

1 Vision Area

1 Home Bible Study

The Big Picture

Today we will continue to look at the importance of reading scripture in the home, regardless of the makeup of your home.

Biblical Text

Psalm 119 (NIV, 1984)

Materials Needed

Reading Schedule, *copy for everyone*

Preparing for the Lesson

Today's lesson is a continuation, in some ways, of last week's lesson. However, the lesson brings home a sharper focus as to the importance of reading *scripture* in the home.

Our lesson, in reality, started several weeks ago in Mardel, the Christian bookstore. I knew we were looking at 1 Home Bible Study and had even selected the texts we would use, but thought it might be good to have some resources to suggest to families as they prepared to spend time together reading.

I walked into Mardel and went to the "Family Devotional Guides" section. And I just stood there overwhelmed. After a while, I came to my senses and began to thumb through a couple of the selections ... and soon returned to my stupor and just stood there again.

Seriously, there were no less than 15 devotional Bibles of some sort. Many of them had fancy covers—generally targeted toward whatever specific demographic they were marketing too—and almost all had great "application" stories. The more I looked, the less certain I was at succeeding in finding a Bible or two to recommend.

So, I called Luke over and asked him to help me select one. He pointed to one he liked and when I asked why, he said: "The cover looks cool." (Remember that marketing thing?) He then wandered back to the music section to find some new music to listen to.

As I sat there, I began to think through how this lesson (and the previous one) would be structured and I kept coming back to Psalm 119, the text for this week. Without there ever being an application story, there was a ton of application. And throughout almost every verse was a mention of the word of God ... the law of the Lord ... his statutes...

It was then that I decided we do not need more craftily told application stories (Please know I have no issue with those.), but instead need more time in the God's word.

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Preparing for the Lesson

This week, we will use Psalm 119 to help remind us of the importance of God's word always being a lamp for our feet and a light for our path.

Psalm 119 is the longest of all of the psalms and almost certainly the most word focused passage in all of scripture. Divided into 22 sections, it is an acrostic with the verses of each section beginning with one of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Were we to read through the entire psalm in one setting, we would come away with one idea: the importance of the word of God.

The nice thing about Psalm 119 is that it is long enough that we can read and discuss a section of the psalm in our group and yet still have plenty left over to read throughout the week. Let me encourage you to spend time in your discussion this week asking the questions below and then encourage your group members to spend time reading just this psalm this week. You might even suggest that they read the initial section in your group time and then three sections a day (morning, lunch, and evening) for the remainder of the week. This will allow them to cover the entire psalm in seven days. I have included a page that can be printed out for this purpose.

I do not know how many of you have the capability to play YouTube movies during your group discussion, but there is a powerful scene in the movie "The Apostle" that would make a great discussion starter. I have linked to the clip or if you have the DVD, I believe (please confirm this) it is Chapter 30. In the clip below, the entire clip is good, but you can also cut off at the 5:00 minute mark.

In the clip, the troublemaker (Billy Bob Thornton) arrives on a bulldozer to knock down the church building during a Sunday afternoon church picnic. He is confronted by the Apostle (Robert Duvall) who places a Bible right in front of the bulldozer and tells Thornton he must run over the Bible to get to the building. Other people place their Bibles all the way around the bulldozer. Thornton will not run over it and when he asks one of his helpers to move it, the helper refuses and walks off. Thornton gets down to move the Bible himself, hesitates and the Apostle "converts" him.

A few questions come to mind after watching this clip. Why was Thornton (and his helper) unwilling to run over or move the Bible? Given his stance against the Apostle and given that his mission is to knock down the church, does this make any sense? Does scripture have that sort of power over us today? Should it, if it doesn't?

Possible Lesson Outline

If you have the ability to do so, show the clip from "The Apostle" listed below and ask the questions mentioned in the Preparing for the Lesson section above.

If you do not show the movie clip to begin your group discussion, a good ice-breaker for this week would be for people to tell one another their favorite verse(s) in the Bible. Be prepared to ask individuals why that specific verse or passage is their favorite and how it was that verse became their favorite verse. (Most people will tell you why as they are telling about their passage.)

