

Psalm 119 (verses 105-120)

NUN

“Thy word is a lamp ... and a light”

Verses 105-112: The word of God directs us in our work and way, and a dark place indeed the world would be without it. The commandment is a lamp kept burning with the oil of the Spirit, as a light to direct us in the choice of our way, and the steps we take in that way. The keeping of God's commands here meant, was that of a sinner under a dispensation of mercy, of a believer having part in the covenant of grace. The psalmist is often afflicted; but with longing desires to become more holy, offers up daily prayers for quickening grace. We cannot offer anything to God, that he will accept but what he is pleased to teach us to do. To have our soul or life continually in our hands, implies constant danger of life; yet he did not forget God's promises nor his precepts. Numberless are the snares laid by the wicked; and happy is that servant of God, whom they have not caused to err from his Master's precepts. Heavenly treasures are a heritage for ever; all the saints accept them as such, therefore they can be content with little of this world. We must look for comfort only in the way of duty, and that duty must be done. A good man, by the grace of God, brings his heart to his work, then it is done well.

Psalm 119:105 "Thy word [is] a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

NUN: The Fourteenth Part.

“Lamp ... light”: God’s Word provides illumination to walk without stumbling.

We are living in a very darkened world. The path of life would be obscured from our view, were it not for the Light of Jesus which lights our way.

John 8:12 "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

The Word (spoken of in John chapter 1), and the Light are the same. The One we know as Jesus Christ the righteous is both. The Light that directs my every step is not only that flaming torch of a light mentioned in the first of verse 105 above, but the Bible (God's Word), guides me by enlightening my understanding. If I continue to study His Word, then I will see the path that I am to walk brighter and brighter. It is very important not to go anywhere, unless the light guides you there. Stay in the presence of Light, until you are like Moses' head: full of His Light. Look with me at one more Scripture on this.

Ephesians 5:8 "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now [are ye] light in the Lord: walk as children of light:"

You see, we not only walk in His Light, but His Light is in us and shines forth from us.

Psalm 119:106 "I have sworn, and I will perform [it], that I will keep thy righteous judgments."

Or, "I have performed it". The psalmist had not only taken up a resolution in his mind, but he had openly declared with his mouth, and professed in a solemn manner, that he would serve the Lord. He had sworn allegiance to him as his King, and, through divine grace, had hitherto kept it. And hoped he ever should, and determined through grace he ever would (see Psalm 119:48).

"That I will keep thy righteous judgments": The precepts of the word, the ordinances of the Lord, the doctrines of grace. All which are righteous, and to be kept, observed, and held to. Though they cannot be perfectly kept unless in Christ the surety.

When the day star shines in our lives, it causes us to understand so fully that we will be committed, such as the psalmist is here, to keep the judgements of the Lord.

2 Peter 1:19 "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:"

When this day star, (Jesus, the Light), shines forth within you, it does away with all darkness. It completely changes you from within.

Psalm 119:107 "I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word."

In a temporal sense, in his body, in his family, and by his enemies. In a spiritual sense, with the corruptions of his heart, with the temptations of Satan, and with the hidings of God's face. And what with one thing or another, he was pressed above measure. And his spirits sunk under the weight of the affliction, so that he was as a dead man. And therefore prays:

"Quicken me": Make me live; give me life and vigor, that I may bear up under my trials (see notes at Psalm 119:25).

This is not the psalmist being pushy with God, he is just claiming the promises that God has made in His Word. He says, your Word says that you will quicken me, I believe your Word, so it is done. Remember that the quickening is of the spirit, and not the flesh.

Psalm 119:108 "Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments."

Or, the meaning of the word here rendered "free-will," (see notes at Psalm 110:3). It conveys the idea that there is no constraint or compulsion. That the offering is a prompting of the heart. The offering might be that of flour, or grain, or fruits, or property of any kind, as devoted to God. Or it might be, as here, an offering of the lips, expressed in prayer and praise. Either of them might be acceptable to God. Their being accepted in either case would depend on the good pleasure of

God, and hence, the psalmist prays that his offering might be thus acceptable (compare Heb. 13:15).

"And teach me thy judgments": Thy commands; thy laws (see notes at Psalm 119:12).

This is speaking of the sacrifice of praise. Some sacrifice is of obligation, but the sacrifice of praise is a freewill offering. This is not an obligation. The psalmist desires to praise, and so it is spoken of as a sacrifice of praise.

