

## Psalm 119:17-24 || Ep. 923 – Perfect Stranger

### Dwelling Richly Podcast – Summer 2024

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[lightly edited transcript]

Hey, welcome back to the Dwelling Richly podcast. This summer, we are focusing on how to study the Bible, and we're moving through several different passages in God's Word. We've covered the entire book of the Bible with 1 John, and we have covered other different passages through God's Word. The point of this whole podcast series has been to move through God's Word in a way that helps us to learn principles about how to study the Bible better. The whole idea is that we would do what Paul said in Colossians 3, to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. And then we return the favor. We dwell in God's word.

We don't just do Bible study. We don't just open the Bible and kind of treat it like a self-help book. We don't just neglect the Bible altogether. You know, we really are part of our marching orders, part of who we are. Our identity, when we say, hey, I'm a Christian, is, well, I know what it says to be a Christian. And everything about following Christ, everything about being a Christian is being in God's Word, knowing His Word. So that's what we're about. That's what this whole summer session has been about. And we are going to move in, continuing on in our moving through Psalm 119. We're going to pick up in verse 17 and go through verse 24 today.

Thank you for being with me. If you haven't already, please subscribe, follow, like, all the good things, and share this podcast. And I invite friends to join with you in learning what it takes to study the Bible, at least my thoughts on it, and then share your thoughts as well. I'd love to hear from you.

As we continue with our study today in Psalm 119, actually, I want to remind you, this is technically a study through Psalm 119. We are reading Psalm 119, and we are applying principles about how to study the Bible as we use this particular psalm to help us to do that. In our last episode, we talked about memorizing God's word. I want to continue to encourage you to do that. Today, we're going to talk about what it feels like to be different, to feel like you don't quite fit in and how abnormal that is for the rest of the world and how normal that should be for those of us who follow Christ.

It's very abnormal in this world to not fit in. In fact, we spend most of our time in this world, if you think of it from a worldly perspective, trying to fit in. We feel out of sorts, like we're not doing it right. And so we want to try to figure out why. And we see advertisements for various products from soda, food, clothing, eyewear, whatever you use, are all geared at making you feel like, hey, if you don't have this, you're not part of the cool people, the people who know what it's all about. And yet when you open up God's word, like we're going to do in just a second, we see that's not, that's the exact opposite of what God's word teaches us. And it's the common experience of those who fiercely followed God and his word.

It's a common experience to them to say, hey I don't, I'm not at home in this world. It doesn't feel comfortable to be a part of this. We're going to see that in David's words. So open up your Bibles to Psalm 119. We're going to kick it off with verse 17. I'm going to be reading today again from the English Standard Version as well as a couple other versions of the Bible just to kind of help us get some understanding and perspective.

Verse 17, deal bountifully with your servant that I may live and keep your word. Here's one of my all-time favorite verses next: Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. I am a sojourner on the earth. Hide not your commandments from me. My soul is consumed with longing for your rules at all times. You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones who wander from your commandments. Take away from me scorn and contempt, for I have kept your testimonies. Even though princes sit, plotting against me, your servant will meditate on your statutes. Your testimonies are my delight. They are my counselors. I want us to go back to verse 19 as kind of our focus verse for this particular episode.

I'll read it from a couple other translations. ESV: I am a sojourner on the earth. Hide not your commandments from me. The New American Standard: I'm a stranger on the earth. New International: I am a stranger on the earth, do not hide your commands from me. And then I love the way that the Tree of Life version says: I'm a temporary dweller on earth, do

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not hide your mitzvot from me. And then in the Complete Jewish Translation: Though I'm just a wanderer on the earth, don't hide your mitzvot from me.

We get this idea from David that he understands, number one, the temporary nature of life. Number two, feeling like a stranger on the earth, a sojourner, a wanderer, right? In the very next verse, he says his soul is consumed with longing, and his longing is well-placed. It's his longing for God's rules, for the order that comes from orienting his life to God's way in comparison to the rest of the world. And he says, you rebuke the insolent or the arrogant or the cursed. They stray from your commands. They're scornful. They have contempt. The rulers sit together. They slander me. And he says, your servant, I'm going to meditate on your decrees.

You know, this is not a new teaching in the Old Testament. God is constantly setting apart his people. In fact, I just finished a Bible study for this past year, and you might be interested in looking at it. It's from going through Exodus through Deuteronomy. It's called Saved and Set Apart. And that particular study really focused on the idea that we're set apart. We're different. If we're following God's way, we're different. When he called out his people, he set them apart and he said, you shall be to me. This is from Exodus 19, 6. You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. And he says, you're going to be, you're strangers in this world. You're unique, a peculiar nation, a called out people.

