

# PSALM 119.89-96

psalm  
God's Word 119

T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

Psalm 119.89-96  
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## Introduction to Psalm 119.89-96

The psalmist points our vision heaven-ward to explain the certainty of God's Word. Then he turns to show how God in heaven has ordained all of creation to serve us in our journey on the Lord's pathway.

The wicked, of course, are never far away from our psalmist. But he trusts in the Word of God and is determined to remember it all day long, looking to the Lord for salvation. He knows the Word of God is perfect and broad as all of life, so he resolves to stay in the Law and pathway God has marked out for him.

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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 Settled, Set

Pray Psalm 119.89.

Forever, O LORD,  
Your word is settled in heaven.

Psalm 119.89-91.

(Finlandia: *Be Still, My Soul*)

Forever, Lord, Your Word abides in heaven; Your faithfulness to every age is sure.  
You made the earth; to us it has been given, and it abides, because Your Word is pure.  
All of creation serves Your holy pleasure, thus we, Your servants, by Your grace endure.

Read Psalm 119.89-96; meditate on verse 89.

Preparation

1. How did the psalmist describe God's Word?
2. Where is God's Word "settled"?

Meditation

This first verse of the ל (*lamed*) stanza comes almost exactly at the middle of Psalm 119. And it represents a high point in Psalm 119, because it gives us an important insight to the faith of our psalmist.

Our psalmist practiced the discipline of living there and then, here and now. He had an eye to the heavenly realm. He could see, as it were, into the throne room of God, where Christ is seated at the Father's right hand, ruling over and advancing His Kingdom to bless and fill the earth. Our anonymous psalmist shared this vision with David and other psalmists (cf. Pss. 2; 20; 22.21ff; 45, 46, 93, 97, 110, etc.).

What did these psalmists see? What glimpses of heaven allowed our psalmist to know that God's Word is forever *settled* in heaven? That Hebrew verb, נָצַב (*nit-TSAV*), means *be set* or *stationed* or *fixed in place*. It's in a passive form because God Himself has set His Word in place. We pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth *as it is in heaven*." How can we know what that intends or what we should be seeking and working for, if we have no insight to what it means that God's Word is settled in heaven forever?

Think about what we know of heaven as revealed in God's Word (cf. Rev. 4, 5). It is a place of radiant glory and rejoicing. All is focused on God the Father and Jesus, at His right hand. Creation is represented by four mysterious creatures which serve and praise the Lord. Saints carry our prayers around in bowls, like incense. Songs of praise fill the place continually. The Holy Spirit arches like a rainbow over all. And all the movements, comings and goings, singing and rejoicing reflect what happens in a world where God's Law is *set in place*. This is the *real* world – set, fixed, unchanging, and glorious according to the Word of God.

When the Law of God is settled in our hearts and fixed in our lives, we'll bring something of the real world of eternal life into the fallen, unreal world where God has set our Personal Mission Field. Think about it.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.16.

An oft-used phrase of the modern church is also one of the most hubristic: "God said it, I believe it, that settles it." What? Frankly, whether you or I believe it has absolutely nothing to do with the truth or reliability of what God says! God's Word is true. It is *settled*. And human beings' belief system has not a shred to do with it.

“Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven” (Ps. 119.89). Period.

We have an option: whether to serve God or an idol.

Here is a brief description of an idol:

“The idols of the nations are silver and gold,  
the work of men’s hands.

They have mouths, but they do not speak;  
eyes they have, but they do not see;  
they have ears, but they do not hear;  
nor is there *any* breath in their mouths.

Those who make them are like them;  
so *is* everyone who trusts in them” (Ps. 135.15-18). Hmmm.

And here is our wonderful, amazing God and Savior, the Word:

“He is the image of the invisible God the firstborn over all creation.

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth,  
visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.

All things were created through Him and for Him.

And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning,  
the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him  
to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven,  
having made peace through the blood of His cross” (Col. 1.15-20). Yes!

“Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13.8).

That is Settled. Believe it or not.

