greater intensity!

- *Oh how gracious is God in sending persecutors over our paths that we might be driven closer to Him and so find greater joy in our fellowship with Him!*

*Q: Is this your purpose and longing in crying out and calling on God – that you may have greater **COMMUNION, FELLOWSHIP, INTIMACY** with Him...? That you may be enabled to walk in greater **OBEDIENCE** to His Word?*

### 3. His Hope and Confidence in his Seeking. (v149, 151-152)

- His hope and confidence in seeking the Lord was not in who he is or what he has done... the **FOUNDATIONS** on which he was standing as He was seeking the Lord was the **CHARACTER** of His Lord – who and what **HE** is!
- **FIVE ATTRIBUTES** of God gave Him Hope and Confidence in his seeking:

#### 3.1) The **LOVE** of God... (v149a)

- God’s love is an **UNCONDITIONAL, INTENSE, UNENDING, VOLITIONAL, SACRIFICIAL** and **MANIFESTED** love...!
- He has proven once and for all that He **LOVES** us and **THAT** is our grounds for crying out and calling upon Him!
- The Psalmist was not putting **ANY** trust in his resolutions to obey God or who or what he is for God to hear him – he was hoping and was confident that God would hear Him because of, “**according to**” His **STEADFAST LOVE**...!

#### 3.2) The **JUSTICE** of God... (v149b)

- Here we can mention and note **TWO REASONS** why the Psalmist was hoping and having confidence in the **JUSTICE** of God and why we can also have this same hope and confidence...
- It was **NOT** because he was perfect and thought that God **OWED** to answer him because of his own righteousness, but rather...
  - 1) Although he wasn’t perfect and knew he was a sinner, he also knew that his persecutors didn’t even **CARE** about God and His law! Therefore, he hopes in God’s justice to deal according to His justice with them...
  - 2) Based on the work of **JESUS CHRIST**, we can plead with God according to His justice that has been satisfied in the **ATONING WORK** of Jesus, to **REVIVE** us, to **REFRESH** and **RESTORE** to us the true life that we have in Him...  
David Guzik: *“Though revival from God is never deserved, it can still be asked for according to the justice of God. It can be prayed for based on the justice-satisfying work of Jesus Christ. It can also be prayed for with an eye to honouring the justice of God on earth, especially when wickedness abounds.”*

#### 3.3) The **IMMANENCE** of God... (v151a)

- *When trouble is close, God is closer!*



- **Isa 43:1-2, 5a; Heb 13:5; Ps 145:18**

- He is the **COVENENTAL** God – **YAHWEH!**

- His is **NEAR** because He is our **GOD** and our **FATHER**, we are **UNITED** with His Son and His Spirit are dwelling in us...!

- If God then is for us, who can be against us! (cf. **Rom 8:31**)

- By His Spirit in us we can call to Him as our **ABBA FATHER!** (cf. **Rom 8:15**)

- It doesn't matter how close our enemies may come, **GOD IS ALWAYS CLOSER!!**

- He is only a prayer away!

- It is also through His Word that He draws near to us as we draw near to Him. The Psalmist was sure of the nearness of God because of His time spent in His Word!

### **3.4) The TRUTHFULNESS of God... (v151b)**

- All the commandments, promises, and words of God are **TRUE** and can be trusted!

- **Num 23:19; Tit 1:1-2**

- In Jesus, every one of His promises are **YES** and **AMEN!** (cf. **2 Cor 1:20**)

- What God has said, He will surely **DO** it!

### **3.5) The UNCHANGEABILITY of God... (v152)**

- It is the Psalmist **EXPERIENCE** and **CONVICTION**, because of his **CAREFUL READING** of the Scriptures that testifies to God's will and mind and by all his **MEDITATIONS** on His words, that he is certain and convinced that His words will remain forever!

