

# PSALM 119.105-112

psalm  
God's Word 119

T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

Psalm 119.105-112  
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## Introduction to Psalm 119.105-112

In this stanza we drill down deep into the secrets of happiness (Ps. 119.1-3).

Happiness begins in the heart where delighting in God and His Word is the defining affection of our lives (Ps. 37.4; Matt. 22.37; Jn. 14.15). We understand that only this Word can keep our feet safe as we journey toward the eternal Presence of our God (Ps. 84; Jn. 14.6). We will be assaulted and know many afflictions along the way, but if our heart is truly inclined toward God's Law, we need not fear stumbling or straying.

Yet through them all, in the Lord and in His Word, we can know true and lasting happiness.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources, helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

We hope you find this study of Psalm 119 instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

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## 1 Light My Way

*Pray Psalm 119.105.*

Your word *is* a lamp to my feet  
And a light to my path.

*Sing Psalm 119.105, 106.*

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)

Your Word a lamp is to brighten my way.  
Lord from Your pathway let me never stray!  
I give my word now as I have before:  
Your righteous Law I will keep ever more.

*Read Psalm 119.105-112; meditate on verse 105.*

*Preparation*

1. How did the psalmist describe God's Word?
2. What did the Word do for him?

*Meditation*

In the 1 (*nun*) stanza the psalmist expresses in various ways the intensity of his commitment to the Law and Word of God. He swears and confirms it (v. 106); he calls on God to revive him by it (v. 107) and to teach it to him (v. 108). He takes the Word in hand for every aspect of his life (v. 109) and clings to it against the snares of the wicked (v. 110). He finds the Word to be his true inheritance and the joy of his heart (vv. 111, 112).

This stanza will afford us many opportunities to check the nature and intensity of our own commitment to the Law and Word of God.

As a lamp for his feet the word of God accomplishes two important tasks. First, it illumines the pathway we should walk: "This is the way; walk in it", the Spirit whispers as He recalls the Word of God to our mind throughout the day (Is. 30.21; cf. Ps. 119.109). We can see the path. We know where it's safe to step, and which way will lead us further on in our journey to the Lord.

But second, God's Word as a lamp illumines our feet. By it we see where we stand, and whether where we stand is where we *ought* to stand. It shows us the direction we are tending – along the pathway of God or diverting from it. And it guides our every next step so that, gradually, step by step, and day by day, we make progress in our journey.

It's not necessary to make huge progress. Steady progress is the goal, and the Word of God will light our way when we cherish it, learn it, take it with us in all things, and obey it from the heart.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

"For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light;  
reproofs of instruction are the way of life,  
to keep you from...evil..." (Prov. 6.23).

Walking the dogs can be a challenge at night. One needs a flashlight to see the path to the appropriate place to go, and (pardon my indelicacy) to find the treasures one's dog has deposited, pick up said treasure with a bag, and place it in the proper receptacle.

Not a job done well in the dark.

The same thing applies to us. We need the Word of God to illuminate for us the things we need to scoop up and throw away. We need all the wattage we can muster from the grid of the Word to keep ourselves from evil. Jesus doubled down on this truth with these words: “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory...” (Lk. 9.26). We must never neglect the lamp and the light offered to us by the Word for salvation, guidance, reproof, and instruction.

But He also adds these words of direction and encouragement: “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (Jn. 8.12). Jesus, our Savior, promises to shine His light on our pathway. For His glory. And our knowledge and joy in how to love Him effusively (Jn. 14.15; 15.14).

The Word of God lights up our lives like a stadium hosting a night game!  
We just need to make sure that when the lights come on, we are “found in Him”. (Phil. 3.9)

*For reflection*

1. How can you make sure the Word of God is illuminating your every next step throughout the day?
2. How can you use prayer at night, as you are retiring, to check on your progress in the Lord during the day past?
3. Whom will you encourage today to walk in the light of God’s Word?

*... unless the word of God enlighten men’s path, the whole of their life is enveloped in darkness and obscurity, so that they cannot do anything else than miserably wander from the right way; and again, that when we submit ourselves with docility to the teaching of God’s law, we are in no danger of going astray.* John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.105*

*Pray Psalm 119.111, 112.*

Pray that God would more deeply embed His Law in Your heart, and you will, like Jeremiah (Jer. 15.16), find the Word to be a source of great nourishment and joy.

