

Read seventeenth section of Psalm 119.

Ps 119:129-136 Thy testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul observes them. <sup>130</sup> The unfolding of Thy words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. <sup>131</sup> I opened my mouth wide and panted, for I longed for Thy commandments. <sup>132</sup> Turn to me and be gracious to me, after Thy manner with those who love Thy name. <sup>133</sup> Establish my footsteps in Thy word, and do not let any iniquity have dominion over me. <sup>134</sup> Redeem me from the oppression of man, that I may keep Thy precepts. <sup>135</sup> **Make Thy face shine upon Thy servant, and teach me Thy statutes.** <sup>136</sup> **My eyes shed streams of water, because they do not keep Thy law.**

Look carefully at the descriptions of God's Word – what it is and what it does. Verse 129: the word is wonderful; verse 130: it gives understanding; verse 132 and 133: it gives confidence; verse 133: it has power.

Knowing the truths of God's word causes His children to protect it and to long for it. The word becomes something powerful and precious to behold and causes a change in behavior. Our very being from the inside out is completely converted to a different way of thinking and feeling and doing.

Note that his religion was soul work; not with head and hand alone did he keep the testimonies; but his soul, his truest and most real self, held fast to them. *Treasury of David*

**Consider.** We are all changed by the people and circumstances around us. We may alter our thinking after an experience. When we get married or become a parent, or accept a new position at work, our responsibilities become different. We may be able to look back at when we were younger and see that our perspective or attitude towards certain things has changed. Many changes are just on the outside, such as physical changes. Some of these changes are permanent, some may be temporary.

When God softens our heart, and calls our name to Himself, gives us divine understanding of His truths and the significance of the sacrifice and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, we change. **Completely. From the inside out.** Our thinking, our purpose in the world, our responsibilities, our perspective, our attitude – all change drastically, **forever.** **Our soul,** that part of us that is immaterial, that causes us to be, **is touched by God.**

**Consider** how your soul has been changed by God.

**Do we readily recognize what we were before God touched our heart?**

**How has your life been IMPACTED by this change?**

**Do we realize who we are now and what we have in Christ?**

*How are your actions INFLUENCED by this realization?*

*Are we reaching towards God's promises for our future?*

*How are you INDUCED [stimulated, hastened] by God's promises?*

*We've been changed - AND - We are called to action! We will receive eternal blessing. These are truths that our Psalmist readily recognized and relied upon. This change of soul is what David shares with us through his pen.*

*Look at the title our Psalmist gives to himself in regards to his relationship with God. **Servant.** Why is this important, what does it mean? He voluntarily places himself under the control of God. Remember, David is a king. But his soul has been directed to live for something other than himself. **When the weight of sin and its power is lifted through Christ's victory, we are set free.** Because the Psalmist is free from the constraints of sin, he now lives for God and he can make the requests we find in [Psalm 119:135](#).*

*Make thy face shine upon Thy servant.*

*David requests God's favor <paniym>. And of this favor, he asks that it shine <owr> upon him - that it is glorious, that it sets him on fire! Our Psalmist desires to please the Father. Imagine the feeling of acceptance and encouragement you receive when someone you love and admire smiles at you! **Whatever our circumstances, do we live in a way that would cause God to smile upon us? Do we desire God's face to shine on us? What does this look like?** On the outside, our testimony, our words and actions. On the inside, our thoughts, peace in all situations, patience and love for others in our heart.*

*Ps 4:6 Many are saying, "Who will show us [any] good?" Lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us, O LORD!*

*Ps 67:1 (For the choir director; with stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song.) God be gracious to us and bless us, [And] cause His face to shine upon us--Selah.*

*"Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; let me be accepted of thee, and let me know that I am so. Comfort me with the light of thy countenance in every cloudy and dark day. If the world frown upon me, yet do thou smile." Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*

*Some of us struggle with caring too much if others are pleased with us. **How does the above quote answer this concern?***

*Ver. 135. -- Make thy face to shine upon thy servant. The believer's incessant cry is, Let me see "the King's face." This is a blessing worth praying for. It is his heart's desire, his present privilege, and what is infinitely better, his sure, everlasting prospect -- "They shall see his face." --- Charles Bridges.*

*Re 22:4 and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.*

*Read the words God gave Moses to share. Numbers 6:24-26 The LORD bless you, and keep you; 25 The LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; 26 The*

*LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.' This is what God Himself wants for His children: He wants to shine upon them! This is called a blessing! When we ask for things within God's will for us, we can be certain our prayers are answered. So will God shine in a believer's life if they are intent on following Him?*

*Because our Psalmist has freedom in Christ he can also request that God show him His ways. When we turn towards Christ and away from sin, we desire to know more about God. We hunger to learn what He wants from us and how to please Him.*

*And teach me Thy statutes.*

*Twice before in this same Psalm, David has penned this same request.*

*Ps 119:12 Blessed art Thou, O LORD; Teach me Thy statutes.*

*Ps 119:26 I have told of my ways, and Thou hast answered me; teach me Thy statutes.*

*teach <lamad> properly, to goad; by implication, to teach (the rod being an Oriental incentive; instruct*

*Goad is an interesting word and one that we don't use very often. To goad, according to WordWeb, means to 1. Give heart or courage to; 2. Urge with or as if with a goad; 3. Stab or urge on as if with a pointed stick; 4. Goad or provoke, as by constant criticism.*

*Think of the idea of urging someone, prodding someone, or spurring them on. How often have you said, 'You can do it', while trying to encourage someone? I think this is the same idea, only stronger. It's 'You can do it and I'll show you how'. The picture that comes to mind is a mother bird gently pushing her baby out of the nest when it's time to learn how to fly. Or a parent holding their hand out to a toddler learning to walk. Often, teaching another comes with a bit of prodding or spurring them on.*

*We were at Vasquez Rocks with three of our grandchildren, one 5½ and two 3 ½ year olds. They were hesitant and even scared as we climbed up on the rocky mountain. It was slippery and steep and something new for them. But as they were urged on, we watched them become increasingly confident. Some areas they desired a hand to hold for encouragement, other times they would just look back to make sure we were close. Once we were on the top, they were so excited at what they had accomplished!*

*Our Psalmist knows he needs God to teach him His ways, to spur him on, to encourage him. Because sometimes it's difficult to move forward on our own. Often times if it were up to us, we would stay off the mountain where it is more comfortable. We wouldn't choose to climb the hills. But then we miss the beautiful view and perspective we get from struggling through to the end. We miss the blessing of leaning on God's help as He guides us.*

*Job 36:22 "Behold, God is exalted in His power; who is a teacher like Him?"*

*Lu 24:45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,*

*"And teach me thy statutes. This is the favour which he considers to be the shining of the face of God upon him. If the Lord will be exceeding gracious, and make him his favourite, he will ask no higher blessing than still to be taught the royal statutes. See*

how *he craves after holiness*; this is the choicest of all gems in his esteem. As we say among men that a good education is a great fortune, so *to be taught of the Lord is a gift of special grace*. The most favoured believer needs teaching; even when he walks in the light of God's countenance he has still to be taught the divine statutes or he will transgress." *Treasury of David* (Emphases mine)

"Thy ministers can pronounce the words, but cannot impart the spirit; they may entertain the fancy with the charms of eloquence, but if thou art silent they do not inflame the heart. They administer the letter, but Thou openest the sense; they utter the mystery, but You reveal its meaning; they point out the way of life, but You bestow strength to walk in it; they water, but Thou givest the increase. **Therefore do thou, O Lord, my God, Eternal Truth! speak to my soul! lest, being outwardly warmed, but not inwardly quickened, I die, and be found unfruitful.** "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." "Thou only hast the words of eternal life." --*Thomas a Kempis, 1380-1471.* (Emphases mine)

## **Consider.**

- We have the privilege of being God's servant.
- We have the promise of His favor.
- We have the prodding of His Truth.

*Do we desire Him to shine upon us? Are we obedient to His instruction?*

*In light of the blessings of God's favor and His instruction in our own lives, how are we affected when we see others turning from God?*

Weirsbe, in his book, "Be Exultant", says "As we walk with the Lord in freedom, we walk in the light and have nothing to hide. But enjoying His freedom and blessing does not eliminate the burden we carry because of the wickedness in the world (v. 136). A broken heart and a blessed heart can exist in the same person at the same time."

*Ps 119:136 My eyes shed streams of water, because they do not keep Thy law.*

Crying is something we are all familiar with. Sometimes we cry tears of joy. Most often, we cry when we are hurt. We cry when we are sad. We cry when something seems difficult or overwhelming or unfair. We cry when our hearts experience loss. We can cry for ourselves and we cry for others.

