SBC – Nov. 8, 2026
Psalm 119:97-112 (NKJV)
"God's Word is Sweet and Gives Guidance"

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible with 176 verses. It has for its theme THE WORD OF GOD.

It has no outline per se, but it does follow the Hebrew Alphabet (22 letters), giving 8 verses to each letter in successive fashion. So we are taking 16 verses for each message and working our way through the Psalm.

Tonight we are looking at Psalm 119:97-112, which I have titled: "***God's Word is Sweet and Gives Guidance."***

Slide # 1

Psalm 119

Theme: The Word of God

Psalm 119:97-112

"God's Word is Sweet and Gives Guidance"

- vv. 97-104 (Heb. letter "Mem" – 13th letter) – *God's Word is Sweet*
- vv. 105-112 (Heb. letter "Nun" – 14th letter) – *God's Word Gives Guidance*

In Psalm 119 there are 8 primary Hebrew synonyms (or terms) used to refer to the Word of God.

Slide # 2

- ***Law:*** (torah) used 25 times = Commands
- ***Testimonies:*** (eduth) used 23 times = truths in keeping with God's character
- ***Precepts*** (piqqudim) used 21 times = divine instructions
- ***Statutes*** (huqqim) used 21 times = fixed decrees/rules
- ***Commandments*** (mitzvah) used 22 times = divine directives
- ***Judgments/Rules*** (mishpat) used 23 times = judicial edicts
- ***Word*** (dabar) used 24 times = the spoken Word
- ***Word*** (imrah) used 19 times = declarative message

Psalm 119:97–112 (NKJV)
97 Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

The writer loved the Word of God, and what you love, you think about constantly. What drives your thought life and mine? A lover finds it easy to meditate on the one they love. Their mind is constantly drawn to the one they love. To truly love God is to love His Word. You can't separate the one from the other. What you think of the Word, you think of God, and what you think of God, you think of His Word.

> Our relationship to the Lord is determined by our relationship to His will, and that is determined by how we relate to His Word.
> – ***Warren Wiersbe***

Tell me the quality of your relationship with the Word, and I will tell you the quality of your relationship with God.

> Only the spiritual man *loves* it; he lives as if he could not live without the word of God. To the superficial Christian it is a duty to satisfy the conscience; to the believer it is food and medicine, light and comfort – the word of God is life. – ***David Guzik***

There are those who read the Bible as a duty, and then there are those who LOVE it!

> "He meditated in God's word because he loved it, and then loved it the more because he meditated in it." - ***Charles Spurgeon***

> "The Order of the Divine mind, embodied in the Divine Law, is beautiful…. It is the language of a man ravished by moral beauty."
> -**C.S. Lewis**

In verses 47 and 48, the psalmist twice stated that he loved the Word and what you delight in, you meditate on. And his mind is intensely focused on the Word "all the day." He is a man preoccupied with the Word. He can't get enough of it.

98 You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they are ever with me.

Pride boasts about how smart it is, but true wisdom comes from the Word. Thus the writer was made wiser than his enemies because of his relationship with the Word.

He took comfort in the enduring reality of this wisdom that would never leave him. No matter the circumstances, the abiding, unchanging wisdom of the Word will always be there for God's people.

> **Isaiah 40:8 (NKJV)**
> **8** The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."

99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation.

> When I taught a course in Bible at a Bible institute, I used to tell my students, "Don't you ever give me this verse or I'll give you an F in the course!" Seriously, humble believers who sit at the feet of Christ are often more skilled in the Word than a man who has a D.D. or a Ph.D after his name. – ***J. Vernon McGee***

It's not bad or wrong to have teachers. The Psalmist had teachers. However, we are not limited to what teachers can teach. We can go deeper if we will apply ourselves.

Note: He says the reason he has more understanding is because "Your testimonies are my meditation." That involves intensely staying focused on the Word, where you gain deep understanding and discernment.

He is not carnally bragging, but his commitment to focusing on the Word has given him this deep level of understanding.

