

Psalm 119

Week 7, v. 7 (continued), v.8

Notice in Psalm 119:7 David says he will praise or give thanks to God with an upright heart. **What does it mean to have an upright heart?** According to WordWeb, to be upright means to be morally excellent; to be right is to be free from error. These words speak of sincerity.

Eph 6:24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with [a love] incorruptible.

Jos 24:14a "Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth;

Joh 4:23-24 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

1Ti 1:5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Ps 34:13 Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit.

Php 1:9-10 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

2Co 1:12 For our proud confidence is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.

There is no sincerity or uprightness of heart in the wicked:

Ps 5:9 There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction [itself]; Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.

Ps 55:21 His speech was smoother than butter, But his heart was war; His words were softer than oil, Yet they were drawn swords.

The best of God's servants are but scholars and students in the knowledge and obedience of his word. Treasury of David

We learn to know, that we might remember, that in remembering we might believe, that in believing we might delight, that in delighting we might admire, that in admiring we might adore, that in adoring we might practice, that in practicing we might continue in the way of God' s statutes. (taken from Richard Greenham, TOD)

Are you actively pursuing to learn about God? How? Are you actively praising Him for what you are learning? What does this praise look like in your life? Is it sincere?

Look again at the words used in Psalm 119:7. It says " when I learn" .

Note, there is acknowledgment that there is more to learn. The Psalmist readily admits his inadequate understanding. Why is this important? Have you ever tried to teach someone who " knows it all" ?

In saying " when I learn" the Psalmist also shows his confidence that God would teach him. This is a different attitude than saying *if I can learn* or *maybe*. There is a certainty that through the work of God in his life, he will learn His divine laws.

How big is God? Is He able to teach you and change you even with all your deficiencies and faults? How much confidence do you place in Him to do what He says?

Psalm 119:8 marks the end of our first section of eight verses. We have learned that true blessedness – happiness – comes from following God sincerely and completely. Following God keeps us from unrighteousness. God has given us direction in the way which we should live and we are to keep His commands diligently. Yet, dependent upon ourselves we recognize we are weak and unable to be successful in our own attempts at righteousness. The answer? We cry to God to provide what we need to fulfill His precepts. Through His instruction, His guidance, His strength and His grace we can be confident in our walk of faith. This truth leads us to praise God from a heart of gratitude as we see His work in our life. Verse 8 ends therein with a resolve to follow God and a realization that left to our own attempts we will fail miserably.

Ps 119:8 I shall keep Thy statutes; Do not forsake me utterly!

What is the decision David reaches at the beginning of verse 8?

' I shall keep Thy statutes'

David is asserting himself to action. It is one thing to know information but information is only as good as the practice of it. The example given to us is not ' maybe I can' or ' I will try really hard' or ' let' s see if this will work' . It is an imperative statement – I WILL!

The Psalmist readily recognizes his deficiencies, so how can he be so confident that he will succeed? Do you have this same confidence we see in David?

It is good if you do, however, confidence itself is not the key. We can be confidently mistaken. Have you ever been positive that you were making the right decision only to find out that you were dreadfully wrong? The key is Who and what our confidence is placed in and the recognition of our inability to do good on our own.

David' s confidence is coupled with an admission of fear that left to his own devices and strength failure is imminent. The need to remain close to God – relying on His word, leaning on His strength – is imperative.

Ps 119:16 **I shall delight** in Thy statutes; **I shall not forget** Thy word.

Ps 119:106 **I have sworn**, and **I will confirm it**, That **I will keep** Thy righteous ordinances.

Ps 119:115 Depart from me, evildoers, That **I may observe** the commandments of my God.

Jos 24:15 "And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, **choose for yourselves today whom you will serve**: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, **we will serve** the LORD."

Psalms 119:8 goes on to say, " **Do not forsake me utterly!**"

David states his resolve in the first part of Ps 119:8 then pleads for help.

What does this say about David' s knowledge of himself?

He cries to God to not forsake him as he strives to keep God' s commands.

Forsake <azab> to loosen, relinquish, permit; commit self, fail, forsake, leave
Utterly: vehemently; wholly speedily; [intensifies the meaning of the word it follows]

It seems in this verse that David is literally begging God not to leave him on his own. This recognition of inadequacy can only come from a humble heart that recognizes its depravity. **Are you able to identify with this plea?**

Think of a child when they are in that ' clingy' stage. I have seen some Mom' s that literally need to pull themselves away from a hysterical child in

order to get something done. While that scenario really has lasting significance other than the temporary insecurity that is felt, our need for God is very real. We should be afraid of being left to ourselves unprotected by His grace, His strength, His guidance, His conviction ... we could go on and on since everything we have and everything good we do is all because of Him.

The following is taken from Adam Clarke's Commentary:

1. "I will keep thy statutes." So am I fully resolved and decreed with myself. And it is a great help to godliness to resolve to live a godly life; for how shall that be performed which is not purposed.

2. And yet this purpose or conclusion he makes in God's strength; and therefore constantly prays: "O forsake me not utterly." Without thy aid I can do nothing: but if at any time in thy just judgment thou desert me, that I may know and feel my own weakness, and learn the better to fly to thee, let it not be an utter desertion. Forsake me not, neither too much nor too long.

Ps 119:117 Uphold me that I may be safe, that I may have regard for Thy statutes continually.

Ps 38:21 Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, do not be far from me!

Ps 51:11 Do not cast me away from Thy presence, and do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me.

What happens when we sin?

Isa 59:2 But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden [His] face from you, so that He does not hear.

Ps 66:18 If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear;

Joh 9:31 "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him.

Jer 5:25 'Your iniquities have turned these away, and your sins have withheld good from you.

David's example is a resolve to follow God in everything and a recognition that God is his "lifeline".

Do you have a resolve to follow God with a sincere heart in all areas of your life? Is that resolve wrapped in the recognition of your dependence on Him for success and survival?

Application Questions

- 1) What does it mean to have an upright heart?

Is your love for God and His word sincere? 1 Tim 1:5; Phil 1:9-10; 2 Cor 1:12. Whose wisdom do you rely upon? Is there an area of your life where you need to seek God more sincerely, desiring to know what He wants rather than what you think is best?

- 2) Think about what God has shown you, what He has taught you, how He has changed you. How does His testimony in your life affect your confidence in His ability to continue to guide your life?

Are you willing to *make* an opportunity to share God's faithfulness in your life with someone who is struggling to understand the Truth?

- 3) At the beginning of Psalm 119:8, David resolves to keep God's commands. He states no exception to this resolve. When is it most difficult to for you to follow God with a sincere heart in all circumstances? What can you do to conquer this weakness?
- 4) Read the second part of Psalm 119:8. How important is God to the Psalmist? Think of a child lost in a store, crying inconsolably for the comfort of their mother's hand. How would you describe your need for God?
- 5) What additional thoughts and questions has God placed on your heart through this study? Is there something He has specifically shown you that you need to look at more closely?