

Lesson 8

“The Christian’s golden A B C of the praise,
love, power, and use of the Word of God.
Here we have set forth in inexhaustible fullness
what the word of God is to a man and
how a man is to behave himself in relation to it.”
Franz Delitzsch’s description of Psalm 119 in 1871.

“As we seek the living God through His living Word,
He makes Himself available to us.”
Mike Bullmore

Throughout the writing of this study, the following quotes have been my companions:

“Psalm 119 opens doors into the rest of Scripture. (It) carries you outside of itself to the rest of God’s revelation and to all of life.” David Powlison

“Take a verse of Psalm 119 every morning to meditate upon, and so go over the Psalm twice in a year: and that ... will bring you to be in love with all the rest of the Scriptures.” Philip Henry

Oh, to continue growing more in knowledge and affection with God’s inerrant, active, and breathing Word- what a worthy prayer and pursuit! With that in mind, let’s take one more lesson to further allow Psalm 119 to open new doors for us into *all the rest* of Scripture, and spur us on to love Them more.

To gain the most from this lesson, I encourage you to go slow. Take two or more days to cover each Day.

Store: Choose your favorite stanza from all of Psalm 119 and begin storing it up in your heart and mind. Spend time each day committing the stanza to memory.

Take time to **savor** the Word and **steep** yourself in His precious truths. Conclude your daily time of study with prayers of praise, **supplication**, and **surrender**. **Sing** to God and worship your LORD and Savior. Choose from the suggested prayers and songs or use/create your own.

Heavenly Father give us eyes to see Your Glory.
Holy Spirit, affect us and change us
as we study and delight in Your Testimonies.
Jesus, may our awe and wonder of You continue to grow,
as we look for Your Presence on every page.

“He (the psalmist) gives God glory and asks God to give him grace.

Prayers and praises make a sweet mixture.”

Charles Spurgeon

“God’s worship should be the product of all our learning.

Prayer is the helper of study,
but praise should be the object and result of it.”

Charles Spurgeon

“Amen!

Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving

And honor and power and might

Be to our God forever and ever!

Amen”

Revelation 7:12

Day 1

Read Psalm 119:1-32

1. “When we get on speaking terms with a single verse, we begin to understand something of where the entire psalm intends to take us.” David Powlison

“Take the specific sayings of God and learn to love them one by one.” James M. Boice

- Choose one or more verses from today’s passage to *study*, *love*, and *get on speaking terms* with.
 - Ask God to open your eyes to see “wondrous things” (v. 18).
 - Where do you need Psalm 119 to “befriend you” (as David Powlison said)?

A few suggestions for learning to love and get on speaking terms with a single verse:

- Slowly read the verse out loud several times, each time emphasizing a different word.
- Look up the verse in several different reliable translations.
Biblestudytool.com is a good website for this purpose.
- Pray through the verse, talking with and listening to the LORD.
- Write the verse on an index card and post where you can see it regularly.
- Find your verse in a reliable commentary and read thoughts from a godly scholar.

Here’s a few suggestions:

[ligonier.org/blog/top-5 commentaries on the book of psalms](http://ligonier.org/blog/top-5-commentaries-on-the-book-of-psalms)

biblestudytools.com/commentaries

biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries

Notice James M. Boice’s observations on how God used spiritual disciplines to transform a friend: “Meditation involved thinking what the passage he was studying was about and internalizing it, imagining what it would mean for him in specific acts of conduct. He even worked on singing specific verses to whatever tune seemed to fit them, because singing helped fix the biblical truths in his mind.”

2. Today's focus: LORD

"Blessed are You, O LORD" (v.12)

You have probably noticed that every time the psalmist refers to God as Lord, the entire word LORD is capitalized. From today's selected verses, you will find this in verses 1, 12, and 31.

Following are several Bible scholars' definitions of the name "LORD":

"The Tetragrammaton; the LORD, or Yahweh, is the personal name of God..." "the proper name of the one true God; knowledge and use of the name implies personal or covenant relationship."

"Scripture speaks of the Tetragrammaton as 'this glorious and fearful name'... It connotes God's nearness, His concern for men and the revelation of His redemptive covenant."

John R. Kohlenberger III

"Yahweh is used when God's covenantal relationship with Israel is in view."

Bruce Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary*

"YHWH is parallel to I AM who I AM. Personal, eternal and all-sufficient."

Hill & Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament*. Zondervan, 1991 pg. 113

3. Oh, the splendors of our personal, glorious, covenantal, and fearful God! In this first day, we will focus on the LORD's nearness—His personal, relational commitment to and with each of His children. (On Day 3 we will focus on the covenantal aspect of YHWH, our LORD.)

