

The Word

Six Lessons from Psalm 119
with Discussion Questions
(For Individual or Group Use)

by
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Introduction

So, you are faithfully reading your Bible every day, maybe even doing a “read-the-Bible-in-a-year” plan or a “five-Psalms-and-one-Proverb” a day plan. Then you get to Psalm 119. Maybe you cringe a little, look at the clock, and try to judge if you have enough time to get through it. “Maybe I’ll catch up on that one later,” you may decide. The only problem with that scenario is “later” usually doesn’t come.

It can be difficult to read any portion of Scripture consistently, but we know we need to, so we try an assortment of reading plans to help motivate us. Still, we may end up avoiding long or difficult passages.

For more than a year I spent nearly every day in Psalm 119, and that often included reading it in its entirety several times a day. In that time I discovered how deep and meaningful this chapter really is. A sermon could easily be developed out of each of the 176 verses. But this study is not an exposition of verses, it is merely designed to draw your attention to the emotion the Psalmist conveyed concerning the Word of God, as well as the blessings he received through loving it.

The Word: Six Lessons in Psalm 119 will not have you read the entire chapter every day. In fact, no where in this study will you be required to read Psalm 119. However, I would highly recommend reading it before you begin each lesson, whether you do one lesson a week or one lesson a month.

You will find the meat of this study amongst the discussion questions. I encourage you to grab a sheet of paper or use the space provided in this book as you carefully record your answers and meditate on their application to your life. You will receive the greatest spiritual benefit by combining the reading text with the questions for each lesson. At the end of lesson six I’ve included *The Song of Psalm 119* which may be used for personal reflection or as a prayer. In any case, know that you have been covered in prayer as you begin this study.

Lesson 1-The Word

Part 1

→ Affirming Truth

Whether alone or in a group, read each verse out loud before beginning the lesson.

- *“Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.” Psalm 119:18 (NIV)*
- *“Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek Him with all their heart.” Psalm 119:2 (NIV)*
- *“The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.” Psalm 119:72 (NIV)*
- *“How sweet is the taste of your instructions—sweeter even than honey!” Psalm 119:103 (GNT)*
- *“I opened my mouth wide and panted, for I longed for your commands.” Psalm 119:131 (NASB)*

Part 2

→ A Little Background

Before we begin our six week journey through Psalm 119, we need to consider some basic facts concerning this famous chapter.

There are four different classifications of the psalms.

- Didactic Psalms** give instruction.
- Messianic Psalms** contain prophecy.
- Imprecatory Psalms** implore God for punishment of the wicked.
- Penitential Psalms** deal with repentance and cleansing.

Psalm 119 is a **Didactic Psalm**, clearly giving us instruction for daily living. It contains 176 verses; each of which is packed full of instruction. I counted 178 times the “Word” is mentioned using various terms such as:

Commands, Decrees, Judgments, Laws, Ordinances, Precepts, Promises, Statutes, Testimonies, Truth (my personal favorite), Ways, Wonders, and of course the Word(-s)

Some of these terms may be different depending on which translation you use for your own personal reading and study.

Part 3

→ I Need A Map!

My daughter enjoys watching several different kid's programs, some of which are geared to educate. (I think my daughter knows more Spanish than I do!) One of these shows has a little girl who goes on various "adventures" where she may need to rescue someone or solve problems. One thing the main character says in every episode:

"What do we do when we don't know which way to go? We ask the map!"

Every time I see this I immediately think of God's Word which is *our* map for life. His Word contains every single thing we could ever need to get through *any* circumstance that comes our way. His Word directs us, answers our questions, shows us the only way to eternal life, and gives us our purpose for existing. Psalm 119 demonstrates an earnest desire to understand God's Word and fall in love with it.

- *"The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold." Psalm 119:72 (NIV)*
- *"How sweet is the taste of your instructions—sweeter even than honey!" Psalm 119:103 (GNT)*

Part 4

→ **Next Step**

When we open God's Word we should want to experience an intense longing for it. We should want to love His words more and crave His words above any material possession or status. We *should* want these things, but often our sin nature gets in the way as we lust after that which cannot fully satisfy.