*For reflection*

1. What’s the difference between the real world and the unreal world? Why has God assigned us a Personal Mission Field?

2. What can you do to know more of the real world in your daily life?

3. Whom will you encourage today to stand firm on the settled Word of God?

*... by placing God's truth in the heavens, he allots to it a habitation subject to no changes. That no person then may estimate God's word from the various vicissitudes which meet his eye in this world, heaven is tacitly set in opposition to the earth. Our salvation, as if it had been said, being shut up in God's word, is not subject to change, as all earthly things are, but is anchored in a safe and peaceful haven. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.89*

*Pray Psalm 119.92-94.*

Ask God to give you greater delight in His Word. Thank Him for all the ways He has given you life. Give yourself anew to Him today as a living sacrifice for His glory (Rom. 12.1, 2).

*Psalm 119.92-94.*

(Finlandia: *Be Still, My Soul*)

Unless Your Law had been my great delight, I would have perished when affliction came.

I will Your precepts ever keep in sight, for by them I have life – I praise Your Name!

Lord, I am Yours, deliver me from night! I seek Your precepts for Your praise and fame.

## 2 Ordained to Serve

Pray Psalm 119.90, 91.

Your faithfulness *endures* to all generations;  
You established the earth, and it abides.  
They continue this day according to Your ordinances,  
For all are Your servants.

Psalm 119.89-91.

(Finlandia: *Be Still, My Soul*)

Forever, Lord, Your Word abides in heaven; Your faithfulness to every age is sure.  
You made the earth; to us it has been given, and it abides, because Your Word is pure.  
All of creation serves Your holy pleasure, thus we, Your servants, by Your grace endure.

Read Psalm 119.89-96; meditate on verses 90, 91.

*Preparation*

1. How is the faithfulness of God evident?
2. What keeps creation going?

*Meditation*

From contemplating heaven the psalmist turns to thinking about the earth and all creation. Verses 90 and 91 are a lovely parallelism to encapsulate the psalmist's meaning. The parallelism takes this form:

|                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| A ("faithfulness")        | B ("established", v. 90) |
| B ("continue" or "stand") | A ("ordinances", v. 91)  |

We call this form of parallelism a *chiasmus*, "*chi-shaped*". Draw lines connecting the same ideas, and you get a Greek X, *chi*. The end of verse 91, "For all things *are* Your servants", completes the thought which the parallelism implies.

The word "earth" in verse 90 stands for every created thing: God has established the earth, that is, all creation. We understand this because the verb in verse 91 is plural: "They stand". It refers to "the earth" in verse 90 and points forward to "all things" in verse 91. All creation is settled in place by God and, by His faithfulness and ordinances, serves His purposes (v. 91). In the beauty, diversity, wonder, precision, continuity, abundance, and usefulness of the creation we are seeing God at work, causing His creation to serve His purpose, which is to serve us (cf. Ps. 104.10-24).

Though the creation groans and travails under the burden of humankind's sin (Rom 8.19-22), it serves as a witness to God's grace and power, calling us to look to Him and His Word for all our needs (cf. Acts 14.17). Creation bears witness to God's faithfulness and points us to His Word (cf. Acts 17.24-28; Heb. 1.3).

When we understand creation this way, as God's servant and witness, our love for God will increase and our testimony concerning Him will never want for connecting points with the people in our Personal Mission Field.

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

"...all are Your servants" (Ps. 119.91).

Agur, the composer of Proverbs 30, wrote:

“Who has ascended into heaven, or descended?  
Who has gathered the wind in His fists?  
Who has bound the waters in a garment?  
Who has established all the ends of the earth?  
What is His name, and what is His Son’s name,  
if you know?” (Prov. 30.4)

And we do know. It is the Triune God.

The disciples echoed this thought after Jesus rebuked the wind and the raging of the water by saying, “Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!” (Lk. 8.25)

And we know the answer to this question as well: It is Jesus, the Son of God.

We need only to look daily at God’s creation to see His utter and complete faithfulness at work.

*If creation is a marvel of wonder upon wonder,  
how much more should we wonder and marvel at Him  
Who “made each creature in turn”?  
If creation is to be feared, how much more should He be feared  
Who made and rules creation?  
No king on earth can protect us from the power of creation  
when its dangers overwhelm us.  
But the King of mysteries is King even of creation,  
and all His works and wonders teach us to know Him  
as the One Who by His unfathomable grace  
protects His people from all dangers and fears.  
(Crosfjell, 6 September 2022, The Fellowship of Ailbe)*

Creation declares the glory of God (Ps. 19.1) and places everything He created in a place of grateful servitude and wonder.

