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Pastor's Introduction

The Psalms have been the hymnal of God's people for thousands of years. They are a compilation of Hebrew poetry written by different human authors, inspired by God, to reveal how we are to worship Him. One of the greatest examples of Hebrew poetry is Psalm 119. This psalm is the longest chapter in the Bible. The psalm is an alphabet poem. Each line in the various stanzas begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In the first stanza, each line begins with the letter "aleph" in Hebrew. Each stanza introduces the next letter of the 22-letter Hebrew alphabet. It is a masterpiece of poetry.

Psalm 119 is about the Word of God. God is showing us how His Word speaks to our lives to grow us, comfort us, convict us, teach us, etc. The title of our next sermon series through Psalm 119 is "People of the Book." Baptists have used this epithet for hundreds of years because of our commitment to the Word of God. As we study this psalm, my prayer is that it would challenge us to be people of the book. I desire for us to see the importance of the Bible for our daily lives. The Scriptures are not just an old book that you pull out when you need help. We should view the Bible as the Living Word of God that speaks to us and guides us to know God and serve Him every day. I hope that we would love the Bible like the psalmist who wrote this beautiful psalm. May we be a people of the book!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John T. Green II". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ed. TG



Participant Guide for Nov 15, 2020

Trust

Ps 119:81-88

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. As a class, come up with a list of institutions, people, and things in which people place their trust. What are some of the common trends that you see in this list? What does this list tell you about our hearts?
2. What does it mean to trust God? How does trust in God develop over time? What sort of events help build our trust in God?
3. What are some of the signs that the Psalmist's trust in God might be beginning to waiver? What is his current emotional and physical state?
4. Despite his current state, where does the Psalmist find hope? There are at least two specific sources of hope and life that the Psalmist looks to from God. What is the significance of these sources to him?
5. Do we find it challenging to trust in God and his word in times of struggle? How so? Is it easier to trust in God and his word when times are good? What changes in us between these two extremes?
6. How did Jesus model trust in God? How do we model this for our friends, family, and co-workers? How can we teach others what it looks like to trust God?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, look for your sources of trust and security. How can you give these over to God?

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Participant Guide for Nov 22, 2020

Certainty

Ps 119:89-96

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. Read 1 Peter 1:24-25: Note that Psalm 119:89 says, “Lord, your word is forever, it is firmly fixed in heaven.” Compare and contrast Biblical principles and many of the fads and trends that come and go in the world today.
2. Read Psalm 119:91: The theologian John Calvin says in response to this verse, “It is a harsh manner of expression to say, that all the elements are God’s servants; but it expresses more than if it had been said, that all things are ready to yield obedience to him.” That is, this verse affirms that nothing in creation happens apart from God’s sovereign will. God is actively sustaining creation in both the cosmos and your life. How does this fact give us confidence in the face of life’s many trials?
3. Read Psalm 119:92-94: Often, in this life, we experience trials and seasons where God’s word may take a back seat in our daily schedules, attentions, and affections. Discuss a time when your attention to God’s word waned and discuss the redemption you experienced when you returned. If you haven’t returned, what is hindering you?
4. Read Psalm 119:95: The world is often hostile to God’s word and the gospel due to God’s assertion that we are not sovereign over our lives, and we are dependent upon Him. Discuss ways the world expresses hostility towards God’s word and principles. For example, how does the world understand human basic nature compared to the way God’s word does? What anecdotal evidence can you cite that supports the fact that God is right?
5. Read Ecclesiastes 12:9-14: Some commentators say that Psalm 119:96 could be cited as a summary for the book of Ecclesiastes. What do you think it means when the writer says that he has seen a limit to all perfection? How should this impact our daily lives?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Seek to have an eternal perspective in all your activities and dealings this week. Be more mindful of how you spend your time and energy. Be certain that God sees, He is in control, and it matters!

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Participant Guide for Nov 29, 2020