"I opened my mouth wide and panted, for I longed for your commands."
Psalm 119:131 (NASB)

My hope and prayer is that you and I will be forever transformed through the course of this study, and as our lives are changed by God's priceless words, we will learn to love Him more. We are reminded in Ecclesiastes 12:13

"Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

And in Matthew 22:37-38

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment."

From this one chapter we are given all of the tools necessary to live a life pleasing to God--a life full of purpose.

Remember, God wants His best for each of us. Our natural choices could never compare to what He perfectly planned in His sovereignty. Let's ask Him to open our hearts to new and wonderful truths from His word as we seek Him earnestly (Psalm 119:18). We have nothing to lose and everything to gain!

"Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek Him with all their heart." Psalm 119:2 (NIV)

Discussion:

1. **Which translation(s) do you find most helpful during your personal reading or study time? Why?**
2. **Read John 16:13. Do you think it is important to pray before you study God's Word? Why or why not?**
3. **Do you believe spending time in God's Word and loving God as commanded in Matthew 22:37-38 are directly related to each other?**
4. **Read Jeremiah 29:11-13. What action are we to perform in the plan God has laid out for us?**
5. **Read Psalm 119:2, Jeremiah 29:13, and Matthew 22:37. How much of us does God desire?**

6. **Read Matthew 6:24a and James 1:8. God has made it clear that anything less than complete surrender leads to instability and confusion. Can you think of a time in your life when you surrendered only a portion of yourself to God? Why were you unable to fully give yourself to Him?**
7. **Read Psalm 84:11 and Romans 8:28. God always has our best interest in mind. When we choose complete surrender, He orchestrates our circumstances to work for our greatest good. In what ways have you experienced this truth in your life? How has God chosen to reveal His will to you?**
8. **Have you found Psalm 119:2 to be true in your life as you have completely surrendered to His will?**
9. **If you have not fully surrendered to God's perfect plan for your life, what is holding you back?**

Lesson 2-Eternal WORD

Part 1

→ Affirming Truth

Whether alone or in a group, read each verse out loud before beginning the lesson.

- *“Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.”*
Psalm 119:18 (NIV)
- *“When I think of your rules from of old, I take comfort, O Lord.”*
Psalm 119:52 (ESV)
- *“Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures. Your laws endure to this day, for all things serve you.”*
Psalm 119:89-91 (NIV)
- *“I have learned that everything has limits; but your commandment is perfect.”*
Psalm 119:96 (GNT)

- *“Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage forever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.” Psalm 119:111 (KJV)*
- *“You righteousness is righteous forever. And your law is truth.” Psalm 119:142 (ESV)*
- *“Your testimonies are righteous forever; give me understanding that I may live.” Psalm 119:144 (ESV)*
- *“Long ago I learned from your statutes that you established them to last forever.” Psalm 119:152 (NIV)*
- *“All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.” Psalm 119:160 (NIV)*

Part 2

→ Antiques

- “*I remember your ancient laws, O Lord.*” *Psalm 119:52 (NIV)*
- “*I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord.*” *Psalm 119:52 (KJV)*

The first mention of the Word in regard to any period of time is found in verse 52. The term “old” or “ancient” is used to describe the Word. The original Hebrew text reveals the author’s intent in using certain words. “Old” is translated “o-lám” (pronounced “o-lawm”) and speaks to a reference of time. It is frequently used as an adverb synonymous with always, continual, eternal, forever(-more), ever (-lasting), perpetual, and most specifically a time without end which has been since the beginning of the world.

God’s words have been since the beginning of the world (before they were inspired to be written by human hands). The word of God is eternal, and it will last forever.

Why is this even important, you may wonder? Any word or phrase appearing at least ten times in one chapter must be of some significance and we would be wise to take note of it. We can surely have peace of mind following the messages God has spoken through His word, because it has always been and always will be.

