

PSALM 119:1-40

1. Whenever you think of the Word of God what comes to your mind?

Psalm 119 is about the Word of God. C.H. Spurgeon wrote, "...those who have studied this divine hymn and carefully noted each line of it, are amazed at the variety and profundity of the thought." As you study it, it's bound to warm your heart and enlighten your mind. It could even change your life. As you move into these truths, prayerfully consider how they could move into you."

Memorize Psalm 119:9 –11.

Many psalms give us a title and the author. This one does not. Some scholars believe David is the author because of its tone and expression. We will, however, be able to learn a lot about the author for it does give us a unique form of a personal testimony. We will see his mood swings, with which we will be able to identify. We'll see the importance he has put on the teachings of God. We'll learn what the Word was to him and can be to us, as well. Also we will see the significance of obedience to it.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Psalm 119 is:

1. The longest chapter in the Bible with 176 verses.
2. Written with 8-10 different terms or synonyms for Law or the Word of God (depending upon your Bible version).
3. An acrostic psalm. This means it is divided into 22 parts or stanzas according to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each part consists of 8 verses. Each verse in that part begins with the same letter of the alphabet as its heading. The following alphabetical arrangement may help you understand with this example of ALEPH:

A blessing is on them that are undefiled in the way
and walk in the law of Jehovah;
A blessing is on them that keep his testimonies,
and seek them with their whole heart;
Also on them that do no wickedness
but walk in his ways.
A law hast thou given unto us,
that we should diligently keep thy commandments.
Ah! Lord, that my ways were made so direct
that I might keep thy statutes!
And then shall I not be confounded,
while I have respect unto all thy commandments.
As for me, I will thank thee with an unfeigned heart,
when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.
An eye will I have unto thy ceremonies,
O forsake me not utterly. 1

Because of the length of this psalm, it has been divided into four lessons. Lesson #1 will cover verses 1-40, lesson #2 verses 41-88, lesson #3 verses 89-136 and lesson #4 verses 137-176.

Read Psalm 119:1-40 in one sitting. You may want to mark or underline the terms in your Bible that refer to the Word as you go along. Let's begin.

Reread verses 1-8.

ALEPH

2. In the columns provided, jot down (from verses 1-8): what the Word is called, then our responsibility to it and finally what it does for us. Put the reference of the verse beside each answer as per example. You may have more than one reference by an answer.

	<u>What it is:</u>	<u>My responsibility to it:</u>	<u>What it does for me:</u>
Ex.:	law (verse 1)	walk in it (verse 1)	blessed, blameless (verse 1)

*Note for those who wish to dig deeper, you may want to continue the whole psalm in this manner on a separate piece of paper.

Reread verses 9-16.

BETH

3. a. Our memory verses speak of cleaning up our life by using God's Word.
From this section what are some ways we can do this?

b. Which one of these do you desire to incorporate in your life?

Reread verses 17-24.

GIMEL

4. a. How does the author describe himself? (verses 17,19, 23)
 - b. What does he desire?
 - c. Note the contrast with those described in verse 21.

5. In verses 15, 23 and 27 the psalmist mentions meditation.
 - a. Define meditate.

 - b. How does one meditate on God's precepts, statutes, or wonders?

 - c. What has been your experience with meditating on God's Word both in good times as well as hard?

Reread verses 25-32.

DALETH

We are going to look at a paraphrase of this next section written by Eugene Peterson. Remember that a paraphrase begins with the thoughts of the original language and states those thoughts in whatever English words best express them. The English words may or may not be the same as the original language thoughts.

I'm feeling terrible-I couldn't feel worse!
Get me on my feet again. You promised, remember?
When I told my story, you responded;
train me well in your deep wisdom.
Help me understand these things inside and out
so I can ponder your miracle-wonders.
My sad life's dilapidated, a falling-down barn;
build me up again by your Word.
Barricade the road that goes Nowhere;
grace me with your clear revelation.
I choose the true road to Somewhere,
I post your road signs at every curve and corner.
I grasp and cling to whatever you tell me;
Yahweh, don't let me down!
I'll run the course you lay out for me
if you'll just show me how.

6. Compare this paraphrase with your Bible and note your thoughts and insights.

Reread verses 33-40.

HE

7. a. Write down each request made in this section.

b. Note in whom the psalmist has confidence and dependence.

c. Now go back and humbly pray these verses as your own.

8. Write an acrostic of your own that would express your feeling about God's Word. Choose any letter of the alphabet and write 4–8 verses beginning with that letter.

9. What are your thoughts about the Word of God now that you have completed this lesson?

Footnote: 1 From "The Psalms Chronologically Arranged. By Four Friends." 1867