

Lesson 1: Psalm 119:1-8 – *Aleph*

The Blessedness of Obedience

<i>ESV</i>	<i>NKJV</i>	<i>NASB</i>	<i>NIV</i>	<i>NLT</i>
1 Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord!	1 Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the Lord!	1 How blessed are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the law of the Lord.	1 Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord.	1 Joyful are people of integrity, who follow the instructions of the Lord.
1 Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk (live) according to the law of the Lord.				
<p>Commentary:</p> <p>Blessed are those whose way is blameless. “How can we receive God’s blessing? By being blameless before the Lord, obedient to His law, and wholehearted in our relationship to Him. ‘Blameless’ does not mean sinless but wholehearted devotion to the Lord, sincerity, and integrity. Only Jesus Christ was totally blameless in His relationship to God and His law, but because believers are ‘in Christ,’ we are ‘holy and without blame before Him’ (Eph 1:4).” (<i>Wiersbe, Bible Exposition Commentary</i>)</p> <p>Blessed. To be blessed by God is to be the recipient of His unmerited favor (grace), the object of His undeserved mercy and unfailing love. The blessing of God does not necessarily result in “happy” circumstances and “happy” circumstances are not necessarily an indication of God’s blessing on one’s life.</p> <p>Way. Habitual behavior, conduct, way or manner of living; lifestyle. (Cp. vs. 5)</p> <p>Blameless. Is it really possible to live a completely blameless life? No! And for that reason, we need a Savior. God’s standard is nothing short of perfection—blamelessness. But “blameless” here does not speak so much of sinless perfection as an “orientation of life,” a pointing or directing of one’s life toward God and His Word; a desire and a commitment to follow the Lord and obey His Word.</p> <p>Blamelessness is a matter of character that reveals and manifests itself in a person’s conduct. (<i>ESV Study Bible, note on Psalm 15:2-5b, p. 955</i>)</p> <p>Proverbs 11:20 – “The LORD detests men of perverse heart but he delights in those whose ways are blameless.”</p> <p>Who walk in the law of the Lord. The way one conducts oneself. Each step of his life is guided by God’s Word.</p> <p>Character reveals or manifests itself in conduct. God blesses the man of godly character and conduct.</p> <p>The law of the Lord. “The Hebrew word <i>torah</i>, translated law, basically means ‘instruction’ or ‘direction.’ Broadly it refers to all God’s instructions from Moses to the prophets. More strictly it refers to the first five books of the Old Testament. The Law was never designed as a means of salvation; no one could be saved by keeping it. The Lord gave His law to a people with whom He had already graciously established a covenantal relationship (Ex. 20:2). Instead, the Law was the means for the Israelites to learn how to live as God’s holy people. The psalmists consistently describe the Law of God as a great blessing, for it was God’s gracious revelation to His people for their own good (Deut. 6:1-3). In</p>				

the Law, God mercifully pointed out the right path to follow. Only mistaken legalistic interpretations of the Law prompted the negative statements concerning it in the New Testament.” (*New King James Study Bible, p. 1002*)

“The law is not a weapon in the hands of an angry judge but a tool in the hands of a loving Father, used by the Spirit to make us more like Jesus Christ. The Word enables us to know God better and draw closer to Him.” (*Wiersbe, Bible Exposition Commentary*)

Application:

True happiness (joy, satisfaction) is found only in right relationship with God and obedience to His Word.

Are we experiencing the blessing of God on our life and ministry? If not, why not?

How much do we desire the blessing of God on our life?

“Lord, please increase my desire for Your blessing and my commitment to obedience.”

In order to experience God’s blessing, there are things that we must *not* do (Psalm 1:1 – not walk in the counsel of the wicked, not stand in the way of sinners, not sit in the seat of scoffers) and things that we must do (Psalm 1:2 – delight in the law of the Lord, meditate on His law day and night; note Psalm 119:2 – keep [obey] His testimonies; seek Him with my whole heart; Psalm 119:3 – do no wrong; walk in His ways).

“Please help me to have a greater hunger (delight) for You and Your Word. Teach me how to meditate on Your Word constantly (day and night). Help me to be more obedient to Your Word and to seek You with all of my heart. Please help me to fear (respect; revere) You and Your Word as I should.”

“Lord, I want Your blessing on my life and ministry. Please help me to do whatever I need to do to experience Your blessings.”

Trust and Obey

by John H. Sammis

When we walk with the Lord In the Light of His Word
What a glory [blessing] He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise, Not a cloud in the skies,
But His smile quickly drives it away;
Not a doubt or a fear, Not a sigh nor a tear,
Can abide while we trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear, Not a sorrow we share,
But our toil He doth richly repay;
Not a grief nor a loss, Not a frown or a cross,
But is blest if we trust and obey.

