The Synonyms for God's Word in Psalm 119

A two-column survey of Psalm 119 (CSB)

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible — 176 verses, arranged as an acrostic poem, twenty-two stanzas of eight verses each, one stanza for every letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is, from first to last, a love song to God's Word — and the psalmist almost never repeats himself. Again and again he names the Word, and again and again he names it differently: the psalm is built on eight synonyms, eight Hebrew words that together say what no single word could. This companion repeats the survey of the ESV edition in the Christian Standard Bible (CSB), so the two versions can be read side by side.

The verses are grouped under the same Hebrew word as in the ESV edition, with the CSB's wording quoted — and the CSB often chooses a different English word: torah becomes “instruction,” 'edot becomes “decrees,” mitzvot becomes “commands,” and mishpatim becomes “judgments.” Because the grouping follows the Hebrew, a few verses stand in a different section than in the ESV table: v. 158 moves to Promise ('imrah — the CSB's “your word” is the literal rendering), and vv. 84, 91, 121, and 149 take their place under Judgments. In all, 171 of the 176 verses name the Word with one of the eight; a verse that uses two names appears under both. Quotations are from the CSB, lightly trimmed with ellipses where a verse is long, keeping the synonym in view.

1. Instruction (torah) — 25 verses	
The CSB renders torah “instruction” in all 25 verses — where the ESV reads “law.” God's teaching that directs life.	
Verse	**Text (CSB)**
Ps. 119:1	"How happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk according to the LORD’s instruction!"
Ps. 119:18	"Open my eyes so that I may contemplate wondrous things from your instruction."
Ps. 119:29	"Keep me from the way of deceit and graciously give me your instruction."
Ps. 119:34	"Help me understand your instruction, and I will obey it and follow it with..."
Ps. 119:44	"I will always obey your instruction, forever and ever."
Ps. 119:51	"The arrogant constantly ridicule me, but I do not turn away from your instruction."
Ps. 119:53	"Rage seizes me because of the wicked who reject your instruction."
Ps. 119:55	"LORD, I remember your name in the night, and I obey your instruction."
Ps. 119:61	"...I did not forget your instruction."
Ps. 119:70	"Their hearts are hard and insensitive, but I

	delight in your instruction."
Ps. 119:72	"Instruction from your lips is better for me than thousands of gold and silver pieces."
Ps. 119:77	"...I may live, for your instruction is my delight."
Ps. 119:85	"The arrogant have dug pits for me; they violate your instruction."
Ps. 119:92	"If your instruction had not been my delight, I would have died in my affliction."
Ps. 119:97	"How I love your instruction! It is my meditation all day long."
Ps. 119:109	"My life is constantly in danger, yet I do not forget your instruction."
Ps. 119:113	"I hate those who are double-minded, but I love your instruction."
Ps. 119:126	"It is time for the LORD to act, for they have violated your instruction."
Ps. 119:136	"My eyes pour out streams of tears because people do not follow your instruction."
Ps. 119:142	"Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your instruction is true."
Ps. 119:150	"Those who pursue evil plans come near; they are far from your instruction."
Ps. 119:153	"Consider my affliction and rescue me, for I have not forgotten your instruction."
Ps. 119:163	"I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your instruction."
Ps. 119:165	"Abundant peace belongs to those who love your instruction; nothing makes them stumble."
Ps. 119:174	"I long for your salvation, LORD, and your instruction is my delight."

2. Decrees ('edot) — 23 verses

The CSB renders 'edot "decrees" in all 23 verses (singular "decree" in v. 88) — where the ESV reads "testimonies." God's own witness to himself.

