

The book of
Psalms
The Ancient Hymnbook of Israel

Foundation Q19

Teacher Book

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Psalms
The Ancient Hymnbook of Israel

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Foundations 19 - A Study of the Book of Psalms

Lesson 1 Introduction to the Book of Psalms

4.12.26

Big Picture: The Book of Psalms is the Hymnal of Ancient Israel and of the Early Church, whereas the Book of Proverbs is described as wise sayings that help believers understand the character of other people. The Psalms provide insight into the character of GOD, which includes allowing His children to express any and every emotion and concern they have. GOD is the same in every Psalm, but we respond to Him in different ways, according to the specific circumstances of our lives. However, it's great news to know that our circumstances never change the character of GOD.

- In Hebrew, Psalms means praise.
- The Psalms are *not* placed in categories or themes. They are random, expressing various emotions.
- The Psalms span a 1,000-year history, from the Egyptian Exodus to the Babylonian captivity in the 6th century BC.
- Often, a Psalm starts with despair and ends in praise.
- The 150 Psalms are divided into five books/sections.
- Over 35 manuscripts of the Book of Psalms were among the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were discovered between 1947 and 1956.

One reason for the 5-part division is that they were collected and compiled over a period of time. Many believe they were organized during the period after Israel's 70-year exile to Babylon. Ezra the scribe is likely the person responsible for compiling the work, organizing it into its five books, and adding the titles to those Psalms for which authorship was known.

Two-thirds of the Psalms are identified with superscriptions. This is the line above verse one that provides information about the author and, at times, the historical context. The first superscription is in **Psalm 3** - *A Psalm of David When He Fled from Absalom His Son*.

Superscription of **Psalm 90** - *A Prayer of Moses the Man of God*.

A postscript is at the end of a Psalm, and there are very few of these. An example is - **Psalm 72**: *The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended*.

→ **Types of Psalms**

- Imprecatory: Calling on God to bring judgment on others
- Lament: Personal and National, the largest category of Psalms
- Praise: To express worshipful thanks for GOD's blessings
- Messianic: To point to the person and work of Christ
- Ascent: To prepare the hearts of those making their way to Jerusalem
- Wisdom: To instruct and encourage believers to pursue GOD and His way

The Psalms of Ascent (120-134) are known as "pilgrim songs" sung on the journey to Jerusalem for Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Some traditions also suggest they were sung by priests ascending the Temple steps. While perhaps they were not originally composed for this purpose, these Psalms were later grouped together for use in traveling toward Jerusalem for the yearly Jewish festivals.

Re: gotquestions.org

→ **Various Authors of the Psalms**

- David leads with over 70 – note how he is described in 2 Samuel: **2Samuel 23:1** *Thus says David the son of Jesse; Thus says the man raised up on high, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet **psalmist of Israel.***
- Asaph, the worship leader, wrote 12 Psalms
- The sons of Korah, who were musicians, wrote 11 Psalms
- King Solomon wrote Psalms 72 and 127
- Ethan wrote Psalm 89
- Moses wrote Psalm 90
- Orphan Psalms - title given to those whose author is unknown

→ Five Books of Division of Psalms (There are variation in the divisions)

- Book 1: Psalm 1-41
- Book 2: Psalm 42-72
- Book 3: Psalm 73-89
- Book 4: Psalm 90-106
- Book 5: Psalm 107-150

The Psalms are a Book of Poetry; many are put to music. This poetry is based on thought lines, not rhymes.

- There are over 400 quotes or allusions to the Psalms in the New Testament.
- The Psalms reveal the hearts of those who love GOD and express their faith and doubts, victories and failures, fears and assurance, and their hope for a glorious future.
- Lyric poetry is a short, song-like form of expression focusing on the personal emotions, feelings, and state of mind of a single speaker, usually written in the first person.
- Poetry often uses *parallelism*; that is to say, the same thing twice with different words.
- Psalmists express their emotions and thoughts; that doesn't mean they are always accurate in their expressions of words.

"Most emphatically, the Psalms must be read as poems; as lyrics, with all the licenses and all the formalities, the hyperboles, the emotional rather than logical connections, which are proper in lyrics." (adapted from C.S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*)

Let's look at an example:

Psalm 56:8 *You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?*

- Does this mean GOD actually has a bottle with my name on it filled with my tears? No, but it does communicate that GOD keeps track of every single tear that is shed for His purpose.

"This is not what is called an 'apologetic' work. I am nowhere trying to convince unbelievers that Christianity is true. I address those who already believe it, or those who are ready, while reading to 'suspend their unbelief'. A man can't be always defending the truth; **there must be a time to feed on it.**" C.S. Lewis

"It was therefore with great surprise that I first noticed how the Psalmists talk about the judgments of GOD...The reason for this soon became very plain. The ancient Jews, like ourselves, think of GOD's judgment in terms of an earthly court of justice... The Jew pictures it as a civil case with himself as the plaintiff, hoping for GOD to bring down full justice on the offender, their enemies. We should not be surprised if the Psalms are full of longings for judgment and regard the announcement that *judgment* is coming as good news." C.S. Lewis

“Christians cry for mercy instead of justice; they (the Psalmists) cried to GOD for justice instead of injustice. They (the Jews) look forward to *judgment* because they think they have been wronged and hope to see the wrong righted. Nearly always, the Psalmists are the indignant plaintiff. The psalmist is quite sure that his own hands are clean, or at least in regard to the fact that he never did the horrible things that others did to him. At times, the Psalmist may confuse a desire for justice with revenge.” C.S. Lewis

