

Arise, My Soul, and Pray!

The Word of God and the Prayers of a Believer in Psalm 119

Kristie Gant



SAMPLE PAGES:

Table of Contents
About the Study
Lesson Four

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Table of Contents

	About this Study	7
Lesson One	An Introduction to Psalm 119 Psalm 119:1-176	11
Lesson Two Part One & Part Two	Seeking God Psalm 119:1-16	17
Lesson Three Part One & Part Two	Life's Trials Psalm 119:17-32	25
Lesson Four Part One & Part Two	God's Mercies Psalm 119:33-48	33
Lesson Five Part One & Part Two	Finding Comfort Psalm 119:49-96	41
Lesson Six Part One & Part Two	Sweet Words! Psalm 119:97-104	51
Lesson Seven Part One & Part Two	Divine Light Psalm 119:105-128	59
Lesson Eight Part One & Part Two	Faithful Expectations Psalm 119:129-152	67
Lesson Nine	Knowing God Psalm 119:153-176	75
	Notes & Appendices	83
	Notes	85
	Do I Have a Saving Faith?	87
	Completing a Word Study	89
	Scripture-at-a-Glance:	
	Psalm 119 in Parallel	91
	Additional Passages for Study	105
	Bibliography	117

About this Study

Frequently Asked Questions

What do I need to complete this course?

You will only need a pencil or pen, and this course book.

Don't I also need a Bible?

For those who study on-the-go, you can find almost all of the Scripture passages this study mentions in the *Scripture-at-a-Glance* sections in the back of this course book. Thus, you do not need your own copy of the Bible in order to complete most of the lessons.

Nevertheless, if you have access to a Bible as you study, we do recommend that you use it rather than the *Scripture-at-a-Glance* sections. Looking up the passages in a Bible allows you to see more of the context surrounding each passage and helps you gain a greater familiarity with the Scriptures.

If I use my own Bible, does it matter which translation I have?

Quotations throughout this course come primarily from the New King James Version of the Bible (NKJV) with parallel readings from the English Standard Version (ESV). It is fine to use another translation — for example, the New American Standard Bible or New International Version — to answer questions. Paraphrases, such as The Living Bible, will be more difficult to use for study.

Is there anything else I might want to have on hand?

Occasionally there is an opportunity to complete a word study (looking up definitions for the Hebrew or Greek words used in the original Bible languages) or to read from a commentary. Many of these resources are available free online. See Appendix B for more information about how to do word studies and where to find these resources.

If I join a group late, do I have to start from the beginning?

In order to lay a good foundation for study, first complete Lesson One, questions #1, #2 and #3. When done, jump ahead to the lesson your group is currently completing. At the end of the study, you can come back to the beginning and work through any lessons you missed.

Why are there boxes to initial?

It is all too easy to plunge right in and begin studying without pausing to ask God's blessing on, and help in, your Bible study endeavors — or to conclude your study without responding to God in prayer. To remind you of the importance of prayer, and encourage you to make it a serious part of your study time, we include a small box for you to initial after completing a time of prayer and/or meditation at the beginning and end of each lesson (and occasionally elsewhere).

Why do some lessons have two parts, and others do not?

Serving as an introduction and a conclusion, the first and last lessons in this course (Lesson One and Lesson Nine) are shorter than the other lessons, and thus are not divided into two parts. The remaining lessons are divided in order to give classes the option of completing the lesson in one week, or in two.

What if I don't understand, or don't have an answer for a question?

If you occasionally have trouble answering a question, make a mark in the margin and go on to the next question. Many times an answer will come to light as you continue to study.

I'd love to hear from you!

If you have comments or questions, or if you would like to share what the LORD has done in your life as you have studied His Word in this course, please write to me at: kristiegant@inpraiseministries.com

May the LORD bless your study!

Kristie

God's Mercies

Lesson Four

“No heart can conceive that treasury of mercies which lies in this one privilege, in having liberty and ability to approach unto God at all times, according to His mind and will.”¹

John Owen

As a child, I sang of the mercies of God long before I had any real understanding of them. One of my favorite songs was based on Psalm 89:1. You may know it:

I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever,
I will sing, I will sing.
I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever,
I will sing of the mercies of the Lord.
And with my mouth, will I make known,
Thy faithfulness, Thy faithfulness.
And with my mouth, will I make known,
Thy faithfulness to all generations.

Knowing and proclaiming the mercies of the Lord is one of the great privileges given to every generation of believers; and whether we proclaim His mercies through songs, teaching, actions, attitudes, or through our prayers, one thing is sure — we must know and treasure God's mercies to truly proclaim them!

