

Rick Miller - Psalm 119 - 15 Jan 2023

So this morning we're going to continue our series on prayer for this new year. Ask the Lord to encourage our hearts related to prayer, and we're looking into the word to get those encouragements. So let's open in prayer. Father, we thank you for the encouragements you give us in your word. Lord, you know the difficulties that we face concerning a life of prayer and yet you speak to us.

And give us examples of people with praying hearts. And Lord, we want to emulate that. We want to grow in that. As you said, men ought always to pray and not lose heart. Because we can get discouraged, we can lose heart. We don't understand maybe why you don't answer in the way we want or in the timing we want, but Lord, that we could learn to overcome all these obstacles and to become an effectual prayer warrior.

As James said, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous person avails much, and we want to see you availing in our lives. It's seeing victory, seeing answers to prayer. And so encourage our hearts as we look at your word in Jesus' name, Amen.

We've already had two sessions on prayer. The first one, we looked at John 17, which many scholars call the high priestly prayer. It was the prayer that Jesus prayed right before he went to the cross, and he's praying for himself. He's praying for his disciples that he's leaving behind, and then he's praying for future believers.

One of the things we got from that prayer, especially as he's praying for us as future believers, is that we would be one with God in our relationship, that we would understand that oneness we have, but we would also be one with one another. So that's something we want to pray for ourselves. We want to pray for others.

Lord, help us to understand the new covenant and this oneness we now have with God. It's quite amazing that what Christ did on the cross, that where we were separated from God, now we have this oneness, and then the importance of getting along with one another. You know, we're to strive for unity, the Bible says. We don't want to be the kind of people that are easily offended.

I'm taking my toys and going home because someone stepped on my toes at church. No, you find the church God's called you to, and then you get along with each other. You're not easily offended. You're quick to forgive.

Very important, very important because the enemy can try to disrupt the church by us not loving one another, not getting along with one another.

And then Jesus went on. He said twice in the prayer for us in John 17, that if the church is like that, the world will see and they will know that Jesus is the son of God. So think of the responsibility on us. For us just to get along and love one another and, and understand that oneness we have with God and with one another, that will impact the world.

They will see that and say, Hey, I want to be part of that. That was John 17 and you can go back and listen to that sermon if you want to hear the whole thing. But then last week we looked at some of the prayers of Paul, and that is really powerful. And for years I have been impacted by the prayers of Paul.

I wanted to just read one of them quickly as a reminder of what we learned last week. And so he has prayers in Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians. In Colossians I wanted to look at Colossians 1:9, and Paul says, *“for this reason, we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to ask.”*

So here we see Paul telling us what he's praying for - the Colossian church. *“To ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.”* So this is a theme that we see through the prayers of Paul, that he is praying for others that they will have spiritual understanding.

So you've probably had times where you've just read the Bible and then you think, well, what did I just read? You really didn't even understand it. Or, you're reading through a passage and you're trying to understand it, but you just don't understand it, or it's not impacting your life or you're praying for others that you're trying to share the word with, and you can see they're just not getting it.

It's just going right over their head or they're not receiving from the Word. Paul understood that about his ministry. He could get up and preach the word, but if he did not pray for the people for a supernatural revelation, he knew that it wasn't going to change their life.

So he would often pray, Lord, fill them with the knowledge of his will. I want people to understand God's will. I want them to have all wisdom and spiritual understanding. It's so important that we pray that for ourselves. And so this morning we're going to look at Psalm 119. Now Psalm 119, as you know, it's the longest chapter in the Bible.

And don't get scared, I'm not going to go through the whole thing today. But I

was talking to Steven and he goes, how many verses are you going to cover? Because there's 176. I was so impressed that he knew that there are 176 verses in Psalm 119. I said, well, we will be lucky if we get through 40.

But Psalm 119, if you know of this psalm, it is a classic psalm that has some interesting features to it. One is that, as many psalms, it's a prayer. You're seeing the inner life of someone who's praying. So just from that, you can learn. You might say, I don't know how to pray, what am I supposed to pray?

Read Psalm 119, pray along with him. Pray that for yourself. Pray that for others. Not only is it a prayer to the Lord, but it's a prayer about the Word of God. In almost every verse, I think they say maybe two or three verses do not mention the word of God in some way. And he'll say the word of God in different ways.