Psalm 7:3-5 *O LORD my God, if I have done this: If there is iniquity in my hands,
4If I have repaid evil to him who was at peace with me, Or have plundered my
enemy without cause, 5Let the enemy pursue me and overtake me; Yes, let him
trample my life to the earth, And lay my honor in the dust.*

Psalm 109 *Do not keep silent, O God of my praise! 2For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the
deceitful Have opened against me; They have spoken against me with a lying tongue 3They have also
surrounded me with words of hatred, And fought against me without a cause. 4In return for my love they are
my accusers, But I give myself to prayer. 5Thus they have rewarded me evil for good, And hatred for my love.
6Set a wicked man over him, And let an accuser stand at his right hand. 7When he is judged, let him be
found guilty, And let his prayer become sin. 8Let his days be few, And let another take his office. 9Let his
children be fatherless, And his wife a widow. 10Let his children continually be vagabonds, and beg; Let them
seek their bread also from their desolate places. 11Let the creditor seize all that he has, And let strangers
plunder his labor. 12Let there be none to extend mercy to him, Nor let there be any to favor his fatherless
children. 13Let his posterity be cut off, And in the generation following let their name be blotted out. 14Let the
iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the LORD, And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. 15Let
them be continually before the LORD, That He may cut off the memory of them from the earth; 16Because he
did not remember to show mercy, But persecuted the poor and needy man, That he might even slay the
broken in heart. 17As he loved cursing, so let it come to him; As he did not delight in blessing, so let it be far
from him. 18As he clothed himself with cursing as with his garment, So let it enter his body like water, And
like oil into his bones. 19Let it be to him like the garment which covers him, And for a belt with which he
girds himself continually. 20Let this be the LORD's reward to my accusers And to those who speak evil against
my person. 21But You, O GOD the Lord, Deal with me for Your name's sake; Because Your mercy is good,
deliver me. 22For I am poor and needy, And my heart is wounded within me. 23I am gone like a shadow when*

it lengthens; I am shaken off like a locust. ²⁴My knees are weak through fasting, And my flesh is feeble from lack of fatness.²⁵I also have become a reproach to them; When they look at me, they shake their heads. ²⁶Help me, O LORD my God! Oh, save me according to Your mercy, ²⁷That they may know that this is Your hand— That You, LORD, have done it! ²⁸Let them curse, but You bless; When they arise, let them be ashamed, But let Your servant rejoice. ²⁹Let my accusers be clothed with shame, And let them cover themselves with their own disgrace as with a mantle. ³⁰I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; Yes, I will praise Him among the multitude. ³¹For He shall stand at the right hand of the poor, To save him from those who condemn him.

Addressing the Skeptics:

Many of the Psalms attributed to David have been questioned by skeptics on various grounds:

1. David was a wicked man incapable of writing praises to GOD.
2. David was a warrior and not gifted with the emotions found in the Psalms.
3. David was overwhelmed by time restraints due to various wars and then in leading a Kingdom.

Approaching Bible Difficulties *When Critics Ask* by Norman Geisler

- Presuming the Bible is guilty until proven innocent
- Confusing fallible interpretations with infallible revelation
- Failing to understand the context of the passage
- Neglecting to interpret difficult passages in light of clear ones
- Forgetting the Bible is a human book with human characters
- Assuming that a partial report is a false report
- Demanding that the N.T. citations of the O.T. must always be exact quotations
- Assuming that divergent accounts are false ones
- Presuming that the Bible approves of all that it records
- Forgetting that the Bible uses non-technical, everyday language
- Assuming that round numbers are false

“The Bible does not balance every doctrine with its counterpart on every page. In some places, the righteous requirement of the law is emphasized; in other places, the grace of God is clearly the predominant theme. In some places, faith apart from works is taught; elsewhere, faith is tied to one’s works. When you put it all together, you understand that we are saved by faith alone, but not the kind of faith that is alone.” - Lou Priolo

Foundations 19 - A Study of the Book of Psalms

Lesson 2 Psalm 1

4.19.26

Big Picture: The Book of Psalms is the Hymnal of Ancient Israel and of the Early Church, whereas the Book of Proverbs is described as wise sayings that help believers understand the character of other people. The Psalms provide insight into the character of GOD, which includes allowing His children to express any and every emotion and concern they have. GOD is the same in every Psalm, but we respond to Him in different ways, according to the specific circumstances of our lives. However, it's great news to know that our circumstances never change the character of GOD.

List your favorite Psalm(s):

→ Types of Psalms

- Imprecatory: Calling on God to bring judgment on others
- Lament: Personal and National, the largest category of Psalms
- Praise: To express worshipful thanks for GOD's blessings
- Messianic: To point to the person and work of Christ
- Ascent: To prepare the hearts of those making their way to Jerusalem
- Wisdom: To instruct and encourage believers to pursue GOD and His way

In the imprecatory Psalms, it's easy to see the writers as self-righteous and vengeful, especially if we don't understand that the Psalms are God's way of saying that there is no off-limits in expressing any and every emotion. Though they call God's wrath down on their enemies, they still realize the call is GOD's to make, not theirs.

Psalm 1 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ²But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. ³He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. **4The ungodly are not so,** But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. ⁵Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. ⁶For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

- The first word of the first Psalm is **Blessed**.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; ²⁴But let him who glories glory in this, That he **understands and knows Me**, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.

