

The Lover of God and His Word

Psalm 119

September 4, 2019

Charles Spurgeon related a story of someone who was about to be hanged, and he made a shrewd use of Psalm 119. Here's the quote: "When upon the scaffold, the prisoner availed himself of the custom of the times, which permitted the condemned to choose a psalm to be sung. He selected the 119th Psalm. And before, before two thirds of the psalm had been sung, a pardon arrived and his life was preserved. And so, the length of the psalm was sagaciously employed as the means of gaining time, and happily, the expedient succeeded." That's Spurgeon's way of pointing to the length of the psalm, and, and hopefully we have a better use for the psalm than just it's great length. Like, Mom and Dad, I don't want to go to bed, so read me Psalm 119.

So, as daunting, though, as the endeavor may seem at the outset, which it is to me, but it is kind of like eating an

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elephant or like climbing Mount Everest. We're not going to take the great psalm in all at once. We're going to take it one step at a time, and we'll savor and ingest all these truths one bite at a time. That said, we're not going to take too small of bites. For those who are familiar with my pulpit exposition on Sunday morning, we're not going to go one verse by one verse. We're going to take it in a little bit bigger chunks, cause if we don't do that we're going to not make it all the way through. It was the puritan pastor, Thomas Manton, who preached a full-length sermon for every single verse of Psalm 119. We're not going to do that, okay? We're not going to move that slowly, though I really like Thomas Manton for the effort.

I've got basically four questions that will provide an outline for us, and the first is just to ask this question: What does Psalm 119 promise and require? What does it promise and require? If you got your Bibles, make sure they're open to Psalm 119. We'll be spending a little time in there tonight. And, hopefully toward the end, we'll see if we can actually read through many of these stanzas in Psalm 119. We'll see if we can get to all of it. But have your Bibles open. And, there in the

first few verses of Psalm 119, you might see that as a gateway into the entire hundred and seventy-six verses.

Psalm 1, if you're familiar with Psalm 1, "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in what? the law of the Lord and on his law he does what? meditates day and night." K? So that, Psalm 1, is also described as a gateway into the entire Psalter. So, you go through Psalm 1, and that is the gateway, and then you get into the rest of the treasures of the Psalter. Well, that's the same way that Psalm 119:1-3 is the gateway into the treasure chest of the entirety of Psalm 119.

These verses, here, tell us how to read this psalm, and tell us about a wholehearted attitude that we need to have. It's like an all-in approach that we need to take. And what is required to study this incredible psalm and to mine its truths, to benefit from everything it talks about is really an all-in, wholehearted attitude.

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There's another puritan pastor/theologian I like to quote from named John Owen. He introduced his treatise defending particular redemption. And, in the introduction to that treatise, he addressed the reader, and this is what he said: "If thou intendest to go any farther, I would entreat thee to stay here a little longer. If thou art, as many in this pretending age, a sign or title gazer, and comest into books as Cato into the theater, to go out again, thou hast had thy entertainment. Farewell." Dr. Owen, he's warning the casual reader and dissuading a casual reader. Basically sending him away. "Go ahead and move on. There's other things to see down the road." But he's also, at the same time, he's laying down a challenge to every serious reader. And it's actually, really, for us, an encouragement to anybody who is sincere, and diligent, goodhearted, humble, and teachable. That's what we find here in the opening verses of Psalm 119 as well.

The psalmist, here, I believe it's David; I'm going to keep on referring to him as the psalmist or David, but he sets our expectations, and he lets us know that the study we're about to embark on is going to require our attentiveness, our undivided attention, you might say, our dedication, thoughtful meditation.

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So, we need to see, going into Psalm 119, that it's more like mining. The pursuit of wisdom and knowledge of God is like mining ore, mining gold, mining silver from the mountains. I mean, it's not easy; it's hard. So, it's more like mining than just wandering through a field of, plucking ripe fruit off low-hanging branches. That's not what Psalm 119 is about.

So, at the same time, David, here, is enticing every serious student and sincere student with the promise of great treasure, of great joy. There's the opportunity of here finding what's most valuable and gaining great reward for our effort. So, that's what we're going to find here, verses 1-3, follow along. So, Psalm 119:1-3, "Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart. Who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways." We'll stop there.