Verse	Text (CSB)
Ps. 119:2	"Happy are those who keep his decrees and seek him with all their heart."
Ps. 119:14	"I rejoice in the way revealed by your decrees as much as in all riches."
Ps. 119:22	"Take insult and contempt away from me, for I have kept your decrees."
Ps. 119:24	"your decrees are my delight and my counselors."
Ps. 119:31	"I cling to your decrees; LORD, do not put me to shame."
Ps. 119:36	"Turn my heart to your decrees and not to dishonest profit."
Ps. 119:46	"I will speak of your decrees before kings and

	not be ashamed."
Ps. 119:59	"I thought about my ways and turned my steps back to your decrees."
Ps. 119:79	"Let those who fear you, those who know your decrees, turn to me."
Ps. 119:88	"...and I will obey the decree you have spoken."
Ps. 119:95	"The wicked hope to destroy me, but I contemplate your decrees."
Ps. 119:99	"I have more insight than all my teachers because your decrees are my meditation."
Ps. 119:111	"I have your decrees as a heritage forever; indeed, they are the joy..."
Ps. 119:119	"...metal; therefore, I love your decrees."
Ps. 119:125	"I am your servant; give me understanding so that I may know your decrees."
Ps. 119:129	"Your decrees are wondrous; therefore I obey them."
Ps. 119:138	"The decrees you issue are righteous and altogether trustworthy."
Ps. 119:144	"Your decrees are righteous forever. Give me understanding, and I will live."
Ps. 119:146	"I call to you; save me, and I will keep your decrees."
Ps. 119:152	"Long ago I learned from your decrees that you have established them forever."
Ps. 119:157	"My persecutors and foes are many. I have not turned from your decrees."
Ps. 119:167	"I obey your decrees and love them greatly."
Ps. 119:168	"I obey your precepts and decrees, for all my ways are before you."

3. Precepts (piqqudim) — 21 verses

"Precepts" in all 21 verses, as in the ESV — God's detailed instructions, personally overseen.

Verse	Text (CSB)
Ps. 119:4	"You have commanded that your precepts be diligently kept."
Ps. 119:15	"I will meditate on your precepts and think about your ways."
Ps. 119:27	"...understand the meaning of your precepts so that I can meditate on your wonders."
Ps. 119:40	"How I long for your precepts! Give me life through your righteousness."
Ps. 119:45	"I will walk freely in an open place because I study your precepts."
Ps. 119:56	"This is my practice: I obey your precepts."
Ps. 119:63	"I am a friend to all who fear you, to those who keep your precepts."
Ps. 119:69	"...lies, but I obey your precepts with all my

	heart."
Ps. 119:78	"...I will meditate on your precepts."
Ps. 119:87	"They almost ended my life on earth, but I did not abandon your precepts."
Ps. 119:93	"I will never forget your precepts, for you have given me life through them."
Ps. 119:94	"I am yours; save me, for I have studied your precepts."
Ps. 119:100	"I understand more than the elders because I obey your precepts."
Ps. 119:104	"I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every false way."
Ps. 119:110	"...have not wandered from your precepts."
Ps. 119:128	"I carefully follow all your precepts and hate every false way."
Ps. 119:134	"Redeem me from human oppression, and I will keep your precepts."
Ps. 119:141	"I am insignificant and despised, but I do not forget your precepts."
Ps. 119:159	"Consider how I love your precepts; LORD, give me life according to your faithful love."
Ps. 119:168	"I obey your precepts and decrees, for all my ways are before you."
Ps. 119:173	"May your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts."

4. Statutes (chuqqim) — 22 verses

"Statutes" in all 22 verses, as in the ESV — God's engraved, permanent decrees.

Verse	Text (CSB)
Ps. 119:5	"If only my ways were committed to keeping your statutes!"
Ps. 119:8	"I will keep your statutes; never abandon me."
Ps. 119:12	"LORD, may you be blessed; teach me your statutes."
Ps. 119:16	"I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word."
Ps. 119:23	"Though princes sit together speaking against me, your servant will think about your statutes;"
Ps. 119:26	"I told you about my life, and you answered me; teach me your statutes."
Ps. 119:33	"Teach me, LORD, the meaning of your statutes, and I will always keep them."
Ps. 119:48	"...and will meditate on your statutes."
Ps. 119:54	"Your statutes are the theme of my song during my earthly life."
Ps. 119:64	"LORD, the earth is filled with your faithful love; teach me your statutes."
Ps. 119:68	"You are good, and you do what is good; teach

	me your statutes."
Ps. 119:71	"It was good for me to be afflicted so that I could learn your statutes."
Ps. 119:80	"...heart be blameless regarding your statutes so that I will not be put to shame."
Ps. 119:83	"...I do not forget your statutes."
Ps. 119:112	"I am resolved to obey your statutes to the very end."
Ps. 119:117	"Sustain me so that I can be safe and always be concerned about your statutes."
Ps. 119:118	"You reject all who stray from your statutes, for their deceit is a lie."
Ps. 119:124	"Deal with your servant based on your faithful love; teach me your statutes."
Ps. 119:135	"Make your face shine on your servant, and teach me your statutes."
Ps. 119:145	"I call with all my heart; answer me, LORD. I will obey your statutes."
Ps. 119:155	"Salvation is far from the wicked because they do not study your statutes."
Ps. 119:171	"My lips pour out praise, for you teach me your statutes."

