

January 1, God's Word Is Always Relevant Psalm 119:89-96

The Point: God's Word reflects His character and power—and always will.

The Bible Meets Life

We look to doctors with our health needs. We look to the courts to give us justice. We look to family members to step in and help us with various needs. We need each other, but there is only so much any of us can do. Not so with God. He is the perfect, all-powerful Creator who gives us life. We see these very attributes in Scripture, because the Bible is His Word, and it has always reflected His character and power.

The Setting

Psalm 119:89-96 (the *lamed* stanza, the twelfth one) focuses on how God's Word reflects God's character and power. In these verses, the psalmist praised the eternity and power of God's Word. He remembered that in his times of persecution and affliction, it was God's Word that delivered him and gave him life.

- **When have you gotten swept up in a trend or fad**

Weight loss is consistently the top New Year's resolution each year. What isn't consistent is how we go about that weight loss. The 1910s emphasized chewing your food 32 times—once for each tooth. The 1930s gave us the Grapefruit (or Hollywood) diet. The 1950s fed us the Cabbage Soup Diet. The 1970s started the trend of over-the-counter diet pills. The 1990s gave us low-carb, high-protein diets. What's trendy in dieting is based on what this year's experts say is relevant—but that relevant information changes as much as our waistlines do.

Our lives should be based on something far more reliable than the latest trend. Psalm 119 points to the one Source that is always consistent: God's Word.

- **When did you first encounter the Bible in a meaningful way?**

Psalm 119:89-91 (HCSB) 89 LORD, Your word is forever; it is firmly fixed in heaven. 90 Your faithfulness is for all generations; You established the earth, and it stands firm. 91 They stand today in accordance with Your judgments, for all things are Your servants.

Verses 89-91 affirm the timeless nature of God's Word in two ways.

- **God's Word is affirmed in the heavens.** "LORD, Your word is forever; it is firmly fixed in heaven" (v. 89). Here, the psalmist expressed God's view of His Word: it is certain, firm, established, and can't be changed. Like God Himself, His Word is eternal with no beginning or end.
- **God's Word is affirmed on earth.** We see God's faithfulness in His creation and the world around us. God spoke the created order into existence, and because it stands firm, we can trust that all God speaks stands firm.

- **Why is it important to know that God's Word will never change?**
- **How have you experienced God's Word as trustworthy?**

We see the faithfulness of God by gazing up and looking around. Verse 91 refers to the heavens and the earth when it says, "They stand today in accordance with Your judgments." They do not stand on their own; God sustains them. The remainder of verse 91 explains why: "for all things are Your servants." God is in control, and creation serves Him. This, then, is the confidence we have in God's Word. He is in charge, and His Word on our behalf is timeless and faithful. Next, the psalmist declared another quality of God's Word: its ability to give life.

Psalm 119: 92-93 (HCSB) If Your instruction had not been my delight, I would have died in my affliction. 93 I will never forget Your precepts, for You have given me life through them.

God's Word is sufficient for whatever we face. A devotion to God's instruction did not keep the psalmist from affliction, but his delight in God's Word sustained him through it. Note the progression and relationship between affliction and God's Word. "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word" (v. 67). "It was good for me to be afflicted so that I could learn Your statutes" (v. 71). "If Your instruction had not been my delight, I would have died in my affliction" (v. 92).

- **How have you experienced 'life' as a result of God's instruction**
- *What steps can we take to engage the Scriptures so that we never forget?*

His delight led the psalmist to vow: "I will never forget Your precepts" (v. 93).

- Forgetting God's Word is a matter of the will. Consequently, remembering God's Word requires more than just thinking about it. Remembering includes doing and persevering.
- The psalmist's pledge of obedience reflected sincerity, not perfection. He had determined in his heart to please God.
- When pleasing God is our heart's determined desire, it will be clearly and consistently evident in how we live.

At the point of death, the psalmist was revived by the Word of God. This is the power of God's Word—it can put us back on our feet again.

Psalm 119:94-96 (HCSB) I am Yours; save me, for I have sought Your precepts. 95 The wicked hope to destroy me, but I contemplate Your decrees. 96 I have seen a limit to all perfection, but Your command is without limit.

The psalmist was in danger from men who sought to destroy him.

- The psalmist had previously referred to his faithfulness in keeping God's precepts in spite of persecution from his enemies (Psalm 119:84,87). However, this verse reveals that his persecutors were still a problem.

- Facing these enemies, the psalmist declared, "I contemplate Your decrees" (v 95).
- **What makes God's instruction different from other guidance we encounter in life?**
- *What does it mean in your own words to tell God, "I am Yours"?*

As he contemplated the decrees of God, the psalmist saw how perfect God's Word is. "I have seen a limit to all perfection, but Your command is without limit" (v. 96).

- The Hebrew word "perfection" speaks of the intended end or completion of a thing. Even the best things in this world are limited; nothing in this world is perfect: not people, places, experiences, or achievements.
- The Word of God is perfect. "Your command is without limit" (v. 96). This is a poetic way of saying the Word of God is complete, sufficient, limitless, and undefeatable.

How Should You Respond To The Truth That The Word Of God Is Always Relevant?

- **Get outside.** Psalm 119 says that even the heavens affirm the trustworthiness of God's Word. Find a time this week to spend outside and observe God's creation. Pull up Psalm 119 on your smartphone and read it in the context of God's handiwork.
- **Pledge to respond in obedience to what God's Word says to do.** It's easier to take steps of faith if we've already decided to do so. Ask God to make His guidance for you clear and for strength to follow His Word in obedience.
- **Share the love.** As a group, make it your goal to collect and donate Bibles to those who don't have one. Whether it's visitors who come to this group, children who attend VBS, or another outreach ministry of your church, giving a Bible to someone communicates the treasure that it is.

Wrap It Up

- God's Word reflects God's character; it's timeless and perfect. Trends and fads will come and go, but God's Word will always be true. This week, don't take this gift for granted. Spend time in God's Word and be ready to put it into practice.