

Psalm 119:65-72 || Ep. 929 – When God Disciplines Me

Dwelling Richly Podcast – Summer 2024

[lightly edited transcript]

Welcome back to the Dwelling Richly podcast. This is Jennifer, and today we're going to be continuing in Psalm 119. Today we're going to be reading through verses 65 to 72. Grab your Bible, and I have a question for you. What place does the discipline of God have in your life? Or, think of it this way, how open are you to the discipline of God? God correcting you. How open are you to that? We're going to talk about that because it comes up in this particular Psalm. So, let's go ahead and dive into that.

This has been a great study. I've enjoyed having you with me. I hope that you are already subscribing, following along, and hitting notifications wherever you're listening from. If you haven't already, please consider listening from my website, JenniferGRichmond.com.

I've got a podcast page right there with a ton of resources for you. Not only can you listen to this message, but you can also follow along with a transcript. I'll provide you with some talking points, teaching points, and follow-up actions.

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All right, let's get into God's word. Thank you for doing any or all of the above. I love engaging with you in that way. As I was reading through this passage today, I was thinking about the place of God's discipline in my life. Am I aware of it? Like David, writing this Psalm, he seems very aware that he's been disciplined by God, and he loves it. I want us to think about that in terms of how we study the Bible. Do I study the Bible and thank God for disciplining me? Am I aware of it when it happens?

In my own life, I've had those moments where I think, "Wow, that was God redirecting me." I don't think of God punishing me because Christ has taken my punishment for my sin, but I definitely think of God correcting me and disciplining me. We'll talk about that as we read through. Let's read this portion and make some connections. Here we go. Psalm 119:65-72, reading from the English Standard Version:

"You have dealt with your servant, O Lord, according to your word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments. Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I keep your word. You are good and do good; teach me your statutes. The insolent smear me with lies, but with my whole heart, I keep your precepts. Their heart is unfeeling like fat, but I delight in your law. It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes. The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces."

There is a lot to unpack here. I want to make sure you're understanding this. It took me a minute to ensure I was on track, so I want to ensure you are as well.

Again, I'm reading from the English Standard Version, and this passage opens up with "You've dealt well with your servant." Then, he goes on to talk about being afflicted. That's an interesting Hebrew word, this idea of being afflicted. The root word here, if you look it up in your Hebrew concordance or lexicon, is "anah."

In verse 67, it says, "Before I was *anah*, before I was afflicted, I went astray." This is the first time the idea of this word is used in this way. Before I was afflicted, before I was punished or redirected, I went astray. If you open up your Bible and read from other translations, which I encourage you to do, sometimes you might find it helpful to read from a paraphrase to get a better understanding. Let's look at verse 67 from the Living Bible: "I used to wander off until you punished me. Now I closely follow all you say."

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I appreciate the insight the Living Bible gives to the word afflicted. The idea here is not of God afflicting us with disease necessarily, but of being humbled before God, being disciplined by Him. One of the ways to study the word is to keep a concordance handy. Use the concordance in the back of your Bible or use an online tool like Bible Gateway or Bible Hub, which I love using. You can also use the cross-references in your Bible. A Bible with cross-references is helpful for study. In our quest to study the Bible and love it, letting God's word dwell richly in us, remember to use a Bible with cross-references.

Let's quickly look at the cross-reference for this Bible passage. You'll see connections to a verse in Jeremiah and a verse in Hebrews. In Jeremiah, it says, "I have heard Ephraim grieving: 'You have disciplined me, and I was disciplined like an untrained calf. Bring me back that I may be restored, for you are the Lord, my God.'" This passage in Psalm 119 connects us to the idea of being disciplined.

In Hebrews 12, beginning in verse 5, it says, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." This connection helps us understand the passage in Psalm 119. David is saying, "I am so glad that you afflicted me, that you disciplined me, that you humbled me because I am prone to wander off." God brings us back through His discipline.

The Psalm continues in Psalm 119, saying, "You've disciplined me. You brought me back. I went astray. You keep me according to your word. You are good and do good. Keep teaching me." The Psalmist is humble before God, just like we need to be, open to the possibility that what we're going through is God's discipline. God's redirecting us, making us pay attention. In verse 69, it says, "The insolent smear me with lies, but with my whole heart, I keep your precepts."

No matter what they do, no matter what they try, they smear me with lies, but I keep your precepts with my whole heart. Their heart, verse 70, is unfeeling like fat, but I delight in your law. This passage can be clarified by reading another translation. The Complete Jewish Bible says, "Their hearts are as thick as fat, but I take delight in your Torah." They're calloused, but not me. I'm tender toward you, God, and your word. I appreciate your discipline, even though it's tough. I want my heart to be tender and delight in your law.

There's a wordplay in verses 69 and 70. The root word of "delight" means "smearing with your law." The Psalmist says, "They're smearing me with lies, but I delight in your law." He's playing on words. It's the first time these words are used this way in the Bible. Being afflicted, smearing with lies, delighting in the law – it's all connected. Verse 71 says, "It is good for me that I was afflicted so I can learn your statutes." Nothing is better than the law from your mouth, better than a thousand pieces of gold.

God's word redirects, guides, and disciplines. I'd rather be afflicted by God than worry about my enemies. Let God take care of them just like He takes care of me.

As you study God's word, I pray you're filled with love and enthusiasm. I pray God opens your heart and mind to understand His discipline and that you're humble enough to thank Him for it. Let's encourage each other to be in God's word, to thank Him for His discipline, and to study with a humble heart.

Thank you for being with me here on the podcast. Don't forget to say hi and leave a comment. I'd love to hear from you. Let's continue reading and loving God's word together. I pray you're blessed, that you grow in faith and love for God's word. Know that you are loved and prayed for. I look forward to being back here with you, dwelling in the word again soon. Bye-bye for now.