RIGHT LIVING
You can overcome the challenges in living for God.

CHRISTIAN OBLIGATIONS
What does it mean to be on active duty for the Lord?

LIVING ABOVE LOSS
There is hope in the midst of pain.

ALWAYS FAITHFUL
Stay focused to finish strong.

A NEW WAY OF LIFE
Have you opted in to an authentic Christian community?

MAKE THE RIGHT CONNECTION
There is a connection between what God does and what we do.

GOD’S GOT IT!
Trust God in the hard places of life.

COMING NEXT QUARTER
We talk a lot about the importance of staying physically fit, but what about the health of your spirit? Connect, Grow, Serve, Go is a call to evaluate your present spiritual condition and discover ways to improve your spiritual health. Packed into each biblical concept—Connect, Grow, Serve, Go—is a simple way you can move forward, not remain stagnant. Best of all, these tools will stand the test of time—no “fad” diets here. They will help you become spiritually healthy, and stay that way.

**Connect** urges you to worship, pray, fellowship, and relate to others in positive relationships at work, at home, and in other settings. Spiritual fitness results when you connect with God, with others, and with your church family.

**Grow** refers to learning and understanding more about God and His expectations of His people, which comes through Bible study. You grow by applying that knowledge to your everyday living.

**Serve** describes the work you do inside your church. Your church is full of ministry and service opportunities. You serve by using your spiritual gifts, skills, and passions to glorify God. All of us must work together for the church to function as God intended.

**Go** moves you outside the church and into the community and the world. Evangelism and missions are ways to go into your community and the world in the name of Jesus Christ. It might be uncomfortable at first, but you will experience first-hand the difference Christ can make through you.

Connect, Grow, Serve, Go must impact YOU, the individual, before it can permeate your circle of friends, your Bible study group, and then the church as a whole. But balance is the key! We must be actively participating in all four areas if we want to be spiritually healthy. All Go and no Connect with God or other believers results in powerless activity and wears you out. A steady diet of Grow without the action of Serve or Go leads to unhealthy spiritual obesity and laziness. We need a balanced spiritual diet to remain fit and able to serve God in the ways He has gifted us.

The **YOU** lessons will help you Connect 🎭, Grow 🎤, Serve 🎩, and Go 🚶. Look for these icons throughout this issue. They will help you check and maintain your spiritual health.

Visit [www.lifeway.com/adultstrategy](http://www.lifeway.com/adultstrategy) for more about Connect, Grow, Serve, Go.
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DAILY READINGS are included after each lesson.
A WORD FROM THE EDITOR...

I recently spent quality "play time" with a preschooler. What an awakening! Every time I asked how or where a game piece fit, the jubilant reply began with, "Oh, that's easy!" Each time I seemed perplexed by my next "move," I was encouraged with, "Oh, that's easy!"

I don’t think I’ve ever heard an adult say that about life. Nor do I recall having read it in the Bible. Full of ups-and-downs, hard knocks, surprises, and countless blessings—yes, but never "easy." Emotional roller coaster, exceeding expectation, bittersweet—yes, but never "easy."

Regardless of what life brings, isn’t it good to know that we don’t have to experience any of it alone? That there’s always One with us to lead, guide, protect, and comfort us? One who shares our joy and sorrow? Who never, ever fails?

I learned a valuable lesson from my young friend: How we choose to live speaks volumes into how "easy" or difficult our lives become. I pray that you will be strengthened by this quarter’s lessons on Christian duty, lifestyle, and trust. Be encouraged and choose to live out the truth found in God’s Word. It won’t be easy, but it will be worth it!

