

# PSALM 119.121-128

psalm  
God's Word 119

T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

Psalm 119.121-128

Copyright 2022 T. M. and Susie Moore

The Fellowship of Ailbe

[www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org)

Except as indicated, all Scripture are taken from the *New King James Version*. © Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. All quotations from the early Church Fathers are from *Psalms 51-150: Ancient Christian Commentary Series, Old Testament VIII*, Quentin F. Wesselschmidt, ed., General Editor Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2007). All quotes from John Calvin are from *Commentaries on Psalms*, Rev. John Pringle, tr. (Edinburgh: Calvin Translational Society). All quotations from Matthew Henry are from *Matthew Henry Concise Commentary*, E-text version Copyright 1996, 2002 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. All Rights Reserved. All quotes from Earl Radmacher are from *The NKJV Study Bible*, copyright ©1997, 2007 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All psalms for singing are from *The Ailbe Psalter* (Williston: Waxed Tablet Publications, 2006), available by [clicking here](#).

Cover art: Yahoo images

## Introduction to Psalm 119.121-128

The Law of God, far from being a useless burden to cast off and ignore, is our mandate and handbook for love. Ignore the Law – void it in any way – and your love for God and others will grow cold.

And if love grows cold in the Church, imagine how rare that precious commodity must be in the world beyond the pale of faith.

It is time to act for the sake of love. To do justice and righteousness (v. 121), seek more of our great salvation (v. 123), study God's Law and all His Word for greater understanding (v. 125), cherish the commandments and precepts of God more than all other things (vv. 127, 128), and, convinced of the rightness of God's Word, to hate every false way and keep to the righteous path (v. 128).

This the burden of this beautiful stanza of Psalm 119.

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.

T. M. Moore, Principal  
[tmmoore@ailbe.org](mailto:tmmoore@ailbe.org)

## 1 Guaranteed

*Pray Psalm 119.121, 122.*

I have done justice and righteousness;  
Do not leave me to my oppressors.  
Be surety for Your servant for good;  
Do not let the proud oppress me.

*Sing Psalm 119.121-123.*

(Leominster: *My Heart Doth Overflow*)

Lord, justice I have done, and likewise righteousness.  
Leave me not to the proud one, Lord, nor those who would oppress!  
My strength and promise be of more salvation, Lord.  
O God of grace, my Guarantee, uphold me by Your Word!

*Read Psalm 119.121-128; meditate on verses 121, 122.*

*Preparation*

1. What did the psalmist plead before the Lord?
2. What was he seeking from Him?

*Meditation*

We're not surprised to see that heavy awareness of wickedness bleeding through from the previous stanza to the *ṽ* stanza (*ayin* – it has no specific sound attached to it). Here, proud oppressors are threatening him, although we're not sure exactly how.

He calls on the Lord to be his Guarantee, his “down payment” on goodness. This is the way Paul referred to the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 1.14. He is God's “down payment” that more of His Kingdom, power, Presence, pleasure, peace, and joy are yet to come.

The psalmist must have fallen into the company of oppressors somehow. Walking the streets of unfaithful Jerusalem, that wouldn't have been too difficult. We can imagine our psalmist, strolling home from the temple, being suddenly accosted by a group of rich men who wanted to “talk” with him about his preaching.

In the confidence that God would keep him in His goodness, we can see our psalmist simply walking on, like Jesus through the angry mob in Luke 4.30. No one can harm those who look steadfastly to the Lord and stand firm in His Word. And the proof that we do? “I have done justice and righteousness...”

The wicked may indeed bring affliction to us, but nothing and no one can wrest us from our loving Father's hand. Guaranteed.

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

Since there are promises of goodness, and guarantees of protection, wrapped up in our behavior: Wouldn't it make a great deal of sense for us to practice justice and righteousness? (Ps. 119.121, 122)

God thinks so, and is not afraid to say so:

“To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice” (Prov. 21.3).

“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice...” (1 Sam. 15.22).

“It is a joy for the just to do justice, but destruction will come to the workers of iniquity” (Prov. 21.15).

“For I the LORD, love justice...” (Is. 61.8).

How then do we go about doing works of justice and righteousness? The ones already prepared for us to do? (Eph. 2.10). We must first clarify in our hearts why we are doing them. It is not to earn our salvation. That would be impossible to do; and Jesus already accomplished that for us and gave it to us as a gift. What we are working for is to make our salvation evident. Because “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only...For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (Jms. 2.24, 26). When this matter is settled, we are ready to get busy with our Kingdom work.

