

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

RUNNING THE RACE

STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, September 14, 2025

Teaching Title: Life in the Word

Key Scripture: Psalm 119

CEDAR VALLEY

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: Psalm 1

Tuesday: Psalm 119:1–40

Wednesday: Psalm 119:41–80

Thursday: Psalm 119:81–136

Friday: Psalm 119:137–176

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's word, what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

MEMORY TOPIC:

God's Word

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 1:1–2 NLT

Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Introduction:

There are so many things in life we know we should do, yet we put them off. Flossing, exercising, eating healthy, drinking enough water. Even though we know these things are good for us, we often avoid them. In the same way, as Christians, we frequently neglect reading the Bible, even though we know how beneficial it is for us. Just like water nourishes our bodies, the Word of God brings life to our souls. It refreshes, guides, and sustains us. So why do we so often set it aside? Psalm 119 centers around God's Word and how it brings joy, guards our heart, revives us when we're down, provides guidance, and gives peace and stability. Spending time in Scripture isn't a burden or just another task to check off a list; it's nourishment for our souls. God's Word isn't a weight to carry, it's life to drink.

Questions:

Ice Breaker: What is something small you know you should do regularly but don't? Why do we tend to skip the things we know are good for us?

For the structure of Psalm 119, see Digging Deeper.

1. Read Psalm 119:1–8. How is God's Word described in these verses? What are its characteristics, and what effect does it have on the psalmist's life? (See Digging Deeper)
2. Read Psalm 119:9–16. The psalmist says, "*I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.*" What are some practical ways we can "store up" God's Word for times of temptation or trial?
3. Read Psalm 119:25–32. When life feels overwhelming, how does Scripture revive us?

4. Read Psalm 119:105. How does the metaphor of a lamp and light help you understand the purpose of God's Word in your life?
5. Read Psalm 119:165. The Hebrew word for "peace" is *shalom*, which means more than just the absence of conflict. It implies a sense of wholeness, well-being, and flourishing. How does this richer definition shape your understanding of "great peace"?
6. How do you plan to spend time in God's Word this week? How can we encourage one another in this commitment as a group?

DIGGING DEEPER

The Structure of Psalm 119—

Below is a comment on the structure of Psalm 119 from Dr. Walter Brueggemann, an Old Testament scholar of the Psalms. He highlights the beautiful artistry of this carefully crafted psalm:

"[Psalm 119] is shaped as the most artful and well-developed acrostic poem in scripture. An "acrostic" is a poetic articulation that proceeds through the alphabet with each successive line beginning with the next letter from A to Z, that is in Hebrew, from 'aleph to taw. We have other acrostic poems in the Old Testament that run the course of the alphabet as a way of completeness. (See Psalms 25, 34, 37, 111, 145, and Proverbs 31:10–31, Lamentations 1–4.) ... In each of these texts the alphabetic sequence is traced, though some of the poetry does not complete the task. Psalm 119, however, is exceptional. In all the other cases of acrostic each letter of the Hebrew alphabet occurs once in sequence. In Psalm 119, by contrast, each letter gets eight successive lines. Thus with twenty-two letters in the alphabet, and each letter reiterated eight times, we get a sum of 176 verses... Unfortunately none of this is evident in English translations."

—Taken from an online article by Dr. Brueggemann: <https://churchanew.org/brueggemann/the-empowering-illuminating-word-from-elsewhere>

Question 1—

Psalm 119 uses eight different nouns to refer to God's Word. Dr. Michael Wilcock helps us see the nuanced meaning in each:

Word is the most general of the eight. Just as God is everything I need, I should pay attention to everything He says, however He first spoke it, and however I now hear it.

Promise also refers to something spoken. It calls for a response from the whole heart to a grace that touches the whole life.

Statues reminds us that God has made His covenant with us on His own terms, and witnesses testify to the kind of God He is.

Commands simply means "orders" and emphasizes doing what we are told without delay.

Law/instruction is the first word used (v. 1) and the most frequent (25 times). It refers to direction or instruction. Verse 61 reiterates the surprising point that God's law brings freedom, in contrast to the entanglements of evil.

Laws/regulations (v. 62) is a different word that means judgments or rulings. The psalmists often eagerly anticipate the Lord's coming to judge; even in the darkest times (like midnight), they trust that His decisions will ultimately set things right.

Precepts/commandments emphasize careful attention to detail.

Decrees are permanent, unchanging, as if carved in stone.

—Taken from Dr. Wilcock's commentary on Psalms called: The Message of Psalms 73–150 from the Bible Speaks Today series.