

# Psalm 119:1-8 || ABCs of Grace with Dave Garrett

First Baptist Church, Newbury Park, CA – June 21, 1981

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*This is an unedited transcript from a message that my dad, Dave Garrett, gave at First Baptist Church of Newbury Park. He taught an adult Sunday School series called "ABCs of Grace" through Psalm 119. I recovered and remastered the audio from the original cassette recording and make it and other recordings and transcripts available here for you to enjoy. The audio is available the Dwelling Richly podcast under the same title or here at [www.JenniferGRichmond.com/DaveGarrett](http://www.JenniferGRichmond.com/DaveGarrett)*

*~Be blessed and be in the Word.*

*Jennifer Richmond*

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Our gracious God and Heavenly Father, how we give you thanks and praise this morning for your inexhaustible Word. As we look into Psalm 119 this morning, I pray that you would teach us by your Holy Spirit the things that we need to learn about Ezra's experience. Now, his experience so closely approximates and parallels our experience today. We thank you that your word not only is inexhaustible and eternal, but thoroughly furnishes us unto all good works. We commit this morning's study to you, to the end of Christ is glorified, and we are edified. For the gift of the name we pray, Amen.

I'll open your Bibles to Psalm 119. And today, after three weeks of introduction, we're finally going to get into Psalm 119. Last year was a small assignment last week. Anybody remember what the assignment was? Read verses 1 through 8. I wanted you to come up with something out of verses 1 through 8. Remember what that was. What did I ask you to do last week?

To look at verses 1 through 8, Psalm 119, and to observe the difference between verses 1 through 4 and verses 5 through 8. Now, for those of you who were not here last Sunday, I'd like to give you that opportunity right now. Now, I want you to take a look at verses 1 through 8. Read through them real quickly. I want you to see a major change in place between the first four verses and the last four verses. It's very important to read the scripture with an eye to watching the small changes that make a difference in the understanding of the word. And I think this is an indication. It's not a big thing. It's something that jumps out and leaps at you, but it's something we tend to overlook. And it's there, and it makes a change and shows you something different in this passage. Someone, let's come up with it. What's the change between the first four verses and the last four verses? Let me just see hands.

Someone's got it. Dave, all right. Let's do this to him in late. And so we'll pick on him. Dave, what's the change? Okay. Those who raised your hands, how many made that observation? Okay. Okay, one of the key observations in reading Scripture is to find out who's doing the talking and to whom is he talking about. It's obvious in the first four verses of Psalm 119, he talks about they, and then he switches to the last four verses and begins talking about me. And from then on, throughout the rest of the passage of Scripture, Psalm 119, he generally talks from the first person. He starts off with the third person, a general introduction to the people that are with him on the march, and then he switches on and starts talking about his personal involvement.

I WANT TO TAKE A QUICK LOOK AT PSALM IN GENERAL. PSALM HAS SO MANY CHAPTERS IN IT. Has 150 chapters in it. I'm here aware that the book of Psalms has actually five separate books. The book of Psalms is actually divided into five separate books by the Hebrews. Were you even aware of that? Remember who was? You're both aware of that? All right. The first book of Psalms is Psalm 1 through Psalm 41, and it corresponds, and you can call this the Genesis book. Okay? The Genesis book. Then we have Psalm 42, through Psalm 72. And guess what we call that? Real exodus effect. Okay. And then we have Psalm 73 through Psalm 89. And again, we have the Leviticus book. And we have Psalm 90 through Psalm 106. And all together now it's three. It's the numbers book. And then we have Psalm 107 to what? 150. And we have, what book is that? The Deuteronomy book. Alright?

The emphasis of each one of those books. The Sush book deals with Israel. God blessing to Israel. The Exodus book, God's blessing on the earth. The Leviticus book deals with the sanctuary, the Numbers book deals with all the nations of the earth, and the final book deals with God's word. The subject matter of the first 41 chapters, then, is Israel. The subject matter of the next is earth. The subject matter of the next is the sanctuary. The subject matter of the next is the nation. The subject matter of the last section of the book of Psalms is the word, and where do we find Psalm 119? It starts in the fifth section and it deals with the word and what is the most characteristic facet of Psalm 119 over and over again it repeats what? The word synonyms for the word over and over and over again how many synonyms did we find

## Psalm 119:1-8 || ABCs of Grace with Dave Garrett

First Baptist Church, Newbury Park, CA – June 21, 1981

---

last week? How many? We came up with nine synonyms remember? Because there were two Hebrew words so the one English word way now disobedience to the word is pointed out from 107 to 150.

