

Psalm 119:17-24

GIMEL

“Deal bountifully with thy servant, *that* I may live, and keep thy word. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. I *am* a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me. My soul breaketh for the longing *that it hath* unto thy judgments at all times. Thou hast rebuked the proud *that are* cursed, which do err from thy commandments. Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies. Princes also did sit *and* speak against me: *but* thy servant did meditate in thy statutes. Thy testimonies also *are* my delight *and* my counsellors.”

Introduction

“that’s verse 17 in this 119th Psalm, I would remind you again, it is an acrostic in the sense that it is metered to the letters, 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, so there are 22 sections, 8 lines per section, and each line...in your Bible there should be an annotation there, like if you look at the very first verse, right above it, it should say “Eleph” and those first 8 verses all begin with Eleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. From verse 9 down to verse 16 you’ll see it begins, it says “Beth” on top, every letter there begins with Beth, the second letter. We come this evening to Gimel, Nancy Gimel thinks this section is about her, but it isn’t. And every one begins with the Gimel, then Daleth, He, you’ll see as we go through. So, these are the A, B, C’s of the Word of God, they’re written in acrostic form, again, because Hebrew children would memorize this Psalm, all 176 verses. You guys know this, you learned when you were a little kid, ABCDEFG, and it’s still stuck in your head, that’s an acrostic, that’s the way this is. Now you’ll find again, besides the 8 Psalms, other Psalms that are acrostic. Interestingly, in Proverbs chapter 31, verses 10 to 31 is also an acrostic, those 22 verses of the virtuous woman, so those verses were meant to be memorized, by women, about a virtuous woman, they should be memorized by men before they pick a woman. And there are some fascinating combinations of acrostics in the Book of Lamentations, fascinating, they’re arranged differently, but remarkable. This is one of those places where it’s written like that because God wants this in the memory, in the minds and hearts of his people. Again, it’s the longest chapter in the Bible, and it’s about the Bible, very fitting. All of the authors you read say that the theme of this 119th Psalm is the Word of God, I would agree with that, out of 176 verses, 173 specifically mention the Word of God. But out of 176 verses,

all 176 verses mention the God of the Word. So I almost feel the real theme of this Psalm is the God of the Word. Not the God of miracles, though he is that, not the God of power, it's really specifically the God of the Word here, and the Word of God that he gives to us. So, remarkable. Let's begin in verse 1 and we'll read to verse 17 where we are this evening, **"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently."** (verses 1-4) and those first four verses kind of rule this all out, then in verse 5 the Psalmist lifts his head to heaven, and that's where he stays for the rest of the Psalm, he begins by saying there's a blessing on all those with a perfect heart, that keep your Word, that are undefiled, that never do anything, those that are perfect, Lord, and then in verse 5 he lifts his own heart and his own head, and he says **"O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly."** (verses 5-8)

BETH

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word." And in context of that, he's saying, *'LORD, I want to be a man that keeps your Word, I want to do what's right, wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way, this is what needs to happen, this is what I will do,'* so then he says in verse 17 to the LORD, it's a continuation of thought, so

GIMEL

"Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me. My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments. Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.

Princes also did sit *and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes. Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.*” (verses 17-24) So he moves into this next section, GIMEL, and he talks about true delight, a man needs to cleanse his way, he needs to go through these things, so [the author] says **‘Alight LORD, I’m gonna keep your Word, so “deal bountifully,’** notice this, **“with thy servant.”** So he considers himself the servant of the LORD, he doesn’t hesitate at all to say **‘Deal bountifully with me, or be generous with me,’** or literally **‘Deal kindly with me,’** he’s asking the LORD to be gracious, to be bountiful, he says, **“with your servant,”** and here’s why, not because life is a hassle, *‘there’s too many headaches around me, deliver me from all this stuff,’* he says, no, **‘LORD, be generous to me, deal bountifully with thy servant,’** here’s the reason, **“that I may live, and keep thy word.”** **‘That I might live, and keep thy Word, LORD, be gracious to me, deal bountifully with me, LORD, you have to do this, LORD, I’m dependant on you that I might be able to live the kind of life where I keep your Word. LORD, do it, so that might happen.’**

*God Must Open Our Eyes To The Wondrous Things In His
Law—Making Himself More Attractive Than Our Sin*

