

Lesson 3: Psalm 119:17-24 – *Gimel*

Dependence on God and Devotion to His Word

ESV	NKJV	NASB	NIV	NLT
<p>17 Deal bountifully with your servant, that I may live and keep your word.</p>	<p>17 Deal bountifully with Your servant, That I may live and keep Your word.</p>	<p>17 Deal bountifully with Your servant, That I may live and keep Your word.</p>	<p>17 Do good to your servant, and I will live; I will obey your word.</p>	<p>17 Be good to your servant, that I may live and obey your word.</p>
<p>17 Deal bountifully with (do good to) Your servant, that I may live and obey Your word.</p>				
<p>Commentary: Deal bountifully with your servant. Be generous to me. Pour out Your blessings richly (abundantly, liberally) upon me so that I may have more than enough, especially spiritually. Cause good to happen to me; show favor to me. The psalmist recognized that “The continuance of life was dependent on the favor of God.” (<i>Barnes’ Notes</i>) The writer recognized that he deserved no good thing from the Lord (as seen elsewhere in this psalm) but he prayed boldly for God’s blessing on his life so that he might live and obey God’s Word. Do good to your servant. (NIV) To treat a person well, to reward, to benefit. (<i>Strong’s Concordance</i>) Your servant. “If ever we feel we can ignore our daily time with God in His Word, then this is the Scripture to read. We need the Word because we <i>are servants</i> (vv. 17,23,38, 49,65,76,84,122,124,125,135,140,176), and in His Word, our Master gives us directions for the work He wants us to do. Eli the priest was wrong in many things, but he was right when he taught young Samuel to pray, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening’ (1 Sam 3:9, NASB).” (<i>Wiersbe, Bible Exposition Commentary</i>) I will obey your word. (NIV) “Out of gratitude for God’s care and blessing.” (<i>NIV Study Bible, p. 915</i>) God’s blessings motivated the writer to greater obedience. Obedience motivated by gratitude.</p>				
<p><u><i>Count Your Blessings</i></u>, by Johnson Oatman, Jr. When upon life’s billows you are tempest tossed, When you are discouraged thinking all is lost, Count your many blessings—name them one by one— And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done. Are you ever burdened with a load of care? Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear? Count your many blessings; ev’ry doubt will fly,</p>		<p>When you look at others with their lands and gold, Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold. Count your many blessings; money cannot buy Your reward in heaven nor your home on high. So amid the conflict, whether great or small, Do not be discouraged; God is over all. Count your many blessings; angels will attend,</p>		

And you will be singing as the days go by.	Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.
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Application:
 I am totally dependent on the Lord for my life and for every good thing—for my very existence. All my activities are in vain, ineffective and fruitless without His blessing. My situation and circumstances are hopeless without God and His blessing. (Cp. John 15:5)
 God's blessing and undeserved favor should produce much gratitude in my heart and much obedience in my life.
 God doesn't owe me anything; He graciously and mercifully blesses me of His own free will. He created me; He sustains me. If He chose to withhold His sustaining blessing, I would die.
 "Lord, I am Your servant. Please help me to always be about Your business."
 "You have always been very generous, kind and merciful to me. Thank You for dealing so bountifully with me—far beyond what I deserve!"
 "O Lord, I need 'Much Grace and Great Mercy' from You!" --*Frank*

18 Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.	18 Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.	18 Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law.	18 Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.	18 Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions.
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18 Open my eyes so that I may see wonderful things (truths, principles, concepts) in Your law.