Disobedience to the word was a source of man's sorrows, Israel's dispersion, the sanctuary's ruin, and the earth's miseries. Disobedience to God's word was a source of man's sorrows, Israel's dispersion, the sanctuary's ruin, and the earth's miseries. The last five psalms all praise the word and end with the Hebrew word hallelujah, which means praise the Lord. So throughout Psalm 119, which is the pay on to God's word, we have again a repeat of the problem Israel has from failure to obey God, the problem the earth has from failure to follow God's rules, failure in the sanctuary, and failure of the nations all the result of disobedience to God's word. Now when Psalm 119 starts off what period of history are we in Israel's history? Where are we at in Israel's history?

Okay, we're just beginning with captivity, which is how many years after Israel was made a nation? When was Israel made a nation? When was Israel, give me a chapter in scripture if you can't give me a date. Chapter of scripture, Israel was made a nation, when? In Genesis chapter 12. All right. We've got Abraham, the river of the Calvins. And what period of time is this? B.C. About 2000 B.C. What period of time is it that the captivity takes place? Try and round numbers. About 500 B.C. Okay, so we have a period of 1,500 years that Israel has been a theocracy under God's rule, and now they are completely right-field, gone into 70 years of captivity so the land can have its Sabbath. And it's the beginning of this time, the beginning of this captivity, God's final judgment on the nation of Israel, that the psalm begins, and it begins with probably the most curious expression that he could have started with.

1,500 years of walking with God. 1,500 years of obeying and disobeying God and having the temple built, the waters of the water, even with the whole history of Israel. All this great history is there, and now it's all crushed around him. It's all falling around him. The defeat is uttered. Before you, it was a beautiful... it's a No, and that wasn't because God always comes up with unexpected and times when we need it the most. And then, they say, part of the spectrum, and pretty just do, all in their own lives. John has a word for us, and that word is the first word that's from 119. And that word was, oil power factory. Now, if you were only going to ask for the questions in your God's words, you'd be a perfect fool for saying them.

We can say all of our actions in the midst of that kind of a practice. All the questions, all the times we were oriented to God's words, not to say the questions. All the times we were oriented to what God's words said. Now, it goes on to say that, let me back up a second. The lesson. The lesson of the law of life. The lesson of the law of life. In the way of the Lord, okay? What does this expect to remind you of? Does it remind you of? Let me hear. I go, I'm what? I'm one. And what's that say? I begin with a blessing. As the biblical Jews, as the Genesis built a psalm, we start off with a blessing. And God begins our life as a Christian with a blessing.

God wants to bless us, doesn't he? He wants to put a blessing on us. It's instructive to me to believe that psalms begin with blessing in the Genesis book and in the Word book where we hit the absolute bottom, God still wants to bless us. What does that teach us? It teaches no matter how far down you get, God still loves you, God still got a plan for you, and God hasn't given up. I have been in many situations in my own life where I've been on the bottom looking up and I feel God has left me. There's nothing else. God still got a plan for your life. And it doesn't matter what's happened. You might have lost your job, lost your wife, lost your husband, lost your kids, lost your house. God still has a plan for your life. God still wants to bless you.

I think part of more than any other lesson learned out of Psalm 119, the first eight verses, is that God still has a plan for your life, and there's nothing you can do that can really fill it up. You should do what God says you should do. The blessings are the undefiled way, to walk in the law of the Lord. Now

, where else do we find the word blessings? I guess the most famous place in Scripture. In the Beatitudes. Blessed are the what? Are the poor. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are the, what? Pure in heart and dull. Blessed are the, what? The

## Psalm 119:1-8 || ABCs of Grace with Dave Garrett

First Baptist Church, Newbury Park, CA – June 21, 1981

---

peacemakers. You know, oh, how happy are those who are poor. Oh, how happy are those who are meek. It seems to be a total contradiction, but it's not. It's a contradiction to the world around us, but it's not a contradiction to God.