Part 3

→ Ages Endless

“Your word, O Lord, is eternal...” (vs. 89)

“Your faithfulness continues through all generations...” (vs. 90)

“Your laws endure to this day...” (vs. 91)

In verse 90 we see the word “generations” used. The Hebrew text defines this as a revolution of time, an age, and evermore. Verse 91 uses the word “day”. The Hebrew word here is “yôwm” (pronounced “yome”) and literally means a period of time between sunrise and sunset or from one sunset to the next. Figuratively we see it defined as a space of time: always, continually, daily, perpetually, and forever. In either case, whether literal or figurative, we’re getting the same consistent message. God’s Word is eternal, and it is the only source we can wholly rely on for direction. It endures for all time, it does not change, it will not change.

Websters Dictionary defines eternal as “always the same” and “unchanging”. Over the course of our lives God has given us His written Word as a *constant, consistent, and comprehensive* map to guide us through every stage of life. How comforting to know that our map is eternal; we can *always count on it* to give us the *right* answers! We never have to worry.

If we believe that the Bible is God’s spoken Word, written through human hands with the inerrant inspiration of the Holy Spirit, then we can trust its every word without worry. His words will never lead us astray—*it cannot lead us astray* because it is perfect. God’s best for us is based on the timeless truth of God’s instruction. Now *that* is news that should get us excited!

“All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.”
Psalm 119:160 (NIV)

Discussion:

1. Do you think it is relevant to understand that God's word is eternal? Why or why not?
2. We have learned that God's Word is unchanging. Does this knowledge have any significance to you? Why or why not?
3. Read Psalm 119:111. How do you feel when you read God's Word? Is it an obligation, or is it truly the joy of your heart?
4. Examine your thoughts about God's Word. What are your beliefs concerning its accuracy, relevancy, and application to your life?
5. Do you want to love God's Word more, or do you feel as though you already love God's Word enough?
6. Read Psalm 119:96. What does this verse mean to you?

Lesson 3-Word of Truth

Part 1

→ Affirming Truth

Whether alone or in a group, read each verse out loud before beginning the lesson.

- *“Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.”*
Psalm 119:18 (NIV)
- *“Enable me to speak the truth at all times, because my hope is in your judgments.”*
Psalm 119:43 (GNT)
- *“All your commands are trustworthy. Protect me from those who hunt me down without cause.”*
Psalm 119:86 (NLT)
- *“The statutes you have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy.”*
Psalm 119:138 (NIV)
- *“Your righteousness is eternally right, your revelation is the only truth.”*
Psalm 119:142 (MSG)
- *“But you are near, O Lord, and all your commandments are true.”*
Psalm 119:151 (ESV)
- *“All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.”*
Psalm 119:160 (NIV)

Part 2

→ **Deceived**

“Your righteousness is eternally right, your revelation is the only truth.” Psalm 119:142 (MSG)

We live in an age full of deception and lies. Satan takes a lake full of truth and taints it with an ounce of poison. This poison is just enough to lead us off the path God created for us. We get confused, unsure, and overcome with doubt; before long we don't know what to do or how to face a situation. It almost feels as if we've become a dog perpetually chasing its own tail in an endless circle of chaos.

Sometimes we hear a whisper that we're not good enough, we're failures, we can never please God and surely He can't love us. We believe we have let God down so many times there is no way He could continue to tolerate us.

Or perhaps we think we're better than someone else, certainly not capable of doing the horrible sinful things *they* are doing. We think we are serving God more, sacrificing more, giving more; we think we have a more intimate spiritual life, we're more talented, we work harder, and we're an all around better Christian than *the other guy*. Pride is one of Satan's deadliest—and most effective—tools in our lives. In many cases, we are completely unaware of its presence.

→ **Good is Bad and Bad is Good**

Another insidious deception involves taking the good things God provides and twisting their purposes into sinful habits.

For example, God provided us with an assortment of delicious foods to nourish our bodies and give us energy. But sometimes we believe we will only be satisfied if we have a second (or third or fourth) helping of that food. Before we know it we're lusting after something God intended for our good, giving in to the sin of gluttony. We become enslaved to the very thing God created for our benefit and pleasure. For others it's the lust of possessions, always craving the newest product on the market. Many people willingly choose debt in order to get more "stuff" and what could have been used for good turns into financial bondage.

