

PSALM 119

SESSION 3:

PSALM 119:33-48

Quick Start



READ

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.



PRINT

Before meeting, make enough copies of this session's handout for your entire group. The handouts came with your download.



WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

Note: For more detailed information, please see the How to Use The Leader's Guide document.

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OPEN

What is something that you've been responsible for growing in your life? (plant, company, physical strength, etc.)

What did you do to contribute to the growth? What else was required to accomplish the growth?

In every situation, we require more than ourselves for growth. For a company to grow, it needs strong leadership, but also buy-in from employees. Plants need people to water them, but they also need good soil for seeding. Physical strength requires personal discipline, but also guidance from the outside on best practices for growing strong. The same is true for our spiritual life. To grow into maturity, we need God to meet us in our need, which is what we're going to see in our session today.

READ

Read 119:33–48.

WATCH

Show Session 3: 119:33–48 (15:30 minutes)

DISCUSS

Matt began this session observing how verses 33–48 illustrate a cause and effect in King David's prayer life. In verses 33–40, we read the desires of David's heart, specifically what he desires the Lord to bring about in his life. Then, in verses 41–48 we see the fruit of David's prayers.

How have you seen that cause and effect in your own life? What have you asked for and seen God provide in response?

What are you asking God to do in your life today?

As we've said from the start, this psalm centers on the importance of God's Word in the lives of His people. And what we see in the first eight verses we're studying in this session is an increasing awareness of our need for God to transform our posture toward His Word. Verse 33 begins with David asking the Lord to help him remain obedient to the end—a prayer we can all relate to.

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As you compare your life before Christ and your life after coming to know Him, how has your perspective changed toward God's Word?

In what ways have you grown more disciplined in "keeping" His Word? Where do you find yourself struggling with consistency?

A lot of times, our temptation is to pursue perfectionism believing our obedience will earn more of God's favor, but David makes it clear here that God is the one who supplies us with the ability to obey. Even more, God leads us out of a compartmentalized life and into wholehearted obedience.

Matt observed that all of us could confess ways in which our obedience to God is half-hearted. **What are some areas in your life where you find full obedience most difficult?**

What are some of the factors blocking that obedience? (Fear, pride, lack of understanding, etc.)

DUST OFF THE HEBREW

The Hebrew term for "heart" is *lev*, which carries a much broader meaning than our English concept. While at times, it refers to the bodily organ (1 Sam. 25:37; 2 Kings 9:24; Ps. 39:4), it far more often appears describing the whole of one's inner life. It's the same term used in Deuteronomy 6:5—"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." Interestingly, when Jesus quoted the commandment He included "mind" as one of the ways in which we are called to love God (Matt. 22:37). In Psalm 119:34, *lev* clearly encompasses all aspects of one's inner life (mind, will, emotion, etc.) due to David's request for "understanding" in order to obey. Obedience to God is more than simply knowing the right answers. It is a heartfelt, willful action in response to that knowledge—one brought about by the grace of God.

Like Matt said, we're not to be lazy about our obedience, but the reality is that true obedience requires the transformative power of God. **Having watched this session, has the Holy Spirit convicted you of any ways that you are trying to obey apart from God's transforming power? How would your efforts change if you asked God to change your heart?**

What can you do practically over the next week to plead with God to change your heart the way David does in these verses?

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How would your life look different if God created in you wholehearted obedience?

David goes on to a further aspect of commitment to God's Word, namely, that of desire. God desires more than our begrudging obedience. To wholeheartedly follow His Word means to see the goodness of God through His commands.

How do you tend to respond to someone telling you what to do?

How is that response reflected in the way you tend to react to the commands in the Bible? In what ways does it affect how you see the heart of God behind His commands?

Someone read Psalm 34:8. In context, David is writing about the faithfulness of God to those who fear Him.

What does David say we find out about God when we “taste” of His ways? (He is good.)

In other words, David is encouraging us to pursue obedience to God because in doing so we will come to see Him as good. Following Him allows us to grow in our intimacy with Him, which broadens our view of His goodness to us.

How have you experienced God's goodness in your obedience to Him? How has God shown Himself as kind and gracious to you?

How should that change the way you approach His commands? Or to put it another way, how should it cause you to trust in the goodness of God's commands going forward?

Verses 36–37 ask for the Lord to bring about two similar ends. David prays that God would cause him to hate selfish gain and turn his eyes from worthless things so that it would grant him the freedom to pursue God's ways.

As Matt shared, all of us have to contend with the temptation toward using what God has given for selfish gain. **What do you find yourself most tempted to use for your own purposes rather than in service to the Lord?** (money, time, influence, etc.)

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What would it look like to devote that resource more fully toward God’s purposes? What would need to change about your life currently?