Paul sums up our Kingdom mindset and heartset, and of what these works of justice and righteousness consist: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you” (Phil. 4.8, 9). Remembering always that “it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2.13).

And God gave us Jesus Who makes our works of justice and righteousness a possibility. He instructed us thusly: “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (Jn. 15.4, 5).

But in Him and with Him, we can say with the psalmist, “I have done justice and righteousness” (Ps. 110.121).

*For reflection*

1. In what sense is God a Guarantee for us? How do we lay hold on what He guarantees?
2. How would you explain to a new believer the place of works of justice and righteousness in the life of faith?
3. Meditate on Hebrews 10.24. Whom will you pray for and encourage in love and good works today?

*Happy is the man, who, acting upon gospel principles, does justice to all around. Christ our Surety, having paid our debt and ransom, secures all the blessings of salvation to every true believer. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 119.121,122*

*Pray Psalm 119.128.*

Lay the “all things” of your day before the Lord in prayer, asking Him to show you how His Word should guide your steps as you are going out into your Personal Mission Field.

*Sing Psalm 119.128.*

(Leominster: *My Heart Doth Overflow*)

Speak, Lord, and let us hear, the precepts of Your Word,  
and know Your Presence ever near - our good and sovereign Lord!  
Your ways are right and true; I hate each lying way  
Your precepts let me ever do and never from them stray.

## 2 Such a Great Salvation

*Pray Psalm 119.123.*

My eyes fail from seeking Your salvation  
And Your righteous word.

*Sing Psalm 119.121-123.*

(Leominster: *My Heart Doth Overflow*)

Lord, justice I have done, and likewise righteousness.  
Leave me not to the proud one, Lord, nor those who would oppress!  
My strength and promise be of more salvation, Lord.  
O God of grace, my Guarantee, uphold me by Your Word!

*Read Psalm 119.121-128; meditate on verse 123.*

*Preparation*

1. What was the psalmist seeking?
2. How diligent was he in seeking this?

*Meditation*

Our psalmist has used nearly this same expression before (v. 82). Here, however, he is not seeking comfort from the Lord, but merely expressing the diligence of his effort in working out his salvation.

This verse puts me in mind of Philippians 2.12, Paul's command to work out our salvation in fear and trembling. Salvation is a great and unfathomable gift. While we expect to increase in it, to gain and know more of it, to become more like Christ day by day, still we will never plumb the depths of it nor scale its heights of glory, delight, and power. There is always more – exceedingly, abundantly more (Eph. 3.2) – to our salvation than we can ever know.

We have such a great salvation (Heb. 2.3) because our salvation is in the Lord Himself and in His righteous Word, and He is infinitely and eternally good, beautiful, wise, and true. Thus, we work out our salvation to increase in the knowledge of the Lord, even though we do not expect ever to know Him fully (Eph. 4.17-24; 2 Pet. 3.18). Our desire must always be to learn “[more about Jesus](#)” (Eliza E. Hewett) in all facets of His glory and grace.

This working out of our salvation involves seeing and all its attendant activities – looking, reading, contemplating, understanding, and so forth. We are to apply ourselves diligently to looking into God's Word, observing His creation, and seeing with the eye of the heart our Lord Himself in His glory. So constant and intensive should this work of seeing be that it nearly causes our eyes to fail.

The sense here is that we are to be always about the business of seeking to increase in our salvation in everything we do. And though our physical eyes may grow weak or even fail completely, still by our spiritual eyes, and all our other senses, we must seek the Lord and His salvation in all we do, ever striving and straining to know, love, and serve our Lord and thus to know our great salvation with ever-increasing glory.

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

I daresay we all hope that the surgeon that is about to operate on our loved one studied very hard to get their degree. Or the pilot who is about to take us soaring above the clouds; we truly hope he did his homework. How about the builder building our home, or the autoworker who put together our car; or the chef who just prepared our restaurant meal—our hopes, dreams, and aspirations for these folks is that they studied and learned, and worked hard to be in the position they are in.

What about us? How seriously do we take our licensure to be a Christian? Have we worked hard enough to be convincing in this role? Have we studied God's Word so diligently that our eyes fail? Do we exhibit the results of being a student of God? We have, after all, claimed about God that "You Yourself have taught me" (Ps. 119.102). And will those who fear God be glad when they see us because we have hoped so mightily in His Word? (Ps. 119.74)

Paul instructed Timothy: "Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth" (2 Tim. 2.15 Amplified Bible).