*Sing Psalm 119.111, 112.*

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)

I take Your Word as the joy of my heart,  
my trust, my heritage, my special part.  
I bend my heart to perform all Your Word,  
always, forever, to serve You, O Lord.

## 2 Resolved

Pray Psalm 119.106.

I have sworn and confirmed  
That I will keep Your righteous judgments.

Sing Psalm 119.105, 106.

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)

Your Word a lamp is to brighten my way.  
Lord from Your pathway let me never stray!  
I give my word now as I have before:  
Your righteous Law I will keep ever more.

Read Psalm 119.105-112; meditate on verse 106.

*Preparation*

1. On what was the psalmist resolved?
2. How did he describe the judgments of God?

*Meditation*

The psalmist declares his determination to keep the judgments of God. He has sworn and has bound himself (NKJV, “confirmed”) to this resolution. That is, he has taken a vow before the Lord to keep His Word. Such a vow can be taken in private, as we see Jacob doing in Genesis 28.20-22. More often, vows are taken publicly, as in marriage vows, or the vows church officers take as they assume their calling.

Vows are solemn promises, made to God, to undertake and fulfill certain specific commitments. Here, in our psalmist’s case, that commitment was to “keep” the judgments of God. We saw what that entails back in the 8<sup>th</sup> stanza of Psalm 119: seeking God’s favor for understanding and obedience, committing one’s heart to the Word, thinking on it, remembering it, giving thanks for it, fulfilling its requirements, and hanging out with like-minded friends. Why would anyone make such a demanding commitment?

Because of what it promises.

Vows are made in expectation of blessing, *not* because blessing has been fully received. In marriage vows, for example, the couple has come together because they believe they’re going to find happiness, fulfillment, family, and more at the hand of God. So they vow before God their commitments to love, honor, cherish, and so forth, in the *expectation* of blessing. As they keep their vows, God releases blessing to them.

So vows are an act of faith. A vote of confidence in God and His Word, that fulfilling the vow will result in the pleasure of God. And vows doubly resolved, like this one of our psalmist, not only require extra diligence, but promise extra blessings. Nothing compares with the blessings that accrue to us from learning and keeping the Word of God. We should renew our vows daily to keep the judgments of God, and all His Word, as the Spirit teaches and empowers us throughout the day.

Can you say that you are *resolved* to keep the Word of God? *Doubly* resolved?

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Tiger Day. Yes, it is a holiday. Well, maybe not for you, but it is for us. It marks the day of our official agreement to be married. This year we exchanged poems that we had written for each other. As I was experiencing the joy of the poem written exclusively for me, I realized that so much of Psalm 119 is a love poem written to God from this psalmist.

He longs for the Lord to know of his absolute love.  
He assures the Lord of his faithfulness to Him.  
He works hard to find out how to show his love for God.  
He vows to live only for Him.  
It is a pure love that he writes about.

“You are my portion, O LORD;  
I have said that I would keep Your words” (Ps. 119.57).

In the same way that we borrow words from other writers to express our feelings, he may have used the words of Asaph to express his love:

“Whom have I in heaven but You?  
And there is none that I desire besides You” (Ps. 73.25).

We can use these words, and more, to speak to our Beloved—we are, after all, His bride (Rev. 21.9).  
“My beloved is mine, and I am his” (Song of Solomon 2.16).  
“Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it” (Song of Solomon 8.7).

It is established that we love the Triune God. So, now what? Are we free to go our own way, live our own lives, do what we want, or be unfaithful if we choose? That is certainly not the way it works with earthly relationships, and I am assuredly sure that is not the way it works with God.

Peter posed this question: “...what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God...” (2 Pet. 3.11, 12) As we anticipate joining God in His new heaven and earth someday, and as we live daily, on this earth, to honor and glorify our Beloved “we must be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless...” (2 Pet. 3.14).

Writing with our lives, each day, a poem for Him—because we have sworn and bound ourselves to Him, to keep His righteous judgments.

“With my whole heart I have sought You;  
oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!” (Ps. 119.10)

Because I love You.

*For reflection*

1. Why are vows an important part of the life of faith?
2. What does God promise those who receive His Word and obey it?
3. Look at Ecclesiastes 5.1-5. How does this help us in thinking about the solemnity of vowing to God?