Look up Deuteronomy 4:1-8

According to Moses, what distinctives set the Israelites apart from other nations?

Isaiah 40:10-11

List the specific actions of our God. Notice the vast and powerful contrasts in His character.

These vast and varied actions of our God, added together, help to display a beautiful picture of Who our God is. He rules with absolute power and might and yet gently and lovingly gathers us in His arms.

Oh, the nearness of our glorious God!

How is His nearness described in the following verses?

Psalm 145:18

Matthew 1:23

Galatians 2:20

Revelation 3:20

“But You are near, O LORD, and all your commandments are true.”

Psalm 119:151

4. Read and meditate on one of following Psalms.

Marvel at further evidence of God’s nearness and personal care.

Jot down a few specific phrases that demonstrate His personal care for you.

Psalm 23

Psalm 139

Sit at the feet of Jesus, taking time to pray, listen, and sing.

Offer personal praises to your God, using specific truths about His nearness.

“Come down, O love divine,
Seek thou this soul of mine,
And visit it with thine own ardor glowing.
O Comforter, draw near, within my heart appear,
And kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.”
Bianco da Siena

“A Prayer about God’s Goodness and Nearness in the Storm”

Isaiah 43:1-3

Heavenly Father, your Word is a balm for the broken, ballast for the bewildered, and bread for the hungry. This is not theory. It’s not even just good theology. It’s my reality and I praise you. You’ve promised to show up, and you have. Thank you for being the Father from whom all fatherhood derives its name and meaning. No god is as near as you and no god is as good, in every season and storm. The aroma of fresh gospel bread is wafting through the air.

You’ve created us and you are redeeming us, all for your glory. You’ve summoned us by name, calling us to life in the gospel. You’ve give us a new name, “Mine”. There’s no sweeter name.

Father, you don’t promise we won’t experience floods and torrents and fires and flames. But you do promise you will be with us. To know you are near and to know you are good is all we really need. We will go anywhere and do anything as long as we are convinced that you will never leave us, forsake us, abandon us, shame us, or reject us.

Father, we know ourselves to be precious and honored in your sight, and greatly loved, because you gave Jesus in exchange for us. Through Jesus was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, so that through his poverty we might become rich (2Cor. 8:9)! And since you didn’t spare your own Son, we can trust you graciously to give us everything else we need (Rom. 8:32), for every season and storm ahead. We don’t have to be afraid of anything or anyone. You are with us and you are for us.

Continue to write bigger and better stories of reconciliation and restoration than we ourselves would ever choose to pen. We pray to the glory of the true Peacemaker, Jesus. Amen.

(*Everyday Prayers*, Scotty Smith)

Songs:

Be near, oh God
Be near, oh God of us
Your nearness is to us our good
Your fullness is mine
Revelation divine
But, o, to taste
To know much more than a page
To feel Your embrace...
For dark is light to You
The depths are height to You
Far is near, but Lord
I need to hear from You....
("Be Near" by Shane & Shane)

Jesus, keep me near the cross,
There a precious fountain—
Free to all, a healing stream—
Flows from Calv'ry's mountain.
Near the cross, a trembling soul,
Love and Mercy found me;
There the bright and morning star
Sheds its beams around me.
Near the cross! O Lamb of God,
Bring its scenes before me;
Help me walk from day to day,
With its shadows o'er me.
Refrain:
In the cross, in the cross,
Be my glory ever;
Till my raptured soul shall find
Rest beyond the river.
("Near The Cross" by Frances J. Crosby)

“The best possible praise is that which proceeds from men who honour God,
not only with their lips, but in their lives.

We learn the music of heaven in the school of holy living.
He whose life honours the Lord is sure to be a man of praise.”

Charles Spurgeon

“But I have trusted in Your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.

I will sing to the LORD,
Because He has dealt bountifully with me.”

Psalm 13:5-6

“Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him,
On those who hope in His steadfast love,
That He may deliver their soul from death...”

Psalm 33:18

Day 2

Read Psalm 119: 33-72

1. From his article “Suffering and Psalm 119,” David Powlison believes that Psalm 119 in its entirety is an “outcry of faith,” “a rich confession of faith,” and “faith in action.”

In today’s section of verses, specifically where and how do you see the psalmist:

- Crying out for faith?
- Confessing or declaring faith?
- Acting in faith?

Today, do you find yourself most in need of crying out to the Lord for faith as you walk through a trial, or taking a specific action of faith in order to be obedient? Take some time to talk with the Lord about this. Use specific verses to share your requests and declarations with Him.

“Have you learned how true, how utterly trustworthy God’s Word is, even when everything and everyone around you proves false and untrustworthy?”

