**PSALM 119:33-40**

Psalm 119 is a psalm which primarily concerns itself with the Law of God – particularly the Moral Law of God – the Ten Commandments. Psalm 119 reveals the heart of David – the sweet psalmist of Israel. God’s own testimony of David is that he is a man after the heart of God – he is a man whose pursuit is God’s heart.

In this whole section of Psalm 119 David’s heart is filled with pleadings and prayer. David is filled with an awareness of his dependence upon, and his need for, the great Jehovah to do for him what only God, by His grace, can do.

The pleadings are: v. 33, Teach me; v. 34, Give me understanding; v. 35, Make me; v. 36, Incline me; v. 37, Turn away my eyes & quicken me; v. 38, Establish your Word to me; v. 39, Turn away my reproach; and v. 40, quicken me.

**Verse 33 - Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes:**

**Verse 33 - Teach me** - point me in the direction of thy statutes – teach me what your word has to say about life and living – teach me what is right and wrong based upon how you see things and not how I see them.

**David is asking the Lord to set His Word before his eyes (v. 37) – his mind (v. 34) – and his heart (vs. 34 and 36) and to do so in such a way as David learns from it.**

**Verse 33 - The way of thy statutes** - The Christian is faced with a multitude of ways - all but one lead to death. One path leads to life; that is the way (path) of God's statutes – God’s Word.

**Note**: Two things can be learned from David's desire to be taught:

**First**: David understand that no matter how experienced a believer becomes, he is never without the need for teaching from God’s word.

**Second**: David understands that the Lord God Almighty will condescend to teach His children.

This is not the first time David makes this request:

**Psalm 119:12, 26-27 – “**(12) Blessed art thou, O LORD: **teach me** thy statutes … (26) I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: **teach me** thy statutes. (27) **Make me to understand** the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.”

David knows that God alone can teach a sinner and God alone can teach a Christian the true way of life.

**John 6:45** – “It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”

**Hebrews 10:16** – “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;”

**Verse 33 - And I shall keep it unto the end:**

David also knows and confesses that if God is active in teaching him, he will persevere in true Christianity to the end of his life. He is trusting in God’s grace to cause him continue to the end. This is not self-determination but biblical confidence in the grace of God.

**John 6:44-45 and 65-69** – “(44) No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. (45) It is written in the prophets, And the**y shall be all taught of God**. **Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me** … (65) And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, **except it were given unto him of my Father**. (66) From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. (67) Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? (68) Then Simon Peter answered him, **Lord, to whom shall we go?** thou hast the words of eternal life. (69) And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”

**Note**: Peter’s testimony indicates that he has been taught of God and therefore perseveres in the truth of God based upon God having put the truth in his heart.

**Verse 34 - Give me understanding:** - Give me the **mental ability** to comprehend your Word. Give me **discernment**. Give me a **spiritual perception**.

Give me the ability to rightly divide the truth of God’s word (**II Timothy 2:15**).

**I Corinthians 2:14** – “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

The spiritual word of God can only be known as we are taught by the Spirit of God. Without God’s teaching – we can learn nothing of Him. He must reveal Himself and His Truth to us.

**Acts 16:14** – “And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: **whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken** of Paul”

**David is asking God to put the word of God in his mind and in his heart.**

Our ears hear the teaching of God's Word, but our mind must understand that teaching and our hearts must believe it and love it in order for us to be able to practice it. We learn two things from this request of David:

**First**: That sin has brought us so low that we cannot naturally understand the things of God's Law.

**I Corinthians 2: 12-14** – “(12) **Now we have received**, not the spirit of the world, but **the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God**. (13) Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, **but which the Holy Ghost teacheth**; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (14) But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, **because they are spiritually discerned**.”

**Second**: That it takes divine intervention - divine grace - before a person can understand spiritual things; especially before a person can perceive the spirit of the Law of God.

**I Corinthians 2: 13** – “ (13) … **which the Holy Ghost teacheth** …”

**Verse 34 - And I shall keep thy Law:** David does not seek understanding to increase in wisdom, to win debates, or that he might be famous as a man who knows the Law of God.

Instead, he seeks understanding so that he may be able to “practice” God's Law and God’s Word - to observe it – to do it.

**Verse 34 - I shall observe it with my whole heart:** Knowledge affects the mind, but understanding is in the heart. It operates upon our affections and flows from our affections.

These words are not a promise, but a confession of David's confidence in divine and effectual grace. Again, David knows and confesses that if God is working in Him to teach Him, then God will be working in him to will and to do of His good pleasure.

**Philippians 2:13** – “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

**Verse 35 - Make me to go in the path of thy Commandments:**

**David is asking God to set His feet on the pathway of His Word.**

**Verse 35 - Make me to go** - the act of walking (living in view of God's Word – His Commandments). There is more to Christianity than simply knowing God’s word and perceiving it with the mind. The grace of God will work in us so that we are able to walk in God’s word.

The practical living out of God's Word in our lives brings us into the pathway of godliness as well as the pathway of trials.

**II Timothy 3: 12** – “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

**Verse 35 - in the path** - a pathway, foot path; not a well traveled public road but God’s road for God’s children.

Compare **Matthew 7:13-14** – (a narrow path) – “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

**Verse 35 - Thy Commandments** - refers particularly to the Moral Law of God but the word commandment may also refer to the revealed will of God throughout the whole Word of God.

i.e. - **John 13:34** – “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”

We can learn two things from David’s request:

**First**: It takes divine grace to cause us to be able to walk in the way of God's will.

**Philippians 2: 13** – “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

**Second**: If God grants us grace, it is for the purpose of enabling us to live godly lives.

**Verse 36 - Incline my heart unto thy testimonies:**

**David is asking God to work the word of God into his heart -**

Christianity is not simply a mental understanding of the Way of God nor an outward observance of the Way of God. It is, essentially, a heart-felt affection for the Way of God.

**Verse 36 - Incline** - bend my heart - move my heart from the direction of this world into the direction of your will – into the way of holiness.

The direction which our life will go is dependent upon the bending of our heart.

There are several things which we can learn from this text:

**First**: A lost person will not pray this. His heart cannot be bent, it must be removed and replaced with a new heart; which is soft and pliable to the touch of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Ezekiel 36:26-27** – “(26) **A new heart also will I give you**, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and **I will give you an heart of flesh**. (27) And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”

**Second**: Without God's gracious hand upon our hearts, we who are Christians are apt to turn aside to self-love – self-desires – self- will.

**Third**: Because of remaining sin - we can be worldly minded, selfish, and covetous, without much effort - So to be holy minded takes the mighty act of God's grace to turn us and keep us turned to His Testimonies – His Word – His Way.

**Note**: David confesses: (1) his need for grace, (2) his desire for holiness, and (3) his inclination to covetousness all in one verse.

**Verse 36 - And not to covetousness:** Covetousness will lead us away from God's Law – God’s revealed will.

**Question**: What is covetousness?

**Answer**: It is the selfish desire to satisfy the carnal appetites which make up our carnal nature.

**First**: It is idolatry -- **Ephesians 5: 5** – “For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, **nor covetous man, who is an idolater**, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”

**Second**: It is an excessive love for riches which leads a man to seek those riches either by lawful or unlawful means or use his riches in an unlawful way.

**I Timothy 6:9-10** – “(9) But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. (10) For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

**Third**: It is an impatient attitude to get things.

**Proverbs 28:20 and 22** - (20) A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent. (22) He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him”

**Fourth**: It is an insatiable appetite which can never be satisfied.

**Ecclesiastes 5:10** – “He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.”

**Fifth**: It is an attitude of selfishness which refuses to give to others.

**I Timothy 6:17-18** – “(17) Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; (18) That they do good, that they be rich in good works, **ready to distribute, willing to communicate**;”

**Sixth**: It chokes the Word of God and, eventually, leads a man to Hell.

**Matthew 13:22** – “He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”

**I Timothy 6:10** – “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

Christians, we should join David in pleading and praying for God’s help – God’s grace – God’s mercy – as we walk through this world on our journey to heaven.