

Psalm 119:49-56 || Ep. 927 – Getting Angry the Right Way

Dwelling Richly Podcast – Summer 2024

[lightly edited transcript]

Hey, welcome back. This is Jennifer Richmond. This is the Dwelling Richly podcast. Today, we're going to be in Psalm 119, picking up where we left off. We're going to read verses 49 through 56.

I'm loving this series on how to study the Bible. I'm hearing from so many of you that you're enjoying it as well. We have a record number of views or listens on this podcast series, a summer record number for me of downloads. I want to encourage you, if you have not already, go over to my website, follow the website, get onto my newsletter, and share an episode from the website. I'm going to encourage you to do that today.

What it does is, it's just the way that things work on the interwebs. When I get traffic over there to the website, it helps other people find my content and hear God's word and learn better how to study the Bible. One of the most searched topics on the Internet is simply this: how to study the Bible. That's exciting to me. People want to know how, and I'm hoping, I'm praying that this series helps to answer that question. It gives people some ideas, inspiration, encouragement, and challenge on how to study the Bible.

A way that you can help get the word out is to go over to my website, jennifergrichmond.com. On the page where you find this episode, just share it. Share it on Instagram, send it in an email, or post it on Facebook. Whatever method you choose, just share it with somebody. Each time you do that, it really does help, so thank you so much for doing that.

Another way to help is to leave a comment on my website. If you're listening on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, YouTube, Podbean, wherever you're listening, give it a rating—five billion stars, of course—and leave a comment. All those are simple ways that you can help. I don't charge a penny for this. I don't make a penny for this either. Anything that gets any likes or subscribes goes right back to my home church, La Mirada Christian Church. Everything goes right back to supporting the outreach efforts of our church to reach our community and to help me continue to teach.

So, once again, today we'll be in Psalm 119. This is going to be kind of a different one because, again, the purpose of this series is how to study the Bible. As we read through this, you might be asking, how are we going to learn how to study the Bible from this particular portion out of Psalm 119? Stick with me. I think you'll be challenged and encouraged on how exactly this impacts how we study the Bible.

Let's go ahead and get into the word. I'll read it straight through, and then we're going to go back and talk about it, break it down, and give you some things to think about. Here we go. Psalm 119, verses 49 to 56. I'll read today from the English Standard Version.

"Remember your word to your servant, in which you have made me hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me life. The insolent utterly deride me, but I do not turn away from your law. When I think of your rules from of old, I take comfort, O Lord. Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked who forsake your law. Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my sojourning. I remember your name in the night, O Lord, and keep your law. This blessing has fallen to me, that I have kept your precepts."

Woo. I love this. I love, love, love this passage from Psalm 119. It's just so applicable to a lot of our lives and how we feel. Here's what I mean by that.

In this particular passage, the author, David, and I believe it's David, though some attribute Psalm 119 to other writers in the Bible, like Ezra, but I think it might be David. It's not something that impacts our understanding

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of this psalm too much, but just something I'd toss out there. We talked about that earlier in this series. This particular portion is very applicable because it talks about where we could potentially be.

Raise your hand if you have ever found yourself frustrated, angry, infuriated, baffled by people who do not accept the truth of Christ, of Jesus, of the Bible, of the word of God, right? How many of you have ever felt that way, frustrated, shocked? That is where the author of this psalm finds himself as he writes. Listen to what he says here.

He opens up talking to God: "Remember your word to your servant in which you have made me hope." He's talking about his personal hope. He says about that hope, "This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me life."

Amen to that. How many of you have found yourself in that moment of your life where you have been in affliction, or the New International translates that same word, suffering. You've been with me in my suffering, the troubles, the trials that I'm going through. My comfort, I have found, you give me hope, your word, your promise gives me life.

Then in verse 51, he says, really frustrated, "The insolent utterly deride me," or in the New International, "arrogant," or the modern English version, "the proud people." So someone who's insolent is arrogant or prideful, and they are the ones mocking him. He says, "But I don't turn from your law. I don't turn from it. They can say what they want. I am not going to turn from your law."

In verse 52, he says, "When I think of your rules from of old," his rules, that's his law, that's where he has found comfort in his word. "When I think of your rules from of old, all the way back, I take comfort, O Lord. I find comfort in them." They bring me a great deal of comfort. I go back and reflect, like there's something consistent and satisfying and wholesome about God's rules. They bring order to a chaotic mind. This is what he's talking about here. I go back and reflect on that and find myself comforted again in your words from way back then.

Verse 53 is the part that really gripped me as I was looking at this portion of the Psalm. He says, "Hot indignation seizes me." The NIV says "indignation grips me." I love that the ESV really amps it up and gives you this idea that he's just on fire with indignation. The modern English version says "fury." The whole idea is this word "indignation" is righteous anger. Hot indignation seizes me. Why? Because of the wicked who forsake your law. The same type of people, the insolent, the prideful, that are deriding me. He's on fire with righteous indignation, with anger because of all the wicked around him who are not obeying God's law.

