

Setting the Word before our Eyes, Mind, Feet, & Heart

Psalm 119:33-40

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Introduction: Thus far in our study of Psalm 119 we have seen: “The Blessedness of God’s Word (:1-8); “Take Time to be Holy” (:9-16); “The Prayer of God’s Servant (:17-24); & last week “The Word of the Lord in Time of Tribulation” (:25-32). This evening we look at verses 33-40, which we might entitle: “Setting the Word before our Eyes, Mind, Feet, & Heart.” On the basis of verse 1, Wiersbe suggests the theme of “Ending Well.” Perhaps we can combine these themes & see that in order to end well in our Christian lives, we must continually put the Word of God before our eyes, mind, feet, & heart. Consider those who started well but did not end well: Lot, Samson, King Saul, Ahithophel, & Demas. To end well is to live well – consistently & obediently. Let’s see what the psalmist has to say about “ending well.”

I. Setting the Word before our **eyes** (:33 & 37) [his desire]

A. “Teach me...” (:33)

1. “Teach” >

- a. Literally, “to point out” or “to send out the hand” or “to indicate” (cf. teachers).
- b. Spiritually, the psalmist wants the Lord to be his teacher (not just to learn the *statutes*, but the *way* of them; their daily use).
- c. Practically, our perseverance (“*unto the end*”) depends upon the Lord’s teaching & that requires our willingness to learn (no one can teach a man who refuses to learn).

Summary: “The very desire to learn this way is in itself an assurance that we shall be taught therein, for He who made us long to learn will be sure to gratify the desire” (Spurgeon).

2. “Keep it unto the end” >

- a. “Those who are taught of God never forget their lessons” (Scroggie, quoting Spurgeon). ??
- b. There is no such enduring influence with man’s teaching; only as the Word of God is applied in character building & Christ-likeness.
- c. If God keeps us (I Peter 1:5), we shall keep His way.

B. “Turn” me... (:37)

1. Eyes turned away, but not closed; directed to the right object.
2. Eyes not upon “*vanity*” – emptiness, worldliness (cf. I John 2:15-17).
3. Eyes to be “*quicken*ed” – given spiritual life; victory over sin & its power. “Vitality is the cure of vanity” (Spurgeon).

II. Setting the Word before our **mind** (:34 & 38) [his discernment]

A. “Give me understanding...” (:34)

1. This understanding is God’s gift to us (but not given until we sense the need).
2. This understanding is “discernment” – see Hebrews 5:12-14 & cf. Philippians 1:10.
3. This understanding is to love “*with my whole heart*” (& see verse 2, 10, & 58) the law of the Lord – to learn, remember, treasure up & obey.

B. “Stablish Thy word...” (:38)

1. The prayer is to be established in the truth; it is the servant’s duty to obey.
2. The prayer is of one “*devoted to Thy fear*” – compare Proverbs 1:5; 9:10 & Psalm 89:7.
3. “We cannot look for the fulfilment of promises in our experience unless we live under the influence of the fear of the Lord: establishment in grace is the result of holy watchfulness & prayerful energy” (Spurgeon).

III. Setting the Word before our **feet** (:35 & 39) [his direction]

A. *"Make me to go..."* (:35)

1. To be made to go in the Lord's path requires God's power.
2. To be made to go in the Lord's path results in delight (cf. Psalm 1:1-3; 40:8).
3. "Thou hast made me to *know*; now make me to *go*" (Spurgeon).

B. *"Turn away my reproach..."* (:39)

1. The scorn or reproach which comes from living according to God's Word?
2. The scorn or reproach which comes from not living according to God's Word?
3. The psalmist asks for his reproach to be turned away – either way.

Summary: "The psalmist was not afraid of his enemies; he was afraid of disgracing the Lord & bringing dishonor to His great name" (Wiersbe). Compare verse 31, "*put me not to shame*" - & see verses 46, 78, & 80 as well as II Samuel 12:14; I Timothy 6:1; & Titus 2:5.

IV. Setting the Word before our **heart** (:36 & 40) [his dedication]

A. *"Incline my heart..."* (:36)

1. The psalmist asks for a heart inclined to God's "*testimonies*" – everything to which God gives witness.
2. The psalmist ask for his heart to be turned away from "*covetousness*" – the desire for worldly gain; selfishness.
3. The "replacement principle" – the only way to keep out covetousness is to put in God's testimonies (& cf. Colossians 3:5-17).

B. *"Behold, I have longed after Thy precepts..."* (:40)

1. The psalmist's claim of sincerity, not perfection. It is his desire to be conformed to God's standard of righteousness.
2. The psalmist's "*longing*" can be compared to Matthew 5:6, "*Blessed are they which do hunger & thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*" Could that be said of you?
3. "*Quicken me*" – "His will is good; but he needs fresh strength, & for this he prays on the ground of God's righteousness, that attribute in virtue of which He must needs be true to His covenant-promises" (Kirkpatrick).

Conclusion: How, then, can we be enabled to "end well"? Wiersbe suggests it involves learning (:33-34); obeying (:35); delighting (:36-37); fearing (:38-39); & longing (:40). I would suggest we can be enabled to end well by setting the Word of God before our eyes (:33 & 37); our mind (:34 & 38); our feet (:35 & 39); & before our heart (:36 & 40). Spurgeon observes: "A sense of dependence & a consciousness of extreme need pervade this section which is all made up of prayer & plea." The previous 8 verses spoke of the psalmist's sense of his sin, weakness, & folly. Here he pleads to God that he might not fall back into sin.

How about you & me tonight? Do we sense our weakness & frailty & tendency to sin? Are we mindful to continually set before us God's Word – before our eyes, mind, feet, & heart? Do we have a desire to be taught & prayer for discernment? Do we seek the Lord's direction as we dedicate our heart to serve Him? Might this prayer of the psalmist be ours!