The blessed life is a deep, abiding state of spiritual prosperity, joy, and divine favor that supersedes positive or negative circumstances. It describes a person whose life is firmly rooted in God's word, leading to inner contentment and stability, similar to a tree planted by streams of water. We experience the blessed life when Scripture transforms how we think about GOD and how we feel about GOD.

Jesus highlighted the blessed life in **John 10**, where He identified Himself as the Good Shepherd and said that His sheep hear His voice.

→ **John 10:10** The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more **abundantly**. (beyond, extraordinary)

- In having Christ as our source of true and enduring happiness, we drastically decrease the vulnerability to the various competing voices that call for our affection and allegiance.
- Abundant life doesn't mean trouble-free, escape from all bad circumstances. It goes deeper and beyond any external events. It provides what money, entertainment, sex, and education cannot provide: a deep sense of contentment.
- Often Scripture provides the best definition or explanation for terms we want to explore.

1 Timothy 6:6 Now godliness with contentment is **great gain**.

Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which **surpasses all understanding**, will guard your hearts (emotions) and minds (thoughts) through Christ Jesus.

Because of the fall, our thoughts and emotions are not trustworthy. The blessed life in Christ helps us navigate through all the changes that accompany life on this side of Heaven.

Psalm 1

- The first decision in the first Psalm is **what path will I choose?**
 - Different paths mean different destinations.
 - Who's the most qualified to tell me how to live a happy life? _____
 - One path leads to a temporal worldview, and one path leads to an eternal worldview.

Temporal Worldview:

1. Entitlement
2. Autonomy
3. Immediate Gratification

Eternal Worldview :

1. All that I have is a gift from GOD's grace, love, and mercy.
2. I am purchased with Christ's death and belong to Him.
3. Delayed gratification

- Evidence of maturity and commitment is being willing to wait between achievement and reward.
- The first promise and warning in the first Psalm is **blessing or destruction**.
 - The **longing** to be **happy** is placed in our hearts by GOD and is not sinful.
 - We should not try to deny or resist our desires for happiness; instead, we should seek to find it in its deepest and most rewarding source.
 - The deepest and most rewarding source is **Christ!**

Psalm 1 Blessed is the man *Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ²But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. ³He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. ⁴The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. ⁵Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. ⁶For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

1. What a blessed person doesn't do:
 - A. A blessed person doesn't **walk in the counsel of the ungodly.**
 - B. A blessed person doesn't **stand in the path of sinners.**
 - C. A blessed person doesn't **sit in the seat of the scornful.**

Note the Progression:

- Walks, Stands, and Sits
- Counsel, Path, and Seat
- Ungodly, Sinners, and Scornful

→ Humble and sincere believers don't think they're too *good* for non-believers; they realize they are *not good enough, not strong enough to endure the temptations that accompany their worldview and lifestyle.*

2. What a blessed person does:
 - A. Delights in GOD's Word
 - B. Meditates on GOD's Word
3. The benefits of the blessed person:
 - A. Spiritual stability
 - B. Spiritual fruit - **Galatians 5:22-23** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law*
 - C. Spiritual success - **Joshua 1:8** *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*

4. The consequences of the ungodly

- Many people confuse the delayed judgment of GOD with the denied judgment of GOD. They abuse GOD's grace and mercy and interpret it in a sinful and foolish way.

Romans 2:2-5 *But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. ³And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? ⁴Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? ⁵But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God...*

How does Psalm 1 align with my life?

What changes or re-commitment needs to be made?

Foundations 19 - A Study of the Book of Psalms

Lesson 3 Psalm 2

4.26.26

Big Picture: The Book of Psalms is the Hymnal of Ancient Israel and of the Early Church. The Psalms provide insight into the character of GOD, which includes allowing His children to express any and every emotion and concern they have. GOD is the same in every Psalm, but we respond to Him in different ways, according to the specific circumstances of our lives. However, it's great news to know that our circumstances never change the character of GOD.

→ Types of Psalms

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Psalm 2 is universally recognized in Christian theology as a premier Messianic Psalm prophesying the reign, sonship, and ultimate victory of Jesus Christ. It portrays God installing His King on Zion, defying earthly rulers, and declaring him the Son of God. The New Testament quotes it frequently to affirm Jesus as the Messiah.

Skeptics place **Psalm 2** within a historical context. They say **Psalm 2** only speaks of the kings during the time of the Nation of Israel. Though it's true that **Psalm 2** was sung during the coronation of a new king, we see that any honest reading reveals that its complete fulfillment could only be found in **Christ**.

Psalm 2 is a Messianic Psalm, penned some 1000 years before Christ's first coming, but it focuses on His second coming. The 3,000-year-old Messianic **Psalm 2** brings encouragement and hope to Christ followers and a severe warning to those outside of Christ.

Psalm 2 *Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing?*

²*The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying*

³*"Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."*

⁴*He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.*

⁵*Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure:*

⁶*"Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."*

⁷*"I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.*

⁸*Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.*

⁹*You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' "*

¹⁰*Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth.*

¹¹*Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling.*

¹²*Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little.*

Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

- A coalition of Nations rebel with a plan to dethrone GOD.
- By nature, we are rebellious against God; despite our condition, Jesus came to bring salvation, saving us *not* only from the just penalty of our sins, but also transforming us into worshippers of God.

