



ourTUESDAY

NOV 2017 | *psalm 119*

our TUESDAY

A WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY FOR YOU, FOR HER, FOR US.

NOVEMBER 2017

psalm 119

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NO. 1

Psalm 119:1-8
**The Blessedness of
Obeying the Word**
- Aleph -

| PSALM 119:1-8 |

Hi there! Lanie Beth here. We are back at it again with another Bible study - I can feel the excitement oozing from the page! Thank you for cracking open a fresh workbook. Whether this is your first or 100th study, I pray it meets you where you are and offers hope and encouragement in our great and glorious Father. Let's take a collective deep breath and get going. I sure am proud of you!

Here's the backstory: Psalm 119 is a chapter in one of the largest books in the Bible that has recently become very dear to my heart. Many times the Psalmist (usually David) would write things that resonated with me personally and then the next line would be something so far outside of our normal life that he would lose me. Enemies closing into a field or dogs chewing on bones....I simply couldn't relate. Recently, during a tough season for me, Psalm 119 came bursting into my life and rooted its words so deep into my heart I couldn't help but share them with you. It's a long one, so get ready! At 176 verses it's the longest chapter in the Bible. Simply put: *I can't get over it*. This chapter has been a go-to for me when I don't know what to pray, or let's be honest, don't want to pray. I read Psalm 119 and it seems to put words in my mouth that I didn't know I wanted to say.

Have you ever felt like you wanted to pray but just couldn't find the words? Describe what that experience was like.

Something else to note about this chapter is that, unlike some of the other spontaneous Psalms, this chapter is in fact extremely deliberate. It was thought out, planned and no doubt drafted over time. Let's discuss one example. Take a look at Psalm 119 in your bible and you will see that it is divided into 22 units or stanzas of 8 verses each. This is called an acrostic or alphabetical poem. As it was originally written in Hebrew, every verse in the first stanza began with Aleph, or A, the

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first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Likewise, all of the verses in the second stanza began with Beth, or B, the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and so on. Of course, since we are reading it in English, the verses will not reflect that pattern, however, note that under each heading in this study and in your bible, is the corresponding letter of the Hebrew alphabet. One thought behind the purpose of utilizing this writing style was that it was helpful in applying it to memory.

**Now, let's get started by diving into verses 1-8 together.
Take a moment to read through those verses a few times
before we go any further.**

If we're not careful, verse 1 can throw us off and make us feel like we're not capable of even reading this passage at all. *'Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord.'* The words blameless and perfect are not interchangeable here. He means those who sin and fail (all of us) still take hold of confession and restoration that is offered. When our lives are conformed to the word of God we find our purpose lies outside of ourselves and in the hands of a mighty God. A perspective shift, no doubt, yet one that holds great application in our day to day lives.

Write verse 5 here:

There's an important pattern we need to address moving forward. MacDonald writes that the 5th verse in each stanza appears to be counter to the first verse, and the last verse tends to wrap up the stanza while previewing the next 8 verses. This is the method by which the stanzas tie together. As we move on I'm sure you'll notice the patterns, as well. So verse 5 is a lament to the blessing in verse 1. An antithesis. And a way to show how things differ when we are not steadfast.

On the heels of verse 5, verse 6 brings us the statement that the Psalmist deals with shame when he considers the Lord's commands. How relatable is that? I'm sure all of us, at one point or another have known that we didn't maintain discipline in certain situations and so when we hear about the Lord's goodness and his commands for us, we feel shameful. While there are differences in our language today between guilt and shame, rest assured that the Psalmist was referencing an appropriate visceral response to knowing what we should do and yet doing the opposite. This stanza ends with a resolved promise to 'obey your decrees' and a pleading to 'not utterly forsake me'. A promise followed by what appears to be a desperate plea. However, it is actually more of a promise followed by a statement in which the Psalmist is asking for grace in spite of what he knows he deserves.

Have you ever felt like that? Give an example.

Goodness knows I have. I find myself saying, 'I am back in the game, Lord. Please pardon me from what I know I deserve.' Oddly enough, acknowledging that we know what we deserve and yet in God's great grace we are not given over to it, is what helps us eek out the words, 'I will obey your decrees!' There is a healthy acknowledgment happening that shouldn't be overlooked here.

Lord, I am anything but perfect. Thank you for meeting me where I am and encouraging me to know you more. I want to seek you with my whole heart. Meet me in my today. I love you.

