

Women's Bible Study

Psalm 119:166-168

Ps 119:166-168 I hope for Thy salvation, O LORD, and do Thy commandments. 167 My soul keeps Thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly. 168 I keep Thy precepts and Thy testimonies, for all my ways are before Thee.

Look back a few verses in Psalm 119. David loves God's word (v.163); this leads him to praise God (v.164); which produces peace through difficulties and no worries that he might stumble (v.165). There is hope and strength in God to keep going in a way that glorifies Him!

What is hope? It is the expectation that something will happen. Hope in the world is based on chance, like wishing for something. We can be optimistic and full of hope that something will turn out well but there are no guarantees. Hope in the biblical sense is absolute when placed in the hands of God. Hope is certain confidence in God!

How do we get hope? By faith – believing that God is who He says He is and will do what He claims. True faith is trusting in God's plan alone for the future. Years ago I had a sign in my kitchen that said, "I placed all my eggs in one basket and gave the basket to God". This is contrary to the world in which diversity is encouraged. Diversity is the idea that if one area fails you haven't lost everything, there is still a chance for success in other areas.

The world doesn't know God! God will not fail. Our best investment for our future is to place all our hope in God's plan. This is the hope our Psalmist is speaking of in Psalm 119:166.

What does our Psalmist hope for? Salvation. God's deliverance, His aid, His victory, His prosperity. In other words, all things that are good and for my welfare come from God. We can have hope for now – that God will continually guide and help us – and for the future of our salvation.

Re 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.

Ps 130:5-7 I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope. 6 My soul [waits] for the Lord More than the watchmen for the morning; [Indeed, more than] the watchmen for the morning. 7 O Israel, hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is lovingkindness, And with Him is abundant redemption.

What action is taken while hope is deferred? Obedience. The Psalmist says he follows God's commandments.

Matthew Poole's Commentary says, "Thus performing the condition which thou hast required, I justly and confidently hope for thy mercy promised".

Ps 4:5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and trust in the LORD.

Ps 24:3-5 Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood, and has not sworn deceitfully. 5 He shall receive a blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

First, we must have faith. Then we have certain hope of God's salvation as we obey His commands. The gift of God's salvation produces a desire to please Him and follow His

words. As we consistently seek to do God's will, we are assured of our relationship with Him – obedience is evidence of our certain salvation.

“This is the true posture in which all the servants of God should desire to be found -- hoping in his mercy, and doing his commands. How easy were it to demonstrate the connection between the mental feeling here recognized, and the obedience with which it is here associated! It is the hope of salvation which is the great and pervading motive to holiness, and it is the consciousness of obedience to the will of God which strengthens our hope of interest in the divine mercy.” --*John Morison, in The Treasury of David*

Where is your hope? Are you absolutely certain of your salvation in Christ? Are you living in obedience to His commands?

Moving on to the next verse in our group, we are caused to look carefully at the description the Psalmist uses of himself in keeping God's commands.

Ps 119:167 My soul keeps Thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly.

My soul – that very part of us that makes us a being; our body, our heart, and our mind.

In other words, my spirit is in accordance with God's plan. My desire lines up with God's commands. If I obey in action but my thoughts and words are not supportive, I am a hypocrite. If I think right without taking action, I have not witnessed for God. If I use the words that sound pleasing to God but have no evidence in my life, my words are empty.

Picture the ingredients to make brownies on the kitchen counter. All items needed to make something gooey and delicious are available in separate bowls ready to work together. If I leave something out while mixing, the brownies will not be as yummy as they could be. Each part needs to be included to make the whole recipe complete. Also recognize that unless I make some effort to use the ingredients, they will remain on the counter and not be transformed.

When David says his soul keeps God's testimonies, he is saying in effect that he is completely saturated in his desire to obey God. There is nothing he is holding back, and nothing he has kept out. He is immersed in God's love.

Consider for a moment all the wonderful pleasures God has allowed in your life. Family, friends, a place to live, activities, involvement, and on and on. These blessings are for us to enjoy, however none of these things is more important than obeying God's word. Is obedience to His commands first in your life?

Joh 15:9-11 “Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.¹⁰ “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.¹¹ “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and [that] your joy may be made full.

We keep God's testimonies because we love them! In Psalm 119:167, David says he loves God's testimonies exceedingly. Our failures and imperfections are not the measure of our love for God. It is our soul, our desire to follow after all His commands, and our sincere efforts to live a life pleasing to Him in obedience.

“Let not our consciousness of daily failures make us shrink from this strong expression of confidence. It is alleged as an evidence of grace, not as a claim of merit, and therefore the most humble believer need not hesitate to adopt it as the expression of Christian sincerity before God. David aspired to no higher character than that of a poor sinner: but he was conscious of spirituality of obedience, “exceeding love” to the divine word, and an habitual walk under the eye of his God -- the evidences of a heart (often mentioned in the Old Testament) perfect with him.” --*Charles Bridges, in The Treasury of David*

In Psalm 119:167 we read that David loves God's testimonies exceedingly. Think of the words intense, vehement and diligent. These three words are included in the Hebrew adjective describing this word. Consider something or someone that you love with such strength and energy that you know your love will persevere regardless of difficulties. This is the love described for us that David has toward God's testimonies. His love for God is extreme and it shows in his life. **What consideration can we make for ourselves from this example?**

Moving on the Psalm 119:168, we read:

Ps 119:168 I keep Thy precepts and Thy testimonies, for all my ways are before Thee.

We have looked closely at the word keep several times beforehand in our study of Psalm 119. The definition of keep means to protect. The picture given is a hedge with thorns preserving what is valuable. We are to take utmost care to preserve God's truth in its entirety. Our understanding of God's commands and our representation of God's commands speak of our carefulness to uphold the Word.

As we have moved through this section of scripture, we have seen the Psalmists confidence in God's Word, his obedience toward God's Word and now his careful attention to follow God's Word. When you consider paying careful attention to something, it requires intent study, effort, and understanding. This certainly would work to David's benefit but more important is his love for God and desire to honor Him.

"For all my ways are before Thee". God sees all that we do and understands our motivation. God is omniscient. Every area of our life is known by Him. We need to pay attention that each decision we make, and every word we say or think, is in accordance with honoring God.

Picture a closet in your home. The areas we see may look organized and picked up. What about the corners, the areas way in the back recesses where things get stashed or are rarely used? It is easier to address what is directly in front of us. But those things that are hidden we can readily ignore. God sees all. **Is it time for a thorough closet cleaning?**

Pr 5:21 For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He watches all his paths.

Ps 139:3 Thou dost scrutinize my path and my lying down, and art intimately acquainted with all my ways.

Jer 23:24 "Can a man hide himself in hiding places, so I do not see him?" declares the LORD. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the LORD.

God sees our heart. **Do we live accordingly? Does the certainty of our salvation cause us to rejoice in doing all that God commands? Does our love for God lead us to obey His Word? Does our understanding of God's omniscience motivate us to carefully honor Him in all things?**

Be encouraged! God knows we are unable to live effectively for Him on our own. As we call upon His strength and grace, we are able to honor Him with our lives.

2Th 2:16-17 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.