Start your discussion time by reading Psalm 119.1-8.

Print out one of the reading schedules and cut it up so that every individual in the group has one section. Who has which section is not important—the discussion questions will apply to any of the sections equally.

Spend some time in discussion using the discussion questions found below.

Close with a time in prayer.

Lesson Activities

Reading Schedule

Using the reading schedule attached to this lesson, print out a copy and cut it up so that everyone in your group has a piece of paper with one section to read. Have the group read their section prior to spending a time of discussion based on these sections.

The Law and Other Words

Psalm 119 is unique in that almost every couplet says something about “God’s law.” In many, many different ways, it describes God’s law, his statutes, etc. Have your group look at the section they are given (see above) and find all of the different ways God’s word is described. You might even have people circle each instance and then go around the room to compile all of the different ways the psalmist does so, using a white board or a large sheet of paper to collect the different descriptions.

For the Kids

I would suggest that you include any children in your discussion that you feel like can understand the questions being discussed, even if they are unable to actually read the passages being discussed. To help acclimate them to the text, you might perhaps read not only psalm 119.1-8 from your usual translation, but also from a children’s translation as well. (It wouldn’t hurt the adults to hear it from both versions, either!)

For Next Week

For this week, encourage your group members to read all of Psalm 119 together in their home.

Prayer Ideas

One prayer idea you might try is to go around the room and allow every person in the group to pray a line from the section of Psalm 119 they are holding. Obviously, there may need to be some editing done, that is, you may have to ask that God “allow my/our ways to be blameless and that we will walk according to Your law” (paraphrase of 119.1).

Discussion Questions

1. How important is the Bible to you?
2. We often hear people say they are blessed: I’m too blessed to be stressed, for instance. What do you think when you hear someone say they are blessed? What do you think makes someone blessed?
3. When you think about your own life, would you describe yourself as blameless? What does the psalmist mean by this (v. 1)?
4. What are ways that you try to be “steadfast” in obeying the decrees of God (v. 5)?
5. What sort of things do we use to find advice on how to live our lives or to get through our busy, hectic days? In other words, if you wanted to improve your life in the next 30 days, where would you turn to begin that process?
6. When you look at the section of Psalm 119 you have been given, what are the ways the psalmist describes God word? How does this compare to what others in your group have in their sections?

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Discussion Questions (cont.)

7. How important do we make just hearing the word of God versus continually trying to explain it or find some sort of application? Give an example of ways we can just hear God's word or hear it more?

For Further Reading/Study

Clip from "The Apostle":

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BadaTb1qhZI&feature=player_embedded

What's Next

Next week will begin to look at 1 Ministry and will be discussing Ephesians 4.1-16, but more importantly, we will spend time focusing on how to minister to individuals ... and then doing so.

Psalm 119

אAleph

- ¹ Blessed are they whose ways are blameless,
who walk according to the law of the LORD.
² Blessed are they who keep his statutes
and seek him with all their heart.
³ They do nothing wrong;
they walk in his ways.
⁴ You have laid down precepts
that are to be fully obeyed.
⁵ Oh, that my ways were steadfast
in obeying your decrees!
⁶ Then I would not be put to shame
when I consider all your commands.
⁷ I will praise you with an upright heart
as I learn your righteous laws.
⁸ I will obey your decrees;
do not utterly forsake me.

Psalm 119

גGimel

- ¹⁷ Do good to your servant, and I will live;
I will obey your word.
¹⁸ Open my eyes that I may see
wonderful things in your law.
¹⁹ I am a stranger on earth;
do not hide your commands from me.
²⁰ My soul is consumed with longing
for your laws at all times.
²¹ You rebuke the arrogant, who are cursed
and who stray from your commands.
²² Remove from me scorn and contempt,
for I keep your statutes.
²³ Though rulers sit together and slander me,
your servant will meditate on your decrees.
²⁴ Your statutes are my delight;
they are my counselors.

Psalm 119

בBeth

- ⁹ How can a young man keep his way pure?
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, O 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.

