

PSALM 119:169-176
(Taw)

Pg. 656

- 169) Let my cry come before You
O Lord; Give me understanding
according to Your Word.
- 170) Let my supplication come before You;
Deliver me according to Your word.
- 171) Let my lips utter praise, For You
teach me Your statutes.
- 172) Let my tongue sing of Your word,
For all Your commandments are
righteousness.
- 173) Let Your hand be ready to help me,
for I have chosen Your precepts.
- 174) I long for Your salvation, O Lord,
And Your law is my delight.
- 175) Let my soul live that it may praise
You, and let Your ordinances help me.
- 176) I have gone astray like a lost sheep;
seek Your servant, For I do not forget
Your commandments.

We come now to the final section and final letter of Psalm 119. The letter is “t.” This is letter number 22 of the Hebrew alphabet; it is letter number 19 of the Greek alphabet and letter number 20 of the English alphabet.

As we have said multiple times in the course of this Psalm, this Psalm was written for the purpose of magnifying God’s written Word. The Psalm is carefully written in the order of the Hebrew alphabet to stress the importance of systematically studying God’s written Word.

Every section was carefully constructed so that each word that begins each eight verse section starts with the letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which that eight verse section represents. This attention to the structure is certainly that which promotes systematic study of God’s precious written Word.

Now as we have journeyed through this psalm we have seen that the writer was still experiencing some adversity and hardships in life. **Clearly his commitment to the Word of God did not eliminate all the negatives. But his commitment to the Word of God did enable him to cope with all the negatives.**

Now two themes that we have seen stressed in this Psalm are: 1) The writer loved God’s written Word; 2) The writer prayed to God. Those whose themes clearly showed up time and time again. **This was a man dedicated to the Word and this was a man who prayed.**

Those two themes clearly show up in this final section. In fact, what we have here are some final requests that the writer makes to God.

AS PSALM 119 ENDS, THE WRITER POURS OUT HIS HEART TO GOD IN PRAYER AND ONCE AGAIN FOCUSES HIS ATTENTION ON THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT HE HAD STRAYED.

The writer knows this is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which means it is the last section. So in this finale he pours out his heart to God. One commentator says he prays two basic things: **Lord hear me and Lord help me.**

Life is not easy. It is filled with many bumpy spots. Now in this section it would appear to me that the writer had done something wrong. By his own admission he had “gone astray like a lost sheep” (119:176).

So having wandered off the path, he sensed the need to talk to God. He sensed the need to refocus on God’s Word. That is what we all need when we get off track.

God’s people need the written Word of God and God’s people need to pray to God. There are thirteen requests that the writer makes:

REQUEST #1 – The request for God to permit his cry to come before Him. **119:169a**

The word “cry” is a very emotional and fervent appeal to God. Now it is clear that since he had wandered off the path as a lost sheep, he realized the grace that was needed in order for God to even permit his prayer to come before Him.

This writer does not assume that God will automatically hear his prayer. He certainly was not some “name it and claim it” arrogant person in prayer. He realized that for God to permit his emotional appeals to come to His attention was, in fact, a grant of grace.

Just because a person prays emotionally does not automatically mean the prayer moves God. It may not go any higher than the ceiling. This writer approached God with a contrite and humble spirit.

REQUEST #2 – The request for God to give understanding of His Word. **119:169b**

It is something we have seen many times in this Psalm, this writer had a deep passion to understand God’s written Word and he continually asked God to let him understand His Word. When we stray this is what we need to do. We need to refocus on the written Scriptures.

REQUEST #3 – The request for God to permit his supplication to come before Him. **119:170a**

There is real humility in this verse again because the writer assumes that the final decision concerning any prayer belongs to God. The fact that God would actually permit a prayer to come before Him for consideration is an amazing grant of the sovereignty of God.

REQUEST #4 – The request for God’s deliverance based on God’s Word. **119:170b**

There are two assumptions the writer makes in this request:

- 1) Deliverance comes from God.
- 2) Deliverance will always be in accordance to God’s written Word.

For example, God’s Word says in Proverbs 28:13 that “He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find mercy.”