“Ordained to Serve.”

*For reflection*

1. Why should we expect creation to tell us something about God?
2. Do you spend much time observing creation to discern the Lord there (Prov. 25.2)? How might you begin to do more of this?
3. How can observing God in created things make it so that you will never want for connecting points with the people in your Personal Mission Field?

*Let it then be thoroughly impressed upon our minds, that all things are so governed and maintained by the secret operation of God, as that their continuing in the same state is owing to their obeying his commandment or word. We must always remember the point which the prophet aims at; which is, that God’s faithfulness, which shines forth in his external works, may gradually conduct us higher, until we attain such a persuasion of the truth of heavenly doctrine as is entirely free from doubt. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.90, 91*

*Pray Psalm 119.92-94.*

The enemy of our souls will try to distract, disappoint, and defeat you today. Prepare to fight the good fight against him in prayer, seeking the Lord’s reviving kindness and restoring love. What’s before you today for

*Psalm 119.89-96*

which you will especially need mercy and grace from the Lord?

*Psalm 119.92-94.*

(Finlandia: *Be Still, My Soul*)

Unless Your Law had been my great delight, I would have perished when affliction came.

I will Your precepts ever keep in sight, for by them I have life - I praise Your Name!

Lord, I am Yours, deliver me from night! I seek Your precepts for Your praise and fame.



### 3 Delight. Remember. Live.

Pray Psalm 119.92, 93.

Unless Your law *had been* my delight,  
I would then have perished in my affliction.  
I will never forget Your precepts,  
For by them You have given me life.

Psalm 119.92-94.

(Finlandia: *Be Still, My Soul*)

Unless Your Law had been my great delight, I would have perished when affliction came.  
I will Your precepts ever keep in sight, for by them I have life - I praise Your Name!  
Lord, I am Yours, deliver me from night! I seek Your precepts for Your praise and fame.

Read Psalm 119.89-96; meditate on verses 92, 93.

*Preparation*

1. What was the psalmist's attitude toward God's Law?
2. How did the Law of God (precepts) serve him?

*Meditation*

Full and abundant life comes only by the Holy Spirit working with the Word of God (Jn. 6.63). And this full and abundant life consists in knowing Jesus and the Father (Jn. 10.10; 14.6; 17.3). In this unreal world of getting-and-spending, looking out for #1, and trying to stay one step ahead of trouble, people want what we have in Jesus – peace, forgiveness, beauty, goodness, wisdom, safety, and joy. *Real* life.

But the god of this unreal world of lies and wrong belief distracts and diverts people to vain idols and false hopes (2 Cor. 4.3, 4; Rom. 1.21-25). Instead of seeing in us the full and abundant life they desire – which, alas, is as much our fault as theirs – they mock, scorn, threaten, and even persecute us.

How can we bear up under such affliction? The psalmist tells us: Delight in the Law of God and always remember His precepts. Rejoice to belong to Him, to know the real world of God's heavenly Kingdom coming to earth in and through us unto His glory. This is life, Spirit-and-Word-engendered life. And though some of us may perish through the afflictions foisted upon us – as have many of our fellow believers, past and present – still, not even death can rob us of the life we have in God and His Word.

Here is another example of how Hebrew poetry works. The structure of these two verses is A B A B, where A = delighting in and remembering God's Word (vv. 92a and 93a) and B = affliction in our life (vv. 92b and 93b). The more we delight in God's Law, the more we will remember it. When affliction comes – of whatever sort – God's Law will keep us in the life He intends for us as His Spirit works with His Word. These poetic devices serve both to enrich the message of the passage and to imprint it more firmly in our soul.

Delight. Remember. Live. It's as simple as that. The poetry of real life.

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

Unless. The *Cambridge Dictionary* makes a mighty effort to define this word by saying it is *used to say what will or will not happen if something else does or does not happen or is not true; except if...*

In many respects, the word sums up our state as human beings without the grace and mercy of God.

“Unless Your law *had been* my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction” (Ps. 119.92).

*Psalm 119.89-96*

“Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it;  
Unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain” (Ps. 127.1).

“I *would have lost heart*,  
unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living” (Ps. 27.13).

“Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul would soon have settled in silence” (Ps. 94.17).

Unless we believe the Word of God, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, we will not have life in His Name (Jn. 20.31).

Unless we accept the forgiveness that is ours through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we will not receive the gift of eternal life (Is. 64.6; Jn. 3.16; 1 Jn. 1.9; Rom. 5.8).

Unless we choose to live for Him, all the good works He has planned for us to do will go undone (Eph. 2.8-10).

Unless we remember His Law, we will forget and forfeit the life He has given us (Ps. 119.93).

A lot is riding on whether we will or will not delight in God’s Law.

*For reflection*

1. How would you explain to a new believer what it means to delight in God’s Word?
2. How does delighting in God’s Law, and all His Word, help us in remembering it?
3. Why is it so very important that we always remember God’s Word?

*We may make the Bible a pleasant companion at any time. But the word, without the grace of God, would not quicken us. See the best help for bad memories, namely, good affection; and though the exact words be lost, if the meaning remain, that is well. I am thine, not my own, not the world’s; save me from sin, save me from ruin. The Lord will keep the man in peace, whose mind is stayed on him. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 119.89-96*

*Pray Psalm 119.95, 96.*

Ask God to grant you a greater measure of salvation this day, to protect you against all adversity or temptation, and to allow you to see Jesus in glory more clearly and consistently (Col. 3.1-3).

*Psalm 119.95, 96.*

(Finlandia: *Be Still, My Soul*)

The wicked lie in wait to trouble me, but to Your testimonies I will cling!  
In them perfection I delight to witness, to know the peace and joy to me they bring.  
Your holy Word is broad exceedingly; my faith, my trust, my hope in You I sing!

## 4 Yours to Save

Pray Psalm 119.94.

I *am* Yours, save me;  
For I have sought Your precepts.

Psalm 119.92-94.

(Finlandia: [\*Be Still, My Soul\*](#))

Unless Your Law had been my great delight, I would have perished when affliction came.  
I will Your precepts ever keep in sight, for by them I have life - I praise Your Name!  
Lord, I am Yours, deliver me from night! I seek Your precepts for Your praise and fame.

Read Psalm 119.89-96; meditate on verse 94.

*Preparation*

1. What did the psalmist say about himself (two things)?
2. What did he want God to do?

*Meditation*

The writer of Hebrews tells us that all who believe in Jesus and are saved are possessors of “so great a salvation” (Heb. 2.3). *Becoming* saved is just the beginning of our journey with the Lord. *Growing* in Him and in that great salvation is the ongoing and daily struggle to which we are committed. The salvation of the Lord was given to transform us increasingly into the likeness of Jesus (2 Cor. 3.12-18). Our great salvation holds more power for witness, more fruit for godliness, more gifts for serving, and more love for God and our neighbors than we have ever dared to ask or think (Eph. 3.20). So, like the writer of Psalm 116, we ask, “What shall I render to the LORD for all His benefits to me?” And the answer is, Go for more of His great salvation. Be filled with it. Get drunk on it. Rejoice in its blessings and benefits with increasing vigor and joy: “I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows to the LORD ...” (Ps. 116.12-14).

This is what our psalmist is calling for in Psalm 119.94. He *is* saved (“I *am* Yours...”). He’s not insisting that his works of keeping the precepts of God should merit salvation. He already has that. He wants *more* of God’s salvation: “...save me...” But he hasn’t been merely sitting around waiting for God to work miracles in his life. Instead, he has diligently, dutifully, and daily sought the precepts of the Lord.

The great salvation God intends us to know is bound up in His Word, in commandments and promises and visions of Christ and His Kingdom. The more we apply ourselves to that Word, seeking understanding from God and the will and ability to obey Him (Phil. 2.12, 13), the more of that great salvation we will know. Which is to say, the more we will dwell in the Presence of our Lord Jesus and, seeing Him in His glory, be transformed in soul and body to be more like Him.

All God’s saved people should plead with Him daily for more of His great salvation. And to show good faith in our pleas, we should seek the Lord in His Word, waiting on Him for understanding and direction, fully determined to carry out all our vows and promises in glad and ready obedience.

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

It could be, too, that the psalmist is once again in trouble with his enemies. This verse harks back to verse 86 when he cries out, “They persecute me wrongfully; Help me!”