What would our world look like if national leaders promoted **Psalm 33:8**?

→ **Psalm 33:8** *Let all the earth **fear the LORD**; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in **awe of Him**.*

What would our lives, marriages, families, and churches look like if we *sincerely* and *wholeheartedly* embraced **Psalm 33:8**?

Spiritual rebels do not reject God's Word because it contradicts itself; they reject Scripture because it contradicts their **opinions** of God and their **lifestyle**. They desire and pursue autonomy at all costs (**John 3:19, Romans 1:18-32**). They mentally dismantle God and rebuild Him with only the parts they want Him to possess and convince themselves there is absolutely nothing God will do about it!

How did GOD respond to the threats of world leaders? God laid out threats of his own. The huge difference is that God is able to fulfill His. **vv. 4-9**

Psalm 59:8 *But You, O LORD, shall laugh at them; You shall have all the nations in derision.*

Not a single person will receive **injustice** from GOD. Many will receive mercy, many will receive justice, none will receive *injustice*.

Deuteronomy 32:3-4 *For I proclaim the name of the LORD: Ascribe greatness to our God. ⁴He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For **all His ways are justice**, A God of truth and **without injustice**; Righteous and upright is He.*

In **Acts 4**, the religious leaders threatened Peter and John and warned them to stop promoting the resurrected Christ. Their response made two bold claims: (1) David's writing is divinely inspired, and (2) the one David wrote about was Jesus Christ!

While Herod, Pilate, and others thought their political maneuver to kill Jesus was brilliant, they only fulfilled God's purposes. Similarly, in the future, when the Nations rise up against Christ, they are **fulfilling** God's decree!

Acts 4:23-28 *And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. ²⁴So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, ²⁵who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? ²⁶The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ. ²⁷"For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together ²⁸to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.*

What does "**today I have begotten you**" in Psalm 2:7 mean?

- It's *not* in the sense of the begotten Son in eternity past (though it's true).
- It's *not* in the sense of the begotten Son at his incarnation, birth to Mary (though that is true).
- Begotten highlights Jesus as uniquely God's Son—sharing the **same divine nature** as God—as opposed to believers who are God's sons and daughters by adoption.

Christ, being the "begotten" Son in **Psalm 2**, addresses his resurrection as the exalted risen Lord, thereby claiming His right to rule! **How do we know this?**

- **Acts 13:32-33** *And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers.* ³³ *God has fulfilled this for us their children in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the **second Psalm**: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.*

There's a direct connection between what David wrote in **Psalm 2** about Christ ruling with a rod of iron and dashing into pieces his enemies, and what John wrote in **Revelation 19**.

- **Revelation 19:15-16** *Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.* ¹⁶ *And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS*

God's sovereignty, omnipotence, holiness, justice, and **love are all displayed in Psalm 2.**

- Skeptics argue that they cannot see the **love** of GOD in *Psalm 2*.
- God places His warning about wrath alongside His call to repentance so rebels can escape judgment; that's God's **love** displayed!
- A peace treaty is offered by God, yet many despise His terms!

Psalm 2:10-12 *Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth.* ¹¹ *Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling.* ¹² *Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.*

- Fools cannot see warnings as love. It's the church's responsibility to help them make the connection.
- The unsaved are not just in spiritual darkness; there's a power working in them to keep them there...

2 Corinthians 4:3-4, Colossians 1:13

Romans 1:21-22 *because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.* ²² *Professing to be wise, they became fools...*

Romans 2:2-6 *But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.* ³ *And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?* ⁴ *Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?* ⁵ *But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*

Psalm 10:13 *Why do the wicked renounce God? He has said in his heart, "You will not require an account."*

Proverbs 3:7 *Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.*

The "**fear of the Lord**" is an understanding that GOD sees and knows everything about me and one day I will give an account of my life to Him. This knowledge affects my daily decision-making.

- **Psalm 44:21** *Would not God search this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart.*

We will either rule with Christ or be separated in judgment from Him. Our response to God's loving warning and gracious provision for salvation in Christ will determine where we spend our eternity.

God's King (His son) will reign forever! **Psalm 2** promises it, and the resurrection of Jesus affirms it!

Friends of Israel source: About ten percent, or 16 of the 150 Psalms, are classified as Messianic. They are **Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 23, 24, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 72, 89, 102, 110, and 118.**

Foundations 19 – A Study of the Book of Psalms

Lesson 4 Psalm 19

5.3.26

5.17.26 **Psalm 23**

5.24.26 **Psalm 73**

5.31.26 Pastries with Pastors in the Pavilion (all ages)

6.7.26 **Psalm 119**

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Psalm 19:1-6 The **World** GOD Created

Psalm 19:7-14 The **Word** GOD Communicated

Psalm 19:13-24 The Prayer of the Psalmist

- **God's two-volume work of revelation: (1) world book (2) word book**

"I take this (**Psalm 19**) to be the greatest poem in the Psalms and one of the greatest lyrics in the world."

– C.S. Lewis

Psalm 19:1-6 *The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. ²Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. ³There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. ⁴Their line (message HCSB) (voice ESV) has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, ⁵Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, And rejoices like a strong man to run its race ⁶Its rising is from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat. (HCSM – Holman Christian Standard Bible by Lifeway SBC; ESV – English Standard Version)*

Skeptics argue that GOD has *not* provided enough evidence to believe in Him.