James M. Boice

2. Today’s focus: God’s *hesed* love brings salvation.

Psalm 119:41 says “Let your steadfast love come to me, O LORD, your salvation according to your promise.”

Charles Spurgeon explains verse 41 this way: “Salvation is joined with mercy; the sum and crown of all mercies—deliverance from all evil, both now and forever. What a mass of mercies are heaped together in the one salvation of our Lord Jesus!”

The connection or link between God’s steadfast love and His gift of salvation is certainly not unique to this psalm.

Read Psalm 85 and Psalm 86

Notice the numerous connections between God’s steadfast love and His gift of salvation. Write out a few of these connections and take time to meditate on these truths.

Using Psalms 85 and 86, as well as Psalm 119:33-72, what are several additional attributes of the LORD declared here, that help us understand the scope of His *hesed* love?

Where do God’s steadfast love and faithfulness meet?

Where do you see God’s perfect and holy righteousness kissing (connecting with) His peace (Psalm 85:10)?

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace...” Ephesians 2:13-14

“Righteousness and peace meet in Christ, God’s man. ... As in their proper centre, they ‘kissed each other’ on this [Christmas] day, because the gospel performed what the law promised.” John Boys

As we contemplate how salvation powerfully displays God’s *hesed* love, here are a few thoughts from Tremper Longman in his commentary on Psalm 85:

85:10-13. Confident in His covenantal faithfulness

The psalmist ends with a powerful reflection on God’s covenant with His people, personifying the divine qualities that are promised in the covenant and displayed in His relationship with His people. Steadfast love is the loyalty that the covenantal king demonstrated to his vassal people. Faithfulness affirms that God will indeed follow through on His promises. Righteousness indicates that God will act in accordance with His nature, and the harmony of peace is the result (a blessing of

the covenant). Verse 10 presents the touching picture of these four qualities coming together in an intimate embrace in the person of God.

(*Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries)

3. Take time to savor the following verses that help explain this beautiful, awful, costly place where God's *hesed* love and salvation meet:

Psalm 130:7

"O Israel, hope in the LORD; For with the LORD there is lovingkindness, And with Him is abundant redemption." (NAS)

"O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption." (ESV)

"O Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love, and with Him is full redemption." (NIV)

Romans 5:8

"But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." (CSB)

Take time to stop and consider: How does God's steadfast love proved in salvation intersect with your present burdens, joys, thoughts, and actions?

Thank and praise God for loving us so much that He gave His only begotten Son.

Thank and praise Jesus for choosing to leave His rightful place in Heaven in order to bring salvation to all who believe, repent, and place their trust in Him.

"...that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, so that through His poverty we might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9)

"Salvation is an aggregate of mercies
incalculable in number, priceless in value,
incessant in application, eternal in endurance."

Charles Spurgeon

HEAVENLY FATHER,
Thou hast led me singing to the cross
where I fling down all my burdens
and see them vanish,
where my mountains of guilt are levelled
to a plain,
where my sins disappear, though they are
the greatest that exist,
and are more in number than the grains
of fine sand;
For there is power in the blood of Calvary
to destroy sins more than can be counted
even by one from the choir of heaven.
Thou hast given me a hill-side spring
that washes clear and white,
and I go as a sinner to its waters,
bathing without hindrance
in its crystal streams.
At the cross there is free forgiveness
for poor and meek ones,
and ample blessings that last forever;
The blood of the Lamb is like a great river
of infinite grace
with never any diminishing of its fullness
as thirsty ones without number drink of it.
O Lord, forever will thy free forgiveness live
that was gained on the mount of blood;
In the midst of a world of pain
it is a subject for praise in every place,
a song on earth, an anthem in heaven,
its love and virtue knowing no end.
I have a longing for the world above
where multitudes sing the great song,
for my soul was never created to love
the dust of earth.
Though here my spiritual state is frail and poor,
I shall go on singing Calvary's anthem.
May I always know
that a clean heart full of goodness
is more beautiful than the lily,
that only a clean heart can sing by night
and by day,
that such a heart is mine when I abide
at Calvary.

