



Psalm 119
DEVOTIONAL & STUDY GUIDE

RESTON BIBLE CHURCH

Psalm 119

DEVOTIONAL & STUDY GUIDE

As a gift to the congregation of Reston Bible Church, the RBC worship team has written, composed and recorded an original song entitled *Psalm 119*. You can find links to audio and video recordings as well as lyric and chord charts online at:

www.restonbible.org/worship

God's Word is Primary

Our team of worship leaders has been on a journey for the past couple years as we think through a number of weighty questions about worship: *What is worship? What role does music play in worship? As leaders of worship in the church, what can we do—from foundational things to fine details—to serve the church well? What's the intersection between Scripture and our musical worship? As we write songs of worship for our own local church body, what should they be about?* Those are just a few of the questions we've been wrestling with. Since we've been called to lead worship, we want to do it well. We want to put great thought into what we do to steward well the abilities the Lord has given us and to edify His church.

As we've specifically thought and talked through the role of Scripture in our musical worship, we are in strong agreement that *God's Word is primary*. It's one of our core values as worship leaders at Reston Bible Church. When we set out to write a song that embodies the truth that God's Word is primary, Psalm 119 stood out. It is rich in truths that have the power to transform our lives. Our vision for the song was that it would be as much verbatim Scripture as possible so that God's truth would just wash over us as we sing His Words. The music is a means to communicate in modern ways what the Lord intends for us to know, believe, and live about Him and His Word.

Among the plentiful wisdom in this chapter, Psalm 119 makes it clear that treasuring the Lord's Word will keep us from sin (v. 11). Then make it our treasure, Lord! Having God's

Word is better than gold and silver (v. 72). Help us believe that, Lord! Change our hearts so we won't pursue all that glimmers so brightly and so often captures our attention and hearts in this world. If we don't keep God's Word, we'll bring pain into our lives (v. 136). Lord, help us to follow You and reap the blessing of seeking after You rather than enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.

Our prayer is that through gathering together each week and singing songs of worship, the Lord would be honored as King of our hearts. This is our hope as well with *Psalm 119*. May the Lord be pleased to use His Word expressed in this song to lift His name high among His people that we might be sustained and encouraged by the light of His unfolding Word (v. 130).

How to Use this Guide

Psalm 119 is a beautiful Psalm all about God's Word. In its original form, it was written as an acrostic, which means each stanza starts with one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It is also the longest Psalm and the longest chapter in all of Scripture, even longer than quite a few whole books of the Bible. Because of its length, many scholars believe it was written over a long period of time. Yet despite its length, it is wholeheartedly and specifically focused on praising God for His wonderful Word to us. It reflects a wide range of emotions and situations, including both joyful highs and painful lows. In so many ways, Psalm 119 mirrors our own walks and lives at various points in time. This Psalm shows that God and His Word are exactly what we need regardless of our situation or season of life.

Because of our sin and brokenness, we know that we cannot obey God's Word perfectly. The point of this Psalm, however, is that we seek and place our trust in Him, His Word and His promises over the false ways of the world. We will see fruit from obedience, and we look to God for our strength and forgiveness when we face trials—even when those trials are self-induced!

This seven-part study guide will cover selected stanzas of Psalm 119. Take a few minutes each day to listen through the song and consider the lyrics. Think and pray through the accompanying sections of Scripture from Psalm 119, and take time to journal and answer the questions as you prayerfully reflect on what it means for God's Word to be primary in your life. Each section closes with a short prayer primer to help lead you into a time of prayer after your study and reflection.

LYRICS
Psalm 119

How sweet are Your words to me
They are better than gold and silver
The unfolding of Your Word gives light
Light my way

*Oh my soul, it longs for You
All my hope is in You
All my heart, seeks You, Lord
Life is found in You*

How great are You, Lord, to me
My portion, my cup
I will speak Your words before great kings
Your Spirit is my voice
Your Spirit is my voice

*Oh my soul, it longs for You
All my hope is in You
All my heart, seeks You, Lord
Life is found in You*

My eyes long for Your salvation
Let my lips utter praise unto You
Let my tongue sing of Your great Word

Blessed are those whose way is blameless
Blessed are those who seek Him
With all their heart!

All my hope is in You, You are my portion
All my hope is in You, You are my strength
All my hope is in You, I trust in Your Word
I wait for Your Word

PART 1: ALEPH

In Your Law There is Blessing

Read & Reflect

Psalm 119:1-11

As we begin our time in this Psalm, take a quick look at all the different terms used for God's word even simply in the first stanza: *the law of the LORD, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, righteous rules, word, Your ways*. This isn't just to mix things up rather than repeat the same term for all 176 verses, but it shows us a glimpse of the depth of God's Word. It covers instruction, revelation, His appointments, the fruits of a lawgiver, commands, His judgments, His spoken words—all "useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

- Meditate on verses 1-2. What do you think that what this Psalm is mainly about? Why start here with a Psalm all about God's Word? What other Psalms or sermons start this way? What do they have in common with this Psalm? For further study, consider Psalm 1 or Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. What do they have in common with Psalm 119?
- What do you note about how multifaceted and useful His Word is in any circumstance?

When we think of laws or rules or commandments, we may think only of restrictive rules that often lead to punitive discipline when we disobey. God is not simply watching and waiting for us to break His rules or disobey His Word. Rather, His laws are an extension of His love and holiness.

- How do the characteristics of God's law also show us the character of God Himself, His love for us, His desire to raise us up, and His desire to love us?

By Christian standards, being "blessed" is abiding in God. But often being blessed is not necessarily how we'd expect it to be. As we'll read in this Psalm, a blessed life is not always easy and pain-free, but it is always for our benefit.

- How do you define “blessed”? What has shaped your definition and understanding of being “blessed”?
- In what ways would you say a relationship with God correlates to a good life?

The Psalmist gives insight that “blessed are those who walk in the law of the Lord.” There’s a corollary between walking—that is, living life—according to the Bible and being a person whose way is blameless and blessed.

- How can our ways be “blameless”? What guide do we have?

We all tend to seek are things and people that appeal to us. This is in stark contrast to Jesus’ character and ways. Isaiah described Jesus like a tender shoot—the part of a plant a wise gardener plucks to encourage growth—with no appearance that we should be attracted to Him (Isaiah 53:2).

- Are you seeking Him with all your heart? Are you attracted to things and people for the right reasons?

Meditate on verse 11. In this verse, the Psalmist asserts an incredible truth for living—having God’s Word in our hearts and loving it will keep us from sin. “For as he thinks within himself, so he is” (Proverbs 23:7, NASB). Before there’s a word on our tongue or an action in our life, there’s a thought that exists in our mind and heart. A key motif in Psalm 119 is that filling our hearts with God’s Word is our only hope for beginning to think the right way and the right things and to do what is pleasing to the Lord and will bring great peace and joy into our lives.

- How valuable is God’s Word to you? How does it keep us from sin?

Prayer Primer

Lord, show me the rich blessing that is Your Word. Help me love Your law and put Your Word into practice that I might not sin against You.

PART 2: DALETH

In Your Way There is Grace for the Struggling

Read & Reflect

Psalm 119:25-32

Here we see the Psalmist struggling, clinging to dust, asking even for life! Consider the actions in the stanzas and what they drive us to. *When I've told of your ways...* (confession); *teach me Your statutes...* (obedience, repentance); *make me understand...* (submission to God's Word and will); *strengthen me...* (trusting God's Spirit to empower and heal); *put false things away from me...* (correct my misunderstanding, show me the false promises I follow and replace them with Your true promises and satisfaction); *enlarge my heart!...* (dependence on God to work in our lives); *that I might run in the way of your commandments...* (to put this into practice instead of just reading or hearing about it.)

- Which of these do you resonate most with in your current season of life? Which are strengths you can thank God for? Which are weak areas you need Him to strengthen?

Too often, a church gathering becomes a place where we must make a case for our holiness instead of being a place for us to admit our brokenness and sin.

- What does this section of Psalm 119 tell us about confession, repentance and how vital that is to Christian living among the body of believers? How should we reflect this as a church body?

Consider and meditate on verse 25. Scripture speaks about us being spiritually dead in our sin (Ephesians 2:1). We need to be brought back to life. Nine times in this chapter, the Psalmist described how we must be revived. Life is found "according to Your Word." The first chapter of the New Testament book of John tells us Jesus is the Word of God.

- Where can we clearly see Jesus by reading God's Word? In what ways do you need to trust in His work on the cross to take your sin and give you life?

Meditate on verse 32. We are able to do what the Lord says as the Lord makes us able, when He removes our heart of stone and gives us a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36). We need hearts with greater capacity and different longings. To flourish and thrive, the Lord must give us new hearts. How great is our God, that he enlarges even our hearts!