Everywhere we turn we are bombarded with messages insisting we need plastic surgery to be beautiful, or certain drinks to be relaxed and social, or a particular movie to be entertained. Commercials entice us to spend money on products in order to gain popularity or acceptance from our peers. In all of this madness, how can we know what is pleasing to God? How can we know if what we're doing is God's best for us?

→ **Questions and More Questions**

- How can we be sure we are using good things in a good way?
- How can we know if we are using our God-given gifts in a manner pleasing to Him?
- How can we know if what we think and act upon is the truth?

Psalm 119 repeatedly states that God's Word is absolute truth and completely trustworthy. It is the *only* source of truth. We may believe we've experienced unique revelations from the Spirit of God, but if that revelation is not in line with God's written word, we can be sure it is not absolute truth and we have likely been deceived by the enemy who seeks to lead us out of God's will. We must never forget that our enemy was an angel of *light*, and he is constantly scheming against us, feeding us little tidbits of junk to taint what truth we do know. He will target our weaknesses and will seek to destroy our hope and affect for Christ's kingdom. It is absolutely imperative that we learn the truth so we can recognize the lies that have infiltrated our thinking.

Part 3

→ Solutions

The truth of God's Word *always* leads to spiritual freedom. If we are in bondage it is because we have believed something less than 100% truth. We must make seeking and remembering the truth of God's Word a priority, a *habit*, if we ever hope to be free, victorious and joyful in Christ.

"Enable me to speak the truth at all times, because my hope is in your judgments." Psalm 119:43 (GNV)

The Hebrew word for truth in this verse is émeth (pronounced eh'-meth). It means stability, certainty, trustworthiness, assured, faithful, right, and sure. I especially love the word *stability*. In an unpredictable and unstable world, we have the very Word of God which is stable and sure.

“All Your commands are trustworthy...” Psalm 119:86 (NIV)

“All Thy commands are faithful...” Psalm 119:86 (KJV)

The Hebrew word for faithful or trustworthy is ēmûnâh (ee-moo-naw). Literally interpreted as *firmness*. His Word is firm. It stands alone as truth. We *must* know the truth to be set free and we can only know His Word if we spend time in it.

→ **Busy Busy Busy!**

We are so incredibly busy aren’t we? We get so wrapped up in doing things, even good things, we become enslaved to our “to-do” lists. We lose our freedom, joy and hope as we take our eyes off of Him and put them on ourselves. It’s all about *me* and the wonderful things *I* am doing for Jesus. Before we know it we’re enslaved to pride, jealousy, discontentment, depression, anger, hopelessness, and selfishness.

Even the best of “godly” activities can be poisoned with our selfish desires to be noticed and acknowledged. The only way to put this old nature to rest is to be saturated in God’s transforming truth. His word is a solid foundation. No wonder the Psalmist proclaims, “*I love Your commands more than gold!*” (vs 127) He knew that these “commands” meant freedom and joy!

One definition Webster’s Dictionary uses for truth is “an established fact”. That basically sums it up, doesn’t it? God’s Word is established and it is absolute fact. His Word is the answer we’re seeking. The only answer that matters is the one which is *absolute*. We must sift every thought or idea through the filter of God’s Word. As our thinking is conformed to the truth, the lies of the devil will become easier to detect and we’ll be able to resist them with utmost confidence.

As you spend time with Jesus, ask Him to open your eyes to any deceptions you may have believed. Choosing to fight in this spiritual battle will be difficult, but the rewards are more than worth any temporary discomfort. When we seek truth with our whole hearts we will find it. God's truth will always lead us to freedom and joy. How important is knowing and believing the truth, and how earnestly are we willing to seek it?

“I call with all my heart; answer me, O Lord, and I will obey your decrees.” Psalm 119:145 (NIV)

Discussion:

1. **Can you think of something God intended for good that you may have used in a negative way?**
2. **Have you ever made poor financial decisions because you believed a commercial advertisement?**
3. **If you honestly looked into your heart and ask God to open your spiritual eyes to His truth, would you discover anything that has enslaved you?**
4. **Is seeking the truth a priority in your life? Have you allowed anything to take place of the time you spend in God's Word?**
5. **Think back to question six from lesson one's discussion. Isn't it amazingly consistent that "stability" is used to define "truth" in verses 43 and 86? Now read Psalm 143:10. How has the truth of God's Word brought stability in your life? How has lack of focus on God's Word brought instability?**

6. Do you have complete joy in your life? Or is your joy directly related to your immediate circumstances?

7. John 8:32 assures us the truth will set us free. Are you free? If not, do you know why? What steps will you choose to make to claim the freedom and joy God created you for?