*By the word swear, he intimates that he had solemnly pledged himself to God not to alter his determination. The true manner of keeping God's law is to receive and embrace what he commands heartily, and, at the same time, uniformly, that our ardor may not forthwith abate, as is often the case. This also is the proper rule of vowing, that we may offer ourselves to God, and dedicate our life to him. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.106*

*Pray Psalm 119.109, 110.*

Pray about the day ahead and all you will be doing in it. Offer it to the Lord and commit yourself to obey His Word. Call on the Spirit to keep whispering to you, “This is the way; walk in it.”

*Sing Psalm 119.109, 110.*

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)

Daily I take up my life in my hand,  
working to keep to Your gracious command.  
Let not the wicked turn me from Your way;  
I from Your precepts, O Lord, will not stray.



### 3 Cure for Affliction

*Pray Psalm 119.107.*

I am afflicted very much;  
Revive me, O LORD, according to Your word.

*Sing Psalm 119.107, 108.*

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)

I am afflicted and sorely distressed;  
O Lord, revive me that I may be blessed.  
Teach me Your Word, Lord, my thanks I proclaim;  
offerings of praise I declare to Your Name!

*Read Psalm 119.105-112; meditate on verse 107.*

*Preparation*

1. What was wrong with the psalmist?
2. What did that lead him to do?

*Meditation*

When afflictions come, as they surely will – trials, setbacks, injuries, insults, disappointments, unjust attacks, sleights, gossip, and so on – we need to know what our options are, because, if we don't, we'll surely make matters worse.

I say “options” but there's really only one true option, and our psalmist knew what it was: Call on the Lord to restore you to life and vitality according to the commandments and promises of His Word. Only God can lift us out of our trials and renew us in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. But He will only do that according to His plan and purpose for us, which He has revealed in His Law and all His Word.

None of our “quick fix” attempts to extricate ourselves from trials ever work out as we hope. Feeling sorry for ourselves, getting angry, getting back, holding grudges, backbiting, sulking, breaking friends – these may all sound viable in the moment, but they'll only make matters worse. If you find yourself there, you need to redirect your steps (Ps. 119.59, 60).

So what do we do when trials come? First, recognize negative and unreliable responses and set them all aside. Then, seek the Lord, just like our psalmist. Remember His promises and pray them back to Him. Return to His commandments in renewed vows and commitments (v. 106). Continue looking to Him, for He will bear long with your supplications (Lk. 18.1-7). Afflict God with your prayers as much as you have been afflicted by your trial, or, as Isaiah put it, “do not keep silent, and give Him no rest” as you importune Him for revival (Is. 62.6, 7).

It's a sure-fire cure for trials. Oh, the trials may continue for a time, but the joy, peace, hope, and strength to endure that come from seeking the Lord according to His Word will enable you to rise above them all.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Affliction is an attention-grabber. When we are afflicted, our focus is fine-tuned. We notice it, and of course we would, because the thing or person that afflicts us is a cause of persistent pain or distress.

As we recall from previous verses, the psalmist has spoken on this topic, and has always seemed to find some good in it. Verse 67 says, “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word.” Yes, I learned something good from this affliction and now I keep God's word. And then in verse 71 he wrote, “It is good

for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.” Okay. Once again, I’m going to learn more of God’s statutes because of this affliction. But now is verse 107 he opines, “I am afflicted very much; revive me, O LORD, according to Your word.” Wow. I’m getting tired of this. Please Lord, revive me because I’ve just about had enough.

The apostle Paul had special personal afflictions, and general afflictions from a variety of sources; yet he persevered in the power of the Holy Spirit. When he pleaded with the Lord about a particular thorn in the flesh that he wanted to be removed, Jesus told him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12.9). The thorn was left in place as a permanent affliction, but he was made stronger because of it. Then on another occasion he wrote, “...I was delivered out of the mouth of a lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever” (2 Tim. 4.17, 18). Paul understood what Solomon meant when he wrote, “Blows that hurt cleanse away evil, as do stripes the inner depths of the heart” (Prov. 20.30). Paul’s goal was always to become more like Jesus, and so whatever affliction happened in his life was an affliction moving him closer to that ultimate desire. Paul’s goal is ours to imitate. (1 Cor. 11.1)

Take heart, dear friends, because when we are in the throes of affliction we can pray these comforting words:  
“Though I walk in the midst of trouble,  
You will revive me;  
You will stretch out Your hand  
against the wrath of my enemies, and  
Your right hand will save me.  
The LORD will perfect that which concerns me;  
Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever;  
do not forsake the works of Your hands” (Ps. 138.7, 8).