Psalm 119

דDaleth

- ²⁵ I am laid low in the dust;
preserve my life according to your word.
²⁶ I recounted my ways and you answered me;
teach me your decrees.
²⁷ Let me understand the teaching of your precepts;
then I will meditate on your wonders.
²⁸ My soul is weary with sorrow;
strengthen me according to your word.
²⁹ Keep me from deceitful ways;
be gracious to me through your law.
³⁰ I have chosen the way of truth;
I have set my heart on your laws.
³¹ I hold fast to your statutes, O LORD;
do not let me be put to shame.
³² I run in the path of your commands,
for you have set my heart free.

Psalm 119

He

- ³³ Teach me, O LORD, to follow your decrees;
then I will keep them to the end.
³⁴ Give me understanding, and I will keep your law
and obey it with all my heart.
³⁵ Direct me in the path of your commands,
for there I find delight.
³⁶ Turn my heart toward your statutes
and not toward selfish gain.
³⁷ Turn my eyes away from worthless things;
preserve my life according to your word.
³⁸ Fulfill your promise to your servant,
so that you may be feared.
³⁹ Take away the disgrace I dread,
for your laws are good.
⁴⁰ How I long for your precepts!
Preserve my life in your righteousness.

Psalm 119

Zayin

- ⁴⁹ Remember your word to your servant,
for you have given me hope.
⁵⁰ My comfort in my suffering is this:
Your promise preserves my life.
⁵¹ The arrogant mock me without restraint,
but I do not turn from your law.
⁵² I remember your ancient laws, O LORD,
and I find comfort in them.
⁵³ Indignation grips me because of the wicked,
who have forsaken your law.
⁵⁴ Your decrees are the theme of my song
wherever I lodge.
⁵⁵ In the night I remember your name, O LORD,
and I will keep your law.
⁵⁶ This has been my practice:
I obey your precepts.

Psalm 119

Waw

- ⁴¹ May your unfailing love come to me, O LORD,
your salvation according to your promise;
⁴² then I will answer the one who taunts me,
for I trust in your word.
⁴³ Do not snatch the word of truth from my mouth,
for I have put my hope in your laws.
⁴⁴ I will always obey your law,
for ever and ever.
⁴⁵ I will walk about in freedom,
for I have sought out your precepts.
⁴⁶ I will speak of your statutes before kings
and will not be put to shame,
⁴⁷ for I delight in your commands
because I love them.
⁴⁸ I lift up my hands to your commands, which I
love,
and I meditate on your decrees.

Psalm 119

Heth

- ⁵⁷ You are my portion, O LORD;
I have promised to obey your words.
⁵⁸ I have sought your face with all my heart;
be gracious to me according to your promise.
⁵⁹ I have considered my ways
and have turned my steps to your statutes.
⁶⁰ I will hasten and not delay
to obey your commands.
⁶¹ Though the wicked bind me with ropes,
I will not forget your law.
⁶² At midnight I rise to give you thanks
for your righteous laws.
⁶³ I am a friend to all who fear you,
to all who follow your precepts.
⁶⁴ The earth is filled with your love, O LORD;
teach me your decrees.

Psalm 119

זTeth

- ⁶⁵ Do good to your servant
according to your word, O LORD.
⁶⁶ Teach me knowledge and good judgment,
for I believe in your commands.
⁶⁷ Before I was afflicted I went astray,
but now I obey your word.
⁶⁸ You are good, and what you do is good;
teach me your decrees.
⁶⁹ Though the arrogant have smeared me with lies,
I keep your precepts with all my heart.
⁷⁰ Their hearts are callous and unfeeling,
but I delight in your law.
⁷¹ It was good for me to be afflicted
so that I might learn your decrees.
⁷² The law from your mouth is more precious to me
than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.

Psalm 119

כKaph

- ⁸¹ My soul faints with longing for your salvation,
but I have put my hope in your word.
⁸² My eyes fail, looking for your promise;
I say, "When will you comfort me?"
⁸³ Though I am like a wineskin in the smoke,
I do not forget your decrees.
⁸⁴ How long must your servant wait?
When will you punish my persecutors?
⁸⁵ The arrogant dig pitfalls for me,
contrary to your law.
⁸⁶ All your commands are trustworthy;
help me, for men persecute me without cause.
⁸⁷ They almost wiped me from the earth,
but I have not forsaken your precepts.
⁸⁸ Preserve my life according to your love,
and I will obey the statutes of your mouth.

