

Psalm 119: For The Love Of Scripture!

Psalm 119:105-112

Psalm 119:105

(KJV) NUN. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

(NIV) Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Nun. The fourteenth letter in the Hebrew alphabet teaches us much about the importance of a right heart before God, and a right walk before God, especially as we meditate and study out His unchanging Word. The manual version of the letter includes a straight *vav* (vertical line or backbone), representing *righteousness*, whereas the cursive version of the letter is bent at the bottom, representing *faithfulness*. As our psalmist well knows, presenting ourselves before the Word of God, and laying it before our eyes will require of us a confidence that what we are reading is the righteousness of Christ, demanding on our part a deep humility to understand it, and hearts ready to obey it.

Perhaps you are familiar with the Christian fish? Well, it has its origins in the letter *nun*. This letter, in Aramaic, literally means “fish,” so imagine a fish unhooked and released into its native waters, fully alive and free to swim and skillfully navigate its underwater paradise. We first read of this word in Exodus 33:11:

Exodus 33:11

And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

Joshua, the “son of Nun” was equipped and released by God to succeed Moses, and to enter the Promised Land. The Jews understood Joshua to be a “Son of Life” and a type of Christ. Oh, dear Christian, the prophetic riches of the Old Testament are on display here!

The construction of the *nun* represents a bent *vav* and topped off with three *tochin* (as the points of a crown), which helps us imagine a man who has humbled himself before God, and is at the last crowned with glory. Now think of Jesus, who came as a humble man to earth (remember the crown of thorns?) and whom God has now exalted as the Righteous One, glorified as King, bearing the Golden Crown of God upon His head for all eternity:

Revelation 14:14

And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet. You may notice two distinct parts of Psalm 119:105 - the psalmist’s *walk*, and his *path*.

1John 2:6

He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Jesus is forever our Lord. He is our example. Our moment-by-moment obedience to God's Word determines the direction of our walk with God - toward Him, or away from Him. Deeper in love with Jesus, or distancing our hearts to Jesus. Simple, right?

John 14:15 *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

So, if Jesus is our example, we can look to His living and active Word to understand better our own *walk* and *path*, as the Holy Spirit illuminates this popular and powerful verse Psalm 119:105.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

So Jesus knew the ultimate end destination of the path he was on. And that knowledge held him steadfast through the painful trials that lay ahead. Are we privy to the same inside information? Gloriously, yes! While the details of our journey are to be determined by God, all we *need* to know is laid out in God's Word.

1Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Beloved, I exhort you, and myself, let what we know of the path ahead through the Word of God shape and direct the direction of our walk. And all to God's glory!

Psalm 119:106

(KJV) *I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.*

(NIV) *I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws.*

I swear. I double swear. I triple swear.

Matthew 5:33-37

"Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all:

either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Surely our psalmist was not relaying his promise to the Lord in a foolish, New Year's resolution kind of way? No. But the spiritual trajectory of our lives is often determined by our faith in and focus upon a destination. In the case of our walk with God, our faith is in a Person, Jesus Christ, Who has already fulfilled the mission perfectly. Perhaps this is the life-transforming other side of the Gospel that many believers are ignorant of, or simply choose to substitute with religion. These are important heart issues though, worthy of our reflection.

Galatians 5:1-5

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

According to Paul's exhortations here, whatever the reasons we prop up to reject the whole Gospel, there is a cost on the other side of the cross that God never intended us to pay. Jesus paid it all! Rest in this truth, beloved, and your obedience will be fulfilled according to God's Word and the power of His Spirit.

1John 5:2-5

This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

*STUDY POINT: Find in the New Testament three instances where vows to God were made and broken. What was the outcome?

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Have you ever fallen into the trap of making a vow to God, and then breaking it? What can you learn from the psalmist in Psalm 119:106 about vowing to God to be faithful?

Psalm 119:107

(KJV) I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.

(NIV) I have suffered much; preserve my life, LORD, according to your word.

