WALK IN THE WORD

Part 8 of The Savior King. Psalm 119:9-16.

Peter Foxwell. The Cornerstone Church. November 1, 2026.

Dismiss the Middle School

STUDY GUIDE

As you came in this morning, you should have received a bulletin. Inside, you'll find a simple study guide you can use in a few different ways: to follow along with today's teaching, to reflect on during your personal devotions this week, or to spark conversation in your small group.

More resources are available online. The link is in your study guide.

Let's get started on today's teaching …

PSALM 119: A UNIQUE PRAYER

We're continuing our journey through Old Testament highlights, and today we've arrived at Psalm 119, which has some notable features:

- It's the longest Psalm in the Bible, 176 verses, more than twice as long as any other psalm.
- It's arranged as an acrostic poem, one eight-verse stanza for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
- It's structured like a wisdom poem, passing on a godly perspective to a younger man.
- Psalm 119 is obsessed with God's Word. It's his word because it is his Holy Spirit-breathed speech to us.
- It uses several terms for God's word:
  - Instruction x 28
  - Decrees x 23
  - Precepts x 21
  - Statutes x 22
  - Commands x 22
  - Judgments x 22
  - Word x 24
  - Promise x 18
- It uses 22 different words to describe ways we can read the Bible.

Let's read the second stanza of Psalm 119 now, verses 9-16; each verse begins with the Hebrew letter B or Beth. **Use my paper Bible.**

THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH QUESTION

This section answers the question in verse 9: *"How can a young man keep his way pure?"* It asks how to cultivate a godly life, set apart for God and pleasing to him. We might ask, "How can I learn to faithfully follow Jesus?"

The answer is ***"by keeping your word,"*** which means to live according to God's word, the Bible. This raises another question: "How can we keep God's word?"

- Verse 10: by **seeking God** wholeheartedly in his word. We don't worship the Bible; we use it to hear God's voice, then love and obey him.
- Verse 10: by **committing** to God's word
- Verse 11: by **treasuring** God's word
- Verse 12: by **learning** God's word
- Verse 13: by **speaking** God's word
- Verse 14: by **loving** God's ways revealed in his word
- Verse 15: by **meditating on** (and thinking deeply about) God's word
- Verse 16: by **delighting** in God's word
- Verse 16: by **memorizing** God's word

The psalmist is adamant: there is one roadmap to spiritual growth and maturity — engage with the Bible. Not just read it, but also love, learn, and live it.

And notice what the passage rules out: there is no alternative route. No trick. No technique. No program. The Bible is not **A** way to grow — it is **THE** way. God didn't give us a shortcut to a Christlike life. He gave us a Book to read, memorize, and follow.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH RESEARCH

Modern research is catching up to what the psalmist sang three thousand years ago.

In 2016, LifeWay Research published an article[1] reflecting on a decade of studying spiritual growth, and here's what they said:

> *"Reading the Bible matters more than anything else.* ***Reading the Bible is the number-one predictor of spiritual growth.*** *Quite simply, those who read the Scripture grow."*

That was their Transformational Discipleship research study — more than four thousand Protestant churchgoers surveyed, eight signposts of spiritual maturity identified — and Bible engagement topped the list by a long way

[1] LifeWay Research, "5 Truths from 10 Years of Discipleship Research," Dec. 3, 2016 — research.lifeway.com/2016/12/03/5-truths-10-years-discipleship-research/

FEASTING ON THE WORD

So let's spend the rest of our time on something practical. I want to talk to you about how to engage with the Bible by **CULTIVATING A CONSISTENT, COMMITTED, GOD-SEEKING, BIBLE-FEASTING HABIT**.

Notice I said feasting. Not snacking. The Bible is a banquet table filled with soul food and nourishing spiritual vitamins. Bible reading isn't a painful religious duty to check off, but a feast to enjoy.