5. Commands (mitzvot) — 22 verses

The CSB renders mitzvot "commands" in all 22 verses (singular "command" in v. 96) — where the ESV reads "commandments."

Verse	Text (CSB)
Ps. 119:6	"Then I would not be ashamed when I think about all your commands."
Ps. 119:10	"I have sought you with all my heart; don't let me wander from your commands."
Ps. 119:19	"I am a resident alien on earth; do not hide your commands from me."
Ps. 119:21	"You rebuke the arrogant, the ones under a curse, who wander from your commands."
Ps. 119:32	"I pursue the way of your commands, for you broaden my understanding."
Ps. 119:35	"Help me stay on the path of your commands, for I take pleasure in it."
Ps. 119:47	"I delight in your commands, which I love."
Ps. 119:48	"...up my hands to your commands, which I love, and will meditate on your statutes."
Ps. 119:60	"I hurried, not hesitating to keep your commands."
Ps. 119:66	"Teach me good judgment and discernment, for I rely on your commands."
Ps. 119:73	"...that I can learn your commands."
Ps. 119:86	"All your commands are true; people persecute

	me with lies — help me!"
Ps. 119:96	"I have seen a limit to all perfection, but your command is without limit."
Ps. 119:98	"Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are always with me."
Ps. 119:115	"Depart from me, you evil ones, so that I may obey my God's commands."
Ps. 119:127	"Since I love your commands more than gold, even the purest gold,"
Ps. 119:131	"I open my mouth and pant because I long for your commands."
Ps. 119:143	"Trouble and distress have overtaken me, but your commands are my delight."
Ps. 119:151	"You are near, LORD, and all your commands are true."
Ps. 119:166	"LORD, I hope for your salvation and carry out your commands."
Ps. 119:172	"My tongue sings about your promise, for all your commands are righteous."
Ps. 119:176	"...I do not forget your commands."

6. Judgments (mishpatim) — 22 verses

Usually "judgments" — where the ESV reads "rules"; "ordinances" in v. 30 and "judgment" in v. 84. Verses 84, 91, 121, and 149 stand here by the Hebrew, though the ESV's wording ("judge," "appointment," "just," "justice") kept them out of its Rules section.

Verse	Text (CSB)
Ps. 119:7	"I will praise you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous judgments."
Ps. 119:13	"With my lips I proclaim all the judgments from your mouth."
Ps. 119:20	"I am continually overcome with longing for your judgments."
Ps. 119:30	"I have chosen the way of truth; I have set your ordinances before me."
Ps. 119:39	"Turn away the disgrace I dread; indeed, your judgments are good."
Ps. 119:43	"Never take the word of truth from my mouth, for I hope in your judgments."
Ps. 119:52	"LORD, I remember your judgments from long ago and find comfort."
Ps. 119:62	"I rise at midnight to thank you for your righteous judgments."
Ps. 119:75	"I know, LORD, that your judgments are just and that you have afflicted me fairly."
Ps. 119:84	"How many days must your servant wait? When will you execute judgment on my persecutors?"
Ps. 119:91	"Your judgments stand firm today, for all things are your servants."

Ps. 119:102	"I have not turned from your judgments, for you yourself have instructed me."
Ps. 119:106	"I have solemnly sworn to keep your righteous judgments."
Ps. 119:108	"LORD, please accept my freewill offerings of praise, and teach me your judgments."
Ps. 119:120	"I tremble in awe of you; I fear your judgments."
Ps. 119:121	"I have done what is just and right; do not leave me to my oppressors."
Ps. 119:137	"You are righteous, LORD, and your judgments are just."
Ps. 119:149	"...life in keeping with your justice."
Ps. 119:156	"Your compassions are many, LORD; give me life according to your judgments."
Ps. 119:160	"The entirety of your word is truth, each of your righteous judgments endures forever."
Ps. 119:164	"I praise you seven times a day for your righteous judgments."
Ps. 119:175	"Let me live, and I will praise you; may your judgments help me."