"Calvary's Anthem", Valley of Vision

Songs:

The grace of God has reached for me
And pulled me from the raging sea
And I am safe on this solid ground
The Lord is my salvation
My hope is hidden in the Lord
He flow'rs each promise of His Word
When winter fades I know spring will come
The Lord is my salvation
Who is like the Lord our God?
Strong to save, faithful in love
My debt is paid and the vict'ry won
The Lord is my salvation ("The Lord is my Salvation" by Keith and Kristyn Getty)

Who could imagine so great a mercy?
What heart could fathom such boundless grace?
The God of ages stepped down from glory
To wear my sin and bear my shame
The cross has spoken, I am forgiven
The King of kings calls me His own
Beautiful Savior, I'm Yours forever
Jesus Christ, my living hope
Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me
You have broken every chain
There's salvation in Your name
Jesus Christ, ... ("My Living Hope" by Phil Wickham)

And can it be that I should gain
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain—
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be,
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
He left His Father's throne above—
So free, so infinite His grace—
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me!
Amazing love! How can it be,
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me? ("And Can It Be" by Charles Wesley)

“In order to grow in grace, we must be much alone with God.
It is not in society, even Christian society that the soul grows most rapidly and
vigorously.

In one single quiet hour of prayer it will often make more progress than in whole days of
company with others.”

Horatius Bonar, Ministerial Confessions

“O beloved! I can say for myself, I am a continual miracle of divine grace.

If thou leave me, Lord, for a moment, I am utterly undone.”

Charles Spurgeon, Distinguishing Grace

Day 3

1. “The Psalms are not only the heart of the Old Testament; they are a pivotal witness and anticipation of Jesus Christ... After interpreting a psalm according to its Old Testament context, consider how the psalm anticipates the coming of Jesus Christ. Ask how the song may be sung to Jesus.” (Tremper Longman III)

As we learned in Lesson 7, Psalm 119 is a wisdom psalm. As Longman explains, “The wisdom psalms call us to be wise, to be righteous, to follow the law of God. As we receive this command, it draws us to Jesus. we know we can’t be wise ourselves. We must seek wisdom elsewhere.”

Read Psalm 119:73-104.

In light of Longman’s thoughts, take time to look for Jesus, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3).

- Where might one or more of these verses be a witness to the coming of the Messiah?
- Where do you see Jesus’ presence or His example on display?
- Is there a particular verse that draws you to Jesus—your wise, humble, righteous, and loving Savior?
- Is there a particular song you want to sing to Jesus in light of these verses?

Sinclair Ferguson believes we should ask the following question of every psalm:

- “How and when might these words have been on Jesus’ mind?”

During my first read through, I had trouble answering these questions. I had to slow down and ask God to open my eyes. I then read one verse at a time, and I began to see!

For example, verse 75 says, “In faithfulness You have afflicted me.” I remembered that God the Father afflicted His own beloved Son in faithfulness; why, then, do I often think I should be exempted from affliction? I recalled a verse that says something about “it was the Father’s will to crush Him.” I looked up “crush” in the back of my Bible and found Isaiah 53:10. That caused me to read all of Isaiah 53 and offer praise to my Savior for how His affliction brought my salvation.

Verses 89-91 speak of God’s eternal presence. From a previous lesson, we learned that Jesus was with God from before the beginning of time, so I realized these verses are not only speaking of God the Father, but of Jesus, God the Son. I wanted to find additional verses that speak of this truth, so I googled the phrase “Jesus was with God from the beginning.” The first item that popped up was an article by John Piper entitled “Before Time Began, Jesus Was,” from *Desiring God*, October 11, 2017. I looked up a few of the verses used in the article. My gaze and my soul were lifted upward as I meditated on these truths about my Savior. I was motivated to see more of His Presence in Psalm 119.

Keep in mind, there are no specific “right answers” to these questions. However, developing eyes that “look for Jesus” as we read Psalm 119, any of the psalms, or for that matter, the entire Old Testament, will only cause our awe and wonder of Jesus to grow—our love and delight in His Word to blossom.

2. Today’s focus: God’s steadfast (*hesed*) love is connected to and revealed in His covenant promises.

“Let your steadfast love comfort me according to your promise to your servant” (v.76)

Here in verse 76 we see that God’s steadfast love is linked to His covenants, His promises.

Look up the following passage to see further evidence of this connection.

Psalm 89:20-35

For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,” says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

Isaiah 54:10

The following definition of Yahweh, from pastor Josh Fenska, explains this covenantal aspect of the LORD's name:

YHWH (Yahweh) is a divine name (*the* divine name) given to Moses and used all across the Old Testament. In almost all English translations, YHWH is represented with the word "LORD" in all caps. YHWH is a relational / covenantal name for the God-Who-IS. (in Ex. 3:13-15, YHWH is set alongside God explaining, "I AM who I AM.") It is not a generic name for any old deity (like the more generic Hebrew word *elohim*, usually translated "God"). It is not a distant concept (like we might associate with "a lord"). It is a name that is almost always tied specifically to His relationship with His covenant people. When you read the term LORD, you can very often find significance in considering how the covenant commitment of God (past, present and future) to His redeemed people shines light on what is being said.