He turns around and says, "Your statutes, I don't just obey them. I don't just find comfort in them." But as he says in verse 54, "Your statutes have been my songs." When my mind and my heart are filled with hot indignation, I'm flaming up with anger when I look at the world, when I think of the wicked, when I see what they're doing and getting away with. It's your statutes that I don't just find hope in. I don't just find comfort in. They've been my song. I sing. They just erupt right out of me. Wherever I lodge, in the house of my sojourning, wherever I'm traveling, wherever I am, your words are that comfort to me, that song that erupts from within me.

He says, "I remember your name in the night, O Lord, and keep your law." If you're like me, the nighttime can be the time when you're trying to fall asleep and your mind is spinning with all of the things that are going on in your day. Rethinking how you handled something, anticipating maybe even with worry or anxiety about what tomorrow might bring. He says, "I remember your name in the night, Yahweh. O Lord, that's what Yahweh is, is Lord. I keep your law. I remember your name and I keep your law."

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He says it again at night in verse 56, "This blessing, the blessing of remembering your name in the night, keeping your law has fallen to me." He adds to that, "That I have kept your precepts." In other words, even in spite of the hot indignation seizing me because of the wicked, the insolent utterly deriding me, he doesn't turn away from your law. At night, I remember your name. At night, I remember that I have kept your law. I've stayed faithful, and that it's a blessing that has come upon me. It's a blessing that he's kept the law.

All of that right there is beautifully encouraging. I hope and pray as you've gone through this psalm, you've seen the powerful encouragement of being in God's word and loving it like David does or Ezra, whoever wrote this. But I want to ask the question, what does this have to do with how to study the Bible? That's what we want to learn during this series: precepts, ideas, foundations for how we approach God's word. Here are a couple of things I want you to think about.

Realize that as you're reading God's word, God's word is going to teach you how to deal with the difficult circumstances and people in your life. When you approach God's word, approach it with that level of expectation that God's word is going to equip you. How do you study God's word so that becomes true for you? You really do understand it in such a way that you can apply it to exactly what you're going through, especially really difficult things like hot indignation seizing you because of the wicked around you. You read God's word and realize, wow, a real person wrote this inspired by the Holy Spirit. It connects to the immutable, the unchanging truth of when we are in God's word because we know who God is.

Think about examples of people throughout God's word who have had the same approach, the same feeling that David has as he's been writing Psalm 119. Think back to Exodus chapter 32 when Moses comes down from the mountain after being with God. He sees that the people have set up this golden calf and are dancing around it. It says, "Moses' anger burned hot." This is Exodus 32. I'll read verses 19 through 20: "As soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot. He threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. He took the calf they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder, scattered it on the water, and made the people drink of it."

He was furious with what they had done because they did not seek God's righteousness and hang in there with God's righteousness. Moses had God's will in mind, God's thoughts, God's plans, the love of God's word in mind, and he was seeking after that righteousness. To come down and be face-to-face with the people who are doing the exact opposite was infuriating, rightly so, to him.

What did Jesus say in Matthew chapter 6? He's talking about how we might worry about our clothing, our food, or what's going to happen tomorrow. He says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Don't give the opportunity to the devil in your anger."

Paul continues this idea of anger and thinking through what it looks like to be righteously angry. He says, "Be angry and do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger and give no opportunity to the devil." In other words, the anger you have has to be rooted in seeking God's righteousness. We need to be aware of the evil around us, but we need to keep God's righteousness first and seek that first. Don't sin in our anger.

Think about David's actual words in Psalm 139. When David is pondering the greatness of God's words, he says, "How precious to me are your thoughts, O God, O vast." He says, "If I would count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand." Then he gets really angry and says, "Oh, that you would slay the wicked, O God. O men of blood, depart from me. They speak of you with malicious intent. Your adversaries misuse your name." He says, "Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord, and abhor those who rise up against you? I have nothing but hatred for them. I count them my enemies." Then he turns to himself and realizes, "Whoa, search

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me, O God, know my heart, test me and know my anxious thoughts, see if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."

This carries us right back into our thoughts in Psalm 119, that we would love God, love his word, and have righteous anger. In terms of our approach on how we study the Bible, we study the Bible to see who God is, who we are, and to make sure that our priorities align with God's. When the world is filled with wickedness and wicked people, we need to make sure that we're on the side of righteous anger, God's righteous anger. Studying the Bible, approaching the Bible with that prayer in mind, will help us do exactly that.

I pray that this is an encouragement for you today, that you would see and be angry at the wickedness in the world and be humble before God, that he would help you to be nourished by his word, to love his word, to wake up in the morning and say it, and go back to sleep at night saying his word and having that completely cover you.

I pray that this is encouraging to you and that you will continue to grow in your ability to love God's word. That's what this podcast is all about. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, and we return the favor. We don't just read it. We don't just do it. We dwell in the word of God.

I always enjoy my time here together with you. Please take a minute to share, leave a comment wherever you're listening from. Today especially, I'd love it if you hop over to my website. I will leave a link. Just click it right to this episode, say hi, and leave a comment there and share. Let me know that you've been listening. Know that, as always, you are loved and prayed for. I look forward to being back here again with you real soon. Bye-bye for now.