“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” (verse 18) As he realizes, if God is going to give him his Word, if he’s going to live in the Word, he realizes he needs to be attracted to the Word. I hear people all the time, *‘I don’t know why I’m gettin’ stoned, I don’t know why I’m blowing cocaine up my nose, I hate it!’* Well you don’t hate it, that’s what I used to say before I was saved. Well if I hated it, I was rolling up a dollar bill at a time or a hundred dollar bill at a time, I hated it. So I finally said, *“Lord, I love this more than I love you, I don’t hate this, I love it.”* *“And you’re going to have to reveal something of yourself that makes you so attractive to me, that you’re more attractive to me than this line laying on the table in front of me.”* And he meets you where there’s that kind of honesty. He meets you where there’s that kind of honesty. **“Open thou mine eyes”** literally **‘Uncover them, LORD, let me see something,’** he’s dependant on the LORD, the reason, **“that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” (verse 18)** **‘That I may behold, consider, see wondrous things out of thy law.’** They’re there, there are wondrous things in the Word of God, wondrous things. You know, it’s funny, we’re in Ephesians, we’re in Psalm 119, I come back to passages I’ve studied and I’ve taught before, and I see things I **never** saw before. The depth of it, it’s overwhelming. It’s not like where you get through your chemistry book and you put it down because you’re done with that. No, you never get through with this, and it’s always alive, because it abides forever, it’s intimate in its beauty and its depth and it’s

power. So he says here, ***‘Alright LORD, I want to do this right, I want my way cleansed, I’m going to hold onto your Word, so deal bountifully with me, LORD, that I might live in your Word, and so that I might live in your Word, cause me LORD, make me, cause me to see wondrous things in your Word, let it blow my mind LORD, let it light me up.’*** Because they’re there, they are there, and it’s filled with wondrous things. ***“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”*** (verse 18) we think of the disciples when Jesus was on the road to Emmaus with them, and they said to one another, ***“Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened unto us the Scriptures,”*** their hearts began to burn. They knew the Scripture, they were Jews. But they said, all of a sudden the Scripture was opening to them, the Lord was the one who was doing it, the LORD that the Psalmist is talking to here, same one, ***“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”*** and here he says, because ***“I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.”*** (verses 18-19) ***‘I don’t belong here, I don’t fit in here,’*** you know, there’s great questions we can ask ourselves, *‘Are we comfortable in the environment that we’re in?’* Remember a young man said to Jesus, ***‘look, I’m coming to follow you, let me first go bury my father.’*** He said, ***‘No, let the dead bury the dead, follow me now.’*** Another one said, ***‘I’ll follow you anywhere,’*** and he said, ***‘Look, foxes have their holes, the birds of the air have their nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head,’*** ***‘in other words, the foxes, this is their environment, they’re at home here, they have their holes. The birds of the air, this is their environment, they have their nests, me, you want to follow me, it’s not my world, it’s not where I’m from.’*** The Son of man has nowhere to lay his head, in fact, beautifully, when we finally read the Greek word, where he laid his head, he gave up the ghost, bowed his head, it’s the same word, he finally found a place to lay his head when his work was done. But he says this is not my environment. And the Psalmist is realizing ***‘LORD, I’m not from this world, I don’t fit in here, I’m a stranger, a foreigner, a pilgrim in this earth.’*** One of the translations I read today said, ***‘I’m a resident alien.’*** This is not our home, remember that. You know, there should be something that happened in you when you were first saved that spoiled you for this world. If you go back and try to do the things you used to do before you were saved, you should be miserable. If you’re living in sin, because I love you I pray that you get ulcers, I pray you don’t sleep, I pray you have insomnia, I pray you’re miserable until you get your heart right with Jesus again, because you ain’t from this world, you’re ruined for this world. You’ve been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, it’s relative to another kingdom. So the Psalmist here, remarkably, the Holy Spirit writing through him, putting the quill to the page, says ***“I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.”*** (verse 19)

'LORD, I need your Word from another world, I'm not from this place.'

"I'm Longing For Your Judgments, And For Your Coming Kingdom, LORD, To Fix It All

Then he says, ***"My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times."*** (verse 20) ***'My soul is despairing'*** is the idea, ***'I'm broken-hearted because of this longing within me, LORD, and it's in regards to your judgments at all times.'*** ***'LORD, I go home and I watch the news, and I hear about Ebola, and I think 'Is it gonna spread?'*** ***And Lord, my heart is longing for your judgments, and when you come and set up your Kingdom, and there is no more sickness, there is no more cancer, and all of that is set aside, no more hospitals, no more doctors. Lord, I look at the injustice in the world, people hating, man unable to govern himself and his fellow man, all of the injustice, bigotry, the war, the bloodshed, and Lord I watch it all, and in my heart, all day, all the time my heart is saying, 'Lord, Jesus come, make this all right.'*** I get around people in church that I know and I love, and I see their marriages breaking up, or I see them going back to using drugs again, where I end up doing their funeral, and you say ***'Lord, fix it Lord, come Lord, set up your Kingdom.'*** [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/kingdomofgod/mkg1.htm>] I look at the television and see people mocking Jesus Christ and mocking Christians, threatening the Church [greater Body of Christ], you're not allowed to believe anything anymore. If you believe, if you actually know something you're an oddity. Well we do know something, and we do know Someone, and in our hearts we should be longing ***'Come Lord Jesus.'*** And by the way, that should be an impetus for evangelism, it shouldn't be we're just escapist. I am an escapist, you can be a stayist if you want. I'm an escapist, I want to get outa here. But realizing as I look at the news that Jesus could come at any time, I want to see people saved. I think our church should be involved in all the outreaches that are around us, I think we need to be praying on Sunday nights for a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit in repentance, asking God's forgiveness, asking for another movement of the Spirit in these last days [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophets/Zephaniah/REVIVAL.html>]. And the Psalmist is so honest here, ***'LORD, deal bountifully with me, that I might keep your Word, you know, open my mind so I can see wondrous things out of thy law, because I'm a stranger, I don't fit in here, LORD, you have to give me that. Don't hide your commandments from me, my soul is longing, it's breaking LORD, and all the time it's about your judgments, I know what's right, I know what should happen.'***