Wisdom

Ps 119:97-104

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. In this section, the Psalmist clearly rejoices over something he loves - wisdom. In v. 97, he notes that the Lord's instructions are his "meditation all day long." What does it mean to "meditate all day long?" And how is this showing a love for God?
2. In vs. 98-100, the Psalmist contrasts the benefit of wisdom gained from God's instruction and statutes against three other recognized sources of earthly wisdom - a formidable opponent (enemy), a professional (teacher), and a respected leader (elder). In each case, God's instruction is superior, and the Psalmist has superseded their abilities because he has chosen to trust in God's instruction. Where in your life could you benefit from listening to God first? Where could you be made wise from God's instruction - even when it goes against the conventional wisdom of others?
3. In vs. 101-2, we see that the Psalmist highlights that he could have made different choices. He could have taken "evil paths" or "turned from [God's] judgments." However, he actively chose to keep his feet on the path that was instructed by God. How do you think choice plays a role in our relationship with God? What is implied here about our role in pursuing the Truth of God in our lives toward wisdom?
4. Perhaps one of the most interesting things in this passage is the emphasis on how God himself provides instruction and wisdom for those who would seek after him. In v. 103, he relishes in the Lord's presence - for God is present even in his commands! "How sweet your word is to my taste..." Can you sense the satisfaction here? How does satisfaction from earthly wisdom compare or differ from that of the Godly wisdom spoken about here?
5. In v. 104, the Psalmist expresses the ultimate conclusion of his pursuit of God - "I hate every false way." "False" as it used here does not always indicate purposeful evil but could also indicate a decision, a way of life, or a commitment to things that are of false hope, vain, or worthless. Do you have such strong feelings about decisions, actions, and patterns of choices in your life? Are you currently pursuing something that is ultimately vain or worthless, something that puts hope in anything other than Christ?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, pray daily that God would grant you his wisdom; that you would be more like him.



Participant Guide for Dec 6, 2020

Guidance

Ps 119:105-112

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. When you hear the word “guidance,” something that may come to mind is the guidance from the GPS in your car or on your phone. What did you do for directions before GPS? Has there ever been a time where you argued with your GPS or did not trust it to get you to your destination? What was the result?
2. Psalm 119:105 is one of the most easily recognized verses from the Psalms. Having now read this verse in context with the entire Psalm, does it carry any more significance or weight? How does following the Psalmist’s journey through the Psalm change how you understand this verse?
3. In what ways does knowing the full context of a verse make the Bible come alive to us? What are some other verses that have meant something different, or perhaps something more, after reading them in their context?
4. What is the recurring theme that keeps bringing the Psalmist back to God? What is going on in his life? Along those same lines, what is the recurring source of hope for the Psalmist?
5. What are some examples of God’s statutes? Is this more than just a list of what is right or wrong? What does it look like to be resolute in obeying God’s statutes? How can infusing God’s word into your life make this easier?
6. How can we use God’s word to help guide others? Tell about a time where you wholeheartedly relied on God for his guidance.

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ It can be hard to trust God’s guidance consistently. This week, examine your life for areas where you are not yet looking to God for guidance. What change can you make to rely on him?



Participant Guide for Dec 13, 2020

Judgment

Ps 119:113-120

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

The Psalmist speaks of himself, the wicked, and God in this passage. Make a list of which statement refers to each in this passage.

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. The Psalmist begins this section by claiming that he hates the double-minded but instead loves God's instruction. What does it mean to be "double-minded?" How does the Bible keep us from this? How can we use the Bible to hold each other accountable for being double-minded? (Give specific verses)
2. Read verse 115: How does the company we keep help us to follow God's commandments? How have relationships in your life been an indicator of what path you are on spiritually?
3. Verse 116 reads, "Sustain me as you promised and I will live, do not let me be ashamed of my hope." We will always come to shame if we put our hope in ourselves. How can our Bible readings remind us to put our hope in God and not ourselves? (give specific verses)
4. Read the last three verses (118-120). If God will only punish the wicked, why does the Psalmist have both awe and fear of God's judgment? How does the Bible help us recognize our wickedness so that we might be saved?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ The Psalmist hates evil and fears God, but we also know God calls us to love our enemies. How can we do both? As you go through your week, how can you love those who don't follow God without falling under their influence?

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Participant Guide for Dec 20, 2020

Christmas Message

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

Your class can take this week as a week of prayer and encouragement for each other or discuss the Christmas sermon using the following general questions:

1. What were the main points of this week's message?
2. Talk through each of those points. What did you learn? Did the message reveal anything new to you about God/Jesus?
3. How can we take this message into the places where we live, work, and play?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

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Participant Guide for Dec 27, 2020

Treasure

Ps 119:232-128

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:

Christians in Romania relate that during the government oppression they had endured for years, Bibles were very scarce. Christians would tear pages out of their Bibles, pass them around, and hide them so that they could have them to read. Recently while digging footers for a new building, they discovered a metal container full of little blue Bibles buried in 1937 with a note that said, “We know that in the near future we will no longer be allowed to worship God freely. It is our prayer that you will find these Bibles at a time when our people most need the Word of God.” Those Romanians in 1937 understood the treasure of God’s Word and risked their lives to help future generations of total strangers have access to their most treasured possession.