He is the sure cure for our affliction.

*For reflection*

1. Affliction can bring out the worst in you. Explain.
2. Affliction can bring out the best in you. Explain.
3. How can you help another believer who is going through a season of affliction?

*We must also observe attentively the last part of the clause, according to thy word. We will pray coldly, or rather we will not pray at all, if God's promise does not inspire us with courage in our sorrow and distress. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.107*

*Pray Psalm 119.111, 112.*

Pray that God would more deeply embed His Law in Your heart, and you will, like Jeremiah (Jer. 15.16), find the Word to be a source of great nourishment and joy.

*Sing Psalm 119.111, 112.*

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)

I take Your Word as the joy of my heart,  
my trust, my heritage, my special part.  
I bend my heart to perform all Your Word,  
always, forever, to serve You, O Lord.

## 4 How Worship Works

*Pray Psalm 119.108.*

Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD,  
And teach me Your judgments.

*Sing Psalm 119.107, 108.*

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)

I am afflicted and sorely distressed;  
O Lord, revive me that I may be blessed.  
Teach me Your Word, Lord, my thanks I proclaim;  
Offsprings of praise I declare to Your Name!

*Read Psalm 119.105-112; meditate on verse 108.*

*Preparation*

1. What did the psalmist do with his mouth?
2. How did God respond?

*Meditation*

This verse is the most succinct description in all of Scripture concerning how worship works. We seem to think that worship is mainly about preaching and whatever message the pastor has on his heart. We regard worship as an activity, the primary purpose of which is somehow to “lift” or “encourage” them. We judge a worship service as spot on when we come out of it and say, “Man, I really got a lot out of that service” or, more typically, “sermon”, since for most folks the sermon is what worship is about, mainly.

But our psalmist counsels us to think otherwise. In worship we *empty ourselves* by making offerings to the Lord with our mouths – of praise, thanks, needs, and even renewed vows. This is how we should worship every day. We come before the Lord in all His worthiness (“worth-ship”) to empty ourselves of all our adoration, gratitude, confession, repentance, supplications, and vows as gifts, believing and praying as we do that He will “accept” them. Worship is about God, recognizing His greatness, majesty, and love, and offering to Him all that is due Him of our lives – which is every aspect of our lives.

Then, we wait on the Lord to see how He will respond (Jer. 33.3). Silence and silent prayer are appropriate here. We expect great things, mysteries, confirmations, promises, and a fuller revelation of Jesus to fill and sustain us. We have offered ourselves as living sacrifices to the Lord, and now, in the ministry of the Word that follows, He indicates His having heard and accepted our offerings. And beyond that, He invites us to feed on His body and blood to seal and renew our relationship with Him.

Preaching should be more spontaneous, less scripted, and briefer than is often the case. To rightly close the worship loop, preachers should incorporate what they have heard in the “offerings” part of worship, addressing these offerings specifically – enlarging on praises, speaking God’s Word to supplications, offering comfort and encouragement to all, according to their offerings, and pointing the way into the Supper of the Lord, now and in that great day to come. For only in Him do our offerings find their proper rest and we the strength to continue in God’s Word always.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name” (Heb.13.15). The psalmist refers to this as “freewill offerings” of his mouth (Ps. 119.108). Sometimes we think better when we are talking. Today, our daughter Kristy and I had a lengthy conversation, full of joy and laughter; and we also discussed three important topics. As we talked about each

of them, the Lord began to enlighten us in His special way. We always know that the Lord Jesus is listening in on our conversation and is an active participant with us, for so He has promised (Matt. 18.20). We come away from our weekly conversations feeling like it has been a time of worship.

Talking about things, when the Lord is in the midst, brings enlightenment and wisdom and hope.

This is true for worship as well. Worship directed solely upon the Lord works best when we are speaking those freewill offerings to our beloved Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Talking clarifies our love. Expression deepens impression. We hear ourselves declaring our love, our needs, our longings, and our desire to be more like Jesus. Confession of sin is appropriate, and spoken rejoicing over our forgiveness brings delight. The prophet Hosea instructed Israel in how to do this properly: "O Israel, return to the LORD your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity; take words with you, and return to the LORD. Say to Him, 'Take away all iniquity; receive us graciously, for we will offer the sacrifices of our lips'" (Hos. 14.1, 2).