- **Matt 5:18; Mark 13:31; Luk 21:33**

- God's words are **EVERLASTING** and **UNCHANGING** because it is **HIS** words and He is **UNCHANGEABLE!!**

- **Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8**

- All his hope and confidence in **SEEKING** the Lord is rooted in **WHO GOD HIMSELF IS!**

- He came to know God for who He is, through His **WORD!!**

**Q: Do you KNOW God? Are you reading, studying, and meditating on His Word in order to KNOW HIM...?**

**Conclusion:**

**Q: Will you seek God in this manner?**

- God has done **EVERYTHING** necessary in **JESUS CHRIST** to make it possible for us to seek Him in this manner!
- Do not delay a moment longer!
- Heed the words of **Isa 55:6**
- Stand on the promise of **Jam 4:8**
- William Plumer: ***“In supplication, we must not only call upon God but continue to call upon God. We must not only pray, but pray without ceasing. We must not only cry with the voice, but with the holy vehement of the soul. We must not only pray with the heart, but from the whole heart. Our attitude must be the attitude of Jacob - I will not let you go until you bless me... YOUR SOUL WOULD NOT BE SO EMPTY OF COMFORT IF YOUR MOUTH WERE NOT SO EMPTY OF PRAYER.”***
- Won't you resolve what David resolved in **Ps 27:4**...

# “The ABC of the Christian Life...!”

## Psalm 119:161-168

### Introduction:

- In this study, we come to the **TWENTY-FIRST** section of **Ps 119**, to the **twenty-first** letter of the Hebrew alphabet named **SIN** or **SHIN**, the equivalent of our letter “s” or “sh”
- Please read **Ps 119:161-168**...

### **Q: What do you FEAR?**

- What you fear will **INFLUENCE** and **REGULATE** the **DECISIONS** you make.
- What you fear is what you will **RESPECT** and take in **CONSIDERATION** and give **HEED** to.

### **Q: What do you DELIGHT in?**

- What you delight in will determine what you **PURSUE** and count as **VALUABLE**, as **WORTH** the effort.

### **Q: What do you LOVE?**

- What you love will determine what your **PRIORITIES** and your **ALLEGIANCE** is, what you **SUBMIT** and **COMMIT** yourself to.
- In this section we will find what the Psalmist **FEAR, DELIGHTS IN** and **LOVE**, but we will find even more than that.
- In this section we will find *The ABC of the Christian Life!*

### Study Points:

- We will look at these **THREE SPHERES** of the **CHRISTIAN LIFE**:

## **1. The ATTITUDE of the Christian. (v161-163)**

- In the first three verses of this section we see in what **STATE** the **HEART** of the Psalmist is – what his **ATTITUDE** is. *He has...*

### **1.1) AWE and FEAR of God and His Word. (v161)**

- This is not the first mention that the Psalmist make concerning **PRINCES** being against him... (cf. **v23**)
- Princes refers to people in **HIGH PLACES** with **MIGHT** and **AUTHORITY**.
- These **IMPORTANT** people are chasing after him, seeking him to do him harm, to intimidate or maybe even manipulate him.
- All of this without **CAUSE** – he didn’t do anything against them in any way to harm them or to bring reproach on them; he didn’t try to usurp their power or authority; he didn’t disobey them or broke their rules.
- But these **INFLUENTIAL** people were on his case and the temptation would have been **GREAT** to succumb to fear of them, had it not been that a **GREATER** fear drove out his fear for them!
- **Ps 119:20; Prov 28:14; Ps 34:9; Isa 66:2; Ps 33:16-19**

- “...my heart **STANDS...**” - He gives **ATTENTION** to the words of God and are more **MINDFUL** of what God says than what people say.

- Albert Barnes comments: *“It is natural, whether proper or not, that we should feel the reproach and contempt of those in elevated life - the rich, the honoured, the learned - more than of those in humbler life. Their good opinion can be of value only as they may be better qualified than others to judge of what constitutes true excellence, or as they may have it in their power to do us more harm, or to do more to aid us in doing good, than others have; but truth and principle are never to be sacrificed that we may secure their favour; and if, in the faithful discharge of our duty, and the zealous adherence to the principles of our religion, we incur their frowns, we are to bear it - as the great Lord and Saviour of his people did.”*

- **Prov 29:25** warns us concerning the fear of man...

**The Principle: FEARING** God and His word will make you **FREE** from the **FEAR** of **MAN**...! If you fear God, there is nothing else to fear!

