

The Importance Of God's Word

Psalm 119

MEMORY VERSE

PSALM 119:9

“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A piece of paper (before class draw a curved path on one sheet of paper and make copies for your children) and a pencil for each child.

A paper plate for each child, a candle template, yellow or gold glitter or yarn, scissors, a marker, crayons, and glue.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Psalm 119 Acrostic

Psalm 119 is an “acrostic.” That means when it was originally written in Hebrew it was split into 22 sections, one section for each letter in the Hebrew alphabet. For each section, the psalmist wrote 8 verses, each beginning with the letter assigned to that section. For example, the first section was Aleph. Each verse in that section began with the letter Aleph.

Have the children open their Bibles to Psalm 119. Take turns going around the room and begin with the letter A. Have children find words from Psalm 119 that begin with that letter. You can have grace with tough letters like Q or X. The aim of the game is to go through the entire alphabet using words that are found in Psalm 119. It will also help the children understand a little bit more about what an acrostic is.

LESSON TIME!

Psalm 119 is the longest of all of the Psalms. In fact, it is the longest chapter in the whole Bible. The psalm consists of 176 verses divided into 22 sections of 8 verses each.

Psalm 119 is not only long, but is rich in meaning. The theme of the psalm is the Word of the Lord. Psalm 119 expresses the beauty and power of the Word of God in a way found nowhere else in the Bible. God's Word is described in several different ways:

1. law
2. word (words)
3. ordinances
4. commandments
5. precepts
6. testimonies
7. statutes
8. judgments

Psalm 119 could also be said to be a prayer for steadfastness in the middle of an ungodly people. It stirs us to commit ourselves to the Word of God as well as the God of the Word. God desires to communicate to us; and for this purpose, He has given us His Word. What a blessing and a privilege it is to read the Word of God—His love letter to us! **God's Word helps us to live for Him.**

Many believe King David wrote the Psalm. Some believe that a young man wrote the earlier verses, and an older man (with the wisdom of age) wrote the latter passages. Evident in all the verses is the psalmist's love for, desire for, and purpose to obey the Word of God. **God's Word helps us to live for Him.**

Psalm 119 is an acrostic. It is divided into 22 sections, each section assigned a letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Each verse in each section begins with a word beginning with the assigned letter for that section. So, in the first section, Aleph, each word of each verse begins with the Hebrew letter, Aleph. (It would be kind of like how we might make a list and letter it a, b, c, and so on.) This pattern is followed through 176 verses while maintaining the singular theme of God's Word!

Since this psalm is pretty lengthy, we will take a brief look at the 22 different sections—this will give you a “bird's eye view” of the psalm. Then we will zoom in on three verses in particular (Psalm 119:9,11, and 105).

ALEPH (verses 1-8) – The blessings of following the Word of God. When we follow the Word of God, our lives will be blessed.

BETH (verses 9-16) – God's Word keeps His people from sin. We need to hide God's Word in our hearts and obey it (take heed to it).

GIMEL (verses 17-24) – The psalmist prays, yearning that he might know God's law. He is determined to delight in God's Word even amid those who would ridicule and persecute him.

DALETH (verses 25-32) – God's Word is our strength.

HE (verses 33-40) – God's Word keeps us pure.

WAW (verses 41-48) – We can put our trust and hope in God's Word and boldly proclaim it.

ZAYIN (verses 49-56) – God's Word provides comfort in times of need. It produces joy in difficult times and hope when we are feeling down.

HETH (verses 57-64) – The psalmist commits to keep and obey God’s Word. He glories in God’s mercy and His Word.

TETH (verses 65-72) – Afflictions, trials, cause the psalmist to learn and keep God’s Word which is worth more than all riches.

YOD (verses 73-80) – Those who know God fear Him and rejoice with others who fear Him. The psalmist relies on God’s tender mercies and delights in His Word.

KAPH (verses 81-88) – Though worn by life’s trials and persecuted, the psalmist clings to God’s Word.

LAMED (verses 89-96) – God’s Word is settled, enduring, established, eternal. The psalmist knows in time of trouble, he can depend on God’s Word.

MEM (verses 97-104) – The psalmist glories in the sweetness of God’s Word and wisdom and understanding it gives.

NUN (verses 105-112) – God’s Word will guide us in our decisions in life. The psalmist commits himself to God.

SAMEK (verses 113-120) – The psalmist commits to being steadfast in keeping God’s Word in the midst of the wicked who are turning away. He prays God will uphold him in his desire to do so.

AYIN (verses 121-128) – In the midst of oppression, the psalmist cries out to God and commits himself to keep God’s Word.

PE (verses 129-136) – God’s Word enlightens our souls, leading and directing our steps.

TSADDE (verses 137-144) – God’s Word is righteous and pure. The psalmist knows--though he feels small, despised, and helpless--he can lean upon God’s faithful Word.

