

## The Foundation for Godly Living

### Text: 119:1-3

- *How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. How blessed are those who observe his testimonies, who seek him with all their heart. They also do no unrighteousness; they walk in all his ways. (NASV)*
- *Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the Law of the Lord. Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart. They do nothing wrong, they walk in his ways. (NIV)*

### Introduction:

- The picture I am about to show you portrays for us in graphic and violent detail what happens to an individual and a nation when famine comes. (show picture)
- This man is absolutely powerless to help himself – too weak to even walk, he moves about in a pitiful crawl – too hungry to even be embarrassed at his nakedness.
- One of the things about extreme hunger – is that after you have gone through the initial stages of starvation—you no longer crave food—you no longer sense that you are hungry and your body after a period of time—begins to feed on itself.
- Left unchecked, it will start devouring the fatty cells and tissues and eventually it will literally eat away at the major life giving organs. People die of starvation because their body literally eats itself up!
- I am convinced that if we could take a picture of the modern church of Jesus Christ – maybe even of some of us in this room—from a spiritual standpoint – this is what we would look like!
- Some of us here are literally starving to death Spiritually!
- *The Lord, speaking through the prophet Amos put it this way – “The days are coming when I will send a famine through the land—not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. Men will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east searching for the word of the Lord, but they will not find it.”*
- Spiritually, many of us are staggering about – spiritually weak from lack of spiritual food – and we have been so hungry and so weak for so long that we don’t even realize our true condition.
- For many of us – the Bible is a closed book! We give lip service to its truth, we claim to love it, we send it to the foreign nations with our missionaries, we give it away at graduations and weddings, we defend its inspiration – in short – we do everything but what we are supposed to do with it – read it and apply it to our lives!
- If we are ever going to lay a strong and sure foundation for a successful Christian life then we must start with the Word of God.
- In fact, that is what the writer of the 119<sup>th</sup> Psalm is driving at – Note 4 things

## I. God's Divine Imperative: Ps 119:4

- *Thou hast ordained Thy precepts, that we should keep them diligently.* (NASV)
- *You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed!* (NIV)

### A. The Importance of the Precepts:

1. They are important because **God is their source!**
  - The word “precepts” is a military word that was used to describe an officer giving orders and details to his men that were vital to the success of the mission and essential to the survival and well-being of the men.
  - God here is pictured as the Commander-in-Chief and he has outlined or laid down “precepts” or orders for those who are under his command and in His army.
2. They are important because **they determine the outcome of our life.**
  - These “orders” are vital to the success of our mission and are absolutely essential to our survival and well-being.
  - How well we are able to carry out the mission that God has given to us will depend on how well we carry out the orders He has given.
  - How successful and beneficial our time on earth is spent is directly dependant on how much attention we give to the keeping of these precepts!
  - Well, if these precepts are so important – what are they like?

### B. The Nature of the Precepts

1. Fully **Trustworthy**: Ps 119:137-38
  - *Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments. Thou hast commanded Thy testimonies in righteousness and exceeding faithfulness.* (NASV)
  - *Righteous are you, O Lord, and your laws are right. The statutes you have laid down are righteous, they are fully trustworthy.* (NIV)
  - POINT: These orders are not designed to hurt us or to hamper us or to keep us from enjoying life to the fullest!
  - When God designed these laws—he exercised more than just his justice and righteousness—he exercised his faithfulness—his loyal love toward us!
  - These laws were designed for our benefit and therefore are fully trustworthy! There is no hidden agenda!
2. Thoroughly **Tested**: Ps 119:140
  - *Thy word is very pure, therefore Thy servant loves it!* (NASV)

- *Your promises have been thoroughly tested and your servant love them. (NIV)*
- These laws are not “educated guesses” that have been derived from the best evidence and advice possible. God did not sit around heaven and speculate on what might work to help humans live successful and happy lives.
- These laws are absolutes—and we have been given an inspired record that gives us the stories of men who have thoroughly tested these precepts in their lives.
- We learn how God rewards and blesses those that live by this book in the lives of men like Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and David.
- We learn that God is not mistaken about the devastating consequences of sin from the lives of Achan, Able, and David with Bathsheba.
- **THESE LAWS HAVE BEEN THOROUGHLY TESTED!**

### 3. **Timelessly True:** 119:160

- *The sum of Thy word is truth, and every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting! (NASV)*
- *All your words are true: all your righteous laws are eternal. (NIV)*
- These laws and principles are just as relevant and important today in our culture as they were in David’s day and in his culture!
- Well, now that I know what they are like—what does God expect?

## C. **The Demands of the Precepts:**

### 1. Complete and Thorough Obedience (vs 4)

- *Thou hast ordained Thy precepts, that we should keep them **diligently**. (NASV)*
- *You have laid down precepts that are to be **fully obeyed!** (NIV)*

## II. **Man’s Limited Options:**

- There are only two alternatives or options that a believer can choose when it comes to the orders that have been set forth by His Commander-in-Chief.

### A. **Obey and Be Successful (Josh 1:8, Ps 1:2-3)**

- *This book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be **careful** to do according to **all** that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. (NASV)*
- *But his delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which*

*yields its fruit in its season, its leaf does not wither, and in whatever he does, he will prosper. (NASV)*

- The outcome of a man's life – the success or failure of his life is directly dependant on how well and how carefully he gives attention to doing all that is written in God's Word!