## 1.2) DELIGHT in God and His Word. (v162)

- The word of God is **PRECIOUS** and **VALUABLE** to the Christian. (cf. **Jer 15:16**)

- Like a pirate who finds treasure after seeking for it and fighting for it and then is in **ECSTASY** over what he has found, so is the Christian about God and His word.

- **SPOIL** is the **PLUNDER** that falls to the victorious ones in battle and many times it is the **REASON** for the battle and what makes the battle **WORTH FIGHTING**.

- It is **WORTH PURSUING** time in the word of God even when it is necessary to make great sacrifices for it.

- A Christian delight in the word of God and longs for it – **1 Pet 2:2**

- He is willing to **FIGHT** for time with God in His word because he discerns that it is more **VALUABLE** than all the other things worth fighting for...!

**The Principle: DELIGHTING** in God and His word will make you **FREE** from **WORTHLESS PURSUITS**...! Nothing compares to the greatness of knowing God!

## 1.3) LOVE for God and His Word. (v163)

- **FALSEHOOD**, lying, is a grievous **SIN**.

- **Exo 20:16; Prov 6:16-19**

- A Christian has a **HATRED** for **LYING** because **GOD** hates lying so intensely.

- But it is not just lying that a Christian hates he hates **ALL** sin because God hates **ALL** sin...

- A Christian hate what God hates, because **HE LOVES GOD**!

- In this lies one of the **GREATEST** secrets to Christianity: It is your **AFFECTION** for **GOD** that needs to drive out your **AFFECTION** for **SIN**...!

- David Platt: *“The most common yet most unsuccessful (way) to try to conquer sin (is) by working hard to change our actions... But there is another way, a better way. Instead of trying to conquer sin by working hard to change our actions, we can conquer sin by trusting Christ to change our affections.”*

**The Principle:** **LOVING** God and His word will make you **FREE** from the **LOVE** of **SIN**...! Sin has no power or hold over those who are **IN LOVE** with God!

## 2. The BLESSINGS and BEHAVIOUR of the Christian. (v1164-166)

- In the next three verses we see the **LIFE** of a Christian – His **BLESSINGS** and **BEHAVIOURS**...

### 2.1) Continual Praise. (v164)

- “**Seven**” is not referring to the specific amounts of times that we need to set aside every day and legalistically try and keep, but rather to indicate the **CONTINUAL** focus of a Christian to praise God throughout every day as often as possible.
- Ligon Duncan: *“He is praising God all the time, not just when he gathers with the people of God to worship, but praise is always coming from his mouth.”*
- **Ps 34:1; Ps 71:14-15; Heb 13:15**

**The Principle:** We simply cannot praise God to much or even enough – He is worthy of **ALL** our praise and even if we were to praise God **ALL** day **EVERY** day, it will still not be too much or enough...!

- We will spend all **ETERNITY** praising God and that will maybe be enough, but most probably not...!
- The reason for his praise is that God has given him His “**righteous rules**” – He has **REVEALED** what is **RIGHTEOUS** and **GOOD** in His sight.
- The word of God is what brings about our knowledge of what is acceptable to God – we would **NEVER** have known what is acceptable to Him if He have not **REVEALED** it to us...!
- What **BLESSING** is the word of God for which we are to **PRAISE GOD** continually!

### 2.2) Peaceful Perseverance. (v165a)

- What **GREAT BLESSING** it is for the Christian to have **GREAT PEACE**!
- This does not mean the **ABSENCE** of any trials and problems, but rather the peace that **TRANCENDS** all his trials and problems, a peace that **SURPASSES** all **UNDERSTANDING**.
- **Isa 26:3; Joh 14:27; Rom 5:1**

**The Principle:** Because of the **PRESERVATION OF GOD** the Christian can **PEACEFULLY PERSEVERE** through all his trials, temptations, and problems!

- **Ps 34:19-20; 37:23-24; Prov 24:16; Mic 7:7-8; 1 Cor 10:13; Joh 10:27-29**

### 2.3) Hopeful Obedience. (v166a)

- The hope of a Christian is not **WISHFUL THINKING**, but a **DEFINITE CERTAINTY** based on the promises and character of God.
- For the Christian, **THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE!** (cf. **Ps 43:5**)
- We have the **HOPE** of **SALVATION**, that God would fully and finally **SAVE** us, **RESCUE** us. We are hoping and waiting on **GOD** to bring about this final salvation because it is His to give.
- **1 Pet 1:8-9; 1 Thess 1:10; 5:8-9; Phil 1:6**

*Q: As we **HOPE** on God for this salvation, what are we to do? What **PROVES** that we are truly hoping on God for His salvation?*

- We **DO** His commandments – we walk in **SIMPLE, HUMBLE** and **HOPEFUL** obedience.
- We do not just **STUDY**, or **MEMORIZE** or **MEDITATE** on His commandments – all those things are good and necessary so that we can ultimately **DO** what God commands.

*The Principle: The Christian is **WALKING IN OBEDIENCE** as He is **WAITING** and **HOPING** on God for His salvation!*

- It is not a passive waiting, but an **OBEDIENT** waiting.

### 3. The **COMMITMENT** of the Christian. (v167-168)

- In the last two verses we see the **COMMITMENT** of the Christian and what is **MOTIVATING** him to life out this commitment...
- **Verse 167-168** testifies of **HEARTFELT** and **THOROUGH** obedience... (“soul”; “precepts and testimonies”)
- It not is just a matter of outward conformity but rather a matter of **WORSHIPFUL SUBMITTING!**
- It is not to see what is the minimum requirements but to seek what brings about the **GREATEST PLEASURE** for **GOD!**

#### 3.1) **LOVE** for God... (v167)

- This is the **PUREST** motivation for all heartfelt obedience to God – **LOVE FOR HIM!!**

*The Principle: **WHO GOD IS** and the **REALITY** of just **LOVING HIM** more than anything or anyone else – that leads to obeying Him with your **SOUL!***

- Doing what He says because **HE** said so and that is enough – not needing to understand always **WHY** He said so, but just because He said it should be **ENOUGH** for us **IF** our motivation behind our obedience is **LOVE!**

- **Joh 14:15, 21**

- **1 Joh 2:3-5** – “love for God perfected” – the salvation of God has been **ACCOMPLISHED** in those who obey God because they **LOVE** Him...!

### 3.2) Living for an AUDIENCE OF ONE... (v168)

- God is the **ALL-KNOWING ALWAYS PRESENT** God – He is **OMNISCIENT** and **OMNIPRESENT**.

- Nothing you do can **EVER** be hidden from God – *He sees everything...*

- **Heb 4:13; Prov 5:21; Ps 139:3**

- But the emphasis is not in only knowing that God sees everything and knows whatever you do, but rather in a **SUBMITTING** and **DEVOTIONAL** sense namely to live so before God that it would bring **PLEASURE** and **JOY** to Him, to live before Him for as for His **ENJOYMENT...**!

- This is Paul’s prayer for the saints in Colossae - **Col 1:9-10**

- This was the testimony that went out from the Thessalonian church – they turned to God to **SERVE** Him with a **SINGLE-MINDED DEVOTION** (cf. **1 Thess 1:9**)

*The Principle:* The Christian is motivated by this namely to live His life with an **AUDIENCE OF ONE**, longing for the **PLEASURE** and **SMILE** and **ACCEPTANCE** of **ONE ONLY** – His **GOD AND HIS SAVIOUR...**!

- The **GREAT AIM** of the Christian is to **OBEY HIS LORD...**!

#### Conclusion:

- We all have **ATTITUDE, BEHAVIOUR** and **COMMITMENT** issues...

- Left to ourselves we would **NEVER** be able to live out these **ABC’s of the Christian life**.

- But thanks be to **JESUS** who is our **PERFECT EXAMPLE** and **RIGHTEOUSNESS** in all three these spheres of the Christian life so that in Him we can have the same **MIND** that He had (**Phil 2:5**), we can **WALK** as He walked (**1 Joh 2:6**) so as to pray with Him, no matter what God may require from us: “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will...” (**Matt 26:39**)