

**Lasting Impact [Psalm 119]**  
Draft by Steve Carr [[www.houseofcarr.com/thread](http://www.houseofcarr.com/thread)]

**INTRODUCTION**

1. A few years ago, I picked up marathon running, which is an odd hobby.
  - a. It's a test of endurance: not can you run fast, but can you run long.
  - b. The "glory" of this run for me was in 2011's Flying Pig where I knew the lay of the land.
    - 1) My attempts to get on television worked (videos parts 1, 2, and 3).
  - c. What's even crazier: now ultramarathons are growing in popularity.
  - d. Apparently 26.2miles just isn't enough; people want to go farther.
2. The world's longest running race takes place in Queens, New York.
  - a. It's a multiday race in which participants have 52 days in which to run 3,100 miles.
  - b. Runners run 5649 laps of one extended city block in the neighborhood.
  - c. They have to average 60 miles every day to complete the race in time.
  - d. It takes place in June-August, making it even more challenging.
3. Summer is the time when we think of extending time and opportunities.
  - a. In fact, this Friday is June 21<sup>st</sup>. It is the summer solstice: the longest day of the year.
  - b. To illustrate: in Anchorage, Alaska, the sun will rise at 4:20AM, setting at 11:42PM
  - c. What better opportunity, then, to examine the longest chapter in the Bible?

**TRANSITION**

1. Psalm 119 is the longest psalm and the longest chapter in the Bible: 176 verses.
  - a. The psalm is an acrostic or alphabetic psalm
    - 1) 22 different sections, each beginning with a letter of Hebrew alphabet
    - 2) In each section, there are 8 couplets, starting with that particular letter.
  - b. This makes for 176 total verses/sections
2. In short, the longest chapter in the Bible takes us from A to Z
3. We could easily spend months studying this psalm.
  - a. Famous preacher Charles Spurgeon has 398 pages on it in his *Treasury of David*.
  - b. Charles Simeon has 19 sermons on random verses from it.
  - c. Today, we're going to limit it to the verse 11 verses which covers it well.

**VERSES 1-3**

<sup>1</sup> Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart—

<sup>3</sup> they do no wrong but follow his ways.

\*As I mentioned, this psalm has 176 total verses/couplets and here's what is fascinating:

- a. Only 3 to 5 of the couplets lack a direct reference to the written Word of God
    - \*In case you're curious: 84, 90?, 121, 122, and 132?
  - b. So throughout this chapter, certain words feature more prominently.
1. The first word is **LAW**, used in Verse 1, appearing 25 times in this psalm.
    - a. We always think of this negatively. It's the word for TORAH, the books of Moses.
    - b. The Jews understand this as "teaching," a healthier way to view
      - 1) What can God teach you?
      - 2) The law reveals God's will for how His people are to live.
      - 3) It's not just for academic interest, but for obedience.
  2. The second word is **STATUTES**. It's used 10 times in this psalm
    - a. The word comes from the root meaning "to bear witness."
    - b. It points to the dependability of the Bible as a witness of things of God.
  3. The third word here is **WAYS**, appearing 7 times in Psalm 119.

- a. It refers to God's characteristic manner of acting
- b. When contrasted with our ways, it looks completely different.
- c. What we need to realize: **THE SCRIPTURES ARE CONSISTENT**
  - 1) The blessings of this worldview: we don't change what we believe.
  - 2) Verse 137: "You are righteous, LORD, and your laws are right."

### **VERSES 4-7**

<sup>4</sup>You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed.

<sup>5</sup>Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees!

<sup>6</sup>Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands.

<sup>7</sup>I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws.

1. The word **PRECEPTS** appears 21 times in this Psalm.
  - a. The word refers to overseeing or paying close attention to a matter.
  - b. It speaks to a God who cares about detail"
    - 1) This needn't be oppressive, but can be liberating
    - 2) Our obedience should come somewhat naturally.
2. Here we have the word **DECREES**. It's found 22 times in Psalm 119.
  - a. It comes from a word meaning "to engrave in stone"
  - b. Why are cemetery memorials made out of stone? Permanence.
3. The word **COMMANDS** is also found 22 times in this chapter.
  - a. It points to "the straight authority of what is said"
  - b. There is no confusion here: it has the idea of giving orders.
4. The word **RIGHTEOUS LAWS** or **JUDGMENTS** or **ORDINANCES** is 23 times in this psalm.
  - a. Here, justice is rooted in God's character.
  - b. These decisions from the ultimate all-wise Judge about common human situations
  - c. As with any judge, we get this lesson: **THE SCRIPTURES ARE AUTHORITATIVE**
    - 1) This is not just fascinating literature, it's meant to direct our lives.
    - 2) Verse 73: "Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands."

### **VERSES 8-11**

<sup>8</sup>I will obey your decrees; do not utterly forsake me.

<sup>9</sup>How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word.

<sup>10</sup>I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.

<sup>11</sup>I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

1. In this text, we want to highlight the same word twice. And that is **WORD**.
  - a. The word *d'bar* appears 23x in the psalm
  - b. The word *im'rah* appears 19x in the psalm)
2. **WORD** has become synonymous with the Bible itself. It's a powerful metaphor.
  - a. This was the emphasis for the name of our church. An aural metaphor.
  - b. Romans 10:17,18 Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.
  - c. **THE SCRIPTURES ARE ILLUMINATING**
    - 1) They word from inside out to transform how we live and move.
    - 2) Verse 105 "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."

### **CONCLUSION**

1. Maybe you're into Marvel superhero movies.
  - a. While these are the cream of the crop, the DC universe have Superman/Batman.

b. Those two characters have dozens of feature length movies about them.

1) And yet those movies STILL bring in money.

2) Between comics, TV shows, and movies, there's been about 18 incarnations of Superman alone.

c. And still, it doesn't get old.

2. It's critical that we understand that the story of Scriptures never should get old to us.

a. It lasts. As we change, its meaning changes in our lives.

b. This is why we must continually go back to it.

c. **Verse 1** "Blessed are those . . . who walk according to the law of the Lord."