Write the verse you'd like to think and pray on today. Your focus verse. The verse that jumped off the page at you:

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NO. 2

Psalm 119:9-16
Cleansing By The Word
- Beth -

| PSALM 119:9-16 |

Before we jump into this passage, please take a minute to read all 8 verses a couple of times. This will help you to get a grasp on the overarching theme of this stanza.

Right off the top: What imagery does the word 'pure' bring to your mind?

Verse 9 comes across like a rhetorical question yet is answered in a very distinct way. *'How can a man keep his way pure? By living according to your Word.'* It's almost as if that question had a well rehearsed answer in a way that lets us know that the Psalmist has spent a lot of time thinking about it. I, personally, love the directness of that answer. In a world of seemingly 'grey' issues, the black and white answer makes my heart sing.

There is a syncopation that has a tick tock sound in much of Psalm 119 but certainly in the second stanza. There is great comfort in rhythm. And seasons. This is not the same thing as repetition. It can feel like a relaxing beat on a drum that allows our hearts to follow suit.

Write verse 10 here:

In verse 10, MacDonald writes that in the matter of holiness theater is a curious merging of human desire - *'With my whole heart I have sought you'* - and divine empowerment - *'Oh, let me not wander from your commandments.'* When we ask the Lord to help us stay in step with Him, he will always empower us to do so. In God's economy, our willing hearts are the currency. He turns his ear toward his children the same way that we do to ours.

When was the last time you know for sure that God heard your prayer?

Verse 11 gives us insight into how we avoid sin and thus continue to stay in relationship with God. We *'hide His word in our hearts that we might not sin against him'*. By reading his word and through memorizing scripture we are proactively fighting the good fight. Even in seasons of peace and plenty, we still remain connected to the Lord through prayer and devotion to His word. This builds up reserve so that when we are ready or when that situation arises, we are prepared and not scrambling to figure things out.

Verse 14 can be telling of our heart posture: *'I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.'* What do we rejoice in? If I'm being honest, my selfish desires take the driver's seat more than I'd like. Here's what I've learned about reading the Bible. It's like any good habit...the more you do it, the more you want to do it. Salad for lunch? Exercise for 30 minutes? Good choices strengthen our resolve to make more good choices. Same with studying. As we start to see how the dots of scripture connect to form this beautiful masterpiece of a story, we become less scared of the unknown and more sure of the one who knows us. It is our great riches!

1 John 5:3 says, *'His commandments are not burdensome.'* So when we *'delight in his decrees'* and choose to *'not neglect his word'* (v.16) we are making a conscience decision to remain committed to God and his word. Why do we tend to think of commitment as stifling and yet we find weddings so incredibly delightful and happy? It's a full ceremony focused around commitment!

Complete the thought for your season of life:

With my lips I recount:

I rejoice in:

I meditate on:

I will delight in:

I will not neglect:

The last phrase in verse 16 can be our promise to God: *‘We will not neglect your word, Father!’* Minute by minute, if we must, we will remind ourselves of your goodness!

May you go in peace today as you rejoice, meditate and delight in his word to you!

Write your focus verse for today and why it spoke to you:

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NO. 3

Psalm 119:17-24

Discernment by the Word

- Gimel -

| PSALM 119:17-24 |

*Do good to your servant and I will live;
 I will obey your words.
 Open my eyes that I may see,
 Wonderful things in your laws.*

At the opening of our third stanza, I picture a woman on her feet. She is sort of bouncing as if she's at a football game and cheering for her baby on the field. She is IN THE GAME because she knows the players and wants to see victory for her team on the field. She's doing that thing where you're on your feet and cheering, possibly a fist pump or two for good measure. I don't know why, but I see those same motions as I read the first part of our passage today. Women on their feet. Engaged and desperate to hear from the Lord. Excited and alive. And yes, possibly a fist pump somewhere in there. The women are standing and asking the Lord to Do good to them! We will obey your words! Open our eyes that we may see the wonderful things in your laws!

See us. We are here. We are waiting for you. Desperate to hear from you. Open our eyes. We know they are closed sometimes to things when they should be open wide as saucers.

*I am a stranger on earth; do not
 hide your commands from me. (v.19)*

Have you ever felt like a stranger on earth? Like everyone else got 'the memo' about something and you missed it? Explain.

There is something to be said about living and functioning in the world - it's a commandment of the Lord! We are to be in the world but not of the world. (Romans 12:2) Yet, I know I have had times

that I felt like I was, in fact, alien to my surroundings. Or even just to the group of people I was around at the time. I feel like the Psalmist is relating that sentiment we've all had - I feel alone sometimes....please don't leave me! It's not a bossy sort of 'don't hide your commands from me' but more of a 'Please, please Lord, don't hide from me. I need you.'