- In what areas of your life do you need to “run in the way of (His) commandments,” that your heart might be transformed? What happens to our hearts if we do not do this?

Prayer Primer

Lord, help me to see that I am broken and need You to revive me spiritually. Give me humility as I walk with the people you've put in my life. Help me be honest and humble in confessing sin and repenting. Help me run in the way of Your commands and put aside any false ways in which I am walking.

PART 3: HE
*By Your Precepts We are
Drawn to You*

Read & Reflect

Psalm 119:33-40

Notice the complete dependence on God in this stanza. Consider the four-step progression in these passages, summarized below. Meditate on each step. What specific things is the Psalmist asking God to do and what is the result that the author expects from God? Why is each important?

First (v. 33-35): I need to want You more. I even need you to incline my heart towards You. Lord, make me want You more!

- Would you say you delight in the Word of God? Why or why not?
- How are our hearts pointed toward God? What is your heart currently set on? Is that a holy inclination?
- Where do you need to trust the Lord to readjust the trajectory of your heart?

Second (v. 36-37): Reveal to me those things I think are worthwhile that are really worthless. Show me what is truly worthwhile.

- Where are you looking outside of God for satisfaction in life? Where are you seeking after what you want in opposition to what God wants for you?
- How does what we gaze upon affect our hearts? Where do you need to submit to the empowering mercy of the Lord in order to turn your eyes from worthless things?

Third (v. 38-39): Help me to trust in Your promises because I don't want to. I want to get my identity from other things.

- In what ways are you putting hope in the false promises of this world as opposed to the true satisfaction of Jesus?
- What promises of God are precious to you? Which of His promises do you have difficulty believing?

Fourth (v. 40): *In Your righteousness, give me life!*

- How does God's righteousness give us life?
- In what ways are you trying to find life through your own self-effort and self-righteousness?

Prayer Primer

Lord, thank You that it is not my righteousness that gives life but the righteousness You have provided by Your Son, Jesus Christ, that gives life. Give me strength to talk with a friend about the things and people You're pursuing through the life You've given me. Invite them to ask me hard questions about the eternal significance of Your plans.

PART 4: WAW / ZAYIN
*By Your Testimonies We Have
an Answer and a Hope*

Read & Reflect

Psalm 119:41-48

This portion of Psalm 119 speaks of having “an answer for him who taunts me” (v. 42). The world today preaches tolerance, but it does not extend tolerance to those who hold to the objective reality biblical Christianity presents. The universal, non-relative truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ are particularly difficult for many in our current climate of moral relativity.

- How have you observed or experienced this? Where do you most clearly see the ideas of moral relativism or relative truth pushed in our culture?
- When you are challenged for what you believe, how will you respond? How does the Word of God enable and empower us to live out the truths of the gospel?

Christianity in today’s society, unfortunately, is known more for what it is against as opposed to what it is for. Many people simply view Christianity as a harsh list of rules. Too often when we think about “rules” our mind does not go to hope—but to obedience, to being restricted and not being able to do what we want to do or not being allowed to have fun. Yet the Psalmist states that his hope is in God’s rules (v. 43).

- How are God’s rules a hope? How are God’s rules actually freedom and life?

If we believe God’s Word is truth, of course we do not want it taken from our mouth (v. 43). We must realize that the Scriptures are not the restriction, but the key to get us out of the restriction of sin.

- What things internally and externally attempt to take God’s Word from our mouths?

- How does God's Word lead us to not only a better way to live, but also to the gospel of grace in Jesus Christ, our only hope?

The Psalmist asserts that he will testify about the Lord "before kings and not be put to shame" (v. 46). Often the taunts of this world can even come from the lawmakers and cultural trendsetters of our day, including our authorities and bosses.

- Do you trust that you can speak confidently to the authorities of this world about your God? Why or why not? Where do you most feel the pressure to keep silent about Jesus?
- How do the popular trendsetters of this world tell us how to live? Does that match up with the wisdom of God's Word? How much of the world's false wisdom are you listening to and where should we get our council from?

The world as we know it is a mess, and it is dark. In contrast, verse 130 tells us that the unfolding of His Word gives light. The metaphor illuminates the truth that God's Word makes clear the path He wants each of us to take. Apart from unfolding His word by reading and contemplating it, we're rudderless in a vast ocean. In every way, we're broken. But when we consume God's Word and it permeates our hearts, minds, and actions, bringing light to dark places. When we feast upon His Word, we begin to place ourselves in a position to be used by Him for His great purposes. If the Lord calls you to speak His Word to anyone—whether great and powerful or seemingly unimportant—the Holy Spirit will be your voice (Matthew 10:20).

