**The Book of Psalms—Study Guide (Psalm 119)**

The Bible always takes precedence in our study of God’s Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). This guide is just a “help” compiled from the Soncino commentary, Ambassador College notes, & personal study.

**Psalm 119:** Soncino titles this Psalm: “Torah (Law); The Way of Life.” Seven words are emphasized throughout: **1: law**—teaching and direction; **2: testimonies**—rules of conduct; **3: precepts**—particular rules to obey; **4: statutes**—those which are engraved; **5: commandments**—laws of God; **6: judgments**—(ordinances) regulating man’s behavior; **7: word**—Hebrew “dabar” (and a variation—“imrah”) meaning the will of God.

This is an acrostic Psalm. Each of the 22 stanzas corresponds to a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Each stanza comprises eight verses which begin with the same Hebrew letter of the stanza.

**Stanza 1: Aleph**

1-2: Blessed (happy) are the undefiled (the blameless/upright) in the way (the path of life), who walk in the law (Torah—meaning teaching and direction) of the Lord (Genesis 17:1). Blessed are those who keep His testimonies (rules of conduct), who seek Him with their whole heart (Deuteronomy 10:12; Jeremiah 29:13).

3-4: They do no iniquity and they walk in His ways. You have commanded us to keep Your precepts (particularized rules to obey) diligently (Deuteronomy 4:1-2).

5-6: Oh, that my ways would be directed to keep Your statutes (those which are engraved in stone). Then I would not be ashamed when I look into all your commandments. See James 1:25.

7-8: I will praise You with uprightness of heart when I learn (and internalize) Your righteous judgments. I will keep Your statutes, and do not forsake me utterly (which will happen to those who transgress).

**Stanza 2: Beth**

9-10: How can a young man cleanse his way? Answer: By taking heed according to Your word (which is the will of God). With my whole heart I have sought You. Oh, let me wander (or err) from Your commandments.

11-12: I have hidden (safeguarded and internalized, treasured) Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You (See Psalm 119:161-163). Blessed are You, O Lord! Teach me Your statutes.

13-14: With my lips (in addition to being in the heart), I have declared all Your judgments of Your mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches (see Psalm 19:9-10; 119:72).

15-16: I will meditate (occupy one’s thoughts) upon Your precepts, and will contemplate (look into) Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes. I will not forget Your word. (Psalm 1:2).

**Stanza 3: Gimel**

17-18: Deal bountifully with your servant, (so) that I may live and keep Your word. Open my eyes (unveil—remove whatever obscures discernment) that I may see wondrous things (divine teachings) from Your law.

19-20: I am a stranger (as a foreigner) in the earth, do not hide from me Your commandments. My soul breaks (is overwhelmed) with longing for Your judgments at all times.

21-22: You rebuke the proud—the cursed, who stray (err) from Your commandments. Remove from me reproach and contempt (which comes from the proud and the cursed), for I have kept Your testimonies.

23-24: Princes (persecuting rulers—verse 161) also sit and speak against me, but Your servant meditates on Your statutes. Your testimonies are also my delight (solace) and are my counselors (to foil their evil schemes).

**Stanza 4: Daleth**

25-26: My soul clings to the dust (sunk to the ground). See Psalm 44:25-26. Revive me (renew my vitality) according to Your word. See Isaiah 38:16-17. I have (confessed to God) my ways, and You have answered me.

27-28: Make me understand the way of Your precepts, so shall I meditate (reflect) on Your wondrous works. My soul (being, life) melts (with tears) from heaviness (grief and anxiety). Strengthen me with Your words.

29-30: Remove from me the way of lying (which leads away from God), and grant (favor) me Your law graciously. I have chosen the way of truth (in contrast to lying). Your judgments I have laid before me.

31-32: I cling to Your testimonies. O Lord, do not put me to shame! I will run (with eagerness) the course of Your commandments (Hebrews 12:1-2), for You shall enlarge my heart (with joy, and free it from worries).

**Stanza 5: He**

33-34: Teach me, O God, the way of Your statutes and I shall keep it to the end (at every step). Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law. Indeed, I will observe it with my whole heart.