*“Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God,
the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations
with those who love Him and keep His commandments;”*

Deuteronomy 7:9



he

Psalm 119:33-40

³³ Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes,
And I shall keep it to the end.

³⁴ Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law;
Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

³⁵ Make me walk in the path of Your commandments,
For I delight in it.

³⁶ Incline my heart to Your testimonies,
And not to covetousness.

³⁷ Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things,
And revive me in Your way.

³⁸ Establish Your word to Your servant,
Who is devoted to fearing You.

³⁹ Turn away my reproach which I dread,
For Your judgments are good.

⁴⁰ Behold, I long for Your precepts;
Revive me in Your righteousness.



waw

Psalm 119:41-48

⁴¹ Let Your mercies come also to me, O LORD —
Your salvation according to Your word.

⁴² So shall I have an answer for him who reproaches me,
For I trust in Your word.

⁴³ And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth,
For I have hoped in Your ordinances.

⁴⁴ So shall I keep Your law continually,
Forever and ever.

⁴⁵ And I will walk at liberty,
For I seek Your precepts.

⁴⁶ I will speak of Your testimonies also before kings,
And will not be ashamed.

⁴⁷ And I will delight myself in Your commandments,
Which I love.

⁴⁸ My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments,
Which I love,
And I will meditate on Your statutes.

Begin with prayer.

***Let Your mercies come also to me, O LORD—
Your salvation according to Your word.***

Psalm 119:41

Part One: Observation and Study

1. Begin by reading the two octets we will observe this week (*he* and *waw*). Read from your Bible or from the text on the opposite page. As you read:
 - a. Record a few words or expressions you have seen in previous octets.
 - b. Note any words or expressions you have not yet seen in Psalm 119.

2. (*Optional*) Using Appendix C, compare the *he* and *waw* octets in the two translations provided (NKJV and ESV). Record the most helpful comparison.

3. In the *he* octet (vv. 33-40), the psalmist makes nine requests (one is made twice). Finish the list below.

Basic Requests in Psalm 119:33-40

v. 33	<u>Teach me . . . Your statutes</u>
v. 34	<u>Give me understanding</u>
v. 35	<u>Make me walk</u>
v. 36	_____
v. 37a	_____
v. 37b	_____
v. 38	_____
v. 39	_____
v. 40	_____

4. In these requests, we see (again) the psalmist's awareness that there are things he simply cannot do in his own power. In other words, he is dependent upon the Lord for divine power and mercies.
 - a. In the right-hand column above, summarize how the psalmist expects life to be different when the Lord answers his prayers.
 - b. Of the requests in the left-hand column above, which are you most likely to hear in your own prayers?
 - c. Which (if any) will you add to your prayers today?
 - d. In light of your last three answers, pause now for prayer.

5. When praying, many of the psalmist's requests are more general in nature. Two stand out here, however, because they are more specific.

³⁶ Incline my heart to Your testimonies,
And *not to covetousness*.

³⁷ Turn away my eyes from
looking *at worthless things*

a. We don't know what the psalmist was coveting or what worthless things were capturing his attention, but we do know believers continue to struggle with these things today. Record a few specifics below.

Things it is easy to covet today

Worthless things that capture our eyes

b. No matter what the sin or worthless things we struggle with, like the psalmist, we need the power and mercies of the Lord in order to overcome them. As 2 Corinthians 3:5 says:

“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything
as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.”

So knowing our sufficiency is from God alone, is there anything we can be doing while waiting on the Lord to answer requests for specific help? Glean from both octets.

Things believers do when living in full dependence upon the Lord

Psalm 119:33-40

Psalm 119:41-48

c. From all you know of Scripture, how do we know doing such things does not help us earn or merit God's mercies [*steadfast love* (ESV)]?

d. If these things don't help us secure mercies or divine love, then why would we do them?

e. In v. 35, just before he prays specifically about covetousness and worthless things, the psalmist pleads:

“Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it.”

If he delights in the path, why is he asking God to “make” him walk it? Wouldn't he just do it if he really found delight in it?

6. Turning our attention fully to the *waw* octet, we find a few words we have not yet seen in Psalm 119. Two of these are *salvation* and *love* — and they bookend these eight verses.

a. In v. 41, the psalmist prays:

“Let Your mercies [*steadfast love* (ESV)] come also to me, O LORD —
Your *salvation* according to Your word.”

From earlier verses, it is quite obvious this psalmist is a believer — and therefore, saved. If he is not asking God to save him (redeem, justify), what is he requesting here? (*Optional*) Consult commentaries or complete word studies before answering.

b. What *mercies* (*steadfast love*) might he be wanting the Lord to let come to him?