Apply

1. What would other people say is something that you treasure above all else?
2. Do we spend more time pointing fingers at the ungodly than we do in studying and applying the Word of God in our own lives?
3. Is humility a word that others would use to describe you? Even though you may be a devout student of the Bible who excels in Bible trivia, if it does not produce a love for those yet to believe, then your treasure may be in your knowledge of the word instead of the application of His Word.
4. Read Matthew 6:21: What did Jesus say about our treasure? What does what we treasure say about our hearts?
5. How can we demonstrate a sincere love for discerning and living out God's Word and hating sin while loving the sinner at the same time? While we should be distraught by the prevalence of evil in the world, it must not overcome us. A sincere passion for the word and ways of Jesus will make us overcomers if we treasure them over anyone or anything else in our lives.
6. Suppose we were to experience the persecution other believers around the world experience on a day to day basis. Would our Scripture knowledge be enough to keep us strong and faithful amid any kind of oppression? Why is knowledge not enough?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ God's ways and timing are not always what we think they should be, but the day will come when the truth will be revealed, and sin will be judged. In the meantime, we are to treasure every word and not let one fall to the ground. What are you doing to develop a love for God's Word if you don't already have it?



Participant Guide for Jan 3, 2021

Understanding

Ps 119:129-136

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. Psalm 119:129 describes God's word as "wondrous." This word implies something miraculous or unusual. Discuss what is unusual about God's word, decrees, commands, and instruction.
2. Verse 130 could refer to God's initial act of revelation in his word, the process of interpreting the word, or the ongoing process of applying the word to our hearts. It could also speak of how all three are intended as a single process bringing light and understanding to the dark soul. What are some examples of God's word lighting a dark path or time in your lives? How did the experience grow you and your understanding?
3. True transformation through the gospel leaves a lasting impact on the life of the believer. In verse 131, the psalmist declares, "I open my mouth and pant because I long for your commands. Read Psalm 42:1-2 and John 10:27. Discuss how a life shaped by the word is evidence of gospel transformation for redeemed people.
4. Verses 132-135 give various impacts and benefits to following God's word. Discuss how the ideas in these verses help fulfill Romans 8:28.
5. The psalmist makes a profound admission through his request in verse 133. He asks that the Lord would not let sin dominate him. How does understanding God's word in its fullness keep us from sin? Discuss ways God's word has grown you in understanding and therefore helped you achieve victory over certain past sins.
6. Earlier, we discussed that one must have truly experienced God to have such a desperate longing for Him. A similar longing must be in place to experience what the psalmist describes in verse 136. How does it make you feel when your loved one's disregard God's word and commands?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Commit to growing your understanding of scripture this week. Try to learn a new theological or biblical concept. This week, use all of your available resources and dive deeply into a short book of the Bible like Philippians or 1 John.



Participant Guide for Jan 10, 2021

Righteousness

Ps 119:137-144

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon notes:



Apply

1. Righteousness is not a common word that we use unless we are describing someone as being “self-righteous.” What does it mean to be “righteous?” Can you think of anyone who models righteousness in the right way?
2. The idea of righteousness permeates this entire section of the Psalm. List everything that the Psalmists states as being righteous. Righteousness is also described in several lines. How is righteousness described? What do those descriptions tell you about the Psalmists' view of the future?
3. Read Isaiah 53:11: Who is the Righteous One spoken of in this passage? What does this passage say about the righteous one? How does the experience of the righteous one relate to that of the Psalmist?
4. Read Galatians 3:10-11: How do people typically seek righteousness? Why can the law not make us righteous? How does Christ make us righteous? What does it mean for the “righteous to live by faith?”
5. What does it look like for a Christian to seek righteousness? What role do we play in helping others seek righteousness? What accountability systems do you have in place? How does living in Christian community help promote righteousness among Christ's Church?

Respond

- **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**
- ◆ Do you feel like you're striving daily for righteousness? This week, meditate on Christ's righteousness and pray for him to reveal himself to you.

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Participant Guide for Jan 17, 2021

Prayer

Ps 119:145-152

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:

“Prayer is surrender to the will of God and the cooperation with His will. If I throw out a boat hook from a boat and catch hold of the shore and pull, do I pull the shore to me, or do I pull myself to the shore? Prayer is not pulling God to my will, but the aligning of my will to the will of God.” -E. Stanley Jones



Apply

1. With one-word responses, what is prayer? What are some reasons people pray? What do these responses reveal?
2. Read Psalm 119:145-152: In this passage, the psalmist concentrates on prayer, and through his “calling out to God” we are reminded of crucial elements about prayer which honors God.
3. In verses 145-146, how does the psalmist describe the manner he prays? Why must we seek God with our whole heart rather than only present our needs to God? “It is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart” (John Bunyan). Was the psalmist bargaining with God, or was he dedicating himself to obey God no matter how God answers his prayer?
4. What are the two important elements of effective prayer in verses 147-148? Consider the truths in these passages: John 15:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18; Jeremiah 29:12-13.
5. What is the plea of the psalmist in verse 149? Prayer is communicating our love to God. How is voicing our prayers to God an example of our love for Him?
6. Read verses 150-151. The psalmist is alert to his circumstances. He is aware that the enemies are near and that God is also near. What is the value of praying with opened eyes? See Neh. 4:7-9; Matt. 26:41; Mark 13:33; Col. 4:2; 1 Peter 4:7.
7. What is the psalmist’s powerful testimony of prayer in verses 151-152? How does his testimony challenge our prayer life?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ How can more consistent times of prayer affect your life? How can prayer strengthen your family; your marriage? Read 2 Chronicles 7:14 and ponder the promises in this verse.