We're going to come back to those verses, hopefully, next week, if I can get through this introduction, but we'll come back in more detail. But I just want to help you see a few

things, here, and then I'm going to tell you about my own motivations for embarking on this study.

Notice how strikingly similar those opening verses are to the opening of Psalm 1. In Psalm 1:1-2 it says, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night." Psalm 119:1-3, "Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, and walk in his ways."

So, there are five key ideas or parallels, there. This is a blessed or a happy way to live. This isn't drudgery, going into Psalm 1, Psalm 119. This way is a happy way; it's a blessed way. It's also, number two, it's a lifestyle. It's a way of walking; it's a way of living. Which is according to, number three, third parallel, according to and in submission to, obedience to the law of the Lord. So, it's obedience to the law of the Lord that

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we find this lifestyle which is a blessed lifestyle. It's a joyful, happy way to live.

Walking in the law of the Lord, here's a fourth parallel, walking in the law of the Lord is going to require us to repent of all sin, to turn away from all evil, which, fifth parallel, is a matter of the heart. It's a matter of the heart to seek him with our whole heart. So, we're talking about the affections. We're dealing with what we truly love, what our hearts are set on worshipping.

So, you got five themes. You can hear the themes of blessedness in both of them, talking about the happiness, talking about prosperity, blessing from God, favor. We're talking about the second thing: a lifestyle. So, that's that word, walk, or the word, way. We're talking about, thirdly, it's according to the law of the Lord. So, his instruction, his rule, what he says goes, that requires us to repent of sin.

So, not "the way of sinners, the seat of scoffers." It's not "the counsel of the wicked." "...who also do no wrong."

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Fifthly, it's a matter of the heart. You can hear that in Psalm 1 with the man who delights in the law of the Lord: he meditates. Why does he meditate? Because the Word of God is something he delights in; it's where he wants to spend time. Why? Because he worships that God. He worships the God who wrote that.

So, those five themes are found in Psalm 1 and in Psalm 119. You find them throughout the entire Psalter, all hundred and fifty psalms. You find those themes in all wisdom literature as well; all through the Proverbs, especially. But, in truth, those are also the themes of the entirety of the Holy Bible. This is what the Gospel's for. In order for us to see the beauty of holiness, the beauty and the joy and the happiness that is in obedience to the law of the Lord, we need to be saved people, we need to be converted people. So, this is what the Gospel's for. And these first few verses, here, are holding forth for us a promise of great treasure, but they also tell us the toll that must be paid at the entrance.

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So, with that small bit of introduction, what do you think about your own willingness to pay the required toll? Does it sound daunting? Does it dissuade you from pursuing? When we read through that, notice that David is saying, "Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways." It's as if David is looking at those over there.

You know, David was a man after God's own heart. We find so much in David that is exemplary. We find in him a heart pursuing the knowledge of the Lord. And like, these, these aphorisms, these sayings all through Psalm 119, these, it's twenty-two stanzas, eight verses a piece, hundred and seventy-six verses of him meditating on the law of the Lord. And he is looking over there, "Blessed are those." He's observing people that he's looking up to. He's, he's observing people that he wants to be like.

So, if he can observe, why not us? This expresses the heart of someone who's longing for the Lord, who's longing for

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blamelessness, who's longing to walk after the pattern of the law of the Lord, the prescriptions of the law of the Lord. We know we're not perfect, we know we don't line up, we know we fail in so many ways, we know we're tempted and distracted by so many other things, but we see this, we see David, "Blessed are those who keep his testimonies." Look at those who keep his testimonies, they seek him with all their heart! We see what we don't feel like we've attained to or lived up to. That's probably for my own heart, for my own part, here, what I long for, and why I want to do this study, because of the promise that it offers to us as believers.

In these first few verses we can see, I think, the expression of our own hearts, the longing of our own hearts, where, David is inviting us here to join him in admiring what we have yet to attain. We see that, we see that we want it, we see we long for it, we know we're not there, and yet, we want to get there. We see from a distance what we desire more than anything, and it compels us to run after it.

