

REDISCOVERING GOD'S WORD

Psalm 119:105-112

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LISTEN: <http://www.fbcjc.org/sermon/rediscovering-gods-word/>

It is a lamp to our feet and light to our paths (v. 105). Ponder that. Our world is well-lit. Lights everywhere. In fact, experts complain of light pollution. We have no sense of the utter darkness at night. God's Word helps us see near (our feet) and farther out (our path). And note the progressive theme. If we keep walking, the light keeps shining. If we quit obeying, no more light. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the God's Word and it's about God's Word. And this morning I want us to think about rediscovering its beauty, power and capacity to shape us.

And this theme of continuing to step out and follow the light of scripture is a central theme in this passage. The greatest enemy of our obedience is the tyranny of our emotions. We don't feel like obeying God or reading His Word. Feelings are fickle. Years ago, I stopped asking new believers, "How do you feel?" It's not about feelings! One emotional believer once blurted out, "I have an inward inexpressibility of an outward all-over-ish-ness!" Wow! Augustine, way back in the 5th century, said we are better at feeling than we are thinking. Our desires dominate.

And v. 106 tells us about his oath-swearing which may have been some public covenant ceremony, like our profession of faith or baptism. *The Message* version of this verse reads, "I've committed myself and I'll never turn back." This is volitional, concerning the will. It is not intellect alone. It is not emotion alone.

One of our church's stated goals from Setting Sail was to take us all deeper in spiritual formation, in our walk with God. And it starts with a commitment to God's Word (v. 106). A man said, "I used to pray, 'God, open your Word to me;' now I pray, 'God, open ME to your Word.'"

It is my goal to make this message about the Bible as practical and helpful as possible. So I want you to think of what we're called to do as leaning in to hear. You know. The way you lean in to hear a juicy piece of gossip, or a baseball score or a compliment someone is throwing you. That phrase, leaning in to hear, is actually the psalmist's phrase in v. 112: "I incline my heart..." I am bending toward the truth.

So, two simple suggestions. **FIRST**, make time. We make time for everything we consider important. We have resources galore, online at our fingertips—audio, email, podcast, etc. For one month, give 15-20 minutes to seriously listening to scripture. After about 4-6 weeks, you will miss it if you don't do it, like forgetting to brush your teeth! **SECOND**, read scripture as a love letter. This is God's heart. If you read it as legal code, a list of do's and don'ts, there will be no joy. Don't read it to get points for winning arguments. Don't read it as if you are creating computer code or filling out a loan application. Don't read it as Bible roulette (spin the Bible, close your eyes, put your finger down on a spot).

This love letter tells you how God created you and even when you shut Him out, He keeps coming after you. How he sent his Son Jesus to die and be raised and how His Spirit comes to live inside and guide you. Receive it as God's love letter to you. Because God does love you.

I'm suggesting this because the Bible makes better food than medicine. By that I mean we don't wait until a crisis comes to get familiar with God's Word and the strength it offers. And troubles will come. I notice the psalmist says affliction came, but it drove him to God's Word (v. 107). And then enemies came after him (v. 110), but he kept trusting scripture's truths. You see, he didn't wait until the crisis and expect to insert a zip drive and download a 20-year relationship with scripture.

Several years ago, my family and I shared a vacation in western North Carolina. The house we rented was up a very steep single-lane road, with many hairpin turns and steep drop-offs. The road was hard enough to negotiate in day light. But one night, we were coming back from town. It was raining harder than I had ever seen it rain. A foggy, too. I could not see past the front of the van. With my vehicle full of family, I have never so afraid while driving. I truly believed we might slip off the side of the mountain. Finally, our son Joel, bless his heart, got out in the driving rain, put the flashlight behind him and walked the path, as we inched along behind him. And as you can tell, we didn't die!

Storms will come to your life. Steep cliffs will create danger. Get to know God's Word. It is a lamp to our feet; a light to our paths. Amen.

Additional resources:

Today's sermon deals with rediscovering the power of the Bible in our lives. Consider doing some summer reading to bolster your own experience with scripture. On the subject of Bible reading for daily growth, read [Hearing God](#) by Dallas Willard. To explore the grand sweep of biblical themes and how they fit together, try these two: [How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth](#) by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart and [Making Sense of the Bible](#) by Adam Hamilton. The last two are in our [church library](#). All may be ordered inexpensively from [Amazon.com](#).