Peace and blessings,

[Signature]

SUGGESTED DISCIPLE-MAKING RESOURCES

Here’s a list of resources you can use to deepen your understanding of the units of study this quarter. These resources complement the lessons for this quarter and can be used for small group study, midweek study, or personal Bible study.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

(FOR UNIT 1)

Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life by Rita Platt and Donald Whitney will help you on your way to expressing Christ’s character through your own personality. It is a guide for disciplines that include Scripture reading, prayer, worship, Scripture meditation, evangelism and Scripture application. This resource will provide an opportunity to embrace the pursuit of holiness-through a lifelong delight in the disciplines.

MANAGE: CARING FOR ALL GOD ENTRUSTED TO US

(FOR UNIT 2)

Manage: Caring for All God Entrusted to Us by Micah Carter and Fred Luter is a Bible study that takes a practical, but scriptural approach to using God’s gifts to us: money, time, relationships, and the environment. This four-session Bible study helps you understand how to manage and leverage resources for God’s mission faithfully. This four session study includes Stewarding God’s Money, Discerning Our Days, Building Healthy Relationships, and Ruling the Earth.

FOLLOW ME: LEARNING ABOUT FAITH, OBEDIENCE, AND BEING MADE HOLY

(FOR UNIT 3)

When we answer Jesus’ call to follow Him, we immediately join in the charge to spread the gospel. We’re not supposed to have it all figured out—we’re supposed to learn as we go, all the while being made holy. That’s the process. Follow Me: Learning About Faith, Obedience, and Being Made Holy by Jason Hayes is a six-session Bible study for young adults that revisits six life-altering encounters the disciples had with Jesus to find out what we can learn about Him through those encounters.

Visit www.lifeway.com or call 1-800-458-2772 for more information or to purchase any of these products.
A Bible Study on Duty

The Christian life sometimes is compared to being in the military. Adults sing “Onward Christian Soldiers,” while children act out motions to “I’m in the Lord’s Army.” In case you missed being in the “Lord’s Army” as a child, it refers to marching, riding, and flying. These songs remind us that, as believers, we are called to be on active duty for the Lord at all times, 24-7, 365. Sometimes, though, we go AWOL. That’s not “absent without leave” but rather “away without the Lord.” We move away from the Lord when we lose sight of the commitments He calls us to make and keep as believers.

The new unit entitled “Christian Obligations” focuses on some of these commitments. You’ll consider questions like these:

• Why should I read and study my Bible?
• Why is prayer important?
• How do I view witnessing?
• What am I missing if I’m not in Christian community?

Are you ready? Your Commander in Chief awaits. Let’s learn more about connecting with God, with others, and with your church family through this Bible study on duty.

Follow the Guiding Light

Background Passage: Psalm 119
Lesson Passage: Psalm 119:9-16

The Question: Why should I read and study my Bible?
The Point: God’s Word will guide your life.

LESSON PASSAGE

PSALM 119:9-16

9 How can a young man keep his way pure?
   By keeping Your word.
10 I have sought You with all my heart;
    don’t let me wander from Your commands.
11 I have treasured Your word in my heart
    so that I may not sin against You.
12 Lord, may You be praised;
    teach me Your statutes.
13 With my lips I proclaim all the judgments from Your mouth.
14 I rejoice in the way revealed by Your decrees as much as in all riches.
15 I will meditate on Your precepts and think about Your ways.
16 I will delight in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

KEY WORDS

Young man: Male or female; one who lacks experience and wisdom, is easily tempted by worldly desires and enticed away from God. See Proverbs 1:8-19; 2:1-22.

Pure: Having thought and behavior appropriate to the people of God. God expects purity, and sin results in uncleanness. Also refers to being without flaw, perfect, clean, such as flawless gold.

Treasured: “Hidden” (NIV). Not concealing the Bible but keeping it in one’s heart to draw on for wisdom whenever the need arises.

Meditate: Careful, deliberate pondering and reflection; constantly recalling and concentrating on God’s Word.