35-36: Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight (have pleasure and joy) in it. Incline my heart to Your testimonies (way of love) and not to covetousness (way of get—see Isaiah 33:15; Romans 7:7).

37-38: Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things (vanity), and revive me in Your way (Your words of love). Establish Your word (promise) to Your servant who is devoted to fearing You (See 2 Samuel 7:25-26).

39-40: Turn away my reproach which I dread, for Your judgments are good. Behold, I long for Your precepts. Revive me in (and by) Your righteousness.

**Stanza 6: Waw**

41-42: Let Your mercies come to me, Your salvation according to Your word (“imrah” promises). So shall I have an answer for him who reproaches (taunts) me, for I trust in Your word (“dabar” the express will of God).

43-44: Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth (in order to speak and glorify God), for I have hoped in Your ordinances. So shall I keep Your law continually, forever and ever (See Isaiah 59:21).

45-46: I will walk at liberty (freed from anxiety and sin—and the truth will make you free: John 8:32), for I seek Your precepts. I will speak of Your testimonies before kings, and will not be ashamed (or intimidated).

47-48: I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I love. I will also lift up my hands to Your commandments (as in doing—action, and in devotion), which I love, and will meditate on Your statutes.

**Stanza 7: Zayin**

49-50: Remember the word (promise) to Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope (in God’s promises). This is my comfort in my affliction, for Your word has given me life (See also Proverbs 12:25).

51-52: The proud (scornful) have me in great derision, yet I do not turn aside from Your law. I remembered Your judgments of old (in which the proud are humbled), and have comforted myself.

53-54: Indignation has taken hold of me, because of the wicked who forsake Your law. Your statutes have been my songs (the themes of my songs) in the house of my pilgrimage (as a sojourner).

55-56: I remember (am mindful of) Your name in the night, and I keep Your law. This has become mine (spiritual joy and comfort), because I kept Your precepts.

**Stanza 8: Heth**

57-58: You are my portion, O Lord (Psalm 16:5-6). I have said (inwardly) that I would keep Your words. I entreated Your favor (face, or presence) with my whole heart. Be merciful to me according to Your word.

59-60: I thought about (considered) my ways, and turned my feet to Your testimonies. I made haste and did not delay to keep Your commandments.

61-62: The cords of the wicked have bound me (like an animal in a snare), but I have not forgotten Your law. At midnight I will rise to give thanks to you because of Your righteous judgments.

63-64: I am a companion of all who fear You, and of those who keep Your precepts (his associates are like- minded in this manner). The earth, O Lord, is full of Your mercy (Psalm 33:5). Teach me Your statutes.

**Stanza 9: Teth**

65-66: You have dealt well (acted graciously) with Your servant, O Lord, according to Your word. Teach me good judgment (discernment, ethical insight) and knowledge, for I believe Your commandments.

67-68: Before I was afflicted, I went astray (erred in God’s way), but now I keep Your word (See Hebrews 12:5-6). You are good, and do good (God is a beneficent God). Teach me Your statutes.

69-70: The proud have forged (besmeared) a lie (falsehood) against me, but I will keep Your precepts with my whole heart. Their heart (the prideful) is as fat (oily) as grease, but I delight in Your law.

71-72: It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes. The law of Your mouth (Psalm 78:1) is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver.

**Stanza 10: Yod**

73-74: Your hands have fashioned and made me. Give me understanding that I may learn Your commandments. Those who fear You will be glad (with encouragement) when they see me, because I have hoped in Your word.

75-76: I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me. Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Your word to Your servant.

77-78: Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live, for Your law is my delight. Let the proud be ashamed, for they treated me wrongfully (subverted me) with falsehood, but I will meditate on Your precepts.

79-80: Let those who fear You, turn to me (as an example of encouragement because he was steadfast and God gave him comfort). Let my heart be blameless regarding Your statutes, that I may not be ashamed.

**Stanza 11: Kaph**

81-82: My soul faints (is consumed or longs for) Your salvation, but I hope in Your word. My eyes fail (are strained by) searching Your word, saying, “When will You comfort me?” (He looked for relief in His word).

83-84: I have become like a wineskin in smoke (it becomes shriveled), yet I do not forget Your statutes. How many (or few) are the days of Your servant? When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?

