

Psalm 119
Week 9, v. 10

With all my heart I have sought Thee; Do not let me wander from Thy commandments.

The heart encompasses the will and the intellect. All my heart means exactly what it says – everything in me strives to know God.

A commentary from Adam Clarke says we must seek God; make earnest prayer and supplication to Him for Divine light, for a tender conscience, and for strength to walk uprightly. All the while, with a whole heart – all our affections.

Ps 78:37 For their heart was not steadfast toward Him, Nor were they faithful in His covenant.

1Sa 7:3 Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the LORD with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashteroth from among you and direct your hearts to the LORD and serve Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."

Ho 10:2 Their heart is faithless; Now they must bear their guilt. The LORD will break down their altars [And] destroy their [sacred] pillars.

1Jo 2:15 Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

If any part of us is given over to any form of idol – meaning we hold any person or thing or interest to be more important than God – then our whole heart is not engaged in worship and prayer. God does not want a portion of our heart, He requires our entire being. Only when He has our whole heart are we able to act upon His commandments, and then only by His grace.

Unfortunately, a common scenario today is to see a couple having dinner or lunch and either one or both are on a phone, talking, texting or searching the web. Physically they are in each other's company but it sure doesn't seem that they are engaged in the situation with all their heart. **What do you think when you've seen this take place?**

What type of effort do you put into knowing God? Why is this so important? Are you convinced that you can't succeed alone?

We seek many things: perhaps we seek a certain position at work, or seek an education. People may seek happiness or seek to discover something unknown. There is a specific direction we take when we are trying to accomplish something. Typically, there is a great amount of effort and time put into something that

is important to us. The Psalmist in 119:10 says " with all my heart I have sought Thee" .

" I have sought thee" <darash> to tread or frequent; usually to follow (for pursuit or search): by implication, to seek or ask, specifically to worship diligently, inquire, make inquisition

With our entire being we are to pursue God. Not just when we think about it or when we are in trouble or when we are especially blessed but all the time – frequently. Frequently means often or many times. **How often do you look to God? Do you recognize him throughout your day?** God is not a trinket we take out at bedtime or in the morning or at church. He is not a security blanket we use only when we are in trouble or scared. He is a personal God that desires a relationship with us, a relationship that requires time and effort on our part to grow in understanding of Him. A relationship which demands our whole heart and devotion in order to learn to trust and obey.

The statement in verse 10, " with all my heart I have sought Thee" , is followed by a request: " Do not let me wander from Thy commandments" .

Wander <shagah> to stray, mislead; usually to mistake, especially (morally) to transgress; sin through ignorance

Wander – (wordweb) – move about aimlessly or without any destination; lose clarity or turn aside especially from the main subject of attention

What happens when we wander from God' s commandments?

The more we understand who we are, the more we should be afraid to wander away from God' s commands.

We' ve all heard the term ' wander aimlessly' . This is exactly what we are not to do as God' s children. We have been given a direction and a plan to follow. It is exact and without error.

Isa 51:1 "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, who seek the LORD: **Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the quarry from which you were dug.**

Mt 4:19 And He *said to them, "**Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.**"

Mr 8:34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, **Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.**

Lu 9:61-62 And another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." But Jesus said to him, "**No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.**"

Look closely at Luke 9:61-62. What is the problem with this response to God's commands to follow Him?

When a farmer ploughs a field he looks ahead. If he looks back then the rows are not straight. We are to follow Jesus, keeping our focus on Him not on the world and its pleasures and problems. We leave behind those things that distract us from God and we direct our mind towards heaven.

What does it mean to follow God? Have you completely forsaken the world and its pleasures, wealth, honors, etc? What do you treasure most? Are you wholly devoted to God or is your heart divided? Do you pray for His grace to keep you from wandering?

Look at the account of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19. Ge 19:17 And it came about when they had brought them outside, that one said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, lest you be swept away." In verse 26, Lot's wife looked back " and she became a pillar of salt" . Looking back means to regard with pleasure. She was reluctant to leave what she had.

The more a man's whole heart is set upon holiness the more does he dread falling into sin; he is not so much fearful of deliberate transgression as of inadvertent wandering: he cannot endure a wandering look, or a rambling thought, which might stray beyond the pale of the precept. We are to be such wholehearted seekers that we have neither time nor will to be wanderers, and yet with all our wholeheartedness we are to cultivate a jealous fear lest even then we should wander from the path of holiness. Treasury of David

We cannot do this in our own strength hence the prayer – " do not let me wander from Thy commandments" .

Pr 21:16 A man who wanders from the way of understanding Will rest in the assembly of the dead.

We are able to live according to the truths of God's word by

- 1) paying attention and practicing His word
- 2) diligently seeking to follow God in all areas
- 3) recognizing it is impossible to do this on our own; it is only by God's grace and strength that we are able to keep focused on Him

How are you doing? Do you turn directly to God first or try things on your own? Do you desire to be obedient to God in every area or are you holding back?

Hereby let us see what great need we have to call upon God, to the end he may hold us with a mighty strong hand. Yea, and though he hath already mightily put to his healing hand, and we also know that he hath bestowed upon us great and manifest graces; yet this is not all: for there are so many vices and imperfections in our nature, and we are so feeble and weak that we have very great need daily to pray unto him, yea, and that more and more, that he will not suffer us to decline from his commandments. John Calvin.

We have been given a direct path to God. A roadmap that shows us clearly which way to go and Whom to follow. This map has no diversions, no shortcuts, no errors, no unknown hazards according to God. We are not to be self-sufficient; we are to be sincerely seeking.

David' s request of staying close to God' s commands is repeated in verse 10: " do not let me wander from Thy commandments" . We saw this same sentiment in verse 8: " Do not forsake me utterly" . It is an ongoing concern that the Psalmist stay close to God. Why do you think this is? What is your experience when you are not close to God?

Ps 143:8-10 Let me hear Thy lovingkindness in the morning; for I trust in Thee; Teach me the way in which I should walk; For to Thee I lift up my soul. Deliver me, O LORD, from my enemies; I take refuge in Thee. Teach me to do Thy will, For Thou art my God; Let Thy good Spirit lead me on level ground.

Ps 119:36 Incline my heart to Thy testimonies, And not to [dishonest] gain.

Ps 141:3-4 Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice deeds of wickedness With men who do iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies.

We are to be such wholehearted seekers that we have neither time nor will to be wanderers, TOD

Application Questions

- 1) What words could you use to describe someone who does not seek God with their whole heart? Ps 12:2; Ps 78:37; Hosea 10:2; Pr 6:18; Matt 15:8; Eph 4:18

- 2) How would you describe someone who is devoted to God with their whole heart? Ps 51:17; Ps 57:7; Ps 84:2; Ps 112:7; 1Sa 2:1; 2 Ki 22:19; Heb 10:22; Pr 14:33

- 3) Describe your heart.

- 4) Why is it important to understand that it is God' s grace that allows you to follow His commands? What did David' s understanding of this lead him to do?