Can you give an example of a time when you begged the Lord not to leave you alone?

*My soul is consumed with longing
for your laws at all times. (v.20)*

Sounds pretty anti-American dream to say that verse aloud. Every other news and media outlet is telling us that what we want is most important. You can choose just about anything today. From food, to dress, to hair color, to even more permanent decisions. All because you have a desire and there is a way to fulfill that desire somewhere out there. Scary to think about it that way, isn't it? It sure is to me. Then the next verse is very telling...

*You rebuke the arrogant, who are cursed
and who stray from your commands. (v.21)*

He rebukes the arrogant because they stray from His commands. His way is the best way. Always has been, always will be. Generation after generation have tried to prove otherwise and they have all failed. Our God's ways surpass time and space laws. They surpass political seats and election disturbances. It's not popular preaching to talk about God's rebuke but he most certainly will make it a priority to show you his authority. He despises the arrogant and gives grace to the humble. (James 4:6). To those who call him their God he hears and is inclined to grant their request (1 John 5:14-15). But to the proud - to those who want to do things their own way, in their own time for their own glory....whew. He will handle that, too.

Does a time come to your mind when you've been arrogant in a situation that would have been better served through humility? Not doormat...but true, gospel humility. Summarize that time here.

In this situation, did the resolution come easily or was it a hard road?

Keeping in mind what we've studied, write a prayer for today asking the Lord for courage and humility.

Think about what your focus verse is for today and write it here:



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NO. 4

Psalm 119:25-32

**Sense of Personal Insufficiency
Through the Word**

- Daleth -

| PSALM 119:25-32 |

Good day to you! I pray today's verses meet you right where you are in your daily routine. Take a minute to read Psalm 119:25-32 a couple of times through to get a feel for where we are heading together. Our Psalmist is throwing a small "pity party for one" today. I personally could be a pity party event planner. Anyone get me? I'm extremely experienced at putting up the "I feel sorry for myself" banner, blowing up the balloons and eating all the ice cream! But the Psalmist doesn't leave us hanging there. In the same breath he acknowledges that, even in our lowest of lows, God can and will revive us with the restorative power of the Word.

Are pity parties your go to? If not, what do you do when you are feeling sorry for yourself?

He starts out verse 28 pretty plainly. *'My soul is weary with sorrow.'* Sorrow makes us physically tired and mentally drained. Our minds work slower and our bodies feel like they are in quicksand. Our Psalmist then directly jumps into *'strengthen me according to your word. Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me through your law.'* It's as if he's trying to say: We acknowledge your law, and we know it is firm, yet we ask for grace in the midst of firm.

Here's another way to think through this phrasing:

I have chosen the way of truth; - I had another option, but I chose truth.

I have set my heart on your laws. - My heart has the ability to be turned and directed. I am dialed ino you, Lord.

I hold fast to your statutes, O Lord; - If the ball is in my court, I'm not letting go!

do not let me be put to shame. - Protect me from shame. It is real and threatening me.

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I run in the path of your commands, - I'm not walking and waiting, I'm running!

for you have set my heart free. - My yoke is easy, I'm no longer held down by the weight; for you carried it for me. I am free in you.

One lie that the enemy hurls at me, quite often actually, is a direct perversion of verse 32.

Write God's version here:

The counterfeit version is something along these lines:

The Lord doesn't want what's good for you. He wants to contain your awesomeness. He doesn't want you to run, he wants you to walk and then be on your knees all the time....what's so free about that? He gets all the glory and no one even knows your name.

Satan can't make up his own truth so he has to borrow from God's word as material for the basis of his lie. He always speaks directly to our weak spots. And most often, he speaks to the weakest spot of all - our desire to protect ourselves and our loved ones. So if he can somehow make you believe, or at minimum, get you distracted, then he's already halfway there. That's the scary part. We must be so incredibly diligent that we might not fall victim to the lies and misleadings of the other side.

Memorization is so important for many reasons but these verses and what they imply shine a spotlight on their vitality.

HOW WE FEEL:

GOD'S ANSWER:

I'm really tired of hearing bad news.

(28) My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word.

The Bible is too confusing and not worth the time it takes to study. What difference does it make anyway?

(27) Let me understand the teaching of your precepts; then I will meditate on your wonders.

I feel like I can't breathe from anxiety about my past or present mistakes.

(31) I hold fast to your statutes, O Lord; do not let me be put to shame.