Peter, in his epistle, in 1 Peter chapter 2, he keys in on this idea and he says, you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness, that's what this world is, and into his marvelous light. And the very final testimony in all of God's word says that he made us a kingdom of priests to God and to God, his father. Let's read that again correctly from Revelation chapter one, verse six. And he made us a kingdom priest to his God and father to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. And Jesus spoke to this as well when he was before Pilate. It's recorded in John chapter 18 beginning in verse 33: Pilate goes back inside the palace, summons Jesus and he asks him, are you the king of the Jews? And Jesus responds, is that your own idea or did some others talk to you about me? Am I a Jew? Pilate replies. Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you've done?

Jesus says, verse 36, my kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders, but now my kingdom is from another place. You are a king then, Pilate says. Verse 37, you say that I'm a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me. What is this truth? My kingdom is not of this world. We talked about this at the very beginning of this entire series we kicked off with 1 John. And in 1 John 5, he writes, everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God and everyone who loves the Father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God. Do you remember what it says? By loving God and carrying out his commands.

In fact, this is love for God to keep his commands and his commands are not burdensome. So when we go back to Psalm 119, we say, wow, you know, David was writing exactly correct. The feeling of being out of place, wandering, not being a part of this world, and a sojourner, as he says, a stranger on the earth, and he says the right thing, don't hide your commands from me. His entire desire is wrapped up in following and keeping his commands.

And so I want to say to those of us today who feel out of sorts, maybe you are in a family of non-believers. Maybe you have a lot of non-believers in your life. Or maybe you have people who even claim to be Christian, but don't follow what it looks like to actually be a Christ follower, keeping his commands, right? Or maybe you, like me, have found times in your life when you realize, wow, I'm not really following God according to his commands. I'm, I'm loosely adjacent to being a Christian. I mean, I still go to church. I wouldn't say I'm not a Christian.

But listen to what David says here in the psalm. Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from your law. I'm a stranger on the earth. Don't hide your commands from me. The only way that I'm going to

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be able to make my path through this world is if I follow your ways. And what is it that David had said right from the beginning of this psalm, right? In fact, in our very last session together: How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping that way according to your word. Of course we're going to feel like strangers. In Ephesians chapter 2, remember Paul says you're no longer foreigners and strangers. That's who you were, that's how it feels. But now you're citizens with God's people, you're members of his household. That's how we keep our way pure, by knowing the rules of the house, right?

And then we see in 2 Corinthians, Paul reminds us that we don't even fight with the weapons of this world. We don't deal with it the way that this world wants to solve the problems of this world. We have divine power and we demolish strongholds. We demolish the things of this world because we have a citizenship that is not of this earth. Our citizenship is in heaven, he says in Philippians chapter 3. And so we await, we await eagerly our Savior, Jesus Christ, to come back and to rebuild on earth the kingdom that God has laid before us.

So we, man, we feel you, David. As he says, deal bountifully with your servant. Deal generously. Open our eyes that we can see those wonderful things in his law, in his demands. Don't hide your commandments from us. And that is our prayer. That's what we ask God for. That's what we pray that God would do, that his testimonies would be a delight, that we'd be advised by his testimonies.

And that's my prayer for you today as well, as you're listening. Get back into God's word, hide God's word in your heart, memorize God's word like we talked about in a previous episode, and just freely acknowledge, yeah, this world is not my home. This world doesn't have what I need because my needs could only be satisfied in God. What a beautiful reminder to be in God's word together, to meditate on his statutes, to acknowledge that, of course, this world is going to plot against us, but our citizenship is not here. We're looking forward to our heavenly home, that he has made us a kingdom of priests, that we are part of a holy nation, that we can speak to one another in songs and hymns, spiritual songs, and we let the word of Christ dwell in us richly.

How do we study the Bible? We study it in a way that reminds us that this is what we need to make it through this strange world that we don't feel accustomed to. And as soon as we start feeling more accustomed to this world, that we're not really strangers here, is when we should be putting the brakes and saying wait that's not how it should be in my life. And so I encourage you to live along those lines today, to get back into God's word, to read it again and be encouraged by God's word and to remember that we are temporary dwellers on earth. Our soul may be crushed with longing, as it should be. We should be longing for God's return. But it's God's judgments. It's the judgments and the truth of God's word that can sustain us through this. We know that God rebukes the proud. He rebukes those who are cursed, who don't follow his words. But we can delight in his testimonies. We can take solace and truth and redemption in his word.

All right. Thank you for being with me again in God's word today. Know as always, you are loved, you are prayed for. I look forward to being back with you here again real soon. Bye-bye for now.