Psalm 119

יYodh

- ⁷³ Your hands made me and formed me;
give me understanding to learn your commands.
⁷⁴ May those who fear you rejoice when they see
me,
for I have put my hope in your word.
⁷⁵ I know, O LORD, that your laws are righteous,
and in faithfulness you have afflicted me.
⁷⁶ May your unfailing love be my comfort,
according to your promise to your servant.
⁷⁷ Let your compassion come to me that I may live,
for your law is my delight.
⁷⁸ May the arrogant be put to shame for wronging
me without cause;
but I will meditate on your precepts.
⁷⁹ May those who fear you turn to me,
those who understand your statutes.
⁸⁰ May my heart be blameless toward your decrees,
that I may not be put to shame.

Psalm 119

לLamedh

- ⁸⁹ Your word, O LORD, is eternal;
it stands firm in the heavens.
⁹⁰ Your faithfulness continues through all genera-
tions;
you established the earth, and it endures.
⁹¹ Your laws endure to this day,
for all things serve you.
⁹² If your law had not been my delight,
I would have perished in my affliction.
⁹³ I will never forget your precepts,
for by them you have preserved my life.
⁹⁴ Save me, for I am yours;
I have sought out your precepts.
⁹⁵ The wicked are waiting to destroy me,
but I will ponder your statutes.
⁹⁶ To all perfection I see a limit;
but your commands are boundless.

Psalm 119

Mem

⁹⁷ Oh, how I love your law!
I meditate on it all day long.
⁹⁸ Your commands make me wiser than my enemies,
for they are ever with me.
⁹⁹ I have more insight than all my teachers,
for I meditate on your statutes.
¹⁰⁰ I have more understanding than the elders,
for I obey your precepts.
¹⁰¹ I have kept my feet from every evil path
so that I might obey your word.
¹⁰² I have not departed from your laws,
for you yourself have taught me.
¹⁰³ How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!
¹⁰⁴ I gain understanding from your precepts;
therefore I hate every wrong path.

Psalm 119

Samekh

¹¹³ I hate double-minded men,
but I love your law.
¹¹⁴ You are my refuge and my shield;
I have put my hope in your word.
¹¹⁵ Away from me, you evildoers,
that I may keep the commands of my God!
¹¹⁶ Sustain me according to your promise, and I will
live;
do not let my hopes be dashed.
¹¹⁷ Uphold me, and I will be delivered;
I will always have regard for your decrees.
¹¹⁸ You reject all who stray from your decrees,
for their deceitfulness is in vain.
¹¹⁹ All the wicked of the earth you discard like
dross;
therefore I love your statutes.
¹²⁰ My flesh trembles in fear of you;
I stand in awe of your laws.

Psalm 119

Nun

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light for my path.
¹⁰⁶ I have taken an oath and confirmed it,
that I will follow your righteous laws.
¹⁰⁷ I have suffered much;
preserve my life, O LORD, according to your
word.
¹⁰⁸ Accept, O LORD, the willing praise of my
mouth,
and teach me your laws.
¹⁰⁹ Though I constantly take my life in my hands,
I will not forget your law.
¹¹⁰ The wicked have set a snare for me,
but I have not strayed from your precepts.
¹¹¹ Your statutes are my heritage forever;
they are the joy of my heart.
¹¹² My heart is set on keeping your decrees
to the very end.

Psalm 119

Ayin

¹²¹ I have done what is righteous and just;
do not leave me to my oppressors.
¹²² Ensure your servant's well-being;
let not the arrogant oppress me.
¹²³ My eyes fail, looking for your salvation,
looking for your righteous promise.
¹²⁴ Deal with your servant according to your love
and teach me your decrees.
¹²⁵ I am your servant; give me discernment
that I may understand your statutes.
¹²⁶ It is time for you to act, O LORD;
your law is being broken.
¹²⁷ Because I love your commands
more than gold, more than pure gold,
¹²⁸ and because I consider all your precepts right,
I hate every wrong path.

