

Subject: *A Clean Life in a Dirty World*

Scripture: *Psalm 119:9-16*

Psalm 119 stands alone for several reasons:

It is the longest chapter in the Bible.

It is an alphabetical psalm. Each of the 22 sections begins with a different Hebrew letter. God revealed Himself in human flesh and He communicates to us in human language. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Greek.

It is a personal psalm. The writer refers to himself 325 times.

It is a collection of prayers and meditations. Aside from verses 1-3, all other verses are in the form of a prayer or devotional thought. The writer makes about 70 prayer requests.

It is a psalm that comes out of personal suffering. The writer mentions suffering or one kind or another in 65 verses.

It is a psalm of someone who is struggling to do God's will. It is the psalm of a pilgrim, someone who realizes this world is not our home. This world system is in fact our enemy.

It is first and foremost a tribute to God's Word. Several words are used to refer to Scripture, many of these in our text:

- 1) Law (*torah*) – used 25 times and denotes direction or instruction. This word usually refers to a body of teaching, usually the books of Genesis-Deuteronomy.
- 2) Word (*dabar*) – used 20 times and is a general term for God's revelation. The Ten Commandments are called "Ten Words" (literal Hebrew reading, Deut. 4:13).
- 3) Sayings (*imrath*) – used 19 times and may be translated as "words, promises."
- 4) Commandments (*mitswah*) – used 21 times in the plural and once in the singular. It has the idea of a clear, definite, authoritative command.
- 5) Statutes (*huqqim*) – used 21 times and means "things inscribed or engraved." It denotes the permanent, fixed, unchangeable nature of God's Word.
- 6) Judgments (*mishpot*) – used 19 times in the plural and 4 times in the singular. It stands for a legal decision or a ruling from the bench that establishes a precedent.
- 7) Precepts (*piqqudim*) – used 21 times and has the idea of taking charge. It refers to God's edicts, mandates or requirements.
- 8) Testimonies (*edoth*) – used 22 times in the plural and once in the singular. It refers to the solemn declarations of God's standard for human behavior.
- 9) Ways (*derek*) – used 5 times in the plural and 6 times in the singular to refer to the pattern of life marked out by God's Word.

10) Paths (*orah*) – used five times and is similar to “ways.”

HOW TO HAVE A CLEAN LIFE IN A DIRTY WORLD

The problem we face (vs. 9)

This is a special challenge for youth, but also a real challenge for all ages. It has always been a challenge for God’s people to live pure lives in this filthy world. It was hard for Noah, for Daniel, for Paul and the apostles. This world is not our home and it is not our friend. Jesus knows how hard it is to have a pure life in a sinful world because He came into this world. He prayed for believers to be clean and this is how He prayed:

- **John 17:17** *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

The priority we must have (vs. 10)

Seeking God through His Word will prevent us from straying. If you are seeking Him, you won’t be straying from Him. That’s a simple, but powerful principle.

- **Galatians 5:16** *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*

The psalmist realizes his natural tendency is away from God and not toward him (Isa. 53:6). The hymn writer understood this: “Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love. Here’s my heart, Lord, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts above.” To overcome sin we must seek God with our “whole heart,” a phrase that is found six times (vs. 2, 10, 34, 58, 69, 145).

The place where the battle is won (vs. 11)

The battleground is in our heart. Sin is anything that is contrary to God’s character and will.

- **Proverbs 4:20-23** ²⁰ *My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.* ²¹ *Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.* ²² *For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.* ²³ *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

The personal response that we need (vs. 12-16)

- **We need to learn God’s Word (vs. 12)**

We are not all Bible scholars, but we are Bible students.

- **We need to share God’s Word (vs. 13)**

The word “declared” means to share, to tell. (NLT, “recited aloud” and NASB, “told”)

- **We need to treasure God’s Word (vs. 14)**

(Ps. 19:10; 119:72, 127, 162; Pr. 8:10-11)

- We need to meditate on God's Word (vs. 15)

(Ps. 119:23, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148). The purpose of meditation is not to clear the mind, but to fill it with God's truth.

Psalms 1:1-3 ¹ *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.* ² *But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.* ³ *And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

- We need to remember God's Word (vs. 16)

(Ps. 119:93, 176)

John MacArthur said: "The greatest failure of modern Christianity is not in people's inability to recognize problems—the failure is when they look to human wisdom for the answers because they don't understand God's Word enough to trust it."

Chuck Swindoll wrote: "If I could have only one wish for God's people, it would be that all of us would return to the Word of God, that we would realize once for all that His Book has the answers. The Bible is the authority, the final resting place of our cares, our worries, our griefs, our tragedies, our sorrows, and our surprises."