



ELEMENTS

Week 4: Scripture

RECALL

DISCUSS YOUR EXPERIENCE:

What consistent messages did you **Recognize** as you read through Psalm 119: 9-80 this week? In what ways did the use of specific wording or phrasing play in the messaging? What verses were most impactful and memorable for you?

ICEBREAKER:

Your leader has prepared three paper bags with everyday objects inside. Break up into three groups and follow the steps below.

1. Pass the **unopened** bag around the room and allow each person to shake the bag. **Reveal** your best guess.
2. Pass the **unopened** bag around again, this time using your fingers, feel the object. **Reflect** and describe what you felt?
3. Pass the bag around for a 3rd time, **open the bag** and **Recognize** what the object actually is.
4. Pass the **object** around allowing each to **Respond** to its proper usage

We can find a parallel between this exercise and reflection on Scripture. By simply shaking the bag, its contents are very difficult to define. In the same manner, it is very difficult for us to understand the Bible through only a cursory review. We must dig deeper and deeper; **Reflecting** on the Word with increasing scrutiny in order to **Recognize** it's truths and **Respond** accordingly.

REVEAL

PRAY FOR GUIDANCE:

Now take a few moments and ask God to help you understand, grasp and apply the spiritual truths of this week's selected Bible passage.

Psalms 119:81-88 (HCSB)

⁸¹ I long for Your salvation; I put my hope in Your word.

⁸² My eyes grow weary [looking] for what You have promised; I ask, "When will You comfort me?"

⁸³ Though I have become like a wineskin [dried] by smoke, I do not forget Your statutes.

⁸⁴ How many days [must] Your servant [wait]? When will You execute judgment on my persecutors?

⁸⁵ The arrogant have dug pits for me; they violate Your instruction.

⁸⁶ All Your commands are true; people persecute me with lies—help me!

⁸⁷ They almost ended my life on earth, but I did not abandon Your precepts.

⁸⁸ Give me life in accordance with Your faithful love, and I will obey the decree You have spoken.

REFLECT

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT:

As a group, utilize your study bibles or on-line resources to help you answer as many of the following questions about the selected passage as you can. Keep in mind, these questions are intended to be a guide and you may not be able to find all of the answers or have time to address each one in the group.

1. Who? Who wrote the book and/or passage? Who was the intended audience? Who are the main characters in the story?



2. What? What are some of the key words and their meanings in the passage?
3. When? When was the book or passage written? What was historically occurring at the time?
4. Where? In what geographic location did the story take place? What was the setting?
5. Why? Why was this book or passage written? What was the main purpose?

RECOGNIZE

FOCUS:

Last we discussed the importance of knowing God’s Word so that we can obey His will. Our focus passage, Psalm 119, rejoices in the gift of God’s Torah, His covenant instruction and guide for our lives. In every verse except two, within Psalm 119, the psalmist utilizes terms to define God’s covenant revelation. At first glance, these words might seem redundant, but they function to create a comprehensive picture of God’s divine authority. They support the primary truth contained in Psalm 119 that God’s word is divine, complete, and we should delight in it routinely.

Take a minute to consider the meaning of several of these terms. This is a critical exercise to ensure we understand and apply them correctly. Each English word has a different Hebrew origin. As a group, discuss examples of how we can model these instructions in our daily lives so that we reflect more of God’s full character.

ENGLISH	HEBREW	MEANING
law	<i>torah</i>	instruction
testimonies	<i>'edot</i>	what God solemnly testifies to be His will
precepts	<i>piqqudim</i>	what God has appointed to be done
statutes	<i>khuqqim; khuqqot</i>	what the divine Lawgiver has laid down
commandments	<i>mitswot</i>	what God has commanded
rules	<i>mishpatim</i>	what the divine Judge has ruled to be right
word	<i>'imrah; dabar</i>	what God has spoken

Source: Crossway ESV Study Bible

KNOW THE TRUTH(S):

Keeping in mind the context of the selected passage (see **Reflect**), read the Scripture as a group and carefully take note of the truth(s) and/or promises God provides. Look for God’s promises, plans, provisions and purposes.

1. What did it mean? Read each verse individually, pausing at the end to note any truth(s) and/or promises that were intended for the original audience.
2. What does it mean? What are the universal truth(s) and/or promises and how do they apply today?
3. What meaning is unclear? Discuss, if any, problems you have encountered with the passage (i.e. what you don’t understand, possible contradictions, or difficulties in applying the passage today).

RESPOND

FOCUS:

In an article several years ago, the *Associated Press* made an interesting concession (*Associated Press*, September 14, 1992). After evaluating 4,000 self-help books on the market, they concluded that the best book on happiness and contentment was the original self-help book, the Bible. It is comprehensive. It provides the principles that are necessary for every area of life.



Psalm 119 teaches us that we need to understand God's word at a deeper level. We must continually allow it to change and guide the way we live. Take a moment and pray silently, asking God to build in you the desire and discipline to stay committed to reading and **R**esponding to His word.

TAKE ACTION:

You've now prayed asking God to **R**eveal Himself and help you understand the selected passage; you've **R**elected on the context in which the passage was written; you've **R**ecognized God's timeless truths; and now you must **R**espond. To help determine your response, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. As Christians we long for the promise of God's eternal salvation. However, while we wait, we continue to wrestle in our lives with sins, fears and antagonists. These struggles, at times, cause us to grow weary. How do we utilize God's Word to maintain energy and stay strong for the fight?
2. Each of us will face times of sorrow in our lives. The source of this mourning could be the loss of a loved one, a lost opportunity or a goal not achieved. What are some practical ways to stay grounded in the knowledge that God's plan for us is bigger than our current reality?
3. In this world we are inundated with opinions. Some of these align with God's Word and others do not. What are some recent examples of public opinions (teachings) you have heard which do not align with God's Word? In what ways did these false teachings (heresy) create traps for those who are not familiar with God's Word? What response must Christians have in the face of heresy?
4. Without God's promises and grace we would almost certainly be crushed under the oppressive nature of our worldly society. What examples can you share of recent situations in your life where there is no doubt God was at work? How do we stay mindful of God's way so that we do not inhibit His plan?

THIS WEEK:

Your assignment is to spend at least five (5) days studying Psalm 119: 89-176, applying the five (5) spiritual learning steps (**R**ecall, **R**eveal, **R**eflect, **R**ecognize, & **R**espond).

The following is a guideline to help you navigate this week's study:

Monday: verses 89-104

Tuesday: verses 105-120

Wednesday: verses 121-136

Thursday: verses 137-152

Friday: verses 153-176

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