

The Disciplines of a Godly Life: Meditation EZRA: The Prayers of a Word Filled Life

Jesus said some words that if understood lead to the most fruitful, joyful, and powerful spiritual walk there can be – this side of Heaven.

Yet His words often scare us. We think He must have meant something other than what He said, right? What verses do I mean? These. Listen to Jesus speak about prayer:

1. Matthew 18:19 “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning ***anything that they ask, it will be done for them*** by My Father in heaven.
2. Matthew 21:22 And ***whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.***”
3. Luke 11:9 “So I say to you, ***ask, and it will be given to you***; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
4. John 14:14 ***If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.***
5. John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, ***that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.***
6. John 16:23-24 “And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, ***whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.*** 24 Until now you have asked nothing in My name. ***Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.***
7. 1 John 5:14-15 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, ***that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*** 15 And if we know that He hears us, ***whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.***

Whew, that sure sounds too good to be true, right? So we know it, think about it, don't understand it – and don't do what He says. That is because of one qualification that keeps coming up by many different expressions like – “...in His will”, “...that obeys...”, and “...keeps His Word”.

To solve this great mystery, and to unleash some of the greatest prayers of your life, please turn to those words He spoke to them back then, and to us today. They are in John 15.7. Please listen as we read them.

- John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and **my words abide in you**, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. The King James Version
- John 15:7 “If you abide in Me, and **My words abide in you**, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. The New American Standard Bible
- John 15:7 If you remain in me and **my words remain in you**, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. The New International Version
- John 15:7 If you abide in Me, and **My words abide in you**, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. The New King James Version
- John 15:7 But if you stay joined to me and **my words remain in you**, you may ask any request you like, and it will be granted! The New Living Translation
- John 15:7-8 But if you make yourselves at home with me and **my words are at home in you**, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. This is how my Father shows who he is— when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples. The Message

The key to unleashing prayers that God always answers is to have them flowing from a Word Filled Life!

Prayer

Jesus wants us to have room for His Word.

Jesus spoke His Word -- to stay with us, live with us, walk with us, talk to us, meet with us, travel with us.

Jesus spoke His Word – to fill our hearts, fill our minds, fill our days and our ways.

Jesus spoke His Word – so we could choose to have what I like to call “The Word Filled Life”.

- What do prayers look like that flow from a Word filled life?
- When the Word of Christ is richly dwelling in us as Paul writes about – what happens to your prayer life?
- When His Words abide in us and we abide in His Word – what comes out of our life in the form of prayers?

That is what we will see this morning as we open our hearts to Psalm 119.

The prayers that flow from a Word filled life are: simple, direct, and Biblical. If we seek to pray simple, directly, and Biblically – it will harmonize our prayers to the Lord, His will, His Spirit and we will experience the power of a Word filled life.

Remember Ezra faced a worldly congregation, soaked in all the worldly ways of Babylon and Persia. What was his plan to bring about lasting change in those he served? He started with his own life. He learned to point his heart frequently toward doing God's Will. The final facet of the life of that incredible Old Testament giant Ezra's life we need to study is his prayer life.

The priority of prayer in the Word filled life, is seen in the extensive use of the imperative class¹ of verbs in the Hebrew language, by Ezra. There also also in the beauty of Hebrew language, three different verb forms used in the imperatives of the 119th Psalm: Piel², Hiphil³, and Qal⁴.

48 times with 23 phrases, Ezra cries to the Lord. The secret of his fruitful life was his choice to invite the Lord into every part of his life, and invite Him into every part of his day.

1. Let me not wander (7886): 10
2. **Teach me** (3925): 7; 12; 26; 64; 66; 68; 71; 73; 99; 108;124;135; 171. **[13]**
3. Open me (1540): 18
4. Remove from me (1556): 22.
5. **Make me understand** (995): 27; 34; 73; 95; 100; 104; 125; 130; 144; 169. **[10]**
6. Strengthen me (6965): 28; 38; 62; 106.
7. Take away from me (5493): 29; 102; 115.
8. Grant me graciously (2603): 29; 58; 132
9. Make me go (1869): 35
10. Incline me (5186): 36; 51; 112; 157.
11. Turn away (5674); 37; 39.
12. **Revive me** (2421): 17; 25; 37; 40; 50; 77; 88; 93; 107; 116; 144; 149; 154; 156; 159; 175. **[16]**
13. Help me (5826): 86; 173; 175.
14. Save me (3467): 94; 117; 146.
15. Uphold me (5564): 116.
16. Hold me (5582): 117.
17. Redeem me (6299): 134;

¹ This verb class indicates an order or a command.