God has a plan. I don't care what you've done. I don't care how miserable your life is right now. I don't care what's the problem it seems to me God wants to bless you. And we can find out what some of the ways he'll do it in verses 1-8 of Psalm 119. Let's take a look at it. We've titled the entire section Psalm 118. As we look through Psalm 119, verses 1-8, there's a key word that characterizes the problem that Ezra faces. And let's see if you can find it finding the key words that characterize the problem that Ezra's facing. Take a look. Scan it real quickly.

What was on Ezra's heart? Clean. Okay, but what was his feeling? What was the problem he built? What was he battling with? What was the emotion that was really starting to weigh him down? This was the emotion which was kind of coursing over his head like the heat that was growing. I mean, it was just coming over him. What was his problem? What was the word that he uses? Okay, that's part of it, Beth. Look at verse 8, what's he's concerned with? Oh God, don't forsake me utterly. Don't forsake me utterly, but why would he feel God might forsake him utterly? What's the key word there? An emotion.

All this, pardon me? Okay, that's the key word. The key word in the Psalm for 8 verses is found in verse 6. Okay. Then shall I not be ashamed? Ashamed. The emotion Ezra was battling was the emotion of shame. Why didn't you see what he felt ashamed? What do you do in the definition of shame? What is shame? Death to final. Embarrassment is the word that comes to mind, isn't it? It's embarrassment. We have these parties. What's your most embarrassing moment? Well, I was in the shower and I had to run to the phone and picked up the phone, wouldn't have anything on, something wet, and someone knocked on the door. And I said, come in, inadvertently, and they came in, and I was in a lot of shame, okay?

I was embarrassed, all right? Or you're on a date with somebody, and had dinner, and a great evening, you know, and he took your almond, and shook your hand, and said good night, you know, and you went back, and they're crying, and he's like, why did you shake my hand? And he looked at himself, and he had a big piece of spring hanging off his head, you know? Okay, that's what we think of in terms of being embarrassed or ashamed, but this is not Ezra's problem. I mean, he didn't have spinach on his tooth, I don't think. Maybe he did. Maybe he was driving some leaks from Egypt.

I don't think that's his problem. The word shame here, the word shame is found most often in the Psalms and in the prophets. It's found 155 times in the Old Testament. All but 25 of those times found in the prophets and the Psalms. And the word shame here means to fall into disgrace, normally through failure. Fall into disgrace, normally through failure. Now, let's put Ezra in the situation again. Who was Ezra? Ezra was a priest. Ezra was a man in Ezra 7-10 that said, he had set his ark to seek the law of the Lord and to do it and to teach chastisement and judgment to Israel.

A priest ministered where? What did the priest minister? Daniel Temple. And he was a high priest. Once a year he got to go into what place? Bethlehem. That's the only place there was in Israel. Now, we look back in the history of Israel, we're going to find a few interesting things about that holy place, the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies. As a matter of fact, in Exodus chapter 25 verse 8, God says to Israel, let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell with them. So a sanctuary was what? It was a dwelling place of God.

However, at the end of their history, some 1500 years later, we find some interesting expressions in the Prophets. Now, if I can find them in my notes. Ezekiel chapter 5, verse 11, says, God's talking, because you have defiled my sanctuary, therefore, I will withdraw. Now, the sanctuary was the dwelling place of God. They had built this temple for God so that they have a place to dwell. They had their labor and all their shoulder. They had all these beautiful artifacts that went there, and God was there. It was the only place, it was a place that indicated God's favor with Israel, but now we're in year 500 and since he says you have defiled the sanctuary I'm withdrawing, I'm taking off and as a result of taking off it says, see O Lord my affliction for the enemy has magnified himself by entering the sanctuary.

## Psalm 119:1-8 || ABCs of Grace with Dave Garrett

First Baptist Church, Newbury Park, CA – June 21, 1981

---

In Lamentations 9 for 1, 9 and 10 and in Jeremiah 31, 51 it says, we are ashamed, listen to this because we have heard reproach, disgrace has covered our faces for aliens have entered the holy places of the holy house. The shame that Ezra faced as a priest of God was the utter shame and defeat. Ezra was losing their personal relationship with Jehovah God. Why did they lose that relationship? What were they doing in the temple? Someone tell me out of their vast referral. What was Ezra doing that caused God to be upset with him in relationship to their worship.