Like he might call it the law of God, the statutes of God, the precepts of God, the testimonies of God, but it's all different ways of saying the same thing. He's talking about the Bible. He's talking about God's word that has such an important place in his life and he understands the central place the word of God needs to have in his life, as a man of God.

And he's praying over that and we can just see the struggle that he has with himself in rising up to that place of obeying God, of walking with God. And it's encouraging to us, because it is a struggle walking with the Lord, isn't it? Because we have this fallen flesh we're living with as Paul says, in Romans 8 that our flesh is at enmity with God.

It's like fighting against God. The flesh and the spirit fight against each other, it talks about in Galatians. So we have that daily battle and you can see these struggles that the psalmist is going through. Now, we don't really know who wrote this, if it was David, or if it was someone else, but that doesn't really matter.

I think it's really probably intentional that God said, this could be anybody. This could be all of us, and, and it's very encouraging, related to prayer. So let's just dive in.

Psalm 119 verse 1. *“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity. They walk in his ways.”*

So you can see right off the bat, he's not really praying yet. It's more he's

making a statement of the kind of person he admires, the kind of person he wants to be. You know, it's interesting. Before I was a believer, I became a Christian at 17. The people I looked up to before I was a believer, you know, rock stars and athletes. That's who I wanted to be like, that's who I wanted to emulate. And then once I got saved and God gave me a new heart, a new spirit, this is what the Bible says, when you become a Christian, you're born again. You're like a different person. And I could just see that radical change in my own heart.

And all of a sudden, the people that I looked up to were Christians, you know, were great authors who loved the Lord and people I went to church with, older Christians. Yeah, I want to be like them or the pastor. Yeah, I want to know the word of God, like he knows the word of God and who love the Lord, like he loves the Lord.

So you see this admiration that the Psalmist has for those who are walking with God and how that's what he wants to be. That's the highest goal in his life. And man, if that isn't the highest goal in our lives, there's something really wrong in your life. If learning how to walk closer with God and to obey his will and to walk in his paths, all these descriptions we see here, keeping his testimonies, walking in the law of the Lord with our whole heart, if that's not our highest goal, man, we need to really take stock of our lives and say, man, where'd I go wrong?

Where'd I go astray? Because we're going to stand before the Lord and give an account for our lives.

And I want him to be able to say well done, good and faithful servant. So this is a wonderful way to start this psalm of just seeing that goal we want to reach of walking with God. Now, let's continue on.

Verse 4 Now he starts into the prayer. *"You have commanded us to keep your precepts diligently."*

Now again, notice the mention of God's word in every verse. Go back to verse 1, the law of the Lord. Verse 2, the testimonies. Verse 3, his ways. Verse 4, his commandments. Every verse is going to mention the word of God in some way. Now, this is important because when we talk about the law of the Lord, the commandments of God, the precepts, statutes, however you want to say it, all that's speaking of is God's will.

Every time Congress goes into session, like, oh, great, another 20,000 pages of

laws, and more lawyers to try to figure it all out, you know, and so with the things of the Lord it's a relatively small book when you think about it, you know, God's will. And, yet it's when we think of the word of God, we should think of God and what his will is for our lives. It's kind of like a father, right? Maybe he's going away and he's going to leave the children at home, older children I would hope, at home by themselves.

And he's going to write, okay, here's the rules I want you to follow. Here's the things I want you to get done. It's not just a piece of paper that the children found randomly. It's their father's will. And if they're good children, they want to obey him, they want to honor him, and I love verse 4. *“You have commanded us to keep your precept diligently.”*

Now we're going to talk about this as we go through the Psalms, we should have at least the desire to keep God's law diligently. Now, are we doing that? That's another question. And this is the very struggle you're going to see with this man, that in one hand he clearly sees where he wants to be and where he should be and what God has shown him, where God is showing him he should be.

But he also looks at himself and he's very realistic with his weaknesses and failures. So that's the Christian life, isn't it? I'm amazed. This, you know, was written probably 3000 years ago, this Psalm, and how relevant it is to our everyday struggle, like this is where we live. And so if you don't have that desire to want to obey God diligently, again there's something wrong.

And, this is something that took me a long time to figure out. When I got saved, God put that new heart in me and I found all my desires changed. I really wanted to please God. Before I was a Christian, you know, I didn't even think about that. I just thought about how he pleased me. So if you don't have that desire in you to please God, then you kind of have to question, maybe I'm not born again.