If you have the joy of salvation in your heart, knowing with certainty that God is your source of all that is needed and He has a perfect plan for your life, you experience a sense of peace through all circumstances that often seems not 'normal'. That's because it's not! It's God-given. Because we care about the people God has placed in our lives, we desire this same sense of joy for them that comes from His grace and mercy.

Watching someone step out into a busy, car-filled intersection with a blindfold on is scary and heart breaking because the end result is most certainly not good. They seem oblivious to the dangers around them, but you can imagine suffering ahead -

pain and sadness. Probably, many of you right now feel like you're watching a scenario similar to this idea in your own life, with people you know. **What is your reaction? Can you relate to the tears David sheds for those who do not follow Christ?**

Psalm 119:136 uses the words 'because they do not keep Thy law'.

This is more than someone not adhering to a standard because they don't know. In order to keep something you must have it in the first place. So this is a situation where the Truth is known yet rejected. It's not considered valuable enough to follow.

Think of the word contemn. It means to look down on with disdain, to despise, to scorn. When God's truth is reacted to in this way, it should cause His children to sorrow. **Do we shed tears for the wickedness of others? Do we sorrow when God's name is dishonored?**

Jesus wept when His beloved Jerusalem rejected Him.

*Lu 19:41 And when He approached, He saw the city and wept over it,*

Joy is a product of salvation; misery is produced from sin. There is a difference between crying for oneself and crying for the loss of others. The tears that flow from our Psalmist's eyes were not born from self-pity or his own troubles, but were shed for the miseries brought upon others as a result of sin. Read how Jeremiah wept for Jerusalem as they continued to treat God's word with disdain.

*Jer 9:1 Oh, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!*

*Jer 13:15-17 Listen and give heed, do not be haughty, for the LORD has spoken. 16 Give glory to the LORD your God, before He brings darkness and before your feet stumble on the dusky mountains, and while you are hoping for light He makes it into deep darkness, and turns it into gloom. 17 But if you will not listen to it, my soul will sob in secret for such pride; and my eyes will bitterly weep and flow down with tears, because the flock of the LORD has been taken captive.*

In Romans, we read of Paul's sorrow for the unbelieving Jews. And then in the book of Philippians, Paul wrote how he shed tears for those who professed to know Christ but were continuing to live according to the world and its pleasures.

*Ro 9:2-3 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, [separated] from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,*

*Php 3:18-19 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, [that they are] enemies of the cross of Christ, 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is [their] appetite, and [whose] glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.*

**"Let us consider the nature of this affection. 1. It is not a stoical apathy, and affected carelessness; much less a delightful partaking with sinful practices. 2. Not a proud setting off of their own goodness, with marking the sin of others as the Pharisee did**

in the gospel. 3. *Not the derision and mocking of the folly of men, with that "laughing philosopher": it comes nearer to the temper of the other who wept always for it.* 4. *It is not a bitter, bilious anger, breaking forth into railings and reproaches, nor an upbraiding insultation.* 5. *Nor is it a vindictive desire of punishment, venting itself in curses and imprecations, which is the rash temper of many, but especially of the vulgar sort. The disciples' motion to Christ was far different from that way, and yet he says to them, "We know not of what spirit ye are." They thought they had been of Elijah's spirit, but he told them they were mistaken, and did not know of what a spirit they were in that motion. Thus heady zeal often mistakes and flatters itself. We find not here a desire of fire to come down from heaven upon the breakers of the law, but such a grief as would rather bring water to quench it, if it were falling on them.*" "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes." --Robert Leighton. (Emphases mine)

In only eight verses, *Ps 119:129-136*, we are presented with an inspirational prayer from the heart of a man who truly loves God.

- v. 129      *Praises God for His word.*
- v. 130      *Recognizes the power of God's word.*
- v. 131      *Realizes his need for God's word.*
- v. 132      *Requests God's favor.*
- v. 133      *Requests direction and protection from God.*
- v. 134      *Recognizes his need to be rescued from the distraction of sin.*
- v. 135      *Requests God's presence to shine in his life as God teaches him.*
- v. 136      *Feels regret for those who reject God.*

**Take action!** *Pray through the above truths as you reflect their application in your own life and circumstances.*