We must declare Whom we believe. Jesus wanted to hear His disciples say Who they thought He was. He asked them two questions: "Who do the crowds say that I am?" Then, "But who do you say that I am?" (Lk. 9.18, 20)

Say it out loud. Who do you say that He is?

When we have declared that, then we must ask to be taught by Him (Ps. 119.108). Because one is not good without the other. Our belief and our worship must be complete.

Communication is a gift from God. We must employ words to praise, honor, and glorify Him. He wants to hear them. This is how worship works. It is a daily labor into godliness.

*For reflection*

1. Why is it important to offer sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to God?
2. Do you ever pray out loud? Do you think doing so might enhance your time of worship with the Lord? Explain.
3. How can you encourage your fellow believers during times of worship?

*The psalmist is often afflicted; but with longing desires to become more holy, offers up daily prayers for quickening grace. We cannot offer any thing to God, that he will accept but what he is pleased to teach us to do. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 119.108*

*Pray Psalm 119.105, 106.*

Offer praise and thanks to the Lord. Renew your vows to Him. Call on Him to guide and direct your steps all day long.

*Sing Psalm 119.105, 106.*

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)

Your Word a lamp is to brighten my way.  
Lord from Your pathway let me never stray!  
I give my word now as I have before:  
Your righteous Law I will keep ever more.

## 5 Keeping Life in Hand

*Pray Psalm 119.109, 110.*

My life is continually in my hand,  
Yet I do not forget Your law.  
The wicked have laid a snare for me,  
Yet I have not strayed from Your precepts.

*Sing Psalm 119.109, 110.*

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)

Daily I take up my life in my hand,  
working to keep to Your gracious command.  
Let not the wicked turn me from Your way;  
I from Your precepts, O Lord, will not stray.

*Read Psalm 119.105-112; meditate on verses 109, 110.*

*Preparation*

1. What did the psalmist say about his life?
2. Did the snares of the wicked trip him up?

*Meditation*

My sense is that the psalmist means he was ever diligent in attending to the matters of his daily life. He took his life in hand each day, keeping an eye out for temptations and distractions, and walked the path of God's precepts.

Like us, the psalmist doubtless had many responsibilities, tasks, obligations, and duties. It's not likely he had much of what we would call leisure time. He was busy and had always much on his mind. At the same time, enemies were trying to subvert, entrap, and destroy him. Nevertheless, he kept the Law of God in mind, to obey it in all his daily life and work.

This is the challenge we face as well, to be eager, diligent, and fruitful in all our daily duties, all the while keeping the Word of God in mind, so that we walk the path of righteousness and love in all we do. The enemy of our souls lays traps and snares in our path in the form of temptations, trials, troubles, and tumult. We need to be aware of his wiles and ways, and learn to recognize the snares he sets out for us each day. If we can see them, we'll be better able to avoid them by God's wisdom and grace (Prov. 1.17).

The ability to do this comes from consistent and continuous reading, reflecting on, and meditating in God's Word, as well as talking about it with others. And we must remember and renew our vows to keep God's Word, relying on His promises and hewing to His commandments when trials and temptations arise.

Keep your hand in God's hand, and you'll keep your life in hand always.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

As I do my life with You,  
I do not forget Your law.  
As the wicked do their lives—busily setting traps for me,  
I do not stray from Your precepts (Ps. 119.109, 110 my paraphrase).

We all go about our lives; but it's Whom we go with and Whom we follow that matters. As Paul exhorted, "...walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2.12). And what we do is

plain to all who observe us, for “Even a child is known by his deeds, whether what he does is pure and right” (Prov. 20.11). It is painfully obvious whether we are following God’s Laws.

Ezra exemplified what and how we are to go about taking our life in hand and living it wholeheartedly for God: “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel” (Ez. 7.10). Seek, do, teach. Before he opened his mouth to speak, he sought the LORD for himself, he himself obeyed the Law of God, then he was ready to teach it to others.

Now, about those snares or traps that the wicked set for us. We have God’s promise that He will deliver us from those when we are dwelling in Him—heart, soul, mind, and strength:

“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the LORD, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.’

Surely He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence” (Ps. 91.1-3).

If we dwell in Him, He will deliver us from snares and traps set by the perilous pestilence of the wicked. (Yes, it’s another one of those glorious times when we get to call names: Wicked perilous pests!)