Stay Away From People Who Think They're Smarter Than The Bible

“Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments.” (verse 21) I would just tell you this, if you know anybody that’s smarter than the Bible, stay away from them. [laughter] Because that’s what the problem people do, it says here, **‘they do err from the commandments,’** *‘Ya, I know what the Bible says, but, oh ya, that was written a long time ago, but. You must be Puritanical, Victorian, look, we live in a different age,’* you know, I stay away from people that are smarter than the Bible. Because God wrote the Bible, and if they’re smarter than God, I’m scared of them. You know people that are smarter than the Bible? Keep your distance. It says here it’s pride, it says here that God deals with them. **“Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments.” (verse 21)** Verse 22, **“Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies. Princes”** civil authorities **“also did sit and speak against me:”** and boy do we hear it today, don’t we? **“but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes. (verses 22-23)** Notice, he’s the LORD’s servant, not the public servant. **“thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.”** And I think, *‘Lord, I don’t know how good I am at that, when somebody slanders me, somebody speaks against me, or somebody stabs me in the back, I don’t normally think ‘Oh boy, let me go get my Bible now.’* Unless there’s something in your Bible and open it up and take it out. It says here **‘I will meditate in thy statutes, people are stabbing me in the back, slandering me, even at the point of civil authorities, Lord, I’m gonna sit with your Word. It’s gonna tell me that all authority in heaven and earth is given to you. It’s gonna tell me that you set up one man over a kingdom, you take another one down, and sometimes in your wisdom you set up even the basest of men in authority. It’s gonna tell me that not a sparrow falls to the ground without your notice. It’s gonna tell me that you are the Lord of lords, and you are the King of kings, and all, not most, all authority is yours. And you are sovereign over everything that’s happening around us now.’** You think of John on the Isle of Patmos, you think of those Caesars, here we are, Sunday morning we’re studying Ephesians, **‘This is what a marriage should look like, this is what parenting should look like.’** Well go back and look at the context of when those things were being said. There was a government in place that was steamrolling people down like fodder, going through Saxony and through the British Isles, they were slaughtering people, they would destroy Jerusalem within a few years and flatten it. There was such abuse and such power in government at that point, and they just went and slaughtered whoever they wanted, and local magistrates and local

people in authority followed suit with what Caesar was doing, there was no justice, only brutality, and Paul said, ***‘This is how to treat a wife, and this is how a wife should treat a husband, and this what a family should be like,’*** he’s not intimidated by it all going around him. He said ***‘This is truth.’*** You think of John on the Isle of Patmos, banished there, and you think, while he’s there, Christians are being burned at the stake, they’re being set on fire, Nero’s going out to...just different Caesars that would come in, just how terrible it was. And he said ***‘I heard this voice behind me like a trumpet, and I turned around, and behold, One whose eyes, they were a flame of fire, his countenance was like the sun shining in its strength, out of his mouth a huge Thracian double-edged sword, he was girt about with a breastplate of burnished bronze, with gold glowing, his feet looked like they had just come out of the furnace, and his voice like Niagara Falls, like the voice of many waters. And when I saw him, I fell down as a dead man.’*** but also he thought ***‘Caesar ain’t in control. When I saw him, everything got exceedingly clear.’*** And the same One is our Saviour and our Lord, and rules over us. The Psalmist says ***‘Princes, ya, they can sit down, they can speak against me, but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes, and that’s why,’*** ***“Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.” (verse 24)*** Want to delight in the middle of difficult times? You’re gonna find it in his Word. ***“Thy testimonies also are my delight”*** and look, ***“and my counsellors.”*** Man, oh man, we are healthy if that’s true, that God’s testimonies are our counsellors. The testimonies, the records through the Bible of David and Abraham and of Samson and of Daniel and Joseph, and of Paul, you have the testimonies of Scripture, those things should be our counsellors. Those things should be our counsellors. He moves down to DALETH, not Dallas, DALETH.