But we never can prove The delights of His love
Until all on the altar we lay;
For the favor He shows, And the joy He bestows, [blessing]
Are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet We will sit at His feet,
Or we’ll walk by His side in the way;
What He says we will do, Where He sends we will go,--
Never fear, only trust and obey.

Refrain:

Trust and obey, for there’s no other way
To be happy in Jesus, But to trust and obey.

<p>2 Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart,</p>	<p>2 Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart!</p>	<p>2 How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart.</p>	<p>2 Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart.</p>	<p>2 Joyful are those who obey his laws and search for him with all their hearts.</p>
<p>2 Blessed are they who obey His statutes and seek Him with their whole heart.</p>				
<p>Commentary: Blessed are those who keep his testimonies. Obedience resulting in God’s blessing. Who seek him with their whole heart. Genuine “seeking” manifests itself in diligent “keeping”. “Seeking” and “keeping” are the prerequisites of being blessed by God. (<i>Leupold, Exposition, p. 824</i>) Note the close connection between seeking the Lord and seeking out His guidance and instruction through His Word. Genuine salvation manifests and reveals itself in seeking out and obeying the Lord’s decrees; a desire to know and do His will, that which pleases Him. Deuteronomy 4:29 – “But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.” We are to seek the Lord with all our heart, but we will fail and fall short. And when we do, we need Him to seek us like the loving, caring Shepherd that He is. Our seeking may be ineffective but His never is. (Cp. vs. 176) Whole heart. Wholehearted and undivided. Cp. vs. 7, "an upright heart." The psalmist’s righteous character (the heart) was the basis of his righteous conduct. “Seeking God means much more than reading the Bible or even studying the Bible. It means hearing God's voice in His Word, loving Him more, and wanting to delight His heart and please Him. It means wholehearted surrender to him (vv. 2,10,34,58,69,145) and an unwillingness to permit any rival love to enter.” (<i>Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary</i>) “With the fullest concentration of the mental faculty upon the task of learning.” (<i>Cohen, The Psalms, p. 394</i>) Heart. “In Biblical language the center of the human spirit, from which spring emotions, thought, motivations, courage and action—‘the wellspring of life’ (Pr. 4:23).” (<i>NIV Study Bible, p. 790</i>)</p>				
<p>Application: “O Lord, I pray that I would increasingly be more wholehearted in seeking You.”</p>				
<p>3 who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways!</p>	<p>3 They also do no iniquity; They walk in His ways.</p>	<p>3 They also do no unrighteousness; They walk in His ways.</p>	<p>3 They do nothing wrong; they walk in his ways.</p>	<p>3 They do not compromise with evil, and they walk only in his paths.</p>
<p>3 They do nothing wrong; they walk in (live according to) His ways.</p>				

<p>Commentary: Who also do no wrong. Again, not sinless perfection. See vs. 1 above. But walk in his ways. "Note throughout how the law is sought for the very purpose of being kept, not for the sake of attaining a theoretical knowledge of it." (<i>Leupold, Exposition, p. 824</i>) Ways. The ways of righteousness, contrasted with walking in the ways of man, the world, the flesh, the devil—the ways of wickedness. "The pattern of life required by God's law." (<i>NKJV Study Bible, p. 1003</i>)</p>				
<p>Application: "Lord, please give me a greater desire to walk in Your ways."</p>				
<p>4 You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently.</p>	<p>4 You have commanded us To keep Your precepts diligently.</p>	<p>4 You have ordained Your precepts, That we should keep them diligently.</p>	<p>4 You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed.</p>	<p>4 You have charged us to keep your commandments carefully.</p>
<p>4 You have commanded us to diligently obey Your precepts.</p>				
<p>Commentary: You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. Diligent (steady, earnest, and energetic effort; painstaking; full) obedience.</p>				
<p>Application: Are we diligent or careless in our obedience to God's Word? A "little" obedience is a dangerous thing! Our goal should be nothing less than full and complete obedience in every area of our life all the time.</p>				
<p>5 Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes!</p>	<p>5 Oh, that my ways were directed To keep Your statutes!</p>	<p>5 Oh that my ways may be established To keep Your statutes!</p>	<p>5 Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees!</p>	<p>5 Oh, that my actions would consistently reflect your decrees!</p>
<p>5 Oh that my ways were steadfast in obeying Your statutes!</p>				
<p>Commentary: Oh that my ways may be steadfast. "Our ways (v. 5) may not yet be God's ways (v. 3), but as we press on by faith, He will help us and not forsake us (v. 8; Heb 13:5)." (<i>Wiersbe, Bible Exposition Commentary</i>) Ways. Daily conduct. Steadfast. "Firmly grounded... We might say by way of paraphrase: O that the bent of my mind were firmly set in the direction of always keeping what Thou has commanded!" (<i>Leupold, Exposition, pp. 823-24</i>)</p>				

