

# The Perfect Righteousness of God & His Word

## *Psalm 119:137-144*

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Introduction: Verse 137-144 of Psalm 119 each begin with the 18<sup>th</sup> letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *Tzaddi*. The key theme is that of “*righteous*” or “*righteousness*” (found 5 times in these 8 verses). Wiersbe entitles this section: “In God We Trust.” He suggests 4 divisions in these 8 verses: “God’s Word is trustworthy no matter what people do (:137-139); God’s Word is trustworthy no matter what people say (:140-141); God’s Word is trustworthy regardless of how you feel (:142-143); & God’s Word is trustworthy no matter how long you live (:144).” We are reminded of Romans 10:17, “*So then faith cometh by hearing, & hearing by the word of God.*” The Bible describes those who have **no** faith (Mark 4:40), those who have **little** faith (Matthew 8:26; 14:31), & those who have **great** faith (Matthew 8:10; 15:28). In which category do you fall?

I see 3 divisions in these verses: (1) the psalmist’s assessment of God & His Word (:137-138); (2) the psalmist’s acknowledgement of his enemies & God’s Word (:139-142); & (3) The psalmist’s admission of his troubles & the comfort of God’s Word (:143-144). Consider with me tonight the perfect righteousness of God & His Word & what ought to be our response.

### I. The psalmist’s **assessment** of God & His Word (:137-138)

#### A. The righteousness of God (:137a) >

1. The root word of “*righteous*” means to be in the right; be justified; be just. (cf. Gen. 18:25, “...shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”)
2. “God is always right, & He is always actively right, that is, righteous” (Spurgeon).

#### B. The righteousness of God’s Word (:137b-138) >

1. His “*judgments*” – judicial ordinances; decisions; legal sanctions (God’s judicial decisions). See Psalm 19:9, “*The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the LORD true & righteous altogether.*”
2. “*Upright*” – “The decisions both of His Word & providence are unimpeachable” (Plumer).
3. “*Testimonies*” – “God’s commandments which bear witness to His will & man’s duty are the expression of His absolute righteousness & of that faithfulness to His covenant which is an inalienable element of that righteousness” (Kirkpatrick).

Suggested paraphrase: “Thou hast strictly & severely, under the highest obligations & penalties, commanded in Thy word that men should be just & true in all their actions” (Poole).

### II. The psalmist’s **acknowledgement** of his enemies & God’s Word (:139-142)

#### A. Characteristics of his enemies (:139b; 141) >

1. They “*have forgotten Thy words*” – contrast with psalmist in verse 141.
2. They seem to accuse the psalmist as “*small & despised*” (:141):
  - a. He is insignificant in the eyes of man (& perhaps in his own eyes?).
  - b. He is despised for his dedication to God’s Word.

Summary: “Neither the glamor of worldly power nor the sting of worldly contempt can move him from his allegiance” (Kirkpatrick).

B. Confidence of the psalmist (:139a; 140; 141b) >

1. His zeal for God (:139a):
  - a. His righteous jealousy for the honor of God's Word (& cf. Ps; 69:9).
  - b. "So long as grace triumphs, the pious zeal of God's people rises in proportion to the out-breaking & outrageous conduct of the wicked around them" (Plumer).  
Illustrate: George Whitefield. Though he lived only to the age of 56, he preached 18,000 times – "Sermons all on fire, & they set the world on fire!" (Plumer).
2. His love for God's Word (:140):
  - a. God's Word is "*very pure*" – doubly refined; no dross; no mixture of error or mistake.
  - b. God's servant – No man ever loved His Bible too much.

C. The conviction of God's Word (:142) >

1. "*Thy righteousness*" – speaks of God's Word.
2. "*Everlasting righteousness*" – means no injustice; lasts forever, into eternity.  
Summary: "It is at once the rule of duty, the guide to life, & the measure of happiness" (Plumer) & compare Deuteronomy 6:24.

III. The psalmist's **admission** of his troubles & the comfort of God's Word (:143-144)

A. The psalmist's circumstances (:143a) >

1. "*Trouble*" – speaks of his affliction (from without or within?).
2. "*Anguish*" speaks of distress (from without?).

B. The psalmist's comforts (:143b-144a) >

1. God's "*commandments*" – in which he delights.
  - a. In contrast to human laws (& wisdom) which seem to work for a while, yet can be found faulty & needing to be changed.
  - b. Compare the Dred Scott decision & the overturning of Roe vs. Wade.
2. God's "*testimonies*" (cf. verse 138) are everlasting.
3. God's "*understanding*" –
  - a. A prayer for fuller understanding of God's Word, "for through knowledge of it & obedience to it man really *lives*, truly realizes the purpose of his being" (Kirkpatrick).
  - b. "Those that know much of the Word of God should still covet to know more, for there is more to be known" (Henry).

Conclusion: Since God's Word is unchangeably right in all respects, it is to be our unending obligation in all things. What is your response to God's righteousness & His righteous Word? Do you have a zeal for God (godly jealousy) for His name & His Word? Do you have a love for God (Matthew 22:37-38) & His Word? Do you delight in His will & His Word (Psalm 40:8)? And do you pray daily for a greater knowledge of Him (Psalm 46:10) & a greater understanding of His Word (Psalm 119:18)?

For the unbeliever, he must come to the knowledge of God (John 17:3) & faith in Him (Hebrew 11:6). We should challenge the unsaved to answer 3 questions: "Who am I? Why do I exist? Where am I going?"

Again I ask, "What is your response to the righteousness of God & His righteous Word?"