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.
Everyone longs to find a guiding light, a beam of hope in a world of darkness. Maybe that’s why the television show Guiding Light became the longest-running soap opera in history. It began airing on radio in 1937 and on television in 1952. The TV network extinguished this Guiding Light by cancelling the show in 2009. Christians can count on a different type of guiding light that beams eternally. The Bible, God’s Holy Word, contains everything we need to know to be saved and to live in a way that pleases God.

Purity is a conscious choice. Notice the choice of the word “wander” in this verse. Today’s world provides plenty of opportunities to wander from God’s path of purity. It all comes down to choices. The Internet provides a wealth of Bible study materials and information, such as mystudybible.com and lifeway.com. The World Wide Web also offers temptation to wander into porn sites or other areas of impurity. We make choices every day in regard to our relationships. We can choose to be involved with people who are pure and focus on uplifting activities, or we can opt for relationships in which we wander from God’s commands.

Reflect on the choices you have made in the past week. In what ways did they help you keep your way pure? How did they tempt you to wander away from God’s commands?

KNOW THE WORD
PSALM 119:9-10

Have you heard about the aspiring minister who was invited to read Scripture at his home church? He was allowed to pick any chapter of the Bible. His selection? Psalm 119, which has 176 verses. He wanted to read for a long time! Today’s lesson focuses on this psalm. Don’t worry—you won’t be asked to read aloud all of this incredible psalm. But you will consider its wisdom that points you to reasons for reading and studying the Bible. You can learn more about Psalm 119 through “Did You Know?” on page 14.

Why should I read and study my Bible?

What could be wiser than knowing God’s Word? In the space below write the name of someone you know really well or something you know a lot about. Then think about how you came to know so much about that person or thing.

Knowing someone doesn’t just happen. You need to study or practice a sport or skill to become an expert in it. You have to spend a lot of time with a person to get to know him or her. How does this apply to knowing the Word of God? Knowing the Word extends beyond being a mental thing. It is a willingness to keep the Word, stick with it, and not wander from it. Knowing God’s Word provides clear guidance for life.

According to Psalm 119:9, how can the Bible help this type of person—and everyone else—stay pure?

TREASURE THE WORD
PSALM 119:11-14

Read Psalm 119:11-14. Some people confuse treasuring God’s Word with buried treasure. The biblical term treasure can mean “hidden.” The meanings for the words treasure and hidden are somewhat related. People sometimes hide what they treasure to keep others from stealing it. In Psalm 119, however, the psalmist was not trying to hide God’s Word to conceal it from others. He treasured the Word in his heart. In the Bible the word heart represents the entire person and is connected with thinking. By keeping God’s Word in his heart, he could draw on its wisdom whenever the need arose.

God’s Holy Word

Psalm 119 uses seven terms that help us clarify and understand the importance of the Bible as God’s Holy Word. The main term is torah, often translated as “law.” Torah, or law, refers to the first five books of the Old Testament, which are a blend of legal material, history, and narrative. It also refers to teaching or training. Read these passages for additional insight into the Bible as God’s Word.

• Hebrews 4:12
• 2 Timothy 3:16

Want to know more about the Bible as God’s Word? Log on to www.lifeway.com/YOU and scroll down to “DOWNLOADABLES” for additional study helps for Unit 1, Lesson 1.
Psalm 119 is the longest psalm and one of the most amazing. It is an acrostic, an alphabetic poem.

- It has 176 verses, with eight verses in each set beginning with each letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
- The first set of verses begins with aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The next set of verses begins with beth, the second letter, and so on throughout the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
- Nearly every verse contains one of eight words for God’s revelation: instruction, decree, precept, statute, command, judgment, promise, and word.

Did you know?

Psalm 119 is the longest psalm and one of the most amazing. It is an acrostic, an alphabetic poem.

Imagine a treasure chest in your heart in which you store God’s Word. How would you describe the chest?

Almost empty       Rather dusty       Frequently opened
Room for more treasure       Full to running over

Treasuring God’s Word always leaves you wanting to know more. The psalmist asked God to teach him His statutes. The word statutes comes from a word that means “to inscribe.” God first inscribed the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone (Ex. 32.15). Isaiah said God had inscribed His people on His palms as a constant reminder of His relationship with them (Isa. 49.16).