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So, "Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord." Don't you want a blessed way? Don't you want an undefiled way, one that can't be blamed in any way? I think it's the expression of the sanctifying heart, "Oh, to be spotless, and pure, and clean, always." More than anything, don't you want to walk in and live in the law, or the instruction that's been revealed to us by God himself? I mean, is there a wiser mind? Absolutely not. "Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart." Do you want to live in the reality of a consistent faith and listen to this divine testimony, here, and do it, obey it, follow this witness? Don't you want to be wholehearted and consistent in your seeking of the Lord your God?

It's the same prayer that David prayed in Psalm 86:11, "Teach me your way, oh Lord, that I may walk in your truth. Unite my heart to fear your name." So, take my heart, that spills all over the place, and chases all kinds of fruitless and frivolous and futile and vain things, and tie all those loose ends together so I'm wholehearted so I pursue the God who is whole and one. Let my heart reflect who you are, that God, you are one, and let my heart be the same and reflect that and chase

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after one, and one thing only. So, that's our prayer, too,
"Blessed are those who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways."
Man! Oh, to do no wrong whatsoever. None whatsoever. Not even a,
not even a foot out of step. Not even, like, mistakes. To do no
wrong; what must that feel like?

I've lived for long enough to know the vanities and the
empty pleasures of this world, to know that their end is the way
of sorrow and death, and I so want to follow the pathway marked
by those who do no wrong whatsoever but walk in his ways. I want
to see the wisdom of this divine mind and put it to the proof
and test it and find it to be exactly what it says it is,
reliable, and worthy, and good, and to put that wisdom into
daily effect in my life.

So, realizing that embarking on this study is for our
sake, the concerns that I have about my own heart and my own
holiness and blessedness and joy, I realize it's by God's grace
and by Christ's choice that I've been appointed to this post to
be an under-shepherd in this local church, and the fact that
it's on my heart to pursue this study; it must be the will of

Christ, then, to bring us all together into the blessing of Psalm 119, so.

Just to set expectations as we work our way forward, I'm going to be working through this study with exegetical kind of insights, things that I'm drawing out of exegetical work, but it's not going to be comprehensive. I'm not going to have the time to be as thorough as I'd like to. Also, I'm kind of getting back into my Hebrew, which is, admittedly, not as fresh as my Greek, so there are likely to be syntactical, lexical points that are not going to be as sharp, and I may need to tell you from time to time, I, I don't know.

And, as much as I'd like to research and answer for you on every question you may have, other duties and demands may mean that I might not be able to do that. But don't let that ever stop you, prevent you from asking a question, k? So, ask a question. Press. Press me for answers. That really does sharpen all of us, because your thoughtful engagement and your interaction is part of what makes a study like this so enjoyable for everyone.

At the end of the hour, as we come together at the end of each hour, I believe we're going to have accomplished our purpose in setting out in this study, which is to find mid-week refreshment in the Word of God. That's really what we're after. This is hump day for everybody. We, we come through, we're, we're trying to get over, we get, got through the Wednesday. Might be nice to take a little bit of a breath on Wednesday night together, study the elevated thoughts and expressions of the psalmist here, someone who deeply loves God and deeply loves his Word.

Because of the nature, the character, the construction of Psalm, Psalm 119, I want you to know that it is not going to hurt if you miss a week here and there of this, this study. This is not like sequential exposition like we do on Sunday mornings, where, when you miss a week it means you're missing a pretty big chunk in the flow of the text and the context. So, you know the psalmist has arranged the text in a pretty unique way, which means you can kind of drop in when you're able to, be away if you need to be; that's totally fine. Obviously, I don't want you to miss anything, but it, it won't be irreparably disruptive to

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your learning if you're, if you're not here a week or, a week, or two, or three, or whatever you need to miss.

In fact, I may have to cancel a week. I know one thing, for, for certain, I need to be gone for a week. We, probably bring in somebody else to teach, but not Psalm 119. They're not touching my precious flow, here. But, but we'll deal with that in due course, and give you plenty of warning, all right? Any questions, so far, about how we're going to do this? We're going to take it in eight verse chunks every single week and see if we can do that, k? Any, any questions? All right.