Study hard and eagerly and assiduously. Work so hard that when you stand before God you will not be ashamed about your lackadaisical attitude toward Him and His Word. Study so hard, in fact, that you always rightly understand His Word and are even able to teach it. Work hard to know it inside and out because this Word is the absolute Truth (an amplification on the Amplified Bible).

And all this hard work will result in our love exponentially growing for God and for others. Even if we grow weary and our eyesight weakens it will all be for good. Because we love God and are called according to this purpose, His purpose (Rom. 8.28).

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15.58).

*For reflection*

1. How would you explain to a new believer what it means to "work out" your salvation?
2. What things can keep you from working out your salvation? How can you overcome those obstacles?
3. In what does working out our salvation result?

*In short, the faling of his eyes indicates perseverance combined with severe and arduous effort, and it is opposed to the momentary ardor of those who immediately faint, if God does not grant their requests. This expression also denotes a painful earnestness, which almost consumes all the senses.* John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.123*

*Pray Psalm 119.124, 125.*

Call on the Lord to teach you and give you understanding of how best to serve Him this day. Spread your day before the Lord, and offer yourself as a living sacrifice to please and glorify Him in all you do.

*Sing Psalm 119.124, 125.*

(Leominster: *My Heart Doth Overflow*)

With mercy greet me, Lord, Your servant, ever true;  
teach me the wonders of Your Word, and set my heart on You!  
Help me to understand and serve You day by day,  
Lord, lead me by Your good, strong hand, and keep me in Your way.

### 3 Servants of the Lord

*Pray Psalm 119.124.*

Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy,  
And teach me Your statutes.  
I *am* Your servant;  
Give me understanding,  
That I may know Your testimonies.

*Sing Psalm 119.124, 125.*

(Leominster: *My Heart Doth Overflow*)

With mercy greet me, Lord, Your servant, ever true;  
teach me the wonders of Your Word, and set my heart on You!  
Help me to understand and serve You day by day,  
Lord, lead me by Your good, strong hand, and keep me in Your way.

*Read Psalm 119.121-128; meditate on verses 124, 125.*

*Preparation*

1. How did the psalmist describe Himself?
2. What did he seek from the Lord?

*Meditation*

The idea that we are created to be servants is very old. Indeed, it goes all the way back to the garden of Eden (cf. Gen. 2.15). The word translated “tend” by NKJV is actually the word “serve” – that same word root by which the psalmist identifies himself here. This is important, because it shows us that serving is first a matter of place, not tasks, and not even people. You can’t serve unless you understand the *place* God has appointed for you. In our case, not a garden, but a Personal Mission Field.

Staying with Adam for the moment, we can understand “serve” – as in *serve* the garden – to mean apply ourselves heart, mind, and strength to bringing out the goodness God has invested in the things He has placed around us, so that the goodness of God might increase in the land of the living (Ps. 27.13). That requires knowledge of what God intends for His creation, and that knowledge comes from His Word, beginning in His statutes and testimonies – His Law. Thus, to fulfill our calling as servants, we need the Word of God. We need His Spirit to teach it to us (Ezek. 36.26, 27) so that we understand and know it well, and can obey it unto the glory of God.

And if – as in the case of Adam – God happens to put *people* in our Personal Mission Garden, then our job is to work at serving them so that they realize more of the goodness, beauty, and truth for which God created them. And in doing that, the best we can do – as those who know His Word – is to point them to Jesus, the Word of God incarnate, by our lives and words.

What if everything in your Personal Mission Garden – all the stuff, every place, and all the people – bore the fragrance or provided a glimpse of Jesus? We are the frail vessels God intends to use for His praise and glory, as we serve everyone and everything with the grace and truth of God (2 Cor. 4.7, 15).

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

A garden is defined as a planned space, usually outdoors, set aside for the cultivation, display, and enjoyment of plants and other forms of nature. The single feature identifying even the wildest wild garden is control.

And God has placed us each in our own Personal Mission Garden. Just think of it! And the many beautiful



possibilities displayed there. Our family, our homes, our friends, our neighbors, our churches, our communities, our callings are all a part of this beautiful garden. Under the control of the Holy Spirit and His loving guidance and power.

