

Lesson 2: Psalm 119:9-16 – Beth

Wholehearted Devotion to God and His Word

<i>ESV</i>	<i>NKJV</i>	<i>NASB</i>	<i>NIV</i>	<i>NLT</i>
9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.	9 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.	9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word.	9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.	9 How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word.
9 How can a young man cleanse and keep his way pure? By living (guarding it, keeping it, obeying) according to Your word.				
<p>Commentary:</p> <p>How can a young man keep his way pure? (<i>NIV</i>) The focus here is on the <i>goal</i>—keeping one’s character and conduct pure. Purity as defined by the Word of God which is the true standard of purity.</p> <p>“...how can he be saved from what will destroy mind, body, and soul? Let him hear what follows...” (<i>Adam Clarke’s Commentary</i>)</p> <p>How can a young man cleanse his way? (<i>ESV</i>) The focus here is on the <i>means</i> to the goal—cleansing one’s character and conduct. By what means shall he cleanse his way? Combining both thoughts, “How is he to make his way clean, and keep it clean?” (<i>S. Cox</i>)</p> <p>“We can only make our way clean on condition of constant watchfulness... it is clear that there must be constant watchfulness, if we consider what sort of a world this is that we have got into. And it is also plain if we consider what sort of creatures we are... We are creatures [with]... strong passions, desires rooted in the flesh which are not meant to get the mastery of a man. And there are parts of our nature which are as obviously intended to be supreme and sovereign: the reason, the conscience, the will.” (<i>The Biblical Illustrator: Old Testament</i>)</p> <p>How can a young man. “...the Word of the Lord is of distinct blessing also to the young in that it can, if it is faithfully appropriated, enable them to shun all the contamination of sin.” (<i>Leupold, Exposition, p. 825</i>)</p> <p>Certainly, this is true for the old, as well! But how much better to form the necessary habits of living according to God’s Word when we are young. How much pain and suffering can be avoided, if we learn to walk in the ways of the Lord when we are young! It is far easier to avoid the bondage of bad habits than to try to escape from it. Maintenance of the spiritual life is far easier than trying to recover from the harmful habits of impurity.</p> <p>This verse indicates that there is both: 1) a responsibility – that of living a pure life; and 2) a privilege – God has given us the resources—His Word, the Holy Spirit, prayer, accountability partnerships with others, fellowship, etc.—making it possible for us to live a pure life. 2 Peter 1:3 – “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence...”</p> <p>Pure. “Not mixed. Free from adulterants or impurities. Free of dirt, defilement, or pollution. Free of foreign elements. Containing nothing inappropriate. Having no faults, sinless. Unmixed.” (<i>The American Heritage Dictionary</i>)</p>				

“We are drowning in a sea of impurity. Everywhere we look we find temptation to lead impure lives. The psalmist asked a question that troubles us all: how do we stay pure in a filthy environment? We cannot do this on our own, but must have counsel and strength more dynamic than the tempting influences around us. Where can we find that strength and wisdom? By reading God’s Word and doing what it says.” (*The Life Application Study Bible*, p. 1037)

By living according to your word. God’s Word points the way to a pure life. However, there must be a commitment, a determination to walk in the way of the Word.

Application:

How much desire and determination do we really have to keep our way (our life) pure?

“Lord, I pray that You will give me a greater desire and determination to live a pure life.”

<p>10 With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments!</p>	<p>10 With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!</p>	<p>10 With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments.</p>	<p>10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.</p>	<p>10 I have tried hard to find you— don't let me wander from your commands.</p>
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10 I seek You with my whole heart; do not let me wander away (stray) from Your commands.

Commentary:

With my whole heart I seek you. This was the highest aim and purpose of his whole life—the pursuit of intimate relationship with the Lord. Wholehearted devotion. Anything less, a divided heart, trying to love God and the world, results in being spiritually divided, anemic, ineffective, powerless and weak.

James 1:8 - "...a double-minded man, unstable in all he does."

1 John 2:15-17 – “15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

Proverbs 4:23 – “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” We guard our heart by directing it to seek the Lord at all times; by filling our mind with the Word of God. (Cp. Philippians 4:8)

“...Train [discipline] yourself to be godly” (1 Timothy 4:7). This is really the discipline of the inner man.

“We need a heart that seeks God, for if our heart is [truly] seeking God, our feet will not stray from God (v. 10; Prov 4:23). Such a heart will see Him in all of life, learn more about Him, fellowship with Him, and glorify Him in all that is said and done. Again, the Holy Spirit enables us to do this as we yield to Him.” (*Wiersbe, Bible Exposition Commentary*)

I seek you. "The author's devotion is first of all to the God of the law and the promises; they have meaning for him only because they are God's word of life for him." (*NIV Study Bible, note on Psalm 119:10, p. 915*)

Psalm 119:2 – “Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart.”

