



“Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently” (Psalm 119:4).

God’s Word

Central Truth: God expects people to take Him at His Word.

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Psalm 119, which has 176 verses, is the longest chapter in the Bible. In all but two of its verses a reference is made to the Word of God. It is called by many different names: law, testimony, way, precept, statute, commandment, righteous judgment, word, and law. But in every verse there is expressed respect, love, and celebration of what God has spoken.

Psalm 119 does not discuss the doctrines of revelation or inspiration of the Bible. The devotional side of the doctrine of inspiration is found there. It teaches that God's Word is the source of happiness; therefore, people should obey it. Obedience is the proper response to the Word of God.

Psalm 119 has little uniformity and much repetition. One will not find a carefully developed outline that develops a doctrine. It appears to be an accumulation of precepts stated by many people over a period of time. But how it magnifies the Holy Bible! We approach this week's study in the spirit of Psalm 119:18: *“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”*

I. THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

The Bible takes great effort to assure us of the dependability of the Scriptures. Its unchangeable nature is indicated in Psalm 119:89: “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.” Second Peter 1:21 assures us of the divine origin of the Bible: *“The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”* Second Timothy 3: 16 assures us of the faithful recording of what God

revealed: *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God.”* If you accept those three facts, you are ready to hear the message of God as you study your Bible.

A. God's Word is His *“law.”* The word means “instruction, teaching, direction.” It gives the principles by which we are to live.

Romans 7:12, 14 describes it as *“holy, and just, and good,”* as well as *“spiritual.”* Psalm 19:7 reads, *“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul.”* No wonder the saints of God testify, *“O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day”* (Psalm 119:97).

Do not think of *“law”* as harsh rules which depress the spirit. Look on the Bible as a source of direction that you may live your life in peace with God and equity with men. It gives you direction, being a light to your path (Psalm 119:105).

B. God's Word is His *“testimony.”* That word occurs eighty-three times in the Old Testament — after God gave the law at Mount Sinai. It refers to the solemn and divine charge or duty laid on us in Bible teaching. Its reference to the Ten Commandments (Exodus 31:18) is enlarged to include all the Bible (Psalm 19:7). Our duty is to *“keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies”* (I Kings 2:3). The charge laid on us in Holy Scripture is founded forever (Psalm 119:52). Obey the Bible!

C. God's Word is His *“way.”* It shows the path or direction we are to follow in life. And it means also the manner in which we conduct ourselves on that journey. It includes the *“paths of righteousness”* in which the Lord leads us (Psalm 23:5). *“The way of the just is uprightness”* (Isaiah 26:7).

How good God is to show us the way we should go and to tell us how to conduct ourselves as we travel that way. We find that information in the Bible. We should study it daily.

D. God's Word is His *“precept.”* Today that term means “a rule of action or conduct; a written order.” What an excellent quality of the Bible that is! It meets us where we are and tells us what we should be. Then it sets forth in clear terms how we change from what we are to what we must become. The guidelines are written clearly so we can know them and refer to them once and again. Psalm 119 tells us to long after the divine precepts (verse 40), to keep them (verse 4), to meditate on them (verses 15, 78), to never forsake them (verse 87) or forget them (verse 93), to love them (verse 159) and choose them above all else (verse 173). Believe and obey the Bible.

E. God's Word is His *“statute.”* It is a rule or regulation (Psalm 119:8). There we find the guidelines by which to live in relation to God and

to one another. It contains principles to be obeyed. As the speed limit on the highway, or the “No Passing” sign on the curve is for your safety, so the “*statutes*” of the Lord are for your welfare. Do not think of them as oppressive. Rejoice in their indication of God's loving concern for you.

F. God's Word is His “*commandment*.” It is a “body of laws” given by divine revelation. It is the very commandment of God himself. There you find orders or injunctions. Obedience to the principles recorded in the Bible proves that one is truly a child of God. “*Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments*” (I John 2:3). Obey the Bible.

G. God's Word is His “*judgment*.” It stands over two parties, deciding what is right or wrong in their relationship and what to do about it. What an excellent description that is of the ministry of the Bible in our lives! It tells us when we are wrong before God and what to do about it. It tells us when we are wrong with one another and what to do about it. We are to examine all conduct “*by taking heed thereto according to (God's) word*” (Psalm 119:9).

H. God's Word is His “*word*.” That statement is not a senseless collection of terms. The written Word of God is as authoritative as the spoken Word of God. The Bible has as much authority as if God spoke to you personally so you could hear His voice with your ears. All Scripture is God-breathed, whether heard or read. Receive it and yield to it. Your attitude toward the Bible portrays your attitude toward God.

II. OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD'S WORD

Almost every verse in Psalm 119 refers to our relationship to the Word of God. There is too much to write here. Read the psalm slowly and note what it says. Below are some suggestions on what to look for as you read it.

A. Receive God's Word. Hide it in your heart by memorizing it (verse 11). “*Lay up these words in your heart and in your soul*” (Deuteronomy 11:18). “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom*” (Colossians 3:16). Welcome it into your heart.

B. Walk in God's Word. Be one of the “*undefiled in the in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD*” (Psalm 119:1). As you seek to know, obey, and hold to the commandment of God, you will rejoice in the blessings of God (Joshua 22:5). There is no reason to know the Word if one does not walk according to it.

C. Respect God's Word. Cultivate the Psalmist's spirit: “*My heart standeth in awe of thy word*” (Psalm 119:161). Do not add to it or diminish from it, but respect it and show your respect by your fullest obedience to it

(Deuteronomy 4:2). No one can reverence God and despise His Word at the same time. Your attitude toward the Bible indicates your attitude toward God.

D. Learn God's Word. A spirit of praise and a life of uprightness follow a knowledge of the Bible (Psalm 119:7). God helps you to know what the Bible means. *“He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths”* (Isaiah 2:3). A lack of divine knowledge will destroy a people because God will reject them (Hosea 4:6). Learn through diligent study what God says in the Bible.

E. Value God's Word. Join the psalmist in his evaluation of it: *“The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver”* (Psalm 119:72); *“Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever”* (Psalm 119:111); *“I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold”* (Psalm 119:127). When you can truly say, *“I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food”* (Job 23:12), you are entering a thrilling life with the Lord.

F. Keep God's Word. Watch the Bible terminology here! To *“keep”* God's Word does not mean simply to preserve it from loss, but to obey it in daily life. A special blessing awaits those who keep God's Word. He has commanded such obedience. The faithful believer will resolve to obey fully all His precepts in Scripture and hid the Word in his heart to make that possible. Read Psalm 119:4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 31, 44, 87, 101, 112. Keeping the principles of God's Word is at the heart of all spiritual living (Joshua 23:6; Deuteronomy 6:17; 4:40; I John 5:3). Do it!

G. Declare God's Word. So speak as to be able to say with the psalmist, *“With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. . . . I will speak of thy testimonies before kings, and will not be ashamed”* (Psalm 119:13, 46). What a witness for God that would be. Do not be embarrassed to speak clearly what God Says. People need to hear it.

H. Meditate on God's Word. He who resolves to meditate on God's Word will find that it comforts and strengthens him. So let your mind turn to the Word when it is free from other requirements, in day or at night (Psalm 119:55, 97, 148). It is food to your soul when you think on Bible teaching.

I. Be comforted by God's Word. It is your hope in times of trouble (Psalm 119:50). You can experience what others testify, *“Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights”* (Psalm 119:143). Multitudes have found assurance and consolation in the promises of God recording in Holy Scripture. You can find them there also.

Cultivate a personal relationship to God in His Holy Book, the Bible.

III. THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

There is so much said about the Bible in Psalm 119 that one is unable to express it all in the confines of one lesson. Here one could study for months, not for just one week. But consider the power of God's Word as indicated in the psalm.

God's Word has the power to cleanse (verses 9, 11), to direct (verses 10, 105), to inform (verses 12, 13, 26, 27, 33, 34, 73, 98-100, 130), to rejoice the heart (verses 14-16, 23, 36, 47, 54, 103, 174), to give hope (verse 74), to provide strength (verses 92-95, 114, 173, 175), and to give peace (verse 165). And that list could be continued.

Stay close to your Bible. You will meet God there! Study it. Memorize portions of it. Meditate on it at leisure moments. Live by it. Share it with others. It is nothing less than the very Word of the living God.

But a word of caution is in order. We do not worship the Bible; we worship Him who is revealed therein. The Bible is precious because it tells us of Him who is most precious of all.

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts” (Jeremiah 15:16).

Questions

1. Why is the Bible called “the Word of God”?
2. How does Psalm 119:18 relate to every time you study the Bible?
3. How do Psalm 119:89 and II Peter 1:21 prove that you study the Bible?
4. What authority does the Bible have in your daily life?
5. How does Romans 7:12, 14 describe your Bible?
6. How does Psalm 19:7-11 describe your Bible?
7. How can you “receive” God's Word?
8. How can you show respect for God's Word?
9. What power is there in the Word of God?
10. How can you apply this study to your life this week?