We have to take care here. Bible reading isn't an end in itself. We don't worship the Bible — we worship the Christ revealed by the Bible. Jesus told the religious scholars of His day:

> *John 5:39-40 (CSB) You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and **yet they testify about me**. 40 But you are not willing to come to me so that you may have life.*

When we open this Book, we're not just studying a text — we're meeting a Person. Don't miss Jesus!

As we read the Word of God in the power of the Spirit of God while seeking God, we grow progressively into the holiness of God.

Not overnight. Not by accident. But day by day, page by page, we'll grow into a mature, godly, happy, Christlike believer.

Here's how. There are two intentional actions we can all take:

CULTIVATING A CONSISTENT, COMMITTED, GOD-SEEKING, BIBLE-FEASTING HABIT

We can all take two intentional actions. Here is the first:

1. Ask God to make you FANATICAL about the Bible.

Now, a Bible fanatic isn't a weirdo. A Bible fanatic is simply a person who places a high value on God's Word. The psalmist writes, **"*I have treasured your word in my heart*"** (v. 11). To treasure literally means ***"to hide"*** — to absorb the Word deep inside, where it shapes our values, our passions, and our whole lives.

The Bible fanatic is the happy man of Psalm 1: "*His delight is in the LORD's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night*" (Psalm 1:2, CSB). Delight is the goal, like we delight in a beautiful sunset.

The Bible is God's voice — so we should love reading it.

> *William Tyndale was an unapologetic Bible fanatic in the early 1500s. He was so desperate for ordinary English people to read the Bible in their own language that he broke the law to translate it, fled to Belgium to escape arrest, and kept translating and smuggling copies home. In the end he was betrayed, arrested, and burned at the stake — and his dying prayer was, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes!" Tell me: was that life wasted? Was that fanaticism foolish? What price would we pay to put God's Word in a nation's hands?*

Ask the Lord for renewed desire and love for the Bible that overcomes every reason and excuse not to feast on it.

Ask him to make you a Bible fanatic.

2. Ask God to help you follow a reading plan.

You've heard the old adage: "Failing to plan is planning to fail." It's true of business, and it's true of Bible reading.

Leave it to chance, and we all know what happens: *everything else happens.* The day fills up, the energy runs out, and God's Word gets the leftovers — or nothing at all. We make appointments for everything we value; will shouldn't leave hearing from God to chance.

Our psalmist knew his own weakness. He knew he was prone to drift, so he prayed: "*I have sought you with all my heart; don't let me wander from your commands*" (Psalm 119:10, CSB). We are seeking God — and something that important takes intention.

So make an appointment, and keep it. Daily, or three times a week — whatever works for you. Be realistic about your availability and ability, and if you miss a day, don't sweat it; just start over.

> *It has to be a plan that works for you. I once tried to follow a famous Christian leader's plan — up at 4 a.m., hours of reading and prayer. It about killed me. I'm a weak and feeble man; I just couldn't do it.*

So pick a time that works for you. Pick a place that works for you. Pick a Bible that works for you. Pick a plan that works for you.

For example:

- **Read a chapter a day.** This is the simplest plan. The goal is quality, not quantity. Here's how it works.
  - Use the same Bible every day; a paper one is best; it's more visually sticky, so you will remember it more.
  - Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see wonderful things in his Word.
  - Pick a book of the Bible and read one chapter a day until you finish.
  - Read the chapter slowly, noting the divisions, paragraphs, and main points. If it helps, use highlighters or pens to mark words that stand out to you. Be sure to use ones that don't bleed through the paper.
  - For extra insight, use a study Bible and read the notes.
  - After reading, take 10 minutes to pray over it, think about it, and apply it.

- **Follow the Lectionary readings in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer.**

- **Choose a plan from the Book Table.**
  - Foundations 260 New Testament
  - Foundations 260 Old Testament - selected passages
  - Foundations - selected passages from the Old and New Testament
  - The One Year Bible - OT, NT, Psalms, Proverbs
  - Tim Wildsmith's Daily Scripture Guidebook: a reading plan and a brief commentary on each passage.