"Seeking" is manifested in "keeping." A person who is sincerely seeking the Lord will be committed to keeping His Word.

Do not let me stray from your commands. (NIV) A humble recognition that, left to his own devices, he would surely stray from the Lord and the pathway of righteousness. There is "...no presumptuous attitude of self-sufficiency here!" (Leupold, *Exposition*, p. 825)

Only one who is seeking God wholeheartedly can sincerely pray this prayer. Otherwise, straying is guaranteed! How often we stray from God's Word as we pursue our own sinful desires!

An acknowledgment of complete dependence on God. In the Garden of Eden, prior to the Fall, Adam and Eve lived in dependence on God. In their sin and rebellion, they declared their independence from God. Much of what God is doing in our lives today has to do with bringing us back to that place of total dependence on Him, appropriating His grace and mercy for our daily lives.

Psalm 119:176 – “I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments.” (ESV)

Isaiah 53:6 – “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Application:

We are easily distracted by the temptations of this world.

We need the Lord's sustaining, keeping power. We need Him to keep us in the right path. There must be an attitude of complete dependence on Him. We are powerless to make it on our own.

“Lord Jesus, I am sorry that You had to die for my frequent wanderings. And I thank You that You willingly died for my wanderings so that my relationship and fellowship with God could be restored.”

11 I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.

11 Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.

11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

11 I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

11 I have stored up (treasured, hidden) Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.

Commentary:

I have stored up your word in my heart. Keeping God's Word on the front burner of my mind. (Cp. Job 23:11-12; Psa. 19:10; Prov. 2:1; 7:1).

“By careful memorization and pondering [meditation].” (ESV Study Bible, p. 1094)

Hidden. (NIV) As one might hide a valuable treasure. We hide for safe keeping that which we value most. We don't want it to be lost or stolen.

“...to lay up knowledge or wisdom in the heart as a treasure, Job 10:13; Prov 2:1; 7:1. The meaning here is, that he had ‘treasured’ up the word of God, as the most valuable thing, in his heart; it was ‘there,’ though unseen; it constituted the secret power by which he was governed; it was permanently deposited there, as the most valuable of his treasures... One is said to hide the word in one's heart when one

has it continually present with him, not merely as an outward precept, but as an inward motive power in opposition to selfish action." (*Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament*)

"The answer to the problems of youth in any period of history is to heed God's Word by meditating on it (v. 15) and committing it to memory (v. 11) and by testifying concerning it to others (v. 13)." (*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)

That I might not sin against you. "...the very purpose that the psalmist had in mind in accumulating a store of divine precepts was that they might be within him a defense against sin" (*Leupold, Exposition, p. 825*).

"Hiding (keeping) God's Word in our hearts is a deterrent to sin. This alone should inspire us to memorize Scripture. But memorization alone will not keep us from sin; we must also put God's Word to work in our lives, making it a vital guide for everything we do." (*Life Application Study Bible, p. 1037*)

Application: Do I truly treasure and value the Word of God? What evidence do I see of that in my life?

12 Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes!

12 Blessed are You, O Lord! Teach me Your statutes.

12 Blessed are You, O Lord; Teach me Your statutes.

12 Praise be to you, O Lord; teach me your decrees.

12 I praise you, O Lord; teach me your decrees.

12 Blessed are (praise be to) You, O Lord; teach me Your statutes.

Commentary:

Teach me your statutes. "...for he, the writer, does not deem himself competent to master God's statutes by his own unaided strength" (*Leupold, Exposition, p. 825*).

"A. W. Tozer used to warn against being 'man taught' instead of 'God taught' (v. 102). The Lord has given teachers to His church and we should heed them. But unless the truth we hear moves from the head (and the notebook) into the heart, written there by the Spirit (2 Cor 3:1-3), and then to the will, we have not really learned the Word or been blessed by it. The blessing comes, not in hearing the Word but in doing it (James 1:22-25)." (*Wiersbe, Bible Exposition Commentary*)

Statutes. "Most of us chafe under rules, for we think they restrict us from doing what we want. At first glance, then, it may seem strange to hear the psalmist talk of rejoicing in following God's statutes as much as in great riches. But God's laws were given to free us to be all he wants us to be. They restrict us from doing what might cripple us and keep us from being our best. God's guidelines help us to follow his path and avoid paths that lead to destruction." (*Life Application Study Bible, p. 1037*)

Application:

"Lord, I am totally dependent on You. I cannot truly learn the truths of Your Word in my own strength. I need You and Your Holy Spirit to be my Teacher. Please make the truths of Your Word come alive to me. May Your Word come to me in the power of the Holy Spirit."