We are called to lovingly serve and tend and weed and fertilize and prune this space into which we have been placed (Eph. 2.10). And we have been given the task by our heavenly Father, Who will teach us and give us understanding in the how-tos of holy horticulture. He will train us in how to cultivate and manage this precious ground of other people's hearts and lives. The very first place of occupancy that God created for mankind was a garden: "The LORD God planted a garden...and there He put the man whom He had formed" (Gen. 2.8).

We, too, have been given this same work, to serve and tend. It is the "*place* God has appointed for" us. He has already gone to the nursery center and has equipped us with the seeds to sow and a good watering can. (1 Cor. 3.6) "For we are God's fellow workers..." (1 Cor. 3.9).

Our request to the Master Gardener is this: Deal with us in Your mercy and teach us how to do this work. We are Your garden workers, and we need understanding in how to make our gardens bloom for Your honor and glory. We need to know Your ways, Your words, and Your testimonies (Ps. 119.124, 125). You know how to do this best; so we will be in Your Word daily, learning from You, longing to be more like Jesus, and rejoicing to be Your servants.

*I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses;  
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses.  
And He walks with me,  
And He talks with me,  
And He tells me I am His own,  
And the joy we share  
As we tarry there,  
None other has ever known.*  
C. Austin Miles

*For reflection*

1. Does thinking about your Personal Mission Field as a garden enrich your thinking at all? Explain.
2. Why do we need to be grounded in God's Word to fulfill our calling as servants?
3. How does your garden grow? Whom will you serve today with the grace and truth of God?

*This prayer then must be resolved thus: Lord, deal gently with me, and manifest thy goodness towards me by instructing me in thy commandments. Our whole happiness undoubtedly consists in our having that true wisdom which is to be derived from the word of God; and our only hope of obtaining this wisdom lies in God's being pleased to display his mercy and goodness towards us. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.124*

*Pray Psalm 119.128.*

Ask the Lord for mercy and grace according to your specific needs today, that you might serve Him and others well.

*Sing Psalm 119.128.*

(Leominster: *My Heart Doth Overflow*)

Speak, Lord, and let us hear, the precepts of Your Word,  
and know Your Presence ever near - our good and sovereign Lord!  
Your ways are right and true; I hate each lying way;

Your precepts let me ever do and never from them stray.

## 4 Time to Act!

Pray Psalm 119.126.

It is time for *You* to act, O LORD,  
For they have regarded Your law as void.

Sing Psalm 119.126, 127.

(Leominster: *My Heart Doth Overflow*)

The wicked scorn Your Word; let us be strong and bold  
to act for You our sovereign Lord, and love You more than gold.  
How precious is Your Word, no treasure on the earth  
compares to it or to You, Lord, of holy, matchless worth.

Read Psalm 119.121-128; meditate on verse 126.

*Preparation*

1. What “time” was it?
2. What made this “time” so urgent?

*Meditation*

This verse puzzles me with respect to who should be acting here. Literally the text reads, “It is time for doing to the Lord,” which could convey the idea that, since the Law of God has been set aside, what is needed to re-establish it in the affairs of men is for some to begin living and doing, obeying the Law with a view to serving God, so that His wisdom and power for love may again be seen (Deut. 4.6-9).

It's not difficult to see that this condition describes the times in which we live. For not only in the unbelieving world but in many sectors of the Church, God's Law has been considered void and unnecessary, if not downright harmful. It's time for this to change before the world and the Church become overwhelmed by the lies of relativism.

Another reading, favored by several translations, suggests that the negating of God's Law among men has become so pronounced that God Himself needs to act, to restore the Law to life in society. This begs the question as to how He would do that, for surely His way of furthering His rule is to act within and through His people.

So, again, it comes down to faithful people putting the Law into practice if the voiding of the Law is to be overturned and the Law given its rightful place in church and society once again.

But God's people will not act in this way unless He moves within them by His Spirit. Each of us must daily seek the Spirit's reviving Presence and power, and call on others to join us in seeking Him for revival, renewal, and awakening. He will teach and empower us to keep the Law and all the Word of God as the standard for every aspect of our lives.

It is indeed time for God to act. And when He does, when He acts to bring His rule more powerfully and beautifully to the world, will He act through you?

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

When our mindset and heartset are correct we will be ready for God to act through us. “Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved!” (Ps. 80.18, 19) Saved to do His will.