So God says if one of my people needs Me to deliver them from their sin or sins, they cannot try to conceal them if they want to experience My mercy, grace and forgiveness.

God is the only One who can grant forgiveness from sin and He will only do so if one is willing to be honest about it. If he confesses it and turns from it, He will grant his deliverance. Deliverance from anything is always based on God's Word.

REQUEST #5 – The request for God to permit his lips to utter praise. **119:171a**

This is one powerful verse. The writer believed that the ability to praise God in an acceptable way demanded the permission of God. In other words, the ability to praise something, God, Himself, must grant. Even though he had gone astray, he did believe it was possible to get back on track so that he was offering praise to God.

REQUEST #6 – The request for God to teach his statutes. **119:171b**

True praise is consistent with God's Word and in order to understand God's Word one must be taught God's Word.

I can personally relate to this. Back in 1977, I began asking God to let me understand His Word. What God did was lead me to a place where I could be taught God's Word. So the process was when I prayed that God would teach me His Word was that He led me, through a recommendation of my brother, to a place I could learn it.

I believe when people pray and ask God to help them learn His Word, He will lead them to a place where they can learn it. This church is one such place that works in harmony with that request.

REQUEST #7 – The request to let his tongue sing of God's Word. **119:172**

Now we get a critical glimpse of what real praise singing actually is. It is music that is sung that is based on an accurate understanding of God's written Word.

There is a thing called Billboard Hot Christian Songs. When you look up the top songs, it is obvious they are not written to sing about God's Word. In fact, some of them present ideas actually contrary to God's Word. There is much that is emotional and very little that is Biblical.

But what we do see here is that even when one has strayed, it is possible for them to sing again.

REQUEST #8 – The request for God's hand to always be ready to help. **119:173**

The hand of God is often used as a metaphor for the action of God or what God does. When he prays for God's hand to always be ready to help, he is asking God to always be willing to take action concerning his situation.

He is asking God to step into His world Personally and help him and direct him and protect him and to even punish those wicked (Ps. 32:4; 139:10).

Now carefully notice the last part of the verse, the basis for him believing that God would help him was because he had dedicated himself to obeying God's Word.

If we want God's intervention, we had better be very serious about God's Word. God can and will come to the aid of His people when they cry out to Him for help, but they must be willing to commit themselves to His Word.

REQUEST #9 – The request concerning his longing. **119:174a**

This is more of a statement than a request. But there is no question that he longed for God's salvation. He longed for God's deliverance. That word "long" is one that means to carefully mark out something and desire it (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 854).

This writer was focused on God and on the fact that God was the One who could save him and deliver him. He did not focus his attention on the enemy; he focused his attention on God.

REQUEST #10 – The request concerning his delight. **119:174b**

The writer is very clear that he found his greatest delight in the Word of God. Specifically, he found it in the law of God.

Now we know from the final verse that he had wandered off the path as a lost sheep. That law would show him that. But that law would also point to grace found in those sacrifices. He did not find the O.T. law boring or tedious or irrelevant; he delighted in it.

REQUEST #11 – The request concerning his soul living. **119:175a**

We suspect that the sin that had been committed was such that it could bring about death. So the writer appeals to God to let him live. If nothing else, when we sin our soul goes dry and our relationship with God is dead. This writer appealed to God to let his soul come alive again.

REQUEST #12 – The request concerning God's written ordinances helping him. **119:175b**

I find this fascinating. He asks God to let His Word help him. You see, there is a big difference between just reading the Bible and actually having the Bible help you. In order for that to happen, God must grant it.

REQUEST #13 – The request for God to seek him as a lost sheep. **119:176**

This writer was a true servant of God who had wandered astray like a lost sheep. The truth is all we like sheep have gone astray. We have all turned to our own way multiple times.

Now it is clear from this verse that when this writer went astray he did not forget God's Word. He knew that God was a gracious and merciful God who would come to the rescue of a sheep who admitted he wandered off the path.

He not only wanted God to find him, but he wanted God to use him as a servant again. So this writer did what the Word told him to do, he went straight to God and asked for His help.