So many of the verses we read today are relatable to our daily lives. Which verse spoke to you today? Write it here:

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NO. 5

Psalm 119:33-40
Power of the Word
- He -

| PSALM 119:33-40 |

Alright, let's dive in...start today off by reading verses 33-40 several times through, asking the Lord to meet with you in this space. If you'll remember with me, that in the original Hebrew language, all of Psalm 119 is an acrostic. In the stanza we are reading today, it's the Hebrew letter 'HE'. So each line in these verses would have started with the same letter to form a pretty poem that has rhythm and flow. Even though the english translation doesn't all line up that way, there is still very much a pattern.

Look with me and write down the verbs you see at the beginning of each verse:

Did you get them all?

Teach, Give, Direct, Turn, Fulfill, Take, Preserve

I'm reading out of the NIV so your version might be a little different but I'm sure you see the point. At first glance, each word seems to have a positive connotation except for two of them.

Write those down here:

I'm looking at you, 'Take' and 'Turn'. We don't like to think that the Lord takes things from us. At least not in the worldly meaning.

Just for clarification, write the phrasing for those words below:

Turn (v.36 & 37) -

Take (v.39) -

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Many times, the turning and the taking appears to be done for us. Sometimes a job or a relationship or a dream. It makes us angry and resentful at God, so much so that we tend to think that's all he wants to do. But unlike our earthly parenting skills, He is a good Father. And he turns our hearts away from selfish gain. He turns our eyes away from worthless things. He takes away the disgrace we dread, for his laws are good!

This sort of turning and taking is because we choose it. After walking with the Lord for over 25 years (!!) I can assure you that he can change your palate. What I used to think I wanted can now make me nauseas when I think about it. The big dreams and plans for my life, even though they were God-flavored (hear me on this!) were not God's best for me. It was what I wanted. Bottom line. I can see now that there was/is so much selfishness and desire that I had to lay down so that I could walk free of that bondage. This is daily for me. A laying down and a picking up. A turning away from my desires and taking God's blessed forgiveness that I might walk in the peace he has for me that day.

He wants to teach us to follow his decrees that we might keep them *to the end*. Not until we get what we want. Or we reach a milestone achievement. To the very end of our lives. (v.33)

*Give us understanding, Lord that we
might keep your law and obey it
with all our heart. Please! (v.34)*

**What is one thing you want understanding on today?
Ask him for it.**

*Direct me - coach me to listen to your voice -
so that I can walk in the path of your
commands, for there I find delight. (v.35)*

What is one area of your life you want to delight in today?

*Fulfill your promise to your servant,
so that you may be feared. (v.38)*

Is there a promise in your life that is unfulfilled?

All of these verses are blessings and admonishment toward God to keep the promises he's made to his people. And oh, does he ever keep his promises. Out of righteousness but goodness, first and foremost out of love. Pray with me....

Jesus, I long for your precepts (v.40). Preserve my life in your righteousness. I am choosing today to believe that you bless me and know what's best for me. I am choosing your way and your path. I am no longer living for myself but for you. Lead me in every situation and circumstance I may find myself in. I trust you, Lord. Amen.

Focus verse:

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NO. 6

Psalm 119:41-48

Victory Through the Word

-Ware -

| PSALM 119:41-48 |

Today's reading starts out with a bang, sister. I'd suggest that you fasten your seatbelt because the Psalmist is bringing his A-game today. Part of what is so striking to me concerning this stanza in Psalm 119 is that our author holds nothing back. In a world that is increasingly fearful of offending someone or speaking truth, the author makes no apologies for his request while simultaneously offering praise and admiration to His King. It's that balance of being humble and unapologetic that we could all learn from. We trust that God's ways are better. Always. He doesn't miss a beat or forget appointments so when we praise him for his guidance and precepts and word, it's our way of speaking aloud his righteousness and our need for him to intervene in our everyday lives. It's by his goodness that he answers when we cry out like in verses 41 & 42:

*May your unfailing love come to me, Lord,
your salvation, according to your promise;
that I can answer anyone who taunts me,
for I trust in your word.*

There is something so powerful about being unashamed of God's truth. We can be fearless in proclaiming His truth because, quite frankly, we have nothing to do with it. This is how we can tell our sisters and our children that the Lord is present with them. And that we have hope in something that is bigger than us!

Have you ever felt nervous to share hope with someone for fear that they would protest God's goodness? Perhaps you weren't sure how to respond so you didn't even bring it up? Give an example.

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There have been times when I've wondered about 'freedom in Christ'. You? I've heard about it my entire life in church, yet somehow all the rules and the list of things I couldn't do, felt like anything but freedom.

Verse 45 brings a little light to this topic.