Hebrews 13:15 "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of [our] lips giving thanks to his name."

Psalm 119:109 "My soul [is] continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law."

In the utmost jeopardy, always exposed to danger, ever delivered unto death. Killed all the day long, or liable to be so. This is the sense of the phrase (see Judges 12:3). For what is in a man's hands may easily fall, or be taken out of them. So the Targum, "my soul is in danger upon the back of my hands continually."

"Yet do I not forget thy law": It was written on his heart, and fixed in his mind. He had a true affection for it, and a hearty desire to keep it. And no danger could divert him from his duty. As Daniel, though he carried his life in his hand, yet continued to pray to his God as usual. Nor could anything move the Apostle Paul from the doctrine of the Gospel, and preaching it.

The soul of man is his will. The flesh of man is always trying to take control of the soul of man. The spirit of man is in mortal battle against the flesh, and it too is trying to control the soul or will. It is in the psalmist hands what controls the soul. The psalmist decides what he will follow. Will his flesh rule him, or will his spirit rule him? This is also a decision that each of us must make, as well. The condition of our soul is in our hands. The psalmist has no trouble deciding, because he remembers God's law.

Psalm 119:110 "The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts."

To draw him into sin, and so into mischief. And even to take away his life, as they are said to dig pits for him (Psalm 119:85).

"Yet I erred not from thy precepts": Not willfully and wickedly, though through inadvertence and infirmity, as he often did, and every good man does. And indeed, his errors are so many, that they cannot be understood and numbered. The sense is, he kept on in the way of his duty and did not desist from that. Or wickedly depart from his God, and his worship, to escape the snares of bad men.

The wicked are continuously trying to get us to follow the call of our flesh. They try to find out what your weakness is, and lay a trap for you. The man that has thoroughly studied and accepted God's ways, will not be fooled into falling into this trap.

Psalm 119:111 "Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage for ever: for they [are] the rejoicing of my heart."

The Scriptures, which testify of Christ and of his grace, and of the mind and will of God, are a portion of themselves. And a goodly heritage they are, better than thousands of gold and silver. Preferable to all worldly inheritances; as they have been to many, who have forsaken all for Christ and his Gospel. These, like an inheritance, have been transmitted from father to son, from one age of the church to another, in successive generations. Nor shall they depart from her, nor from her seed and her seed's seed, from henceforth and for ever. They are an inheritance which will continue for ever (Deut. 33:4). These David chose and took, as for his counsellors, so for his portion and inheritance. And a wise and good choice he made. He chose the good part that should never be taken away; his reason for it follows:

"For they are the rejoicing of my heart": The doctrines in them, the promises of them, when read or heard explained, gave him a sensible pleasure. Revived his heart, and cheered his spirits. Supported him under all his troubles, and caused him to go on his way rejoicing (see Jer. 15:16).

"Rejoicing": Compare verse 162.

The teachings of God are possibly the greatest heritage we could have. Parents that truly love their children and teach them the ways of God have left their children a wonderful heritage. They may not have great material blessings to leave their children, but they have given them the greatest gift a person can have, the knowledge of how to acquire Eternal life. Testimonies, in the verse above, is speaking of the covenant of God with man. This covenant promises us eternal life.

Psalm 119:112 "I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, [even unto] the end."

He had prayed to God to incline his heart to them (Psalm 119:36). And by the grace of God his heart was inclined to obedience to them. And nothing but that can incline the heart, which is naturally averse unto them. The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be, until it is made so by the grace of God (Rom. 8:7). And by this the psalmist had prevailed upon his heart to keep the statutes of the Lord, and do them, and that continually. For a good man is desirous of being steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

"Even unto the end": The end of life, as long as he lived. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin version render it, "for a recompense"; and the Arabic version, "for an eternal recompense"; but the Ethiopic version the reverse, "not for a recompense", or benefit. Which latter is the truth, though neither of them for a right reason. For the statutes are to be kept, not for the sake of a recompense of reward, but from love of God. And; in duty to him, without any mercenary views. Though the word does sometimes signify "a reward". And may be rendered here, "for ever there is a reward"; as there is "in", though not "for", keeping the commands (see Psalm 19:11).