Psalm 119:25-32

DALETH

“My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word. I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes. Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of wondrous works. My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according to thy word. Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously. I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid *before me*. I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame. I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.” And he talks about strength in the middle of those trials. Look at **verse 25,**

he says, **“My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.”** Look at **verse 28**, where he says **“My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according to thy word.”** So he’s admitting there’s difficulty, and he’s going through difficult things. He says **“My soul cleaveth unto the dust:”** and look at his request, you know, he’s saying **‘I am down and out,’** he’s on his face, he’s down in the dirt, **“My soul cleaveth to the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.” (verse 25)** now that’s the first of nine times in Psalm 119 where the Psalmist asks the LORD to quicken him. That means “revitalize, revive, give life where there isn’t any.” He says **‘My soul’ not just physical frame, the deepest part of my being, is cleaving to the dust, LORD, my life is in the dirt, in the dust, I’m broken down. Give me life again, quicken thou me,’** and listen then how he says to do it, **“according to thy word.”** There were no professional counsellors then, no psychologists, psychiatrists. Not that they might not have their place at times, but there are times when the Bible strictly cuts off, we read the record, every other human voice, every other natural source to get an individual alone with the LORD. You know, David, God had anointed him to be king of Israel, but it would take years for David to be the king that God anointed him to be. He would refine him, and refine him, and refine him, and refine him. And we see in David great victory over Goliath, we see the people rallying, you know, Saul had slain his thousands, David has slain his tens of thousands, and Saul getting jealous, and then sending for David, his wife knows Saul’s guards are coming, she puts a dummy in the bed and lets David get out of there, God separates him from his home, from his employment, from his position. And David flees and goes to Samuel. God removes him from Samuel, his mentor and his counsellor. He goes to Jonathan, Jonathan at least 30 years older than David, we don’t realize it sometimes, who was certainly a mentor, a counsellor, a partner who loved him. And then God separates him from Jonathan. And each step of the way, God takes him further away from counsellors, further, because God wants to break the man down and bring him to the Cave of Adullam. And here, this author, this human writer, through whom the Holy Spirit has put these things before us, says, **‘My very soul is cleaving to the dust, quicken thou me, give me life again, revive me, bring me back according to thy Word. That’s what your Word says, what I’m gonna trust in.’**

*“I’ve Told You My Ways, Confessed To You—Now Teach Me
Your Ways—Make Me Understand So That I Can Teach—Open
My Eyes LORD*

He says **“I have declared my ways and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.” (verse 26)** **‘LORD, I’ve declared my ways to you.’** Now

that is not specific, so no doubt that includes confession, it includes a lot of these, **'LORD, you know me.'** I do this in the morning, I have this running conversation with the Lord. By the way I try to do it in traffic, people think I have a Blue Tooth, I don't, I'm talking to God, keeps me safe, keeps everybody safe around me. But I just talk out loud when I'm driving. *'Lord, this person in front of me drives like a jerk, they're probably an angel you put there, to keep me from getting in an accident somewhere, ok, Lord, you have to take care of me, I'm like a child, Lord, you leave me out here on my own...'* and I have this running conversation with him. *'Lord, I know I shouldn't be thinking that [I pray that all the time], Lord, you know I deal with lust, I deal with anger, I deal with selfishness Lord. But I love you, Lord, and I want to do what's right, Lord. I want to hear 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'* Lord, I want to take care of your Bride till you come, I still appreciate when I travel, the guys take care of my wife, Lord I want to take care of your Bride, and when I see you face to face I just want to see that glimmer in your eyes that I did a good job taking care of your Bride, your blood-bought Bride. [I think he's referring to the part of the Body of Christ he's been entrusted to care for and nurture with the Word of God, and not his wife]. I want that, Lord.' And I think he wants us to be that honest with him. The Psalmist says, **'I have declared my ways, you've heard me, you've listened to me. Now teach me your ways. I've told you and you've listened, LORD now you tell me, and I'll listen.'** "teach me thy statutes." Look what he says in **verse 27**, he says, **"Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works."** ***'If you just tell them to me, I'll write them down on a list. I don't want just knowledge, and I don't want just blind obedience,'*** though sometimes God asks for that, he says here, ***'I want to understand, LORD, help me to understand the instruction of Scripture, and help me understand it LORD, let the light go on, 'so ya I see that! I understand that!'*** Because look at what he says, and he asks God to do it in him, **"Make me to understand the way of thy precepts:"** look what he says, **"so shall I talk of thy wondrous works."** ***'LORD, if I get it down, as I understand it, it sets my heart on fire, I find it so much easier to talk to others about who you are and what you do.'*** Look, before you read the Bible, do you do these things [pray these things]? I encourage you, get up tomorrow, you're gonna read the Scripture in the morning, before you read, I would go to **verse 18** here, this is a great prayer, **"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."** I'd encourage you to go to **verse 27**, **"Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works."** ***'Make me do it, make me do it so that I will talk of your wondrous works.'***