Psalm 119.9-16 is our preparation manual for revival; and guide in how to avoid being the object and subject of God's action. We are instructed to:

1. Take heed—pay attention—to God's word. (vs. 9; Deut. 32.46.47)
2. Seek God with your whole heart. (vs. 10; Col. 3.1)
3. Do not wander from His commandments. (vs. 10; Jude 21)
4. Hide God's word in your heart by reading and memorization. (vs. 11; Ps. 119.105)
5. Don't sin against God—which would be any time you sin. (vs. 11; Ps. 51.4)
6. Ask God to teach you His statutes. (vs. 12; Ps. 25.4)
7. Be able to declare, then declare, all the judgments of God. (vs. 13; Ex. 20.1-17)
8. Rejoice in all of God's testimonies. (vs. 14; Phil. 4.4)
9. Meditate on God's precepts. (vs. 15; Phil. 4.8)
10. Contemplate God's ways. (vs. 15; Is. 55.8, 9)
11. Delight in God's statutes. (vs. 16; Ps. 1.2)
12. Do not ever forget God's word. (vs. 16; Josh. 1.8)

Solomon told his son to: “pay attention to my wisdom; lend your ear to my understanding, that you may preserve discretion, and your lips may keep knowledge” (Prov. 5.1, 2). God prescribes the same course of action for us when it pertains to Him and His word, so that we can act in a godly way; and not be acted upon in a Godly way!

Any way we look at it, God acts. He acts through His creation; He acts through His creatures. But make no mistake: He acts. In 1 Samuel 6. 19 and then in 7.9, 10 we read about God acting. First against the Israelites, His chosen people; and then against the Philistines, His unchosen people. Both chosen and unchosen acted wrongly against God; both folks saw His anger and displeasure. “Then He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck fifty thousand and seventy men of the people, and the people lamented because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter.” Next the Philistines. “Then Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him. Now as Samuel was offering the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel.” It is indeed time for God to act, for so many of His people and so much of the world have regarded His law as null and void—as if it had been rescinded, nullified, or abolished. A truly life-changing miscalculation.

And we know this to be true: He will bring His rule more powerfully and beautifully to the world.

In light of that, may God's Holy Spirit empower us to be used mightily for this action with Him.

*For reflection*

1. In a world that has rejected the Law of God, how does God act to restore His rule?
2. How do the Gospel and the Law work together to restore God's rule?
3. How does God bring His rule – His Kingdom – to earth through you?

*...the Prophet's grief proceeded from no other cause than that he could not endure to see the divine law violated. In short, this is a prayer that God would restore to order the confused and ruinous state of things in the world. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.126*

*Pray Psalm 119.128.*

God's Word is the way “to order the confused and ruinous state of things in the world.” Ask Him to use you today, in each task or responsibility or relationship, to bring His rule of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit on earth as it is in heaven.

*Psalm 119.121-128*

*Sing Psalm 119.128.*

(Leominster: *My Heart Doth Overflow*)

Speak, Lord, and let us hear, the precepts of Your Word,  
and know Your Presence ever near – our good and sovereign Lord!  
Your ways are right and true; I hate each lying way;  
Your precepts let me ever do and never from them stray.

## 5 More than These?

*Pray Psalm 119.127.*

Therefore I love Your commandments  
More than gold, yes, than fine gold!

*Sing Psalm 119.128.*

(Leominster: *My Heart Doth Overflow*)

The wicked scorn Your Word; let us be strong and bold  
to act for You our sovereign Lord, and love You more than gold.  
How precious is Your Word, no treasure on the earth  
compares to it or to You, Lord, of holy, matchless worth.

*Read Psalm 119.121-128; meditate on verse 127.*

*Preparation*

1. What did the psalmist love?
2. How much did he love it?

*Meditation*

In one colossal moment of “gut-check,” Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me more than these?” (Jn. 21.15). These? What *these*? These other guys? These fish?

Any and all of it. Everything. All the “these things” Peter might have imagined, including his own skin. He had already shown that he didn’t love Jesus more than his own convenience, wellbeing, safety, or reputation. It was all “these things” Jesus was calling Peter to set aside and focus his love supremely on Him.

How much do we love the commandments of God? More than “these things”? More than wealth and things and leisure and discomfort and the status quo and all “these things”? The psalmist emphatically declared twice in one sentence that he could not be bought off from loving God’s Word by even the wealth of nations.