He, once again, knows exactly where to look for the help he requires and that is in God’s Word. “Save me; for I have sought Your precepts” (Ps. 119.94).

It is exactly where we need to go, too, for help from the Lord. “For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life...” (Prov. 6.23)

Jesus said, “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).

The light to guide us on our path and in our thoughts.

Hannah struggled with her enemies; and she also must have been sorrowful in heart at the prospect of leaving her son Samuel with Eli. And yet, because she knew God and trusted His Word she was able to pray thus:

“My heart rejoices in the LORD; my strength is exalted in the LORD, I smile at my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation” (1 Sam. 2.1).

“For the LORD is the God of knowledge; and by Him actions are weighed” (1 Sam. 2.3).

“He will guard the feet of His saints, but the wicked shall be silent in darkness. For by strength no man shall prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces; from heaven He will thunder against them. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth” (1 Sam. 2.9, 10).

Our psalmist, like Hannah, was able to find courage, comfort, and peace in the knowledge that God knows all. He knows who is tormenting and troubling us. He knows when we seek refuge in Him and His Word. He weighs all actions, the enemies’ and ours. He is the righteous Judge. “God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day” (Ps. 7.11).

“I am Yours, save me; for  
I have sought Your precepts” (Ps. 119.94).

I am “Yours to save”.

*For reflection*

1. What is your approach to realizing more of God’s great salvation?
2. How can people like Hannah and our psalmist encourage us in our daily struggles?
3. Why should we expect that keeping God’s Law will help us realize a greater measure of His salvation?

*[The psalmist] brings forward the unmerited grace of God, and that alone; for no man, by any efforts of his own, acquires the high honor of being under the protection of God — an honor which proceeds solely from his free adoption. The blessing which God had conferred upon him is therefore here adduced as an argument why he should not forsake the work which he had commenced.*  
John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.94*

*Pray Psalm 119.95, 96.*

Thank God for His salvation and for all the specific ways you experience it. Ask Him for a clearer vision of Jesus and for the strength to be transformed increasingly into His likeness.

*Psalm 119.95, 96.*

(Finlandia: [Be Still, My Soul](#))

The wicked lie in wait to trouble me, but to Your testimonies I will cling!  
In them perfection I delight to witness, to know the peace and joy to me they bring.  
Your holy Word is broad exceedingly; my faith, my trust, my hope in You I sing!

## 5 The Price of Liberty

Pray Psalm 119.95.

The wicked wait for me to destroy me,  
But I will consider Your testimonies.

Psalm 119.95, 96.

(Finlandia: [Be Still, My Soul](#))

The wicked lie in wait to trouble me, but to Your testimonies I will cling!  
In them perfection I delight to witness, to know the peace and joy to me they bring.  
Your holy Word is broad exceedingly; my faith, my trust, my hope in You I sing!

Read Psalm 119.89-96; meditate on verse 95.

Preparation

1. What were “the wicked” trying to do?
2. How did the psalmist intend to protect himself?

Meditation

Thomas Jefferson is often cited as the author of that oft-heard sentiment, “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.” Many have used that quote throughout the years, typically as a political call for a strong national defense. But the true origin of the saying is from Irish patriot John Philpot Curran (1750-1817). His original version demonstrates the spiritual truth appealed to in Psalm 119.95: “The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance; which condition if he break, servitude is at once the consequence of his crime and the punishment of his guilt.”

Count on it: Spiritual forces of wickedness and enemies of the Gospel will be unrelenting in their quest to turn you from the Lord and His Law and take you captive for sin. And they can be very subtle; hence, Peter’s call for vigilance against their wiles and assaults: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5.7).

The psalmist tells us where resistance to these assaults and victory over them can be found. The NKJV translation “consider” is too weak for the Hebrew verb, אֶתְבוֹנֵן *et-bob-NAHN*. The reflexive form of the verb implies the kind of sober and vigilant considering that Peter commends, not just a casual “Yeah, I thought about it.” I would translate this “attend to” or “be diligent about” to indicate the seriousness with which this psalmist turned to the “testimonies” of the Lord – His Law and Word – to find the wisdom, guidance, promises, and power to stay on the pathway of the Lord.

