

DEVELOPING A
HEART FOR GOD

A Devotional Commentary on Psalm 119



Ron Auch

First printing: January 1995 (First published as *Heart of the King*)
Revised and Updated Third printing: August 2022

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New Leaf Press, P.O. Box 726, Green Forest, AR 72638

New Leaf Press® is a division of the New Leaf Publishing Group, Inc.

ISBN: 978-0-89221-768-7

ISBN: 978-1-61458-823-8 (digital)

Library of Congress Number: 94-68844

Interior and Cover Design: Left Coast Design

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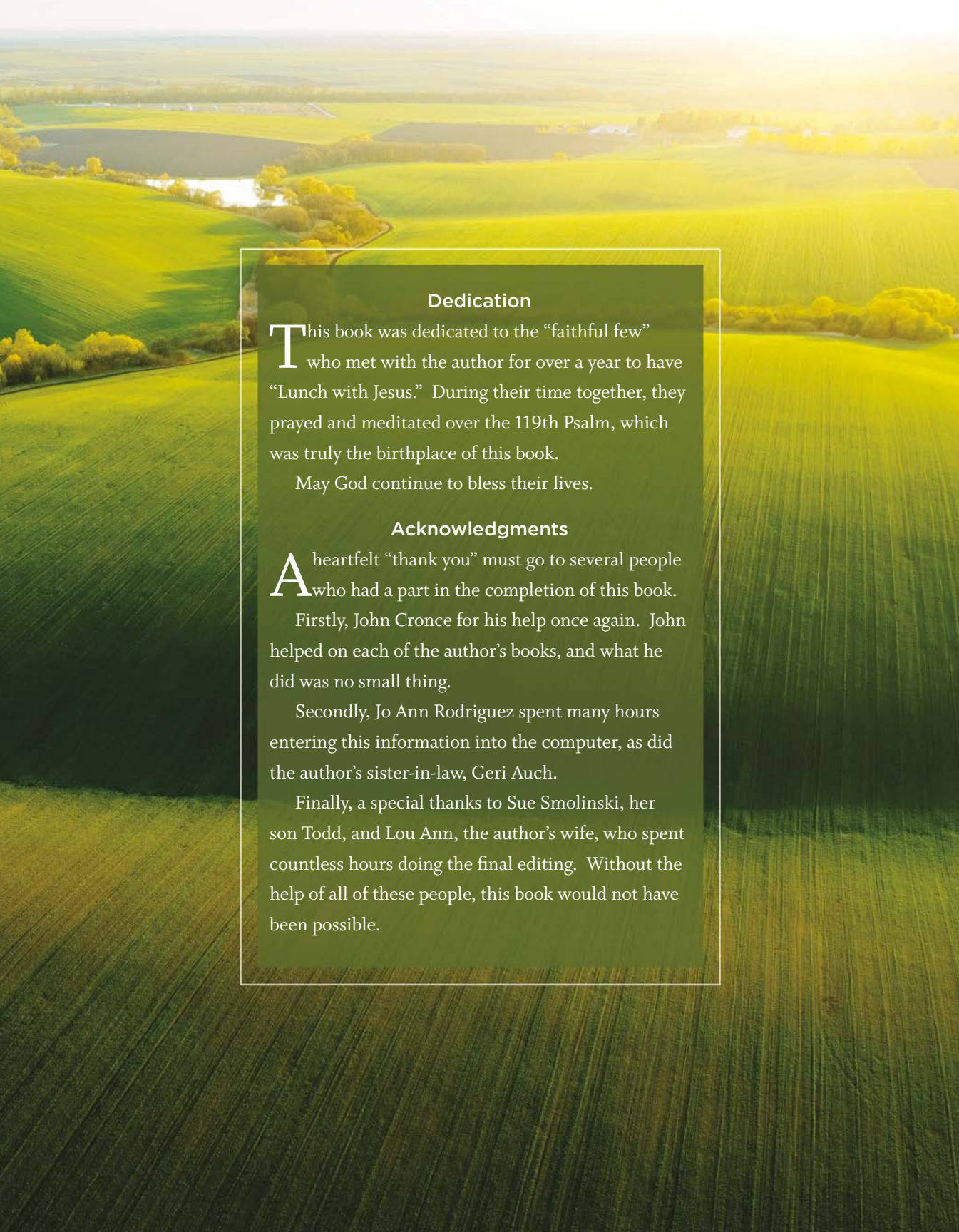
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Dedication

This book was dedicated to the “faithful few” who met with the author for over a year to have “Lunch with Jesus.” During their time together, they prayed and meditated over the 119th Psalm, which was truly the birthplace of this book.