*If You Don't Have The Vertical Of The Word Of God, You Won't
Get The Meat, The Core, The Center, The Heart Of It*

“My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according to thy word.” (verse 28) He comes back to that, “my soul,” where he was in verse 25. **“My soul”** here he says **“melteth for heaviness:”** now gloss in the column might say “dripeth”, the Hebrew has the idea of that, “drips” your translation might say, **‘My soul is just melting, dripping because of heaviness’**, may be speaking of tears. His request, **“strengthen thou me”** and again, look, **“according unto thy word.”** Listen, this is all in the vertical. As we get down to verse 33, look what happens there, **verse 33, “Teach me,” verse 34, “Give me,” verse 35, “Make me”, verse 36, “Incline” in verse 37, “Turn away mine eyes”**, look, here’s what we find as we go through this Psalm, what makes the Word of God the Word of God is the vertical of the Word of God, not just the horizontal. We should study, straightly cutting, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, we should be able to answer, we should be able to understand why we believe what we believe. ***But if you just study the Bible, if you just apply human intellect, if you just form your hermeneutic, if you just do that, and you don't have the vertical of the Word, you don't got the meat, the core, the center, the heart of it.*** Because this Psalmist is telling us, in every verse he mentions the LORD, and in 173 of 176 verses he mentions the LORD’s Word, and all of this is dependant on the vertical. I just don’t want to study it so that my head can get blown up with pride, knowledge puffeth up. ***‘LORD, I want your Word, make me see it, incline my heart, make walk in it LORD, that it might be my life, that it might be what I breathe, that it might flow through my being, that when I share with my kids I'd be bringing something from another world, that it would be real, that it would be powerful.’*** And look, this Psalm is the longest chapter in the Bible, about the Bible, and about our dependence on the LORD of the Bible. And he wants that. You know, I’m gonna study for the rest of my life. I never want to be an academician, I want to be a scholar. I love language, I love history, I love archaeology, I love studying. I hated it in school, I don’t know what happened to me. [I’m worse, I love all those things, along with all science, geology, chemistry, biology, astronomy, physics, marine biology, earth science, you name it, it’s my curse, because I’m a remedial reader, and have to focus on one thing, one study at a time. But it’s helped me keep this website interesting and alive, hopefully, as long as my inspiration comes from the vertical.] Lord, turn on the light or something, I love to study. I read, I read, I read, I study, study, study, I love to study. But if I just do that, I dry up. I have to get alone with him, with the Bible. I love the commentaries, all that stuff, just getting in the Bible, and I read, just early, late, quiet, and I don’t get to the end of two pages before there’s tears coming down my face,

because he's there, he's there, he speaks to me. And if you train yourself, you learn that sensitivity, then when you're in a conversation, you're driving your car somewhere else, you have all of a sudden that sense, you know, it sharpens our sensitivities, we learn by practice and mistakes. You think of all the other things we cultivate in this world. Again, I think of Elisha, and he was surprised when God didn't talk to him. I think, *'What's wrong with me, I'm surprised when he does talk to me.'*

Remove From Me The Way Of Lying

He says **"My soul melteth for heaviness", 'Just LORD, I'm overwhelmed,' "strengthen thou me according unto thy word. Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously." (verses 28-29)** Isn't it an interesting verse, look at it. It doesn't say *'Remove me from the way of lying,'* because if it says that, that means you're blaming somebody else. It doesn't say "remove me from", it says **"Remove from me the way of lying."** You know why? Because we're all little liars. *'I'm not a big liar. I just tell little white lies.'* I don't even tell white lies, I'm just a fibber now, because I'd rather fib than argue. And sometimes it's easier to say *'Ya, ya,'* because I just don't want to get into a contest with somebody. I don't think Jesus ever did that, ever. I think he was so loving, and so transparent, that I think the truth flowed from him like a river. I don't think anybody ever thought *'Is he fibbing to us?'* I think people dissolved in his presence. He says **"Remove from me the way of lying:"** of course, the whole Psalm is about the Truth. **"Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously." (verse 29)** because that's truth. Look what he says, he says in **verse 30, "I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me."** That's why he wants the way of lying removed from him. *'I've chosen the way of truth, that's my choice, LORD, I'm tired of bologna, I'm tired of nonsense,'* look, you watch the TV, isn't it disheartening? I sit and watch the TV sometimes and think *'You're lying through your teeth. That isn't the way it is. That's not what's happening.' That's untrue.'* Even my kids, I love it when my kids, we'll sit there, we like the Discovery Channel, we have the Discovery Channel free, I love to watch big crocodiles eating things trying to swim across the Nile River, I love all that stuff. And then the guy says, *'And 40 million years ago,'* and my kids start crackin' up. Truth, you know it's a wonderful thing. He says **"Remove from me the way of lying"** not *'remove me from the way of lying,'* you know, like Paul says, you'd have to leave the planet to get away from all the liars. **"Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously. I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me." (verses 29-30)** *'that's what I want. LORD, I've taken your Word, the way you say*

