

Women's Bible Study

Psalm 119:175-176

Word by word, line by line and we've come to the last two verses of Psalm 119! This study of understanding God's gift to us through His written commands has caused my heart to grow in its praise for our Lord and Savior. The value contained in the Bible written by hands, directed by God, is immeasurable. These last two verses in the Psalm end with a praise, a request, and a determination.

Psalm 119:175 Let my soul live that it may praise Thee, and let Thine ordinances help me.

My soul is what makes me, me! It is that very part of me that only God can access, It is the inner most recesses of my heart, The soul is not found in anatomy books, its location is known only to God, it is His to change, to direct and to own. It is God who initiates the love that causes our conversion to trust in Him; it is God who has the authority to place us exactly where He desires; and it is God who possesses our soul to use our lives for His glory. The request of David to let his soul live is directed to the only One who is able to do so. The Psalmist understands that this most precious part of him that defines his spiritual awakening belongs to God.

What do you think? When we believe these truths with our whole heart, we will more likely desire His leading, and plan and move forward even in difficulty. The question of 'why is this happening?' is not where we will linger. Instead it will be a question of 'what would You have me to do?'

What does David request in Psalm 119:175? – let my soul live.

Remember the setting which David is writing. He repeatedly asks for God's mercies and protection as his life is threatened. David suffers because others hate what he believes and what he stands for. Truth is always a threat to those who follow their own selfish ambitions.

Romans 1:18-20 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

David represents truth and because of that, his life is in danger.

At one point, the Psalmist also has the hand of God disciplining him for sin in his own life, for choosing to follow worldly lusts rather than keeping his eyes on God.

Psalm 119:75 I know, O LORD, that Thy judgments are righteous, And that in faithfulness Thou hast afflicted me.

The Psalmist has experienced God's protection and God's judgement. He has learned to cry for help and forgiveness. He realizes he deserves neither yet he also knows God's great love for him.

A familiar section of scripture comes to mind.

Ephesians 2:1-5 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Consider this: the very fact that you are able to understand scripture – not as a grammatical exercise but as a life-changing manual of love from God – is because God has reached down into your

soul and claimed it for Himself, because He loves you! Ponder this truth for a moment. It should move you to an overwhelming sense of thankfulness and awe for God's power and presence in your life.

What does it mean to live? It is opposite of death. As a child of God, a believer who has placed their trust completely in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, to live is to be made alive again. To be revived, to be preserved, to be saved and made whole in Christ. Our need to be saved from the power of sin and death has been fully met in Christ.

Why does the Psalmist pray to let his soul live? That it may praise God! Our soul is designed to be with God in heaven. **Is your soul filled with praise for God who alone makes this possible? Whom do you speak of, whom do you boast about, and whom do you celebrate?**

Psalm 34:2 My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; the humble shall hear it and rejoice.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; ²⁴ but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD.

We are saved to praise! Our desire as we live on this earth should be to praise God. When we are called to heaven, we will praise God. It's not about us – it is about God's glory. **How are you praising God with your life? Do you freely speak of Him? Where do you spend the time He has given you? Are you quick to serve others as an opportunity to show your praise to God? Is His praise the goal of your pursuits? Are you light in a world of darkness? Are you aiming to fulfill *your* desires or to **fulfill the desires God has for you?****

There are things we all enjoy. Each of us has been given unique likes and dislikes, dreams, abilities and opportunities. All of this is good – as long as my pursuit of them does not diminish my obedience and desire to serve God. **How are you doing in this area? Are you willing to pray that God will even remove the desires you have so that your focus and pursuit is more completely on Him?**

Our example in David is that he asks God to protect his soul and to comfort his soul – so that he can praise God.

"Let my soul live. Fill it full of life, preserve it from wandering into the ways of death, give it to enjoy the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, let it live to the fulness of life, to the utmost possibilities of its new created being." *Treasury of David*

How does David determine to praise God? Through the power of His word: **"And let Thine ordinances help me."**

All of God's word collectively – His judgments, His commands, His blessings – every aspect of God's word is to be used to help us live in a manner that brings glory to His name.

David can personally testify to God's protection, His guidance, His care, His discipline, His promises, His unwavering love, His forgiveness, His strength, His mercies, His grace, His peace, and His comfort. Each of us are able to do the same! God is David's hope presently and for the future. Each of us is able to have the same hope!

Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to [His] purpose.

2Corinthians 4:17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

1Peter 1:3-9 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

from the dead, ⁴ to [obtain] an inheritance [which is] imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷ that the proof of your faith, [being] more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ⁸ and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

God's judgments – the fact that He is in control, sees things exactly as they are, and will right all wrong in His time – comfort and help us in time of affliction. We can be secure in our direction as we seek to follow Him in all righteousness and we can be assured that God will tend to those who are against Him. God's word is an encouragement to those who seek Him. God has given His children a complete instruction manual on how to live in a way that is honoring to Him. This is not a manual in which we check off a box each time a task is completed. Rather it is a living guide that will continually direct us if we are sincere in our desire to follow God. God will work in our lives as He corrects us and leads us to be conformed to His likeness. Either in death or life, we are to praise God – His glory is our focus.