The mockers are back! Did we expect any less? The psalmist certainly has no problem bringing these evil-tongued God-haters to the throne of grace - or *is it* a throne of grace he

is seeking for these men? Most of us are reactive and react carnally when done wrong by another.

John 18:10-11

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

Romans 8:5-8

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

When I was in Grade 9, aware of God but not born-again in Jesus, a group of three bullies strategically targeted me because of my bright red hair and glasses, and obviously to mask their own insecurities. While I had experienced much physical bullying in public school, nothing could have prepared me for what abuse lay ahead in high school - years that were supposed to be filled with promise! Their attacks were not physical but verbal and escalated daily in their frequency. After a year of this verbal onslaught - which I did not avenge outwardly - I began to plot the murder of these three bullies. My hatred for them was so red-hot I began to see them as better off dead, out of my life. My dreams were saturated with hate and detailed vengeance. Thankfully, God, in His mercy, eventually moved me and them into different classes where I was no longer a target for their damning darts. However, my issues with self-image and managing my anger would not dissipate for many years. Until I met Jesus.

Jesus' way is the better way! Early in my own walk with Christ, newly married, I still carried dangerous rage and self-loathing in my heart. God came to the rescue of my relationship with Him, and my wife, with this verse:

James 1:19-20

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Appealing to God, in obedience to His Word, is the only way to deal with our enemies.

Romans 12:17-21

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Psalm 119:108

(KJV) Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments.

(NIV) Accept, LORD, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me your laws.

Oh, beloved, to give God willing praise means our hearts are attuned to His Spirit, and our will is aligned with His Word. This is truly the peaceful spiritual posture that God intended for all men and women, for all time. Beginning with Adam and Eve:

Genesis 2:4-25

These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

You know what happens from Genesis 3 onwards. An abandonment of God's care and a forfeiting of His peace in favour of a temporary thrill. Sound familiar? However, the psalmist is steadfast in his pursuit of God and His Word. Check your heart today. Or better yet, ask God to check your heart today.

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Proverbs 4:23 *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

1 Timothy 6:11-12

But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 51:10-13

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Psalm 19:12-14

Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

In all of the above verses - and I hope you will take the time to meditate upon them - you will find action words, action steps for both us and for the Lord. A divine partnership of practical righteousness. Perfect! And all because *faith requires action!*

*STUDY POINT: Reread the verses listed above. List on a piece of paper two separate columns, one listing our action steps, and the other listing what God will do.

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: What does this list teach you about your own faith, with regards to righteousness? And what does this list teach you about God's part in the changing of your heart?

Psalm 119:109

(KJV) My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.

(NIV) Though I constantly take my life in my hands, I will not forget your law.

The parallels here to King David are just great! The Holy Bible is replete with Men of God in great peril, crying out to God, but still steadfast in meditating on His Word. Men of God (myself included!) let this verse be an energizing, encouraging exhortation to stay in God's Word, *no matter what!*

2Timothy 4:2

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Psalm 119:110

(KJV) The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.

(NIV) The wicked have set a snare for me, but I have not strayed from your precepts.

Have you experienced déjà vu while reading through Psalm 119? Perhaps right here, Psalm 119:109 and Psalm 119:110. God knows we need repetition, or at least a rewording of similar themes. He knows us, beloved!

*STUDY POINT: List four major themes you have observed during your sojourn through Psalm 119 thus far.

Psalm 119:111

(KJV) Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.

(NIV) Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart.

I want my legacy to be my love for God's glory through His Word. *How* He works that out is not as important as that He *does*. I pray that this journey through Psalm 119 - and we're not through yet - has the same inspiring effect on you!

Psalm 119:112

(KJV) I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end.

(NIV) My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.

Jesus is taking us to the end. Or until His Great Commission is fulfilled. Let's stay faithful.

Amen.

Matthew 28:16-20

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

~ Reverend Darren McClelland