1. **SKY**
2. **SON**
3. **SCRIPTURE**

Romans 1:18-21 *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who **suppress** the **truth** in unrighteousness,¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are **clearly seen**, being understood by the **things that are made**, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are **without excuse**,²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

- **Creation is GOD's wordless book that everyone can read.**
- **Creation should create a desire to seek out the Creator.**

Paul quotes **Psalms 19:4** in **Romans 10:18** *But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed "Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world.*

Hebrews 11:3 *By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.*

→ Paul's Sermon on Mars Hill in Athens to the Philosophers:

- Creation
- Repentance
- Judgment
- **Resurrection**

Acts 17:23b-25, 31 *Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: ²⁴ God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. ²⁵ Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things... Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, ³¹ because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."*

→ **The imagery of Psalm 19:1-6**

- Each day and night communicate that there is a powerful Creator.
- This message is communicated throughout the entire world.
- The sun is like an eager bridegroom on his wedding day, and like the excitement of a champion runner winning a race.

→ "tabernacle (tent) for the sun" perhaps to describe how the sun appears to go into hiding for the night.

Psalm 19:7-12 *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; ⁸The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; ⁹The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. ¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. ¹¹Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults.*

- It is GOD's Word that reveals the sinful areas of our hearts that we could never perceive otherwise.
- Just as the "sun" is GOD's dominant focus in verses 1-6, the "**Word**" is GOD's dominant feature in verses 7-11.

What are the various titles and characteristics of Scripture in Psalm 19?

v7 The law of the LORD is perfect *Law = Hebrew; *Torah*

v7 The testimony of the LORD is sure (trustworthy)

v8 The statutes of the LORD are right

- Statutes are GOD's detailed, specified instructions for everyday life.

v8 The commandments of the LORD are pure (free from anything impure)

v9 The fear of the LORD is clean

v9 The judgments of the LORD are true

- Judgments align with how a judge in a courtroom gives verdicts.
- How does "fear of the LORD" fit in? We wouldn't think to identify Scripture this way. It is GOD's display of how His Word is to be perceived and valued, highlighting how we should see and treasure it. The **fear of the LORD** is the beginning of true and life-enhancing wisdom.

What are the various benefits of Scripture listed in Psalm 19?

v7 it converts the soul (renewing HCBS, reviving ESV)

v7 makes wise the simple

v8 causes rejoicing in the heart

v8 enlightens the eyes

v9 it endures forever

v9 it is righteous altogether

How is the value of GOD's Word revealed in Psalm 19?

v10:

v11:

The point of **Psalm 19** is that we gain immeasurable benefits from studying and embracing Scripture and forfeit many blessings when we do not.

The Closing Prayer of Psalm 19

Psalm 19:13-14 *Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression.¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.*

- Imagine how our relationships would be enriched by committing verse 14 into our regular prayer life.
- LORD, give me strength to help my words and thoughts honor you, and my redeemer, restore me when I don't use them in a God-honoring manner.

What does my Bible reading plan look like?

What does my Bible study plan look like?

GOD's Word...

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. Read It | Matthew 4:4, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Psalm 119:50 |
| 2. Study It | 2 Timothy 2:15, Romans 10:17, Psalm 119:38, 71 |
| 3. Meditate on it | Psalm 1:1-3, Psalm 119:18, 48, 97 |
| 4. Memorize it | Psalm 119:11, 62, 92, 103 |
| 6. Apply it | Psalm 119:4, 9, 24, 33-34, 59-60, 105 |
| 7. Share it | Psalm 119:13, 27, 46, 164, 171, 172 |
| 8. Delight in it | Psalm 119:16, 48, 72, 127, 131, 140, 143, 162 |

Foundations 19 – A Study of the Book of Psalms

Lesson 5 Psalm 23

5.17.26

5.24.26 **Psalm 73**

5.31.26 Pastries with Pastors in the Pavilion (all ages)

6.7.26 **Psalm 119**

Big Picture: The Book of Psalms is the Hymnal of Ancient Israel and of the Early Church. The Psalms provide insight into the character of GOD, which includes allowing His children to express any and every emotion and concern they have. GOD is the same in every Psalm, but we respond to Him in different ways, according to the specific circumstances of our lives. However, it's great news to know that our circumstances never change the character of GOD.

Superscription: A Psalm of David.

Psalm 23 *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ²He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. ³He restores my soul;*

He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. ⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;

For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil;

My cup runs over. ⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever

Psalm 23 Our Lord's Commitment to His People (adapted from Dick Lucas)

1. I shall not want for peace...*he leads me beside the still waters*
2. I shall not want for mercy...*he restores my soul*
3. I shall not want for guidance...*he leads me in the paths of righteousness*
4. I shall not want for meaning...*for his names sake*

5. I shall not want for security...*though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil*
6. I shall not want for protection...*thy rod and they staff they comfort me*
7. I shall not want for confidence...*you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies*
8. I shall not want for comfort...*you anoint my head with oil*
9. I shall not want for contentment...*my cup runs over; good and mercy follow me all my days*
10. I shall not want for eternity...*I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever*

→ ***I shall not want for peace***

Romans 5:1 *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

- **Romans 5** addresses our position, our standing.
- **Philippians 4** addresses our practice, our state.

Philippians 4:6-7 *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

- Because of our fallen nature, our emotions and thoughts are not trustworthy.
- Scripture doesn't teach us to ignore our feelings; it warns us against being directed by them in how we make life choices.
- As we take our anxiousness to our Lord (Great Shepherd) He may or may not remove our circumstances, but He has promised to protect our hearts (emotions) and minds (thoughts) in the midst of anxious times.