things should be, and I've laid them before me.' **"I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame."** (verse 31) I like the way the King James reads there, the Hebrew says **"I cling unto thy testimonies."** I love this though, **"I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame."** **'Don't let me come into reproach and shame, LORD, I've been clinging to your Word.'** And look what he says, **"I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart."** (verse 32) There's a sense here, **'I will run with joy,'** he's not just saying here **'I will walk in your ways,'** he's saying **'LORD, do this, lead me, teach me, do this in me LORD, I've laid your judgments before me, I am clinging to your testimony LORD, don't let me come to shame LORD, and I will, not just walk, I will run the way of thy commandments, when they shalt enlarge my heart, or because you will enlarge my heart.'** Now an enlarged heart is not a good thing physically, you don't want it. But spiritually an enlarged heart is a great thing. It speaks of your heart being deeper, and broader, no doubt, more gracious, more tender, more forgiving, less selfish. Enlarge my heart, LORD, because I am motivated so often by my brain, by my will, by my selfishness, Lord, enlarge my heart, Lord. **"I will run the way of your commandments, when you enlarge my heart."** (verse 32) So look then about this remarkable set of requests in regards to that. He then says **"Teach me, O LORD"** I'm going to read through them.

Psalm 119:33-40

HE

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way. Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good. Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness." Listen to the dependence on the LORD in all of this. So this remarkable now response to him saying, **'LORD, this is the way it is, I want you to deal bountifully with me LORD that I might live in your Word. You've gotta open your Word and let me see wondrous things out of your law, because I'm a stranger here LORD, I'm passing through, and I need you to work in my life. My soul is breaking, it's longing for your judgments, you've rebuked the proud, LORD you deal with sinners, and LORD, even those around me that are slandering,**

gossiping LORD, when that happens, you know what I do, I go to your Word, meditate on your statutes, LORD. I don't take things into my own hands, I just meditate on your statutes. I haven't taken things into my own hands, I flee to you. Your testimonies, they're my delight, they're my counsellors, your Word, LORD, it counsels me. And my soul is cleaving to the earth, to the dust. So LORD, quicken me, make me alive, give me life again according to your Word. I've sat before you, I've poured out my heart, I've been honest, I've confessed, I've shared all of this, so now LORD teach me your statutes and make me understand, because if you make me understand, then I can share, LORD, with others your wondrous works. I have reason, I have thought, I have intent, I have depth, I have understanding. My soul, it is melting for heaviness, so strengthen me according your Word. Remove from me, LORD, the things that are wrong, if I have lying, get it out of me, and grant me your law graciously, because I've chosen the way of truth, that's what I want. Thy judgments I've laid before me, this is where I meditate. I have stuck unto thy testimonies, I'm clinging LORD to the truth, and I'm gonna run, LORD, in the way of thy commandments, with your path before me I'm gonna run, LORD, as you enlarge my heart.' So now, all of that said, he realizes **'I am 100 percent dependent on you for any of this to happen.'** Listen, no flesh is going to glory in his presence. Paul tells us again, **'There are good works foreordained, that we should walk in them.'** It says **'We were chosen for Himself out from others before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy, without blame, before him in love.'** Think of it, and again, Paul's talking to a congregation, not written to theologians in a seminary, but to people, saying **'He loved you from the foundation of the world. He chose you for himself, he wants you to walk in his ways.'**