- **Try the HEAR Journal method.**
  - Rob Gallaty, a pastor in Tennessee, developed it to help you work through a Bible passage.
  - **There are guides on the Book Table.**
  - This would be a great plan to follow alongside a Foundations reading plan. Then, maybe consider getting a small group of friends to meet once a week to discuss a passage you've all journaled.

B.Y.O.B.

Today I'm introducing a new initiative—one I believe will have a profound, positive impact on our church family. It's called **B.Y.O.B**. No, it's not an invitation to a party. It stands for **Bring Your Own Bible**.

Can I suggest that we all commit to bringing our own Bible to church? I know it's inconvenient, and I know we all have the Bible on our phones and tablets. I use Bible Study apps, and I love having it on my phone wherever I go, BUT … there are good reasons to use a paper Bible too. For example:

- **You can make the sermon yours.** Highlight the passage being preached. Write notes in the margin. Add the date — and years from now you'll remember where you were, and what God said to you.

- **Your kids will see it.** Children learn what we value by watching what we carry. When they see the Word in your hands Sunday after Sunday, they learn that it matters — and in time, they'll follow your example.

- **Other people will see it.** Example is contagious. The visitor, the new believer, the brother in the next seat — they'll notice, and they'll follow.

- **You'll remember more of what you read.** A paper Bible does two things a screen doesn't do as well. First, the passage is always on the same physical page: you can picture where it sits — top left, near the bottom — and that mental picture helps the Word sink deep into mind and heart. Second, you can mark it: underline, highlight, scribble a note. What your hand marks, your heart keeps.

What do you think? Will you BYOB with me?

WEAR YOUR BIBLE OUT

I'm encouraging you to follow an intentional Bible-feasting plan in 2027 as you seek the Lord with all your heart and strive to grow in Christlikeness.

Do it with a paper Bible, and mark it up. Underline, highlight, write in the margins. And bring it to church so you can take notes in it.

Don't have a paper Bible? Several Bibles are on the Book table.

If you bring your paper Bible to church, you can take a Bible highlighter from the Book table for free.

Wear that Bible out. God's OK with that. And it will transform your life.

Charles Spurgeon is often quoted as saying, "A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't."

> *Have you ever seen a Bible like that? Maybe it is your grandmother's. The spine is held together with tape. The pages are wrinkled from being turned. Notes fill the margins, tear stains mark Psalm 23, and she has underlined half the New Testament because she spent years reading, meditating, and memorizing it. That Bible is falling apart — but she isn't.*

When a loved one passes away, it is comforting to look through their Bible to see what mattered to them, or the promises they believed, or the hope they held onto. It's a precious legacy to hand on to their children.

Pray to the Lord: "Please help me to be a Bible fanatic like the Psalm 1 happy man who meditates on your Bible day and night. Amen."

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Use any or all of the following questions to guide your group's conversation about Sunday's sermon.

Read Psalm 119:9-16.

Observation (what the text says)

List everything the psalmist does with God's word in verses 10–16 to keep God's word and keep his life pure. How many different actions can you find?

Look again at verses 10–12. Some of the psalmist's words are prayers asking God to act, and some are commitments he makes himself. Which are which — and what does that balance tell us about how growth works?

Interpretation (what it means)

The sermon put it plainly: the Bible is not A way to grow — it is THE way. There's no shortcut, trick, or program. Why do you think God designed growth to run through a book we read slowly over a lifetime, rather than something faster or more dramatic?

In verse 11, the psalmist says he has "treasured" God's word in his heart — the word literally means "hidden." How is treasuring the word different from simply reading it or hearing a sermon on it?

Application (where it lands in real life)

The sermon named two intentional actions: ask God to make you fanatical about the Bible, and ask him to help you follow an intentional reading plan. Which of the two is the bigger hurdle for you right now — desire, or a plan? Why is this, and what can you do to overcome the hurdle?

How might praying for the Spirit's help before you read (Open my eyes to see wondrous things in your word), and reflecting on the passage (its meaning and application to your life) after you read, increase the impact of Bible reading for you?