May God continue to bless their lives.

Acknowledgments

A heartfelt “thank you” must go to several people who had a part in the completion of this book.

Firstly, John Cronce for his help once again. John helped on each of the author’s books, and what he did was no small thing.

Secondly, Jo Ann Rodriguez spent many hours entering this information into the computer, as did the author’s sister-in-law, Geri Auch.

Finally, a special thanks to Sue Smolinski, her son Todd, and Lou Ann, the author’s wife, who spent countless hours doing the final editing. Without the help of all of these people, this book would not have been possible.



The title of this book, *Developing a Heart for God*, refers to King David. It was said of David that he had a heart that sought out the heart of God (1 Sam. 13:14). Psalm 119 reveals his heart in a way that no other portion of Scripture does. This entire Psalm is a prayer that expresses David's innermost feelings about his God. If we follow the admonitions in this Psalm, we will develop into spiritual beings. David was a spiritual man, and the things he prayed were an expression of that.

Using this Psalm as a prayer began to interest me after reading an article by Rex B. Andrews from the 1960 issue of *Feed My Lambs* in which I found he had a practice of praying through it every day. If a person were to pray this every day, he would find himself going through some very transforming things. To read/pray* through it, *we will* express things we do not ordinarily express. It teaches us to say the things the Holy Spirit wants us to say. Though I am not suggesting we always, only, pray this Psalm, all we will ever need to pray is in its root form here.

We may have difficulty praying something that may not seem true of us at this particular time. In Psalm 119:8, for instance, we read, "I will obey your decrees." We may ask, "What good can there be in saying, 'I will obey,' when I continually disobey?" By praying this, it becomes more and more clear that we aren't as spiritual as we thought, and that we actually need God to help us. Remember that by praying this Psalm, we are praying what the Holy Spirit wants us to pray. Pray it as it is, even though we may not have fully accomplished what it says yet.

This Psalm furnishes something that we cannot find anywhere else. It brings us into a desire for God, and it is given in a way that only God can express. As Rex Andrews said, "It contains a prayer for quickening. 'Quicken me according to thy word,' is a common phrase. The power of the Psalmist's utterance is somewhat dimmed by the old English word 'quicken.' That word is hardly ever used in our present speech

in its primary directness.” What the term “quicken” actually means in this Psalm is: “PUT ME TO LIFE.” In this study, we will use the New International Version of the Bible, where instead of “quicken me,” we will see the phrase “preserve my life.” In either case, it is asking God to put or bring life into you.

The words *word, law, statute, testimony, commandment, precept, and judgment* cover the whole range of what the Word of God is. Rex Andrews’ definition of these words will be used in studying this Psalm.

To use this Psalm as a prayer, we will be involving ourselves in devotional type praying. It is also a meditation.** These are the most important type of prayers there are because they develop intimacy with God. Devotional or meditative prayers are different from what we may be used to. This is internal prayer, not external. This type of



praying causes us to go inward and to look at the intimacy of our relationship with God. In praying this Psalm, we will be going through what is called a “heart searching.” It reveals the current condition of our own heart and shows us how much we need a heart like King David’s.

There are 22 sections of Scripture in the 119th Psalm. Each section is 8 verses long. The subtitle at the beginning of each section is one of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet. For instance, the first section begins with the subtitle “Aleph.” Aleph is the word used for the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet. “Beth” is the subtitle for the second section. Beth is also the word for the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, etc. These subtitles are found in most Bibles.