Here's the bit about the structure of the Psalm. So, we asked, "What does Psalm 119 promise and require?" Second question is, "How does the poetic structure of Psalm 119 reveal the mind of God?" How does the poetic structure of Psalm 119 reveal the mind of God? Psalm 119 is an acrostic poem. It has twenty-two stanzas. Each stanza consists of eight individual verses. And each verse, and each eight-verse stanza starts with one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

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So, for example, in verses 1-8, some of your Bibles may have this as a heading at the beginning, but every single verse begins with the Hebrew letter, *Aleph*, which is like our "A." Then, in verses 9-16, each of those verses begins with the Hebrew letter *Bet* or *Beth*. So, that's like our "B." That next section, 17-24, each begins with *Gimel*, and so on and so forth.

Psalms 9 and 10 are not the only alphabetic acrostic in the Bible. There are several other psalms of David, actually, that are constructed and structured as alphabetic acrostics. Psalm 9 and 10, that's really together as one unit. We have it divided into Psalm 9 and Psalm 10, but it's actually together as a singular unit, one acrostic unit, not two psalms. *Aleph* through *Tav* is the Hebrew lettering, there. Also Psalm 25, 34, 37, 145: those are all alphabetic acrostics. The anonymous psalms 111 and 112, both of those are alphabetic as well.

Other alphabetic acrostics in the Hebrew Bible, not in the Psalter: I love this, Solomon's recitation of his mother's teaching on finding an excellent wife, Psalm 31:10-31. Do you know that's not about making all the women feel bad in your

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church that they're not Proverbs 31 women? What that was is Solomon's mother teaching him: "Here's the kind of wife to find." And she put it into, here's the A, B, C's of finding a good wife. Isn't that cool? Talk about something to memorize when you're young, that will inform your decision of a wife when you're older. Something for men to think about, and women to think about as well. Jeremiah's lamentation over the fall of Jerusalem, Lamentations 1-4, are an alphabetic acrostic. Also, you find some hint of that in Nahum, first nine verses of Nahum's prophesy.

So, why? What's the point? Why go to all the trouble of lining things up A through Z, so to speak? First of all, we see the beauty of God and his mind, the beauty of his thinking. He loves to put things into excellent form. It takes skill to form a coherent acrostic, and especially an alphabetic acrostic that makes sense. There are some commentators who look at Psalm 119 and there are some people I've talked to who look at Psalm 119 and say, that's just a bunch of scattered thoughts about the Bible. Those are the kind of comments that actually show you haven't really done a whole lot of deep thinking about the psalm.

And so, the deeper we go, the more we stare at it, the more we meditate on it, the more we see it conforming into a unity and a coherence and a harmony and a depth that is so profound. And so, we're going to try to discover some of that as we go forward. But it takes great skill to put that kind of a thing together. It reveals a heightened mind and a sense of understanding of language and structure. And certainly, we see that in David, but there is a divine mind behind him that is putting this into exalted speech. It's aesthetically pleasing, it's beautiful in form, beautiful in structure, and it shows great skill with language, and God is a God who rejoices in this. He rejoices just in the, in the pure, aesthetic beauty of it.

Second, we see what I would call the lovingkindness of God and his great care for us. And we see this in two ways: both in his concern to teach us, but also in the way that he teaches us. Proverbs 3, in verse 11, "My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves him whom he loves, a father the son in whom he delights." It's that same thought that we need to take into this Psalm 119: that God

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loves us, we're his children, and he wants us to learn who he is and what he's like.

So, in this psalm, he points us to the single most important factor in our salvation and our sanctification. He points us, in this psalm, to the most vital principle of life and growth and health and happiness. He expounds the excellence of his Word. He says, look at my Word. Look deeply, look closely, look with joy, look with longing, look with anticipation. Look at it. That's what Psalm 119 is celebrating, elaborating on. It's what it magnifies, what it glorifies; that's what it's about. So, God is the one who teaches us and instructs us. He wants us to get this.

In an alphabetic acrostic, this poetic structure, the way that he teaches us, here, also demonstrates his kindness. God knows our frame. He knows that we are but dust. He knows our tendency to forget, some more than others, and God accommodates us. He gives us a memorable pattern. It's a memory device. So, it's a pneumonic device, an alphabetic acrostic to help us to

make the saving and sanctifying knowledge about himself accessible to us and also memorable to us.

