

Building an Appetite for the Word of God



Psalm 119:1-8

Critics

- “a particularly artificial product of religious poetry...”
- “a many colored mosaic of thoughts which are often repeated in wearisome fashion”
- “a monotonous repetition”

Claude Monet



Structure

- An acrostic
- 22 Stanzas (one for each of the 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet)
- Each stanza consists of eight, two-line couplets.
- In Heb. the first word in each of those eight verses begins with the same Hebrew letter.
- Designed to improve memorization

Synonyms for Scripture

- Law (25x)—*torah*; primary term (in 21 of 22 stanzas); God’s instruction, or teaching
- Testimonies (23x)—“witness”; Scripture is God’s own testimony of Himself
- Precepts (21x)—official orders from a ruler
- Statutes (21x)—root “engrave”; speaks of the permanent, binding nature of God’s law
- Commandments (22x)—emphasizes authority; God’s right to give orders
- Ordinances (23x)—*judgments*; the decisions of an all-wise judge about common human situations; the standard for fair interaction between men
- Word (24x; *dbr*)—general term for divine revelation
- Word (19x; *imra*)—anything God has spoken, commanded, or promised

Theme of Entire Psalm

- Personal (the Psalmist mentions himself over 300x)
- Saturated w/ God (not a single verse without reference to Him)
- A prayer (except for the 1st 3 verses)
- The focus: the Word of God
- Theme: the believer’s pursuit of a life dominated and controlled by the Word of God.

Theme of Aleph (1-8)

- Introduces the Psalm
- Explains where we begin the journey to a life dominated and controlled by the Word of God.
- Lays out four steps that will both create a hunger and strengthen your appetite for a life dominated by the Word of God.

I. Recognize Its Benefits (1-3)

- A. Integrity (1)
 - “way” = well-worn path → habits or way of life
 - “blameless”
 - Used frequently in OT to refer to the sacrificial animal
 - Means “without defect”; “irreproachable”; “whole, complete, having integrity”
 - Cf. Abraham (Gen. 17:1); Job (Job 1:1); Pr. 11:20
 - It's how God is (Ps. 18:30) and His Word (Ps. 19:7)
 - LXX uses same word as Eph. 1:4; 5:27

I. Recognize Its Benefits (1-3)

- A. Integrity (1)
- B. Devotion (2)
 - “Who Seek Him”
 - 1) To know His character
 - Ps. 63:1-2 – O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water. 2 Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory.
 - 2) To know His will (10)
 - 3) To enjoy His Person and favor (57-58)

I. Recognize Its Benefits (1-3)

- A. Integrity (1)
- B. Devotion (2)
- C. Obedience (3)
 - “*unrighteousness*” – sins against other people
 - “His ways” – a synonym for Scripture meaning God's paths.

II. Embrace God's Authority (4)

- “*You have ordained Your precepts*”
 - “*Ordained*” = command, order
 - “*Precepts*” = synonym
- “*That we should keep [or obey] them diligently*”
 - “*diligently*” = lit., very much or exceedingly
 - Not formally or superficially but really and thoroughly.

III. Seek God's Grace (5)

- Oh that my ways may be established To keep Your statutes!
 - A Sense of Personal Failure
 - A Desire for Personal Holiness
 - A Prayer for Personal Obedience

IV. Anticipate God's Response (6-8)

- A Decreasing Pattern of Sin (6)
- A Heart of Worship (7)
- A Spirit of Dependence (8)

First Steps

- Recognize Its Benefits
 - Integrity
 - Devotion
 - Obedience
- Embrace God's Authority
- Seek God's Grace
 - A sense of personal failure
 - A desire for personal holiness
 - A prayer for personal obedience
- Anticipate God's Response
 - A decreasing pattern of sin
 - A heart of worship
 - A spirit of dependence



This Week

- Make sure you have a new heart that desires (1 Pet. 2:2) and can understand God's truth (1 Cor. 2:14).
- Make time to slowly, meditatively express the words of this psalm to God in prayer once a day for 5 days.
- Read, reread, study, and meditate on those passages like this one that exalt the sufficiency of God's Word.
 - Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1; 19; 119; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; Heb. 4:12-13
- Pray for illumination (Ps. 119:18; Eph. 1:18).
- Pray for God to use His truth to sanctify you (John 17:17).
- Live in anticipation that God will honor your request and His Word.