- Have you ever felt that God placed you in a position to communicate something of eternal significance to someone on His behalf? What is holding you back? In what way do you need to step out in faith and obedience to what He is asking you to do?

Prayer Primer

Lord, help me to see that Your wisdom as true so I may recognize the false teachings of the world as the lies they are. Help me to put my trust in You and find true peace and rest. Give me courage to speak, and may my words reflect the wisdom of Your Word.

PART 5: TETH

Your Statutes Teach Me Even in Affliction

Read & Reflect

Psalm 119:65-72

This section of passages shows us that God has “dealt well with (His) servant...” (v. 65) even through His servant “was afflicted”(v. 67). The Psalmist laments that he has been “smeared with lies” by others (v. 69), yet concludes that “it was good” to be afflicted. We so often assume pain, suffering and affliction are pointless, but God is always at work, even (and sometimes, especially) in our suffering.

- How do we reconcile our pain and hurt with the goodness of God? How does God use affliction for good in our lives? How have you observed or experienced this?
- What are some specific Scriptures that remind you that God is faithful even when the world is not?
- Do you find yourself more faithful or less faithful to God’s precepts in times of trials? Why?
- What have you learned in affliction that you would never have learned without it?

Suffering often brings with it a strong sense that we are not in control. Often when we lose control by facing trials beyond our capabilities, we find ourselves more willing to surrender to God and trust Him instead of relying on ourselves. This is a great redemptive use of affliction in our lives, to show us more of our loving Father and to reassure our souls that He can indeed be trusted. That’s why “His law is better ... than thousands of gold and silver pieces” (v. 72). His lessons are priceless, and we could afford no better tutor. Which would we really prefer? The comfort and independence that earthly riches promise? Or a life spent according to God’s law? The Psalmist is clear which option has a better return on investment.

- Would you say you are as eager to gain more of God’s Word the way you want your retirement

account to grow? Why or why not? If that's not where your heart is right now, how can you move in that direction?

- What things in your life right now distract you from treasuring God and His Word? What adjustments or changes do you need to make?

Prayer Primer

Father, teach me in my affliction. Don't let me waste the valuable lessons you have for me in these times. Help me steward my suffering well for Your glory. Give me the eyes to see Your provision is greater and that Your Word is worth more than all the riches of this world!

PART 6: MEM / NUN
*Your Teaching is My
All-Day Joy*

Read & Reflect

Psalm 119:97-120

The Psalmist says that the Word of God is his “meditation all the day” (v. 97). Think of how a steak gets more flavorful the longer it is marinated. Or consider how the effects of direct sunlight are compounded and intensified the longer you are exposed to it. What treasures might we gain from prolonged exposure to God’s Word. What joys might we savor from marinating in His law “all the day” long?

- Does this reflect your current appetite for God’s Word? Why or why not?
- Why does consistently meditating on God’s Word impact us just as a marinade does?

God’s teachings are wiser than the teachings of anyone around us. They are wiser than the teaching of our enemies (v. 98), even when they seem to prosper despite ignoring God’s Word. God’s teachings are wiser than the lessons of our teachers (v. 99), who may teach well, but are not infallible like the Word of God. God’s Word is greater even than the wisdom of the aged (v. 100), whose experience will show God’s Word effectual over all else. God’s Word is always wiser in the end. May we never let our best source of wisdom sit idle on a night stand or collect dust on a bookshelf!

- Do you trust that there is no replacement or substitute for God’s Word? Why?
- In what ways do you find yourself seeking wisdom and counsel from weaker sources than God’s Word?

The Psalmist says the testimony of God’s Word is “my heritage forever” and “the joy of my heart” (v. 111). To a greater degree than even our family or cultural heritage, we should love being children of God, recipients of and witnesses to the testimonies of His Word.

- What affiliations matter most to you in your life (family, cultural, political, etc.)? Do any of these practically supersede your primary identity as a child of God and co-heir with Jesus Christ (Romans 8:17)?

Psalm 119:103 states, "How sweet are Your Words to my taste!" This was the start of inspiration to write music for this Psalm. We need to bathe ourselves in the sweet experience of reading, hearing, wrestling with, learning, exploring, memorizing and sharing God's Word with others. He's given us His Word to completely change our lives for His glory and our good. Surely God's Word is "A lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (v. 105), a light brighter than any other. That's why in verse 107, the Psalmist writes "Give me life according to Your Word!"