Write it here:

When we walk about in freedom, it's because we know what's at stake. It is possible to walk about in blissful ignorance. Which, let's be honest, we've all done...hello, college! As we gain wisdom with age, we start to see the cost of our decisions. The weight of being faithful day in and day out. The difference between running sprints and training for a marathon. Both involve running but one tires out in mere seconds while the other lasts for hours.

Psalm 119 motivates us to be marathoners. It points us back to precepts and laws that remind us of our smallness while pushing us to be in relationship with a great and gracious God. The world might tell you that you're popular or famous even. That is until you mess up. There's no grace in the media or in circles of popularity. In lifting up our hands to his commands (v.48) there is a letting go that is necessary.

What is something literally or figuratively that you can 'lift up your hands'? An area that you need to let go?

The paradox of the believer's life is that in giving up our lives, we gain so much more. Hold tightly to his promises today, sister.

*Speak his statutes before kings and you
will not be put to shame! (v.46)*

Write out your focus verse for today:

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NO. 7

Psalm 119:49-56
**Rest and Comfort
Through the Word**
- Zayin -

| PSALM 119:49-56 |

Can we just acknowledge the elephant in the room? The Hebrew name for this stanza- Zayin- is awfully close to the One Direction band member, Zayn. In fact, let's be honest, I had to google his name before I could finish writing this lesson because it was driving me crazy! Not to be divisive, but One Direction will never be the Backstreet Boys or N'Sync... may they rest in peace!

Ok, now that we've gotten the heavy stuff out of the way, take a minute to read through our portion of scripture for today a few times to wrap your head around the content. This section is called Rest and Comfort Through the Word. Have you ever met someone or are you one of those people that just remembers everything anyone has ever said to you? *silently raises hand* - I am that person. For better or worse, I've got a pretty darn good memory. Except apparently when I need to do things like bring snacks for my child's entire soccer team- then my brain decides to fail me!

The Psalmist starts out of the gate imploring God to remember. In fact, in the NIV he asks God to remember three times in eight verses. That's sort of like my 4 year old asking me to remember to buy her favorite snacks at the grocery store 100x between our house and the store. Which is a whopping 1 mile door to door, by the way. Here's the thing that is so relieving about God versus us as earthly parents... God doesn't mind us reminding him of His words. This is also one of the reasons we partake of the Lord's supper. So that we can remember Christ's sacrifice. Remembering and reminding are good things! Blessed things!

*Remember your word to your servant,
for you have given me hope. (v.49)*

Can you write the last thing you asked God to remember? Or something you've asked him for repeatedly?

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The next verse (v.50) has been a lifeline for me. Under my breath I remind myself and the enemy that *God's promises preserve my life*. He's not looking to take away for amusement. God promises life (John 10:10) and life to the full! I can trust that he preserves my life when I look back on my life and see how far he's brought me!

Forgiven people know what it feels like to be forgiven and they remember the feeling of drowning under the weight of their sin. Forgiven people are gracious and quicker to extend kindness to those around them that are struggling. When we find ourselves in a self-righteous place looming over others that are in the wrong, no matter how justified we are in our rightness, we are wise to remember what God has brought us through.

*In the night I remember your name, O Lord,
and I will keep your law. (v.54)*

During the dark of the night, no one else is there to puff up our pride or coddle us when we need to be encouraged to get out of our pit. It's just us and the Lord. We remember his name and his character in the night and the daylight.

Has there been a figurative night or dark season of your life where you felt the Lord was with you? Write how that instance made you feel. How did you remember the Lord through that difficult time?

I know I always feel like there is a secret to life. A secret that everyone around me seems to know and understand deep down. Something that upon learning would clear up every pain and stressor in my life. If only I knew the secret!

Have you ever felt that way? Perhaps in school or parenting or marriage?

Turns out, there's no secret sauce. I know. I'm frustrated about it, too. This is what we do know: His promise preserves our life. Not destroy us.

When we level our eyes on the prize: life to the full, our game face changes. You wanna know how to get there? We do as verse 56 says:

This is my practice: I obey your precepts.

We practice obedience. Every day. Every situation. Every opportunity. That's it. It really is that simple. And the good news is that it's no secret. It's written plainly for us to see and learn.

I'm praying for us today. That we could both stop searching for shortcuts and easy paths. That we could get out from under the weight of stress and shame that we might be bold enough in our prayer lives to remind the Lord what he's promised. For us, not him. Let's practice obedience together. I'm with you, sister.

**Do you remember which verse stood out to you today?
Write it here:**

The page is framed by a decorative border of black and white line drawings. It features stylized flowers with five petals and long, slender leaves. Interspersed among the foliage are almond-like fruits, some shown whole and others split open to reveal their textured, ribbed interiors. The drawings are scattered across the page, creating a delicate, botanical frame around the central text.

NO. 8

Psalm 119:57-64
Perseverance in the Word
- Heth -

| PSALM 119:57-64 |

It's so nice to meet you back in the ink on these pages. The fact that you keep coming and spending time with Jesus is just the most thrilling thing to me. Way to go! Please read Psalm 119:57-64 several times through to get a flavor for it. Ask the Lord for fresh eyes and an open heart before we begin.

*You are my portion, O Lord;
I have promised to obey your words.
I have sought your face with all my heart;
be gracious to me according to your promise.*

Remember how we talked about remembering, yesterday? It's a privilege to feel as though we can ask the Lord to remember his word. Knowing he doesn't forget, the reminding has more to do with us knowing his word and feeling as if we can take ownership of his promises to us. Knowing he is our portion (v.57) and that when we seek him with our whole heart he is gracious to us (v.58)!

Please write verse 59 here:

There is a sobriety in knowing that we can ask the Lord for what we need, yet we must also *consider our ways* (v.59) and what if they don't line up with his. We *turn our steps toward his statutes*. Pivoting can be a game changer. It's whether we have the guts to actually change the course of our direction that determines the condition of our heart. How we act when we mess things up or we choose what we want to do versus what God wants us to do. God hears his people pray, but when we act on those prayers and we put our lives in vulnerable situations for the glory of God and not our own fame, he meets us there! In the seemingly small. In the places where we never thought we'd find ourselves. In the places we spoke cruelly about when other people were there. Even in those places.

In verse 62, the Psalmist says he rises at midnight to give thanks. This is the same wording as in yesterday's passage in verse 55. 'In the night' we remember. Not just in the day when things look a little better and people might see us. We cannot have a platform mentality when it comes to our faith. The stage is not where we work things out...amen? We work our faith out with the Lord in the quiet of the night when it's us alone with him. That's when the real stuff comes out. And quite frankly, that's when growth happens! Be encouraged, sister, if you are in a dark season, the Lord wants to meet you there just as he does when things are pretty and birds are singing. Even more, probably. You are dear to him! All of you!

Can you remember a hard time that, in retrospect, you grew more spiritually than you ever thought you could? Describe how and when. Can you thank the Lord for that time right now?

If you are reading this and are somewhat alone or maybe your kids are playing in the background, as mine are right now, would you do something with me? As quietly or as loudly as you like, raise your palms to the sky and repeat verse 64 a few times.

*The earth is filled with your love, O Lord;
teach me your decrees.*

Speak it out with conviction. Say it on purpose. Say it with as much strength as you can through gritted teeth or with a smile on your face. Proclaim that the whole earth is his! Ask him to teach you what he wants you to do and say. This I can promise you, He will tell you!

Now, when you're done, and if you feel like you can, reread the entire stanza (vv. 57-64) aloud. There is power in reading silently, but man, when we use the vocal chords and bodies that the Lord designed to praise him for their intended purposes, the spiritual world wakes up and takes note! Feel the atmosphere change with his words, written for you, hanging in the air.

This is how you change the game, sister. Fight. Speak. Decide. Pray. I'm cheering you on!

Focus verse:



A decorative border featuring black and white line drawings of almond blossoms and almonds, scattered around the central text.

NO. 9

Psalm 119:65-72

The Pricelessness of the Word

- Teth -

| PSALM 119:65-72 |

I have this weird skill. Well, I have a couple of strange party tricks, but one of them is that I remember events in my life based on the clothes I was wearing. The other aspect to this strange brain thing is that I can tell you where I bought it, what size it was and how much it cost. WEIRD. Who knows how much brain space I've used up unconsciously cataloguing these details! I could be so intelligent right now but instead I can tell you that the white tennis shoes I wore to the first day of 3rd grade were the brand Cherokee from Target, a size 3 in girls and they cost \$12.99.

Pray for me!?

There is one strange benefit to this weirdness I have....I can count the cost of decisions I've made in my life as well. Not in dollars, of course, but in terms of natural consequences that I've experienced along the way. As we read these verses for today's lesson, let's be reminded that everything costs something. Every learning experience and every shred of wisdom we can ever offer costs us something. Perhaps it was just the time we spent hearing of someone else's mistakes so we learned through a secondary source. Or maybe we can speak with authority on poor choices we've made along the way and we are the person looking square into the face of a woman younger than us simply begging her to not do it the way we did.