He has made a lifetime commitment to God. He has caused his heart to listen to the teachings of the Word. We see a man whose heart is stayed upon God. We are what our heart is.

SAMECH
"I hate vain thoughts"

Verses 113-120: Here is a dread of the risings of sin, and the first beginnings of it. The more we love the law of God, the more watchful we shall be, lest vain thoughts draw us from what we love. Would we make progress in keeping God's commands, we must be separate from evil-doers. The believer could not live without the grace of God; but, supported by his hand, his spiritual life shall be maintained. Our holy security is grounded on Divine supports. All departure from God's statutes is error, and will prove fatal. Their cunning is falsehood. There is a day coming which will put the wicked into everlasting fire, the fit place for the dross. See what comes of sin. Surely we who fall so low in devout affections, should fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into heavenly rest, any of us should be found to come short of it (Heb. 4:1).

Psalm 119:113 "I hate [vain] thoughts: but thy law do I love."

SAMECH: The Fifteenth Part.

Or thoughts: evil thoughts are undoubtedly meant, no other can be the object of hatred to a good man. They are such as are contrary to the law of God, and forbidden by it, mentioned in the next clause as the object of love, in opposition to these. And which are abominable to God, and defiling to men; and should be forsaken and need pardon. And, if not pardoned, will be brought into judgment, and there exposed, and men punished for them. There are multitudes of these that rise up in the minds of men, not only bad men, but good men. Even sometimes atheistically blasphemous thoughts, as well as proud, haughty, revengeful, lustful, impure, and worldly ones. Which, when observed by a good man, give him great concern and uneasiness, and raise a holy indignation in him against them. The word is used for the "opinions" of men. The ambiguous, doubtful, wavering, and inconstant sentiments of the mind (1 Kings 18:21). And is used of branches, or the tops of trees, waved with the wind to and fro. And may be applied to all heterodox opinions, human doctrines, and damnable heresies. Such as are inconsistent with the perfections of God. Derogate from his grace, and from the person and offices of Christ. And are contrary to the word, and which are therefore rejected and abhorred by good men. The Targum is, "I hate those who think vain thoughts;" and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it of persons, thinkers, or devisers of evil things. And to this sense are the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; and which is approved of by Gussenius. Even free thinkers, such as devise things out of their own brains, and regard not the law, doctrine, or word of God.

"But thy law do I love": Which forbids and condemns such vain and wicked thoughts, and requires pure and Holy Ones. Or, "thy doctrine"; which comes from God, is concerning him, and reveals his mind and will, his grace and love to men. The doctrine of Christ, concerning his person, office, and work. The doctrine of the Scriptures, which contain the whole Gospel of Christ, as well as the law of God. The doctrine according to godliness, and which is good, sound, and wholesome, and to be received in the love of it.

This is saying, that he rejects vain thoughts. Vain thoughts are thoughts of one's self. I suppose everyone occasionally have a thought they must reject. Satan tempted Jesus with vain things, and Jesus rebuked him with the Word of God.

Psalm 119:114 "Thou [art] my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word."

From temporal calamities. The perfections of God are chambers of retreat and safety to his people. Where they may hide themselves and be safe, till such calamities are over (Isa. 26:20). And from spiritual evils; from avenging justice, from divine wrath, from the rage of Satan, and the fury of men (Isa. 32:2). And from eternal death, and being hurt by it. The spiritual and eternal life of saints being hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3; see Psalm 32:7).

"And my shield": To protect from all dangers, and preserve from every enemy. Such are the love and grace, the power and strength and the truth and faithfulness of God. Which are the saints' shield and buckler (Psalm 5:12). Such also the person, blood, righteousness, and salvation of Christ, who is a sun and shield. The shield of faith, or which faith holds up and defends the soul against the attacks of a powerful enemy (Psalm 84:11).

"I hope in thy Word": In Christ the Word, for acceptance and justification, for peace, pardon, and eternal salvation. All which are in him: in the word of promise, for all supplies of grace, strength, light, life, and comfort here, and for glory hereafter, contained therein (see Psalm 119:74).

The only hiding place that any of the believers have, is in the Lord. We could run and hide and the Lord would protect us, but it is time to stand and fight and God will be our shield. This shield covers our heart, where we are the most vulnerable. For the believer in Christ, He builds a hedge around us and over us of the precious shed blood of the Lamb. The blood of Jesus the Lamb, is what defeated Satan on the cross. He is afraid of the blood of Jesus. We must stand and fight for the Truth of God. He will protect us with His blood.