Psalm 119

Pe

¹²⁹ Your statutes are wonderful;
therefore I obey them.
¹³⁰ The unfolding of your words gives light;
it gives understanding to the simple.
¹³¹ I open my mouth and pant,
longing for your commands.
¹³² Turn to me and have mercy on me,
as you always do to those who love your name.
¹³³ Direct my footsteps according to your word;
let no sin rule over me.
¹³⁴ Redeem me from the oppression of men,
that I may obey your precepts.
¹³⁵ Make your face shine upon your servant
and teach me your decrees.
¹³⁶ Streams of tears flow from my eyes,
for your law is not obeyed.

Psalm 119

Qoph

¹⁴⁵ I call with all my heart; answer me, O LORD,
and I will obey your decrees.
¹⁴⁶ I call out to you; save me
and I will keep your statutes.
¹⁴⁷ I rise before dawn and cry for help;
I have put my hope in your word.
¹⁴⁸ My eyes stay open through the watches of the
night,
that I may meditate on your promises.
¹⁴⁹ Hear my voice in accordance with your love;
preserve my life, O LORD, according to your
laws.
¹⁵⁰ Those who devise wicked schemes are near,
but they are far from your law.
¹⁵¹ Yet you are near, O LORD,
and all your commands are true.
¹⁵² Long ago I learned from your statutes
that you established them to last forever.

Psalm 119

Tsadhe

¹³⁷ Righteous are you, O LORD,
and your laws are right.
¹³⁸ The statutes you have laid down are righteous;
they are fully trustworthy.
¹³⁹ My zeal wears me out,
for my enemies ignore your words.
¹⁴⁰ Your promises have been thoroughly tested,
and your servant loves them.
¹⁴¹ Though I am lowly and despised,
I do not forget your precepts.
¹⁴² Your righteousness is everlasting
and your law is true.
¹⁴³ Trouble and distress have come upon me,
but your commands are my delight.
¹⁴⁴ Your statutes are forever right;
give me understanding that I may live.

Psalm 119

Resh

¹⁵³ Look upon my suffering and deliver me,
for I have not forgotten your law.
¹⁵⁴ Defend my cause and redeem me;
preserve my life according to your promise.
¹⁵⁵ Salvation is far from the wicked,
for they do not seek out your decrees.
¹⁵⁶ Your compassion is great, O LORD;
preserve my life according to your laws.
¹⁵⁷ Many are the foes who persecute me,
but I have not turned from your statutes.
¹⁵⁸ I look on the faithless with loathing,
for they do not obey your word.
¹⁵⁹ See how I love your precepts;
preserve my life, O LORD, according to your
love.
¹⁶⁰ All your words are true;
all your righteous laws are eternal.

Psalm 119

שSin and Shin

- ¹⁶¹ Rulers persecute me without cause,
but my heart trembles at your word.
¹⁶² I rejoice in your promise
like one who finds great spoil.
¹⁶³ I hate and abhor falsehood
but I love your law.
¹⁶⁴ Seven times a day I praise you
for your righteous laws.
¹⁶⁵ Great peace have they who love your law,
and nothing can make them stumble.
¹⁶⁶ I wait for your salvation, O LORD,
and I follow your commands.
¹⁶⁷ I obey your statutes,
for I love them greatly.
¹⁶⁸ I obey your precepts and your statutes,
for all my ways are known to you.

Psalm 119

תTaw

- ¹⁶⁹ May my cry come before you, O LORD;
give me understanding according to your word.
¹⁷⁰ May my supplication come before you;
deliver me according to your promise.
¹⁷¹ May my lips overflow with praise,
for you teach me your decrees.
¹⁷² May my tongue sing of your word,
for all your commands are righteous.
¹⁷³ May your hand be ready to help me,
for I have chosen your precepts.
¹⁷⁴ I long for your salvation, O LORD,
and your law is my delight.
¹⁷⁵ Let me live that I may praise you,
and may your laws sustain me.
¹⁷⁶ I have strayed like a lost sheep.
Seek your servant,
for I have not forgotten your commands.