Now, we got to admit, we're reading English. We're not seeing the structure as well in English. You have to be a Hebrew reader or speaker to get that. But still, the point stands, even if we are at a distance from the language it's written in, that this is the record of a God who loves us. He loves to teach us. He shows kindness and accommodation to our weakness and need by trying to make that truth as accessible to us as possible. So, we see the beauty of God, we see the excellence of his ways, we see the lovingkindness of God, his care for us, teaching us, accommodating us.

Third thing we see in the structure of this psalm are the attributes of God's self-revelation, which point us to the attributes of God himself, and I want to mention several. First of all, God's Word is orderly, which means if God's Word is orderly, God is orderly. God is a God of order. So, this acrostic feature, it's an enumeration feature. It's listing, it's revealing structure, order, boundary, and that's true of

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the God who revealed his Word, as well. We don't expect God is going to be arbitrary and apart from boundaries that he doesn't put himself in. He does bind himself to certain things and says, "I, the Lord, do not change." This is what you can count on. He doesn't change from day to day, year to year, month to month. He is immutable, and his Word is orderly and reliable, as well.

God's Word is also complete. It's all-sufficient, and that reveals something about God. It reveals his completeness, his wholeness, his oneness. The acrostic shows the revealed Word of God covers everything from *Aleph* to *Tav*, or, as we might say, everything from A to Z. So, since God's Word literally covers everything from the beginning to the end, God is all in all, and from beginning to end. The Greek expression, he's the Alpha and the Omega; He is the first and the last; the beginning and the end.

Also, another thought: God's Word is orderly, it's complete; God's Word also is God's heart. It's his mind. It reveals his love and his knowledge and his wisdom. And just as it takes, for us, in order for me to construct the words that

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I'm speaking to you, it's made up of letters, it's made up of letters from an alphabet that we all embrace, that we all hold as a standard, and then all structured together with words that we comprehend, and the words are structured together with syntax and rules of grammar that we can all access. You understand what I'm saying. Same thing with Psalm 119. Same thing with what's revealed, here, in the alphabetic acrostic, that he is the A to Z, is the *Aleph* to *Tav*, he's the Alpha and the Omega. And every bit of expression, all the language is contained from his mind coming to our minds. He's speaking, he's revealing his love, his knowledge, his wisdom.

God's revelation, as you think about the Bible, obviously, it's truth, it's wisdom, it's profound knowledge, it's deep understanding; but we need to never separate God's revelation from His love. If you love somebody, you communicate with them, you tell them things about yourself. And it's the same thing with God. He tells us things about himself; that's why his Word is precious to us. That's why we take time to exegete it, and hard work to understand it, because it's our God speaking to us. We want to make sure we get it right, and we're not wrong in, in what we believe about him. Psalm 119 is revealing his desire to

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communicate with us, to give himself to us and reveal his mind to us.

So, when he conveys himself, as Hebrews 1:1-3 says, "Long ago, many times in many ways God spoke," he spoke, "to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He," his Son, this one by whom he has spoken, finality there, he's, "the radiance of the glory of God," he's, "the exact imprint of his nature, he upholds the universe by the word of his power." God has been loving us, as a people, by communicating himself across the ages over several millennia.

And when he sends his son into the world, what does he call him? The Word. "In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God, the Word was God." "The Word became flesh," verse 14, "dwelt among us, we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." And verse 18 tells us, "No one has ever seen God; the only God," who's, "at the Father's side," that's the Word, "he has made him known."

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It's the Word who makes God known. It takes words, it takes letters, it takes grammar to make God known.

This concept of the logos, known among the Greeks since the fifth century, B.C., among the Assyrians, Babylonians, Syrians, Egyptians, all of them had this concept of the logos embedded in their cultures. Most seminally, though, the logos concept began with the Jews. Opening words of John's Gospel allude to that: "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, the Word was God." So, that's John 1:1, but it alludes to the same expression in Genesis 1:1 when God spoke the world into existence, and God spoke to reveal himself to mankind.

So, you can see the power in God's Word to bring things into effect, to reveal himself, to unleash his own power. So, there's a creative element to it, but also a communication element to it. So, that's why Christ has become to us wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification, redemption. Flowing out of the Word, who is Christ, this Alpha and Omega, you have wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification, redemption. So,

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this is just some of the ways Psalm 119 reveals the mind of God to us.