85-86: The proud have dug pits for me, which is not according to Your law (to love others). See Psalm 7:14-15. All Your commandments are faithful. They persecute me wrongfully. (So please intervene) Help me!

87-88: They almost made an end of me (consumed me) on the earth, but I did not forsake Your precepts. Revive me (from their onslaught) according to Your lovingkindness, so that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth.

**Stanza 12: Lamed**

89-90: Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled (stands fast) in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations (Psalm 89:1-4 gives an example of God’s faithfulness). You established the earth, and it abides.

91-92: The (heavens and earth) continue this day (decreed by) Your ordinances, for all are Your servants (everything in the universe). Unless Your law had been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction.

93-94: I will never forget Your precepts, for by them You have given me life (Proverbs 11:4). I am Yours, save me; for I have sought Your precepts.

95-96: The wicked wait to destroy me, but I will consider (give heed to) Your testimonies. I have seen the end (every purpose of man has an end—Proverbs 11:19). Your commandment is exceedingly broad (unlimited).

**Stanza 13: Mem**

97-98: O, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day (Joshua 1:8). You through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies (See Deuteronomy 4:6) for they are ever with me (they are accessible to me).

99-100: I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation and I keep your precepts. I understand more than (the aged, whose knowledge is limited by just their experiences).

101-102: I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep (in order that I may observe) Your word. I have not departed from Your judgments, for You, Yourself (no human teacher), have taught me.

103-104: How sweet (smooth) are Your words to taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth (Psalm 19:9-11). Through Your precepts I get understanding (discerning between right/wrong), therefore I hate every false way.

**Stanza 14: Nun**

105-106: Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path (and to my way of life--Proverbs 6:23). I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments.

107-108: I am afflicted very much; revive me, O Lord, according to Your word. Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth (prayer and praise), and teach me Your judgments.

109-110: My life is continually in my hand (David took his life in his hand with Goliath—1 Samuel 19:4-5), yet I do not forget Your law. The wicked have laid a snare for me, yet I have not strayed from Your precepts.

111-112: Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever (inheritance), for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes, forever to the end (at every step).

**Stanza 15: Samek**

113-114: I hate the double-minded. (The same idea is in “How long will you falter between two opinions?”—1 Kings 18:21), but I love Your law. You are my hiding place (refuge) and my shield. I hope in Your word.

115-116: Depart from me, you evildoers. for I will keep the commandments of my God! Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live; and do not let me be ashamed (disappointed) of my hope.

117-118: Hold me up (give me support), and I shall be safe, and I shall observe Your statutes continually. You reject all those who stray from Your statues, for their deceit (by which they deceive themselves) is falsehood.

119-120: You put away (cause to cease) all the wicked of the earth like dross (as a refiner). My flesh trembles (for fear of You), and I am afraid (with reverent awe) of Your judgments (to be inflicted upon the wicked).

**Stanza 16: Ayin**

121-122: I have done justice and righteousness (the foundation of God’s throne—Psalm 89:14). Do not leave me to my oppressors. Be surety (as a guarantee) for Your servant for good. Do not let the proud oppress me.

123-124: My eyes fail (are strained with longing) by seeking your salvation and Your righteous word. Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy, and teach me Your statues.

125-126: I am Your servant. Give me understanding that I may know Your testimonies. It is time for You to act (against the wicked—Jeremiah 18:23; Isaiah 28:21-22), for they regard Your law as void (Romans 3:31).

127-128: Therefore I love Your commandments more than gold, more than fine gold! Therefore all Your precepts concerning all things, I consider to be right (and will walk in them). I hate every false way.

**Stanza 17: Pe**

129-130: Your testimonies are wonderful (of divine origin). Therefore my soul keeps them. The entrance (entering in) of Your words (into my mind) gives light. It gives understanding to the simple.

131-132: I opened my mouth (to take in the spiritual food) and panted (in eagerness), for I longed for Your commandments. Look upon me and be merciful me, as that is Your custom toward those who love Your name.

133-134: Direct (guide) my steps by Your word, and let no iniquity (infraction of the law) have dominion over me (Romans 6:12-13). Redeem me from the oppression (hindrance) of man so that I may keep Your precepts.