You know, maybe I haven't really had that regeneration in my heart and I need to go back to the Lord and say, Lord, what's wrong? You know I thought I was a Christian, but maybe I'm not. Maybe I've never, you know, stepped across that line to give myself to Christ, to ask him to forgive my sin, to ask him to come in and give me a new heart.

So you have the desire, that's great. God puts that in our hearts when we get saved. But then again, to learn how to fulfill those desires. We can get tripped up because we can start to try to do it in our own strength. And we get frustrated and I've heard people say, well, I just don't have what it takes to live a Christian

life, so I've just given up.

Well, none of us have what it takes. That's the whole point. And this is the point you'll see Paul will make in his letters. Especially it comes to a real clear point in Romans 7 and 8 where he's talking about that inner battle he was having as a Christian. He wants to do God's will, but he said, you know, the things that I want to do I find myself not doing and the things that I don't want to do, I find myself doing and, and he ends Roman 7 and saying, oh wretched man that I am, who will save me from this body of death.

So he had the desire to please God, but he found himself failing. And then he gets into Romans 8 where he discovered walking in the spirit, walking in the power of the spirit. He wasn't trying to please God anymore in himself, but learning to let Christ live his life through him. And we all have to go through that process.

And it can be pretty agonizing because you're trying to please God with all your heart, but you're failing. But it's almost when you get to the end of yourself and you're like, I'm just so wretched, what's wrong with me? And the Lord says here I am. You know, you finally understand how wretched you are.

Now here I am to pour not only my forgiveness to you, but my grace to give to you, to live this Christian life. And then you just begin to walk in that every day. Lord, you are my strength. You're my righteousness. Let's just keep that in mind as we're going through this psalm, that inner battle that we all have. Verse 5; *"Oh, that my ways were directed to keep your statutes, then I would not be ashamed when I look into all your commandments."*

So can you see the heart there? Now you're starting to see, oh, I'm struggling, oh, I just long that my ways were directed to keep your statute. Then I wouldn't be ashamed when I look into your word. Do you ever start reading the Bible and feel ashamed or are there times where you just avoid reading the Bible because you feel ashamed? You feel so sinful. But surely we've all felt like that. Like, Lord, I just fall so short. I don't even want to open the Bible. God doesn't come at us with condemnation when we're true seekers of him and we're so discouraged with our performance.

The Lord will give forgiveness. He'll give grace, He'll teach us. See, that's the whole point. You've got to learn how to walk within his grace, and that's where we come back to Paul's prayer in Colossians. Lord, open our eyes. Give us a spirit of wisdom and understanding because if you don't have that supernatural revelation understanding of how to walk in his grace, you're just going to try to

be religious and do your best, and that doesn't work.

So he says, I don't want to be ashamed when I look into all your commandments. Lord, work in me. So we're going to see this theme throughout the whole psalm where there's just this inner struggle that this man is having, in his walk with God. Verse 7, *"I will praise you with uprightness of heart when I learn your righteous judgments."*

As God reveals himself to us, when we learn of the Lord and that experience when you're alone with the Lord, or maybe you're here during worship, a lot of times it happens to be during worship where the Lord just starts revealing things to me about himself or I'm just out on a walk alone with the Lord.

Maybe, you know, listening to worship music, listening to the Bible, just praying, and the Lord starts revealing himself to you. I'm starting to learn from him directly. As the scripture says, you shall all be taught by God. We're supposed to be hearing from God directly. And he says, I will praise you when I learn your righteous judgments, and what can you do?

You just praise the Lord. Thank you that you just showed me that nugget of truth. You just showed me how to overcome that sin. And verse 8, he says; *"I will keep your statutes oh, do not forsake me utterly"* And again, you see that contrast where he's making this commitment. I'm going to do this. I will keep your statutes, but I know I'm weak, so Lord, don't forsake me. Help me.

Verse 9; *"How can a young man cleanse his way by taking heed according to your word?"* So just the cleansing of the word of God, by exposing ourselves to the word of God, there is a cleansing that happens. You know, the world, it just gives us filth. It makes you fall into sin and you feel filthy. You feel disgusting. You're like, oh Lord, and the beauty of having that cleansing that only Christ can bring. And he says, it's according to the word of God.

Verse 10, *"with my whole heart, I have sought you. Oh, let me not wander from your commandments."* So that's just a great prayer to pray.

Remember, we're wanting to learn how to pray more effectively this year. These are the kind of prayers, you know, a lot of times we think about things so much and we're just kind of running in circles over and over with this thought in our mind. Why not just turn that into a prayer, bring the Lord into it, talk to him about the struggle.

I'm always amazed at myself. I'll be thinking about something and I'm kind of

feeling stressed. I'm like, well, why don't you just turn that inner conversation into a prayer to God. Start to talk to him about it, like, oh Lord, you know we don't have ... or whatever your problem is, you know, financial, Lord don't have enough money for rent.

You know. Instead of, whoa, what am I going to do to get this money? You know, I could do this, I could do that. It's just all this inner kind of struggle. How am I possibly going to get rent. I don't have the money, Lord, but I know you own the cattle on a thousand hills and yet God, you haven't provided yet for this need. You know what I'm saying? So turn it into a prayer.

Verse 10, *with my whole heart, I have sought you, oh, let me not wander from your, from your commandments!* Your word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you. So the beauty of Bible memorization, a tremendous blessing to just memorize the scripture or to just meditate on it.

Verse 12 *"blessed are you, oh Lord, teach me your statutes."* So again, you see him worshiping the Lord. Blessed are you, oh Lord. And then following that, that worship toward the Lord, of asking him to teach him. Also I think there's that moment where the Lord just reveals himself to us and you see the blessedness of God, the beauty of God, and you're just worshiping and you realize, wow, Lord, I have a lot to learn. Please teach me your statutes.

Verse 13 *"With my lips I have declared all the judgements of your mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of your testimonies as much as in all riches."* So contrasting the value that we put in money and riches versus our love for God's word and our rejoicing for God's word.

Verse 15 *"I will meditate on your precepts and contemplate your ways. I will delight myself in your statutes. I will not forget Your word."* So you see, again, this commitment to the word of God that you're making your Bible study a priority.

It's not just something if I have time, I'll fit it in. It's like, no, I'm going to meditate on your word. I'm going to contemplate it. I delight myself in your statutes. I will not forget your word.

Verse 17 *"Deal bountifully with your servant that I may live and keep your word. Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things from your law."* So the psalmist knows God needs to deal with him to bring him up to that place where he can live and keep the word of God. And he knows he needs supernatural understanding.

Verse 18 *“Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from your law.”* You know, it's interesting. We think of an Old Testament saint like this praying who isn't even in the new covenant like we are and yet this closeness, this intimacy. And yet we know from, say the book of Hebrews where it talks about the Hall of Faith and how those in the Old Testament who had a relationship with God, it was by faith.

And there was an opportunity even in the old covenant, through the sacrificial system, through the word of God, through faith in God, that you could have a very close relationship with the Lord, and you could hear even the voice of the Lord speaking to you and be taught by God. And this is what Jesus said during one of his sermons in John 6, who the Messiah was, because they already were hearing from God.

And there would be a prayer like this where the people of God in the Old Testament, they're asking God to open their eyes, and God answers those prayers.

Verse 19 *“I am a stranger in the earth. Do not hide your commandments from me. My soul breaks with longing for your judgments at all times.”*

I mean, can we say that about ourselves? Like you have that kind of intense desire for the word of God? By our own natural condition, we're not going to have that kind of desire for God's word, but it's something we can pray about. Say, Lord, I recognize I don't desire your word like I should.

I pray this often. Or, I'll say, Lord, I should know your word better than I do now and I'm kind of ashamed that I don't know it better. But I've learned to just put it right back on the Lord.

I used to just internalize it and say, well, I just gotta work harder. I just gotta get up earlier. I just gotta, you know, I, I, I. Now I just say, Lord, could you put that desire in my heart? Could you help me organize my days better where I have more time for your word? And so, do you think God's going to say No, just do it yourself? You know, I already gave you the word?

No, He says, of course I'll help you. But you have to ask. We have to have the same attitude the Psalmist has - I'm just communing with God. I'm taking all these struggles to him. He already knows our wicked hearts, anyway. It's not a shock to him when you talk to him about it, like, oh God, yeah, the Bible kind of bores me.

What? You know, God's not going to be shocked by that. And, also notice, I don't know that it's a mistake or a coincidence that this happens to be the longest chapter in the Bible. I think God is trying to say, this is really important. I want you to understand what's being said here. And so again, the heart of a man of God struggling in prayer, seeing the value of God's word, but understanding how he is falling short.