Psalm 119:115 "Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God."

The same with the evil thinkers (Psalm 119:113). According to Aben Ezra, they that think evil commonly do it; as they devise it, they commit it. This describes such persons whose course of life is, and who make it their constant business to do, iniquity. Such the psalmist desires to depart his presence, to keep at a distance from him, as being very disagreeable to him. And who would be a great hindrance to him in keeping the commandments of God, as follows. These same words will be spoken by David's son and antitype, at the great day of account (Matt. 7:23).

"For I will keep the commandments of my God": Of God who has a right to command, and not of men, especially when opposed to the commands of God. Of God, who is the covenant God and Father of his people. And whose covenant, grace, and favor, in choosing, redeeming, regenerating, and adopting them, lay them under greater obligations still to keep his commandments. And whose commandments are not grievous. And though they cannot be perfectly kept by good men, yet they are desirous of keeping them as well as they can, and determine in the strength of divine grace so to do. And which they do out of love to God, and with a view to his glory, without any selfish or mercenary ends. The Syriac version renders it, "that I may keep", etc. To which end he desires to be rid of the company of wicked men; who are both a nuisance to good men, and a hindrance in religious duties.

Do not fellowship with those of unbelief. Witness to them and go home. Do not fellowship with them. When you fellowship with them, it is as if you are approving of their life style. Fellowship with believers, so you can build each other up in the most holy faith. He is determined to keep the Word of God. We, too, must determine in our heart to live for Jesus. We must refuse to be part of the evil that goes on around us.

Psalm 119:116 "Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope."

In thy ways, that my footsteps slip not. In thine arms, and with the right hand of thy righteousness. From fainting and sinking under difficulties and discouragements, in trying circumstances. And from slipping and sliding out of the way of God. And from a total and final falling away, according to thy word of promise, that, as are the days of thy people, their strength shall be. And that thou wilt never leave them nor forsake them. The Targum is, "uphold me in thy word;" or by thy word, either essential or written. That I may live; meaning not relating to a physical body, though none so live but whom the Lord upholds in life. But, spiritually, live by faith on Christ the Savior. Live comfortably on the word of promise, and live honorably, agreeably to the word of God, in all holy conversation and godliness.

"And let me not be ashamed of my hope": As men are, when they are disappointed or having and enjoying what they have been hoping and waiting for. But the grace of hope makes not ashamed, nor shall those who have it ever have any reason to be ashamed of it. Since it is a good hope through grace and is an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. Is upon a good foundation, Christ, and by which men are saved. And so may rejoice, in full hope of the glory of God they shall certainly enjoy.

I believe the psalmist is more concerned about what the world will think about him placing his hope in the word of God, than he is concerned about living. He does not want the worldly people around him to have any comeback at him, because of what he believes.

Psalm 119:117 "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually."

Keep me from falling in the trials and temptations of life. The Hebrew word means to prop, uphold, and support. The Septuagint is, "Aid me."

"And I shall be safe": And I shall be saved; or, that I may be saved. It is an acknowledgment of entire dependence on God for salvation, temporal and eternal.

"And I will have respect": I will look to thy statutes; I will have them always in my eye (compare notes at Psalm 119:6).

He knows the promises of the Word so well, that he knows if God upholds him, he definitely will be safe. I don't believe this is saying that he would lose respect for God, if God doesn't keep him safe. I believe he is saying, if God does not save him, he will die, and from the grave, he cannot uphold the Lord. If he does live, he will spend all of his time uplifting God.

Verses 118-119: "Has trodden ... putteth away": God righteously judges the wicked by His Word.

Psalm 119:118 "Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit [is] falsehood."

That wander from the way of the Lord's commandments; that deviate from his precepts, go astray constantly and willfully. A people that err in their hearts, and with all their hearts. These the Lord treads down, as mire in the streets, as grapes in a winepress. Which shows his abhorrence of them, his indignation at them, and how easily they are subdued under him.

"For their deceit is falsehood": Or, "their hypocrisy is a lie": the appearance they make is a false one. They appear outwardly righteous, but are inwardly wicked. They have a form of godliness, but deny the power of it. Or all their deceitful doctrines are lies in hypocrisy, though dressed up with all the art and cunning they are masters of. Or all their subtle schemes to corrupt and subvert the true doctrines of the word are in vain and to no purpose.