So how did that love show itself? Reading, studying, meditating, devoting his heart to obey, celebrate, and teach the Law of God. Standing firm in the face of affliction. Clinging to God’s Word even when all the world regarded it as void (v. 126). This is the commitment to which God calls us with respect to His Word. Mere casual or occasional reading, or merely being content to hear sermons or read devotional guides won’t enable you to overcome the temptation to make an idol of any or all “these things”.

Pray verse 127 again out loud. Then go forth into your Personal Mission Field and show the Lord you mean it.

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

“I love you.” “Well, I love you more!” Thus, the battle of the heart emojis started to fly on our text messages, and the words “zillions of hearts” and “to the moon and back” and “to infinity” were used. This was a joyous back and forth between me and our granddaughter Reagan. Something for me to ponder in my heart and cherish. More than gold.

The psalmist felt the same way about God’s commandments and all of God’s word. “I love Your commandments more than the finest gold” (Ps. 119.127). To infinity, and to the moon and back.

Job, amid all his suffering, said, “I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23.12). More than treasured gold.

In the same way we value precious relationships with others, we must value God's Word. If we regard the Word of God as essential to our life and work, and treasure it more than the finest gold, then we will see the fruit in our lives that God desires for us to bear.

David wrote cogently about the values and benefits of God's word:

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;  
the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;  
the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;  
the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;  
the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.  
More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold;  
sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.  
Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and  
in keeping them there is great reward” (Ps. 19.7-11). Zillions.

When we love these precious words and let them sink down deep into our souls, we will find that the Triune God is more valuable to us than any of these other things that pertain to our lives. Yes, we will love them, but as an outpouring of our love for God. Jesus said, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6.33). “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Lk. 12.34).

Jesus poses the same question to us that He asked Peter: “Do you love Me more than these other things?” And when we answer in the affirmative because our hearts belong to Him and Him alone, He has some instructive and inclusive words for us: “Follow Me and tend and feed My sheep in your Personal Mission Field.”

*I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold;  
I'd rather be His than have riches untold;  
I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands.  
I'd rather be led by His nail-pierced hands.  
Than to be the king of a vast domain  
And be held in sin's dread sway.  
I'd rather have Jesus than anything  
This world affords today.  
(Miller/Shea,1922)*

*For reflection*

1. How do you determine whether you love God and His Word more than “these things”?
2. What can keep you from loving God and His Word above all else?
3. Whom will you encourage today to focus on Jesus and grow in love for Him and His Word?

*The more outrageously the wicked vaunt themselves, let our veneration for and our love of the divine law proportionally increase.  
John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.127*

*Pray Psalm 119.128.*

Pray for each of your activities individually, that God will show you by His Word how you ought to do them for His Kingdom and glory.

*Psalm 119.121-128*

*Sing Psalm 119.128.*

(Leominster: *My Heart Doth Overflow*)

Speak, Lord, and let us hear, the precepts of Your Word,  
and know Your Presence ever near - our good and sovereign Lord!  
Your ways are right and true; I hate each lying way;  
Your precepts let me ever do and never from them stray.



## 6 Therefore

*Pray Psalm 119.128.*

Therefore all *Your* precepts *concerning* all *things*  
I consider to be right;  
I hate every false way.

*Sing Psalm 119.128.*

(Leominster: *My Heart Doth Overflow*)

Speak, Lord, and let us hear, the precepts of Your Word,  
and know Your Presence ever near - our good and sovereign Lord!  
Your ways are right and true; I hate each lying way;  
Your precepts let me ever do and never from them stray.

*Read Psalm 119.121-128; meditate on verse 128.*

*Preparation*

1. How did the psalmist regard the precepts of the Lord?
2. What was his view of false ways?

*Meditation*

It's a reliable principle for studying the Bible that, whenever you come across the word "therefore", you should ask yourself, "What's the 'therefore' there for?"

Because "therefore" always points back. We must retrace our steps a bit whenever we encounter "therefore" to remind ourselves of what lies at the base or what is the impetus for whatever follows the "therefore".

In this case, it's another "therefore" (v. 127)! We might just consider that our psalmist was running out of good words to start the next verse, since "therefore" in Hebrew is **כִּי־לֵכֵן** (*ah!-KEN*) and is thus a right word for starting these two verses in the **ו** stanza (remember: Hebrew reads right to left).