→ ***I shall not want for mercy.***

Lamentations 3:22-23 *Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not.²³ They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.*

- **Grace** is GOD giving us what we did *not* deserve.
- **Mercy** is GOD *not* giving us what we did deserve.
- My worst days are never so bad that I am **beyond** the reach of **God's grace and mercy**, and my best days are never so good that I am beyond the **need** of **God's grace and mercy**.

Matthew 7:7 *Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.*

- Sometimes people should get exactly what they do *not* deserve; we did!
- While mercy offers forgiveness and has the potential to restore relationships, it often allows natural, legal, or relational consequences to remain as a means of correction, healing, and accountability.
- It is a gift from GOD to be able to **perceive** our sins. It is a greater gift from GOD to have **our sins forgiven!**

→ ***I shall not want for guidance***

- Note the path GOD leads us on... *in the paths of righteousness*
- GOD's leading is about His **glory** and our **good!**
- A great amount of anxiousness would decrease simply by allowing GOD to lead us through His Word.
- A great amount of heartache would be avoided as well.
- Be a part of the Lord's "few," see Matthew 7

Matthew 7:13-14 *Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

- When you begin to comprehend how **vulnerable** you are, your view of Jesus as your Shepherd will take on a whole new **perspective**.

Hebrews 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that **great Shepherd** of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

→ ***I shall not want for meaning***

- The cry for happiness and meaning is found in GOD!
- Why is it difficult for people to embrace that in GOD we find the deepest meaning and satisfaction in life?

When we take pursuing our meaning in Jesus seriously....

1. He exposes prideful desires and motives
2. He confronts traditions
3. He counters consumerism
4. He reveals prejudices
5. He expands comfort zones
6. He transforms worldview
7. He revises personal agendas

*Jesus does so for the purpose of having you experience the abundant life He promised. Re: **John 10:10***

→ ***I shall not want for contentment***

- **Contentment** is defined as a state of peaceful satisfaction, happiness, and ease of mind, often described as "the knowledge of enough."

1Timothy 6:6-10 Now **godliness** with **contentment** is **great gain**.⁷ For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

- By finding our contentment in Christ, we **remove** a huge amount of temptation and decrease our vulnerability to the voices that compete for our allegiance.

→ ***I shall not want for eternity***

- Eternal life isn't just about a quantity of time; it's about the quality of life. We will have a glorified body. We will worship and serve GOD and experience ultimate joy forever!

Romans 8:18 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the **glory** which shall be revealed in us.*

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are **eternal**.*

John 17:3 *And this is eternal life, that they may **know** You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

Jeremiah 9:23-24 *Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; ²⁴ But let him who glories glory in this, That he **understands** and **knows** Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.*

- The following was given to me by Tom Woods on May 28th, 2002.
- Tom is Sharon's husband; he was a faithful member of Grace and was ushered into the presence of the Great Shepherd on 2.26.2013

Psalm 23

*The Lord is my Shepherd...*That's Relationship!

*I shall not want...*That's Supply!

*He makes me to lie down in green pastures...*That's Rest!

*He leads me beside the still waters...*That's Refreshment!

*He restores my soul...*That's Healing! (spiritual healing)

*He leads me in the paths of righteousness...*That's Guidance!

*For His name's sake...*That's Purpose!

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...*That's Testing!

*I will fear no evil...*That's Protection!

*For thou art with me...*That's Faithfulness!

*Thy rod and staff they comfort me...*That's Discipline!

*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies...*That's Hope!

*Thou anointest my head with oil...*That's Consecration!

*My cup runneth over...*That's Abundance!

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life...*That's Blessing!

*And I will dwell in the house of the Lord...*That's Security!

*Forever...*That's Eternity!

In the New Testament period, who identified himself as the Shepherd of Psalm 23? [**Jesus Christ**](#)

John 10

Jesus presented Himself as the True Shepherd **v3**

Jesus presented Himself as the Only Shepherd **v8**

Jesus presented Himself as the Good Shepherd **v11**

Jesus presented Himself as the Obedient Shepherd **v11,15,17**

How well do I trust Christ in allowing Him to lead (Shepherd) me in how I do life on this side of eternity?

Foundations 19 – A Study of the Book of Psalms

Lesson 6 Psalm 73

5.24.26

Big Picture: The Book of Psalms is the Hymnal of Ancient Israel and of the Early Church. The Psalms provide insight into the character of GOD, which includes allowing His children to express any and every emotion and concern they have. GOD is the same in every Psalm, but we respond to Him in different ways, according to the specific circumstances of our lives. However, it's great news to know that our circumstances never change the character of GOD.

The Author of Psalm 73:

Asaph: There were a number of Levites that King David assigned as worship leaders in the tabernacle choir, according to **1 Chronicles 6:31-32**. Asaph was one of these men (**1 Chronicles 6:39**). Asaph's duties are described in detail in **1 Chronicles 16**. According to **2 Chronicles 29:30**, both Asaph and David were skilled musicians. – gotquestions.org

The Theme of Psalm 73:

The 'root sin' issue for Asaph was **envying sinners**. The Temptation to **envy sinners** is addressed in detail in Psalm 73 and repeatedly throughout the Psalms. Solomon also warned about envying sinners in numerous Proverbs. It is a common and easy trap to fall into. **Envy** is a strong emotion, and if it's not addressed quickly and completely, it will display itself in numerous sinful ways.