QOPH (verses 145-152) – The psalmist cries out to God with his whole heart, before the dawning of the morning and during the night watches. Continually, he hopes in God’s Word.

RESH (verses 153-160) – In the midst of affliction, the psalmist prays God will consider him and revive him in keeping with God’s character revealed in His Word.

SHIN (verses 161-168) – The psalmist, once more, is amazed at God’s Word and declares his love and commitment to it.

TAU (verses 169-176) – The psalmist prays for understanding of God’s Word, deliverance, and instruction in order that he might praise God and speak of His salvation.

Knowing and continually growing in our understanding of God’s Word is vital in the life of a Christian. What kind of effect does the Word of God have upon us? Let’s zoom in on a few verses in Psalm 119.

PSALM 119:9

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word.

In other words, “How can a young person do the right things and live in a way that pleases God?” The answer is “by taking heed”—not only *hearing* God’s Word, but *doing* what it says. **God’s Word helps us to live for Him.**

We know we are polluted—“For all have sinned...”(Romans 3:23); therefore, we know we need cleansing. 2 Timothy 2:22 tells us, “Run from anything that gives you the evil thoughts that young men (women) often have, but stay close to anything that makes you want to do right. Have faith and love, and enjoy the companionship of those who love the Lord and have pure hearts.” (Living Bible).

If we are to live a life “heeding” God’s Word, we must hide His Word in our hearts. Let’s zoom in on psalm 119:11.

PSALM 119:11

Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

There is an old saying that says, “The Bible will keep us from sin and sin will keep us from the Bible.”

We need to know which path to walk on and which path to stay away from. God’s Word is like reading the directions to put something together. No matter how much we think we know, unless we read the directions, we will get it wrong. It is pride that keeps us from heeding God’s Word—a feeling that we know it all and do not need any help. What a lie! We need God’s help each and every step of the way. We may desire to do right, but unless we know what is right, how can we do right? If we do something that we did not know was wrong, it won’t change the result. We will still suffer problems when we do wrong, even if we did not know it was wrong. We need the direction of God’s Word. **God’s Word helps us to live for Him.**

How do you suppose we can hide God’s Word in our hearts? First, read God’s Word often and meditate (really think about) what we have read. Second, memorize God’s Word. The best way to do it is through scripture memory. Scripture memory is a way to store a very powerful weapon against sin in our hearts. Did you know it is easier to memorize Bible verses as a child? If you commit to memorizing verses as a child, they will stay with you like a dear friend all of your life. The Word will be there to keep you from sin, to comfort, to help, and to lead and guide you. Do not underestimate the powerful effect of God’s Word upon your life. **God’s Word helps us to live for Him.**

Light Up My Path

For this activity, you will need a piece of paper (before class draw a curved path on one sheet of paper and make copies for your children) and a pencil for each child. Give each child the paper and a pencil. Tell them to wait to draw on their paper until you instruct them to do so. Explain that you simply want them draw a line down the path from one end of the page to the other. But they have to stay in the path. Sounds pretty easy doesn't it? Well, next tell them that you are going to turn the lights out and give them 30 seconds to do it.

Turn the lights out. Wait 30 seconds. Turn the lights back on. Let's all look and compare how we "walked" down our path. Ask the children if it was difficult to do in the dark. Explain that we can't walk down the path of life in darkness. That is why we need God's Word. It provides light for our path so we know where we are going. God's Word guides and protects us.

PSALM 119:105

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

Not only does God's Word keep us from sin, but it also gives us great safety. God's Word will lead us, guide us, and give us direction for our lives. Many people get into trouble because they have no direction and choose the wrong path. We all need to seriously consider the path we choose in life. If we allow the Word of God to light our way, we will know where we are going and will not trip and fall on the way getting there. So many problems in our lives can be avoided just by seeing what the Bible says about things we are going through.

So, it is important to "heed" or obey God's Word. It's important to "hide" God's Word in our hearts, and it is important "hold" onto God's Word as a light to show us how we are to live our lives.

Get to know the Bible, God's wonderful love letter to us—read, meditate, memorize. May we, with the psalmist, be able to say, “I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies as much as in all riches.”

Remember that we always have a choice before us. God's Word will shed light on the right path and keep us from evil. **God's Word helps us to live for Him.**

Light Craft

For this craft you will need a paper plate for each child, a candle template, yellow or gold glitter or yarn, scissors, a marker, crayons and glue. Give each child a candle to cut out from the template. Have them cut it out and color the candle and/or flame. Glue the candle into the center of the paper plate.

Under the candle write, “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” Psalm 119:105. Next make rays of light with either gold glitter or yellow yarn glued to plate above the flame. You will need about 5 – 7 rays. With a hole punch, make a hole at the top of the craft and take a piece of yarn and tie it through the hole so it can be hung up.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for God's Word and a commitment to hide His Word in their hearts and allow the Word to guide their paths. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

Template - Light Craft

