



WK OF 02/08/26

INTO THE WILD: THE MAJESTIC NATIONAL PARK OF PS 119

PSALM 119: 81-96

Silence (1-2 minutes)

Sit silently together as a group for a minute as a way to center your heart and invite the Holy Spirit into this week's small group devotional.

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Read: Psalm 119:81-96

Devotional

All of us know, life is tough—just ask the poet who wrote Psalm 119. Life breaks our hearts, strikes us with grief, slams us with guilt, plants fear in our minds. The good news is God's Word lights our path when darkness settles in. His words give us the answers we seek. In this week's teaching of Psalm 119, we learn about the organization and purpose of verses 81–96, the faith of a man who suffered, and the life-giving power of God's Word.

1. Describe a time when God's Word lit your path.

The Map of Psalm 119 | In the whole of Psalm 119, the psalmist's words are not merely scribbles of thoughts but rather poetry organized in an acrostic format including 22 paragraphs of eight verses each—an effort no doubt requiring numerous drafts and revisions before reaching its final form. Further, the poet organizes Psalm 119 into a V shape, like that of Grand Canyon National Park. The poem begins “high” on the top of the North Rim, dips to the canyon floor in the between, and ends “high” on the South Rim. The psalmist writes for the benefit of future generations, producing an artistic archive to help future sufferers. This week's verses, the canyon floor, are divided into eight verses of question and eight verses of confession.

2. In verse 81 (ESV), the poet begins with the phrase “my soul longs for your salvation.” Why might he have used these words rather than simply “I want your salvation”? Describe an event that made your soul long for salvation.
3. Verse 89 says the Lord's law is “firmly fixed.” This points to the steadfastness of God. Read verses 90–96 and name other attributes of God.

4. Read verse 95 then write your own verse of confession and share if you wish.
Template: "Lord, [this is what is happening to me], but I will ponder [this instruction in your Word]."

O LORD, why is life so hard on my heart? | In verses 81–88, the psalmist cries out to God about his suffering, yet his words exude faith. This poem—these prayers—come from someone who is utterly unafraid to be honest with the God of the universe. Someone who knows that every law, word, statute, commandment, precept, judgment, and testimony in God's Word is true. This psalmist has left us an archive that says we, too, can cry out to God with raw honesty.

5. What situation is hard on your heart and why?
6. Describe a time you spoke to God about the impact of his Word on your life. What happened?

Your Word, O LORD, gives life to my heart! | In verses 89–96, the psalmist testifies that God's Word lives in his heart and has saved him from his afflictions. Importantly, he recognizes his place as a servant of God and the limitless power of God's Word (v. 94). He expresses his fears while acknowledging his confidence in God's Word. In other words, he trusts God's Word to guide him past the limits of the world into a place of comfort, security, and confidence.

7. Describe your own "I am yours" moment. Which precepts guided your way? What others could you have sought?
8. Which commandments are you following, which are you ignoring, and why?

Everyone goes through hardship. Thankfully, Psalm 119 gives life to our hearts to help us work through suffering. This book exposes two opposite worlds: one in which we build meaning without God and one in which we build meaning through God's Word. The former is autonomous and has limits; the latter anchors us in the character of God and is limitless. The former relies on a changing world; the latter relies on the fixed nature of God. In all, the Word tells us who we are and whose we are, its promises having been fulfilled and still being fulfilled today.

Closing Prayer

Dear God, while the world has limits, your Word does not. Your Word fills our hearts with a limitless life that began when Jesus died on the cross to wash away our sins. In this life, we ask for your guidance to build meaning through your Word. We give ourselves as your servants. We are yours. In your name I pray. Amen.

Share Prayer Requests (10-15 minutes)