Psalm 73 Provides Incredible Insight...

Asaph provides insight into identifying and correcting the sin of envy. It's another reminder of how **valuable Scripture** is and how many heartaches could be avoided by trusting GOD with our lives.

Four reasons envying sinners is more challenging than ever before:

1. The **Ability** to compare the lifestyles of the rich and famous due to the media.
2. The **Access** to a multitude of material items, all available through credit.
3. The **Anticipation** of immediate gratification, I want it now!
4. The **Alarming** reality of the law of diminishing effects.

The benefits of trusting GOD by not envying sinners:

- By not envying sinners, we discover that ultimate delight is in the Lord. **Ps 37:1-4**
- By not envying sinners, we decrease our struggle with anger. **Ps 37:7-9**
- By not envying sinners, we diminish discouragement and depression. **Ps 37:1**
- By not envying sinners, we decrease the desire to be with them. **Pro 24:1**
- By not envying sinners, we decrease anxiety. **Pro 24:19**
- By not envying sinners, we honor God through the Tenth Commandment **Exodus 20:17**
- By not envying sinners, we reveal our love for God. **Matt 22:37-38**
- By not envying sinners, we acknowledge that Christ is the provider of abundant living. **John 10:10**
- By not envying sinners, we communicate that our hearts are set on eternal things. **Col 3:2, 1Tim 6:6-11**

Psalm 73 Truly God is good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart.

²But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped.

³For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ⁴For there are no pangs (pain) in their death, But their strength is firm. ⁵They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like other men ⁶Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them like a garment. ⁷Their eyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish. ⁸They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; They speak loftily. ⁹They set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue walks through the earth. ¹⁰Therefore his people return here, And waters of a full cup are drained by them. ¹¹And they say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?" ¹²Behold, these are the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase in riches. ¹³Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, And washed my hands in innocence. ¹⁴For all day long I have been plagued, And chastened every morning. ¹⁵If I had said, "I will speak thus," Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children.

¹⁶When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me— ¹⁷Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end. ¹⁸Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. ¹⁹Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. ²⁰As a dream when one awakes, So, Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image. ²¹Thus my heart was grieved, And I was vexed in my mind.

²²I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. ²³Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. ²⁴You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory. ²⁵Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. ²⁶My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever ²⁷For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry. ²⁸But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, That I may declare all Your works.

Psalm 73 Outlined

1. Exception

vv. 1-3

- "...but as for me..."
- Don't believe everything you **think** and certainly don't believe everything you **feel**.

1 Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, do not **think** it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some **strange** thing happened to you; ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

2. Exaggeration

vv. 4-12

- A sign that we are struggling with or have yielded to envy is our use of exaggeration in our speech.
- Many godly men and women struggle with seeing the wicked advance and avoid justice.

Jeremiah 12:1-2 Righteous are You, O LORD, when I plead with You; Yet let me talk with You about Your judgments. Why does the way of the **wicked prosper**? Why are those happy who deal so **treacherously**?

Ecclesiastes 7:15 I have seen everything in my days of vanity: There is a **just man who perishes** in his righteousness, And there is a **wicked man who prolongs life** in his wickedness.

- GOD doesn't ignore the reality of injustice, and one day He will correct and restore the original plan as started in the Garden of Eden. Until then, we are to use the prosperity of the wicked as reminders that we are spiritual pilgrims who are to trust GOD regardless of our circumstances because He is worthy of our complete devotion and allegiance. That's the message from Asaph.

3. Exasperation

vv. 13-16

4. Explanation

vv. 17-22

- This is a great example of the value of hearing Biblical truth. We see this further explained by the Apostle Paul in his letter to Pastor Timothy.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

5. Exaltation

vv. 23-28

- Asaph's circumstances didn't change, but he did! GOD's plan for His Word is to transform us as we await our future glory.

How do we combat the temptation to envy sinners?

Proverbs 23:17-18 *Do not let your heart envy sinners, But be zealous for the **fear of the LORD** all the day;*

¹⁸*For surely there is a hereafter, And your hope will not be cut off.*

- The **fear of the LORD** is an understanding that GOD sees and knows everything about me, and one day I will give an account of myself to Him.
- This information about the **fear of the LORD** is more than mental acknowledgment; it affects how I respond to Him.

Foundations 19 - A Study of the Book of Psalms

Lesson 7 Psalm 119

6.7.26

Big Picture: The Book of Psalms is the Hymnal of Ancient Israel and of the Early Church. The Psalms provide insight into the character of GOD, which includes allowing His children to express any and every emotion and concern they have. GOD is the same in every Psalm, but we respond to Him in different ways, according to the specific circumstances of our lives. However, it's great news to know that our circumstances never change the character of GOD.

Psalm 119 in a sentence... It's about the practical application of Scripture as a means to **honor GOD** and **experience joy**. GOD is glorified when we find our deepest satisfaction in Him.

My Commitment to seek GOD through Scripture:

- I must comprehend that seeking GOD is a **lifetime pursuit**.
- I must realize the temptation to treasure things above GOD.
- I must be **sincere** and **disciplined** in my pursuit of GOD.

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible with 176 verses. The theme is Scripture, which is defined in numerous ways throughout the Psalm. Over 165 of the 176 verses reference Scripture. The author is unknown, but credit is often given to David.