*Teach Me, Give Me—You Teach Me LORD, You Give Me
Understanding*

So the Psalmist here realizing that, then he says ok **"Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end."** (verse 33) He's gonna say "teach me, give me, make me, and incline me" and the two threats to that is he says there are allurements my heart may be drawn after, and there is reproach that might discourage me. He says **"Teach me, O LORD,"** it's a plea for guidance, **"the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end."** (verse 33) So, how do we learn? It's not by commentaries, it's not just by studying, he's saying **'LORD, you teach me, you teach me, LORD.'** Secondly, hey look, he says **"Give me understanding and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart."** (verse 34) This is grace. Because sometimes, again,

he wants obedience without explanation, knowledge sometimes, he says **'My people perish for lack of knowledge.'** But then here the idea is **"Give me understanding and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart."** God can easily do this. We think of Solomon, as a young boy taking the throne, a young man. It says ***'In Gibeah the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream, by night. And God said 'Ask what I shall give thee.' And Solomon then said, 'Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart.'*** The Psalmist just said ***'Give me understanding.'*** Solomon therefore said ***'Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to judge this thy so great people.'*** and his speech pleased the LORD and so forth, and the LORD was pleased with that request for understanding, and then the LORD said that he would grant that, he would give it. Look, Solomon the wisest man that ever lived, his dad was a shepherd. He wasn't the wisest man that ever lived because he learned from David. He learned some incredible things from his father, don't get me wrong. But he was the wisest man that ever lived because God granted him wisdom and understanding, because of the way he asked. He didn't ask to consume it as a young man on himself, he had a heart that pleased the LORD, remember originally his name was Jedidiah, beloved of God. It's a sad history to trace because he ends up so far off course. Here, the Psalmist is saying, ***'Give me understanding.'*** It's the very same thing that Solomon said. Again, I'm not saying we're getting ready for the fall semester, that you should wait till final exam, and the night before just say *'LORD, give me understanding.'* No, no, that's irresponsibility, I'm not saying that. But all of us face circumstances, listen, first of all there are things that come in our life, when all of a sudden it's deeper than any water than we've been in. God loves us, we grow, we take hold of his grace. All of a sudden we hear of someone we love has been taken out of this world. Or you watch your child bleeding out in front of you. [Pastor Joe saw that, had it happen to him. His son survived, thankfully] Or the doctors call and say *'We think your son has leukemia.'* And then you're sitting there, and you're saying *'Lord, I've never been here before. This is deeper water than I've ever been in. Your grace has always been sufficient in my life, and whatever the problems were that have come to me, Lord, you've been there, you've been faithful. But all that I've learned of you right now is insufficient because you've taken me somewhere that I don't want to go, it's deeper water than I've ever been in, and Lord I need you to help me understand, and I need you to speak to me. And I need you to make your Word real to me. Give me understanding.'* It's granted, it pleased the LORD when Solomon asked. Maybe there's a lot of people here tonight that need to do that, they need to be praying *'Lord, give me understanding, I'm in a mess, I need to get something down.'* Or *"Lord, let me see wondrous things out of your Word, deal bountifully.'* Or just say

'I'm a stranger in this world, I'm not at home here, you've gotta give,' and he's asking, he's not hesitating to ask, **"Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it"** notice **"with my whole heart."** (verse 34) Not just so it can be in my head, but so I can observe it.

MAKE ME To Go In The Path Of Thy Commandments

"Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight." (verse 35) What wonderful words. **'LORD, I delight in your Word.'** I do too, and I know you guys do too. **"Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness."** (verse 36) because that's my natural inclination. My heart is inclined, you know, personally, my heart can be very covetous. He tells us in **Jeremiah 17:9 that the heart is desperately wicked, it's incurable, who can know it?** It tells us in the Book of Proverbs to guard your heart with all diligence, stand garrison over it, for out of it flow the issues of life. The heart always makes a convert of the mind. Your life doesn't flow forth from your thoughts, it flows from desire, the deeper place in your being. And my natural inclination is in another direction. Isn't it wonderful that he says with such simplicity and childlike faith, he just says **LORD, "incline my heart unto your testimonies, and not to covetousness."** That's where it goes naturally. *'I think I'd be happy if I had one of these, I think I'd be happy if I had one less of these, I think I'd be happy if I had two of these. I think I'd be happy, Lord, if I had this. Lord, it's not fair, why do they get one of those. Lord, he's a junky, he sells heroine, and he hits the lottery. This is unfair. [laughter] Why do bad things happen to good people? Why is it that I work, and I work, and this jerk has got a golden thumb, everything he touches, what is it? Asaph said, 'I couldn't even talk about it, because I was afraid of stumbling God's people.'* And then he says **'Then I went into the house of the LORD, and I remembered their end. Well, that's right LORD, wicked people might be prospering now, it may be unjust now, but when I went into the house of the LORD and I remembered eternity, and I remembered their end, and I realized I was being as foolish as a beast, just worried about chewing on grass and doesn't have perspective on anything else.'** He says, **"Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness."** (verse 36) Look, **"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way."** (verse 37) Do we need us all to do that? Job, in the midst of suffering says **'I've made a covenant with my eyes, why then should I look upon a maid?'** David in **Psalm 101, verse 3** says, **'In the privacy of my own house I decided not to bring any wicked thing before my eyes.'** You know, in the privacy of our own house when no one else is watching but God, that is where the greatest temptation is, where we

think *'This isn't hurting anyone else,'* and we so compartmentalize ourselves, we make excuses for it, *'and it's ok because it's not affecting anyone else, and Lord we'll work on this and we'll get over it.'* He says here, here's the better prayer, ***'LORD, turn away my eyes from all this. I'm not gonna whup this on my own, LORD, but you're my shepherd, you're my LORD, you're my Saviour, you're my King, my buckler, my shield, my strong tower.'*** "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way." (verse 37) ***'Give life to me again LORD, renew me, revive me.'***