13 With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth.	13 With my lips I have declared All the judgments of Your mouth.	13 With my lips I have told of All the ordinances of Your mouth.	13 With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth.	13 I have recited aloud all the regulations you have given us.
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13 With my lips I declare (recite aloud) all the laws that come from Your mouth.

Commentary:

Recount. (NIV) "Either in meditation or in liturgies of covenant commitment to the Lord (see 50:16, 'recite')." (NIV Study Bible, note on Psalm 119:13, p. 915)

I have recited aloud all the regulations you have given us. (NLT) Prior to the fourth century A.D. all reading was done out loud. Meditation occurred out loud. (From a sermon by Pastor Matt Hannan)

Application:

I need to work at reading and reciting God's Word out loud. God's Word needs to be on my lips, in my mind and in my heart. Seeing it, hearing it, moving my lips, feeling it with my hands.

Communicating God's Word to others also helps to establish it in my own heart and mind.

14 In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches.	14 I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches.	14 I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches.	14 I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.	14 I have rejoiced in your laws as much as in riches.
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14 I delight (rejoice) in following (obeying) Your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

Commentary:

In the way of your testimonies I delight. "Whatever delights will capture our attention and we will think about it and meditate on it. This is true of God's Word. In this psalm, delighting in the Word, loving the Word, and meditating on the Word are found together (vv. 15-16,23-24,47-48,77-78,97-99), and they should be found together in our hearts and lives. We must take time to be holy." (Wiersbe, Bible Exposition Commentary)

I rejoice in following your statutes. (NIV) He rejoiced in following God's Word; not just in learning it but in doing it, putting it into practice. James 1:22-25 (ESV) – "22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing." (Cp. Matthew 7:24-27).

Learning led to living in obedience to the Word.

As one rejoices in great riches. (NIV) He regarded God's Word to be valuable treasure.

“This is the treasure above all treasures. The very meditation upon these riches is a source of great delight, but the type of meditation involved is always such that faithful doing of the Word learned results.” (*Leupold, Exposition, p. 826*)
 Psalm 19:9b-10a – “The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold.”

Application:

Do I delight in the spiritual riches of God’s Word as much as I delight in material riches? What evidence do I see of that in my life?
 Is obedience to the Word of God a delight or a drudgery?

15 I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.	15 I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways.	15 I will meditate on Your precepts And regard Your ways.	15 I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.	15 I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways.
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15 I meditate on Your precepts and fix my eyes on (contemplate, carefully consider, reflect on) Your ways.

Commentary:

I will meditate on your precepts. Genuine meditation leads to diligent application. Failure to think deeply about the Word of God is the missing element for many Christians.

We meditate on, think deeply about, ponder and consider the things we delight in (cp. vs. 16).

“**Meditate** describes an active pondering, perhaps even muttering to oneself in pursuit of insight.” (*ESV Study Bible, p. 942*)

Psalm 119:97 – “Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.”

Consider. (*NIV*) "Have regard for." (*Leupold, Exposition, p. 825*)

The psalmist meditated on God's words and ways. The ways of God are revealed and discovered in the Word of God. The two are always in agreement, never contradictory.

Application:

It is easy for us to think about our hobbies, our interests, the things that are important to us. How much do we think about God and His Word?

16 I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.	16 I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.	16 I shall delight in Your statutes; I shall not forget Your word.	16 I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.	16 I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word.
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16 I delight in Your statutes; I will not forget (neglect, ignore) Your word.

Commentary:

I will delight in your statutes. To delight in God is to delight in His Word and vice versa.

Delight. “The word is very emphatical: I will skip about and jump for joy.” (*Adam Clarke's Commentary*)

I will not neglect your word. (NIV) The danger is not so much opposition to God and His Word as indifference. Indifference is deadly to our soul! Not a sudden blow out but a slow leak spiritually.

We have neglected God's Word if we have failed to put into practice what we have learned. (Cp. James 1:22-25).

Application:

Do we truly delight in God if we do not delight in His Word?

It is a dangerous thing to read and listen and give mental assent to God's Word on the one hand, while failing to put its lessons into practice in our daily life on the other.

Beth

9 How can a young man cleanse and keep his way pure? By living (guarding it, keeping it, obeying) according to Your word.

10 I seek You with my whole heart; do not let me wander away (stray) from Your commands.

11 I have stored up (treasured, hidden) Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.

12 Blessed are (praise be to) You, O Lord; teach me Your statutes.

13 With my lips I declare (recite aloud) all the laws that come from Your mouth.

14 I delight (rejoice) in following (obeying) Your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

15 I meditate on Your precepts and fix my eyes on (contemplate, carefully consider, reflect on) Your ways.

16 I delight in Your statutes; I will not forget (neglect, ignore) Your word.