But there's more than this convenience at work here. We must step back again to verse 126, and here we find the impetus for both "therefores": The neglect, denial, and voiding of God's Law. We sometimes hear preachers and other believers bemoaning the fact that our generation has severed its connection to the Scriptural moorings on which this nation was founded. Fair enough. But our "therefores" remind us that mere moaning and fretting are not what we need. We must increase our love for God's Word by spending more time in it, hiding it in our heart, joyfully giving thanks to God (v. 127), and by living according to its truth, urging its promises and demands on others, and exposing and voiding every false way (v. 128).

When we love God's precepts like this – and hate every false way as we should – we won't be just some spiritual Eeyore, but a force for revival, renewal and awakening.

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

Let's unpack Eeyore, shall we? Eeyore, according to Wikipedia, is a fictional character in the Winnie-the-Pooh books by A. A. Milne. He is a pessimistic, gloomy, depressed, anhedonic, old grey stuffed donkey who is a friend of the title character, Winnie-the-Pooh. And now that he is addressed, let's look at anhedonic, which is defined as having a lack of pleasure, or an inability to experience pleasure from activities usually found enjoyable.

Loving God's Law and hating every false way should be done in a positive manner, and not in a negative

spiritual way as might be acted out by Eeyore, and just sounds so totally religious.

But isn't that the way the world perceives us? We are seen as killjoys—the people of the don'ts. Anton Chekhov wrote, “Prudence and justice tell me that in electricity and steam there is more love for man than in chastity and abstinence from meat.” I'm sure that we would not agree with all this man's thinking or his philosophy of life, but this quote, in my opinion, bespeaks the downside of the church throughout history. We mistakenly believe that people will run to the arms of Jesus because we are so egregiously self-righteous.

Revival, renewal, and awakening come through excited Christians living in the power and steam of the Holy Spirit, who are keeping God's laws in a joyous way, and are fighting against evil through love and the electricity of good behavior. “Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but such as keep the law contend with them” (Prov. 28.4). There is great power in just keeping God's laws.

Eeyore would have us moan and groan against everything; but God would have us delighting to do His will. As David wrote, “I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart” (Ps. 40.8). I delight. I do. The law is within my heart. I am not trying to force other people to follow God's law, I am following God's law!

The pattern of Psalm 119 follows this same outline:

God has commanded me to keep His precepts diligently (vs. 4).

Through following these precepts I get understanding (vs. 104).

I consider all Your precepts to be right concerning everything—all things (vs. 128).

God's Word brings us pleasure. (Ps. 16.11). It is the joy of our lives. In fact, it is our life (Deut. 32.46, 47). It brings us peace (Ps. 119.165; Jn. 14.27). It teaches us how to show love to God and to others (Ex. 20.1-17; 1 Jn. 4.7-11). Positively.

Let's give the mantle of Eeyore to the world and allow them to specialize in negativity; while we take up the joyous work of Jesus (1 Cor. 2.16) for goodness, truth, revival, renewal, and awakening.

*For reflection*

1. What is involved in growing in love for God's Word?
2. How can we recognize false ways? What must we do to keep from straying into these?
3. What do we mean by saying that the Word of God is “right”? Right for what?

*The way of sin is a false way, being directly contrary to God's precepts, which are right: those that love and esteem God's law, hate sin, and will not be reconciled to it. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 119.128*

*Pray Psalm 119.126, 127.*

How will you act today to countermand the widespread disregard of God's Law and to demonstrate your conviction that His Word is truth (Jn. 17.17)? Pray about each task, situation, and person you expect to encounter as you work your Personal Mission Field today.

*Sing Psalm 119.126, 127.*

(Leominster: *My Heart Doth Overflow*)

The wicked scorn Your Word; let us be strong and bold  
to act for You our sovereign Lord, and love You more than gold.  
How precious is Your Word, no treasure on the earth  
compares to it or to You, Lord, of holy, matchless worth.

## 7 In Lawless Times

*Pray Psalm 119.126.*

*It is time for You to act, O LORD,  
For they have regarded Your law as void.*

*Sing Psalm 119.126, 127.*

(Leominster: *My Heart Doth Overflow*)

The wicked scorn Your Word; let us be strong and bold  
to act for You our sovereign Lord, and love You more than gold.  
How precious is Your Word, no treasure on the earth  
compares to it or to You, Lord, of holy, matchless worth.

*Read Psalm 119.121-128; meditate on verse 126.*

*Preparation*

1. In the psalmist's mind, what time was it?
2. How could he tell that was the time?

*Meditation*

In our age as in every other period of human history, the greatest need is love. And the virtue which is in shortest supply, especially in our day, is love.