They were worshipping idols, weren't they? There were two aspects of worship they were involved in too. First of all, they were involved in foreign worship. They were foreign worship. They were involved in hypocritical worship. And they were involved in no worship.

Because of foreign worship, worshipping idols in the, they had set up carvings and set up idols and the like thing in the sanctuary. Because of foreign worship, hypocritical worship, you offer the bloods and bloods and ghosts, but your heart isn't in it. And no worship, just absolute secularism, God left.

And when God left, the enemy came in, destroyed the temple, took all the great little things and ran off to Babylon and took everybody captive. And Ezra cries out in Psalm 119, verse 6, Then shall I not be ashamed or sense this overwhelmingness of defeat when I have respect from the rabbi commandments. And obviously, this is what Israel had failed to do, was fail to have respect from the awe of God's commandments. As a result of that, there came defeat in their lives. And defeat in their lives was indicated by strong worship, hypocritical worship, and no worship.

Now, when you look in the New Testament, you find a Greek word for temple is naos, spelled N-A-O-S, and it says in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 what? About the temple. Something very interesting. What's it say about the temple in 1 Corinthians chapter 3? What's the New Testament teaching about the temple? Are we in the temple now? No. Your body is the what? Is the temple of God. It's the sanctuary of God. It's the holy place of God. And guess what happens, folks, when there is serenity in your sanctuary, or hypocritical worship in your sanctuary, or malice in your sanctuary? What's going to happen?

God's going to leave. When God leaves, what happens? The enemy comes in. When the enemy comes in, what happens? We have deceit, don't we? Along with the thrill of victory, we've got the agony of deceit. The very same thing that has happened to Israel happens to us in our lives when we get involved in foreign worship. How can we get involved in foreign worship in our sanctuary? Inside of idols. Okay. How do we get involved in hypocritical worship in our sanctuary?

If we're headed with something or not, how do we get involved in no worship in our sanctuary? Just, I've got all of you. As a result of that, God doesn't leave on a permanent basis, but the filling of the Holy Spirit is gone because the Holy Spirit dwells in our temple permanently because we have the earnest of the inheritance, according to Ephesians chapter 1. The Holy Spirit is ours. If we don't have the Holy Spirit, we are not of his, it says. We don't lose our salvation, but we lose, according to Psalm 51, we lose our salvation.

That's exactly the situation that he faced. Yes, sir. It wasn't the main reason, but it certainly contributed. As a matter of fact, in Ezra and Nehemiah, it's one of the major problems they had to rectify at the, when they went back into the land in 426, they had to get rid of all the foreign wives. Right. They made them have the forces. And you look at 2 Corinthians chapter 6, and it talks about the defilement of the sanctuary, it's the bodies of the temple of the Holy

Spirit, and it says what?

In 2 Corinthians chapter 6, it talks about what? Be not unequally loved together among believers. We went fast about light with darkness. Alright? And so it certainly was a contributing factor. They needed to remain pure, And so that goes back to our first word, the key word in Psalm 119, verse 1, blessed are the undefiled in the way.

## Psalm 119:1-8 || ABCs of Grace with Dave Garrett

First Baptist Church, Newbury Park, CA – June 21, 1981

---

Now, the word undefiled there is a word that we've already covered in the class on Psalm 119, and it deals with Psalm 119, verse 7. We deal with the five key expressions in Psalm 119, and those five key expressions, the first one starts out from, the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul, remember?

So the word undefiled here in verse 1 is the same word perfect in Psalm 19 verse 7. Remember what the word perfect meant? It meant what? It meant complete. It was used in what book of the Bible? It was Leviticus. And how was it translated in Leviticus?

Blameless or without blemish. All right? Referred to the purity of a sacrifice. Blessed or without happy. Well, all the happiness is of, because this word blessed is plural. All the happiness is of those without blemish in the way who walk a characteristic of life in the Torah, in the direction of Jehovah.