There are those who pretend to be of God, and are not. These are the ones spoken of here who are deceitful. Usually, someone who professes to be a believer and is not, does not keep the laws of God. Even ministers, who do not have the right relationship with God, will sometime deceive their people into believing they are doing right, when in fact, they are sneaking around committing sins against God. Falsehood and deceit are near kinsman. Both are products of Satan. This Scripture is about those who pretend to be of God, and are really of their father, the devil.

Psalm 119:119 "Thou putteth away all the wicked of the earth [like] dross: therefore I love thy testimonies."

Which is of no worth and value, useless and unprofitable. Which is cast into the fire, and separated from the choice metal. This expresses the character and state of wicked men; who are of no account with God, are of no profit and advantage to him; nor to men, but harmful and pernicious. They are cast into the fire of God's judgments here, and into everlasting burnings hereafter. And will be separated from the righteous, and have no part and lot with them. These seem to be hypocrites also, who have made a show of being gold and silver, when they were nothing but dross. And being reprobate silver, were rejected of God as such.

"Therefore I love thy testimonies": Which discover such persons when brought to be tried by them. And which require purity of heart and life, and caution against evil ways and evil men, and are a means of preserving from them.

When silver or gold is heated to a very hot temperature, the dross comes to the top, and you can skim this trash off of the metal and leave the metal pure. This then, is speaking of God separating the evil people from His followers. The dross (trash), sinners, are just thrown away. They must be separated from the pure in heart. This is spoken of in heaven when Jesus separates the sheep from the goats. The Bible teaches that the wheat (believers), live in the earth with the tares, until

that day when God separates them and burns the tares. The wheat is carried into the great barn called heaven. He is saying, that he has read in God's Word where this will happen, and he knows he will not always have to be tormented by them. This is a promise he is looking forward to having fulfilled.

Psalm 119:120 "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments."

Not for fear of the wrath of God coming down upon himself, nor for fear of eternal damnation. But for fear of what was coming upon the wicked, for their sins and transgressions. The word used signifies such a dread and horror, which seizes a man to such a degree, that it makes the hair of his flesh to stand up. As Jarchi and Kimchi observe (see Psalm 119:53, Job 4:14).

"And I am afraid of thy judgments; not of their coming down upon him, but upon the wicked. The thought of which is more awful to good men than to the wicked themselves. And especially when under any darkness, doubts, and fears. Lest, being conscious to themselves of their own weakness, they should be left to join with the wicked in their sins, and so be partakers of their plagues.

Fear or reverence, of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The fear that a believer has of the Lord is similar to the fear a son has of his father. We know that even the earth trembled before the Lord. We know that when the presence of God was on the mountain, the mountain would tremble before Him. It would be more unnatural for us not to tremble before Him. The judgements of God are righteous. We are not righteous in our own right. The only thing that makes us able to stand before the Judge of all the world, is the fact that we are clothed with His righteousness.

Psalm 119 (105-120) Questions

1. What lights the way of the believer?
2. The Word and the Light are the _____.
3. The Word of God enlightens my _____.
4. What had the psalmist sworn in verse 106?
5. Who is the Day Star?
6. Remember that the quickening is in the _____.
7. What are the freewill offerings of the mouth?
8. How is his soul in his hand?
9. What two things, in a man, are in constant battle?

10. What are they fighting over?
11. Why does the psalmist have no trouble deciding between the flesh and the spirit?
12. What is the snare the wicked tries to lay for those who follow God?
13. What has the psalmist taken as his heritage?
14. What is the greatest gift your parents can give you?
15. What is testimonies in verse 111, speaking of?
16. What kind of commitment is spoken of in verse 112?
17. What are vain thoughts?
18. Thou art my _____ and my _____, I hope in the Word.
19. What is the protection that the believer in Christ has?
20. If we fellowship with those of unbelief, it is as if we are saying what?
21. Uphold me according to thy _____.
22. What is verse 117 really saying?
23. Their deceit is _____.
24. Who is verse 118 speaking of?
25. What is dross?
26. How is dross removed from silver or gold?
27. Give two more examples when the evil and those who love God are symbolized, when a separation is made?
28. What type of fear is verse 120 speaking of?