Lesson 4-Guiding Word

Part 1

→ Affirming Truth

Whether alone or in a group, read each verse out loud before beginning the lesson.

- *“Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.” Psalm 119:18 (NIV)*
- *“Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path. I will keep my solemn promise to obey your just instructions.” Psalm 119:105-106 (GNT)*
- *“The explanation of your teachings gives light and brings wisdom to the ignorant.” Psalm 119:130 (GNT)*
- *“Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me.” Psalm 119:133 (ESV)*

Part 2

→ Chartered Cruise

- “*I am but a pilgrim here on earth: how I need a map-and Your commands are my chart and guide.*” Psalm 119:19 (TLB)
- “*Your words are a flashlight to light the path ahead of me, and keep me from stumbling.*” Psalm 119:105 (TLB)

Nothing we face during our journey through life is an accident or a coincidence. God gave us a divine itinerary so we could have the best possible traveling experience. Have you ever been lost without a map? Or maybe you tried to find a shortcut instead of following the directions?

God created us with free wills; we have the opportunity to make our own choices. We can choose the path He designed for us, full of blessing and purpose; or we can choose a path that *may appear* easier, more pleasurable, and less painful, but in the end results in loss and destruction. One path is illuminated through His word, the other path lies in darkness and uncertainty.

We're so good at trying to be the captains of our own cruise ships, aren't we? Once we push Jesus aside and take over the controls, we are doomed to smack straight into an iceberg of failure and misery. It's usually around this time, sinking in chilly waters of hopelessness, that we cry out to God and admit we really have no idea how to steer our own ship.

→ “Jesus, Take the Wheel”

Another option is available to us. We can choose to allow God to take the controls. As He steers us through the oceans of His perfect love, we have assurance of our purpose, satisfaction, joy, and peace. First step: we have to let go of the wheel!

→ Glistening Hope

Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path.” Psalm 119:105 (GNT)

The word “lamp” is translated nêrâh (nay-raw) in Hebrew. It means “to glisten”. Imagine standing in a dark forest surrounded by towering redwoods. Low hanging branches block your vision and you are cold, hungry, frightened, and lost. To the left you see a broad path, muddy and dark, and you hear the sounds of wild animals in the distance. To the right you see a narrow path. A tiny light glistens near the foot of this path allowing you to see just far enough to safely make one step. Which path do you suppose you’d choose?

The problem is, we are tempted to choose the broad path, even though we are perfectly aware of the dangers. But, we reason, we can see further in that direction, and something about that feels more comfortable. What we fail to recognize, many times, is if the narrow path was fully illuminated we would see rushing streams of fresh water, groves of fruit trees, flowing honey, and every resource we would possibly need for survival. But because we can't see it, we don't trust that it's really there.

Part 3

→ It's Complicated

Every day our lives are filled with complications. We're constantly forced to make decisions and we easily get overwhelmed trying to figure out what choices are best. (I know I can barely choose what restaurant to eat at half the time!) Fortunately God invites us to partake in a journey that will result in an inner joy completely overriding any pain or suffering along the way. The product of this path is always meaningful *purpose, peace and provision*. We are never left wanting because this path supplies all we need to be fully satisfied. God's Word is our light, the glistening Map that gives us the wisdom we need to complete our journey successfully.

Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me.” Psalm 119:133 (ESV)

The Hebrew word for “direct” is kûwn (koon), meaning to confirm, ordain, order, perfect, prepare, make provision, establish, or set aright. Through the guidance of His Word we find stability as He makes provision for us along our journey. When we commit to following the path God prepared for us, He never fails to meet our every need. We need to learn to fully trust His direction.

God's Word is the flashlight, the Holy Spirit is the battery needed to turn on the flashlight and illuminate its truth into the depths of our hearts (John 16:13). Let us determine together to open our ears and listen as the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts through God's perfect word.