> My theology teacher in Bible College was somewhat frustrated with us freshman students as he was teaching systematic theology. One day in exasperation, he said to us young men, "You can get this!" That was helpful! We can get this! And by the grace of God I did as I applied myself intently.

Slide # 3

> **Jeremiah 9:23–24 (NKJV)**
> **23** Thus says the LORD: "Let not the **wise** man glory in his wisdom, Let not the **mighty** man glory in his might, Nor let the **rich** man glory in his riches;
> **24** But let him who glories glory in this, That he **understands and knows Me**, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.

Knowing God is the thing to exult in, not in a carnal way, but in the sense that this is most important to you.

Slide # 4

Matthew 11:25 (NKJV)
25 At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have **hidden these things from the wise and prudent** and **have revealed them to babes**.

Slide # 5

Acts 4:13 (NKJV)
13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, **they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.**

Even though we may be uneducated according to the world’s standards, we can have an understanding and wisdom that far exceeds anything the world has. Knowing God is the true and ultimate wisdom!

The story is told about Harry Ironside, the famous pastor, author, and Bible commentator. Ironside went to visit a man near death, who was suffering from tuberculosis. The man was almost dead and could barely speak. As Ironside spoke to him he asked, “Young man, you are trying to preach Christ, are you not?” Ironside said that he was, and the man replied: “Well, sit down a little, and let us talk together about the Word of God.” Then the man opened his Bible and spoke with Ironside until his strength was gone; he shared insights from the Bible that Ironside had not appreciated or even seen before. Ironside was stunned, and he asked the man: “Where did you get these things? Can you tell me where I can find a book that will open them up to me? Did you get them in seminary or college?” The old man replied: “My dear young man, I learned these things on my knees on the mud floor of a little sod cottage in the north of Ireland. There with my open Bible before me, I used to kneel for hours at a time and ask the Spirit of God to reveal Christ to my soul and to open the Word to my heart. He taught me more on my knees on that mud floor than I ever could have learned in all the seminaries or colleges in the world.” (As told by James Montgomery Boice)

Psalm 119:99 (NKJV)
99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation.

100 I understand more than the ancients, Because I keep Your precepts.

We often hear that with age comes wisdom. On some level, that is often true, as life experience does teach us many things. However, the Psalmist here is thinking in terms of biblical understanding and wisdom, where one learns to think about life through the prism of the Scriptures.

In this sense, he has come to acquire more understanding than his elders because he has come to live by the principles of God's Word – His precepts.

They also say, "*There ain't no fool like an old fool,*" and foolish indeed is the person who has never spent time in the Word, and never learned to apply the Word to life.

101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word.

He wants to do what is right before God. This requires discipline. You have to learn to say "no" to yourself. It doesn't just happen!

God's Word is profitable for reproof, in which it acts like a mirror to expose our sin, enabling us to see the truth and turn away from wrongdoing (2 Tim. 3:16). But then we have to apply it! No one can do this for you! You have to exercise restraint, and by looking to God He gives us the strength to do it.

Slide # 6

> **Hebrews 4:15–16 (NKJV)**
> **15** For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with **our weaknesses**, but was in all points **tempted** as we are, yet without sin.
> **16** Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and **find grace to help in time of need**.
>
> **1 Corinthians 9:27 (NKJV)**
> **27** But **I discipline my body and bring it into subjection**, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Look to God and apply discipline! This is how we can restrain our feet in our walk from doing evil, and thus keep the Word.

102 I have not departed from Your judgments, For You Yourself have taught me.

Here is a God-taught man! And how does God teach us? A. Through the Word! And when we are taught by God, it steadies us in our walk. Thus the writer credits God and His teaching him that has kept him on track.

> What we all need is a heart knowledge of the Word, and this means being taught by God (v. 102). – ***Warren Wiersbe***

Human teachers are good and God has given teachers to the church. But there is no substitute for being personally taught by God and that only happens as you personally get into the Word and let God teach you.

You might sit down with your Bible and say, "***God, it's just you and me, please teach me***" and see what happens! God is more than happy to teach you, but you have to sit at His feet and listen to His Word with a teachable heart (cf. Jn. 6:45; Eph. 4:21; 1 Thess. 4:9).