This is a full-time calling: “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5.15). We’ll have to fight to preserve the liberty we have in Christ Jesus, and that fight begins in vigilance and clinging to God’s Word.

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

As we have seen, there is a stronger side to the word *consider*. It has determination. As in, “I will love You, O LORD, my strength” (Ps. 18.1).

So to say, “I will think about God and His Word instead of thinking about the wicked”, would be fair. I am determined not to dwell on the wicked. I am determined to dwell on the precious promises of God.

Wisdom, in God’s Word, speaks to us:

“Listen, for I will speak of excellent things, and from the opening of my lips will come right things;

*Psalm 119.89-96*

for my mouth will speak truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips.  
All the words of my mouth are with righteousness; nothing crooked or perverse is in them.  
They are all plain to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge” (Prov. 8.6-9).

Those words. Yes, on those, I will determinedly think. Nothing, and no one, will destroy me when I consider God’s care for me, His righteousness, His understanding, and His knowledge.

“For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men...” (1 Pet. 2.15).

Our determined faith is in the Creator whose Word is faithfully settled. The heavens and the earth abide because His commands are obeyed here as they are there. All creation are His servants (Ps. 119.89-91).

“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?” (Ps. 8.3, 4)

“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You” (Is. 26.3).

“For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1.7).

Determined to *attend to* and *be diligent about* Him. In all His glory. In His Word.

*For reflection*

1. What can you do to make sure that you will always “consider” God’s Word when temptations or trials arise?
2. What can Christians do for one another to make “considering” God’s Word a fruitful, daily discipline?
3. Whom will you encourage today in this work of “considering” God’s Word? How?

*To consider God's testimonies is, in this place, equivalent to applying our minds to the word of God, which sustains us against all assaults, effectually allays all fears, and restrains us from following any perverse counsels.* John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.95*

*Pray Psalm 119.89-91.*

Call on the Lord to help you know His Presence with you throughout the day. Thank Him for His faithfulness and for all the provision He makes for you throughout the day. Keep your focus on Him as you go into your Personal Mission Field.

*Psalm 119.89-91.*

(Finlandia: *Be Still, My Soul*)

Forever, Lord, Your Word abides in heaven; Your faithfulness to every age is sure.  
You made the earth; to us it has been given, and it abides, because Your Word is pure.  
All of creation serves Your holy pleasure, thus we, Your servants, by Your grace endure.

## 6 Perfect and Exceedingly Broad

Pray Psalm 119.96.

I have seen the consummation of all perfection,  
But Your commandment *is* exceedingly broad.

Psalm 119.95, 96.

(Finlandia: [Be Still, My Soul](#))

The wicked lie in wait to trouble me, but to Your testimonies I will cling!  
In them perfection I delight to witness, to know the peace and joy to me they bring.  
Your holy Word is broad exceedingly; my faith, my trust, my hope in You I sing!

Read Psalm 119.89-96; meditate on verse 96.

Preparation

1. What did the psalmist see?
2. How did he describe God's commandment?

Meditation

I want to offer a slightly different translation of Psalm 119.96, one that is more in line with the literal Hebrew and that makes better sense than the NKJV.

First, a word of explanation. The NKJV inserts the word, "But", in the second part of verse 96. However, as the *italic* of that word indicates, it is not in the Hebrew text. This is an interpretive decision, and I humbly submit it is both wrong and misleading. "But" is a conjunction of contradiction. Inserting it here puts the second part of verse 96 in opposition to the first, as if this were an *antithetical* parallelism (putting the two parts of the verse in opposition) rather than a *synthetic* one (combining the two into one whole idea). This is not only not necessary, but it also leaves us wondering, "What is that 'consummation of all perfection' the psalmist has seen?"

So let's try this translation, all in a single line: "I have seen to the end (or consummation) of all perfection: Your exceedingly broad commandment." This puts the second part of this parallel not in opposition to the first, but complementary to it and completing what part 1 only implies. It is the commandment of God – His Law and all His Word – which is perfect (cf. Ps. 19.7) – to reveal God's character and will, direct our every step, equip us for every good work (2 Tim. 3.15-17), serve as a lamp to our feet, both our every next step and the whole of our journey (Ps. 119.105), and bring us into the Presence of Jesus (Jn. 5.39). And it is exceedingly broad – providing wisdom and counsel for every aspect of life – and entirely perfect – which is why we must strive to "see to the end of it" (cf. Acts 20.27) and neither add to nor detract from it in any way (Deut. 29.29; 12.32; Rev. 22.18, 19).