3. During this lesson, we will barely begin to dip our toes into the vast, rich, and deep ocean of the covenant commitments of God. If you'd like to dig deeper, I encourage you to read John Piper's article, "The Covenant of Abraham" (*Desiring God*, October 18, 1981).

Look up the following passages.

What **are** the covenant commitments of God?

Genesis 12:1-3

Genesis 13:14-17

Genesis 15: 1-6; 17-21

Genesis 17:1-8

Exodus 2:23-25 (or even through chapter 3)

Joshua, a faithful servant of the LORD, at the end of his life, makes this awesome declaration in Joshua 21:43-45:

“So, the Lord gave Israel all the land He had sworn to give their forefathers ... Not one of all the LORD’s good promises to the house of Israel failed; everyone was fulfilled.”

4. How do these Old Testament covenants apply to us, living in the 21st century?

Here is how John Piper describes it:

God’s purpose is to bless the world with the blessings of Abraham. He is to be a conduit, not a cul-de-sac, of God’s blessing. Therefore, even though God has begun his redemptive, reclaiming process with a single individual, He has in view the world. He has a plan, a clear purpose for the centuries, and it reaches even to us ... God’s 4,000-year-old relation to Abraham is of immense importance for your life as a believer today. Everything written about Abraham “was written for your instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures you might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

The author of Psalm 119 seems to understand this connection between Abraham and himself:

“Let your steadfast love comfort me according to your promise to your servant” (v.76).

Read Galatians 3:7-14; 23-29

How can we know that God’s covenantal promises are for us, today?

“So then, *those who have faith* are blessed *with* faithful Abraham...In Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (v.14) ...There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s then you are Abraham’s offspring (seed), heirs according to the promise (v.28,29).” (John Piper, emphasis added)

By faith, which is a gift from God, we are the beneficiaries of this covenantal, *hesed* love. By faith, we can and should place our complete hope in our gracious LORD and His covenantal promises.

“...but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His steadfast love.” Psalm 147:11

“Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in You.” Psalm 33:22

“Know therefore that the LORD your God is God,
The faithful God
Who keeps covenant and steadfast love
With those who love Him and keep His commandments,
To a thousand generations.
Deuteronomy 7:9

Covenant Faithfulness

Psalm 89:24-32

Faithful heavenly Father,

You are a covenant-keeping God, but we have forsaken your law and violated your statutes. We have not walked according to your rules or kept your commandments. Though you have always been faithful to us, we are unfaithful to you many times each day in our thoughts and with our words and actions. We know that we deserve to be punished for our sin. We have earned the rod of your anger and violent stripes of bitter anguish for our mountains of iniquity. Father, because of your steadfast love, forgive us we pray.

Jesus, you have been faithful in all things for us, keeping covenant with your Father on our behalf. You were the sinless Servant who kept the law perfectly, the perfect Son who walked according to your Father's commandments, and now you have become the Rock of our salvation. You truly earned the steadfast love and faithfulness of God, but willingly surrendered to the punishment that we deserve for all our rebellion. Instead of a throne here on earth, you chose a cross; instead of the honor of a high king, you chose the humiliation of whips and lashes, your flesh torn as you endured our stripes of anguish. You freely took our place, enduring our shame as you were lifted up to die. Thank you, Lord Jesus. Now the empty tomb proclaims God's faithfulness to you, his obedient Son, and to all of us who are united to you. By faith we behold you, the Holy Lamb of God, crowned with glory and honor and seated on a throne that will last forever. You are so worthy to be praised.

Holy Spirit, in our great weakness, help us to believe that guilty and vile sinners like ourselves become spotlessly clean in the redeeming blood of Christ. Cause us to see him as our precious jewel, the one great treasure that we seek above all else. Grant us overwhelming joy in this Man of Sorrows who made full atonement for us and help us to believe and enjoy the truth that it is truly finished. Make us steadfast and faithful until that wonderful day when we see our glorious King and we are brought safely home where we will sing, “Hallelujah, what a Savior,” forevermore. Amen.

(Prone to Wander: Prayers of Confession and Celebration, Barbara R. Duguid and Wayne Duguid Houk)

Songs:

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea:
A great High Priest, whose name is Love,
Whoever lives and pleads for me.
Behold Him there, the Risen Lamb
My perfect, spotless righteousness,
The great unchangeable I am,
The King of glory and of grace!
("Before the Throne of God Above" by C.L. Bancroft)

Standing on the promises of Christ my King
Through eternal ages let his praises ring
Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing
Standing on the promises of God
Standing on the promises, I cannot fall
Listening every moment to the Spirit's call
Resting in my Savior as my all in all
Standing on the promises of God
("Standing on the promises of Christ my King" by Alan Jackson)

“... let us offer to God acceptable worship,
with reverence and awe
for our God is a consuming fire.”
Hebrews 12:28-29

“Live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.”
1 Peter 1:17

“The fear of God in which godliness consists is the fear which constrains (compels or powerfully produces) adoration and love.

