



Psalm 119

Lesson 3

It is clear in all of Scripture, from the details of God's acts in creation in Genesis to His final disclosure in Revelation, that God desires a relationship with man. Although God is incomprehensible in totality, He has revealed Himself in many ways. God created man for the purpose of fellowship and identification of His person. Man, being made in the image of God, is God's portrait of self-revelation in a limited capacity. By breathing His life into man, He set man apart from all other aspects of His creation to reflect His communicable attributes. In so doing, He established man's purpose and the parameters of how his life was to be lived to best express that divine identity. Therefore, when Adam and Eve refused that position in the garden and determined to seek self-identity, they lost the ability to live according to their Creator's design. No longer would they, or the world God had created for them, be able to live out their divine purpose accurately. When God determined to rescue His people from Egypt and reestablish relationship with them, He gave Moses a set of covenant agreements that would enable Him to dwell among them. Because God is holy and undefiled but the people were unholy, new parameters had to be established so that an unholy people could fellowship with a holy God in their midst. Those parameters, expressed in the form of laws, would not only meet that requirement but would identify the nation of Israel as "God's chosen nation" to the other nations around them. The contrast in lifestyle and worship would be obvious. Therefore, the Law given through Moses was not meant to be a burden but a privilege that would bring true peace and wholeness (shalom) to the one's committed to trust its wisdom. The writer of Psalm 119 understood that significant benefit and resolved to make God's Law his lifestyle. But the battle with the flesh would continue to subvert his efforts if he let down his guard. In response to that reality, he made all aspects of obedience to God's Law his life priority and passion.

In addition to breaking his psalm into 22 parts as an acrostic with 8 verses coinciding with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the psalmist, in his expression of desire to follow God's law to the fullest extent, used eight synonyms that would describe the unique nuances of the Law. Though the words are synonyms, they are distinct in their meaning to identify certain aspects of the whole of God's words. Like sections within a contract that explain and narrow the limits and requirements of the contract as a whole, the different words used by the psalmist identify specifics within the complete body of the covenant agreement. These synonyms are used in almost every one of the 176 verses in Psalm 119.

1. In verses 57- 64 using the Hebrew letter heth, in verses 73-80 using the letter yadh, and in verses 81-88 using the letter kaph, the psalmist uses all 8 of the synonyms mentioned above. From those verses list the 8 words as they are translated into English. Two are done for you. KJV recommended.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Words vs. 57,74,81 | 5. |
| 2. | 6. |
| 3. | 7. |
| 4. | 8. word (meaning promise) vs. 58, 76. 82 |

2. The book of Deuteronomy is Moses' restatement before his death of the details of the covenant that was made with the Israelites when they came out of Egypt. Read Deuteronomy 4:1-14. What words does Moses use to identify that covenant and its details?

3. What does Moses say is the reason they should keep those details? Deuteronomy 5:32-33; 30:15-16, 19-20?



The word "live" in those passages doesn't simply mean to stay alive, but it employs the word to say that God's Word gives and preserves life. The Old Testament speaks of life as the experience of life rather than as an abstract principle of vitality which may be distinguished from the body. This is because the OT view of the nature of man is holistic, that is, his function as body, mind, spirit is a unified whole spoken of in very concrete terms. Life is the ability to exercise all of one's vital power to the fullest; death is the opposite. The verb haya "to live" involves the ability to have life somewhere on the scale between the fullest enjoyment of all the powers of one's being, with health and prosperity on the one hand and descent into trouble, sickness, and death on the other.
(Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

4. In Psalm 119:17, 77, 116, 144, and 175, how does the psalmist express God and His Word as necessary for life?
5. In Psalm 119:25, 37, 40, 50, 88, 149, 154, 156, and 159, the author uses the same word but focuses on a different aspect of that word. What do you think he is using the word "haya" to express in these verses?

6. *From the last 3 sentences in the above definition of “haya,” how would James 1:2-4 fit into the Hebrew concept of life?*

7. *If a person understood that God gave the Law to preserve and prosper their life, not just burden them with a list of rules, how might that change the way it was viewed and approached?*

8. *God brought the Israelites out of Egypt and intended to live among them and be their God. Why was the Law a necessary part of that plan? Leviticus 11:44-45; Leviticus 19:1-4; Leviticus 20:7-8.*

9. *In Deuteronomy 12-25, Moses restates many of the laws, statutes, precepts, commandments etc. that were directed in the covenant agreement. Skim over those chapters and give some of the laws God specified they were to keep. Why would God give those directives for His people?*

10. *What are some of the other reasons (other than in it is life) that the writer of Psalm 119 loves God’s law? Vs. 68, 72,76, 92, 98-99, 104, 129-130, 140, 160, 172.*

11. *Although the law of God has not changed, how has the application of it changed for those who are now part of the new covenant of Christ? Romans 3:27-31; 7:7-12.*

Prayer requests:

Group time notes:
