



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V27 N33 August 17, 2025

PSALMS: CELEBRATING CHRIST IN GOD'S HYMNBOOK

"Psalm 119:9-16"

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Authority of the Bible

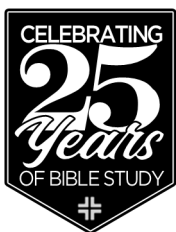
I believe the Bible is the word of God and has the right to command my belief and practice.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16-17



How can a person lead a pure life?



According to the apostle Paul, the word of God is truthful and reliable because it is "God-breathed," namely, *inspired*, and is "useful," to wit: for "teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness," leading to spiritual growth and maturity (2Ti 3:16-17). However, the word of God is no magic amulet. Merely owning a Bible is not enough; having one in the house will not do. Its right to command one's belief and practice and its power to change one's life through its usefulness is lost on the person who neither understands what it says nor does what it commands. In either case, one must read the Bible in order to enjoy its benefits, thus linking the Central Belief of Authority of the Bible, to the Central Practice of Bible Study — "I study the Bible *to know* God, the truth, and *to find direction* for my daily life" — thus linking belief to behavior.

Psalm 119, the longest psalm in the Psalter, is well known for its teaching on God's word. According to one commentator: "It consists of twenty-two strophes corresponding to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Each strophe has eight verses, or *bicola* (two-line units), and each *bicolon* of a particular strophe begins with the same Hebrew letter. Consequently the whole Psalm form a very elaborate acrostic poem, since the strophes are arranged according to the alphabet sequence" (A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms*, NCBC, 2:787). The psalmist uses eight synonyms to refer to God's revelation: 1) "law" (25 times); "word" (22 times); "decree" (23 times); "ordinance" (23 times); "statute" (22 times); "commandment" (22 times); "precept" (21 times); and "promise" (19 times). One of the eight synonyms occurs in every verse of the Psalm except four, while two occur in five verses (see Nancy deClaissé-Walford, Rolf F. Jacobson and Beth Laneel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT, 871). Verses 9-16 contain seven of the eight synonyms.

Below is a select list of *verbs* linked to synonyms for God's word in Psalm 119 (ESV). These verbs show how people relate **directly to, that is, how they engage** God's word:

First, with regard to verbs related to *learning and knowing*: "**learn** your righteous rules" (v. 7), "**learn** your commandments" (v. 73), "**understand** the way of your precepts" (v. 27), "**know** your testimonies" (v. 125).

Second, with regard to verbs related to *thinking, meditating, and reflecting*: "**meditate** on your precepts" (v. 15), "**delight** in your statutes" (v. 16), "**consider** your testimonies" (v. 95), "**recount/declare** your rules" (v. 13).

Third, with regard to *loving and valuing*: "**love** your law" (v. 97), "**delight** in your commands" (v. 47), "**long for** your commandments" (v. 131), "**rejoice at** your word" (v. 162).

Fourth, with regard to *keeping and obeying*: "**keeping** your statutes" (v. 5), "**keep** your law and **observe** it" (v. 34), "**will not forget** your word" (v. 16), "**cling to** your testimonies" (v. 31), "**not wander** from your commandments" (v. 10), "**do not turn aside** from your rules" (v. 102), "**keep** your statutes" (v. 145).

Fifth, with regard to *seeking and trusting*: "**sought** your precepts" (v. 45), "**believe in** your commandments" (v. 66), "**hope in** your word" (v. 81).

Finally, *sixth*, with regard to *receiving and internalizing*: "**stored up** your word in my heart" (v. 11), "**incline my heart** to your testimonies" (v. 36), "**Open my eyes**, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law" (v. 16).

The verbs in bold type, used in Psalm 119 (e.g., "learn," "understand," "know," "meditate," "consider," "recount," "keep," "seek") reveal that the Bible is not to merely hold an honored place in Christians' homes. It is to hold a central place in Christians' lives.

Read Psalm 119:9-16

Beth

9 *How can a young person stay on the path of purity?**By living according to your word.*10 *I seek you with all my heart;**do not let me stray from your commands.*11 *I have hidden your word in my heart**that I might not sin against you.*12 *Praise be to you, LORD;**teach me your decrees.*13 *With my lips I recount**all the laws that come from your mouth.*14 *I rejoice in following your statutes**as one rejoices in great riches.*15 *I meditate on your precepts**and consider your ways.*16 *I delight in your decrees;**I will not neglect your word.*

Read another translation

(Bet)

9 *How can a young person maintain a pure life?**By guarding it according to your instructions.*10 *With all my heart I seek you.**Do not allow me to stray from your commands.*11 *In my heart I store up your words,**so I might not sin against you.*12 *You deserve praise, O LORD.**Teach me your statutes.*13 *With my lips I proclaim**all the regulations you have revealed.*14 *I rejoice in the lifestyle prescribed by your rules**as if they were riches of all kinds.*15 *I will meditate on your precepts**and focus on your behavior.*16 *I find delight in your statutes;**I do not forget your instructions. (NET)*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "young person" in v. 9.
- Circle "purity" in v. 9.
- Box "By" indicating *means* in v. 9.
- Bracket "living according to" in v. 9.
- Underline "your word" in v. 9, 11, 16.
- Circle "seek" in v. 10.
- Bracket "with all my heart" in v. 10.
- Underline "your commands" in v. 10.
- Circle "hidden" in v. 11.
- Box "that" indicating *purpose* in v. 11.
- Underline "your decrees" in vv. 12, 16.
- Circle "recount" in v. 13.
- Underline "laws that come from your mouth" in v. 13.
- Underline "your statutes" in v. 14.
- Box "as" indicating *comparison* in v. 14.
- Circle "meditate" and "consider" in v. 15.
- Underline "your precepts" in v. 15.
- Bracket "delight" and "will not neglect" in v. 16.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. *Identify* the psalmist's question and his own answer to it (v. 9).

2. Each verse in 9-16 contains *one* term that refers to God's revelation (v. 16 contains *two*). List all of them.

3. *Paraphrase* "by living according to your word" (v. 9).

4. *Paraphrase* "with all my heart" (v. 10).

5. The psalmist has "hoarded" God's word in his heart (v. 11). Why?

6. We need God's help to stay on the path of purity (cf. vv. 10, 12). How so?

7. Does verse 13 suggest that there is value in reading the word out loud? What do you think?

8. Explain the *comparison* (v. 14) and its significance.

9. *Paraphrase* verse 15.

10. **Discussion:** Talk about whether it's possible to make time for the things the psalmist describes (vv. 11-16).

Commentary On The Text

Psalms 119 is an acrostic poem. It has twenty-two stanzas, corresponding to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Each stanza consists of eight two-line units (bicola), each of which begins with the particular letter corresponding to that stanza. The eight two-line units of the second stanza (vv. 9-16) each begin with the second letter *bet* (with a dot in the middle of the letter, it rhymes with *mate*), also spelled *beth* (cf. stanza headings in NET and NIV respectively).

About Psalm 119, one commentator writes: “The psalmist was persecuted by men of rank and authority, who ridiculed his beliefs, seeking to put him to shame and make him give up his faith. But he strengthened himself by meditating on the Word of the Lord, which to him was his comfort, his prized possession, his rule of life, and his resource for strength—all of which drove him to desire it even more” (Allen P. Ross, “Psalms,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 879). The fact that every verse of the psalm mentions at least one of the synonyms for God’s word confirms the commentator’s observations.

The psalmist begins the second stanza of the longest psalm in the psalter with a question, which he immediately answers. Worded with respect to a “young man” (ESV), the question (v. 9a) is actually not gender-specific, hence the translation “young person” (NIV, NET). It pertains to the *means* whereby a person can live a morally exemplary life, which, of course, is a matter of concern to young men and young women alike. The answer (v. 9b) is addressed to God, namely, “By living according to *your* word.” The psalmist’s question assumes there is a particular way of life that is conducive to moral integrity; his answer identifies that way as living in obedience to God’s word, which he calls “a lamp for my feet, a light on my path” in verse 105.

Since the answer begs for elaboration, the psalmist particularizes his answer in terms of his own personal experience. In verses 10-16, he illustrates what a life lived according to God’s word looks like as described in terms of nine actions he has taken and two requests he has made. *First*, he himself wholeheartedly **seeks** the LORD, to wit, by living according to his word (v. 10a). The phrase “with all my heart” connotes *sincerity* as well as single-minded *dedication*. His first *action* is followed by his first *request*, “do not let me stray from your commands” (v. 10b), a recognition of his dependence upon God.

Second, he **internalizes** God’s word. This internalization certainly involves Scripture memorization, about which one author writes: “For millennia, committing things to memory served as the foundation for religious political and educational instruction. Memorized matter was known to have staying power. It was not at the mercy of being relevant or hip and didn’t depend on books or literacy” (Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 177). But it involves more than that. For example, reflective reading, responsive reading, active Bible study, praying Scripture are also means of internalizing God’s word.

Third, he **praises** the LORD (v. 12a)—no doubt for his word, the key to living a pure life. His *third* action is followed by his *second* request, “teach me your decrees” (v. 12b). A proper regard for God and a teachable spirit go hand-in-hand. Praise and instruction are paired in verse 7 as well. “I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws.”

Fourth, he **recounts** God’s laws, which likely means he recites them one by one, which is comparable to reading God’s word out loud.

Fifth, he **rejoices in obeying** God’s word (v. 14). Furthermore, this rejoicing is comparable to rejoicing over great wealth. Rejoicing in the value of God’s word is a theme repeated in verses 72, 111, and 162.

Sixth and seventh, he **meditates on** and **considers** God’s ways revealed in his word (v. 15). The parallelism suggests that “meditates” and “considers” are used synonymously here. One translation renders this verse: “I will fix my mind on Your instructions and my eyes on Your path” (VOICE).

Eighth, he **delights** in God’s word (v. 16). Doing so, he fits the description of the “blessed” person described in Psalm 1, a person “whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night” (v. 2).

And finally, *ninth*, he **refuses to neglect** God’s word—it never gathers dust. “Love for God’s word is love for God (v.16; cf. vv.47, 70), expressed in heartfelt attitude, actions, and words. In his whole being the godly person cries out for God and delights in his will” (Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, vol. 5, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., 862-63).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 9 *young person*

Lit. "young man."

"Hebrew wisdom literature often assumes and reflects the male-oriented perspective of ancient Israelite society. The principle of the psalm is certainly applicable to all people, regardless of their gender or age" (*The NET Bible*, 11^{tn} on Ps 119:9). "The 'young man' is the disciple, also known as 'my son' in Proverbs" (Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, vol. 5, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., 862).

v. 9 *purity*

Hb. "purity his way"; cf. "How can a young person maintain a pure life?" (NET); "How can a young man keep his way pure?" (ESV). "The word 'way' (Heb. 'orah) is sometimes translated 'path.' It occurs five times in this psalm (vv. 9, 15, 101, 104, 128)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Psalms," 2025 ed., 415, sonlight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/psalms.pdf). The term "pure" is equivalent to "blameless" (v. 1)—not necessarily sinless.

v. 9 *living according to*

Cf. "By guarding it according to your word" (ESV) where "it" refers to "his way;" "By keeping your word" (HCSB); "By obeying your word" (NLT).

v. 9 *your word*

"In 119:9 the *dābār* is the divine word which proceeds from the mouth (or lips) of God (17:4, 33:6). Consequently this word or words may also signify divine commands (50:17); so the 'ten words' (Exod. 34:28) is the Decalogue, and the 'words of this law' (Dt 17:19) may refer to the Deuteronomic code. *Dābār* may indicate not only a particular message of Yahweh (Isa. 2:1; Jer. 7:2), but also the sum total of his revealed will, as perhaps in Dt. 4:2; Prov. 30:6" (A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms*, NCBC, 2:812).

v. 10 *seek*

"The author's devotion is first of all to the God of the law and the promises; they have meaning for him only because they are God's word of life for him" (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Ps 119:10). "From its beginning, 'keeping' his statutes and 'seeking' him go together (v. 2, also v. 58). The purpose of this pondering on Yahweh's teaching is to seek guidance, not about minutiae (e.g., the precise regulations of ritual sacrifice), but about matters of general lifestyle: **Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path** (v. 105)" (Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, NIBC, 443).

v. 10 *with all my heart*

"With . . . whole heart: i.e. with utmost sincerity" (Anderson, 812).

v. 10 *your commands*

Verses 9-16 contain seven of the eight synonyms used in Psalm 119 for God's revelation, and each of them connote a slightly different expression of divine revelation. However, as one commentator writes: "While each synonym carries a slightly different nuance of meaning, little is gained by attempting to distinguish a separate meaning, theological or otherwise, for each of them" (Nancy deClaissé-Walford, Rolf F. Jacobson and Beth Laneel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT, 872). "Verse 10b might be understood from Prov. 19:27, which states that when a man ceases to obey instructions he begins 'to stray from the words of knowledge.' So 119:10 is a recognition of man's dependence upon God" (Anderson, 812); cf. "teach me your decrees" (v. 12).

v. 11 *hidden*

"The act of 'hiding' God's word is not to be limited to the memorization of individual texts or even whole passages but extends to a holistic living in devotion to the Lord (cf. Deut 6:4-9; 30:14; Jer 31:33)" (VanGemeren, 862).

v. 11 *word*

"A poetical synonym for 'word' (v. 11) is 'saying' (Heb. 'imrah), which the translators have sometimes rendered 'promise'" (Constable, 433). Not the Hb. term *dābār* used in v. 9 that is also translated "word" in the NIV.

v. 13 *recount*

"I declare: the verb *s-p-r* can mean both 'to count' (22:17 (M.T. 18)) and 'to recount, declare'. It has been suggested that the divine commands may have been memorized by being counted as they were recited. *NEB* has 'I say them over, one by one'" (Anderson, 813); cf. "I have recited aloud all the regulations you have given us" (NLT).

v. 14 *as one rejoices . . .*

"It is only when the will of God becomes more important than material values that one begins to understand the meaning of God and his fellowship (see prov. 2:4f.). So it is a 'variant' on Mt. 6:33: 'But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness . . .'" (Anderson, 813).

v. 15 *meditate, consider*

"The root *šyḥ* (‘meditate,’ vv. 15, 23, 27, 48, 78) has the basic meaning of a loud, enthusiastic, and emotion-filled form of speaking: but in Psalm 119 it has the sense of a wise, pensive concentration" (VanGemeren, 862). The root *nabat* ("consider") has the basic meaning "look intently at." Cf. "fix my eyes on your ways" (ESV); "keep my eyes on your ways" (CJB).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THIS PASSAGE

If you want to live a pure life, take seriously internalizing God's word and obeying it.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



PARENT CONNECTION

What is your greatest challenge in pursuing God? Is it your calendar and you're simply too busy? Is it distractions and you find yourself in the endless binge-watch or doom-scroll cycle? Are you struggling and God seems too far away? Are you walking in sin and don't feel ready to give it up or allow yourself to be confronted with truth? These aren't just adult issues. I bet your kids are dealing with very similar challenges that pull them away from pursuing a relationship with the Lord. Now is a great time to make changes in your family that slough off these challenges and help you fully focus on pursuing God. We've just begun a new school year, and this encourages us to make a fresh start and begin healthy habits. To start, find a day and time that your family can worship together, memorize a verse as you share a meal, read a Bible story or simply gather to pray before you walk out the door. This will look different for every family. Mark 15 minutes on your calendar to pursue a new habit and protect it with everything you've got. Will everyone walk in harmony the day you implement this? Absolutely not! You'll be challenged and it might be difficult, but it's worth it. Helpful hint: start small and simple. As it becomes routine, build on each habit by adding another. You'll be amazed at the difference in your family as God becomes front and center. There is value in pursuing the Lord, and it's our privilege and responsibility as parents to model this for our kids. We're praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Psalm 119:9-16.

1. What question is asked in verse 9 and what is the answer?
2. What 7 ways to live according to God's word are listed throughout the psalm?
3. Why does the psalmist hide God's word in his heart?

What Do You Think?

What are some things that might distract you from pursuing the Lord and His word?

What Do You Do?

List 7 steps to take that correspond with the 7 ways to grow in God listed in the psalm. Put one of them into practice this week.

CORE COMPETENCY: Authority of the Bible

I believe the Bible is God's book that tells me what to believe and do.

MEMORY VERSE: James 1:19-20

"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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BIBLE CHURCH**

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OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.