Sometimes treasured jewelry is inscribed. People often put names, dates, or brief messages inside. What inscription, or message, would you choose to represent your relationship with God?

The psalmist compared God’s Word to riches associated with treasure chests. His careful study of God’s Word helped him realize its value. All the riches of the world could not compare; he would rejoice because in God’s Word, he had what is really true wealth!

The Bible is more than a book to be stored on a shelf or kept on a bedside table. It is a priceless treasure that will guide your life. Treasuring the Bible, or reading and studying it, is essential to help you understand God’s ways.

Read Psalm 119:14. How can this verse help you treasure the Bible?

MEDITATE ON THE WORD
PSALM 119:15-16

The concept of meditation can be mysterious. Some associate meditation with a person sitting cross-legged, all alone, humming random tones out loud. Meditation is more mind-set than posture. The word meditate contains the idea of careful, deliberate pondering and reflection. It conveys the idea of constantly recalling and serious concentration. Christian meditation involves focusing on God and biblical principles, while other religions focus on non-godly matters.

What comes to your mind when you hear the word meditation? How does this relate to Christian meditation?

Read Psalm 119:15-16. The psalmist carefully considered God’s precepts and regularly would think about (literally, “look to”) God’s ways. These precepts and ways together provided a spiritual compass to guide him through life. Notice that the psalmist says he will not forget God’s Word. This involves more than tying a string around his finger. When we take steps to know God’s Word and to truly treasure it, we are well on our way to remembering it. Check out “Diggin’ Deeper” on page 13 for more insight into the Bible as God’s Holy Word.

What steps do you take to meditate, or remember, God’s Word?

SO WHAT? How does this apply to me?

If you grew up in church, maybe you remember memorizing Bible verses. Today’s lesson is about more than being able to quote the Bible. It challenges you to treasure and meditate on God’s Word. Then you can depend on the Bible to be your guiding light every day, in every situation.

• If you were lost at sea and saw a lighthouse in the distance, how would you feel? How does this compare to God’s Word as your guiding light in a sin-darkened world?

• Recall a time you needed guidance. Where did you turn? How will today’s study affect the way you depend on the Bible to provide everything you need to know?

Live It!

Bible study is a Christian obligation. Commit to “unplugging” yourself and your family from the daily distractions of life and to “plugging into” God’s Word.

Focus on making a written plan for studying God’s Word. Identify a specific time and comfortable, quiet location. In addition to your Bible, gather supplies such as commentaries and a spiral notebook for recording insights. Use the “Daily Readings” on page 16 as a starting point. Beginning with small increments of time, develop them steadily and then build into more time. Clip out the memory cards on page 99 to help you memorize Scripture.

• How many Scripture verses do you know by memory? Based on what you learned in today’s study, how are you treasuring them and meditating on them?
The Question: Why is prayer important?

The Point: Prayer is your lifeline to God.


Lesson Passage: Luke 11:1-4, 9-10

LUKE 11:1-4, 9-10

1 He was praying in a certain place, and when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples.”

2 He said to them, “Whenever you pray, say:

   Father, Your name be honored as holy.
   Your kingdom come.

3 Give us each day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone in debt to us.
   And do not bring us into temptation.”

9 “So I say to you, keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep searching, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you.

10 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who searches finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Memory Verse

Luke 11:10

For everyone who asks receives, and the one who searches finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Key Words

John: John the Baptist; announced the coming of Jesus; baptized Jesus. Some of Jesus’ first disciples had also been disciples of John the Baptist.

Father: “Abba,” or the equivalent of the word “daddy.” An ordinary, intimate term children used in addressing their fathers.

Your name: God’s name refers to His character, His reputation, His Person, and His nature.