It is the fear which consists in awe, reverence, honor, and worship,
and all of these on the highest level of exercise.

It is the reflex in our consciousness of the transcendent majesty and holiness of God.”
John Murray

Day 4

Read 119:105-144

1. Today's focus: fearing God = obedience + awe and wonder

"My flesh trembles for fear of you, and I am afraid of your judgments" (v.120)

"Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them" (v.129)

Spurgeon explains the connection between the wonder of God's ways and the psalmist's obedience this way: "Their wonderful character so impressed itself upon his mind that he kept them in his memory; their wonderful excellence so charmed his heart that he kept them in his life" (Boice 1040).

How are we to think appropriately about a God who is both loving and yet perfect in holiness?

How are we to respond to this God who is both near yet fearful, Abba and Yahweh, our loving Shepherd and a "consuming fire" and "a jealous god"? (Deuteronomy 4:24)

Here's how several theologians describe the fear of the Lord:

- "True religion consists in a proper mixture of fear of God, and of hope in his mercy; and wherever either of these is entirely wanting, there can be no true religion. Those only who both fear him and hope in his mercy, give him the honour that is due to his name." (Edward Payson, from Spurgeon, "The Treasury of David")
- "That indefinable mixture of reverence, fear, pleasure, joy and awe which fills our heart when we realize who God is and what He has done for us."
(Sinclair Ferguson, "Grow in Grace")
- The proper definition of the fear of God is "reverential awe".
Awe: "an emotion in which dread, veneration, and wonder are variously mingled." To have a proper fear of God, "we need to include respect (which toward God means reverence) in recognition of His infinite worth and dignity; admiration of His glorious attributes; and amazement at His infinite love." (Jerry Bridges, "The Joy of Fearing God")

The following passages are just two examples of the numerous Scriptures that speak about this mixture of fear, awe, and obedience. The passage from Malachi is a sober reminder that our God does not ignore or take lightly dishonor to His name.

1 Samuel 12:24

Malachi 2:1-5

Let all the earth fear the LORD;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!
Psalm 33:8

2. From the verses below, what are additional ways we demonstrate appropriate biblical fear of God?

Exodus 14:31

Deuteronomy 6:13-15

Joshua 24:14

Psalm 33:18

“The end of the matter; all has been heard.
Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the whole duty of man.”
Ecclesiastes 12:13

3. From the connections we've seen between fear/trust/hope/awe/obedience, look for examples in Psalm 119:105-144 and record your observations.

Where do you see the psalmist fearing God by...?

- Hoping and trusting in His mercy?
- Standing in awe of God's character and what He has done?
- Obeying His words of life?

Read Isaiah 11:1-3 to see the ultimate example of one who delights in fearing the LORD.

“None reverence the Lord more than they who know him best and
are most familiar with him”

William Cowper

Through His living and active Word, God promises *many* rewards for those who fear Him. Oh, the kindness and generosity of our God!

“The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.” (Psalm 25:14)

“The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.” (Proverbs 14:27)

“Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind!” (Psalm 31:19)

4. Take time to commune with the LORD and complete the following:

- I have the opportunity to fear God when I trust Him with.....
- I fear God as I consider, declare and praise Him for these great and specific things He has done for me:

- I fear God when I resist this specific sin_____and obey Him by...

“We... will trust God to the extent we fear Him; to the extent we stand in absolute awe and amazement at His great power and sovereign rule over all His creation. Frequent meditation on passages of Scripture such as Isaiah 40 will help us fear the Lord and be able to trust Him more.” (Jerry Bridges)

Prayer:

Worship

It is the flame of my life to worship thee,
the crown and glory of my soul to adore thee,
heavenly pleasure to approach thee.
Give me power by thy Spirit to help me
worship now,
that I may forget the world,
be brought into fullness of life,
be refreshed, comforted, blessed.
Give me knowledge of thy goodness
that I might not be over-awed by thy greatness;
Give me Jesus, Son of Man, Son of God,
that I might not be terrified,
but be drawn near with filial love,
with holy boldness;
He is my Mediator, Brother, Interpreter,
Branch, Daysman, Lamb;
him I glorify,
in him I am set on high
Crowns to give I have none,
but what thou hast given I return,
content to feel that everything is mine
when it is thine,
and the more fully mine when I have yielded it
to thee.
Let me live wholly to my Saviour,
free from distractions,
from carking care,
from hindrances to the pursuit
of the narrow way.
I am pardoned through the blood of Jesus —
give me a new sense of it,
continue to pardon me by it,
may I come every day to the fountain,
and every day be washed anew,
that I may worship thee always
in spirit and truth.

