

Psalm 119:9-16 || Ep. 922 – Memorizing the Bible part 1

Dwelling Richly Podcast – Summer 2024

[lightly edited transcript]

You know, one of the things that I have been so blessed by when I think back to how God's word has impacted my life and how I've been able to make it through really challenging seasons of my life or just have an opportunity to feel really connected to God in memorizing the Bible.

Having scripture deep inside of me and having it come back out in significant times of my life, important times of my life, lighthearted times, heavy times, all the things. It's having God's word memorized and just what a blessing that's been.

And if you're like me, you look back into your life when you were quite a bit younger and you think, or maybe you know kids these days who are young kids or whatever, they memorize things so much easier. We memorized so much easier back in the day.

And so today in the podcast, I want to talk to you about encouraging your children to study the Bible at a young age and raising the bar for them because their brains are so much more able to not only retain today in the moment, but then to be able to bring that back out as an adult.

So I want to talk to you as parents and grandparents, you who have influence over young people right now, raise the bar, encourage them to get into the word at a young age and to be connected to God's word by memorizing it. I'll talk about that.

And then I want to encourage you today, old people like me, it's not too late. If you've never memorized God's word, I bet you know more than you think you know. And we're going to use, like we've been doing, we're going to dig into scripture.

We're going to let God's word teach us. And we are in a portion of this podcast series on how to study the Bible, we're in a portion that's going to be digging into Psalm 119. So it's a perfect day today to talk about memorizing God's Word. You'll see why in just a second.

I'm really glad you're here joining me on the podcast. Open up your Bible, let's get into God's word together. We're in Psalm 119, and today I'm going to be reading from the English Standard Version.

So it doesn't matter what translation you're reading from, grab your Bible and let's get into God's word today. Remember, the whole idea is for us to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly and we return the favor by not treating the Bible like a self-help book, but by letting God's word dwell in us richly and then we go back into it and we dwell richly in it as well.

If you haven't already, thank you for subscribing. Thank you for leaving a comment. Click the like button, give me a five-star rating or whatever you want to do and share this podcast. If you're listening on my website, I really appreciate that engagement because there's a place down below where you can leave a comment and ask a question.

You can always connect with me and ask questions and all that through YouTube or Spotify or whatever. But I tend to see them more if they're on YouTube or if they're going to be on my website.

That's it. That's it for promotionals and the introduction. Let's go ahead and get into God's word and ask God to bless our time together.

Heavenly Father, you are awesome. You've given us your word that's alive and powerful, and we just come before you humbly today and ask that you would bless our time together in your word. In Jesus' name, amen.

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All right, let's take a look at Psalm 119. We're going to begin today in verse 9. Last time we covered verses 1 through 8.

Psalm 119 is conveniently wrapped up into bite-sized little portions. There are eight verses each. There's 22 sections of this psalm. So we're going to do the next eight sections.

They also coordinate to the Hebrew alphabet. You might even have a Bible that has it outlined that way and it says the name of the alphabet letter that we're on today. We're on the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which is bet.

Hebrew alphabet number two, letter number two, it's bet. You might even be able to learn how to write that because in the NIV, they preserved the writing of that letter and they have it there for you.

Let's go ahead and read this portion together. And then we're going to talk about memorizing God's word.

How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart, I seek you. Let me not wander from your commandments. I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Blessed are you, O Lord. Teach me your statutes. With my lips, I declare all the rules of your mouth. In the way of your testimonies, I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes. I will not forget your word.

Let's read that again. I want to take a look at it from the New International Version, a slightly different way of working through some of those Hebrew words and phrases.

Verse 9 says, It says, how can a young person stay on the path of purity? And a question opens up an honest question that any of us should want to have an answer to, no matter what our age is.

But how can we be on the path of purity? How can we have a way that is pure? Answer, keep it according to your word. And then he goes through the next few verses and talks about what that looks like in his life.

Seeking you, God, seeking you, Lord, with all of our heart and praying, make it an intentional part of our prayer. Do not let me stray from your commands.

And what we talked about last time is the shocking, maybe surprising thing is that when David was writing the psalm, the only commands that he would have had that wouldn't have been what we think of as New Testament Christians, you know, the beatitudes and the commands coming out of God.

Of course, those are true for us today as well. But we have to think about what David was referring to. Why? So that we don't negate that or we, you know, kind of set it aside or, you know, like, oh, you know, it's just commands, you know, from the Old Testament, it doesn't really count anymore.

You should know better than that by now, right? So he says, don't let me stray from those commands. And then he says, I have hidden your word in my heart.

Verse 11 from the New American Standard says, I have treasured your word in my heart. Why? What do we do with treasures? We hide them away so we don't lose them, right?

I treasured your word. One of the English standards says, I stored up your word in my heart. This is also a shout-out, a benefit of having multiple translations open for you. If you click the show notes in this, I'm going to leave you a link to open up multiple translations.

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If you just click that link, it'll help you to see various translations in parallel right at the same time. So I've hidden your word. I've treasured your word. I've stored up your word in my heart. Why? So why am I not sinning against you?

I don't want to sin against God. I want to treasure it. I want to hide it. I want to store up God's word in my heart.

And so verse 12, Praise be to you, Lord Yahweh. Blessed are you, Lord Yahweh, teach me your decrees or your statutes.