Holy: Separated. God is separate or different from us, lifted up above us, higher than us in power and righteousness.

Keep: Indicates continuous action.

DAILY READINGS

1. Buried Treasure—Not!

Psalm 119:11

Dr. Henry “Indiana” Jones is an archeologist, known in movies for his adventures in hunting hidden treasure. The psalmist wrote of treasuring God’s Word in a different sense. Treasuring God’s Word does not mean hiding it, as in concealing like the treasure Indiana Jones hunted. It means protecting it and keeping it in your heart—a true treasure chest. When you do this, God’s Word will always be nearby to you.

Heavenly Father, help me treasure Your Word in my heart so that it is with me at all times.

2. Meditating on the Word

Psalm 119:15-16

When people want to change the way they eat, they sometimes keep a food diary. They write down everything they eat. By creating awareness, the food diary helps people make dietary changes and lose weight. What if you were to keep a Bible diary? Suppose you were to write down every time you thought about God’s ways, Word, and statutes? Hopefully you would have a long list as you meditated on God’s Word. Why not try it?

Almighty God, I commit to meditating on Your Word and making it an ever-present guide for my life.

3. Watch and Learn

Luke 11:1

Have you ever watched a child imitate an adult? Perhaps you’ve seen a little girl try on her mother’s clothes or a little boy push his toy lawn mower behind his daddy’s real rig. Children watch adults and notice their examples. It’s important to look at good examples and to be one. The disciples observed Jesus and John the Baptist praying. That motivated them to pray, and they asked for instruction.

Father in heaven, thank You for Your example. Keep me continually watching and learning.

4. Daily Bread

Luke 11:2-3

The concept of “daily bread” seems at odds with today’s world. Many people accumulate possessions, often reflecting their wants more than their needs. When their stuff exceeds their storage capacity, they rent more space. The Bible teaches another way. Jesus taught His disciples to depend on God to provide what they needed—not what they wanted—on a day-by-day basis. That involves faith!

Jesus, I depend on You to supply my “daily bread” by meeting my needs as they arise.

MEMORY VERSE

Luke 11:10

For everyone who asks receives, and the one who searches finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.
STRESS
FOR UNIT 1, LESSON 1 (pp. 11-15)

BEFORE YOU TEACH
FOR UNIT 1, LESSON 1 (pp. 11-15)

STEP 1
REFLECT ON THE NEW UNIT.
As you prepare to teach this new unit, take time to practice what you teach. Reflect on the unit title. What do the words obligations and duty mean to you? How do you feel about them in relationship to Christ? Read through the lesson titles and carefully consider each Question and Point. Ask God to lead you in growing as you study this unit with fellow learners.

STEP 2
ANSWER “THE QUESTION.”
Read “The Question” and make a list of reasons you should read and study the Bible. Recall times God’s Word guided your life in a specific way. Share these experiences with your class prior to the new session. Use your example to help them reflect on how God has guided and is guiding their lives. Thank God for His ongoing guidance.

STEP 3
PRAY PERSONALLY.
Pray for your learners by name. Perhaps you’re aware of overwhelming circumstances they are facing. Ask God to lead you in preparing this lesson, that they will come to see the Bible as a source for guidance. Pray for unspoken requests. Sometimes people are so overwhelmed they are unable or unwilling to share their needs with others. Be open to God’s leadership.

STEP 4
SEEK A FRESH APPROACH.
Sometimes a fresh approach can yield amazing new insight into Scripture. Many adults are visual learners. An object lesson or visual example can unlock new biblical truths for them. Review the Object Lesson below. Read through the Scripture passages from a visual perspective. Locate the word pictures. How can you communicate these to learners in a fresh new way?

INTRODUCTION

Summarize the introduction to the learner lesson on page 12 about the popular soap opera Guiding Light. As an option, use the Object Lesson on page 102 to illustrate the Bible as a guiding light in a world filled with sin’s darkness. Ask: In what situations do people need guidance? Where do they turn for guidance? To what extent is this guidance reliable?