- Law of the LORD
- Testimonies
- Precepts
- Statutes
- Commandments
- Judgments
- Word

Law is *Torah*, typically in reference to the Laws of Moses or the first five books of the Bible. It can also apply to all of GOD's laws.

Testimonies are written witnesses, evidence declaring GOD's character and desire for humanity.

Precepts are GOD's divine instructions on moral behavior.

Statutes are GOD's authoritative decrees or rules.

Commandments are GOD telling humanity how to worship and live

Judgments are GOD's evaluation of righteousness and unrighteousness.

Word is God's divine revelation that communicates to us that GOD desires a relationship with His created beings.

Psalm 119 in Hebrew is an acrostic with eight verses (stanzas) taking you through the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Each section has the same letter in the Hebrew text.

Psalm 119:1-2 **Blessed** are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD! ²**Blessed** are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart!

Do you really want to be happy?

Why is "Do you really want to be happy?" such a crucial question?

- Everyone desires happiness because it is built within us by our Creator. The issue is what do you mean by "I want to be happy," and where do you think the greatest source of happiness is found?

Valuable Insight Regarding Asking Questions from Matthew 22 :

Matthew 22:35-40 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" ³⁷ Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

- Is it possible to ask questions without truly wanting the answer?
- Is it possible to hear the truth without applying it?
- Is it possible to say you love someone without understanding true love?
- Is it possible to say you love someone without really meaning it?
- Is it possible to stop loving someone whom you once truly loved?

Clarification of Happiness

Happiness is a state of emotional well-being that is accompanied by joy, purpose, satisfaction, contentment, and fulfillment. **Circumstances** and **correct thinking** play a major role in our happiness. Of the two, *thinking correctly* would be supported in Scripture as the most important.

Philippians 4:8-9 *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—**meditate** (**think** KJV, **dwell on** HCSB) on these things. ⁹The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.*

- Don't believe everything you **think**.

Happiness and Joy are often used as synonyms, but they are *not* necessarily the same. It's OK to use them in the context of Christianity as being closely related. However, **happiness** is based more on external circumstances, whereas **joy** is internal, and if circumstances play a role, they only influence joy; they do not determine it. For a Christ follower, the answer for both our happiness and joy is found in the person and promises of GOD. With that said, we must "fight" to cherish and protect our joy in Christ. Many passages support this, but **Psalm 119** is a huge promoter of discovering and building happiness and joy in God. Seek and discover the greatest source and experience of happiness and joy in GOD! **That's how Psalm 119 opens!**

The Opening of Psalm 119 - The Foundation is Laid

Psalm 119 *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD! ²Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart!*

The blessed person consistently (not perfectly) follows God's teaching with a desire to pursue GOD with all their heart!

- **Why is this important to know?**
- **What does this look like in my life to seek GOD with all my heart?**
 1. It doesn't mean perfection, but it does mean **sincerity**.
 2. My relationship with God is the most important one in my life, made evident by my desire to know Him better, love Him deeper, and serve Him more faithfully. **KNOW LOVE SERVE**
 3. I take my disobedience and sin seriously and accept **full** responsibility.
 4. I am more focused on **my sins** than on the sins of others.
 5. I love what God loves and desire to please Him.
 6. I treasure Christ as my greatest prize.
 7. I extend forbearance and forgiveness to others.
 8. I seek and want the very best for others, which is always their relationship with Christ.
 9. I demonstrate gratitude to GOD through generosity in **finances, time,** and **service**.
- There are many ways to invest our lives; there are many good causes, many hobbies, many legitimate ways to spend our money and time. The question is, what is the "best" way?
- Which way honors GOD the most, and which way brings me the greatest joy, contentment, and peace?
- How will the way I choose affect eternity?

Psalm 119 provides hundreds of spiritual instructions and motivations to **know, love, and **serve** GOD.**

Psalm 119:1-8 *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD! ²Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart! ³They also do no iniquity; They walk in His ways. ⁴You have commanded us To keep Your precepts diligently. ⁵Oh, that my ways were directed To keep Your statutes! ⁶Then I would not be ashamed, When I look into all Your commandments. ⁷I will praise You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgments. ⁸I will keep Your statutes; Oh, do not forsake me utterly!*

vv1-2 Discover and experience true happiness by pursuing and following GOD.

v3 There are optional ways/paths to walk

v4 GOD gives commands, not suggestions, and they should be carried out with consistent and sincere effort.

vv5-7 The acknowledgment of what results from being led by GOD's Word.

v8 The reality of our need for complete dependence upon GOD. The Psalmist confesses that any commitment to GOD requires His grace to fulfill it.

- Read the following passages and make notes on what sticks out to you:

Psalm 119:9-18 *How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. ¹⁰With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! ¹¹Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You. ¹²Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes. ¹³With my lips I have declared All the judgments of Your mouth. ¹⁴I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches. ¹⁵I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways. ¹⁶I will delight myself in Your statutes I will not forget Your word.*

My notes:

One of Pastor Jerry's favorite verses in **Psalm 119...**

Psalm 119:18 *Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.*

- This is the first passage Jerry memorized as a follower of Christ at age 17.
- It teaches that there are things we would never perceive from Scripture without GOD's help.
- It communicates that GOD's Law is good and profitable.

Homework Assignment:

Read Psalm 119, list your favorite verses, and explain why you enjoy them.