² **PIEL** usually expresses an "intensive" or "intentional" action. Qal: "he broke" vs. Piel "he broke to pieces, he smashed". Also the Piel can express a "repeated" or "extended" action. Qal: "he jumped" vs. Piel "he skipped, he hopped". And finally, some intransitive verbs in Qal: "to be strong/ to become great" become transitive in Piel "to strengthen, to fortify/ to make great". This verb form is found 18 times in the imperatives of Psalm 119 verses – 27; 29; 33-39; 73; 94; 125; 133; 135; 144; 146; 169-170.

³ **HIPHIL** usually expresses the "causative" action of Qal. Qal: "he ate, he came, he reigned" vs. Hiphil: "he caused to eat, he fed", "he caused to come, he brought", "he made king, he crowned". Hiphil is also often used to form verbs from nouns and adjectives. Noun or Adjective: "ear/far" in the Hiphil: "to listen (lend an ear)/ to remove oneself, put far away". The form accounts for 13.3% of the verbs parsed. While Qal accounts for 66.7% of all verbs in the Old Testament. This verb form is found 21 times in the imperatives of Psalm 119 verses – 12; 18; 25-26; 28; 37; 40; 64; 66; 88; 107-108; 124; 135; 149; 153-154; 156; 159; 176.

⁴ **QAL** is the most frequently used verb pattern. It expresses the "simple" or "casual" action of the root in the active voice. Examples: he sat, he ate, he went, he rose, he said, he bought. This form accounts for 66.7% of the verbs parsed. This verb form is found 19 times in the imperatives of Psalm 119 verses – 17; 22; 29; 49; 58; 86; 108; 115-117; 122; 124; 132; 145; 149; 153-154; 159.

18. Shine on me (215): 130; 135.
19. Deliver me (2502): 154.
20. Hear me (6030): 145.
21. Consider me (7200): 153; 159.
22. Come upon me (935): 41; 77; 170.
23. Seek me (1245): 176

Now let's examine these in order of Ezra's use. The top three prayers of Ezra are: quicken or revive me, teach me, and give me understanding. In that order let's listen to his prayers and learn from him the power and joys of a Word filled life!

1. **Revive me** (impv-# 2421: to preserve alive, let live; to give life; to quicken, revive, refresh; to restore to life; to cause to grow) Psalm 119:37 Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, And **revive me in Your way.** Psalm 119:40 Behold, I long for Your precepts; **Revive me in Your righteousness.** Psalm 119:88 **Revive me according to Your lovingkindness,** So that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth. Psalm 119:107 I am afflicted very much; **Revive me, O Lord, according to Your word.** Psalm 119:149 Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness; O Lord, **revive me according to Your justice.** Psalm 119:154 Plead my cause and redeem me; **Revive me according to Your word.** Psalm 119:156 Great are Your tender mercies, O Lord; **Revive me according to Your judgments.** Psalm 119:159 Consider how I love Your precepts; **Revive me, O Lord, according to Your lovingkindness.**
2. **Teach me** (impv-#3925 lamad: teach, learn, instruct, diligently, expert, skilful, teachers): Psalm 119:12 Blessed are You, O Lord! **Teach me** Your statutes. Psalm 119:26 I have declared my ways, and You answered me; **Teach me** Your statutes. Psalm 119:33 **Teach me,** O Lord, the way of Your statutes, And I shall keep it to the end. Psalm 119:66 **Teach me** good judgment and knowledge, For I believe Your commandments. Psalm 119:68 You are good, and do good; Teach me Your statutes. Psalm 119:108 Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord, And teach me Your judgments. Psalm 119:124 Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy, And teach me Your statutes. Psalm 119:135 Make Your face shine upon Your servant, And teach me Your statutes.
3. **Make me understand** (#995 biyn: cause me to -- understand, consider, be prudent, perceive, regard, discern, be instructed): Psalm 119:27 **Make me understand the way** of Your precepts; So shall I meditate on Your wonderful works. Psalm 119:34 **Give me understanding,** and I shall keep Your law; Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Psalm 119:125 I am Your servant; **Give me understanding,** That I may know Your testimonies. Psalm 119:144 The righteousness of Your testimonies is everlasting; **Give me understanding,** and I shall live. Psalm 119:169 Let my cry come before You, O Lord; **Give me understanding** according to Your word.

