

A watercolor illustration of a landscape. The foreground is a sandy, light-brown ground. In the middle ground, there is a single, stylized tree with green and brown leaves. The background is a soft, hazy blue and white sky. The overall style is soft and artistic.

# THE PSALTER

A SEASON THROUGH THE PSALMS

## *Psalm 119*

If you've taken the time to read Psalm 119 recently, you may have noticed a few things. First, it's really long! At 176 verses, it is easily the longest chapter in all the Bible. Second, it's consistent. Some Psalms shift their focus part way through the poem. But Psalm 119 stays laser-focused on its dominant theme all the way through. That theme is a love for God's Word. And this may have led you to notice a third thing: There seems to be a disconnect between the way the Psalmist feels about God's Word and the way we often feel about it. He can't stop talking about it, can't stop longing for it, and craving it, and praising God for it. It truly is the joy of his heart. (v. 112)

I confess this is not how I often feel about the Bible. It's not that I don't think it's important. I do! And it's not that I don't love it. I do! But I'm not sure it captures my heart in the way the Psalmist describes. There are just so many other things--important things, entertaining things, urgent things--vying for my attention. You know what that's like, right? You know you should read your Bible. You know it's important. You know it's good for you. But if you're honest, it can sometimes be hard to find the motivation to do so.

Now if we view Psalm 119 as a sort of standard for how we ought to feel about the Bible, it's going to place a pretty heavy burden on us. Who can possibly live up to this? Who can possibly feel this way all the time? But I don't think that's the point of this poem. I think it's meant to be an invitation, that it's meant to ignite something in us. I think the point is to display the value and beauty of God's Word, so that hopefully we can begin to see it for ourselves.

When the Psalmist says the Scriptures are "sweeter than honey to my mouth," or that they "are the joy of my heart," or \_\_\_\_\_, it's an invitation for us to come experience this too. To come see what the Bible truly is: joy-giving (Jn 15.10-11), life-sustaining (Matt 4.4), freeing (Jn 8.31-32), and breathed out by God (2 Tim 3.16) so that we might know him!

---

## *Discussion*

1. We all have times when reading the Bible seems difficult or even boring. What do you think is the biggest contributor to those feelings in your own life?
  2. Have you ever experienced moments like the Psalmist when the Word of God felt alive and refreshing and joy-giving to you? What was that like? Do you remember specific passages that have really spoken to you in those times?
  3. Who is one person you know who really demonstrates a valuing of God's Word and a delight in it? Why do you think that is? What could you learn from them?
  4. How has this Psalm encouraged, strengthened, or challenged you?
- 

## *Our Corporate Prayer*

*Psalm 119.33-37*

*Teach me, Lord, the meaning of your statutes, and I will always keep them.*

*Help me understand your instruction,*

*and I will obey it*

*and follow it with all my heart.*

*Help me stay on the path of your commands, for I take pleasure in it.*

*Turn my heart to your decrees*

*and not to dishonest profit.*

*Turn my eyes*

*from looking at what is worthless;*

*give me life in your ways.*