

# The Psalms: Psalm 119

Matt Bruns | 21 May 2023

Pastor Jill Weber says that “The Psalms show me how I can bring my whole self before God. My waiting, my longing, my suffering, my questions. However, the Psalmists don’t stop there; they let their pain and the pain of the world inspire intercession - prayer for God to intervene with His saving help.”

*Read Psalm 119:1-16 NIV*

Psalm 119 is the longest Psalm and chapter in the entire bible! It is essentially a love letter written about the glory and greatness of God’s word.

Sometimes I think we can expect the Word of God to hit us like a bolt of lightning every time we read or study it. Although the bolt may hit periodically, I want to suggest that the benefits of the Word of God act more like vitamins. People regularly take vitamins not because every time they swallow one of the pills, they feel new strength surging through their bodies, but because they know that, in the long run, they are going to have a beneficial effect on their physical health, resistance to disease, and general well-being. The same is true of reading the Bible. At times it will have a sudden and intense impact upon us. However, the real value lies in the cumulative effects that long-term exposure to God’s Word will bring in our lives.

## Questions

1. What are some of the long-term effects you’ve experienced by engaging with Scripture?
2. What obstacles get in the way of engaging with Scripture in a regular or meaningful way?

For me I struggle with a sense of obligation, distractions, lack of motivation, and the busyness of life can often relegate my engagement with the bible well down the list of priorities. How do we renew our relationship with God and with His Word in meaningful ways in light of these challenges especially if the bible is a key place where we get to know God & where God meets us? Pastor Glen Packiam in book *The Resilient Pastor* says that an answer is to dig new wells!

*“Sometimes we just need to drink from a different well than the one from which we were serving others or drawing from. Too many of us wait until the well we’ve been drinking from has run dry or ceases to satisfy. We walk away thirsty, sad. But the water is not the problem. And mostly neither is the well. We simply need to find another way into the great underground water source. The river of life comes from the same Lord and the same spirit. We may just need another way of drawing from it. We’re going to need more wells if we’re going to [last in the life of faith]. Dig another well before you need water.”*

## **Let’s Get Practical**

Listen to it: Come Read with Me, Rev Chris Spotify recommend to me recently or download another app like Bible in One Year

Watch it: The Bible Project or The Chosen series

Read a different translation & one that has a study or application version

Mix it up: Swap to different parts of the Bible - because through different seasons of your life, you’ll find that certain books of the Bible resonate with you more

Use aid: Commentary Matthew, Mark, Luke, John for Everyone or take a paper at Laidlaw or Carey

Get honest: If you’re experiencing spiritual dullness, ask God to restore the first love that you had before

Pray it: Lectio 365 app, practice Lectio Divina

Group Study : it can be so much richer to read, unpack and discuss Scripture in community (so long as you have some basic ground rules around respect, listening, and understanding that people are coming to the text with different levels of experience)

## Have a go - Lectio Divina

This is a way of praying scripture that can help us engage with it in our hearts and alert us to a personal word for us illuminated via the Holy Spirit.

We use no more than a few verses paying attention to the impact the words have on our hearts. There are four steps: read, reflect, respond, rest. Before you start take a moment to settle, relax and open yourself to God.

### **Read**

As we read the passage listen for a word or phrase that touches you in some way, or that is highlighted to you by God...it doesn't matter if you do not know why you respond to it. Nor does it matter what kind of response you have...it may be joy, sadness, gratitude. Just "notice what you notice" about your own inner responses to the reading. If there is nothing particular that touches you at this stage, don't worry or feel pressured. Stay with the passage as a whole and be relaxed about whether anything happens or not.

### **Reflect**

Continue to meditate on your word, phrase or image. As you read the passage again ask yourself what is happening in your life that this may be speaking into? Is there an invitation here for you? What is it?

### **Respond**

As you read the passage one final time if you sense that God has spoken to you in some way, take some time now to respond to God in prayer. Your prayer might be written, drawn, or spoken, out loud or in silence of your heart.

### **Rest**

The first 3 steps to this approach to prayer are active – listening, meditating, praying. In this final step we're taking our hands off the controls and creating some space to simply be with God.

## Closing Prayer (Anslem)

Lord, teach me to seek You.

I cannot seek You unless You teach me  
or find You unless You show Yourself to me.

Let me seek You in my desire,  
let me desire You in my seeking.

Let me find You by loving You,  
let me love You when I find You.

Amen