There are two ways we can effectively use this as a prayer. 1) Each day read/pray over one section of 8 verses. This could be done in an hour’s time. It would prove to be an excellent way to spend an hour in prayer. The author suggests that we read the particular verse and the following commentary, then meditate on the verse for a few minutes. If we spend around 7 minutes on each verse, it will take close to an hour to go through one section. 2) Another approach would be to take one verse a day, and use this as a daily devotional. Obviously, we would want to add this to our daily time of prayer because it would be difficult to spend an hour meditating on just one verse. This approach would take 176 days to go through the entire Psalm. May God bless you on your adventure!

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- * The term read/pray simply means to carefully and thoughtfully read the verse and then pray over it.
 - ** Meditating on the Scriptures is done through simply repeating a verse over and over. This can be done verbally or in your mind. To meditate verbally or audibly you will keep yourself from daydreaming. Many of the promises for success in the Bible come through meditating on the Word of God. After you read the verse and commentary, then take the next few minutes to say the verse over and over while subconsciously keeping the commentary in mind.

Psalm 119 is an acrostic poem with 22 stanzas, with 8 verses per stanza.





Aleph

Keepers of God's Law

Verses 1-8

1. Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord.

Are you one of those who are “blessed” because all your ways are upright, with no hidden agendas? “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death” (Prov. 14:12). The only way for our “way” to be blameless is to walk according to the law of the Lord.

What is the summation of the law of the Lord? Mercy. We can measure all our ways by that one standard. Will our way result in others being blessed? Only when we think in terms of mercy will we be blameless in all our ways. If we do everything for the sake of blessing others, no one can blame us for doing anything wrong. Do you understand what the result of most sin is? Sin is the deprivation of someone else. The reason sin hurts God is because of how our sin hurts those He loves.

The law of the Lord is mercy. In all that God does, He does it to have mercy on others. If a man murders another man, it is such a tragedy from God’s perspective, because the murdered man no longer has the opportunity to be a recipient of the mercy of God. Whenever we sin, we rob someone else of the mercy of God. If a father or mother has a “way” in their life that is not blameless (a way full of self-centeredness), they deprive their own children of God’s mercy.

To walk blamelessly, we must walk in mercy. It is the merciful who continue to receive mercy. We must understand that the will of God is mercy. It is God’s desire to reveal His mercy to all people at all times; therefore, everything we do should be done in that light. To walk according to the law of the Lord is to do so with the intention of revealing God to others through having mercy on them.

As you meditate on this verse ask God to show you all the ways of your heart that do not yet reflect Him.

A statute is a distinct law, an explicit law. There is no compromising a statute – it must be obeyed. Blessed are those who practice the fear of God to the point that they recognize there is no wavering when it comes to a statute.

The only way to develop unwavering obedience is through seeking God with all our heart. “Their heart is deceitful [divided], and now they must bear their guilt.” Hosea 10:2 tells us that because the people of God did not have their hearts focused wholly on God, they did not seek Him wholly. Subsequently, they developed idols. Psalm 10:4 says, “In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.” The primary “idol” which causes us to not seek God is called *self*.

The people of Hosea's day had divided hearts. They could not fully seek God because they had more than one love. David tells us that the wicked, because of pride, do not seek God. Is there any greater occupation than self? When self becomes an idol, we are no longer able to keep God's statutes. It's only through the keeping of His statutes that we are able to seek Him with all our heart. To seek something with all our heart means our heart is surrendered to that thing. When we idolize self, our heart is not fully surrendered to God.

Whether self is an idol or not is determined by our prayer life. If we spend relatively small amounts of time in prayer, it's because we are not God-centered, we are self-centered. We cannot just have prayer in our life. All Christians have some type of prayer in their lives. We must have a prayer life, which, when defined, means someone whose very life comes from their time of prayer. That life is centered around prayer.

2. Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart.



As you meditate on this verse, ask God to help you develop a heart that seeks Him wholly.

