

## ***“Blessed are the undefiled in the way”***

### ***Psalm 119: 1-8***

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Introduction: What are your first thoughts when you hear “Psalm 119”? Do you think of the longest psalm, or longest chapter in the Bible? Do you think of the different references to God’s Word – “*law, testimonies, judgments, commandments, word, statutes, precepts, truth*”? Do you think of the Psalm written originally in the form of an acrostic? If asked, “What words are most frequently repeated in this Psalm?” Would you answer, one of those 8 words that refer to the Word of God? In reality, the most repeated words are first & second person pronouns – “I, me, mine, Thee, Thy, Thine.” Psalm 119 is in fact, a personal prayer. “It’s talking to, not teaching about. We hear what a man says out loud in God’s presence: his joyous pleasure, vocal need, open adoration, blunt requests, candid assertions, deep struggles, fiercely good intentions” (Powlison). He goes on to suggest, “A person who has listened opens his heart to the Person who has spoken, & this is what he says.” As we enter into a study of this Psalm, Spurgeon wrote that we do well to commit it to memory. He speaks of it as “the holy soul’s soliloquy before an open Bible.” By way of introduction, let’s consider the author, the audience, & the address of this Psalm.

#### I. The author

##### A. David?

1. He is most often suggested as the author, though there is no heading as such in our Bibles.
2. “It is Davidic in tone & expression, & it tallies with David’s experience in many interesting points. After long reading an author one gets to know his style, & a measure of discernment is acquired by which his composition is detected even if his name be concealed; we feel a kind of critical certainty that the hand of David is in this thing, yea, that it is altogether his own” (Spurgeon).

##### B. Some other writer?

1. “It might have been written by Hezekiah, but more likely still by Ezra” (Scroggie).
2. “A stronger reason appears for assigning this Psalm to one of the prophets of the captivity, either Jeremiah or Daniel, with greater probability to the latter” (Jebb).
3. “The author is unknown for certain, although David, Daniel, or Ezra have reasonably been suggested” (MacArthur).
4. “Who the author of the Psalm was it is idle to speculate” (Kirkpatrick).

Summary: “If David did not write it, there must have lived another believer of exactly the same order of mind as David, & he must have addicted himself to psalmody with equal ardor, & have been an equally hearty lover of Holy Writ” (Spurgeon).

#### II. The audience

A. The psalmist is talking to the Lord – this is a personal prayer.

B. The psalmist is talking to us – this is a “public” prayer.

“We overhear the *honest words* erupting when what God says gets into you. We hear someone speaking to God who speaks, someone who needs the God who speaks, someone who loves the God who speaks” (Powlison).

### III. The address

#### A. The theme:

1. “The psalm conveys the thought that the Word of God contains everything man needs to know” (Ryrie).
2. “The psalmist is one whose earnest desire & steadfast purpose it is to make God’s law the governing principle of his conduct, to surrender all self-willed thoughts & aims, to subordinate his whole life to the supremely perfect will of God, with unquestioning faith in His all-embracing Providence & unfailing love” (Kirkpatrick).
3. “Psalm 119 is the thoughtful outcry that rises when real life meets real God” (Powlison).

#### B. The “tactics”:

1. The psalmist shares his adoration (devotion) – asserting who the Lord is.
2. The psalmist shares his confession – speaking of his struggles & failings.
3. The psalmist shares his petitions – pleading for God’s help in his time of need.
4. The psalmist shares his affirmations – declaring his convictions & delights.

**Conclusion:** What can we hope to gain from a study of this Psalm? I trust we will gain not only a greater love for the Word of God, but a greater love for the God of the Word! Will you take the challenge with me to memorize these 178 verses, or at least one verse from each section? Some you already know & have probably memorized: verses 9-11; verse 18; or verse 105. “This psalm, as an Alphabetical Psalm, was evidently meant to be laid up in the memory & heart. God’s Word is a great treasure & it is good, not only to meditate on, but also to commit to memory (:11), so that, in a time of need, it can be readily recalled. Since in nearly every verse God is addressed, we are reminded that along with reading the Bible we need to be praying. Our prayer should be that God, by His Holy Spirit, will reveal wonderful things to us, so that we derive from Scripture great & lasting profit. Although believers pass through many changes in this life, it is important to realize that God’s written Word is settled & remains forever the same. To our great comfort, it is truth unchanged & unchanging” (RSB).

Consider these challenging words from Spurgeon in his introduction to this Psalm... By God’s grace, may our study of Psalm 119 lead to (or result in) our adoration, confession, petitions, & affirmations.