Hating selfish gain requires God to transform us so that we turn away from dwelling on what is worthless, which is where David focuses his attention in verse 37.

What are some of the “worthless things” we pursue instead of chasing after the things of God? (sex, wealth, fame, etc.)

How do those distractions keep us from displaying Christ to a lost world? In what ways do they weaken our witness?

Someone read Philippians 4:8.

Where does Paul say to fix our perspective? (On whatever is honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, and of excellence)

What kind of difference do you think this perspective would make in your life? (increased joy, less cynicism, a greater focus on God, etc.)

Like Matt pointed out, everything David has requested up to this point requires a work of God from within. The same is true for us. If we hope for any external change, we need the Lord to transform us from the inside out, which begins with the fear of God.

How did Matt describe the experience of fearing God? (Realizing that He is big and we are small)

How have you experienced the fear of God in your own life? In what ways did it affect you?

Go Deeper

Learn more about a biblical view of fearing God from the following passages:

Prov. 1:7; Matt. 10:28; Heb. 12:5–11, 28–29

Compare Matthew 10:28 to Hebrews 12:28–29. How does Matthew describe the fear of God for unbelievers in contrast to the fear of God for believers in the book of Hebrews? (For unbelievers, the fear of God is terror because they stand under His judgment. For believers, the fear of God is a reverential awe that motivates us to pursue obedience to Him as a result of receiving His loving kindness.)

What does the fear of God produce according to Proverbs 1:7? (Knowledge. The beginning of all true understanding comes from a right understand of God and our position before Him.)

In 2 Corinthians 7:1, what does Paul describe as fruits of fearing God? (Cleansing and a pursuit of holiness)

How do these truths deepen your understanding about what it means to fear God?

Whereas verses 33–40 focus on David’s requests, Matt explained that verses 41–48 gives us insight into what happens when God answers those prayers.

What were the two fruits Matt keyed in on as results of David’s prayers?

1. We are liberated from the fear of others
2. We walk with Christ in certainty

Someone read verses 41–46.

How do these verses demonstrate a freedom from the fear of what others think?

Matt explained that one of the primary roots of this fear is a deeper fear of being rejected. It’s especially so for those of us who struggle with perfectionism. **How have you dealt with a fear of rejection in your own life?**

Through faith in Jesus Christ, God doesn’t simply like us—He adopts us as His children, members of His family. We belong to Him and He becomes our hope. **How should this truth inform our penchant for perfectionism? How should it confront our fears?**

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Where are you in need of God to supply you with boldness to overcome your fears?

Someone read verses 46–48.

How do these verses demonstrate a confident walk with Christ?

Like Matt observed, in today's culture we are far more comfortable with doubt than we are with certainty, especially when it comes to the topic of faith. **In what ways do you experience doubt? How do you respond to the doubts in your life?**

We belong to a loving Father who desires that we come to Him with our doubts. Experiencing doubt is not a sin, but it does present a choice of whether we will turn to God for confidence or away from Him in fear. **Where do you need God to create confidence in you today?**

Through our faith in Jesus Christ, we find an answer to the prayers David writes throughout these verses. We also experience the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who continues to lead us into truth. Let's close by reading Mark 9:21–24.

What does the father ask of Jesus in verse 24? (To help his unbelief)

How should this prayer change the way you approach God with your doubts and fears?

LAST WORD

Having a confident faith does not mean knowing all the answers. Rather, it means trusting that God Himself is a sufficient answer in the midst of any question we may have. As we experience doubt and difficulty, God invites us to cry out to Him for help, as He is faithful to respond like the loving Father that He is.

If you're struggling with doubt today, invite God into your questions. Ask Him to create confidence where you need it and teach you how to walk in freedom from the fear of others. We serve a caring Father who desires to give us good gifts. Act on that truth today.

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LIVE IT OUT

Pray: Each day this week, pray the prayer of the father in Mark 9:24 and trust that God will help your unbelief.

List: Write down at least 2–3 specific items you are asking God to accomplish in your life. Place them somewhere that you will regularly see them in order to pray daily over them and rejoice when God responds to your prayers.

Reflect: Take some time this week to reflect on your life before Christ and how He has transformed you since. Be encouraged by the work He has done in you and allow the Holy Spirit to minister to your heart as you resolve to pursue Christ.

Give: Recall whatever you identified as the thing you're most tempted to use for your own purposes rather than in service to the Lord (money, time, influence, etc.). Find a practical way this week to intentionally devote a portion of that in service to God and as a blessing to those around you.

Draw: If you have a creative leaning, draw an image of what you believe best pictures a biblical fear of God. Hang the image in a place for you to see it daily so that you can be reminded of the freedom that comes with fearing the Lord.