The Two Major Threats: Allurements And The Reproach Of Others

Look, ***"Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear."*** (verse 38) That's what we want to be, the servant of the LORD. ***'LORD, I'm one of the ones who reverence you.'*** The whole world around us, there's no fear of God. He says ***"Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear." 'I'm one who reverences you, who fears you LORD.'*** ***"Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good."*** (verse 39) Now if you follow it down, he says "teach me and I'll keep it" "give me understanding, I'll observe it" "make me to go in your path, that's where I delight," "incline my heart to your testimonies, not to covetousness," ***and he realizes, "my eyes behold vanity, there are allurements, and there are reproaches that can discourage me.*** Look. Isn't that the truth with any of us? We want to walk with the Lord, spend time with him, but things of this world allure us. And then we get discouraged sometimes, want to throw in the towel, and then Satan is right there to condemn us. The Bible says ***'if we confess our sins he's faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'*** We need to flee to him at those times. And then reproach. How many times has someone come to the church, they get settled, and the church should be the environment where we can let down our guard and be vulnerable, and the next thing you know, somebody slanders you or gossips about you or backbites you, *'and then that's it, they ain't no different than anybody else!'* [how about in our families as well, or close friends, it hurts just as much, and happens here too, in our own home environment, real family, adoptive family, been there.] *'I finally found a place where I could let down my guard, and now somebody's chewing on my back.'* Well he realizes here that reproach, temptations and allurements can, these are the things that can get in the way of the LORD teaching, giving, and making, and inclining, and he says it, ***"LORD, turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good."***

*Behold, Look LORD, Consider This, I Have Longed After Thy
Precepts*

“Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.” (verse 40) *‘Think of this, consider this, “I have longed after thy precepts, LORD, would you remember this?’* It’s not very often you say “Behold” to the LORD. **“LORD, think about this, I have longed after thy precepts, quicken me, bring me to life in thy righteousness.’** Can we say that this evening? **“Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.”** I mean, honestly, can you get home tonight or tomorrow morning and say ‘*Lord, this is what I’ve longed after, your Word.*’ If you can’t, it’s ok. Then you go back, **verses 17-40, “Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. I am a stranger in the earth” ‘I need you to do this, my soul is in the dust, I’ve been honest with you, I’ve declared my ways, now teach me your ways, make me to understand, verse 27, get rid of the lying that’s within me, the dishonesty, LORD, let me walk before you, I’ve laid your Word before me so that I would just run in joy in the path you’ve set before me, because, I can say in honesty I’ve longed after your precepts, so then LORD, teach me that way of your statutes, and then I’ll keep them, you’re my teacher. Give me, LORD, I don’t deserve it, give me understanding and I shall keep thy law, yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments.’** It always reminds me of that movie ‘*Young Frankenstein*’, this verse, forgive me, but Gene Wilder wants to make friends with the monster. And he says ‘*Alright, I’m going to go in there, you’re going to lock the door, and whatever I say, don’t open this door again.*’ And he goes in, clunk, they locked the door behind him, and the monster goes ‘*Grrrrrr!!!*’ and he says ‘*Open the door you idiot, let me out of here!!!*’ and he starts pounding on the door. This verse reminds me of that, it says **‘Make me, drag me in the way everlasting, lead me, LORD, make me go in the way everlasting,’** it says, **‘Make me, make this happen, LORD, because I’m not inclined, make me go in the path of thy commandments,’** and all the glory will be his, **‘for therein do I delight, incline my heart, your testimonies LORD, do those things in me. Turn my eyes away from beholding vanity, quicken thou me in thy way, stablish thy word unto thy servant who is devoted to thy fear, who walks in reverence with you, LORD, that’s me, turn away my reproach, for thy judgments are good. Behold, I have longed after thy precepts, quicken me in thy righteousness LORD, because of your righteousness, because it’s the right thing to do, and it won’t happen without you.’** Let’s bow our hearts, I’m going to ask the musicians to come, we’ll sing a last song, let’s stand. Read ahead,

alright, you don't have to read the whole Psalm, ok. But read the next three or four sections...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Psalm 119:17-40, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]