Jesus said, “Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock” (Lk. 6.47, 48). Founded on Jesus I will not forget Your law. I will not stray from Your precepts.

“Keep your hand in God’s hand, and you’ll keep your life in hand always.”

*For reflection*

1. What does it mean for you to have your life “in hand”?
2. How can you tell when the enemy of your soul is leading you into some kind of snare?
3. How can believers help one another to keep their hand in God’s hand?

*To have our soul or life continually in our hands, implies constant danger of life; yet he did not forget God’s promises nor his precepts. Numberless are the snares laid by the wicked; and happy is that servant of God, whom they have not caused to err from his Master’s precepts. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 119.109, 110*

*Pray Psalm 119.97, 98, 105-108.*

Renew your commitment to learn and keep God’s Law. Ask the Lord to keep you from falling through temptations into sin, and to give you grace to bear the burdens of this day.

*Sing Psalm 119.105-108.*

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)

Your Word a lamp is to brighten my way.

Lord from Your pathway let me never stray!

I give my word now as I have before:

Your righteous Law I will keep ever more.

I am afflicted and sorely distressed;

O Lord, revive me that I may be blessed.

Teach me Your Word, Lord, my thanks I proclaim;

Offrings of praise I declare to Your Name!

## 6 Heartset

*Pray Psalm 119.111, 112.*

Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever,  
For they *are* the rejoicing of my heart.  
I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes  
Forever, to the very end.

*Sing Psalm 119.111, 112.*

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)

I take Your Word as the joy of my heart,  
my trust, my heritage, my special part.  
I bend my heart to fulfill all Your Word,  
always, forever, to serve You, O Lord.

*Read Psalm 119.105-112; meditate on verses 111, 112.*

*Preparation*

1. How did the psalmist regard the testimonies of the Lord?
2. How did he express his love for and commitment to the Word of the Lord?

*Meditation*

We're all familiar with the term "mindset." Mindset indicates a direction or shape or framework of thought. A mindset is developed over time, as we focus on some ideas and opinions and set others aside. Because all who believe in Jesus have the mind of Christ, we should be working daily to develop that mind as it is revealed to us in God's Law and all His Word (1 Cor. 2.16; 2 Pet. 3.18).

But a Christian mindset is not enough. A Christian mindset won't keep you on the Lord's path when temptations arise that garner the attention of your heart. You need a solid *heartset* to go with that mindset, and the Spirit of God is working within you to accomplish both (Jer. 33.31; Ezek. 36.26, 27; Phil. 2.13).

But a heart set on God is more important than a mind filled with Biblical insights and theological convictions. The psalmist knew this, and so he wrote this very elaborate passage to emphasize that point. Notice the structure of this parallelism:

- A "testimonies"
  - B "taken as a heritage"
  - C "forever"
  - D "rejoicing of my heart"
  - D "inclined my heart"
- A "statutes"
  - B "perform" or better "fulfill" or "accomplish"
  - C "forever"
  - C<sup>1</sup> "to the very end"

At the heart of this bit of poetic brilliance is the heart, rejoicing in and inclined toward God's testimonies and statutes, to "take" them and "fulfill" them, and not just now, but "forever" and "forever, to the very end." This is the Christian heartset. Keep working on developing the mind of Christ. But do not neglect your heart. Commit it and all your life to the Lord daily, until you love God's Word like a glorious inheritance and bend your heart in rejoicing to it more and more each day.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.*

“My heart is set on keeping Your decrees to the very end” (Ps. 119.112 NIV).

This verse is what drives me on in my quest to be more like Jesus. It is dear to my heart. And this is why: Years ago, we learned that a minister friend of ours had been unfaithful to his wife. He had two young children. He had a church full of people. We had four children who knew him. We knew him. He had a married brother. He had nephews. He had parents. He had a Savior and a jealous God. The overwhelming mayhem caused by one person’s act of infidelity was far-reaching and devastating.

At that time, I pled with God never to allow me to be that kind of a disappointment to Him, my family, or anyone else. To be a disgrace to my Savior. Please, no, Lord, never.

Not long after that, I read Psalm 119.112 and claimed it as a “light for my path” (Ps. 119.105).