3. They do nothing wrong; they walk in his ways.

What a wonderful testimony to be said of anyone; they do nothing wrong! Is it your testimony? This whole Psalm is an inspection of the heart because the heart is the home of Jesus. Do you love Jesus enough to do nothing wrong? Do you love Him enough to walk in His ways? Our love of God is demonstrated by our obedience to Him. This is why rebellion is considered Satan worship. Rebellion is exactly the opposite of obedience. First Samuel 15:23 says, “For rebellion is like the sin of divination [witchcraft], and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.” Those who have any rebellion in them cannot have the testimony “they do nothing wrong.”



We are quick to quote John 15:7, “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.” The word “remain” means to “live.” If you live in Christ, or if Christ occupies your whole heart, you can ask whatever you wish in prayer and it will be given you. Some people live under the impression that since they are believers, they have the right to ask for anything they want from God and He must give it to them. There is a condition that must be met before we can simply ask for anything and have it given to us. The condition is to have the testimony that we do nothing wrong, we walk in His ways. To abide means more than just having Jesus in our heart. It is to live the life He lives. First John 2:6 puts it this way, “Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.”

To walk as Jesus walked means our flesh has been dealt with and it no longer controls our actions or desires. When a person is so submitted to God that he does nothing wrong, he then gains the privilege of asking for anything he wants and it will be granted to him. The idea behind this is that when our flesh has been dealt with, we will no longer ask for things that would be out of God's will.

As you meditate on this verse, ask God to help you gain the testimony that you do nothing wrong.

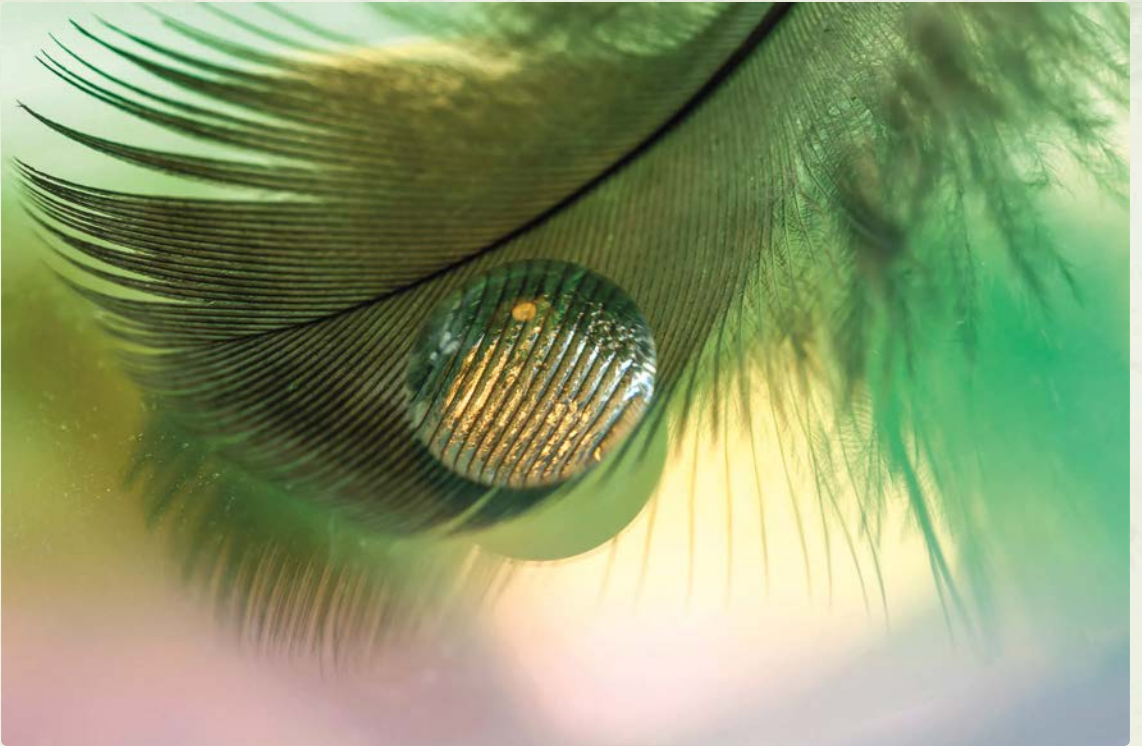
4. You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed.

