

November 12, 2023, Pastor Jason Smotherman

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

1. When reading God's word, what ways have you found to be a diligent student of His word? If you are having difficulty knowing how, who would be a person or group of people you should reach out to for help?
2. People have come up with many ways to study scriptures. One such way is the "S.O.A.P" method. Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer Method. As a life group, discuss different ways (such as this method) that you are aware of. Use Google University to research different methods.
3. A Bible reading plan can be both positive and negative. What are the best ways to navigate the expectations of being disciplined in your study of God's word and the inevitable time crunch that happens in life?

SERMON NOTES:

The Word of God

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

The Truth:

The light of God's word can be blinding to the eyes that have gotten used to the darkness.

Story - Jayce with a flashlight while camping is a dangerous combination to the eyes.

Have you ever stepped out of a movie theatre into the parking lot and were suddenly met with the sensation of your eyes needing a moment to adjust to the light?

Our eyes have rods and cones. Depending on the light conditions, rods or cones are needed.

- **Rods:** responsible for nighttime vision, has a low resolution but is more abundant.
- **Cones:** contribute to daytime vision, are responsible for color vision and are fewer in number.

When exposed to light (after being in dark for long) the eye takes approximately 5 minutes to adapt to light (function of cones in the retina). Whereas the dark adaptation takes longer say 20-30 minutes to adapt to darkness (function of rods).



The Spiritual lesson: It's a slow fade to darkness (explain: not just one bad decision, but multiple) but can be a quick journey to the light. The journey to light will cause a sudden awareness and can be uncomfortable. Isaiah, when exposed to the glory became suddenly aware of how unclean he was.

Light sensitivity, also called **photophobia**, is a term that covers any sort of eye discomfort in bright light. This can range from having difficulty adjusting to brighter lights after being in a darker room to experiencing pain in the eyes or head from lights that are too bright.

We are living in a day where spiritual photophobia is everywhere.

Discipleship could be described as, the process by which our spiritual eyes go from being used to seeing in the darkness to seeing in the light.

We need healthy eyes. God uses the rod of correction to steer us from the darkness and the uses cones of safety (wisdom) to guide our path in the light.

Psalms 119 gives us the declarations of why God's word is a difference maker.

Because of what it is

Various names

This psalm employs ten names for the Word of God: word, law, saying, statutes, way, commandments, path, testimonies, precepts, and judgements.

These names give us an insight on how uniquely important the Word of God is to be in our lives. His word is God himself speaking. It's to be our path, our ways, our commandments, and even guide our judgements.

Various pictures

But the importance of the Word of God is also conveyed by several graphic pictures. The psalmist likens the Word of God to **water (v. 9), a treasure, (vv. 14, 72, 127, 162), a companion and counsellor (v. 24), a song (v. 54), honey (v. 103), light (vv. 105, 130), and a heritage (v. 111).**

To fall in love with God's word is to fall in love with God.

To fall in love with God's presence is to fall in love with God.

You cannot separate the person of God from the presence of God or the precepts of God.

To love Him is to know Him in all ways.

My encouragement; Be a person who learns how to practice His presence and His precepts.

The psalmist tells us that we should value the Word of God ...

Because of what it does.

1. It brings happiness (vv. 1–2).

The word 'blessed' means 'happy'.

The psalmist is, therefore, asserting something of strategic importance—our happiness is tied to valuing the Word of God!

Tragically, the devil has succeeded in convincing most that the opposite is true. They see God's commands as being detrimental to their happiness, but just the opposite is the case. **Freedom is found in following His word not departing from it.** The key to happiness is to live in God's Word and to let his Word live in us.

2. It produces cleansing (vv. 9, 11).

The Word of God is the agent the Spirit of God used to regenerate the hearts of all of us who are saved (Eph. 5:25–27), and he continues to use that same cleansing power in our lives. By that Word, the Holy Spirit shows us what pleases God and what doesn't and, in so doing, calls us away from sin and into purity of life.

It is noteworthy that the psalmist specifically relates the cleansing power of the Word of God to young men (v. 9). He knew the tendency of young men to fall into unclean living, and he wanted them to understand that devotion to the Word of God could preserve them from such living.

3. It gives liberty (v. 45).

Sin always promises to bring freedom, but it only creates bondage (2 Peter 2:19). It is the truth of God that brings true and lasting freedom (John 8:32).

4. It provides direction (v. 105). We live in a dark, perplexing world that offers us many paths. If we are careless about the paths we choose, we invite misery and ruin. The Word of God provides the direction we need. It is like a light shining in a dark place (2 Peter 1:19).

5. It produces understanding (v. 130). Our walking and understanding are inseparably linked. In addition to shedding light on our path, the Word of God enlightens our minds so we can discern what we ought to do.

Knowledge, wisdom, and understanding are similar but different things. The word of God applied allows a person to be a follower, companion, and teacher.

A second major emphasis in this Psalm is this:

How we show that we value the Word of God.



1. Studying it

Firstly, we will study it diligently.

God's purpose in giving his Word was to point us to himself. We are, therefore, to seek him through his Word (v. 2), and this seeking is to be done wholeheartedly (vv. 2-10). We are to 'look' into his Word (v. 6) and to learn its judgements (v. 7).

Wednesday Nights and Life groups are an incredible way to get around people who are just a few steps ahead.

2. Obeying it

Secondly, we will obey its commands.

The duty of obedience is set forth in these verses in several ways: walking in the law of the Lord and in his ways (vv. 1, 3), keeping his testimonies (vv. 2, 129), and taking heed to our ways to make sure they correspond to the teachings of God's Word (v. 9).

3. Storing it

Thirdly, we will hide it in our hearts.

This means we are to store it in our minds and treasure it in our affections with the confidence that it will fortify us against sin (v. 11).

G. Campbell Morgan summarizes this verse in this way: **'The best book, in the best place, for the best purpose.'**

4. Declaring it

Fourthly, we will declare it to others (v. 13).

Studying the Word of God will cause our hearts to burn within us (Luke 24:32) in such a way that we won't be able to keep it to ourselves. We'll be anxious to share its message of salvation with those who don't know Christ and to discuss its teachings with fellow Christians.

5. Rejoicing over it

Finally, we will constantly rejoice over the Word of God and delight in it (vv. 14-16).

We must not miss the connection the psalmist makes in these verses. The rejoicing of verse 14 and the delighting of verse 16 are connected by the meditating of verse 15. As we reflect on what the Word of God is and what it does, we will find the rejoicing and delighting to be inescapable.

The psalmist tells us that we should value the Word of God ...

Because of where it comes from, God!

There is no difference between an atheist who doesn't believe in God and a Christian who doesn't pray and commune with God.



There is also no difference between an agnostic who doesn't believe in the Word of God and the Christian who doesn't read it.

God, through His word and presence, invites you to a relationship with HIM.

Some practical advice on going deeper in His word and into His presence:

- **Invite the Holy Spirit to be the teacher and companion He is.** Set the atmosphere of your life for the presence of God to be welcomed.
- **Invite others to go along with you on your journey.** Whether an introvert or extrovert, there is a place for you in the body of Christ. We have large meetings and small gatherings.
- **Read the narrative of scripture and then allow the Holy Spirit to teach the lessons from the narrative. He leads we follow.**