Introduce today’s study by directing attention to the session title on page 11. Invite a volunteer to read “The Question” and “The Point.” Share these revealing statistics about Bible reading: 19 percent of Protestant churchgoers recently surveyed said they set aside time to read the Bible every day. Yet 68 percent of those surveyed exercise their pet daily. Discuss: Why do you think people are more likely to exercise their pets than read the Bible?

Present this as the first study in a new five-session unit about Christian obligations. Summarize the introduction on page 10. Read aloud “The Question” from each of the studies. Lead in prayer for God’s guidance today.

DIG INTO THE TEXT

KNOW THE WORD
PSALM 119:9-10

- Invite learners to name someone or something they know well—a spouse, a close friend, a hobby, a skill (playing an instrument or sport), or an occupation. Ask: How did you get to know the person or skill? What does it take to keep on knowing someone or something? Compare this to knowing God’s Word.

- Stress that knowing God’s Word extends beyond being a mental thing. It is a willingness to keep the Word, stick with it, and not wander from it.

- Ask learners to locate Psalm 119. Provide background about this psalm through the commentary on pages 105 and “Did You Know?” on page 14.

- Invite a volunteer to read Psalm 119:9-10. Stress that verse 9 (and the entire lesson) applies to all adults, not just a young man. Refer to the “Key Word” Young Man on page 11.

- Lead learners to name ways the world presents challenges to purity. Ask: According to Psalm 119:9, how can the Bible help people stay pure?

TREASURE THE WORD
PSALM 119:11-14

- Describe a search for buried treasure. Refer to Dr. Henry “Indiana” Jones, a movie archeologist known for his adventures in hunting hidden treasure. (See Daily Reading Day 1 on page 16.) TV shows such as Treasure Hunter and American Digger continue this concept. Comment that these media portrayals of treasure hunting challenge the biblical principal of treasurer God’s Word. Use the Key Words (p. 11) to explain treasured in the biblical sense.

- Direct attention to the word statutes. Explain that it comes from a word that means “to inscribe.” God first inscribed the Ten Commandments on
**FOLLOW THE GUIDING LIGHT (TEACHING PLAN)**
FOR UNIT 1, LESSON 1 (pp. 11-15)

**TREASURE THE WORD (CONT.)**

People often put names, dates, or brief messages inside wedding rings. Lead learners to consider silently: What inscription, or message, would you choose to represent your relationship with God? Why?

**MEDITATE ON THE WORD**

**PSALM 119:15-16**

- **Ask:** What comes to your mind when you hear the word “meditation”? Discuss responses; then summarize the first paragraph under “Meditate on the Word” (beginning with the words “The concept of”). **Say:** Meditation is a characteristic of the spiritual mind, and it involves remembering. The righteous delight in it. Clarify the difference between Christian meditation and that of other religions.

Christian meditation focuses on the Bible and one’s relationship with God. Ask volunteers to look up and read Genesis 24:63 and Psalm 1:2.

- **Direct attention to Psalm 119:15-16.** Brainstorm ways people try to keep from forgetting things. (Responses may include writing notes, making lists, or even tying a string around their finger.)

**SO WHAT? HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO ME?**

If you grew up in church, maybe you remember being challenged to memorize Bible verses. Today’s lesson is about more than being able to quote the words “The concept of” on p. 14. **Say:** Meditation is a characteristic of the spiritual mind, and it involves remembering. The righteous delight in it. Clarify the difference between Christian meditation and that of other religions.