The word “precepts” covers what we generally mean by “instructions.” Instructions are given as to what to do, when, how, etc. The precepts that God has laid down work to our benefit. We receive instructions in all things. If you are a secretary, you are to do your job according to God’s precepts. The same is true of a plumber, a doctor, a lawyer, a preacher, etc. God will tell us how, when, and what. These are to be fully obeyed. If we will go through life obeying the instructions of God, then we can go through life fully expecting His blessings.

It is very similar to how a parent instructs a child. A parent has the child’s best interest in mind. In Luke 11:11-13 we read, “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

We, being evil, know how to provide good things for our children. When we instruct our children, it’s so we can provide good things for them. The same is true of our Heavenly Father but to a greater degree. When God lays down precepts, they are to be fully obeyed because they work to our benefit. God is not demanding obedience just because He has some kind of unquenchable ego. He wants obedience for the same reason a parent wants obedience. It is for the good of the child.

As you meditate on this verse, ask yourself if you really believe that everything God asks you to do is for your good.



**5. Oh, that my ways
were steadfast
in obeying your
decrees!**

The word “decree” is the same as “statute.” A statute is an explicit law. David’s prayer was that his ways would be steadfast in obeying God’s explicit laws. To be steadfast is to be adamant, firm, or resolute. It means it has been settled. There is no wavering in obedience to God’s decrees.

We relate better to the apostle Paul in Romans 7:15, “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.” The average Christian wants to be steadfast in his obedience to God but faces this constant conflict. Paul summed up his thoughts with this, “Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin” (Rom. 7:25). The battle for obedience is won or lost in the mind. If Paul had become a slave to the law of God in his mind, then he ultimately won the battle regardless of the struggle he may still have faced with his flesh.

Romans 12:2 says, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” When we meditate on the Word of God (hide it in our heart), we begin to renew our mind. When the mind is renewed, the flesh becomes subject to it. If we fail to take on the mind of Christ, our flesh continues to control our thoughts and actions.

How much time do you spend meditating on God’s Word? Consider what is the greatest influence in your life. Whatever you spend the most time doing influences you the most. Do you spend more time in front of the television than you do in prayer and the Word? If so, it stands to reason that you cannot get victory over flesh problems.

**As you meditate on this verse, ask God to help you
become steadfast in your obedience to Him.**

There is no shame in obedience to God, there is only shame in disobedience. A command is an uttered expression of a will (God's) which is to be obeyed. When God reveals His will to us, to obey it means we will have no shame when we stand before Him. What is the will of God? God's will in all things is to have mercy.

In Matthew 9:13 we read, "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'" God desires mercy in all things. The will of God for every believer in every situation is to show mercy. If we would just obey that one command, we would never be brought to places of sacrifice. What are places of sacrifice? They are those places we bring ourselves to when we have been disobedient. The sacrifice is something we make or do after we have done wrong.

In 1 Samuel 15:22 we read, "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" To obey is better than sacrifice because obedience goes before sin, while sacrifice goes after sin. It's not that God does not accept our sacrifices and renewed commitments to Him. It is just that if we would simply obey Him in the first place we wouldn't be brought to the place where we need to make sacrifices.

Jesus said, "Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy." Mercy has been described as the ardent desire to meet the need of someone else. If we would go and do mercy to others, we would then learn that mercy is God's will for all people. If we would follow that single command we would never be put to shame.

- 6. Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands.**



As you meditate on this verse, ask yourself if you show mercy to all people.



An upright heart is a heart full of truth. “The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23). The only way to enter into the true spirit of worship is through truth. We must have an upright heart to worship God. However, the upright heart is gained through learning what His righteous laws are.

Righteousness deals with our relationships with men, while godliness deals with our relationship with God. We are made righteous through the blood of Christ. However, being made righteous we are to go and do acts of righteousness. Righteous acts could be termed the right treatment of other men. It's treating men the way God has treated us. We cannot worship God with an upright heart if we have a wrong relationship with another man.