7. Word (davar) — 24 verses

Usually "word" or "words." Twice the CSB renders davar as a promise God has made: v. 65, "just as you promised," and v. 133, "through your promise."

Verse	Text (CSB)
Ps. 119:9	"How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping your word."
Ps. 119:16	"I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word."
Ps. 119:17	"...then I will keep your word."
Ps. 119:25	"My life is down in the dust; give me life through your word."
Ps. 119:28	"I am weary from grief; strengthen me through your word."
Ps. 119:42	"Then I can answer the one who taunts me, for I trust in your word."
Ps. 119:43	"Never take the word of truth from my mouth, for I hope in your judgments."
Ps. 119:49	"Remember your word to your servant; you have given me hope through it."
Ps. 119:57	"The LORD is my portion; I have promised to keep your words."
Ps. 119:65	"LORD, you have treated your servant well, just as you promised."
Ps. 119:74	"...put my hope in your word."
Ps. 119:81	"I long for your salvation; I put my hope in your word."
Ps. 119:89	"LORD, your word is forever; it is firmly fixed in

	heaven."
Ps. 119:101	"I have kept my feet from every evil path to follow your word."
Ps. 119:105	"Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path."
Ps. 119:107	"I am severely afflicted; LORD, give me life according to your word."
Ps. 119:114	"You are my shelter and my shield; I put my hope in your word."
Ps. 119:130	"The revelation of your words brings light and gives understanding to the inexperienced."
Ps. 119:133	"Make my steps steady through your promise; don't let any sin dominate me."
Ps. 119:139	"My anger overwhelms me because my foes forget your words."
Ps. 119:147	"...put my hope in your word."
Ps. 119:160	"The entirety of your word is truth, each of your righteous judgments endures forever."
Ps. 119:161	"Princes have persecuted me without cause, but my heart fears only your word."
Ps. 119:169	"Let my cry reach you, LORD; give me understanding according to your word."

8. Promise ('imrah) — 18 verses

The CSB renders 'imrah "promise" in vv. 50, 58, 123, 148, 162, 170, 172, but "word" in vv. 11, 67, 103, 140, 158, and paraphrases it in vv. 38, 41, 76, 82, 116, 154 ("what you said," "as you promised," "what you have promised").

Verse	Text (CSB)
Ps. 119:11	"I have treasured your word in my heart so that I may not..."
Ps. 119:38	"Confirm what you said to your servant, for it produces reverence for you."
Ps. 119:41	"Let your faithful love come to me, LORD, your salvation, as you promised."
Ps. 119:50	"This is my comfort in my affliction: Your promise has given me life."
Ps. 119:58	"...to me according to your promise."
Ps. 119:67	"Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word."
Ps. 119:76	"May your faithful love comfort me as you promised your servant."
Ps. 119:82	"...looking for what you have promised; I ask, "When will you comfort me?""
Ps. 119:103	"How sweet your word is to my taste — sweeter than honey in my mouth."
Ps. 119:116	"Sustain me as you promised, and I will live; do not let me be..."
Ps. 119:123	"My eyes grow weary looking for your salvation

	and for your righteous promise."
Ps. 119:140	"Your word is completely pure, and your servant loves it."
Ps. 119:148	"I am awake through each watch of the night to meditate on your promise."
Ps. 119:154	"Champion my cause and redeem me; give me life as you promised."
Ps. 119:158	"I have seen the disloyal and feel disgust because they do not keep your word."
Ps. 119:162	"I rejoice over your promise like one who finds vast treasure."
Ps. 119:170	"Let my plea reach you; rescue me according to your promise."
Ps. 119:172	"My tongue sings about your promise, for all your commands are righteous."

All quotations are from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB). The five verses that use none of the eight names are 3, 37, 90, 122, and 132. Verse 57 is listed under "Word" (davar) only: its "I have promised" is the psalmist's own vow, not God's 'imrah.