Commentary:
Open my eyes that I may see. (NIV) This should be our continual prayer as we come to the study and contemplation of God's Word.
 "'Uncover my eyes'... Man is viewed as being afflicted by a natural blindness... God's Spirit alone can lead into all truth." (*Leupold, Exposition, pp. 826-27*)
 The writer recognized his need for God's help in order to accurately understand God's Word. It is not that God's Word is a closed book; rather, it is that our heart is closed to God's Word.
 Man is afflicted by spiritual blindness due to sin (2 Corinthians 5:3-6; 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16). Therefore, we must depend on the Lord for insight and understanding of His Word. We need the Holy Spirit to enlighten, illuminate and teach us. He is our Counselor and spiritual guide into all truth (John 16:13). The study of God's Word is not primarily an intellectual exercise; it is an exercise of the soul.
Open my eyes. "Give me insight beyond my [natural] abilities. **Wondrous things.** Probably the wondrous works recorded there and what they reveal of God himself." (*ESV Study Bible, p. 1094*)
Wonderful things in your law. "... 'simple practical truths of the law,' which man does not naturally discern unless the Spirit of God assists him." (*Leupold, Exposition, p. 827*)
 Four important truths regarding the Bible need to be remembered:
 1) The Bible is unique, unlike any other book in the world. Its Author is God, the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Therefore, it is rightfully called the "Word of God." In this sense it is a "spiritual" book which requires spiritual discernment in order to be understood (1

Corinthians 1:18-25; 2:12-16). God must graciously open our minds and hearts to understand His Word (Luke 24:45; Acts 16:14; 2 Corinthians 4:1-6).

- 2) The Bible is God’s revelation of Himself to man. God is not hiding from man. He wants us to know Him and to understand His will and purposes in the world (Deuteronomy 29:29; Romans 16:25-27; 1 Corinthians 2:6-10; Ephesians 1:15-17; 3:1-6; Colossians 1:9-10).
- 3) The Bible can be fully understood only by those who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin (John 5:37-40; 2 Corinthians 3:14-16).
- 4) Jesus has given His Holy Spirit to those who have received Him as their Savior from sin for the purpose of helping them to understand His Word (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:12-15; 1 John 2:20-27).

“Not only are we servants, but we are also *students* (v. 18), and our basic manual is the Word of God. However, unless God opens our eyes, we will never see the wonderful things hidden in its pages (Eph 1:17-18). God's Word is wonderful (v. 129), His works are wonderful (107:8,15,21,24,31), and His love is wonderful (31:21, NIV), and we must meditate on the wonder of His Person, His truth, and His mighty works. The eyes have an appetite (vv. 82,123; 1 John 2:16) and we must be careful where we focus them (v. 37). Eyes that feast on the vanities of this world will never see the wonders in God's Word.” (*Wiersbe, Bible Exposition Commentary*)

Application: “Thank You, dear Holy Spirit, for Your teaching and illuminating ministry.”

Don’t believe those who try to convince you that only priests or pastors or those who have had special training are able to accurately understand the Bible! If you have received Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, you can pray with real confidence and an expectant heart, “Lord, open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.” (1 John 2:27)

19 I am a sojourner on the earth; hide not your commandments from me!	19 I am a stranger in the earth; Do not hide Your commandments from me.	19 I am a stranger in the earth; Do not hide Your commandments from me.	19 I am a stranger on earth; do not hide your commands from me.	19 I am only a foreigner in the land. Don't hide your commands from me!
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19 I am a sojourner (stranger, foreigner, alien) on the earth; do not hide Your commands from me!

Commentary:

“This world is not my home, I’m just a passin’ through” (Albert E. Brumley). Like a foreigner in a strange country who does not know or understand the laws and customs of the land, he needs help.

I am a stranger on earth. (NIV) “As a servant of the Lord, i.e., a citizen of his kingdom, he is not at home in any of the kingdoms of the world...” (NIV Study Bible, p. 915)

Sojourner. “...stresses his temporary residence in this life.” (ESV Study Bible, p. 986)

"Since mine is a temporary existence here on earth, grant me what can give some lasting value to this brief life of mine." (*Leupold, Exposition, p. 827*)

Guidance for wise living on earth comes not from the earth but from heaven!

Do not hide your commands from me. (NIV) Acknowledging his need for God and His Word. He considered himself inadequate to live successfully and effectively. He considered God's Word to be his guidebook for successful and effective living. (B.I.B.L.E. – Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth --Author Unknown).

As a stranger in a foreign place, you do not know where to find the most basic of necessities. You need someone to show you. How much more difficult if they were deliberately hidden from you!