“Help me to want Your will.” Psalm 119:32 (TLB)

Discussion:

1. Do you believe God has a unique plan for your life? If so, are you cooperating with Him or fighting the direction He has asked you to go?
2. Are you fully satisfied in life? Or do you think your circumstances need to turn out just right before you can be happy? Explain your answer.
3. When you have a major decision to make, where (or whom) do you turn for advice? Do you then have a peace and confidence about the decision you've made?
4. Read Psalm 119:37a. What is a key to staying focused on God's plan?
5. Read Psalm 5:3, 55:17, 59:16, 63:1 and 119:164. When is it a good idea to direct your thoughts on God and His purposes for your life? Do you think making this a habit would help your day be more focused and overall God-pleasing?

Lesson 5-Priceless Word

Part 1

→ Affirming Truth

Whether alone or in a group, read each verse out loud before beginning the lesson.

- *“Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.” Psalm 119:18 (NIV)*
- *“Truth from your word means more to me than striking it rich in a gold mine.” Psalm 119:72 (MSG)*
- *“How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” Psalm 119:103 (ESV)*
- *“Because I love your commands more than gold, more than pure gold, and because I consider all your precepts right, I hate every wrong path.” Psalm 119:127-128 (NIV)*

Part 2

→ Overdrawn

It's no secret that the state of our economy is less than stellar at the moment. Rarely a day goes by that we don't hear the phrases "bad economy", "bad credit", or "not enough work". The price of gas and groceries continues to rise while jobs are cut and families become more desperate.

I recently heard a report claiming more people are now playing the Lottery than ever before. For many the answer is money; if only they had some, even a little more, everything would be okay. Money *would* solve most of our problems, right? Wouldn't more marriages last longer if there weren't so many fights over finances? This erroneous way of thinking is a clever ruse from the Enemy. Indeed, *there is* an answer to our problems, but it isn't found in the economy or at the bank.

→ Priceless Possession

The Psalmist learned to cherish something more valuable than any amount of money he could ever have hoped to possess. Something more reliable and completely trustworthy, something that gave him wisdom beyond understanding and joy beyond compare. We now know that "thing" is God's Holy Word.

"Your laws are more valuable to me than millions in silver and gold."
Psalm 119:72 (TLB)

Psalm 119 is a chapter overflowing with pure *passion* for God's Word. The Psalmist is consumed in his love for it because he is in love with the One who inspired it. He could think of nothing more desirable than to soak in the precious principles outlined on those sacred scrolls.

Part 3

→ Forever

Webster's Dictionary defines priceless as "invaluable". Invaluable is defined as "too valuable to be measured". So why is God's Word so valuable—so valuable it cannot even be measured? Why was the Psalmist so wrapped up in it?

If we were to compare God's word with a million dollars, we would discover one of these things is eternal, with eternal value and an eternal message that changes lives for all eternity. And what about the million dollars we mentioned? Well, I think we can all agree it is most definitely not coming with us to eternity. It was created by man and one day will be no more. Our wallets will not be joining us in the kingdom of God, but the eternal truth of God's Word *will be with us* for now and forever to come!

What is it we desire most in this life? Is it success, popularity, beauty, fame, or fortune? How hard have we been willing to work for what we really want? Do we make sacrifices to meet our earthly goals?

How important is God's eternal Word to us? Is it a priority? Do we seek after the Truth with all that we are and all that we have? Is this truth what we desire most in life? Even more than any material possession or temporary pleasure? These are the tough questions we need to prayerfully consider as we allow God to examine our true motives.

The Psalmist could declare in truth that he loved and sought after God's word more than any earthly treasure; can we say this of ourselves? The more we learn from His Word, the more valuable its truth becomes to us

“Purchasing any given translation of the Holy Bible: approximately \$24.99

The eternal truth the Holy Bible contains: priceless!”

-This message was brought to you by the Maker of the Universe and Giver of Eternal Life

“I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out Your precepts.”
Psalm 119:45 (NIV)

Discussion:

- 1. What is the most valuable asset you own? How will this asset affect your eternity?**
- 2. Look up “priceless” and “invaluable” in your dictionary and list their definitions.**
- 3. Do you think hiding God’s Word in your heart can have an affect on your eternity or the eternity of someone else? Explain your answer.**
- 4. What do you work the hardest for in this life? What are your biggest priorities?**

5. **Can you recall any particular Biblical truth that has set you (or someone else) free from bondage? What was that experience like? Did you want to share it with others? Would you be able to put a price tag on that experience?**
6. **Read Psalm 127:1-3 and John 15:5b. What do these passages tell us about “labor” apart from Christ and trying to do things on our own?**
7. **Read Psalm 68:19. How has God showed this to be true in your life?**

Lesson 6–Righteous Word

Part 1

→ Affirming Truth

Whether alone or in a group, read each verse out loud before beginning the lesson.

- “*Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.*” *Psalm 119:18 (NIV)*
- “*I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws.*” *Psalm 119:7 (NIV)*
- “*I know, O Lord, that your regulations are fair; you disciplined me because I needed it.*” *Psalm 119:75 (NLT)*
- “*I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws.*” *Psalm 119:106 (NIV)*

- *“And so I follow all your instructions; I hate all wrong ways.” Psalm 119:128 (GNT)*
- *“You are righteous, Lord, and your laws are just. The rules that you have given are completely fair and right.” Psalm 119:137-138 (GNT)*
- *“Your testimonies are righteous forever; give me understanding that I may live.” Psalm 119:144 (ESV)*
- *“The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.” Psalm 119:160 (ESV)*
- *“I will praise you seven times a day because all your regulations are just.” Psalm 119:164 (NLT)*
- *“Let your promises ring from my tongue; every order you've given is right.” Psalm 119:172 (MSG)*

Part 2

→ Haunting Story

Some of us have different ideas of justice. Some people believe in capital punishment, others believe in second (and third and fourth...) chances. Whether or not we agree on methods of justice I think we *can* agree that justice is not always carried out appropriately in relation to the crime committed.

(Warning: The following description IS graphic....)

I recently watched a program documenting the story of a woman's survival. She had been brutally attacked by a man who repeatedly assaulted and beat her. As she begged to be set free he replied, "I'll set you free". He then proceeded to grab a hatchet and chop off both of her arms. He then tossed her like a piece of garbage off of a thirty foot embankment to die.

This woman's will to live was almost super-human. She used what was left of her arms, while losing more than half of her blood, to crawl up the embankment and find help. She was able to survive and face her attacker in court.

For the brutal assault and attempted murder this man was sentenced to 14 years in prison. I think we can agree that this sentence does not seem to fit the heinous nature of the crime (or maybe I've seen too much *Law and Order*).

Upon his release from prison 14 years later, the man was finally successful in murdering a young woman and was then sent to prison for the remainder of his life. Is this really justice? How can things like this happen? I can't help but think if justice had been appropriately served the first time, a lot of pain and grief could have been spared.

Part 3

→ What is Just?

We live in a fallen world where so many horrible injustices are committed; however, one thing *is* sure:

“You are righteous, Lord, and your laws are just. The rules that you have given are completely fair and right.” Psalm 119:137-138 (GNT)

The words “righteous” or “right” appear more than twelve times in this chapter as a description of God’s Word. Three different Hebrew words are used, all of which have similar meanings.

- tsedeq (tseh'-dek)- legal right, equity, prosperity, just, justice, right.
- tsaddîyq (tsad-deek)- just, lawful, rightness
- tsedâqâh (tsed-aw-kaw)-rightness, justice, virtue, prosperity, righteous

It is interesting to note that in two of the Hebrew definitions the word “prosperity” is used. Certainly we prosper spiritually as we apply the principles laid out for us in His Word. His Word has prospered above all other “books” throughout all of time.

“The statutes You have laid down are [justice, virtuous, right, equitable, righteous].” (vs 138)

Any of these words could be used and each sheds a new light on the meaning of righteous in relation to God’s Word. His Word is justice, God Himself is Just, therefore every word He speaks must be just. His Words are fair and equitable.

God's Word is our moral compass; it is justice for our soul.