You may notice when you read Psalm 119 there are a lot of synonyms for God's Word throughout the psalm. What do the names for God's Word reveal about God and his Word? So, to illustrate, let's read the first stanza, Psalm 119, and we'll notice all the expressions that David uses to refer to God's Word. "Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart. Who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways. You've commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. Oh, that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. I'll praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous rules. I will keep your statutes. Do not utterly forsake me." I counted six different terms, just in those first eight verses, that describe God's Word.

You have the word law, there, in verse 1. That's *Torah*. That refers to God's direction or his instruction. And the

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picture that that gives us of God calls to mind the relationship between a teacher and a student. So, there's an intimacy implied, here. The appreciation, on the one hand, of a humble, teachable student, who loves his wise and experienced, loving teacher. When you hear the word law, the law of God, the law of the Lord, you shouldn't think hard rules. You should think loving instruction, like a father wants to give to his son. "Hey, son, don't hit the ball this way. Here, let me help you with your swing. Don't throw the ball this way, you'll throw out your arm. Throw it this way and you'll hit the target; you'll be able to throw it farther." That's loving instruction. That's how we need to think about God's Word, God's law.

The word testimonies in verse 2, *aduth*: it refers to the truth of God's witness, what he testifies about. It's his warnings, reminders, cautions. So, this is the imagery of a witness in a courtroom who's testifying to what's true. So, the wise will listen to God's expert testimony in the courtroom. When he enters the courtroom and he gives his viewpoint, he tells what he has seen and heard, he reports it truthfully and expertly.

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The word precepts in verse 4 is the next one. Precepts are like directions or orders. And, we have to see this as something which is entrusted to us. Precepts are God's Word placed on us as a charge or a duty. So, something for which we are responsible. So, this pictures, here, God as sovereign. God is in charge, and he's given us direction. And we, ourselves, are morally responsible creatures and actors in his world. We are those who will give an account to him for our lives, for our actions, for our ministries, for our thinking, everything, because he's given us a charge, he's given us precepts: Here's how I want you to do it.

The word statutes in verse 5 refers to prescription, obligation, or even a rule. The verb from which this word is formed means to engrave or inscribe. So, the word means like a definite, prescribed, written law. We know that there are statutes inscribed in stone, but there are also statutes inscribed in the heart, according to Romans 2:15. So, this portrays God as the lawgiver who's prescribing statutes, our thoughts, words, behaviors and he sees our obedience from internal and external vantage points, both.

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Commandments in verse 6. Word *mitzvah*. Derives from a verb. Means to command or to ordain. So, we're talking about a commandment, an ordinance, here. Again, refers to God's sovereignty. And, we can look back to his eternal decree and the outworking of that decree in his providence to accomplish everything that he has ordained. Commandments.

And then rules in verse 7, refers to God's judgements. It's the word *mishpat*: his legal decisions. So, the word statutes pictured God as the lawgiver, the word, rules or judgements pictures God as the judge. His judgements are perfect, and therefore, final. And we're wise if we go back and review the history of his case law, you might call it, in the record of holy scripture.

Now, look at verse 9. We get into verse 9, we can add another word, which is the word, word. Right? "How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word." It's kind of interesting, a psalm devoted to the Word of God, we have to wait nine verses before reading the word "word" to describe the Word of God. But, there it is. It comes again in

verse 11, "I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you." That's a different word for, word. Verse 9, the word is a more common word, *dabar*, refers to a spoken word, speech. Verse 11, a little bit more of a poetic expression, *imrah*, which can be translated, word, or even opinion, viewpoint, also spoken with utterance or speech, but it's, here's the way you need to see this, is kind of the idea. We could also go back to verse 3, "...who also do no wrong, but walk in, What? "his ways." The word way, *derek*, it's not so much a synonym of the word God, but it's more of a way to refer to all of God's habits. His *derek* is his manner, his custom, his dealings, his conduct. So, we know God's way, dealings, are all immutable, actions that proceed from faithfulness and integrity, from the fixedness of his essence and his being, his way. His way of dealing with everything: mankind, creatures, stars, heavens, planets, cells, atoms. His way is perfect.