Valley of Vision

Songs:

Holy, Holy, Holy
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee
Perfect in power, in love, and purity
Holy, holy, holy
Lord, God Almighty
All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth and sky and sea
Holy, holy, holy
Merciful and mighty
God in three persons blessed Trinity
("Holy, Holy, Holy" by John B. Dykes, Reginald Heber, George S. Schuler)

Come, thou almighty King,
Help us Thy Name to sing, help us to praise!
Father all glorious, o'er all victorious,
Come and reign over us, Ancient of Days!

To Thee, great One in Three,
Eternal praises be, hence, evermore;
Thy sov'reign majesty may we in glory see,
And to eternity love and adore!
("Come, Thou Almighty King" by Charles Wesley)

He is also aware that he is very unlikely, himself, to achieve this perfection of discipline:

“O that my ways *were* made so straight that I *might* keep thy statutes!” (v. 5).

At present they aren’t, and he can’t. But his effort to do so does not spring from servile fear.

The Order of the Divine mind, embodied in the Divine Law, is beautiful.

What should a man do but try to reproduce it, so far as possible, in his daily life?

His ‘delight’ is in those statutes (v. 16);

to study them is like finding treasure (v. 14);

they affect him like music, are his ‘songs’ (v. 54);

they taste like honey (v. 103); they are better than silver and gold (v. 72).

As one’s eyes are more and more opened, one sees more and more in them, and it excites wonder (v. 18).

This is not priggery nor even scrupulosity;

it is the language of a man ravished by a moral beauty.

If we cannot at all share his experience, we shall be the losers.”
(*Reflections on the Psalms*, C.S. Lewis, 1958)

Day 5

1. Read Psalm 119: 145-176 and:

- Look for Jesus! Where do you see His imprint?
- Choose a verse from today's passage to *study, love, and get on speaking terms* with. Use one or more of the suggestions from Day 2.
- Use the prayers and songs of the psalmist in these stanzas and make them your own.

Where and how do you need to:

- Cry out for faith?
- Confess faith?
- Find one affirmation about God and His Word that you need to see, believe, and declare. Speak truth to yourself about your God.
- Act in faith?
- What step of obedience can you take today to declare your trust in Him and His Word?

2. Today's focus: God's steadfast *hesed* love= life!

"Give me life according to your steadfast love." (v.159)

"In your steadfast love give me life..." (v. 88)

Ironically, in order to understand the connection between God's *hesed* love and life, we must first discuss death.

Paul Miller, in his book *A Loving Life*, offers this definition of *hesed*:

"*Hesed* combines love and loyalty; commitment with sacrifice. One-way love. Love without an exit strategy. Stubborn love. Unbalanced. Uneven. Unfair. Active. Not dependent upon or determined by feelings. When you love with *hesed* love, you bind yourself to the object of your love, no matter what the response is. Your response to the other person is entirely independent of how that person has treated you. Death is at the center of *hesed* love. That's why, subconsciously, we are allergic to love. We rightly sense that death is at the center of love."

Read the following passages. Take time to savor Jesus; His willing, obedient death on your behalf; and the life that His death brings to you.

Ephesians 2:4-7

Philippians 2:5-11

1 John 4:9-10

He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

1 Thessalonians 5:10 (NIV)

"Jesus's *hesed* of us means that he turns his face to the cross and never looks back." Paul Miller

"Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." Luke 9:51 (NKJV) (ASV)

"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

John 15:13

"By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us..."

1 John 3:16

3. Read the following passages and circle or highlight each time you see the word “life.”
Which of Jesus’ names (titles) are used in these passages?

John 1:1-5

John 6:35-51

John 14:6

The deceitful enemy of our present world is touting the lie that many paths lead to God and life. These passages expose that lie in a big way.

One path leads to God and it is through:

Jesus, “the radiance of the glory of God” (Hebrews 1:3)

One path leads to life and it is through:

Jesus, “the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15)

Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the only Source of Life, invites us to come eat with Him at the marriage supper of the Lamb! (Revelation 19:9)

“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! **Come**, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

“Incline your ear, and *come* unto me; hear, and your soul shall *live*: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David”

Isaiah 55:3 (ASV), emphasis added

Read Jesus’ appeal to *all* people in the final chapters of His eternal, living, inerrant love letter:

Revelation 21:5-7

Revelation 22

To whom does the Alpha and Omega give this water of life?

What do we need to bring in order to receive it?

“May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God
and to the steadfastness of Christ.”