103 How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Sweetness is the idea of delight. God's Word was a delight to the soul of the writer.

The Bible never uses the word "sugar." Actually, sugar is a recent phenomenon in world history, existing commercially for about the last 300 years. In the Bible, natural sugars such as honey and fruits were used. Honey in the Bible is the symbol for sweetness. It is referenced 62 times in the Bible.

> When a soul is full of itself, and of the world, and of the pleasures of sin, I do not wonder that it sees no sweetness in Christ, for it has no appetite!" ***- Charles Spurgeon***
>
> **Psalm 19:10 (NKJV)** [The judgments of the LORD]…
> **10** More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold;
> Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

How blessed is the person who comes to find sweet delight in God's Word to the point where His greatest pleasure in life is being in the Word!

104 Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.

The more you come to love and delight in the Word, the more you will HATE every false way. To love God's truth is to hate what is false.

This section began in verse 97 with an emphasis on loving the Word and concludes with hating every false way.

> "The Christian life is not all sweetness…. It has its sweet moments, and there is incomparable beauty in God. But we still live in a sour, ugly world, and it is equally important to learn to hate evil as well as love the good." ***- James Montgomery Boice***

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

The Bible provides guidance for life.

> The word guides negatively by forbidding certain behavior patterns. And it guides positively by showing the right way.
>
> ***– William MacDonald***

The lamp was a small clay oil lantern that illuminated only one or two steps ahead. Thus, the Bible gives guidance for what is immediately ahead in terms of choices and moral decisions.

> "One of the most practical benefits of Holy Writ is guidance in the acts of daily life." - ***Charles Spurgeon***
>
> **I don't know how God does** it, but very consistently He meets me in the pages of Scripture for whatever I am dealing with right at that time. He is the living God, and His guidance is ever present for those in the Word.

But it is also a "light to my path," meaning that it also spreads a broader light related to further down the path of life. This represents general direction. It thus provides enough overarching clarity to keep us on over the long haul.

So the Bible does both: It provides immediate guidance and also gives general direction that serves us well for the long term.

We need God's guidance all along life's path. The only sure way to keep from stumbling is to keep in step with the light. Make sure nothing gets in the way of the light, or we will stumble and fall.

> **Your word is a lamp…and a light**: These pictures show us that the word of God is **light** and brings **light**; it doesn't make things darker or harder to understand. It is a **light** book, not a dark book.
>
> -***David Guzik***

Slide # 7

> **Psalm 36:9 (NKJV)**
> **9** For with You is the fountain of life; **In Your light we see light**.

106 I have sworn and confirmed That I will keep Your righteous judgments.

The psalmist's resolve to live a life of obedience is doubly affirmed, both sworn and confirmed. He was all in – fully committed (Neh. 10:29).

Slide # 8

> **Psalm 119:10 (NKJV)**
> **10** With my **whole heart** I have sought You; Oh, **let me not wander** from Your commandments!

The writer affirmed two things at once: He was all in with his whole heart, and at the same time he was reliant upon God to keep him on track. This is the proper balance. We need to be sold out, but at the same time being totally reliant upon God.

107 I am afflicted very much; Revive me, O LORD, according to Your word.

He is sold out in his determination to be faithful, but at the same time he is really going through a hard time, being very much afflicted. And so he asks God to revive him according to the Word.

Again, note his dependence upon God to meet his need through and according to the Word.

108 Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, And teach me Your judgments.

He is asking God to grace him in keeping with the commitment he has uttered with his mouth (cf. Heb. 13:15). He wants God to honor this commitment. At the same time, he is asking God to teach him His judgments, that is, His divine instructions regarding right and wrong.

So often people have confidence in their own "judgment calls." We hear, "Just follow your heart." But that is exactly wrong. We want to follow God's heart – His judgments.

