

Psalm 119
Week 4, v.38-39

How does a child initially learn to obey? What steps do you take to teach them to do what is right? How does the motivation change as the child grows and matures?

Ps 119:38 Establish Thy word to Thy servant, As that which produces reverence for Thee.

Look back at the last five verses.

v. 33 – teach me

v. 34 – give me understanding

v. 35 – make me walk

v. 36 – incline my heart

v. 37 – turn away my eyes

David recognizes it is God's grace at work in him that produces understanding, obedience, direction and faithfulness. Now in verse 38, the Psalmist, dependent on God for everything, says 'establish Thy word'.

establish <quwm> abide, accomplish, confirm, continue

What kind of attitude does it take to be able to say to God 'carry out or fulfill your commands in me'? David describes himself as God's servant. We see the picture of a completely yielded heart, total surrender to God. The desire is for God to work through David's life to accomplish God's will. "Self" is absent.

Go back one more time to verse 33. We see the psalmist speaking of God's statutes, God's law, God's commands, God's testimonies and God's way's.

The character of a good man, which is the work of God's grace in him; he is God's servant, subject to His law and employed in His work, that is, devoted to His fear, given up to His direction and disposal, and taken up with high thoughts of Him and all those acts of devotion which have a tendency to His glory. Those are truly God's servants who, though they have their infirmities and defects, are sincerely devoted to the fear of God and have all their affections and motions governed by that fear; they are engaged and addicted to religion.

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible

We have an example of complete trust in God to accomplish what He says He will do.

2Co 1:20 For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes; wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.

Ps 103:11-13 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. Just as a father has compassion on [his] children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.

Ps 145:19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them.

Ps 147:11 The LORD favors those who fear Him, those who wait for His lovingkindness.

Jer 32:39-41 and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good, and for [the good of] their children after them. "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not

turn away from Me. "And I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul.

The promises of God's word greatly relate to the preservation and sanctification of the true believer. David, being conscious that he was the Lord's servant, and much afraid of offending or forsaking him, prayed to have these promises established or performed to his soul, that the effects of the deceitfulness of his heart, and of the force of temptation, might be prevented. Thomas Scott

The request in verse 38 is to establish Thy word. This is a continuous process. Meaning it is not a one-time, 'okay, I got it' accomplishment.

What is the desired result of God establishing His word to His servants? To produce reverence for God.

What does it mean to have reverence for God? Reverence means to be in awe of or to fear.

J. Edward Vaux's "Preacher's Storehouse" in the Treasury of David lists four kinds of fear.

1. the fear of man
2. servile or submissive fear, [submissive fear] through which we are induced to avoid sin only from the dread of hell
3. initial fear, in which we avoid sin partly from the fear of hell, but partly also from the love of God
4. filial fear, when we are afraid to disobey God only and altogether from the love we bear him.

What is the origin of your fear? Why do you obey God's commands?

Do you simply want others to like you which leads to doing whatever people think you should do?

Do you do what you think is right mostly because you are afraid of hell [consequences]?

Do you obey because you fear consequences but also love God?

Do you fear God – show reverence to Him – simply because you love Him and your obedience is born out of love and respect for Who He is?

The KJV of Psalm 119:38 is translated 'who *is devoted*' to thy fear.

Job 28:28 "And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to depart from evil is understanding.'"

Ps 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do [His commandments]; His praise endures forever.

Pr 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Pr 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Pr 15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, And before honor [comes] humility.

Isa 33:6 And He shall be the stability of your times, A wealth of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; The fear of the LORD is his treasure.

Ps 119:39 Turn away my reproach which I dread, For Thine ordinances are good.

David has a similar request earlier in this Psalm and elsewhere in his writing.

Ps 119:22 Take away reproach and contempt from me, for I observe Thy testimonies.

Ps 39:8 "Deliver me from all my transgressions; make me not the reproach of the foolish.

2Sa 12:13-14 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. "However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die."

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

Reproach can mean rebuke, disgrace or shame.

God forgives the sin of a sincerely repentant child. However, the consequences of sin can bring shame upon ourselves, and most unfortunately, shame upon what we believe in – the Gospel and God Himself. When we sin we misrepresent the One we love. Think of the word hypocrite. This is a person who professes beliefs that he or she does not adhere to.

Do we fear God's reproach when we sin? The good news is we have His strength to help us follow His commands consistently.

Tit 2:7-8 in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, [with] purity in doctrine, dignified, 8 sound [in] speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

"The reproach of Christ we rejoice in, but from the reproach of inconsistency we should daily pray to be delivered." Spurgeon Devotional Commentary

1Pe 4:12-16 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation. 14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. 15 By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; 16 but if [anyone suffers] as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God.

If men would be content to attribute evil to *us*, and go no further, we might bear it, for we are evil; but our sorrow is that they cast a slur upon the word and character of God, who is so good, that there is none good in comparison with him. When men rail at God's government of the world it is our duty and privilege to stand up for him, and openly to declare before him, "thy judgments are good"; and we should do the same when they assail the Bible, the gospel, the law, or the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we must take heed that they can bring no truthful accusation against us, or our testimony will be so much wasted breath. Treasury of David

Psalm 119:39 says "Thine ordinances are good". **Can you say this? Do you believe this?** God's ways, His judgements, His laws are good. Meaning they are best, they are gracious, they are right. This allows for no questioning or grumbling or dissatisfaction on our part.

When we believe something is good, we have a desire for it. It is beneficial to us. Word Web says to describe something as good means it is admirable, it is deserving of esteem and respect, it promotes or enhances well-being, it is pleasing, it is of moral excellence, it is thorough, it is suitable or right for a particular purpose, it has a favorable result, it is generally admired.

God's judgments are good. **Do you have a desire for Him to work in your life – even though at times it may be painful? Do you see the benefit of God's word working in your life?**

Application Questions

Think of what it takes to establish something. Time and constant care. What are you doing to help the process of establishing God' s word in your heart?

According to Psalm 119;38, what is the goal of establishing God' s word in your heart?

What does it mean to show reverence towards something or someone?

Do you trust God to do what He says He will do?

Read 2 Cor 1;20: Psalm 145;19:

What is the origin of your reverence towards God?

Do you fear Him out of a thankful heart, recognizing Who He is? Or, is your fear based on not wanting the consequences for your sin?

what do the following verses say about the fear of the Lord?

Ps 111;10

Ps 1;7