135-136: Make Your face shine upon Your servant, and teach me Your statutes (Psalm 80:7). Rivers of water (tears) run down from my eyes because of the lawlessness of the wicked.

**Stanza 18: Tsadde**

137-138: Righteous are You, O Lord, and upright are (each of) Your judgments (Psalm 19:9). Your testimonies, which You have commanded, are righteous and very faithful.

139-140: My zeal has consumed me (Psalm 69:9) because my enemies have forgotten Your words. Your word is very pure (refined). See Psalm 12:6. Therefore Your servant loves it (God’s word).

141-142: I am small (insignificant) and despised, yet I do not forget Your precepts. Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness (eternal as God is) and Your law is truth (Psalm 119:151; John 17:17).

143-144: Trouble and anguish have overtaken me, yet Your commandments are my delights (Romans 7:22). The righteousness of Your testimonies is everlasting, and I shall live (according to God’s laws).

**Stanza 19: Qoph**

145-146: I cry out with my whole heart—hear me, O Lord! I will keep Your statutes. Save me, (so that I may) keep (observe) Your testimonies.

147-148: I rise before the dawning of morning, and cry for help. I hope in Your word. My eyes awake in the night watches (there were three watches in the night) so that I may meditate on Your word (See Psalm 63:6).

149-150: Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness. O Lord, revive me according to Your justice. They draw near (to attack me) who follow after wickedness—they are far from Your law.

151-152: You are near (to save me), O Lord, and all Your commandments are truth. Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old (from reflection) that You have founded them forever (as eternally valid).

**Stanza 20: Resh**

153-154: Consider my affliction and deliver me, for I do not forget Your law. Plead my cause (Psalm 35:1) and redeem me. (Jesus Christ pleads for us—Romans 8:34; Hebrews 2:18). Revive me according to Your word.

155-156: Salvation is far from the wicked, for they do not seek Your statutes. Great (and many) are Your tender mercies, O Lord. Revive me according to Your judgments.

157-158: Many are my persecutors and my enemies, yet I do not turn from Your testimonies. I see the treacherous (the faithless) and am disgusted (disheartened by their behavior); they do not keep Your word.

159-160: Consider how I love Your precepts. Revive me, Lord, according to Your lovingkindness. The entirety (totality) of Your word is truth (John 17:17), and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.

**Stanza 21: Shin**

161-162: Princes (influential rulers) persecute me without a cause, but (despite trials) my heart stands in awe (remains firm) of Your word. I rejoice at Your word, as one who finds great treasure (See Matthew 13:51-52).

163-164: I hate and abhor lying (falsehood), but I love Your law. Seven times a day (frequently) I praise You because of Your righteous judgments.

165-166: Great peace (a sense of restful faith and confidence in the mind) have those who love Your law (Proverbs 3:1-2), and nothing causes them to stumble (temporary obstacles are overcome). I have hoped for Your salvation (similar to the wordage in Genesis 49:18).

167-168: My soul keeps Your testimonies, and I love them exceedingly. I keep Your precepts and Your testimonies, for all my ways are before You. (Our daily conduct is like an open book to God).

**Stanza 22: Tau**

169-170: Let my cry (of entreaty) come before You, O Lord. Give me understanding according to Your word. Let my supplication (prayer for favor) come before You. Deliver me according to Your word.

171-172: My lips shall utter (pour forth as a fountain) praise, for You teach me Your statutes. My tongue shall speak (sing with joy) of Your word, for all Your commandments are righteousness. (Having faith in Jesus Christ is also considered righteousness. See Romans 3:22; Philippians 3:9).

173-174: Let Your hand become my help, for I have chosen (deliberately resolved to keep)Your precepts. I long for Your salvation, O Lord. And Your law is my delight (it is not a grudging effort).

175-176: Let my soul live, and I shall praise you. And let Your judgments help me. (Should) I go astray like a lost sheep, seek Your servant (the Lord is our Shepherd: Isaiah 40:10-11; John 10:11, 14-15).

The conclusion and action step of Psalm 119 is: “For I do not forget Your commandments.” Notice: “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3).