Is our hope and confidence in God? Is our praise to Him shown in a life of desiring holiness – even when it means denying what the world calls happiness? Think eternal versus momentary.

Psalm 119:176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy servant, for I do not forget Thy commandments.

This is an interesting conclusion to this Psalm. In the previous verse, David was praising God, now he seems to be considering his dire straits. The more we understand our need for God, the more our praise will increase as we recognize His protection and blessings. Consider what it means to hear good news. Typically it is information beneficial to ourselves or others, something that is desirable and has positive effects. The Good News of the gospel shines brighter and brighter when we identify more and more with the bad news of our lost condition.

Truth –

- All humankind is lost in their sin (Ecclesiastes 7:20).
- Sin is anything done against God's commands (1 John 3:4; 5:17).
- Sin is avoiding to do what God says (James 4:17).
- Our thoughts can be sinful (Genesis 6:5).
- Our speech can be sinful (Matthew 15:19).

These are sobering statements. But, the hope we have is great and the writer of Psalm 119, David, never completely forgot who he was and the miraculous gift he'd been given. The beginning of verse 176 above mirrors a familiar verse in Isaiah.

Isaiah 53:6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.

Sheep are largely thought of as unintelligent animals. They tend to panic and are easily preyed upon as they have little ability to defend themselves. Sheep need constant protection. *Adam Clarke's Commentary* says, "A sheep, when it has once lost the flock, strays in such a manner as to render the prospect of its own return utterly hopeless".

Something important to note is the tone of David's words. He knows his tendency is to wander from God, he is in constant battle with his sin nature. Understanding his need for God's direction increases his desire to obey God and seek His protection. It is a scary world out there with opportunities to stumble around each corner!

Paul understood the pull of sin in his life also. Romans 7 beginning with verse 19 says, “For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. (Romans 7:19-23)

Do we have an accurate view of ourselves? Do we see the conflict in our heart? We cannot fight what we do not recognize. A lost soul does not recognize its misery and does not understand its eternal ruin. A graced soul desires God’s hand to hold him secure and pull him back when he wanders.

Throughout this Psalm, David has requested God’s help and protection. He has confessed his sin and he has confessed his love and need for God’s word. David’s heart is full of devotion to God. We see this in his praise for Him and his purpose to obey Him.

David requests for God to “seek Thy servant”. On our own, we would not seek God. It takes God’s hand reaching down to us. God will not leave His children defenseless; He will not allow them to remain lost and without their Shepherd. David knew what it meant to be a shepherd. This is a heartwarming picture of God’s love and tender care and mercies.

Ezekiel 34:12 "As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day.

Matthew 18:12 "What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?

Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

God will look after His children. He will help them to avoid danger. He will restore them to peace. We must make an effort to remember and practice His commands. This effort is more than just awareness. It is more than ‘I’ve been in the Word today’. We cannot claim any portion of our lives for ourselves. All of us belongs to God.

David ends Psalm 119 with his resolve to follow God, **“For I do not forget Thy commandments”**. He’s penned similar words several times over the course of his writing.

- Psalm 119:16, “I shall not forget Thy word”.
- Psalm 119:44, “I will keep Thy law continually”
- Psalm 119:55, we read that David intends to “keep Thy law”.
- Psalm 119:93, “I will never forget Thy precepts”.

The repeated dedication to observing and keeping God’s word speaks of the value it holds to the Psalmist.

“In this humble, prayerful manner this long Psalm closes, and so will the believer's life-story end. Confession mourns a thousand faults, faith sees grace still alive within the soul, and prayer pleads for divine mercy. With such a prayer our earthly life will come to a fitting FINIS.” *Spurgeon Devotional Commentary*

I forget all kinds of things. Often, I am looking for my phone or even the car in a parking lot. I have even momentarily forgotten names of those I’ve known for years. In those cases, I’m largely on my own to remember details. God wants us to remember His commands, therefore He will not leave us alone with our feeble brains to call to mind what His word says – He’s given us His Holy Spirit to help. God knows we are weak. Because of His amazing love for us, He gives us every possible way to succeed in following Him.

Philippians 2:12-13 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for [His] good pleasure.

We have a great and certain hope. In this last verse of Psalm 119, we have a confession of sin, a request for God's help and a renewed commitment to follow Him. In humility we need to come before God seeing and believing in His truths. God has showered His mercy upon us through His Son. He gives us grace to weather any storm and He desires to continually bless His children.

Are we seeking our Savior through God's sanctifying Word or are we determined to satisfy ourselves?

2Corinthians 3:4-5 And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as [coming] from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,

Hebrews 13:20-21 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, [even] Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom [be] the glory forever and ever. Amen.