

Subject: *Captivated by God's Word*

Scripture: *Psalm 119:161-168*

This great chapter tells us about the sufficiency of Scripture. During the Reformation in the 1500s some godly men preached and wrote about these five pillars of truth:

- *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture Alone)
- *Sola Gratia* (Grace Alone)
- *Sola Fide* (Faith Alone)
- *Solus Christus* (Christ Alone)
- *Soli Deo Gloria* (For the Glory of God Alone)

The Reformers and those who followed them were captivated by God's Word. The Bible is our greatest possession and it should be our great obsession. In the introduction to his *MacArthur Study Bible*, John MacArthur writes about the time and effort that went into that project: "I have always been committed to the Scripture as inspired, inerrant, infallible, sufficient, and eternal. After this enterprise I have been profoundly enriched in my own life, as never before, because of the sheer force of so much divine truth pouring through me daily. For many months I spent eight or more hours every day working in the Word, not so much because I had to, but because I could not leave the text—its riches held me captive."

Our respect for God's Word (vs. 161)

We stand in awe of Scripture just as we stand in awe of God Himself. One of the names for Scripture is "the fear of God" because the Word causes us to fear Him (Ps. 19:9).

Our rejoicing in God's Word (vs. 162)

Nothing can give us more joy than the Word of God. There is nothing more valuable, nothing more precious. **Proverbs 23:23** *Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.*

Psalms 112:1 *Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.*

The prophet Habakkuk spoke of His joy in the Lord. **Habakkuk 3:17-18**¹⁷ *Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:*¹⁸ *Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*

Our reliance upon God's Word (vs. 163)

A person who is committed to the Word will be disgusted with deception, hypocrisy, and all forms of falsehood. **Psalms 119:29-30**²⁹ *Remove from me the way of lying; and grant me thy law graciously.*³⁰ *I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.*

Psalms 119:128 *Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.*

Our righteousness through God's Word (vs. 164)

Seven may be taken literally or in the sense of perfection or completion. The writer has a constant attitude of praise for the Word because he learns that God is righteous and he learns how to be right and walk right with God. **Micah 6:8** *He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* The Bible defines the righteousness of God, the faulty self-righteousness of proud men, the imputed righteousness of Christ given to sinners by His grace, and the practical righteousness that God works in and through our lives.

Our rest in God's Word (vs. 165)

The Word gives peace and keeps us from stumbling because it reminds us of God's unchanging attributes and His unfailing purpose. **Isaiah 26:3** *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.* Someone observed that if we go without God's Word for a day, God knows it. If we go without it a few days, then we begin to realize it. And if we go without it for many days, others start to notice it.

There are those unexpected times when you need to draw on God's peace. When I heard about David's truck accident on December 19, a verse from the Book of Job came to mind and I was able to rest in that. **Job 1:21** *the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.* I had peace in knowing that God was in control.

Our responsibility to God's Word (vs. 166-168)

If we are committed to obey God's Word we must be committed to learn it. We cannot do it unless we first know it. The writer keeps the Word because he wants to, not because he has to. He truly loves God's Word (vs. 163, 165, 167). He is driven by desire rather than duty. He is motivated to obedience because he knows God is watching and evaluating his life. Verse 168 is a powerful statement about our personal accountability to God. All of our ways are before Him. Psalm 139 says that God knows when we rise up and when we sit down and He is acquainted with all our ways. He knows our words even before we speak them. **Proverbs 15:3** *The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.* **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**¹³ *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*¹⁴ *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

This writer had only a part of God's Word. We have the Old and New Testament from Genesis to Revelation. He had some of the Old Testament. The important thing was he believed and obeyed the part he had. How much more should we believe and obey God? With a greater amount of truth comes a greater responsibility.

We need a firm grip on God's Word. We must read it, study it, memorize it, meditate on it, and apply it. And, best of all, as we get a firm grip on the Word we find it has a firm grip on us.