What is one lesson you'd love to pass on to younger women?

*Teach me your knowledge and good judgement, for
I believe in your commands. (v.66)*

When we pray, may we pray for knowledge and good judgement. Many intelligent people have made some really dumb mistakes. The word judgement gets ruled out for the word 'discernment' in many circles. It's a more palatable word; I get it. We must know how to approach situations with grace first, then knowledge and judgement. From the Word and from life's disciplines we learn sound judgement.

Jump to verse 68 and write it here:

Teach me. That might be your prayer for today. Two words. Simple yet profound. In order to be taught, we must submit ourselves to a teachable spirit. Pride doesn't like to be taught. Self-loathing is too busy with itself to be taught the way out. Greed is too busy looking around for the next thing to conquer to take in a lesson or two. Verse 70 might hit a little close to home. In speaking about 'the arrogant' the Psalmist writes, *'Their hearts are calloused and unfeeling, but I delight in your law.'*

**Which side do you fall on? The calloused and unfeeling?
Or the one who delights in God's word? What advice
would you give to someone sitting on the proverbial other
side of the table?**

I've sat on both sides. Sometimes within hours of each other. You? I have this picture in my head of the Psalmist saying these verses aloud in the outdoors and when he says verse 72, he points his finger to the sky and he speaks it because he knows it's right, but also because, perhaps he's reminding himself along the way.

*The law from your mouth is more precious to me
than thousands of pieces of silver and gold. (v.72)*

Sometimes the best thing we can do is to speak god's word aloud so that we will believe it. Until we believe it. Out of a deep desire to believe it. Over and over. Repetition and prayer. His word changes things. Cold hearts. Calloused hearts. Unfeeling hearts. And hearts that think they can do it all on their own.

Take a minute to thank God today that his word changes our hearts. That he receives glory when we speak his words with the desire to praise him and believe him for more. That's not hypocritical when we mean it as deeply as we know how to mean it. That's being honest about where you are! Be brave in your requests of his Word today, sister!

Focus verse:



A decorative border featuring black and white line drawings of almond blossoms and almonds, scattered around the central text.

NO. 10

Psalm 119:73-80
Insights through the Word
- Yodh -

| PSALM 119:73-80 |

Did you ever sass your mama when you were growing up? Or maybe a grandmother or Aunt? My youngest baby is quite the communicator. She's terribly interested in 'who is the boss?' in every situation. She loves that her older sister is "not the boss of her" and she tells us that we are 'rude' when we correct her or tell her to obey. I've had more than one mom moment where, no matter how many times you tell yourself you won't say the mom-lines, you literally hear them coming out of your mouth....helpless against their strength. Things like, 'I brought you into this world, you better obey me!' and 'I am the mommy and you are the child, I need you to stop talking and obey me the first time.'

Anyone? Bueller?

Well, this concept is a little like our stanza of 8 verses for today except vice versa. In these phrases, the Psalmist is proclaiming that God is the boss and there is no one like him.

*Your hands made me and formed me; give me
understanding to learn from your commands. (v.73)*

This issue of authority is one that we begin teaching our children from an early age. And it's a lesson we are wise to heed ourselves. To start with, understanding authority permeates our theology in the fullest sense of the word. We must know that God is the beginning and end (Alpha and Omega), who was, and is and is to come. (Rev. 1:8) This is the God we put our trust in - he knows us and loved us first. (1 John 4:7-10) Secondly, it is to our advantage to respond to him this way and verse 73 is a perfect example. When we petition the Lord in prayer, we can tell him that *he made us and formed us* and because of that we can ask him to *give us the understanding to learn his commands!* It's a perk of the relationship. The Lord can and will give you eyes to see his grace around you. He can open your heart that has been wounded in the past. He can speak new life into a broken marriage. He can bring joy in a season of tears. Ask him!

*May your unfailing love be my comfort,
according to your promise to your servant.
Let your compassion come to me that I may live,
for your law is my delight. (v.76-77)*

Write verse 79 here. Explain what you think it means.

Based on my research, this is a statement we've all thought from time to time. We want to find 'our people'. Likeminded friends. Community to do life alongside. Simply put: we want friends! MacDonald tells us in his commentary, 'It's a spiritual instinct to seek the fellowship of those who know and love the word of God. But how often do we ask the Lord to lead those who fear God across our pathway?'