7. The *waw* octet begins with the mercies of *salvation* and ends with *love*, for although he will mention it 10 more times in upcoming octets, it is in vv. 47-48 that this psalmist first mentions his *love* for God's Word.

“And I will delight myself in Your commandments,
Which I *love*.
My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments,
Which I *love*,
And I will *meditate on Your statutes*.”

a. From what you know of this psalmist, do you think the love he declares is more a thought, a feeling, an action, or a resolve? Explain.

b. If you also love God's Word, how would you describe the love you have?

c. What are some times or seasons of life when a believer might not fervently love God's Word (or delight in walking the path of His commandments)?

d. In this first mention of love for God's Word, the psalmist connects it to meditating on the Word. Is meditating on God's Word necessary to loving it? Explain.

8. Looking back over both the *he* and *waw* octets, either:

Note any questions you have that have not been asked or answered — *or* — spend time simply contemplating a verse of your choice. (*Optional*) Attempt to answer any questions or further your contemplations through word studies, consulting commentaries, etc. Make notes on page 40.

When done, end this section with prayer.

Part Two: Thinking it Through

1. By the abundance of prayer requests he makes in Psalm 119, the psalmist reveals that:

- ___ • He has a sense of his childlikeness. (*Help me, teach me, give me understanding, etc.*)
- ___ • He knows that, even though he knows much, there is still much he needs to learn. (*Repetition of "teach me."*)
- ___ • He is aware of his weaknesses. (*Revive me, make me, strengthen me, etc.*)
- ___ • He understands that the Word is to affect all of life. (*Either directly or by inference, the two octets this week mention the heart, mind, tongue/lips/mouth, hands, feet, and eyes.*)
- ___ • He is fully aware and convinced of the ease of straying from the path he desires to walk.
- ___ • He wants to walk through life in a way that honors the Lord.
- ___ • He is conscious of his continuing need for direction.
- ___ • He is certain of the value and truth of God's Word.
- ___ • The Lord is surpassingly great in His eyes.
- ___ • He is keenly aware of his need for God's mercies.

a. At random, put a mark by any one of the bullet statements above.

b. If the one thing you checked was missing from the heart of this psalmist, how would that one omission change the prayers he prays? (*Take time here. There is much to be learned for our own hearts!*)

2. Of all the prayers in the Bible, the Apostle Paul's are perhaps the most widely read and memorized. As you read three of Paul's prayers, compare his requests to those of the psalmist in Psalm 119. Note any similarities.

a. Ephesians 1:15-21

b. Ephesians 3:14-21

c. Colossians 1:9-14

3. Whether for knowledge, understanding, strength, etc., the similarities between Paul's prayers for others, and the psalmist's prayers for himself, are notable. In what ways do prayers for others *differ* from prayers for ourselves?

4. Scripture clearly reveals that believers are to be men and women of prayer.

a. Read Romans 12:12, Colossians 4:2, and 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Whether praying for ourselves or for others, what does it mean (or look like) to be faithful in prayer?

b. In Psalm 103, David praises the Lord for His abundant mercies. As you read this psalm aloud, note several of the ways God's mercies come to His people.

c. In what ways do God's mercies help us to be faithful in prayer? (*Answer in general, or give a specific example.*)

d. Do *all* God's mercies help us to be faithful in prayer? Explain.

5. Having spent time contemplating the words of Scripture, respond now to your God. Begin with thanksgiving for the great love with which He has loved you, for the mercies which have come to you because of His salvation, and for the things He has accomplished in your life and prayers — and along with all these words of testimony, make your requests known to Him, lifting up your soul with devotion, delight, love and longing . . .

. . . *And what if you find little delight as you come to pray?* Then, like the psalmist, admit your weakness and pray: "Cause me to delight . . ." and "Make me to love . . ."

Arise, My Soul, and Pray!

Praise Requests Actions Yearnings

Thoughts on the Mercies of Salvation and Prayer

As you read the following, underline mercies mentioned and star the most helpful or insightful comment.

1. "[Salvation] is the sum and crown of all mercies . . . Here is the first mention of salvation in the Psalm, and it is joined with mercy . . . 'He that is our God is the God of salvation.'" ²
2. [In verse 41 we see] ". . . a sinner — feeling his need of mercy — yea, *mercies* — abundant mercy (Ps. li. 1) — mercies for every moment — looking for them only in the *Lord's salvation* — to be dispensed *according to his word*. . . Can we conceive the moment when this prayer is not suited to us? . . . To walk as a saved sinner, 'accepted in the Beloved' . . . Let this prayer live in the heart." ³