Oh, how happy are they that keep his testimonies, testimonies of the principle of God, and that seek him with a whole heart. Can you remember someone else in a recent history of Israel, just recent to the 500, who sought God with his whole heart?

Hezekiah, who else, before that? And after he has Hezekiah. Just before the destruction of Israel. Josiah. And it's something very interesting he says about Josiah in 2 Kings 23, verse 25.

It says, he turned to the Lord with his whole heart, soul, and strength according to the Torah of Moses.

To his awe, he found the book of the law, and he brought back the sacrifices again. It says in, I think, 2 Chronicles, when I go around and around about this verse all the time, when the sacrifice began, the song of the Lord began also.

And worship began again in their lives. And so Josiah, I really believe in the back of Ezra's mind, he's going back to the example of Josiah, and he says, Think back to Josiah, that great king of Israel, and how did he do it, folks?

He turned the land with his soul, heart, and soul, and strength, according to the story of Moses.

Now, what does that command us? In Deuteronomy 6, verse 5, it wants to say, Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and all thy strength.

And when Josiah read that, you know what he did? He decided just to take God in his word.

And as a result of that, God breathed Josiah, but the evil kings that spotted him decided not to do that, and the city was destroyed in 497 B.C.

Now, please turn the tape over for the remainder of the message. What does he tell the people to do?

Rolling right along here. What does he tell the people to do in verses 1 and 2? What are the four things they're supposed to do in order to get this blessing?

They've got to be what and what? There are four things they're supposed to be. Let's take a look at verse 1. They're supposed to be what in verse 1? Two things: blameless and what? Rockers, alright? Blamelessness is the attitude of the heart, and the rocking is the action moving out of their lives. They have to have a blameless heart before God and they have to rock—rock their lives in the will of the Lord. The third and fourth things in verse 2 are what? Keep and seek. Alright? The prerequisite for blessing, then, is what? The four prerequisites for crossing were, to begin with, to be undefiled, to walk, to keep, and to seek—these are the prerequisites for blessing.

## Psalm 119:1-8 || ABCs of Grace with Dave Garrett

First Baptist Church, Newbury Park, CA – June 21, 1981

---

I think keeping and seeking are the same things as being undefiled and walking. Keeping and seeking. Keeping and seeking. Verse 3 says, they also do no iniquity. Iniquity here is a Hebrew word that means distortion. Each one of us, and I know mine very well because I know how distorted he can make things, each one of us has a distorter in our soul. Have you got another name for that? Seth. What else is it called in Scripture? It's called the flesh. What else is it called in Scripture? The old man. Some of you have heard me say that's not found in Scripture, but that's probably the best description—the old sin nature. Alright. Each one of us has an old sin nature, which is the distorter of the soul. The old sin nature is going to tell you what about getting blessing.

Hmm. What's that? Okay. How is it going to tell you to achieve blessing? Is it going to say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," or is it going to say, "Blessed are the proud"? What else is it going to say? "Blessed are the meek" or "Blessed are the strong"? What else is it going to say? "Blessed are the unholy," right? Yeah, "Blessed are the rich." What else is it going to say? What's that? "Fly now, pay later." Fly now, pay later.

Alright? So the distorter in your soul is going to give you messages that are exactly the opposite of God's message. God's message here is "Blessed are the undefiled in the way." What's the distorter going to say? "Blessed are those who grow up and do it the way they can. They don't care if you're undefiled." "Blessed are those who walk in the law of the Lord." What is the distorter going to say? "Make your own law." What's he going to say in verse 2? The distorter is going to say, "Keep his testimonies." Have a nodding acquaintance with God's testimonies, right? It's not going to do him wrong. "You can be a religious fanatic, you know, and your friends are going to go, 'Next time we have a party, don't invite Jimmy.'" He is real, though. Alright?

The distorter is not going to say, "Seek him with the whole heart." It's going to say, "On Christmas and Easter, okay?" Right? Alright, this is what the distorter is going to say. And what's that going to do in your life? Is it going to give blessing or not? It might appear to give blessing, but it won't. The Scripture says, "Thou," and the word "Thou" is emphatic in the Hebrew. "Thou and thou alone." Underline it. Capitalize it. Put it in italics. Put it in Old English caps if you want. "Thou and thou alone hath commanded us to keep thy precepts how? Diligently."

Okay, now. This is Ezra's word to his fellows. Listen to what Ezra's told the folks. They're down, they're broken, their houses have been destroyed, the house of God has been destroyed. He says, "Listen, there's going to be incredible temptation on the steps from Jerusalem to Babylon to join with the Chaldeans and to become like them and to follow them and to think like them. But their lives aren't controlled by the word of God. Their lives are given over to the distorter of the soul. And so during this time, if you want blessing, it's going to come this way, folks. Let me encourage you. The blessing comes this way."

And then he takes the psalm and turns it into a personal prayer of his own life. He says in verse 5, "Oh, that my ways..." He's not talking to the guys out there. He's gone back into his little closet, and he's, you know, it's lonely at the top, and the leader has to button up and look good and get up and say, "We're going to get him. We're going to get him. Be blessed, and it's going to be great. And you go out and just lift up your hands and watch. It's going to be super." He goes back into his closet, "Oh, God, I'm so tired. Oh, God, I'm so miserable. Don't let me tell them that because they're following me."

So he says in verse 5, "Oh, that my ways, God, were directed to keep thy statutes." Why? Because they've got their eyes on Israel. That's Pastor John's prayer. You know, he didn't want to be put on a pedestal—he's talked about that before—but we're going to do that. The distorter of the soul is going to make him something special. Okay? He doesn't want to be special. He's just a man of God trying to do God's work. But I bet his prayer has got to be, on a regular basis, "Oh, that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes because I've got a whole pile of people following me, God. If I get off the road, boy, there's a whole pile of people going to be off the road too."

## Psalm 119:1-8 || ABCs of Grace with Dave Garrett

First Baptist Church, Newbury Park, CA – June 21, 1981

---

So in the case of us, we're going to be praying for John. Then should I not be ashamed? When does it come? When I have respect unto all thy commandments.

"I will praise thee with uprightness of heart. When I shall have learned thy righteous judgments, I will keep thy statutes. O forsake me not utterly."

The idea of shame in our lives. Let's see if we can make this a fact. Our Jerusalem hasn't really been destroyed and we haven't had someone come down here and, you know, rape and kill each other through a new way of heart. But what is shame? How do we experience the shame that he's talking about here? It's a good thought. I haven't thought of that, but that's not exactly what I'm getting at.

Okay, let's take a look. Defeat is taking place. And we'll explain what kind of defeat it was. The temple has been pillaged. The sanctuary has been destroyed. Alright? How is that related to our own lives? It's got to be the type of situation that you and I have faced when something you've done points out to everyone around you that it was a lack of faith that caused your defeat. Now, wasn't it the lack of Israel's faith that caused them to be defeated? With faith and obedience to God?

Can you think of situations in your own life? I've gone through this for the last couple of days trying to think through this. I'm not talking about the shame of those secret sins that no one knows about. That kind of shame between you and God—leave it there. But the shame of you depriving yourself of being a Christian, and through some lack of faith on your part, you become defeated and everybody knows it.

Now, you don't have to talk about things—you can talk about your neighbor, talk about somebody else. Hey, well, I know a guy who... alright, you know who you're already talking about. What are circumstances like that in our own lives? Can you describe a circumstance in your own life where a lack of faith caused defeat and everybody saw it and whose name got reproached? God's name got reproached. But if you were seeking after God's name, boy, you got shame. You were ashamed.

What's the situation? You don't have to describe your own. I've got so much truth that I can prime the pump with. I'll start off real simple, alright? You've been passing out tracts at work. You've been talking to your friends and neighbors about coming to church. Everyone knows you're Holy Joe or Holy Jane, as the case may be, and one day for some reason, I don't know why, it all caves in on you and you blow up. In the air around your workspace is a bright shade of blue. You got me? Are you with me on this? Alright. Words that man hath not thought to utter have come out of your mouth, and people within 25 yards, or a mile, have heard that what you think of the boss is probably less than complimentary.

There's no time for a public confession. What you think of as Hamlet, that just landed on your thumb, should not be repeated in church. Alright, this is... okay. You've declared yourself to be a man or woman of God, and all of a sudden you've done something decidedly ungodly, and everyone now knows it, and guess who is defeated? And guess who feels absolute shame? Oh, my God, what did I do?

Okay, that's an easy one. That's an easy one. Yes,

it's not perfect. It's not perfect, just for giving. Right. Or you have the bumper sticker that says, "Praise the Lord." You just cut somebody off, and they come by and give you the, you know... yeah, sleep over one night. Anyway, or you cut somebody else off or something like that, and you do the... That kind of defeat. I'm thinking of a defeat in the lives of many Christians today. A defeat that opens up, a defeat that kills with a type of shame. And it's not easy to talk about, but it's a defeat that we've got to recognize as something that opens us up to some shame, a shame that we have to live with. And people who go through this struggle with it. And that is the problem of divorce.

## Psalm 119:1-8 || ABCs of Grace with Dave Garrett

First Baptist Church, Newbury Park, CA – June 21, 1981

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You've come before a man of God, you get married, you've made vows, and you bind yourself to a life with that person. And for some reason, I don't know why, I'm not here to talk about why that happened, but it happens, and there's a divorce, and it's open to everyone. And they know you're a Christian, and the life hasn't worked out. It just hasn't worked out. Seeing. And that has to be... that carries with you. The rule that God has for us at a time like that is, He still has a plan. He still loves you. And it can all work out. God still loved Israel. He was still, as far as He was concerned, loved Israel as a bride. Even though that bride had divorced Him by going after other gods. God still says in Jeremiah 31, "I will take that stony heart out of them, and I will put in them a heart of flesh, and they'll be my bride again." I can't think of a situation in a Christian's life that's probably more deceiving than a time when they face divorce. If you have or know someone in advance, God still loves you.

There's another situation that takes place, I think, probably a more critical time. And that's not in a situation of losing a mate. That's in a situation of choosing a mate. I think this situation probably causes more problems than the losing a mate situation. Ladies have a problem with, you know, the knight in shining armor comes running around and just doesn't happen to be too committed to the Lord, but, boy, see how good we're looking. It makes a lot of money. You know? So I think two of the biggest areas of defeat in American life today as far as Christians are in the area of choosing a mate and losing a mate. Because it's so beautiful in the Wall Street, God's choosing Israel and God's losing Israel. Growing up with a job is another situation. Being caught in compromise. Being caught in a lie. Being caught with your hand in the cookie jar, as it were.

Of sins, some are pretty bad and probably the worst kind, as far as I'm concerned, but they aren't overt, and people aren't going to know about it. What we're talking about is those real heavy defeats that every one of us has faced and the shame that comes and the sense that God has given you up utterly. And He says in the last verse, He says, "Don't forsake me utterly." And God says, "I'm not going to forsake you." However, the prerequisites are being undefiled in the way, walking in the law of the Lord, keeping His testimonies, seeking with a whole heart, doing no iniquity, not allowing the distorter of the soul to control the life. Sinners tend to read "diligently" in verse 4 as the same word as "utterly" in verse 8. You can play with that if you like and come up with some kind of interesting applications. Yes, sir.

How do you mean, does he destroy? I am glad you brought that up. It's a beautiful introduction to next week. Also, so we're going to lesson the next week. How do you defeat the distorter? Well, first of all, the distorter in your soul is never eradicated. Never eradicated. You're always going to have that old sin nature. But Ezra shows them in the next eight verses how to defeat the distorter. And it's very simple to see. It's very plain. Now they go through a whole lot of gymnastics to get down to the source. You read verses 9 through 16 during this next week. And God will show you how to defeat the distorter. And there is only one way.

**BUT WE'LL GET INTO THAT NEXT WEEK.**

Being ashamed starts with the letter A, and the next one's going to start with the letter B, and the next one will start with the letter C. So we've got to start our ABCs off this morning. Orienting to being ashamed. First, recognizing that as a Christian, defeat should bring shame, and if you don't feel ashamed, then there should be some re-evaluation of your lifestyle. And then realizing that if you are ashamed because of defeat, God has not forsaken you utterly. God still loves you. God still has a plan for your life. God still wants to bless you. There's still something you can do for God. God hasn't cast you away. You can still be of use to Him. You can still be of use to others.