Participant Guide for Jan 24, 2021

Renewal

Ps 119:153-160

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. In Verses 153 and 154, the Psalmist makes a bold statement before God. When he asks God to champion his cause and redeem him, he can do so in confidence because he knows that he has not forgotten God's instruction. In essence, he has made God's cause his cause. How can we also have this kind of bold confidence before God?
2. Read Psalm 34:1-2, 6-7, and 18. It is said that from God's perspective, humanity isn't divided between good and evil as much as it is divided between humble and proud. Psalm 119:155 says that salvation is far from the wicked. Think about humility vs. pride and discuss why the "wicked" don't study God's statutes?
3. Read Lamentations 3:22-24, then read verse 156 from today's text. Discuss why we so often need so much compassion from the Lord.
4. As our society trends increasingly post-Christian, believers in our culture will have more and more chances to prove what we are. Read verse 157 from today's text. What are some of the extrinsic and intrinsic foes that individual believers and the collective church face today? How does God renew our strength when we stand firm in Him?
5. The entire word of God is inerrant, inspired, and infallible. These things are affirmed in verse 160. Why is this inerrancy so important? What would the implications be if any part were found incorrect? How does inerrancy affect our walk in God's word?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ It often seems we are pressed on every side as we walk with the Lord. Commit this week to always return to home base and seek God's renewal each morning. Start your days with Him!

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Participant Guide for Jan 31, 2021

Peace

Ps 119:161-168

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. Rejoicing at “finding great spoil” to the warrior meant victory, the end of uncertainty, the weakening of the enemy for future attacks, profit/gain, honor, and a declaration of rest (Spurgeon). Discuss how, in our spiritual battles, God’s word can be a great spoil resulting in peace.
2. Verse 163 reveals there are no white lies or partial truths. The psalmist has dealt with the sin of lying in his own life and now hates lies. His heart is filled with the love of God’s word (truth). Read John 8:42-45. Discuss how all sin stems from a lie. How does loving God’s truth of sin bring us peace? Describe a situation where this truth could be used to share the gospel.
3. Read Hebrews 12:27-29: Peace with God is the work of Christ in which, by faith, we have a relationship with God. Peace of God is inward peace when we choose to believe Him over fear. Peace from God denotes God is the source of all true peace. The psalmist states those that love God’s truths have abundant peace and nothing makes them stumble. We belong to a kingdom not subject to the circumstances of this world. How can abundant, unshakable peace be a testimony for Christ and not come across as complacent in a world with growing turmoil? Look at Psalm 119:166 again; how does waiting relate to peace?
4. One of the meanings of the Hebrew letter *shin* is fire. The above passage describes God as a “consuming fire.” He deals with sin. The Hebrew sacrifices were entirely burned on the altar. The psalmist ends with the acknowledgment that God knows all his ways. How does knowing your ways are in full view of God and that He examines all your paths bring peace and not anxiety?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Unfailing love and truth have met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed! Ps. 85:10 In the garden, righteousness and peace walked hand in hand until separated by sin. There was no peace until righteousness could be satisfied. At the cross, perfect righteousness came together with peace again. How does this divine kiss give you confidence when you face the truth of your sin? How does it bring peace when the enemy reminds you of how you have fallen short?



Participant Guide for Feb 7, 2021

Worship

Ps 119:169-176

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Highlight each of the different ways the Psalmist ends up worshipping God in this passage.

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. The Psalmist makes requests of God, “according to his word.” When we make requests of God, are we asking based on our desires or “according to his word.” How can we read the Bible in a way that changes what we ask for?
2. The Psalmist’s cries of worship in 171 and 172 are brought about by God’s commands and promises. When you come in on a Sunday morning, are you worshipping God for his commands, or are you looking for an emotional experience? How can we better focus on God’s commands instead of our own subjective experience?
3. The Psalmist’s reason for praising God in 175 is because God “lets him live.” He is offering full worship for just the mercy of life. Think back on your week. Did you praise God for your life? How can our time in the Bible remind us to be thankful in our worship? (cite specific verses)
4. One of the longest chapters in the Bible culminates in a call to worship. Is your time in the Bible leading you to worship? Is your time in connect group leading you to worship? When you hear the sermon does it cause you to worship? Why do we often confine the idea of worship to music and emotion? How can we hold each other accountable to break this perception and follow the example of the Psalmist?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ How can you worship God as you read the Bible throughout the week? Write down specific readings that cause you to worship God for his commandments and promises this week and share them with your group.

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