

Give Me Life

Psalm 119:33-40

Sermon Handout

The Psalms are the prayers written for God's people collectively so that together they might learn to become the people God redeemed them to be. They teach us how to know and to respond to God.

"Prayers are not tools for doing or getting, but for being and becoming." Eugene Peterson, Answering God

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death." Proverbs 14:12 (ESV)

"For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known." 1 Corinthians 13:12 (ESV)

Wisdom is learning to pray in light of the truth of God and the gospel as opposed to the way we would on our own.

I. Transformation: Pray for Deep and Ongoing Transformation Through the Word of God. Psalm 119:33-34

"Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart." Psalm 119:33-34 (ESV)

One of the purposes of the psalms is not simply to allow us expression of what we already desire but to have our desires and ambitions reformed by the wisdom and will of God.

"There is a difference between praying to an unknown God whom we hope to discover in our praying, and praying to a known God, revealed in Israel and in Jesus Christ, who speaks our language. In the first, we indulge our appetite for religious fulfillment; in the second we practice obedient faith... What is essential in prayer is not that we learn to express ourselves, but that we learn to answer God. The Psalms show us how to answer." Eugene Peterson

The longing of this psalm is for a life that aligns not just principally or convictionally but in reality. The cry is to align one's actual life with God's overarching plan for His redeemed people to live as His holy people.

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules." (Ezekiel 36:25-27)

II. Passion: Pray for An Ever Deepening Delight in God Through the Word. Psalm 119:35

"Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it." Psalm 119:35 (ESV)

Gospel change (transformation) does not consistently happen simply by possessing truth. The truth must grip our souls as the chief pleasure and delight of our lives.

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3)

"Then I said, 'Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.'" (Psalm 40:7-8)

III. Liberation: Pray for Deliverance From Worthless Distractions through the Word. Psalm 119:36-37

"Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways." Psalm 119:36-37 (ESV)

Pray for the power to prioritize what truly matters and be rescued from the ever-present temptations to be distracted and preoccupied with worthless things.

- Selfish gain is not necessarily evil gain. It is merely living for self rather than for Christ and others.
- Worthless things are not merely evil things but good things that may interfere with living for God's will and God's way while on earth.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted." Hebrews 12:1-3 (ESV)

IV. Preservation: Pray that God Would Lead You Into the Fullness of Christ and keep you to the end. Psalm 119:38-40

"Confirm to your servant your promise, that you may be feared. Turn away the reproach that I dread, for your rules are good. Behold, I long for your precepts; in your righteousness give me life!" Psalm 119:38-40 (ESV)

Remember: It is not our faithfulness but God's faithfulness that keeps us.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing." (2 Timothy 4:7-8)

"Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it." 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 (ESV)

Group Study Questions — Psalm 119:33–40

1. **Transformation:** The psalmist begins by asking God, “Teach me” and “Give me understanding.” Where do you sense God currently wanting to **change or deepen you through His Word**? What would it look like to cooperate with that work?
2. **Aligning Our Lives:** The goal isn't simply to know what God says but to have our **actual lives align with His will**. Is there an area where your beliefs and your everyday choices could become more closely aligned? What is one practical step you could take?
3. **Delight:** Psalm 119:35 says, “I delight in it.” What helps you move from viewing God's Word as something you **should do** to something you genuinely **want to do**? How has Scripture brought you joy or satisfaction recently?
4. **A Heart Reoriented Toward God:** “Incline my heart to your testimonies” is a prayer asking God to redirect our desires. **What competing desires tend to pull your heart away from God**, and how can you invite God to reshape those desires?
5. **Worthless Distractions:** The psalmist asks God to turn his eyes away from “worthless things.” These aren't necessarily bad things—they can be good things that become too important. **What good things can easily become distractions in your life**? How might you enjoy them without allowing them to crowd out what matters most?
6. **Living for Something Bigger Than Self:** The sermon described “selfish gain” as living primarily for ourselves rather than for Christ and others. **Where is God inviting you to shift your focus from yourself toward serving or blessing someone else**?
7. **Perseverance:** The psalmist asks God to preserve and lead him to the end. What does it mean for you personally to rest in **God's faithfulness rather than your own ability to remain faithful**? How does that truth encourage you when you feel spiritually weak?
8. **“Give Me Life”:** The repeated longing of this passage is ultimately, “Give me life.” **If God were to bring greater spiritual life into one area of your life right now—your relationship with Him, your family, your work, your relationships, your priorities, or your service—where would you most desire to see it**? What could you begin praying about this week?