> "These repeated cries for teaching show the humility of the man of God, and also discover to us our own need of similar instruction. Our judgment needs educating till it knows, agrees with, and acts upon, the judgments of the Lord." – ***Charles Spurgeon***

109 My life is continually in my hand, Yet I do not forget Your law.

The situation was critical. A life-threatening situation was hanging over him. Yet he does not forget God's law. His connection to God's Word kept him strong.

The tendency is to panic and lose sight of God and His Word. But the psalmist, in spite of these life-threatening pressures, keeps his focus on God's Word.

110 The wicked have laid a snare for me, Yet I have not strayed from Your precepts.

Nothing will sway him! The wicked have gone all out to try and trap him and get him off track, but he has stayed true to the Word. This is the common denominator in his walk. He stays on track through the Word.

Slide # 9

> Those who are instructed in the Word are not ignorant of Satan's designs. By simple obedience to the Bible, they avoid his booby traps. – ***William MacDonald***
>
> **In World War II**, we had a tremendously skilled but eccentric general named George Patton.

> Patton faced the general Erwin Rommel on the North Africa front. The Nazi general had written a book after World War I on strategies for battle, which Patton had devoured.
> And at one point when the battle lines got close enough that these two generals could see each other, Patton was said to have yelled out at the top of his lungs, “I read your book, Rommel! I read your book!” (Shared by pastor Skip Heitzig)

In 2 Corinthians 2:11, Paul says, “we are not ignorant of Satan’s devices.” Satan uses his people to constantly try to get us to fall, to distract us, to tempt us, but the key to staying true is not straying from the Word.

111 Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever, For they are the rejoicing of my heart.

A heritage is what you have received as an inheritance – that which has passed down to you. The psalmist has come to see the very Word of God that has been handed down to him as his heritage.

And he feels so blessed in this position – the Word of God is the rejoicing of his heart.

> Think of the joy that comes to an heir when he inherits a fortune. How much greater joy should be ours in possessing the Book of books.
> – ***William MacDonald***

112 I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes Forever, to the very end.

To truly love the Word, to truly value it, to truly celebrate it, is to incline your heart to obey to the very end of your life.

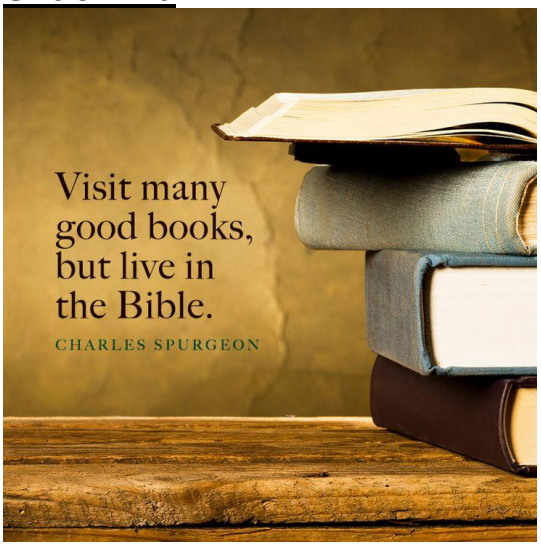
> Faithfulness is evidence of faith, and faith comes from hearing and receiving the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). – ***Warren Wiersbe***

> The believer feels that every step is dangerous; this is why he cried out for the lamp to his feet and the light to his path. With every step dangerous, how can he ever hope to endure **forever, to the very end**? He can, because the same God who lights and sustains him for one step can do it for every step, **to the very end**. – ***David Guzik***

Jesus, quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3, said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” (Matt. 4:4; Lk. 4:4).

Spiritually speaking, we are totally dependent upon God to guide us through us His Word. It is through the Word that we find correction, encouragement, strength, guidance, and everything we need pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3-4).

Slide # 10



And if we do, we will find…

- That we love the Word (v. 97).
- We have wisdom and understanding that transcend all those who don’t know the Word (vv. 98-100).
- The Word is sweet and the delight of our life.
- We have the guidance we need.
- It is our heritage forever.
- It causes our heart to rejoice!

Indeed, “Visit many good books, but live in the Bible.” Amen!