It is heartbreaking, as a believer, to know that many people through the ages have “thrown the baby out with the bathwater.” All the people who have lost love for God, who have been disappointed, or have lost their faith because of another person’s bad behavior. All the wars that have been falsely waged for religious reasons. All the people who have turned away from the love of Jesus because somebody who bore the name of Christian was an absolute flop at righteous living. We are the light of the world (Matt. 5.14). We are the salt of the earth. And frankly, Jesus said, “. . .if the salt loses its flavor. . .it is good then for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men” (Matt. 5.13). Sin always affects others, and the effects are unalterable. It is like the ripples that are put in motion on the surface of water when a pebble is dropped in.

“But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared” (Ps. 130.4). Yes, praise God, there is always forgiveness offered for our many sins (1 Jn. 1.9), and forgiveness offered by gracious people. We are all in need of forgiveness from God and from others every day. Although my heart is set, it is easily jostled and needs to stay current, moment by moment with the Lord (Rom. 7.18-25).

Here is some encouragement for our souls: When the testimonies of God are “the rejoicing of [our] heart” (Ps. 119.111) then the possibility of us grossly disappointing God and others diminishes exponentially.

Now, the upside to all of this. We don’t have to be a disappointment. We can live a victoriously pleasing life. We have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2.16); we can dress daily for the battle (Eph. 6.10-18); we have been given a plan of action:

1. Fear the LORD your God.
  2. Walk in all His ways.
  3. Love Him.
  4. Serve Him with all your heart and soul.
  5. Keep His commandments and statutes.
  6. Know that these rules are for your good and the good of others.
- (Deuteronomy 10.12, 13)

If we set our heart on this “to the very end”; and “Let [our] light so shine before men, that they may see [our] good works and glorify [our] Father in heaven” (Matt. 5.16); then others will run toward Him, and not away. It can be their “heritage forever” too. (Ps. 119.111, 112).

*For reflection*

1. What do we mean by “mindset” and “heartset”? Why do we need both? What defines a proper heartset for a Christian?
2. What can you do, throughout the day, to help make sure you will not be a stumbling-block for someone



else?

3. How can Christians encourage one another to a proper heartset? Whom will you encourage today?

*Heavenly treasures are a heritage for ever; all the saints accept them as such, therefore they can be content with little of this world. We must look for comfort only in the way of duty, and that duty must be done. A good man, by the grace of God, brings his heart to his work, then it is done well.* Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Psalm 119.111, 112*

*Pray Psalm 119.105.*

Pray these verses verbatim, making the psalmist's words your words as you renew your vows with the Lord. Then wait in silence on the Lord with thanksgiving for whatever He brings to mind.

*Sing Psalm 119.105-110.*

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)

Your Word a lamp is to brighten my way.  
Lord from Your pathway let me never stray!  
I give my word now as I have before:  
Your righteous Law I will keep ever more.

I am afflicted and sorely distressed;  
O Lord, revive me that I may be blessed.  
Teach me Your Word, Lord, my thanks I proclaim;  
Off'rings of praise I declare to Your Name!

Daily I take up my life in my hand,  
working to keep to Your gracious command.  
Let not the wicked turn me from Your way;  
I from Your precepts, O Lord, will not stray.

## 7 A Heart for God's Word

*Pray Psalm 119.111, 112.*

Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever,  
For they *are* the rejoicing of my heart.  
I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes  
Forever, to the very end.

*Sing Psalm 119.111, 112.*

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)

I take Your Word as the joy of my heart,  
my trust, my heritage, my special part.  
I bend my heart to fulfill all Your Word,  
always, forever, to serve You, O Lord.

*Read Psalm 119.105-112; meditate on verses 111, 112.*

*Preparation*

1. How did the Word of God affect the psalmist?
2. To what did he commit himself?

*Meditation*

In various ways, the psalmist declares his devotion to the Word of God. He says it is a lamp to guide his daily walk (v. 105) and he solemnly vows to keep to that path (v. 106). He clings to the Word amid afflictions, offering praise and thanks as he listens for more instruction from the Law (vv. 107, 108). In all aspects of his daily life, though wicked men or spirits would lead him astray, he brings the lamp of God's Word to bear on his words and deeds (v. 109, 110). He prizes the testimonies of God as a rich inheritance, one which he begins to make use of even now (v. 111), and he devotes his heart with rejoicing to fulfill all that God's Word requires (vv. 111, 112).

In this stanza we have drilled down deep into the secrets of happiness (Ps. 119.1-3). Happiness begins in the heart where delighting in God and His Word is the defining affection of our lives (Ps. 37.4; Matt. 22.37; Jn. 14.15). We understand that only this Word can keep our feet safe as we journey toward the eternal Presence of our God (Ps. 84; Jn. 14.6). We will be assaulted and know many afflictions along the way, but if our heart is truly inclined toward God's Law, we need not fear stumbling or straying. "This inclination of the heart is opposed to the wandering lusts which rise up against God, and drag us anywhere rather than incline us to a virtuous life" (Calvin).

And so we call on the Lord's help to revive us daily and receive our offerings of praise, and help us fulfill our vow to keep His Word (vv. 107, 108). Thus delighting in God – and His Law and all His Word – we have everything we need and all we desire to know true happiness, peace, joy, and the accompanying Presence of our Lord Jesus day by day (Matt. 28.20; Phil. 4.19).

The heart is the heart of the matter. Make sure yours is aflame for the Lord and His Word.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Our dog CuFinnian is a leaner. Every night when I sit down in my chair, Cu jumps up and then leans with all his might into me. He then looks up lovingly into my eyes and maybe gives me a little kiss on the nose. I pet him and tell him how wonderful he is and how much I love him. It is, to say the least, a special moment for both of us.

Psalm 119.112 has this flavor to it. Because we love God so much, we set our heart, we incline our lives, we bend our every thought and path to Him. We lean into Him with all the gusto we have. And when we do, He tells us how much He loves us too. Forever, to the very end. Jesus said, “And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28.20). And “...when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end” (Jn. 13.1).

This amazing mutual love impels us to want to please God. We are inclined to do His Law (Ex. 20.1-17). We long for ways that we can improve our love for Him. We lean into Him and His Law because this is what pleases Him (Jn. 14.15). John Calvin said as much in our quote today: [the psalmist] *describes the right observance of the law, which consists in our cheerfully and heartily preparing ourselves for doing what the law commands. Slavish and constrained obedience differs little from rebellion.* Yes, we obey because it’s wise, but we also obey because we love.

Solomon wrote that we are to trust in the LORD with all our heart, and wholeheartedly lean on Him and His understanding (while not leaning on our own). And then in everything that we think and do, everywhere that we go, on all our paths into every nook and cranny of our Personal Mission Field, if we acknowledge Him that He will direct our way (Prov. 3.5, 6).

Lean with all your heart into God and His Word.  
Rejoice, take His Law as your heritage.  
Fulfill His Word.  
Lean with all your love.  
Forever, to the very end.

*For reflection*

1. What does it mean for you to “lean into” the Lord?
2. What have you found to be some of the best ways of keeping a close watch on your heart (Prov. 4.23)?
3. How does love factor into our desire to obey God’s Law and all His Word?

*In this verse he describes the right observance of the law, which consists in our cheerfully and heartily preparing ourselves for doing what the law commands. Slavish and constrained obedience differs little from rebellion. The prophet, therefore, in order briefly to define what it is to serve God, asserts, that he applied not only his hands, eyes, or feet, to the keeping of the law, but that he began with the affection of the heart.* John Calvin (1559-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.112*

*Pray Psalm 119.105-112.*

Renew your commitment to God’s Word – to read it daily, meditate on it deeply, study it carefully, live and obey it consistently, and share it gladly. Ask the Lord to give you something of His Word to share today.

*Sing Psalm 119.105-112.*

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)

Your Word a lamp is to brighten my way.  
Lord from Your pathway let me never stray!  
I give my word now as I have before:  
Your righteous Law I will keep ever more.

I am afflicted and sorely distressed;  
O Lord, revive me that I may be blessed.  
Teach me Your Word, Lord, my thanks I proclaim;  
Offrings of praise I declare to Your Name!

*Psalm 119.105-112*

Daily I take up my life in my hand,  
working to keep to Your gracious command.  
Let not the wicked turn me from Your way;  
I from Your precepts, O Lord, will not stray.

I take Your Word as the joy of my heart,  
my trust, my heritage, my special part.  
I bend my heart to fulfill all Your Word,  
always, forever, to serve You, O Lord.

*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. What is a vow and what role can vows play in the life of faith?
2. In what sense is the Word of God a “lamp”? Give an example of how this works in your life.
3. How much of our lives need to be directed by the Word of God? How can we improve in this?
4. What do we mean by “mindset”? How does this related to “heartset”? Why do we need both?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from this part of our study of Psalm 119?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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Thank you.