"I consider all Your precepts [straight, even, prosperous, pleasant] right." (vs 128)

→ Lighthouse

In a fallen world full of moral complacency we need something we can rely on, something that will never fail us. God's Word is that beacon of light illuminating our journey with understanding, hope, joy, and purpose. God is holy and His holy nature requires Him to be just.

We all deserve to be eternally separated from God because we were all born in sin. Praise God for His mercy and forgiveness! He gave us His Only Son as the perfect sacrifice to take our place so justice could be paid for every sin and sinner. As we think about justice, perhaps the greatest injustice of all is the rejection of the free gift of eternal life which is so graciously offered to every human being.

God gave us His Word to show us just how much He values us as unique creations made in His image. Through His words we also get the opportunity to know our Creator more intimately. His Word is so intricate, it all fits together perfectly, each part complementing the next. His Word is just—His Word is right.

→ Conclusion

What is the Word? The Word is eternal, it is absolute truth, it is our perfect guide, it is priceless, and it stands alone as wholly just.

"May my tongue sing of Your Word, for all Your commands are righteous." Psalm 119:172 (NIV)

Discussion:

1. **Read Psalm 89:14 and Romans 12:19. In light of what we have just talked about, how should we address apparent “injustices”?**
2. **Read Matthew 12:35-37. How does this truth affect your every day living?**
3. **Read Romans 5:1-2. How have we been justified? What is our response to this justification?**
4. **Look up “righteous” and “justice” in your dictionary and write your findings.**
5. **Replace “righteous” with “prosperous” in the verses you read at the beginning of this lesson. Do you believe knowing and loving God's word will give you spiritual prosperity?**

6. Over the past five lessons we have looked at what the Word of God is. What has God revealed to you through this study? Has your view or understanding of God's Word and how it relates to your life changed in any way? Explain.
7. What five adjectives (that we specifically discussed in our study) does the Psalmist use to describe God's Word throughout Psalm 119?
8. Which one of these truths has made the biggest impact on your spiritual life and how you approach your personal study time?

The Song of Psalm 119

*I am but a foreigner here on earth;
I need the guidance of Your commands.*

*Along the path of Your commands...
is where my happiness is found.
Give me an eagerness for Your decrees.*

*Turn my eyes from worthless things;
give me life through Your word.
Your laws are all I want in life.
Renew my life with Your goodness.*

*I will walk in freedom,
for I have devoted myself to your commandments.
Your promise revives me;
it comforts me in all my troubles.*

*Your principles have been the music of my life.
Lord, You are mine!
This is my happy way of life.*

*I will hurry, without lingering,
to obey your commands.
I am firmly anchored to your law.
The suffering You sent was good for me.*

*You made me,
You created me.
Give me the sense
to follow Your commands.*

*You disciplined me because I needed it,
Now let Your unfailing love comfort me.
If Your law hadn't sustained me with joy,
I would have died in my misery.*

*I will never forget Your commandments,
for You have used them to restore my joy and health.
Your word is a lamp for my feet
and a light for my path.*

*I have suffered much, O Lord;
restore my life again,
just as You promised.*

*Your decrees are my treasure;
they are truly my heart's delight.*

*Do not let my hope be crushed.
Sustain me.*

Come and show me Your mercy.

*Your decrees are perfect,
they are entirely worthy of our trust.*

*As pressure and stress bear down on me,
I find joy in Your commands.*

*I stay awake through the night,
thinking about Your promise.*

*All Your words are true;
all Your just laws will stand forever.*

*I rejoice in Your word
like one who finds a great treasure.*

*Those who love Your law have great peace
and do not stumble.*

*O Lord, listen to my cry;
give me the discerning mind You promised.*

Let my lips burst forth with praise...

Let my tongue sing about Your word...

Let me live so I can praise You.

**Scriptures portions taken from New Living Translation and the following verses:*

*Psalm 119:19,35-37,39-40,45,50,54,56-57,60-61,
71,73,75-76,92-93,105,107,111,116-117,132,
138,143,148,160,162,165,169,171-172,175*

-Song of Psalm 119 arranged by Rebecca Aarup 5/5/11