**Psalm 119:33-40**

**Psalm 119:37-40** – “(37) Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way. (38) Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. (39) Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good. (40) Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness”

**Review**: 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 seems to be 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.

David is under a burden and knows that nothing but divine grace can help him.

In Psalm 119:37-40, we see no self-resolutions – no trusting in his own understanding – we see no self-determination - only dependence upon God - His mercy and His grace.

**See how David prays for grace**: v. 33, Teach me; v. 34, Give me understanding; v. 35, Make me to go; v. 36, Incline my heart; v. 37, Turn away mine eyes and quicken me; v. 38, Stablish thy word; v. 39, Turn away my reproach; and v. 40, Quicken me.

**Note**: In verse 33, when David says, **I shall keep**, and in verse 34, when he says, **I shall observe**, he is not proclaiming any self-ability – any self-determination - to do what God has revealed to be His will – we see only a testimony that the grace of God will produce results. As God bestows grace, David is certain he will keep and observe the Law of God - God's revealed will.

**Verse 37 - Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity:**

David had just prayed that God would **incline** his heart (v. 36) and now prays that God would add further protection by turning his eyes away from that which is vanity.

In **Job 31:1**, Job said, “I have made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?”

In this verse we see that we are to take personal responsibility for our own eyes – our own action. Yet, self-determination does not eliminate the need for God’s help.

David teaches us that what our eyes look upon, has the potential to lead our hearts away from that which is good and best.

**Genesis 3:1-6, especially vs. 6** – “(1) Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (2) And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: (3) But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. (4) And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: (5) For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (6) And **when the woman saw** that the tree was **good for food**, and that it was **pleasant to the eyes**, and a tree to be **desired to make one wise**, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

**Note**: Satan often attacks the eyes because he knows they are a weak spot in most people. He attacks at that point probably more than at any other given point.

**First**: David desires to have his eyes turned, not shut or put out. (It would have been better for Samson to have his eyes turned from Delilah than put out by the Philistines!)

**Second**: David recognizes that to go through this world safely, he must do so with his eyes opened; not as a blind man stumbling over every snare that Satan puts in his pathway. We must be able to see but we must see what is right and good.

**Third**: David recognizes that he must go through this world with his eyes focused upon the right object - all else is Vanity!

**Verse 37 - Vanity**: that which is useless, worthless or of no value –

How is vanity described in the word of God?

**Psalm 12:2** – “They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.”

Vanity is that which is false and unreal; deceitful; and a lie.

**Jeremiah 10:8 and 14-15** – (8) But they are altogether brutish and foolish: **the stock is a doctrine of vanities** … (14) Every man is brutish in his knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. (15) **They are vanity**, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish.”

Vanity is false religion; false gods; and idolatry.

**Note**: Vanity may be defined as all that is opposed to the nature and character of God.

Charles Bridges calls vanity, “delusive mirages which tempt the pilgrim to leave the safe highway”.

**Verse 37 - Quicken thou me in thy way:** David desires God’s way – all other ways are vanity.

The word **quicken** means to bring to life – It is used in reference to God bringing life to the dead soul.

**Ephesians 2:1** – “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins”

It also means to restore life – to revive. It is used by David to refer to his Christian life. David feels his need of reviving. He knows that only the grace of God can produce that.

Two things can be learned from this request for divine quickening:

**First**: The believer perseveres in the way of the Lord through continued bestowals of grace which brings life to his slothful soul. Increased obedience comes from increased life, which can only come through increased grace. It is God's power working within our hearts on a regular and a continual basis.

**Second**: The source of grace and life is solely found in the Lord. Note the phrase “of God” in **I Corinthians 15:10**.

**I Corinthians 15:10** – “But by **the grace of God** I am what I am: and **his grace** which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but **the grace of God** which was with me.”

**Verse 38** **- Stablish thy word unto thy servant who is devoted to thy fear.**

**Note**: The English word, **word refers to the Law of God within the context of this Psalm. It also refers to the whole of God’s word in general.** The English word **fear** refers to the biblical service and worship of God which results from knowing and practicing God’s Word.

**Question**: Can a Christian be devoted to God's Word – God’s service – God’s worship - yet still feel a need to pray that the Word of God be established within him?

See **verse 35** also - “therein do I delight”. David is not only devoted to God’s word but he delights in it.

**Answer**: David does not delight in God’s Law nor is he devoted to God's Word in a religious sense - in the letter of the word, as a hypocrite might be devoted to it.

**Instead**, David prays as a servant of God – as a true Christian – as a man after the heart of God – as one already consecrated to God and His service.

The answer to our question lies in the truth of true Christianity. God's people are not a perfect people, yet they have within them a heart that desires perfection!

David is a steadfast servant, yet he knows he can be easily moved from this and desires to be more steadfast.

He is devoted, yet uncertain of his devotion and desires to be devoted to his God in a greater measure.

He is serving, yet desires to serve in a greater and more perfect way.

He is a true believer, yet he cries out, “Help thou my unbelief” and “increase my faith!”

**Question**: How does God stablish His Word to his servants?

**Answer**: In two ways:

**First**: By an inward assurance given by the Holy Ghost as He applies the Word of God to our hearts. The promises, the warnings, and the encouragements become a reality in our soul.

**Second**: By the outward performance of the promises of the Word of God.

God establishes His word to His servants by showing them the reality of it – the truth of it - in their own life!

**Verse 39 - Turn away my reproach which I fear:**

**Verse 39** **- My reproach** - This is not the reproach of those who are David’s enemies or who are God’s enemies, but it is his own personal reproach.

**Compare verse 22** - “Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.”

David feared failing the Lord by losing his testimony. He had already tasted the bitterness of losing his testimony before the enemies of God. His sin with Bathsheba occurred before he wrote Psalm 119.

**II Samuel 12:14** – “Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme …”

He feared that he might fail the Lord and cause a reproach.

**Verse 39** - **For thy Judgments are good**.

God's Word is good and true, and the life of a Christian should display that fact.

David is saying, “I know the Law of God is good. I feel in my heart a desire to obey it. I pray for grace to obey and that my obedience might show others that your Law is good and might bring glory to my God.

I do not want to fail or falter in my testimony. I do not want to say by any failure that God's Word is not good. That would bring shame upon me.”

The apostle Paul’s testimony is exactly the same. Whether in the OT or in the NT those who true Christians have the same heart toward God’s Law – towards God’s word.

**Romans 7:12** – “(12) Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, **and good** …”

**Romans 7:14-16** – (14) For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. (15) For that which I do I allow not: for what I would (i.e. that which is holy, just, and good), that do I not; but what I hate (i.e. my sin – my transgression of God’s Law), that do I. (16) If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.”

**Verse 16** - My desire and efforts to do the opposite of what I naturally do, proves that I believe that the Law of God is good!

My desire to do what God says is right and good and holy, proves that I believe God’s Law is good.

**Verse 40 - Behold, I have longed after thy precepts:**

**Note**: David expresses his desires for God's precepts. Many Christians scour the Word of God so that they might find every promise of God and seek to make it theirs. But, they do not spend the same amount of time and energy in seeking out the precepts of God.

David knows that both the promises and the precepts of God are essential for the child of God.

**Note**: Here David is confessing his sincerity for the Word of God as it has been delivered to him by his God.

Even though he has a sense of weakness so that he pleads and prays for God's grace in his life, yet he has not lost the **spiritual longing** for God's Word. His pleading and praying is directly related to his desire to obey his God.

The longing is in his heart but the ability is not. The desire is in his heart but the doing is not.

So he prays – he pleads with God for His help.

**Verse 40 - Quicken me in thy righteousness:**

Make me alive to the knowledge of the righteousness of thy precepts and alive to the practice of those righteous precepts.

Righteous living is related to the practice of God's righteous Word.

It takes grace to know and understand God's Word and it takes grace to practice what we know and understand.

Let us join David and the apostle Paul in our pleading for help to do what we know to be good –

**Romans 7:22 and 24-25** – “(22) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man … (24) O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (25) I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord …”