

# Psalm 119:129-136 || Ep. 937 – Hyperlinking Your Bible Study

## Dwelling Richly Podcast – Summer 2024

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[lightly edited from the podcast episode]

Welcome back. I'm Jennifer Richmond, and this is the Dwelling Richly podcast, where we love God heart, soul, mind, and strength. We are women who enthusiastically and intentionally dwell in the Word and let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly. You can find Bible studies and teaching like this on my blog and right here on this podcast. Hi! Please subscribe to this channel wherever you're listening. Tap a church bell, notification bell, so you can get those updates whenever I drop a new episode. Let's get into the Word today.

This is a continuation of the How to Study the Bible series, which kicked off about three months back. I'm glad that you are continuing with me if this is your first time joining me. I encourage you to hop, skip, and jump backward a little bit and check out the other episodes in this series. The whole point of this series is rooted in the idea of the entire point of this ministry, the Dwelling Richly ministry, which is that we would let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, and then we return the favor by dwelling in the word—not just doing a Bible study or simply reading, but really moving into the word with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and making that part of our lives.

My focus in this particular series has been to say, "Okay, well then how do we do that?" What are some practical things that I can do so that when I'm in God's word, I'm intentional? I really am intentional. I am trying to just dwell in the word and not just check it off a list. So I've been going through some tips, ideas, and ways to approach the word, and ways to avoid approaching the word. I've also shared ideas on how to grow spiritually, how to recognize error, and how to stay out of those traps of error as we're in God's word and engaging with it in order for it to teach us.

Rather than writing a book on how to study the Bible with ten principles, we're literally reading the Bible and letting God's word inform us on how we can better study it, and how we can be better students of the word. This all ties into the bigger vision, really, that we are called by Christ to accomplish. Of course, that's to love God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength. And the rest of that verse says to love our neighbor as ourselves, doesn't it? Christ has given us that great commission to take the good news of his gospel and to get it out there and tell others.

We can't help but tell others. I see people post on Facebook, Instagram, or whatever social media, sharing a photo of a beautiful sunset. And so often, we see the comments coming back saying things like, "Isn't God amazing?" And He is! Just the way we live our lives is a simple way for us to tell the glory of God by making a simple comment. People can do with it what they will, but that's our mission: to give credit to God wherever we go and to point people to Him. That's also the idea of this podcast. We want to study God's word, not just to study it, but to be more effective in understanding it, ingesting and internalizing it, and then getting it back out there, using it in the world to bring people to Him.

Today, we are continuing in our study through Psalm 119. You can open your Bible if you've got it handy, or if you're just listening while you're doing a walk, jog, or errands, what have you. I do the same thing sometimes—I just listen to podcasts when I'm out and about. So maybe that's you. And speaking of "maybe that's you," who are you? I would love to hear from you. Maybe you're tuning in and you've never even said hi or let me know you're listening. It's so quick and easy to just say hello and then say your name, who you are, or whatever. You can give me a code if you want to be more anonymous on that. But anyway, say hi, click like, and give me a 10- or 15-star review or whatever. Let me know that you were listening.

Today, we are continuing through Psalm 119 to allow it to teach us how to study the Word. I've mentioned this before, and I'll mention it again. We could do a study on Psalm 119, and I've talked about this before. It's very likely that I will one day break it down and do an actual deeper dive into Psalm 119, but that's not the purpose of this podcast right now—not in this series. So we're not breaking it down too deeply; we're just allowing it to help us think more about what it looks like to study God's Word.

Let's take a look at Psalm 119. We're going to read verses 129 to 136, and we'll talk about that, and then we'll have some thoughts and ideas on what that looks like to study the Bible more. I want to remind you that with this podcast, if you go

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to my blog and listen to this podcast from my blog page, you will not only be able to hear the message but also have access to resources that help you move through it. You might see an outline, a fill-in-the-blank that you can actually fill in, and here and there, I've been providing devotional studies. You can take this passage and then, over the course of two, three, four, or five days, however long I write the study for, you can actually do that deeper dive into this particular psalm.

And we're back. That was a quick little interruption. Someone was at the door. All right, so let's get into the Word. Psalm 119:129-136: "Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore, my soul keeps them. The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple. I open my mouth and pant because I long for your commandments. Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name. Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me. Redeem me from man's oppression, that I may keep your precepts. Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes. My eyes shed streams of tears because people do not keep your law."

As I was reading through this psalm and preparing for our time together today, I was always thinking about, "What is this psalm? What is this portion in particular?" How does it speak to me in terms of how to study the Bible, giving me better ideas on how to study the Bible? Here's a couple of points I want us to take away as we read this.

For starters, I want to encourage us to be better at making connections, hyperlinks if you will, from one portion of the Bible to another—backward from wherever that point is and forward. So here's what I'm saying: When you're reading something in the Bible, maybe it strikes in your mind and makes you think of another verse, and you think, "That sounds familiar." Maybe the word sounds familiar, or maybe a phrase sounds familiar. As you approach the Bible, of course, we've talked about this many times before—always pray, always invite the Holy Spirit into your time. And then trust the Holy Spirit.

When you find that verse that sounds familiar, something that resonates like, "Hey, I think I've heard this before," move in on that. That's an aspect of studying God's Word—to make a connection with previous passages from the Bible or passages that are going to come later. Here we are in Psalms, which is just about the middle of the Bible, but it's in the middle of the Old Testament, the foundational Testament, as we like to call it. Of course, we know what's coming later with Christ, who sets up the New Covenant or the New Testament. So maybe as you're reading or getting into the word, you're thinking, "Oh, that does sound familiar. I think I've heard that before." Move in on that and trust that the Holy Spirit is leading you, and start making those connections.

It's going to do a couple of things. It's going to affirm the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. You're going to say, "Yes, God is working in my life. I am getting better at understanding and making connections." And number two, it's going to help you recall God's word even more. If you've made, let's see, I'm going to point it out in just a second, but if you read one scripture here in Psalm 119 and you think of a scripture that came before and then another scripture that came after it, now you're going to always remember more easily all three of those scriptures, and that'll help you to remember.

This is one of the reasons why I want to press upon you to please do your Bible study time in a Bible, an actual physical Bible with pages that you can flip through, highlight, and feel in your hand. As convenient as it is to have your Bible online, and as wonderful as it is to have it at our fingertips on our phone and our tablets, all of that is true. But you will not remember it as well as you will if you just get your hands on the physical Word of God. So anyway, just go ahead and do that.

As I was reading through this, I had several things that chimed into my brain. One of them was this phrase where he says in verse 135, "Make your face shine upon your servant." Now, raise your hand if that sounds familiar to you. For starters, right inside this verse, the idea of shine and the idea of light comes forward because in verse 130, he says, "The unfolding

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of your words gives light." The unfolding of your words—literally, that word means "the entrance." As it enters, it gives light. I picture someone coming onto the scene, and

light fills the room. That's the idea the author is giving here. But this idea of light, and then he's saying, "Make your face shine upon your servant."

This is something that we came across if you were with me in our previous study through the Old Testament, the Torah, the book of Numbers. If you go back in your Bible to Numbers chapter 6, you're going to find one of my favorite verses. It's a prayer, a blessing. You might have heard it called the Aaronic Blessing. It's the blessing that God gave to Aaron that he would bless his people. Listen to this: "The Lord bless you and keep you." Now verse 25: "The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you," that's his face, "and give you peace." Did you catch that? "The Lord make his face." It's one of the most beautiful blessings in the Bible. The writer, the psalmist, is making that connection. That's how he wants to engage with God and His Word.

So in terms of you studying the Bible, I want us to be in the pattern of, number one, praying so you trust the Holy Spirit, so that you make those connections, and then confirm that connection. Go back and confirm it. Maybe you will confirm that connection in your Bible study by doing what I originally did: I just looked at the cross-references and thought, "Gosh, you know, I know that verse comes up in Numbers. I wonder if the people who wrote out the cross-references for this edition (I'm in the ESV) included that." So I looked to the teeny-tiny little letters and numbers, and I found this passage, verse 135. I looked it up in my column here, and it actually did not refer me to Numbers. It referred me to an earlier psalm and sent me over to Psalm chapter 4, verse 6: "There are many who say, 'Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord.'" Isn't that beautiful? Then I thought, "Gee, I wonder if that one connects to Numbers." So I went from Psalm chapter 4, verse 6, and I looked at my little numbers in the column there for the cross-references. Sure enough, there it is: Numbers chapter 6, verse 26.

That took me on this little biblical journey and helped me to anchor that. I highlighted each of those. That is a simple way for you to grow in your ability to study the Bible. Look up things, pray, ask God to help you make the connections either backward like I did with this passage or forward into the New Testament. Maybe even as you're listening right now, you're thinking, "Hey, that verse totally reminded me of..." and then there's another verse that it reminded you of. Just be careful; you don't want to invent connections or press the point. But those connections are there, they're rich, and they are meant to be there. The writer of this psalm certainly would have been thinking about that beautiful blessing that God gave to Aaron.

The next portion I want us to think about in terms of how to study the Bible is as you begin reading a passage, look at it and say, "What are some repeated themes I see in this passage?" They might literally connect because the words line up, or the ideas connect. Let's see if you connect in the same way I did as I read through this. At the beginning of this psalm, it says, "Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore, my soul keeps them." When I think of my soul, and the way the Old Testament authors would have connected it as well, it's that deepest, deepest part of us that we can't touch. It's not physical; we can't touch it. But it's the being of it inside of me. The word in the Hebrew, by the way, is "nefesh." So, "Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore, my soul keeps them deep down inside."

Now let's move down to verse 131: "I open my mouth and pant because I long for your commandments." To me, there's the connection. And you know what's beautiful about that? Where does the longing come from? I feel it deep inside my soul, yes. But how is it expressed physically? He says, "I open my mouth and I pant." That reminds me of that other beautiful passage: "As a deer pants for streams of water, so my soul longs for you." Here, the author, the psalmist, is saying, "I open my mouth and I pant because I long for your commandments." Sure, water would be wonderful, but I want to be filled and refreshed by your word.

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What's interesting is this is the 17th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The letter is "Peh." It can also be pronounced "Fay," depending on the little dots it's given. If it has a dot inside of it, it's "Peh," and if it doesn't, it's like an "F" sound—"Fay." And guess what that word means? It means "mouth." So although it doesn't connect with the word "panting" literally, it helps me to remember because the letter is "Peh," and then I think of the word "pant," and then I think of him panting with his soul and longing for commandments.

Another connection I made goes back to this idea of light. At the beginning, it says, "The unfolding or the entrance of your words gives light." That's what imparts understanding to the simple. Then in verse 135, it says, "Make your face shine or give its light upon your servant." So I'm making that connection again. Make those connections inside the verse, make those connections outside from the Old Testament to the New Testament, wherever you're going.

I want to close with verse 136: "My eyes shed streams of tears because people do not keep your law." So that, in closing, is my heart and where I feel also. I preached this last Sunday at church, and I teach a Bible study or put out these podcasts, and honestly, my soul longs for God and it longs for you. If I'm standing and I'm preaching and I'm looking out at the congregation and I see people distracted, or like we had this last Sunday, their phones going off in church and chit-chatting with their neighbor, people don't think that the person up in the front can see all that. But it made me sad in my heart to think of the distraction, and I just longed for people to have a thirst to hear from God and His Word.

That's my longing for you as well today. The streams of tears would be streams of joy, not of sadness because people don't have your word, but because I'm joyful with you, that you are in God's words. Unlike the author at this point in the psalm, who says, "I'm shedding streams of tears because people don't keep your law," I listen and hear from you, and I shed streams of tears that are joyful because I know you are longing, and I pray that you will continue to be in that longing for the word of God as you grow in your faith.

Thank you again for being here with this short little podcast today and being a part of the Dwelling Richly community. Bible study is kicking off soon—please be involved in that. I'm excited about this upcoming Bible study and want you to be a part of that as well. Look for information in the notes here below and wherever you're listening. I also encourage you to go over to my blog site, [jennifergrichmond.com](http://jennifergrichmond.com), and get the resources that I'm making available. I'm creating blog posts for you to read, and trying to make outlines and different ways for you to integrate God's word into your life. Share this, invite other people to be a part of what you're learning, and how you're growing as well.

God bless, and see you once again. It's always wonderful to have you here with me. Know, as always, that you are loved and you are prayed for, and I look forward to being back here with you again real soon. Bye-bye for now.