And then he says in verse 13, with my lips, I have told of all the ordinance of your mouth. How in the world would you be able to do that if you didn't have them stored up?

Friends, this is a calling to you, but it's a calling to me as well, to not give up and not let go by the wayside the beauty of having God's word stored, treasured, set apart in our hearts.

Why? So that we can praise God constantly. When I'm in a difficult time and God's word comes to me, I think, oh, thank God I don't have negative things coming back into my mind. I have God's word stored up. I have God's word coming into my mind.

Verse 13, with my lips, I recount all the laws that come from your mouth. With my lips, I have told of all the ordinances. I declare all the rules of your mouth. I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

Remember he said he treasured it. It's like great riches. I rejoice in all the ways of your testimonies as much as great riches. I meditate on your precepts. I consider your ways. I delight in your decrees. I don't neglect or don't forget your word. I fix my eyes on your ways.

And having God's word in our hearts is exactly the way to do that. Going back to the first question, how can a young person keep his way pure or stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. How can I live according to your word?

Well, of course I can read it all the time, but sometimes I'm stuck. Sometimes I don't have it at hand. And so when I've got it memorized, it's just down there like a little treasure, like a ruby or a diamond or a pearl, something I can just bring up to sparkle and bless my life with and remind me of the truth and to keep me away from error and being discouraged or depressed or overwhelmed by the messages from this world.

And so for you, mom, dad, grandma, grandpa, aunt, uncle, Bible study teachers, kids' church teachers, Sunday school, all of you who have influence over young people.

Encourage people to memorize God's word. Don't discount the power of that every week

at church. If you're not already doing that, if you're teaching Sunday school, encourage your kids to get back into the Bible.

Encourage your kids to just read from God's word, to know God's word. If you're teaching Sunday school, I encourage you right now, don't make it complicated.

Don't worry about buying a big expensive curriculum program and all the bells and whistles. Just be simple, write it on a dry erase board and have the kids memorize that verse, take a picture of it, text it to your families, have the families encourage them to read it at home.

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Mom, dad, good job hanging in there with being steadfast and getting your kids into God's word and encouraging them to memorize God's word. Make it simple. Don't make it complicated.

Start with verses that mean something to you that's been meaningful your whole life and tell them the story about how, hey, when I was a kid, I memorized this particular Bible verse, let's say John 3:16, just to keep it simple and tell them how and why that verse has meant something to you.

And then challenge them like you would challenge yourself to keep memorizing God's word.

And I'll tell you one thing that's really encouraging also is if you encourage your children, your grandchildren, your students to memorize God's word and tell them, hey, I want to get better at memorizing God's word.

If you encourage them to encourage you, they're going to feel excited to do that. And they're going to ask you the next week, hey, how are you doing on reading the Bible?

You know, we're all part of the body of Christ and children at a young age are your brothers and sisters in Christ.

And so let's come together and encourage each other in the word together.

If you don't have children or young people in your life that you're influencing and speaking to, reach out to a friend, a brother or sister in Christ, and ask them, hey, you know what?

I want to make God's Word and memorizing God's Word more of a priority to me. I want to add more of God's Word into my life.

If they're not, you know, obviously listening with you to this podcast, maybe they need to hear your heart on that and say, you know what, I'd like to do that with you.

Get someone to do it with you and make that a goal and set yourself a timeline and say, hey, for the next five weeks, the next seven Sundays, the next two months, whatever it is, figure out a little timeline.

I want to memorize and say, you know, I want to memorize Psalm 119, maybe just a portion of it. I want to memorize the Beatitudes.

Pick a passage of scripture that helps you and go back to the why. And it is this beautiful opening verse, verse nine: How can we keep ourselves on the path of purity? Well, by living according to your word.

Okay, now I want to pause right here just to remind you. In our culture today, oftentimes when we think of purity, how can someone keep their way pure?

For some reason, maybe it's just me, I think of sexual purity. And definitely I want to keep my heart and my mind free from sexual immorality and all that.

But that's not what this is specifically talking about. Purity is a path that's free from things that would stumble you. Anything.

So if I'm clearing a path, I'm going to clear a path of things that might stumble me. I think of myself walking barefoot; I don't want to walk through a path of Legos. I don't want to walk through a path of thorns. I don't want to walk through a path of weeds and little rocks and things that are getting in my way. That could be anything.

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So I'm going to purify that path. I'm going to get those things out of it. And how am I going to do that?

Well, I'm going to know what purity looks like. I'm going to be in God's word and God's word is going to teach me.

A verse I want to encourage you in this particular passage is this one. With my lips, it's verse 13: With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth or with my lips I have told of all the ordinances or verse 13 from the NIV: With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth and then I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

Beautiful pair of verses that you can memorize to help you keep God's word in your heart. I hope that's encouraging to you. It's a reminder to me even as I was reading this and preparing it for you today, that I love that I have God's word. I love that it comes back and teaches me.

And I want to encourage you to do the same in your life and encourage each other in your friendship groups with your children, grandchildren, those that you can have influence over.

Encourage people to memorize God's word. Maybe even share it on social media and talk to people about that.

Hey, let's memorize God's word together and then share why it's so important to you. I'd love to hear from you. Tell me why memorizing God's word has been a blessing and important in your life as well.

And I look forward to being back here again with you real soon. As always, know that you are loved and you are prayed for. Bye bye for now.