Let's come to the final question I have is just by way of introduction. How does the psalmist's manner of expression in the psalm point us to a greater love for God and his Word? How does his manner of expression, the way he expresses himself, point us to a greater love for God and his Word? You can

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probably hear it as you read through. You can hear him pray, petition, cry out, long for. What does that tell us about his love for God, his love for his Word? How does it instruct us?

You've got somebody who sets his sights on being the strongest man in the world. So, what does he do? He sees that the way to get there is through the gym. It's not that he's in love with the barbells and the bars and the machines. It's not that he loves the building, the mats, the benches. It's that he loves what that brings, the outcome on the other side. What he's after, he's willing to go through everything in there to get to his goal. In the same way, the psalmist is like that. He sees what he wants to be, he knows he's not there, and he says, I long for this, that I might be that before God.

In 2 Peter chapter 1, Peter gives this chain of virtues, right? He says, "make every effort to add to your faith," and the very first thing that young men want to say is, Knowledge! Truth! Add to my faith. Once I'm saved, gotta start stacking on facts, man. Gotta know this Bible, gotta memorize stuff, gotta get into apologetics so I can debate, and win the thing, and I

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gotta..., you know? It's just, we want to read book, after book, after book, after book. And I was caught in 2 Peter 1 when it said, "Add to your faith," What? "virtue." Another way to translate it is, "Add to your faith moral excellence." The very first thing you should desire as a Christian, and we all desire this, even if it's kind of masked by youthful pride, very first thing we should desire is God-likeness, Christ-likeness, moral virtue, excellence, holiness, virtue. That's what we long for.

And so then, add to your virtue what? Knowledge. Because in order to get there you need truth. You can't get there without truth. People will say, yeah, I'm more of like, um, you know, relational Christian. Don't need so much of the doctrinal side. Got enough of the doctrine. That's foolish. It's foolish to pit one against the other. Both are necessary, but the desire you have is to be Christ-like, to be like God. That's what we long for.

So, how does the psalmist's manner of expression point us to a greater love for God and his Word? William De Burgh, in 1860, said, "While one ancient father entitles this psalm, 'The

perfection of teaching and instruction,' another says that, quote, 'It applies an all-containing medicine to the varied spiritual diseases of men, sufficing to perfect those who long for perfect virtue, to rouse the slothful, to refresh the dispirited, and to set in order the relaxed.'" Augustine, around the fourth century into the early fifth century, he said, "In proportion as this psalm seemeth more open, so much more depth doth it appear to me, so that I cannot show how deep it is." Armand de Mestral, 1856, "This psalm is a prolonged meditation upon the excellence of the Word of God, upon its effects, and the strength and happiness which it gives to a man in every position."

Doesn't matter where you are, doesn't matter where you are in your walk with the Lord, in your growth. Whether you're an infant, or an old, old man in the faith, it gives strength and happiness to man in every position. John Calvin says, "As this psalm treats of various matters, it's difficult to, to give an epitome of its contents. There are, however, two things which the prophet mainly aims at.

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"Number one, the exhorting of the children of God to follow godliness and a holy life. Number two, the prescribing of the rule, pointing out the form of the true worship of God, so that the faithful may devote themselves wholly to the study of the law." Those are good, good things to long for, to desire. Exhorting us to godliness and holiness on the one hand, and prescribing the way that we may worship God, by studying his Word. You are what you worship. You become like what you worship. That's what I want for myself, and I know you do, too.

Heavenly Father, thank you, for the time in your Word, to just do a very brief survey of this wonderful, wonderful psalm. We count ourselves rich men and women, to hold this in our hands. And this is the Everest of the psalms, and yet, it's one of a hundred and fifty. And, the Psalms are one of sixty-six books of treasure. We hold in our hands, translated in our, into our own tongue, the revelation of your mind and heart and will and kindness and goodness.

Our Father, we are so grateful for the salvation that we share in Jesus Christ. We thank you so much that our sins are for given and that we come boldly before the throne of grace,

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that there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ. We thank you so much that you love us, to reveal yourself to us and draw us into fellowship and worship. What a joy is ours. And so, we offer to you our lives as they are. We want to grow and change and walk in holiness and truth. So, please do that good work by your Holy Spirit, by your Word. Help us to grow through this study. We commit it to you, for your glory, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.