4. **Strengthen me:** (impv-# 6965 quwm: to fulfil; to confirm, ratify, establish, impose) Psalm 119:28 My soul melts from heaviness; **Strengthen me** according to Your word. Psalm 119:38 Establish Your word to Your servant, Who is devoted to fearing You.
5. **Incline me:** (impv-# 5186 natah: to stretch out; to spread out; to turn, incline, influence, bend down, hold out, extend, thrust aside, thrust away) Psalm 119:36 Incline my heart to Your testimonies, And not to covetousness.
6. **Help me** (impv-# 5826 azar: help) Psalm 119:86 All Your commandments are faithful; They persecute me wrongfully; **Help me!**
7. **Save me** (impv-# 3467 yasha: to save, deliver; to save from moral troubles; to give victory to) Psalm 119:94 I am Yours, **save me**; For I have sought Your precepts. Psalm 119:146 I cry out to You; **Save me**, and I will keep Your testimonies.
8. **Grant me graciously** (impv-#2623 chanan: to show favour, be gracious): Psalm 119:29 Remove from me the way of lying, And **grant me Your law graciously**. Psalm 119:58 I entreated Your favor with my whole heart; **Be merciful to me** according to Your word. Psalm 119:132 Look upon me and **be merciful to me**, As Your custom is toward those who love Your name.
9. **Remove from me** (impv-# 1556 galal: to roll, roll away, roll down, roll together, flow): Psalm 119:22 Remove from me reproach and contempt, For I have kept Your testimonies.
10. **Take away from me** (impv-#5493 suwr: to cause to turn aside, cause to depart, remove, take away, put away, depose; to put aside, leave undone, retract, reject, abolish): Psalm 119:29 **Remove from me** the way of lying, And grant me Your law graciously.
11. **Come upon me** (# 935 bow: to enter, come in; to come with; to come upon, fall or light upon, to attain to) Psalm 119:41 **Let Your mercies come** also to me, O Lord— Your salvation according to Your word. Psalm 119:77 **Let Your tender mercies come** to me, that I may live; For Your law is my delight. Psalm 119:170 **Let my supplication come before** You; Deliver me according to Your word.
12. **Consider me** (impv- # 7200 rawah: to see, perceive; to look at, regard, look after, see after, learn about, observe, watch, look upon, look out, find out; consider, give attention to, discern, distinguish; to gaze at) Psalm 119:153 **Consider my affliction** and deliver me, For I do not forget Your law. Psalm 119:159 **Consider how I love** Your precepts; Revive me, O Lord, according to Your lovingkindness.
13. **Shine on me** (impv- # 215 owr: to give light, to illumine, light up, cause to shine, shine; to kindle, light, lighten (of the eyes, his law, etc) Psalm 119:135 Make Your face shine upon Your servant, And teach me Your statutes.

14. **Make me go:** (impv-# 1869 darak: to cause to go, lead, march, tread)
Psalm 119:35 Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it.
15. **Turn me away** (#5674 abar: to cause to pass over, cause to bring over, cause to cross over, make over to, dedicate, devote; to cause to pass through; to cause to pass by or beyond or under, let pass by; to cause to pass away, cause to take away):
Psalm 119:37 **Turn away my eyes** from looking at worthless things, And revive me in Your way. Psalm 119:39 **Turn away my reproach** which I dread, For Your judgments are good.
16. **Uphold me** (impv-# 5564 sawmak: to lean or lay upon, rest upon, lean against; to support, uphold, sustain) Psalm 119:116 Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live; And do not let me be ashamed of my hope.
17. **Hold me up** (impv-# 5582 sawad: to support, sustain, stay, establish, strengthen, comfort; to support, sustain; to sustain) Psalm 119:117 Hold me up, and I shall be safe, And I shall observe Your statutes continually. .
18. **Redeem me** (impv- # 6299 padah: redeem, deliver, ransom, rescued) Psalm 119:134 Redeem me from the oppression of man, That I may keep Your precepts.
19. **Deliver me** (impv- # 2502 chalats: to remove, draw out, draw off, take off, withdraw, equip (for war), arm for war, rescue, be rescued) Psalm 119:154 Plead my cause and **redeem me**; Revive me according to Your word.
20. **Hear me** (impv- # 6030 anah: to answer, respond to; to testify, respond as a witness) Psalm 119:145 I cry out with my whole heart; **Hear me**, O Lord! I will keep Your statutes.
21. **Seek me** (impv-# 1245 baqah: to seek to find, to seek to secure; to seek the face; to desire, demand; to require, exact; to ask, request) Psalm 119:176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; **Seek Your servant**, For I do not forget Your commandments.
22. **Let me not wander** (#7886 shagah: led astray morally; misled mentally): Psalm 119:10 With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, **let me not wander** from Your commandments!
23. **Open me** (impv-# 1540 galah: to uncover; to disclose, discover, lay bare; to make known, show, reveal) Psalm 119:18 Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.

So how do we adopt Ezra's strategy? Here are so elements to practice getting alone with God.

1. **START WITH HIM:** Try to spend at least 12 minutes each day in reading God's Word and seeking to find one truth to hold on to all day long.
2. **SPEAK WITH HIM:** From that time alone with God, think through your entire day. Ask HIM what would be the best use of your life for this day.
3. **STOP WITH HIM:** Try to also get in the habit of a weekly time of evaluation. Just a half hour reflecting on where you are, and where you are headed in life and ministry.
4. **STAY WITH HIM:** Finally, try one time of strategic planning each month, to truly reflect on life for a couple of hours. Take a spiritual retreat. Sit with a pad of paper, your calendar, and an open Bible. List your priorities for the next month. Pray over them, change them, decide upon them and then do them!