We who have the Spirit of Christ in us are to represent Him on earth. I do not represent Jesus if I hate another man. I cannot come to God and worship Him in the name of Jesus while I have something against another man. Mark 11:25 says, “And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” If I have the sin of resentment in my heart, it is not an upright heart. I must have an upright heart in order to worship Him. I cannot gain the upright heart until I make everything right with my fellow man. I must do the same good to others that God has done to me.

Prayer plays a very important role in developing an upright heart. The more time we spend in the presence of God the more we see what God sees in others. The upright heart sees the things that God sees. Subsequently, those with this type of heart tend to treat others from that perspective.

As you meditate on this verse, ask God to help you develop an upright heart.

7. I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws.

8. I will obey your decrees; do not utterly forsake me.

I will obey your decrees! That's a statement full of fortitude. "I will," is a strong statement in itself. "I will obey," is even stronger. What would give a person such resolve? Knowing that God will not forsake us gives us great resolve. We have a wonderful promise in the New Testament which says, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). The Greek meaning of the word "forsake" has to do with the way the soul abandons the body at the time of death. In other words, God's promise to us is that He will never abandon us; He will never take His life away from us.

A decree is a decision. David said that he would obey God's decrees (decisions). His obedience became his assurance that God would never leave him. When we follow God in His decisions we walk with Him. God rarely asks us to go do something for Him. He primarily asks us to go with Him. The work of God is not something we do on our own. It is something we do with God. When we walk in His decisions we walk with Him. God would never abandon those who walk with Him.

We live in a day where there is very little integrity. It is becoming more and more difficult to believe the mere promises of men. Fathers are abandoning their homes. Mothers are abandoning their children. Pastors are abandoning their flocks. Yet in the midst of it all, we have a promise we can cling to. "I will never leave you nor forsake you." "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind" (Num. 23:19). Not only is God telling the truth, He also will never change His mind. What a comforting thought today.

As you meditate on this verse focus in on that one thought. I will never leave you nor forsake you!



Beth

Purity, the Fruit of the Law

Verses 9-16



The word “WORD” is a general term which includes LAW, STATUTE, TESTIMONY, COMMANDMENT, PRECEPT, AND JUDGEMENT. It refers to the utterances of God by which we live our lives. David, being a man, related best to men. However, this is applicable to all people, not just young men. The way we keep our lives pure is by submitting (bringing under) our “way” to God’s Word. That Word may come through the Bible or through the spoken word. Regardless of how it comes, it is to be lived. It’s when we “live” according to God’s Word that our way remains pure.

When something is pure, it is not mixed with anything else. We are talking about a man’s “way” in this verse. The only way for his “way” to remain pure is when his “way” is in harmony with God’s Word. The Word of God, however it is received, is the only pure thing there is. All other “words” are mixed (not pure) with the motives of men. God’s Word has only pure intentions. Men’s words, no matter how godly they are, are all mixed with their own intentions.

This is a challenge to “come under” God. To live according to God’s Word means we are to leave our ways, and bring ourselves under God. It means we must leave our way of doing things. It means we are to abandon our plans, goals, and ambitions. The impurity in our “way” comes from our self-centered motives. There is a life of purity available to all who will “come under” God. Our lives are full of impurity only when we come out from under God, or do our own thing and make our own decisions.

As you meditate on this verse, ask God to show you the impurity of your ways. Then ask Him to help you “come under” His ways.

- 9. How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.**

10. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.

26

A command (commandment) is an uttered expression of a will which is to be obeyed. When we seek God with all of our heart, the chances of us straying are minimized. However, we still have the ability to stray in the sense that seeking God does not remove our free will. The purpose of seeking God is to bring your will in line with His. When God has all of our heart, we won't want to stray, although we still possess the ability to do so.

Our heart is who we are. We have no existence other than what is in the heart. That's why Jesus said, "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45). When we seek God with our whole heart, we are seeking Him with all that we are. David said that he sought God with his whole heart. That's convicting! Can you say the same? David is expressing his love for his God. "God, You have my whole heart, I keep nothing for myself; do not let me stray." What a powerful prayer!

In Jeremiah 24:7 we read, "I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart." When we have a heart knowledge, rather than just a head knowledge, that He is the Lord, we tend to serve Him with our whole heart. We tend to fully realize that we are His people and He is our God. That is the kind of revelation knowledge that will keep us serving Him even though we have the freedom to stray.