As a matter of fact, the people that I know who have been of most use to God are those who have been the most defeated. Those who have been defeated and turned that defeat into a triumph and have been able to share with others. Ministries develop out of defeat. Why? Because once you follow God's pathway out of defeat, then guess what? You have a ministry with everybody else you come in contact with who's had the same defeat and doesn't know the way out. Isn't it neat? God doesn't allow you... you know, God allows us to become crushed so we can tell others what it's like to be crushed and to be put back together again, piece by piece, with His gracious hand.



## Psalm 119:1-8 || ABCs of Grace with Dave Garrett

First Baptist Church, Newbury Park, CA – June 21, 1981

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2 Corinthians 1, verses 3 and 4.

Hope I can remember it. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of all comfort, and the Father of mercy, the God of all comfort, who comforts us in our tribulation that we might be able to comfort those who are in any trouble with the comfort wherewith we ourselves.

Dog, I made it. Why are we comforted? So we can comfort somebody else who's in the same trouble. So what do you say? I will praise you with uprightness of heart when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. I left this for last. The word "learned" is a Hebrew word which means to be trained under the rod, to be beaten with a rod. Otherwise, you've gone through the University of Hard Knocks—it has the highest tuition of any school in the land.

I don't care if you applied to Harvard or Princeton or Yale, the School of Hard Knocks is going to cost you more money than any of those tuitions put together. And yet when you go through it, and you go through it with praise, saying, "God, because I see what you're trying to accomplish, I will keep thy statutes, O forsake me not utterly." Then your life can be used to help someone else's life that's been crushed.

You know, they're all going to be able to run to John and say, "John, help me, I'm in trouble." John might just turn around and say, "Well, I happen to know four people in this church who faced the same problem, and they want to talk to you." So what have you? You know, you've blown up at work. Find somebody else in the church who's got a hot temper. Talk to them about it. Share with them. Find some scriptures that deal with it. Get into James chapter 1 and Ephesians chapter 4. Get that temper under control.

If you've faced divorce, or if you picked the wrong person, or you're about to... Anybody who's got that problem—losing a mate or choosing a mate—needs to talk to somebody who's been through it. That's what I've got to say. Yes. That's true. But let's... I'm going to caution you on something. Let's not get involved in something that I find in the church—I've been involved in—and that is having what I like to call a pity party.

Okay? Let's not get together and have pity parties. Alright? "Woe is me. I know just exactly how you feel, let me do." I know. Well, yeah, but, you know, getting together and licking one another's wounds isn't the answer. You wouldn't say, "I know how bad it is. Wasn't that big mean man that left you, wasn't it?" I've heard that. Yes. Oh, I don't know. Hey, but a lot of that goes around. And what that does is tend to nurture a root of bitterness.

And that root of bitterness, folks, will begin to grow up in your life and just spoil everything God tried to do. Read Hebrews chapter 12 about a root of bitterness and see what happens. It not only affects you, but it affects everybody that comes in contact with you. Hoisting their lives. But if you feel pity for yourself, you go to someone who's a strong Christian—someone who won't just pity you but will say, "Hey, listen, I know what you've gone through, and I've gone through the same thing. This is what God's done for me."

I know that's what you needed to hear,

Del. I'm just making a little extra warning—that's something that involves pity parties. Pity parties are pushing the panic button. Those are the two problems that we're going to have—running into panic palace and pushing that button. You know, "What was I going to do? God's going to suck me out of it."

Anyway. That's all I've got to say on Psalm 119, verses 1 through 8. I'm sure there's volumes more that can be said. And I trust it's helpful to anybody here who has faced that utter defeat, faced that feeling of shame, realized that God loves you. There's still a blessing, and all is not lost.

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Let's close in prayer. Father in heaven, we give you thanks for your inexhaustible Word in you. We pray that those of us who have faced those situations, first of all, might respond as you want us to respond—in faith and in love and praise—taking your Word in as the anchor of our soul, and then learn from you, learning your righteous judgments so that we might be able to help others who are in the same situation, that we together might minister as a body to one another. Help to see us all grow. I thank you for your support has come. In Jesus' name, amen.