How can it be that what the world needs most is most rarely known? Jesus explained: "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold" (Matt. 24.12). To many Christians, this is an enigmatic statement. What is "lawlessness"? Since most Christians have set the Law of God aside – thus joining in the ranks of those in the unbelieving world who regard God's Law as "void" – defining "lawlessness" can be difficult.

But it shouldn't be. Jesus said that all the Law of God can be summed up in terms of love for God and neighbors (Matt. 22.34-40). The Law of God, far from being a useless burden to cast off and ignore, is our mandate and handbook for love. Ignore the Law – void it in any way – and your love for God and others will grow cold. And if love grows cold in the Church, imagine how rare that precious commodity must be in the world beyond the pale of faith.

It is time to act for the sake of love. To do justice and righteousness (v. 121), seek more of our great salvation (v. 123), study God's Law and all His Word for greater understanding (v. 125), cherish the commandments and precepts of God more than all other things (vv. 127, 128), and, convinced of the rightness of God's Word, to hate every false way and keep to the righteous path (v. 128).

If only believers would act more in line with the prescriptions of this stanza, they would find God active in meeting and empowering them to bring the warmth of His love more palpably to our world.

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

"You are my King, O God; commands victories for Jacob" (Ps. 44.4) – and for us!

Before Jesus explained that lawlessness would abound, causing the love of many to grow cold (Matt. 24.12), He answered a question about divorce from the ever-present and irritating Pharisees: "He said to them, 'Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so'" (Matt. 19.8).

We have been duly warned that lawlessness and the hardness of a person's heart arouse the ire of God, and of the godly. When Jesus sent out seventy disciples to go "before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go," He instructed them that whatever city they entered and the people received them, and they healed their sick, they were to say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." Conversely, to the cities that did not receive them they were to say, "The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you" (Lk. 10.9, 11).

The Kingdom of God was near them regardless of their response to it. The positive people and the negative people. Law-keepers and Law-voiders. The godly and the ungodly. Believers and unbelievers alike. "Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them" (Rom. 1.19). The *them* in this verse is all of mankind. We all know of God and have been exposed to His Kingdom. We are all culpable. Will we harden our hearts unto lawlessness, or open them unto life and love?

But when we are sure that we are living on the right side of the Law of God—not regarding it as void, and in the Kingdom of God's own Son (Col. 1.13)—then we can wholeheartedly pray with David:

"This You have seen, O LORD; do not keep silence.

O LORD, do not be far from me.

Stir up Yourself, and awake to my vindication,

to my cause, my God and my Lord.

Vindicate me, O LORD my God, according to Your righteousness;

and let them not rejoice over me..."

"Let the LORD be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant."

"And my tongue shall speak of Your righteousness and of Your praise all the day long" (Ps. 35.22-24; 27, 28).

"In Lawless Times" let us "love Your commandments more than gold!" (Ps. 119.127). And then take this fearful and precious message into our Personal Mission Fields because the Lord is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3.9).

#### *For reflection*

1. How or in what sense does the Kingdom of God "come near" those who do not believe in Jesus? Do you have a role in this?

2. How should having been "conveyed" into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ affect the way we live each day?

3. Why is the Law of God – and all His Word – so important for full and abundant Kingdom living?

*The commandments of God are positive and negative, specific and general, restrictive and permissive. Yet most important, they help a person to identify his or her way in a world that is filled with confusion, sin, and error.* Earl Radmacher (1931-2014), NKJV Study Bible Note on Psalm 121-128

*Pray Psalm 119.123, 124.*

Pray that God will give you a greater understanding of His Word, a deeper commitment to obedience, and more opportunities to encourage your fellow believers in loving God and His Word.

*Sing Psalm 119.123, 124.*

(Leominster: *My Heart Doth Overflow*)

With mercy greet me, Lord, Your servant, ever true;

teach me the wonders of Your Word, and set my heart on You!

Help me to understand and serve You day by day,

Lord, lead me by Your good, strong hand, and keep me in Your way.

*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. What does it mean to regard God's Law as "void"? How can you know when this is the case in your own life?
2. What does it mean to "work out" our salvation in fear and trembling (v. 123; cf. Phil. 2:12)?
3. How should Christians "act" (v. 126) so that God will "act" to bring more of His justice and righteousness (v. 121) to the world?
4. What can you do to cherish God's Word more and more?
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.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org) to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

Thank you.