Have you ever bowed in His presence and said, "Lord, I want a heart to know You. I want to seek You with my whole heart"? This type of praying developed a steadfastness in David's heart. He may have sinned from time to time, but he always returned to his God.



As you meditate on this verse, ask God to give you a heart like King David's.

11. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

28

To hide the Word in our heart is to do more than just read the Bible or to memorize it. To memorize or read the Word puts it in our head. However, everything must get from the head to the heart before it transforms us. The heart is who we are. When we allow the Word of God to get deep within our heart, we are allowing it to shape the very essence of who we are.

The Word of God is hidden deep within the heart through the practice of prayer. God speaks to us in many different ways and at many different times. However, if we will take the Word that God speaks to us into the prayer closet, and talk to Him intimately concerning that Word, we will rise as new beings. In the secret place of prayer, the spoken Word of God becomes our sustenance. It becomes the very thing that gives us life and liberty. Prayer takes the Word of God and brings life to us.

That new life becomes the very thing that keeps us from going back to the old way of sin.

Equally powerful is that of praying the written Word of God. When we pray the written Word of God, we express things we do not ordinarily express. Praying the Word of God teaches us to say the things the Holy Spirit wants us to say. The value of it is that it brings us into the knowledge of God while increasing our desire for God. This knowledge and desire keeps us from sin.

David said, “But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates.” God has always intended for His children to hide the Word in their hearts. Meditation accomplishes this in a most effective way. Meditation is done through running a particular verse over and over in your mind.

As you meditate on this verse, don’t pray any words other than this particular verse.



“Decrees” are decisions. In this case, they are the decisions God has made. In Psalm 63:4 we read, “I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.”

The lifted hand is a sign of surrender or submission. With lifted hands we worship and praise our God. In essence the Psalmist is saying, “Through praise I learn Your decrees (decisions) because I am bringing myself under You.” Bringing ourself “under” is what submission means. It means we are giving our will to God. We can now pray with Jesus, “Not my will but Thine.”

Through submission, we gain a teachable spirit. Praise makes us teachable because of the submissive spirit we must be in, in order to worship God. The true worshipers not only worship in spirit but also in truth. We come into truth through being teachable. God does not force feed us. He waits for our spirit to open to Him so that He can gently teach us of Himself. Matthew 15:8-9 says, “These people honor (worship) me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain.” They worshiped God, but it was futile because their hearts were not pliable.

“The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him” (Ps. 25:14; KJV). The secret of the Lord himself cannot be learned through study, but through submission. There is no way our limited minds can understand the Lord. A person’s spirit must commune with His spirit. This is done through true worship of God. As we worship Him and lay our lives in His hands, we begin to understand things (decrees) about God that cannot be understood any other way. We learn more about God through submission than we do through self-exaltation. Pride is a lifting up of ourselves. Submission is a lifting up of God. When we bring ourselves down and worship from a position of lowliness He is exalted.

As you meditate on this verse, pray this prayer:

“Father, bring me down.”

12. Praise be to you, O Lord; teach me your decrees.



**13. With my lips I
recount all the laws
that come from your
mouth.**

30

The word “laws” has to do with the “teachings” of God. The Old and New Testaments are teachings on how to live. The Psalmist would recount all the things that God had taught him through the law. He recognized the source of his life as being his obedience to God. With his lips, he would declare all of God’s laws. He knew that, “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous” (Ps. 19:7-9).

David knew God’s law to be his source of life. He knew that the laws of God are “more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb” (Ps. 19:10).



David wanted to be kept from willful (presumptuous) sin (Ps. 19:13). He did not want to live a life of continually making sacrifices for his sins. He did not want to live a life of continually sinning on the premise that God would forgive him. He knew that obedience was better than sacrifice (1 Sam. 15:22). Therefore he wanted a clean heart. The heart is cleansed through meditating on and declaring the law of God.

“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight” (Ps. 19:14). The words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart is pleasing to God WHEN it is centered on the Word of God. When our mouth is declaring His Word and when our heart is meditating on His Word, we are most pleasing to God.

As you meditate on this verse, ask God to make your words and meditations pleasing to Him.



14. I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.



Statutes are distinctly laws laid down. They are explicit laws. The Psalmist would rejoice in these laws as one rejoices in great riches. Have you ever dreamt of great riches? The reason we think riches would be so wonderful is because we think it would mean we could live the kind of life we so desire. What kind of life do you really desire? Is it a life that finds its only fulfillment in material things? David understood that true wealth was obedience to God. He truly felt that following God's statutes would result in the kind of life that would give him true satisfaction. It was the kind of life that no material wealth could buy.

Our minds tend to get clouded by the spirit of this world. We see pictures of people winning millions of dollars in some type of contest, and they are depicted as the happiest people on earth. Their joy is understandable from a fleshly perspective. However, that which challenges us is David's rejoicing over the statutes of God in the same way a man rejoices over great riches. It takes a truly spiritual man to see that spiritual growth is as beneficial as

temporal gain.

The Word of God teaches us that we are to take on the mind of Christ. Our carnal minds rejoice in getting all we can for ourselves. The mind of Christ says, "And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well" (Matt. 5:40). If we struggle with the thought of giving someone our cloak, then we are fooling ourselves if we think we are as spiritual as David, who rejoices over the statutes of God.

As you meditate on this verse, ask yourself if you truly have the mind of Christ.

No wonder God said David was a man after His own heart. David was absorbed with his God. He would meditate and consider the precepts of God.

“Instruction” is the term we generally use instead of precept. Has God ever instructed you in anything? Have you ever set aside time to simply meditate on that instruction? Have you ever considered His ways? I once worked for a large corporation. It was common to hear people respond to instructions with the phrase, “Who said I had to do that?” When the answer came, “The boss,” there was no hesitation. We followed his instructions because we respected his position.

Without the daily practice of being in the presence of God and meditating on His Word to us, we tend to lose the reality of who God is. We don’t lose our theological definition of God, we simply lose a real living sense of who He is. There is a great difference between the God we know in our head and the God we know in our heart. The head is full of rationale while the heart is full of emotion. The head takes a very legal look at God and bases its obedience on that. The heart takes a very loving look at God and bases obedience on that. The head cannot change the heart but the heart can change the head.

It’s the heart that is changed through prayer and meditation. When we give ourselves over to time in the presence of God, we are making ourselves a living sacrifice. Through that, our heart begins to conform to the character of God. As the heart changes, the head follows suit. Eventually we are transformed by the renewing of the mind. Ultimately we take on the mind of Christ because we have taken Christ into the heart.

When we know God in the heart we tend to be more obedient to Him. We obey Him out of respect. His instructions become our meditation.

**15. I meditate on
your precepts and
consider your ways.**

As you meditate on this verse, consider your level of respect for God.

16. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

34

The Psalmist found his delight in God's decrees. Decrees are the decisions God has made. Have you ever asked God for directions and found that God actually gave them to you? When He directed you, did you delight in it or did you tolerate it? I have found many people following God's decrees, but hardly delighting in it.

Many times I have come upon a situation where I will say something like, "I see you are teaching Sunday school class." With quite a bit of disappointment in their voices they respond, "Yeah, God wants me to do it, so I have no choice, besides that, nobody else will do it. I'm just doing God's will."

That may be following God's decree, but it is a far cry from delighting in it. The Psalmist's delight was to follow God's decrees and not neglect His Word.

In John 15:10-11 we read, "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." Have you discovered the joy of obedience? Do you want to find a sad, frustrated person? Find one that God has given direction to, but who has remained disobedient. The joy of obedience is knowing that we have pleased God. That is why Jesus said that if we will obey, we will remain in His love. When we love God, our greatest desire is to please God. A number of times, during Jesus' earthly life, a voice came from heaven saying, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." The words I look forward to hearing more than any other are, "Well done, enter into the joy of the Lord." Our obedience to His decrees and Word will bring us to that place one day.

As you meditate on this verse, ask yourself if you truly delight in obedience to God.