And God has given this exceedingly broad and perfect Word to us! No wonder the psalmist says in the next verse, "Oh, how I love Your law!"

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

"Nothing is perfect except Your words" (Ps. 119.96 TLB).

"The whole of perfection is God's Word" (Ps. 119.96 earlier translation TMM).

No buts about it!

*Psalm 119.89-96*

“The words of the LORD are pure words,  
like silver tried in a furnace of earth,  
purified seven times” (Ps. 12.6).

“Every word of God is pure;  
He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him” (Prov. 30.5).

“But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones;  
I was weary of holding it back, and I could not” (Jer. 20.9).

“The grass withers, the flower fades,  
but the word of our God stands forever” (Is. 40.8).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and  
without Him nothing was made that was made.  
In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (Jn. 1.1-4).

Jesus is the whole of perfection, The Word.  
Perfect and exceedingly all encompassing.

*O the deep, deep love of Jesus, Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free!  
Rolling as a mighty ocean In its fullness over me,  
Underneath me, all around me, Is the current of Thy love;  
Leading onward, leading homeward To my glorious rest above.  
(Francis/Williams, 1890)*

*For reflection*

1. Can we ever really see “to the end” of God’s Word? Explain.
2. But should we try? What is your plan for learning all the counsel of God in His Word?
3. How can believers encourage one another to grow deeper and broader in the Word of God?

*He here asserts, that there is nothing under heaven so perfect and stable, or so complete, in all respects, as not to have an end; and that the Divine word alone possesses such amplitude as to surpass all bounds and limits. John Calvin (1509-1564),  
Commentary on Psalm 119.96*

*Pray Psalm 119.89-94.*

Thank the Lord for His perfect and exceedingly broad Word. Delight in His Word. Praise Him for it. Take something of it away from your time of prayer to guard and guide you through the day ahead.

*Psalm 119.89-94.*

(Finlandia: [\*Be Still, My Soul\*](#))

Forever, Lord, Your Word abides in heaven; Your faithfulness to every age is sure.  
You made the earth; to us it has been given, and it abides, because Your Word is pure.  
All of creation serves Your holy pleasure, thus we, Your servants, by Your grace endure.

Unless Your Law had been my great delight, I would have perished when affliction came.  
I will Your precepts ever keep in sight, for by them I have life - I praise Your Name!  
Lord, I am Yours, deliver me from night! I seek Your precepts for Your praise and fame.



## 7 “It’s All about You”

Pray Psalm 119.89-91.

Forever, O LORD,  
Your word is settled in heaven.  
Your faithfulness *endures* to all generations;  
You established the earth, and it abides.  
They continue this day according to Your ordinances,  
For all are Your servants.

Psalm 119.89-91.

(Finlandia: [Be Still, My Soul](#))

Forever, Lord, Your Word abides in heaven; Your faithfulness to every age is sure.  
You made the earth; to us it has been given, and it abides, because Your Word is pure.  
All of creation serves Your holy pleasure, thus we, Your servants, by Your grace endure.

Read Psalm 119.89-96; meditate on verses 89-91.

*Preparation*

1. What endures for all generations?
2. What serves the purposes of God?

*Meditation*

We are a little past half-way in our study of Psalm 119, so it’s time for a quiz. One question: What’s the most prominent idea in Psalm 119?

If you said, “The Word of God”, you get partial credit. If your answer was, “Trials and Tribulations”, same score.

But if you read carefully through verses 89-96, you will discover that the most prominent idea in this stanza is “You” or “Your.” One or another of these words is the focus of every term that stands for the Law and Word of God. And if you go back to verse 4 and skim forward, you’ll find one or the other of these words in every verse of Psalm 119!

Which is to say, Psalm 119 is all about “You”, that is, “God”, and in particular, “Jesus” (Jn. 5.39). Verse 89 reminds of this. The Word of God which we have in our hands and cling to for help in this life is settled in heaven. The Word points us heavenward, to where Jesus is seated at the right hand of God (Col. 3.1-3). As we read and study the Word, our goal must be to see more of Jesus, to draw near to Jesus, delight in the Presence of Jesus, draw on the power of Jesus, and be transformed into the image of Jesus (2 Cor. 3.12-18).