“Like the patriarchs of old, we are also *strangers* in this world (vv. 19-20; 39:12; 105:12,23; Gen 23:4; Ex 2:22; Lev 25:23; Heb 11:8-9,13-16; 1 Peter 1:1; 2:11), and we need the Lord's guidance as we walk the pilgrim path. The laws for driving in Great Britain are different from the laws in the United States and it is dangerous to confuse the two. God's people are being led on the narrow road that leads to life, while the people of the world are on the broad road that leads to judgment (Matt 7:13-14). Just as the cloud and fiery pillar led Israel in their wilderness journey (Num 9:15-23), so the Scriptures lead us (v. 105).” (*Wiersbe, Bible Exposition Commentary*)

Application: “Lord, I acknowledge my need for Your guidance and help in understanding and applying Your Word to my life. Thank You for giving me Your Holy Spirit to provide that guidance and understanding.”

20 My soul is consumed with longing for your rules at all times.	20 My soul breaks with longing For Your judgments at all times.	20 My soul is crushed with longing After Your ordinances at all times.	20 My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times.	20 I am always overwhelmed with a desire for your regulations.
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20 My soul is consumed (overwhelmed) with longing for Your laws at all times.

Commentary:

As a hungry man longs for food.

My soul is crushed with longing. (NASB) “A very strong verb is used, it is even stronger than 'consumed.' It should be rendered 'crushed'.” (*Leupold, Exposition, p. 827*)

“The psalmist felt a crushing burden to read and ponder God's ordinances, and unlike many travelers today, he was not afraid to ask the Lord for directions. If we take time to meditate on the Word and seek the Lord, He will show us the path of life (16:11).” (*Wiersbe, Bible Exposition Commentary*)

Application: “Lord, I pray that You will give me a deep, insatiable hunger for You and Your Word.”

21 You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones, who wander from your commandments.	21 You rebuke the proud — the cursed, Who stray from Your commandments.	21 You rebuke the arrogant, the cursed, Who wander from Your commandments.	21 You rebuke the arrogant, who are cursed and who stray from your commands.	21 You rebuke the arrogant; those who wander from your commands are cursed.
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21 You rebuke the arrogant (proud), accursed ones, who wander (stray) from Your commands.

Commentary:

The arrogant. (NIV) "Those who are a law to themselves... Devotion to God's law marks the Lord's servant, but alienates him from the arrogant (v. 21) of the world." (NIV Study Bible, p. 915)

You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones. The danger of wandering from God's Word. Wandering invites severe discipline from the Lord.

Who are cursed. "The terrible fate of those who go astray from God's commandments leads the writer to pray all the more earnestly that God may keep him faithful to that Word which he so ardently desires." (Leupold, *Exposition*, p. 827)

He did not want to be counted among the arrogant. Note the contrast between "cursed" and "do good to your servant" (vs. 17); "stray from your commands" and "obey your word" (vs. 17), "keep your statutes" (vs. 22), "meditate on your decrees" (vs. 23) and "Your statutes are my delight" (vs. 24).

The attitude (arrogant) and the fate (cursed) of those who wander from the Word.

Who wander from your commandments. Cp. vs. 176. We can "wander" by ignoring God's Word and being indifferent toward it.

Application: "Lord, by Your grace and mercy, may I never wander from Your Word. Please forgive me when I do."

22 Take away from me scorn and contempt, for I have kept your testimonies.	22 Remove from me reproach and contempt, For I have kept Your testimonies.	22 Take away reproach and contempt from me, For I observe Your testimonies.	22 Remove from me scorn and contempt, for I keep your statutes.	22 Don't let them scorn and insult me, for I have obeyed your laws.
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22 Take away (remove) from me scorn and contempt, for I have obeyed Your statutes.