- **Based on what you learned in today’s study, how are you treasuring Scripture verses you know by memory and how are you meditating on them?**

- **In what area of life do you most need God’s guidance? How will this lesson help you turn to Him for direction?**

**CLOSE THE SESSION**

This lesson reminds us that waiting to engage in ongoing Bible study is not an option; it’s an obligation for believers. Encourage learners to act on the “Live It!” assignment on page 15. Help them locate the “Daily Readings” on page 16 and “Memory Cards” on page 99. Assure them that you will be praying for them as they commit to “unplugging” themselves and their families from the daily distractions of life and to “plugging into” God’s Word. Suggest that learners discover more about the Bible as God’s Holy Word by logging on to www.lifeway.com/YOU. Scroll down to “DOWNLOADABLES” for additional study helps for Unit 1, Lesson 1.

**FOLLOW THE GUIDING LIGHT**

**Lesson Passages:** Psalm 119:9-16

The Question: Why should I read and study my Bible? The Point: God’s Word will guide your life.

**FOCUS ON THESE POINTS**

Know the Word (Ps. 119:9-10)

Psalm 119 is the longest psalm and one of the most amazing. It is an acrostic (uh-KRAHS-tik), an alphabetical poem. The first set of verses begins with aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The next set of verses begins with beth, the second letter, and so on throughout the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Verse 9 begins with a contemplative question—one the psalmist both asked and was prepared to answer. He wanted every young man to consider how to keep his way pure. “Keeping” translates the same term found in verses 4, 5, and 8. It denotes the intentional steps those who love God’s Word take to follow His decrees. Careful attention to God’s Word in life’s earlier years keeps one’s heart pure and sensitive to God’s purposes throughout life.

The words “with all my heart” (v. 10) stress the depth of the psalmist’s commitment. The phrase parallels the thought of verse 2, where the psalmist spoke in general of those who keep God’s decrees. Here he applied it specifically to his situation. He had sought the Lord for himself, perhaps because he had seen the blessings that come to those who treasure God’s Word.

The command “don’t let me wander” conveys a sense of urgency. The psalmist wanted God to intervene quickly if he began to stray from His commands.

**Treasure the Word (Ps. 119:11-14)**

The word “treasured” (v. 11) also can mean “hiding” (KJV: “hid”; NIV: “hidden”). The psalmist knew his heart was the source of much evil (Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:20-23), so he wanted to fill it with God’s Word instead (Ps. 1:2). He knew if he could do so, he might not sin against God. If we fill our hearts with sinful thoughts and attitudes rather than with God’s Word, we will not experience God’s blessing and will not prove as effective in His kingdom service. The psalmist encouraged us to treasure God’s Word and to store it up in our hearts. Doing so cleanses us inwardly and prepares us to live and serve God effectively in His world (Col. 3:1-2; Phil. 4:8).

The expression “Laa, may You be praised” (v. 12) can be translated “Blessed are You, Lord.” Many Hebrew prayers today begin with the words “Blessed are You, Lord God, King of the universe.” The Hebrew word translated “praised” appears related to the word knee. The psalmist praised God by bending his knees to Him in humble submission.

The psalmist asked God to teach him His statutes. The word statutes comes from a word that means “to inscribe.” Some interpreters see in the word a subtle stress on the permanence of God’s Word.

**Meditate on the Word (Ps. 119:15-16)**

The word “meditate” (v. 15) contains the idea of careful, deliberate pondering and reflection. It conveys the idea of constantly recalling and serious concentration. The psalmist carefully considered God’s precepts and regularly would think about (literally, “look to”) God’s ways. These precepts and ways together provided a spiritual compass to guide him through life. The word precepts has as its basic meaning “appoint.” The words “I will delight” may represent the psalmist’s further resolve to study and celebrate God’s Word even in the future. The words also could be translated present tense—“I delight.” If so, they would point to the psalmist’s pattern of life, his consistent habit of celebrating God’s Word. Either interpretation fits the context well.

The psalmist would not forget God’s Word. How could he? He had so determined to learn it through living it, treasuring it, and studying it that it shaped all he was. Christians today should have the same kind of determination the psalmist had. If we choose to study God’s Word, it will be in our hearts to shape our choices.

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