We all get lonely. Every single one of us has been through seasons where we wish we had a few more people that really understood us. We are made to crave connection- don't dismiss this longing! Verse 79 is a great reminder to ask the Lord to bring believers into your life! Once we are out of school, it becomes harder and harder to connect and make 'grown-up friends'. This changes again once your children are out of the house and there's not a parent network built into school. In all ages of life, we can ask the Lord to bring new and kind faces into our lives!

This last verse (v.80) at first glance appears to be asking the Lord that we might not be put to shame. However, upon looking closely, I think it means something quite different.

*May my heart be blameless toward your decrees,
that I might not be put to shame.*

I think that the Psalmist realizes that when we stray from God's commands, there are natural consequences (earthly ramifications) when we sin. So in his asking for a blameless heart, he not only wants to

honor God but he also doesn't want shame to enter his life on his own account. The Lord is not out to punish and seek revenge. He loves nothing more than a heart that is wholly devoted to him and his law. He doesn't want us to feel shame! His protective and fierce love for us shields us from our own mistakes when we submit ourselves to him.

**What is one thing you want to ask the Lord for today?
Something that perhaps you thought he didn't care
about or wouldn't want you to ask. Have the courage to
talk to him about it right now.**

*Thank you, Father that you don't put us to shame. May
your love and sacrifice wash anew over us today.*

Focus verse:



The page is framed by a decorative border of black and white line drawings. It features stylized flowers with five petals and long, slender leaves. Interspersed among the foliage are almond-like fruits, some shown whole and others split open to reveal a textured interior. The drawings are scattered across the page, creating a delicate, botanical frame around the central text.

NO. 11

Psalm 119:81-88
Sustained by the Word
- Kaph -

| PSALM 119:81-88 |

Ever been really tired? I mean, not just tired, but exhausted. The kind of tired when you feel every muscle in your body and, oh my word, do they all hurt. That kind of tired? Our author is some more kind of tired as our stanza opens up today. I can speak from experience, nothing makes you more tired than feeling sad or depressed. Chances are you're already physically tired just from normal life activities.....who sleeps as much as they are supposed to, anyway? But emotional exhaustion and spiritual exhaustion go hand in hand. This trifecta can make even the strongest of believers weary for some relief.

*My soul faints with longing for your salvation, but
I have put my hope in your word. (v.81)*

Faint spirit. Longing for the Lord. Weary body. BUT. Hope.

The good news is that almost every sentence we can think of could end that way. But I have put my hope in your word.

Can you fill in the blank with a couple of things that are going on in your life? I'll start you out with one.

Sometimes I feel so worn out from everyday life but I have put my hope in your word.

Now you try...

_____ but I have put my
hope in your word.

_____ but I have put my
hope in your word.

NOTES

It's oddly cathartic to write our anxieties down. It gets them out of our head and onto a page. And they aren't nearly as monstrous in written word as they sound in our head.

2 Corinthians 4:8 brings this point strongly: *'The believer may be afflicted but not crushed; perplexed but not driven to despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed.'*

Verse 83 gives a visual that would have been understood immediately in the ancient day it was written. When was the last time you looked in the mirror and felt like you looked like a wineskin? Probably not recently! The analogy of a 'wineskin in smoke' is shriveled and blackened. Ugh. Think about how you feel when you are going through a hard time, like in verse 81- we carry our worries on our physical bodies.

*Though I am like a wineskin in the smoke,
I do not forget your decrees. (v.83)*

Just like we have hope in his word, we can choose to not forget his decrees! Because we have hope, we choose to not forget! This sentiment leads beautifully into verse 87:

*They almost wiped me from the earth,
but I have not forsaken your precepts.*

**Cancer almost wiped me from the earth,
but I have not forsaken your precepts.**

-

**Divorce almost wiped me from the earth,
but I have not forsaken your precepts.**

-

**Depression almost wiped me from the earth,
but I have not forsaken your precepts.**

-

**Abuse almost wiped me from the earth,
but I have not forsaken your precepts.**

-

**Disappointment almost wiped me from the earth,
but I have not forsaken your precepts.**

This is our battle cry!

These things will try (sometimes successfully) to wipe us out but as believing women, we must hold fast to the word of God! Through gritted teeth and dirty fingernails, we will continue to crawl or run our way through this life but we will not be stopped!

May we go to battle with this plea: 'Preserve my life according to your love!'

As you pray today, be bold enough to fill in the blanks above and pray aloud. Beg the Lord to give you the strength for battle. And when the enemy tries to remind you what you're up against, stand up sister and straighten that back. Keep your eyes on the Lord and tell the enemy that he might have **almost** wiped you out, but you are not forsaking the Lord. Not then, not now and not ever.

What verse spoke to you today? Write it here: