

“Psalms: Week 12”

SUNDAY, MARCH 23, 2025 - MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - “Psalms: Praise and Worship”

We all, at some point in time, have stood in a specific place and looked out into the world on a very clear, bright, and sunny day. We were able to see the details, all that was happening, and thus clearly walked the path or road that was before us. We have also all stepped out into that same place on a very foggy morning or night when we could barely see a few feet in front of us. The details were gone and we felt lost, anxious, fearful, and perhaps unsure of how to move forward or where to go; our path became unclear. As we look at Psalm 119 this week in our study we will look at the clear directions for living that are given in God’s word to guide us in comparison to the direction the world has to offer us, which can often be bleak, dismal, and short-sighted. Our prayer this week, through Psalm 119, is that we are all reminded and challenged by God’s word which is given to us in order to provide the clarity, the direction, and the guardrails to keep us and lead us rather than the bleak confusion this world has to offer. This week, let’s allow Psalm 119 to examine our attitudes toward scripture and the impact God’s Word has on our lives. To do this, we will look at 10 key points from Psalm 119 that will help us to determine our own “attitude inventory” concerning the reliability, effectiveness, authority, and application of God’s word, law, statutes, commandments, in our lives. As we work through these questions, let’s allow God’s word to examine not only our attitudes, but more importantly, our hearts as we aim to be followers of Christ who are living out the great commandment from Matthew 22:37-40: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

Scripture - Psalm 119 “Delight in the Law of the Lord”

Make and take the time this week to read through Psalm 119 at least once (takes about 20-25 minutes to do so; less than the time we invest in watching a sitcom). As you read through this chapter, use the “key thoughts” section of this guide to interact with the 10 points that are listed and the scriptures that go along with them. Spend some time really praying through and asking God where your heart is at regarding these points and God’s Word and direction in your life. Keep in mind that your “attitude inventory” is not a score to determine your salvation, faith, or level of surrender. This is not to be used as a system of legalistic checkpoints, but rather an honest evaluation of your trust and dependence upon God’s Word. The goal of this is to motivate you to action and trust in the WORD of God. An inventory to display your need to wake up and be diligent, to delight, to be led, to be guided, and forgiven in the areas where you have neglected God’s word in the past. The joyful news is that He is waiting to bless you, guide you, clear up the fog, and give you a glimpse of His promises, desires and direction for your life as you dig into the truth and wisdom of scripture.

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Scripture Study

Psalm 119; Proverbs 5-7; 2 Corinthians 1:3-6; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 John 1:5-10 & 5:11-12

As you study the scripture verses provided for this week, study for right context and right questions..

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)

Key Thoughts

I diligently desire to follow the teachings of God's word. (1-10).

These verses do not depict someone who begrudgingly or sluggishly approaches God's word. For 176 verses, the Psalmist echoes a hunger for the word of God, a thirst for the teaching, and not simply for information.

Notice in just these first ten verses, that this is about transformation and action: Walk in the way, Walk in the word, Seek his commands, Keep his testimony.

The Psalmist leads us to examine: Are we diligent to walk in these teachings? And are we willing to allow these teachings to infiltrate every pattern, every decision, and every inch of our hearts? If the word of God convicts us, are we diligent to surrender? If the word of God calls us to take a step of faith in serving and sharing our faith, will we be obedient? And the Psalm even tells the attitude to which we take these steps of obedience: With JOY.

I believe God's word guards me against pitfalls and sinful paths. (9-15).

What is right? What is pure? What is holy? What will keep me from harm? The answer: Guardrails according to God's word and statutes. (see also Proverbs 5-7; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10)

But a guardrail is not a guardrail unless we heed its warnings. God's words provide the warnings, the guardrails, and all that is necessary to protect us, guard us, and guide us.

I delight in reading, meditating, and pursuing God's commands. (vv. 16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 77, 92).

The word of God is from the mouth of God to the heart of the believer; it is spoken and declared by a believer, but it is also proclaimed by how and where they walk.

We delight in the promises of God's word and character, even in our trials. This is a tremendous promise when our world has so many sinful struggles, hardships, and global events: to pause and delight, meditate, in the law of the Lord.

To delight, meditate, and pursue God's commands depends on our belief and trust in His word. Do you delight in his teachings, statutes, commands, and promises?

I believe God's word is my hope in suffering. (vs. 25-28).

Revive me!!! This is the plea from the Psalmist. Things are not going as he imagined, intended, or hoped. "My soul clings to the dust." That's a pretty lowly state. "I am flat on my face", he says. (vs. 25)

Key Thoughts

But notice his quests in his suffering and lowly state: Teach ME - vs. 26; Make ME understand - vs. 27

He doesn't demand God to remove the situations and circumstances but to deepen his dependence upon God's word. The Psalmist asks, "What can I gain from this experience?" And he also knew that, as verse 28 declares, God would strengthen, change, teach, and grow him in the middle of his suffering.

God's word comforts me in times of hardship and trials. (vs. 50, 52, 76)

Comfort in this setting means to be consoled and to be near. God's word is full of promises which lead us to hope and comfort in Christ. (see also Psalm 23; 2 Corinthians 1:3-6)

We are comforted, therefore we comfort. We share in our affliction and sorrow. We comfort through the promises of God's word. We comfort through our hope in Jesus Christ. We comfort each other. We rest. We find hope.

I believe God's word protects my heart by redirecting my eyes. (Vs. 35-38)

Verse 36 takes us to one of our greatest battles: our desire for selfish gain. We are, by fallen sinful nature, prideful, selfish people.

If all of our decisions and directions in life are driven by selfish gain, then we will never understand the core truths and teachings of scripture, which are filled with humility and surrender.

The Psalmist is prompting us to turn our eyes away from worthless things:

- worthless because they do no good
- worthless because they do not last
- worthless because they help no one else
- worthless because they build no faith, hope, or love
- worthless because they distract from things that are truly worthy
- worthless because they have nothing to do with Jesus.

We have swapped around the price tags on worthless things in our daily lives and deemed them worthy instead of useless. We have spent our lives pouring a significant amount of resources into our idols that are cheap and worthless.

By guarding our eyes, we protect our hearts, and by protecting our hearts, we protect our relationships, decisions, and direction.

Key Thoughts

I believe God's word delivers redemption and life. (Vs. 40, 88, 93, 107, 109, 154).

This statement is not only about the Psalms but all of scripture. It points to redemption and life through the guardrails placed in our lives through scripture and the gift of salvation with and through a relationship with Jesus Christ. (see also 1 John 5:11-12)

if we believe in this redemption and life detailed and described for us, then it will become something we desire to communicate to others and long to experience. (119:123)

I am allowing God's word to light up my path. (vs. 105-106, 130).

There is a path, and God's word is the light that keeps us from stumbling along the path: Spiritually and morally. This verse is about guidance and Godliness. The author acknowledges he is on a path, but the lamp keeps the person from stumbling to show the dangers step by step.

We live in a dark world. We must delight in the word, therefore turning on the light (God's word) to guide us through it.

We each wake up each day and perform our tasks in our homes, our jobs, and our lives, but if we are not careful, at some point along the way, without the light of scripture reminding us, leading us, prompting us, we are prone to wander into the darkness.

I worship from a heart of thankfulness for God's statutes. (vs. 7, 62, 108, 164, 171, 175).

One of the guiding principles of Psalm 119 is praising God for his promises. You can't praise something and hate it at the same time. You can't praise something and reject something simultaneously.

Worship, according to the Psalmist, is a response to God's word and its protection offered to us. It is an outpouring of His goodness upon us and it is not defined by our earthly parameters, instead it is defined as a response to His word and His character.

I long to be led daily by God's truth and forgiven by grace. (vs. 20, 40, 81-82, 131).

A person panting is in desperate need of air or, if thirsty, in desperate need of water. We must stay hungry for the Word, or the world will quickly offer substitutes.

This is the story of God's Word. It is rich; it is worthy of worship. It is comforting and life-giving. But we must dig in.

Reflect & Respond

Do you diligently desire to follow the teaching of God's word? Where are you having success in doing so? Where do you need help?

Have you ever considered where you would be without the statutes and teachings (the guardrails) of God's word? What would your life look like without them? How have they helped to keep you on the right path?

To delight, meditate, and pursue God's commands depends on our belief and trust in His word. Do you delight in his teachings, statutes, commands, and promises?

Do you believe that God's word is your hope in suffering? Do you turn to the truths of His word in suffering or are you more likely to turn to the things of this world?

How have you found comfort from God's word in a season of hardship or trials?

How has God's word protected your heart by redirecting your eyes? How has it kept you from pride and selfishness and filled you instead with humility and surrender? Is there anything you are pursuing that is worthless or in which you have attempted to swap the price tag on and thus claim as more valuable than God in your life?

How is God, and the truth of His Word, redeeming you in your daily life?

What is guiding you through your daily life? Is it the word of God, or is it something else (news cycle, social media feed, kid's success, personal conquests, etc.). What is lighting your path as you walk through this dark and sinful world?

Are you living your life from a heart of praise? Are you thankful and grateful for the things that God has done and is doing in your life? How do you express this through your worship (worship being so much more than just seeing songs on Sunday mornings)?

How are you daily cultivating your relationship with God and His Word? Are you digging in or are you sitting idly by, allowing your heart to become harder and harder from the things of this world? What hard ground within your heart may still need to be dug up and cultivated by the truth of God's word in order to produce fruit in your life and in the lives of others?

Please know that you are not alone in this journey. Delighting in the truth of God and scripture is not something that you have to figure out behind the scenes all by yourself. We are the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27) and the staff here at Rich Fork are here to point you back to God's word and also connect you with others so that you are not walking this road alone. If you have questions or simply need to talk, please reach out by calling our main number at (336) 476-6258 or by emailing any of us on staff at info@richfork.com.