If we’re just reading our Bible to learn doctrine or neat verses to memorize or penetrating points to ponder, we’re not reading far enough. Or, actually, *high* enough. Let the Word of God lift your soul heavenward until you connect with Jesus.

Then, when you get there, say to Him, “Lord, it’s all about You!”

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

Our daughter Ashley teaches third grade. This is how she explains the homework assignment to her students:  
First, she tells them their assignment.  
Second, she shows them the assignment on the board or on a paper.  
Third, she has them hold their homework folder and put the assignment in it.

She is imparting the assignment to her students in the way they each learn best. Those that listen and learn aurally, those that see and learn visually, and those who touch and learn tactilely.

Yes, I know, wouldn't we all have loved to have a teacher like Ashley!

Well, in fact, we do. The Holy Spirit speaks to each one of us from God's Word in the unique way that we learn. We hear the Word, we see the Word, we touch the Word. "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good..." (Ps. 34.8).

We read the Word and see Jesus. We can hold the Word in our hands. We hear the Word read to us. We hear and sing of His greatness and His faithfulness.

We look at creation and see the Creator. Creation puts all our senses to work: vision, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching.

And it is all about the Triune God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit – His sovereignty, His majesty, His omnipotence, His omniscience, His omnipresence, His perfection.

Moses was a good teacher too. He told the people:

"Your eyes have seen what the LORD did..." (Deut. 4.3).

"...you who held fast to the LORD your God are alive today..." (Deut. 4.4).

"...be careful to observe them [the statutes, judgments, commandments of God] ..." (Deut. 4.6).

"...take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen..." (Deut. 4.9).

Then God told Moses to say, "Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth..." (Deut. 4.10).

Solomon wrote, "A wise man will hear and increase learning..." (Prov. 1.5).

"As we read and study the Word, our goal must be to see more of Jesus, to draw near to Jesus, delight in the Presence of Jesus, draw on the power of Jesus, and be transformed into the image of Jesus."

As Ashley lovingly teaches her students, so the Holy Spirit teaches us (Lk. 12.12).

You, Lord, and Your Word, aurally, visually, and tactilely are our love, and Your Law is our delight (Ps. 1.2).

*For reflection*

1. What do we mean by saying that reading the Word of God should lead us to look up?
2. Read, hear, sing, meditate, hold: Why are all these important in learning God's Word?
3. In what sense is the Word of God all about Jesus (Jn. 5.39)? What can you do to make sure you meet Jesus during your time in God's Word?

*These two things, then, are quite consistent; first, that the steadfastness of God's word is not to be judged of according to the condition of the world, which is always fluctuating, and fades away as a shadow; and, secondly, that yet men are ungrateful if they do not acknowledge the constancy which in many respects marks the framework of the world; for the earth, which otherwise could not occupy the position it does for a single moment, abides notwithstanding steadfast, because God's word is the foundation on which it rests. John Calvin (1559-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.89-91*

*Pray Psalm 119.92-96.*

Spend some time in silent meditation, using these verses. Focus on the Lord Jesus and the joy of knowing

*Psalm 119.89-96*

Him, on the gift of salvation, and on the perfections of His Word.

*Psalm 119.92-96.*

(Finlandia: [\*Be Still, My Soul\*](#))

Unless Your Law had been my great delight, I would have perished when affliction came.  
I will Your precepts ever keep in sight, for by them I have life -I praise Your Name!  
Lord, I am Yours, deliver me from night! I seek Your precepts for Your praise and fame.

The wicked lie in wait to trouble me, but to Your testimonies I will cling!  
In them perfection I delight to witness, to know the peace and joy to me they bring.  
Your holy Word is broad exceedingly; my faith, my trust, my hope in You I sing!

*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. What does it mean to say that God's Word is "settled in heaven"? Why does that matter?
2. God has given us creation as His servants to help us in serving Him. How does that work in your life?
3. Why do we say that as believers we have "so great a salvation"? What should our attitude be toward that salvation?
4. In what sense is the Law of God – and all His Word – the "consummation of perfection"? How should we expect to benefit from that Word?
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.