### **B. Disregard and Fail (Ps 119:118)**

- *Thou has rejected all those who wander from Thy statutes, for their deceitfulness is useless. (NASV)*
- *You reject all who stray from your decrees, for their deceitfulness is in vain. (NIV)*
- When a person for whatever reason and in whatever way turns away from God's Word and lives outside its boundaries – the Bible states that man is inevitably headed for spiritual and often physical failure!
- Most of us are not going to deny God's Word verbally – however, we end up neglecting it and we refuse to live our lives governed by its principles.
- We read things in God's Word and then come to the conclusion that for whatever reasons they do not work or apply for us today.
- Worse than this is the fact that we give great lip service to God's Word—we come to hear it preached on a weekly basis—but it plays no real part in our lives!
- We live our lives as if God had never left us any orders or any directions to live by!

## **III. The Multiple Benefits:**

### **A. The Word of God offers Protection from Sin: Ps 119:11**

- *Thy word have I treasured (Hidden, buried) in my heart, that I might not sin against you!*
- *When you internalize God's word, it serves as a protection or vaccine against sin!*

### **B. The Word of God Offers Purification from Sin: Ps 119:9**

- *How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word!*
- In other words, if you want to live a pure life and keep it pure—then you are going to have live by the guidelines that God has set forth!

### **C. The Word of God Breaks the Domination of Sin: Ps 119:133**

- *Establish my footsteps in Thy word, and do not let any iniquity have dominion over me! (NASV)*
- *Direct my footsteps according to thy word; let no sin rule over me!*

**D. The Word of God Removes the Shame of Sin: Ps 119:22, 39**

- *Take away reproach and contempt from me, for I observe thy testimonies...Turn away my reproach which I dread, for thine ordinances are good.*

**E. The Word of God Provides Wisdom for Life and Service: Ps 119:24, 66, 130**

- *Your statutes are my delight...they are my counselors! (Advisors)*
- *Teach me knowledge and good judgment for I believe in your commandments.*
- *The unfolding of your word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.*

**F. The Word of God Provides Strength for the Battles of Life: Ps 119:28**

- *My soul is weary with sorrow—strengthen my according to Thy Word. (NIV)*

**G. The Word of God Provides Peace and Stability: Ps 110:15**

- *Great peace have they who love your law and nothing can make them stumble!*

**H. The Word of God Provides Comfort in Suffering: Ps 119:49-52**

- *Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope. My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life. The arrogant mock me without restraint, but I do not turn from your law. For I remember your ancient laws, O Lord, and I find comfort in them.*
- Many people want to go to other people – friends, family, pastors, etc. hoping to find comfort in the valleys of life—here is where the only true comfort can be found.

**I. The Word of God Provides Refuge and Shelter from Spiritual Danger: Ps 119:114**

- *You are my refuge and my shield—I have put my hope (confidence) in your word! (NIV)*

**J. The Word of God Provides True Joy and Happiness: Ps 119:97-103, 111-112**

- *Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. Your commands make me wiser than my enemies for they are ever with me. I have more insight than all my teachers for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders for I obey your precepts...How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! (NIV)*
- *Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart. My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end. (NIV)*

#### IV. The Necessary Activity: Ps 119:15-16

- *I will meditate on Thy precepts and regard Thy ways. I shall delight in Thy statutes; I shall not forget Thy word. (NASV)*
- *I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees: I will not neglect your word. (NIV)*
- If we are ever going to make God's Word the foundation of our lives – then two very specific and very difficult things must take place:

##### A. Meditate: *I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.*

- This is basically the same thought that Joshua received when God told him not to let the book of the law depart from his mouth.
- The word meditate carries the picture of an animal chewing its food carefully so as to receive maximum flavor and benefit. Specifically used to describe a cow “chewing its cud.” It would never chew the food one time and swallow it and be done – it would chew the food over and over.
- Meditation can't be done in five short minutes – it can't be done on the run. It can't be rushed and it is impossible when the busyness of life is not shut out! The two things that meditation demands are concentration and time!
- We are a nation of people who have never learned to concentrate on anything for more than 12 to 15 minutes (the average length between commercials.)
- We are a nation of people driven by the demands of time and we often are too busy to do the really essential and important things of spiritual life!
- “Beware of the emptiness of a busy life!”
- We have learned to survive on “fast-food” and we are now paying the price physically!
- We have learned to survive on “spiritual fast-food” and we are now paying the price!
- For many of us – church is like Burger King – fast, tasty, and done our way!
- The end result is that many of us are undernourished and spiritually sick in a serious way!

##### B. Incorporate: *I will not neglect your word.*

- In other words – I will not disregard what I have learned from meditating on your word!
- Here is where most of us drop the ball – it is not so much that we do not know where to go for the answer – in fact, we know what the answer is in many situations – the real problem lies in incorporating God's answer into our daily lives.

- This is not something that anyone else can do – no pastor can do it for you – no amount of counseling, no amount of pressure or exhortation from others can accomplish this.
- In the end it comes down to this one question—who is really going to sit on the throne of your heart! Who is going to sit in the driver’s seat? Well—God is of course! THEN MOVE OVER AND LET HIM DRIVE!

**Conclusion:** Here is how the author describes the conclusion he arrived at in the inner chambers of his heart.

- *May my cry come before you, O Lord; give me understanding according to thy word.*
- *May my supplication come before you, deliver me according to your promise.*
- *May my lips overflow with praise, for you teach me your decrees.*
- *May my tongue sing of your word, for all your commands are righteous.*
- *May your hand be reaching to help me, for I have chosen your precepts.*
  
- *I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my delight.*
- *Let me live that I may praise you, and may your laws sustain me.*

*I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek your servant...for I have not forgotten your commands.*