Verse 21 *“You rebuke the proud - the cursed who stray from your commandments. Remove from me reproach and contempt, for I have kept your testimonies.”*

So we've talked a lot about pride as we're going through Isaiah. Almost every chapter we've been through in 33 chapters, God's addressing the proud. He's rebuking the proud. He's saying I reveal myself to the humble and so, don't you think that's something God is addressing in our lives as pride? Oh yeah. And, it's interesting where it sounds like the Psalmist is pointing to others like, yeah, get those proud people, those cursed people.

But then he turns, on verse 22 and he says, *Remove from me reproach and contempt*. So he knows, yeah, he's got pride in his own heart and that pride will be the quickest thing that will block you from open fellowship with God. And we all have it. And the more you're willing to just say, Holy Spirit, show me the pride in my life ...

What does pride mean? I'm proud of this work I did? God doesn't want me to do well? That's not what he's talking about. He's talking about pride where you're self-sufficient. You're not acknowledging that God gives me every heartbeat, every breath. I mean, the extreme example is someone who doesn't acknowledge God at all, and yet they've got all these gifts in health and wealth and they're just not even acknowledging God at all.

It's like, man, you're walking on thin ice. Every heartbeat, every breath is from God, and God's given you this window of time to recognize that all things are from God. And you're not responding. You're not opening your heart to that. And, the hammer's going to fall one day. And for us as believers, we want to say, Lord, purge out all pride in my heart.

Man, I could tell you stories, you know, I don't want to get too personal, but you know, of my own pride, where God, the Holy Spirit will show me, oh, you thought you could do that on your own? Or you thought because you knew this, you were better than that person. You know it runs so deep.

It's a daily thing, isn't it? That's where it says, take up your cross and follow Jesus. I love that. Will you want to be my disciple? Okay, well take up your cross and follow me. So though that has so much truth in it, where you have to deal with the flesh every day, I can't say, well, you know, I dealt with the flesh five years ago. I'm good now.

No, it's every day. I mean, do we even visualize ourselves like this? Like you're walking around with a cross all day, what does that mean? Well, it means death to self because self will get out of control real quick. But if I'm carrying it and I got my eyes on Jesus, it's interesting because you might say, well, I'm following Jesus, but are you carrying your cross?

Because you have to do both, and it doesn't work just to follow Jesus. You have to be carrying that cross. And that's the beauty of it – it's not, oh, I'm so super disciplined and I'm denying all of my desires and that's why I'm caring my cross. It's more of a supernatural thing where you're recognizing that when he died and rose again, I died with him. I rose with him.

So Romans talks about reckoning yourself dead to sin, but alive to God. So it's just by faith, I'm just saying, Lord, you've already dealt with this proud flesh, with this sinful flesh, and by faith I just believe I died with you and I recognize it, or I reckon what the cross has done, and Lord, deal with this pride, deal with this flesh.

Lord, I'm just walking with this but I've got my eyes on Jesus. That's just a beautiful place to be, where the cross is dealing with your pride. So he says, remove from me reproach and contempt for I have kept your testimonies, and you know, none of us like to be corrected by the Lord, right?

But the scripture says, if you're without correction from the Lord, you're an illegitimate child. So if you don't know what I'm talking about when I say correction from the Lord, there's something wrong with your relationship with the Lord. You should be able to point to a recent example of when the Lord was like, Ah, don't say that!

Or you shouldn't have looked at her twice. You know, you shouldn't have thought that. Where you sense that displeasure of the Lord. I think that's what the Psalmist is saying. Lord, removed from me those things. I don't want to be displeasing to you. But it is a normal part of the Christian life. Just like children. It's normal for them to be corrected by good parents. We are corrected.

Verse 23 *'Princes also sit, and speak against me, but your servant meditates on*

your statutes. Your testimonies also are my delight and my counselors". So, you know the reality of being criticized, being hated by the world for being a Christian, right?

You're trying to walk with the Lord and someone comes along and says something offensive to you, could be in the church. And yet you don't internalize that, you go right back to the word of God. Lord, okay, that person offended me. That person spoke against me, but Lord I'm going to meditate on your word instead of meditating on that offense.

Verse 24 "*Your testimonies also are my delight and my counselors. Verse 25, my soul clings to the dust, revive me according to your word.*" So those times of just feeling so low, like, you talk about depression, you talk about feeling terrible about yourself. It's like your soul's clinging to the dust.

What does he do? He's looking to the word of God to revive him. You know how many times when you're feeling down and you just say, okay, I'm going to get alone with the Lord. I open my Bible, and this scripture just comes out to encourage us. It's happened to me probably thousands of times in the some 40 years I've been a Christian.

He revives us according to his word. Or you come to church or you come to prayer meeting and God just speaks to you. God speaks to you.

Verse 26; "*I have declared my ways and you answered me; teach me your statutes.*" So you see that interaction that he's pouring out his heart before the Lord. Lord, this is what I'm going through. You heard me. And then you taught me. And I'm asking you to teach me more.

Verse 27 "*Make me understand the way of your precepts so shall I meditate on your wonderful works.*" I love that. It's a little stronger language - Lord, make me understand. I'm thickheaded. Just make me understand Lord. And so we just continue to see that emphasis on understanding what God is doing. Of course, that's the problem in walking with God is where there's a spiritual blindness, right?

You think about the enemies of Jesus. He said to them, you know, you're blind. You think you see, but you're blinded and you're actually a child of the devil. They thought they were God's chosen.

They thought they were self-righteous, and yet they rejected the Messiah and the Lord says you're blinded and we can have areas of blindness in our life. So

the power of just saying Lord, make me understand, I want to meditate on your wonderful works. Again, that's another theme we've seen through Isaiah, where God would rebuke people for not recognizing the works of his hands.

Now, see, this should be the normal part of a Christian life; we're praying about everything. You know, be anxious for nothing. Philippians, be anxious for nothing. But in all things through prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God and the peace of God that passes all understanding will guard your hearts and minds.

So we're just anxious for nothing, just praying about all things. We're just in a spirit of prayer, and then we're seeing God answer prayer. We're seeing his wonderful works. So that's the good part, right? When we see God break through. He works in a city and you're just clearly like, oh, that was God. That had to be God. Wow. Thank you Lord.

And yet, if we're not walking with God and in prayer, we're not in touch with when he's working. We're not even seeing it. And God is offended by that. You know, he would say the wicked, they don't understand the operation of my hands. But if you're in prayer all the time and committing things to God and you're seeing answered prayer, you're seeing God's wonderful works all over the place. That's the way to live.

Verse 28 *“My soul melts from heaviness. Strengthen me according to your word.”*

And again, you see, hey, he's struggling with depression. He's struggling with stress, you know? As a younger Christian you might look at an older Christian and think, oh, they don't have the same struggles I do. They're just walking in victory all the time.

Well, you know, walking with the Lord, sometimes the closer you get to the Lord, the more light shines upon you and the more you see your faults. Three different times in the scripture Paul kind of gave a description of himself toward the beginning of his ministry.

He said I'm the least among the apostles. Okay, well that's still a pretty exalted position. You're an apostle, you know, but you're the least among them, Paul felt like. Then he said, I'm the least of all Christians because I persecuted the church. So it's like, oh, well now you're getting low. And then this was later. Paul, you seem to be not going up.

You've seeing yourself in a lower position. You were the least of the apostles, now you're the least of every Christian. And then at the end of his ministry, he said, I'm just the chief among sinners. Because he was getting closer to God through the years and the brilliance of the light of Christ is shining upon him.

So yeah, you're enjoying the glory, but you're also seeing your sin in all its glory, as it were, negative glory, you know? That can cause your soul to melt with heaviness, if you don't react properly when you see your sin. A person who's in darkness, they don't see their sin at all. They're not mourning over their sin. And they're deceived. They think they're okay. In fact, they get angry when you try to correct them or to point out their sin.

That's just not a good sign. So don't feel bad when you feel a heaviness when you're getting in relationship with the Lord. Remember when Jesus appeared to John, the Apostle John on the island of Patmos, in all his glory, shining like the sun and it says John fell like a dead man at his feet.

And then Jesus reached out and touched him. He said, don't be afraid. See, that's how the Lord is. He's so gracious. But yeah, we would all fall like a dead man. And that's the great Apostle John, the holy man of God. When he saw the glory of God, he fell like a dead man.

Verse 29 *“Remove from me the way of lying and grant me your law graciously.”* This praying about sin, Lord, I struggle with lying. Remove that from me. And notice; grant me your law graciously. Sometimes we can get confused about how Paul talks about the law in the New Testament, and he says, really, the law is the ministry of death versus the ministry of grace.

Anyone who was under the Old Testament, if they responded to the law correctly, it would humble them and tutor them to Christ, tutor them to the sacrificial system. So even the law of God is supposed to humble us and drive us to our knees to ask for help from God. That's the proper way to respond, not to become proud and to twist the law like the Pharisees did.

Verse 30 *“I have chosen the way of truth; Your judgements I have laid before me. I cling to your testimonies. Oh Lord, do not put me to shame! I will run the course of your commandments for you shall enlarge my heart.”* Or in other words, you reveal things to my heart.

Verse 33 *“Teach me Oh Lord, the way of your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep your law.”* So we keep seeing the same theme, the same prayer over and over and it's good to keep praying the

same prayer. You know Jesus said he doesn't want us to pray with meaningless repetition, but he does want us to keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking.

So Lord, I still need more understanding. Teach me your statutes.

Verse 35; *“Make me walk in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to covetousness or to money.”* And you know he sees that within himself, the temptation to go in a wrong direction and that comparison again, of the riches of God's word versus the riches of this world.

And he's saying, Lord, I know my heart could drift over into that place. Incline my heart to your testimonies. Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things and revive me in your way. Now isn't that relevant to our culture now? We've all got our phones. We can be looking at worthless things all day.

Somebody was telling me, one of my daughters, that when I go on to Instagram, I set a 10 minute timer for myself because have you ever started going through Facebook and a half hour later you're like, well I just wasted a half hour. Yeah and most of it was dumb, but you know, you do learn good things from people you know on Facebook and all.

But we have to control it, that is the point, right? We have to turn and ask the Lord, Lord, I am tempted to look at worthless things, so please help me turn my eyes from looking at worthless things. Isn't that beautiful that we can ask God to help us with those struggles? Because we all have interests maybe that are kind of a waste of time or worthless. And we, need our desires to change. And it doesn't even mean that it's looking at pornography or something, you know, blatantly sinful. It could just be that was a waste of time. That was worthless. You could have been in the word of God.

I remember Pastor Chuck Smith talking about reading worthless things or comments that people would make about him on YouTube or whatever. And he's just like, here I waste all that time reading praises toward me and criticisms toward me, and I could have just been reading the Bible.

Verse 37 *“Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things and revive me in your way.”* So it's not just this man committing to do better. He's saying God I need your help.

Verse 38 *“Establish your word to your servant, who is devoted to fearing you.”*

Turn away my reproach, which I dread, for your judgments are good.” That correction that comes from God, I don't want that. I just want to be an obedient child so I don't have to have that correction from God. Or your conscience, when you're feeling guilty for something you said or you did.

And then we'll end on verse 40; *“Behold, I long for your precept. Revive me in your righteousness.”*

So, Lord, we do just pray along with the psalmist. That you would stir our hearts to pray more effectively this year. We could go on for another many verses here, but we get the point, and I think we could continue in our own time reading and see what else is said here. But you can't miss the pattern of the desire to do well with God, but also understanding our weakness and yet not walking away in despair, but running toward you and saying, God, help me, help me, I already see all my sins. I want to overcome Lord, but I'm going to do battle and pray and take the time to struggle in prayer and ask you to change me, Lord. And that's just how you set things up, Lord.

You want us to interact with you, you want us to talk to you? You want us to bring you into every thought, every situation. And yet, Lord, we need your power. There's so many distractions, our flesh, the world, the devil. And yet, Lord, I have a sense that you're calling us to a higher place as a church that we can overcome the things that dragged us down in the past.

If we'll just keep looking to you and calling upon you, Lord, we'll see more and more victories every day. And then as Jesus said, thy kingdom come, thy will be done. Isn't that the bottom line? Lord, we want to see your will done on this earth as it is in heaven. So engaging with you about our struggles, praying for others.

Lord, coming to a place of personal victory where we can intercede for others, where we can work through our depressions, our anxieties, and come out the other side with a word from you, with grace upon grace. And so Lord, as we go today, Holy Spirit, Jesus said you'd bring all things to our remembrance. Just bring this Psalm to our remembrance this week and give us that spirit of prayer.

You said that we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself makes intercession through us with groanings too deep for words. Even that deep groaning of our spirit that says, oh Lord, help me, help me.

Change me God, change my desires. Forgive me for watching that worthless thing. Give me a love for your word and I believe we're going to start seeing

changes in revival.

We thank you and we commit these things to you, Lord, in Jesus name. Amen.