2 Thessalonians 3:5

May the prayers and praises of the psalmist be **our** continual prayers and praises until the day Jesus calls us to our eternal Home.

“Give me life according to Your Word.” (Psalm 119:25)

“Give me life in Your ways.” (Psalm 119:37)

“In Your steadfast love give me life.” (Psalm 119:88)

“Give me life O LORD, according to Your Word!” (Psalm 119:108)

“O LORD, according to Your justice give me life.” (Psalm 119:149)

“Give me life according to your steadfast love.” (Psalm 119:159)

May we live every day with the attitude of Simon Peter, who said to Jesus,
“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

Come to the “Bread of Life”! His arms are open wide. His heart is eager to embrace us.
Worship and bow down at the feet of the “Word of God,” the “Fountain of Living Waters,”
“King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

Jesus Christ, the covenant-keeping God, overflowing with *hesed* love for you, His beloved child, speaks this promise over you:

“For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:40)

Amen. Come Lord Jesus.

Prayers:

“Grant, O God, of your mercy,
That we may come to everlasting life,
And there beholding your glory as it is,
May equally say:
Glory to the Father who created us,
Glory to the Son who redeemed us,
Glory to the Holy Spirit who sanctified us.
Glory to the most high and undivided Trinity,
Whose works are inseparable,
Whose kingdom without end abides,
From age to age, forever, Amen.”

(Augustine, 354-430)

Sovereign Father, every single time I begin to get a little antsy, anxious, or angry about national and international politics, you center my heart with the music of heaven. What did followers of Jesus need in the crazy-making chaos of first-century Rome? The same thing we followers of Jesus need in the crazy-making chaos of our twenty-first century global community. We need to sing your story. We need to sing our theology. We need to sing the gospel!

Hand me a harp today, Father. I'll gladly join the heavenly chorus singing the song of Moses--a song of your Exodus grace, deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, deliverance into a land of freedom. But I'll sing the song of the Lamb even *louder*! For Jesus has delivered us from sin and death, into the glorious freedom of the children of God, and Jesus will deliver us into the ultimate land of freedom--the new heaven and new earth!

Father, I choose to live and sing in light of the day when all nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been and are being revealed so clearly in the gospel. Great and marvelous are your deeds of mercy and grace in Jesus, Lord God Almighty.

All of your ways, in heaven and on earth, are just and true, for you are the King of the ages. Every other king gets the “fifteen minutes in the spotlight” you appoint them, but you alone are “the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God,” and to you “be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen” (I Tim. 1:17 NIV)

I'll not be afraid of any human king, but I will fear you, Lord, for you alone are holy and you alone are good. As the gospel does its work in my heart, I pray my thoughts, words, and deeds will increasingly bring you glory. I pray in Jesus' sovereign and saving name. Amen

(*Everyday Prayers*, Scotty Smith)

Songs:

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of Heav'n to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling;
All thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in Heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

("Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" by Charles Wesley)

Sing them over again to me,
Wonderful words of life,
Let me more of their beauty see,
Wonderful words of life;
Words of life and beauty
Teach me faith and duty.

Beautiful words, wonderful words,
Wonderful words of life;
Beautiful words, wonderful words,
Wonderful words of life.

Christ, the blessed One, gives to all
Wonderful words of life;
Sinner, list to the loving call,
Wonderful words of life;
All so freely given,
Wooing us to heaven.

Sweetly echo the Gospel call,
Wonderful words of life;
Offer pardon and peace to all,
Wonderful words of life;
Jesus, only Savior,
Sanctify us forever.

("Wonderful Words of Life" by Philip P. Bliss, 1874)

Glory to God in the highest
Glory to God evermore
Good news, great joy for all
Melody breaks through the silence
Christ, the Savior is born!
Jesus, the love song of God!
("Jesus, the Love Song of God" by Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Jonas Myrin)

There is an endless song
Echoes in my soul
I hear the music ring
And though the storms may come
I am holding on
To the rock I cling
How can I keep from singing Your praise
How can I ever say enough
How amazing is Your love
How can I keep from shouting Your name
I know I am loved by the King
And it makes my heart want to sing
I will lift my eyes
In the darkest night
For I know my Savior lives
And I will walk with You
Knowing You'll see me through
And sing the songs You give
I can sing in the troubled times
Sing when I win
I can sing when I lose my step
And fall down again
I can sing 'cause You pick me up
Sing 'cause You're there
I can sing 'cause You hear me, Lord
When I call to You in prayer
I can sing with my last breath
Sing for I know
That I'll sing with the angels
And the saints around the throne
("How Can I Keep From Singing" by Eithne Ni Bhraonain, Nicky Ryan, Roma Shane Ray)