- In what ways is God's Word sweet to you?
- How does God's Word provide light and illumination to dark or unknown places along the path of life? What examples have you seen in your life?
- How would your daily life be different if you did not have access to the Word of God?

Prayer Primer

Lord, give me a hunger to read Your Word, consider its application to my life, and to share it with the people You place in my life, wherever that may be—at my work, with my family, in my neighborhood, at the coffee shop. May Your Word be the light of my path and the joy of my heart!

PART 7: QOETH / RESH

Your Word is My Hope for Salvation

~

Read & Reflect

Psalm 119:145-160

"I rise before dawn and cry for help ... I hope in Your words ... my eyes are awake before the watches of the night" How comforting it is to know that when we cry out, day or night, the Lord hears us! The next time you are up late unable to find rest, burdened or unable to keep your mind off the day's troubles, remember your Heavenly Father is also up. The God who never sleeps (Psalm 121:3-4) is always ready to listen to His children; He will not fail to bring comfort, hope and right perspective. In the brightest day or darkest night, what great comfort there is in memorizing and meditating upon His promises so they are at the ready in our minds, hearts and lips.

- Where do you tend to turn to in times when you are troubled, worried or anxious? To God's Word or elsewhere? Where is your hope?
- How does meditating on God's promises (v. 148) lead to life (v. 149)?
- What are some of the promises you read in Scripture that give you peace and life?

"Give me life" is a phrase repeated several times in this portion. We are all looking for life in something—relationships, status, wealth, approval, comfort, achievement, etc. But whatever earthly "fountain of life" we drink from will always leave us thirsty for more. Only the Author of Life can provide what we truly need—living water (John 4:10). Seeking life outside of Christ will, ironically, lead us further and further from real life. What a comfort then to know that "You are near, O LORD" (v. 151).

- Note the instances in this section where the Psalmist uses the phrase "give me life." What things in this section give life? How are these things connected or related?

- Is the nearness of God a comfort to you? Why or why not? How does His Word confirm His nearness to us?
- How is Jesus Christ the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises, steadfast love, justice and life?

Prayer Primer

God, help me to see more clearly that Your promises bring life. Thank You that day or night I can cry out to You and seek rescue, redemption and comfort in Your steadfast love. Help me to turn to You above all else. Keep me from seeking life anywhere else but in You.

AND BEYOND

~

For Further Study & Reflection

As we close our time in Psalm 119, take some time to read through the entire chapter and reflect:

- How does this Psalm remind us that God's Word is active and alive, sharper than a two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12)?
- How does God intend use His Word in our lives?
- How have you seen Him at work through His Word in your life?
- Where can you grow in your love, study and practice of the Word?

Psalm 119:16 says, "I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget Your Word." As you have gone through this guide and read through Psalm 119, what sections, stanzas or verses have impacted you the most?

- Choose a verse or stanza from Psalm 119 to commit to memory.

Psalm 119 ends with verse 176: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments." We see the foreshadowing of Jesus with similar words in Isaiah 53:6 which says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

- Pray and give thanks that in Christ comes the forgiveness of our sin. Give thanks that we can confess our sin and know the steadfast love and forgiveness of the Father through His Word!
- Read Psalm 119:161-176 and write some prayer primers of your own.

Our private devotion should impact our public worship gatherings. As followers of Christ, when we shout our favorite sports team's cheer yet hesitate to sing in church, it reveals a misalignment in our hearts. Something needs to be changed from the inside out. Uttering praise and singing God's Word is a tool that God uses to soften and change our hearts. Don't wait on your emotions to begin singing to and praising the Lord. When you sing, your heart will follow. Use God's Word to be reminded of why we praise Him and how worthy He is of praise.

- What is the purpose of the local church? Why do we gather? Why do we sing? Why should churches preach and teach the Word of God?
- How should our private devotions in the Word of God affect our corporate worship gatherings?

Praise God that He has made a way to know Jesus and make Him known. Give Him thanks for solid biblical preaching & teaching and authentic Christian community. Pray that we will continue to grow in our love for the Word in our church here and around the world.



RESTON BIBLE CHURCH

45650 OAKBROOK COURT, DULLES, VA | INFO@RESTONBIBLE.ORG

WWW.RESTONBIBLE.ORG



@RESTONBIBLE