“Fixed or unchanging; steady; firmly loyal or constant; unswerving; faithful; solid, firm; to fasten, establish; dedicated; unwavering; resolute; undeviating; unflinching; wholehearted; marked by or exhibiting diligence; disciplined; concentrated; thorough; settled.” (*The American Heritage Dictionary*)

Established. (NASB) Contrasted with fickleness, vacillation, instability, lack of balance, wavering, hesitancy, lacking commitment.

Directed. (NKJV) “Without thee I can do nothing; my soul is unstable and fickle; and it will continue weak and uncertain till thou strengthen and establish it.” (*Adam Clarke’s Commentary*)

“Indicating the desire of the pious heart. That desire—a prevailing, constant, uniform desire—is to keep the law of God. It is the aim of the life; it is the supreme purpose of the soul; it is the ruling wish of the man, thus to keep the law of God.” (*Barnes’ Notes*)

“David acknowledges his imperfection, desiring God to reform it, that his life may be conformable to God's word.” (*Geneva Notes*)

“Remembering human frailty and instability, and knowing that man cannot of himself obey God's law, the Psalmist prays for the divine power to regulate aright and establish his ways. (*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary*)

Statutes. “Its literal meaning is ‘that which is engraved’ on stone, the common form in which the laws of a community were published. It signifies a law regulating the life of the individual as a member of society.” (*Cohen, The Psalms, p. 395*)

Application: This is a prayer we need to echo on a daily basis!

6 Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.	6 Then I would not be ashamed, When I look into all Your commandments.	6 Then I shall not be ashamed When I look upon all Your commandments.	6 Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands.	6 Then I will not be ashamed when I compare my life with your commands.
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6 Then I would not be ashamed when I consider all Your commands.

Commentary:

Shame. "The shame and embarrassment that come from having done the wrong thing will be avoided if one keeps looking in the direction of the suggestions that the commandments offer." (*Leupold, Exposition, p. 824*)

Consider. (NIV) "Respect, have regard for." (*NIV Study Bible, p. 915*)

Application: Obedience to God’s Word will deliver us from shame before Him at His coming.

7 I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous rules.	7 I will praise You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgments.	7 I shall give thanks to You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgments.	7 I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws.	7 As I learn your righteous regulations, I will thank you by living as I should!
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7 I will praise You with an upright heart as I learn Your righteous laws.

Commentary:

I will praise you with an upright heart. "Praise is good preparation for learning about God and His Word. It is so important that he repeated it in verses 12 and 171." (*Wiersbe, Bible Exposition Commentary*)

With an upright heart. The character behind the conduct.

As I learn. "By learning... In practice you praise God by esteeming His Word so precious that you make it your business to learn it. Such learning is an act of praising." (*Leupold, Exposition, p. 825*)

Application: "Lord, please help me to grow in my commitment to learn Your Word."

8 I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me!	8 I will keep Your statutes; Oh, do not forsake me utterly!	8 I shall keep Your statutes; Do not forsake me utterly!	8 I will obey your decrees; do not utterly forsake me.	8 I will obey your decrees. Please don't give up on me!
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8 I will obey Your statutes; please, do not utterly forsake me!

Commentary:

I shall keep. (*NASB*) A firm resolve and commitment of the will. A determination to obey.

Do not utterly forsake me. My heart reverberates with this prayer for this is all I deserve from the Lord even if I am perfectly obedient.

"...an expressed resolution. The spirit of it is: I cannot keep these statutes unless the Lord helps me." (*Leupold, Exposition, p. 825*)

"Those who obey God's law...can hope for God's help..." (*NIV Study Bible, p. 914*)

Application:

Because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross—the complete payment for our sins—the Lord will never forsake us. "Thank You, Lord!"

Aleph

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

2 Blessed are they who obey His statutes and seek Him with their whole heart.

3 They do nothing wrong; they walk in (live according to) His ways.

4 You have commanded us to diligently obey Your precepts.

5 Oh that my ways were steadfast in obeying Your statutes!

6 Then I would not be ashamed when I consider all Your commands.

7 I will praise You with an upright heart as I learn Your righteous laws.

8 I will obey Your statutes; please, do not utterly forsake me!