Commentary:

"Because we serve a different Master, obey a different set of laws, and have our citizenship in a different country (Phil 3:20), we are different from the lost people whom Jesus called "the children of this world" (Luke 16:8). We will not conform to the world (Rom 12:2), and the world opposes and persecutes us because of this. Therefore, we are *sufferers* who bear reproach for Jesus Christ (vv. 21-14; Matt 13:20-21; Heb 13:13). The psalmist called these persecutors 'the arrogant [proud]' (v. 21) and described them as disobeying God's law (vv. 126,158), ignoring it (v. 139), wandering from it (vv. 21,118), and forsaking it (v. 53). Because they reject God's Word, they reject God's people and mock them (v. 51), lie about them (v. 69), try to trap them (v. 85), and oppress them without cause (vv. 78,122)." (Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*)

Application:

"Though people may treat me with scorn and contempt because of my loyalty to You and Your Word, may I never wander from my commitment to Your Word."

23 Even though princes sit plotting against me,	23 Princes also sit and speak against me, But	23 Even though princes sit and talk against me,	23 Though rulers sit together and slander me,	23 Even princes sit and speak against me, but I
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your servant will meditate on your statutes.	Your servant meditates on Your statutes.	Your servant meditates on Your statutes.	your servant will meditate on your decrees.	will meditate on your decrees.
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23 Even though princes (rulers) sit together and plot against (slander) me, Your servant will meditate (think deeply) on Your statutes.

Commentary:

Though rulers sit together and slander me. (NIV) "...while the adversaries plot wicked things, he calmly meditates on the statutes of the Lord. They are his life and his delight. In such meditation lies the source of his strength... in the face of ungodly opposition a godly man maintains his peace and composure by meditating upon God's 'testimonies'." (Leupold, *Exposition*, p. 828)

Thy servant meditates on Thy statutes. (NASB) God's Word is his source of strength and peace of mind when he is under attack. Crisis drove him to God and His Word, not away.

"...the psalmist's suffering gave him opportunity to bear witness to nobles and kings (v. 46; and see Matt 10:18; Acts 9:15; Phil 1:12-18; 4:22). The writer needed wisdom to know how to handle these difficult situations and he found counsel in God's Word (v. 24). Instead of listening to the enemy's slander, he meditated on God's truth. That is a good way to keep your mind clean and confident (Phil 4:4-7). (Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*)

Application: "Please help me to keep my priorities straight in the face of crisis. Help me to remember to turn to You and Your Word."

24 Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors.	24 Your testimonies also are my delight And my counselors.	24 Your testimonies also are my delight; They are my counselors.	24 Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors.	24 Your laws please me; they give me wise advice.
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24 Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors.

Commentary:

A counselor gives guidance, wisdom, instruction, insight, understanding.

Your statutes are my delight. (NIV) "He found his main happiness in the word of God." (Barnes' Notes)

[But his delight] "His pleasure; his happiness. Instead of finding his happiness in the society and the occupations of the wicked, he finds it in the truth of God. The law or truth of God is not distasteful to him, but he so delights in it as to desire to become more and more acquainted with it, and to have its truths impressed more and more on his heart." (Barnes's Notes, note on Psalm 1:2)

"It is a characteristic of true piety to find pleasure in the commands of God; in the commandments themselves, and in obedience to them." (Barnes' Notes, Psalm 112:1)

They are my counselors. Cp. Psalm 1:1-2. My values, choices, beliefs, attitudes, and activities should have their basis in the Word of God. Every response of my life should be based on, guided and informed by God's Word.

Nothing can replace the counsel of God's Word! There is no substitute.

“He sought direction and advice from them as from a friend who would give him counsel. He looked to the revealed law of God to ascertain what was right; to know how he should act in the emergencies of life.” (*Barnes’ Notes*)

Application: “Thank You, Lord, for the guidance and wisdom I gain from Your Word. May I always delight in it!”

Gimel

17 Deal bountifully with (do good to) Your servant, that I may live and obey Your word.

18 Open my eyes so that I may see wonderful things (truths, principles, concepts) in Your law.

19 I am a sojourner (stranger, foreigner, alien) on the earth; do not hide Your commands from me!

20 My soul is consumed (overwhelmed) with longing for Your laws at all times.

21 You rebuke the arrogant (proud), accursed ones, who wander (stray) from Your commands.

22 Take away (remove) from me scorn and contempt, for I have obeyed Your statutes.

23 Even though princes (rulers) sit together and plot against (slander) me, Your servant will meditate (think deeply) on Your statutes.

24 Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors.